

## Historical Development of Reported Speech in Chinese

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### 0. Introduction

This paper attempts to show the diachronic process of reported speech in Chinese based on Givón's (1980) hypothesis of binding hierarchy relating verb meaning and complement type. He shows that complementizers occur with saying or informative verbs (i.e. *say*, *tell*) first, then with cognitive verbs (i.e. *think*, *know* or *believe*), then with verbs like *decide* or *agree*. The methodology I use is calculating the frequency of saying verbs, informative verbs and cognitive verbs which occur with the complementizers in Chinese vernacular short or long fiction from the Tang (A.D. 670-905) to the Qing dynasties (A.D. 1644-1908).

There are several sources for data in classical Chinese. For the Tang dynasty, the primary source is *Dunhuang Bian Wen* [Transformation Texts of the Dunhuang Stone Caves] (A.D. 4<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> century) (henceforth DBW). For the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960 - 1278), I will use *Song Si Gong Da Nao Jin Hun Zhang* 'Mister Song Disturbing Jin Hun Zhang' (henceforth SDNJ). For the data regarding usage during the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368 - 1628), I will use a famous short work of fiction entitled *Bai Niangzi Yong Zhen Leifeng Ta* [Madame Bai Forever Locked in the Leifong Tower] (henceforth BYZLT). In the Qing dynasty (A.D. 1644 - 1908), a well-known work of longer fiction *Hong Lou Meng* 'Dream of the Red Chamber' by Xue-Qin Cao (A.D. 1715 -1763) (henceforth HLM), is adopted as the source for our data. Since HLM is a longer work of fiction, I will only use chapters two to five.

### 1. Verbs of Saying in Classical Chinese

In Chinese classical texts, especially the short or long vernacular fiction from the Tang (A.D. 670-950) to the Qing dynasties (A.D. 1644-1908), the forms such as *yan* 'say', *yue* 'say', *dao* 'say' and *shuo* 'say' are all used as utterance verbs meaning 'say'. Among them, *yan*, *yue* and *dao* 'say' are found to introduce sentential complements when they follow another saying or informative verb.

#### 1.1. Stage One: Tang Dynasty (A.D. 670-905)

##### 1.1.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'

Two stories from *Bian Wen* are chosen as primary sources for our data. In these two stories, *yan* 'say' and *yue* 'say' as in (1) and (2) are both commonly used as utterance verbs meaning 'say'.

DBW

- (1) Zi Xu **yue** meng xiansheng yi ji.  
Zi Xu **say** receive mister one help  
'Zi Xu says, "I have received help from you."'
  - (2) Mu Lian liang jiu er **yan** shi yi Qing Ti furen fou  
Mu Lian very long then **say** know one Qing Ti Madame not  
'After a while, Mu Lian says, "Do you know Madame Qing Ti?"'

#### 1.1.2. As Complementizers after Saying and Informative Verbs

In addition, in numerous examples from (3) to (5), when *yan* or *yue* introduces a sentential complement, this item occurs following another verb of saying as in (3), or verb of information as in (4) and (5). In these examples, *yan* or *yue* has lost its literal meaning and served as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement. For example, in (3), when *yue* functions as a complementizer and introduces a sentential complement, it occurs following another verb of saying *yan*. Since two adjacent verbs of saying are redundant and unnecessary, it turns out that the two of them have different functions: the first verb *yan* has a lexical function and serves as a main verb in the main clause whereas the second verb *yue* has a grammatical function and serves as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement.

Another observation is that in examples (4) and (5), the sentential complement introduced by the complementizer expresses what has been answered as in (4), or what has been reported as in (5) instead of what has been verbally said.

DBW

- (3) kou chang ge er yan **yue** lu zhong yi ren...  
mouth sing song and say **YUE** cottage inside one person  
'(Someone) sings a song and says, "There is someone inside the cottage."'
  - (4) zhu ren day **yan** jin jie bu shi.  
you-gentleman answer **YAN** total all not know  
'Everyone answers "We do not know any of them."'
    - (5) er shi shizun bao Mu Lian **yue** ru mu yi luo Abi.  
then time master report Mu Lian **YUE** you mother already fall Abi  
'Then the master reported to Mu Lian "Your mother has fallen Abi ..."'

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## 1.1.3. Optional Complementizers

A number of examples as in (6) and (7) have been found in which an informative verb precedes a sentential complement without being followed by another *yan* or *yue*. This indicates that *yan* or *yue* as complementizers following an informative verb are optional. Since they are optional, it is more reasonable to analyze them as complementizers instead of full utterance verbs.

- (6) yuzhu geng **wen** di qi ge zhong you Qing Ti furen fou.  
warden even **ask** number seven space inside have Qing Ti Madame not  
'The warden even asks "Is there a Madame Qing Ti in the seventh space?"'
- (7) er zhi **jian** bixia shi wan ren zhi wang.  
and direct **warn** your-majesty be ten-thousand people POSS king  
'... and directly warns "Your majesty, you are the king of all the people..."'

Table (1) Frequency of Different Types of Verbs Preceding *Yan* and *Yue* in DBW

Verbs Types	yan/yue 'tell,talk'	wen 'ask'	da 'answer'	bao 'report'	other verbs	cognitive verbs	total
Freq.	7	17	15	19	15	0	73
%	9.6	23.3	20.5	26.1	20.5	0	100

## 1.2. Stage Two: from the Song to Qing Dynasties (A.D. 960-1908)

### 1.2.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'

Similarly, in a number of stories written from the Song (A.D. 960-1278) to Qing Dynasties (A.D. 1644-1908), different forms of verbs of saying such as *yan* 'say', *yue* 'say', *dao* 'say' and *shuo* 'say' as shown in (8) to (13) are commonly used as utterance verbs meaning 'say' introducing a quote.

#### SDNJ

- (8) Song-si-gong **dao** wo lihui de le.  
Song-si-gong **say** I understand PART PART  
'Song-si-gong says "I understand."'
- (9) kuizi **yue** ni ji zhi qian duo hai ji.  
executioner **say** you already know money much harm self  
'The executioner says "Since you already know that too much money is dangerous to you ..."'

#### BYZLT

- (10) Xu Xuan **dao** xiaozi zhun lai.  
Xu Xuan **say** guy allow come  
'Xu Xuan says "You guys are allowed to come."'

- (11) lao yuanwai **shuo** zhege rongyi.  
old gentleman **say** this easy  
'The old gentleman says "This is easy."'

HLM

- (12) Yu Chun **dao** zheng shi.  
Yu Chun **say** exactly be  
'Yu Chun says "Exactly so!"'

- (13) Ta **shuo** bi dei liang ge nuer pei zhe wo du shu.  
he **say** must need two CL girl accompany I read book  
'He says "I must be accompanied by two girls when I study."'

### 1.2.2. As Complementizers After Informative Verbs

Likewise, as illustrated in examples (14) to (18), *yue* or *dao* following another informative verb has lost its literal meaning in that the sentential complement expresses what has been answered, reported or called in an indirect way instead of what has been expressed verbally. In these sentences, *yue* or *dao* has developed into a complementizer.

Certainly, the action of answering, reporting or calling must be involved with some kind of utterance either verbally or metaphorically. However, *dao* as in (15) can follow a verb *xie* 'write' which is not related to an actual utterance,

SDNJ

- (14) lao ren da **yue** wu fei ren ye.  
old man answer **YUE** I not human PART  
'The old man answers "I am not a human."'

- (15) jian shang xie **dao** Gushu cheng ren.  
book on write **DAO** Gushu city people  
'It is written in the book "The people inside the City of Gushu..."'

BYZLT

- (16) zhuren chi le yi jing lianmang wen **dao** zuo shenme.  
master eat ASP one surprise right-away ask **DAO** do what  
'The master was surprised and immediately asked "What do you want?"'

- (17) Xu Xuan jiao **dao** que shi ku ye.  
Xu Xuan yell **DAO** yet be bad PART  
'Xu Xuan yells "My goodness."'

HLM

- (18) Bao Yu xiao wen **dao** Shenxian jiejie.  
Bao Yu laugh ask **DAO** angel sister  
'Bao Yu laughs and asks "Sister angel!"'

1.2.3. As Complementizers After Another Saying Verb

Paralleling example (3) at stage one, in (19) to (22), when *yue* or *dao* functions as a complementizer and introduces a sentential complement, it occurs following another verb of saying *yan* or *shuo*. Again, since two adjacent verbs of saying are redundant and unnecessary, it turns out that the two items have different functions: the first verb *yan* or *shuo* has a lexical function and serves as a main verb in the main clause whereas the second verb *yue* or *dao* has a grammatical function and serves as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement.

SDNJ

- (19) you ren kou chuan yan **yue** Ji Lun jiu wu ze ge.  
there-is someone knock boat say **YUE** Ji Lun save me PART PART  
'Someone knocked on the boat and said "Ji Lun, help me."'

- (20) na laoer shuo **dao** laohan shi Song Gong dian cha de.  
that old-man say **DAO** old-guy be Song Officer order tea PART  
'That old man said "I am the tea server for Officer Song."'

BYZLT

- (21) si dui Zhang zhuguan shuo **dao** women dou yao heqi.  
privately to Zhang boss say **DAO** we all need friendly  
'...Privately talks to Mr. Zhang, the boss, "We all have to be friendly."'

HLM

- (22) Yu Chun banri shuo **dao** yi ni zhenme zuo.  
Yu Chun half-day say **DAO** depend you how do  
'After a while, Yu Chun says "What will you do?"'

1.2.4. As Complementizers After Cognitive Verbs

At the later stage, a complementizer has extended its domain to occur not only with saying and informative verbs, but also with cognitive verbs.

As illustrated in (23) to (26), *dao* in these sentences should be analyzed as a complementizer for two reasons: First, *dao* has lost its literal meaning of 'say' in that the sentential complement expresses what the subject has thought instead of what s/he has verbally said. Further evidence comes from an example (24) in which the context such as 'did not open his mouth but contemplated in his mind' strongly implies that no utterance is involved. As for the cognitive verbs preceding a complementizer, only *xunsi* 'think', *siliang* 'think' or *sichun* 'contemplate' are found in all of these works.

SDNJ

- (23) Lu Zhu zi si **dao** zhangfu bei ta wuhai xingming.  
Lu Zhu herself think **DAO** husband PASS s/he harm life  
'Lu Zhu herself thinks "My husband was killed by him."'

- (24) Song Si Gong kou li bu shuo, du li siliang **dao** Zhao Zheng shou gao si wuo...

Song-si-gong mouth inside not say stomach inside  
contemplate **DAO** Zhao Zheng hand skillful like me  
'Mister Song did not open his mouth but contemplated in his mind  
" Zhao Zheng is as skillful as me ...."

BYZLT

- (25) Xu Xuan xunsi **dao** wo ye wen ta yi wen.  
Xu Xuan contemplate **DAO** I also ask him/her one ask  
'Xu Xuan contemplates "Let me ask him/her."'

HLM

- (26) Bao Yu xiang **dao** zhe ge difang youqu.  
Bao Yu think **DAO** this CL place interesting  
'Bao Yu thinks "This is an interesting place."'

### 1.3. Optional complementizers

Other evidence for analyzing *dao* as a complementizer is that *dao* in these contexts is optional. As shown in (27) to (30), in these examples a sentential complement is directly introduced by an informative verb such as *wen* 'ask' or *jiao* 'call', or a cognitive verb such as *xunsi* 'contemplate' or *xiang* 'think'. .

SDNJ

- (27) Wang Xiu you **wen** shifu zhe kezhang gao xing.  
Wang Xiu again **ask** master this guest Polite last-name  
'Wang Xiu asks his master again "May I have your last name?"'

- (28) zhi ting de you ren **jiao** Zhao er guanren.  
only hear PART there-is someone **call** Zhao two officer  
'(I) only heard someone called "Officer Zhao ..."'

BYZLT

- (29) Xu Xuan ziji **xunsi** zhen ge hao yi duan yinyuan.  
Xu Xuan self **contemplate** really CL good one CL marriage  
'Xu Xuan himself contemplates "It's really a good marriage. "'

HLM

- (30) Dai Yu xin **xiang** zhe ge Bao Yu bu zhi shi zenyang ge pilan...  
Dai Yu heart **think** this CL Bao Yu not know be how CL lazy  
'Dai Yu thinks in her mind "I do not know how lazy this Bao Yu...."'

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Table (2) Frequency of Verbs before a Complementizer (Tang to Qing Dynasties)

Dynasty	Tang dyn.		Song dyn.		Ming dyn.		Qing dyn.	
Time	7 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> cent.		10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> cent.		14 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> cent.		17 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> cent.	
Utterance verbs	yan, yue		yan, yue, dao		yan, dao		shuo, dao	
Complementizer	yan, yue		yan, yue, dao		dao		Dao	
Frequency	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%
Saying verbs	7	9.6	7	19.4	7	16.6	4	17.4
Informative verbs	66	90.4	23	64.0	30	71.4	12	52.2
Cognitive verbs	0	0.0	6	16.6	5	12.2	7	30.4

## 2. Verbs of Saying in Modern Chinese Dialects

In the remainder of the discussion I will use some data from Modern Taiwan Mandarin, Taiwanese, a Southern Min dialect spoken in Taiwan and Cantonese, to demonstrate the grammatical status of different uses of verbs of saying in Modern Chinese. There are several sources for the data for verbs of saying. The data in Taiwan Mandarin is collected from Taiwan's Electrical Mails News-Group Chat (BBS) in 1997. I have also used two books, one is entitled *Bixu Ying de Ren* [You have to Win] by Ji-Gao Zhang, and the other one is entitled *Chutou Kaogu Xuejia de Zaji* [An Archaeologist with a Hoe: A Note of Liji's life as a Scholar] by Guang-Muo Li. Some data in Taiwanese is collected from *Taiyu Quwei Xuanji* [Selection of Humor and Jokes in Taiwanese] edited by Robert Cheng. The data in Cantonese is primarily elicited from a native speaker of Hong Kong Cantonese, named K. C. Ma. She is from Hong Kong and is currently a graduate student in the Art department at the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

### 2.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'

As shown in (31) to (32), when Mandarin *shuo* serves as an utterance verb meaning 'say', it can be marked for aspect such as *le*, *zai* or *guo* as the full verbs and retains the literal meaning of 'say'.

#### Mandarin

- (31) Xianqian **shuo** le na zhong hua, shi ho you shuo  
previously **say** ASP that kind word afterwards again say  
'has previously said that kind of words and afterwards said that ... '
- (32) Ni zai **shuo** nimen xuexiao wo.  
You ASP **say** your school PART  
'Are you talking about your school?'

Paralleling Mandarin *shuo* 'say', Taiwanese *kong* and Cantonese *wa* 'say' as in examples (33) to (36) can serve as an utterance verb marked by aspect markers as full verbs and retain the literal meaning of 'say'.

Taiwanese

- (33) I m bat **kong** koe petshat oe.  
he NEG used-to **say** ASP lie word  
'He has never told a lie.'
- (34) Hakseng **kong**: 'm si goa m si goa ... '  
student **say** NEG be me NEG be me  
'A student said, "It is not me, it is not me ... "'

Cantonese

- (35) Ngo mou **wa** kwo.  
I NEG **say** ASP  
'I have never said so.'
- (36) Khue **wa** khui m sik wo.  
he **say** he NEG know PART  
'He said he did not know...'

2.2. As Cognitive Verbs Meaning 'think'

Mandarin *shuo*, as in (37) and (38), Taiwanese *kong* in (39) and (40) and Cantonese *wa* in (41) have all evolved into a cognitive verb with an abstract reading meaning 'to think' (Liu 1986; Meng 1982). On the basis of examples (37) to (41), Mandarin *shuo*, Taiwanese *kong* and Cantonese *wa* introducing a sentential complement should not be analyzed as utterance verbs meaning 'to say', but should be analyzed as cognitive verbs meaning 'to think' because the subject *you* or *I* does not verbally say anything. Instead, the reading of this sentence indicates that the speaker has assumed that what is introduced by *shuo* expresses the thought of the subject.

Mandarin

- (37) Yexu ni hui **shuo** Taiwan yi zhongxiao qiye wei zhu.  
maybe you will **think** Taiwan take middle small company as primary  
'Maybe you will think that the majorities of business corporations are primarily small businesses in Taiwan.'
- (38) Ni **shuo** ta congming ma?  
you **think** he smart Q  
'Do you think he is smart?'

Taiwanese

- (39) Li **kong** goa au lepai khi Taipak ho m ho?  
you **think** I later week go Taipei good NEG good  
'Do you think it is okay for me to go to Taipei next week?'

- (40) Goa **kong** li mai khi kha ho.  
I **think** you NEG go more good  
'I think you had better not go.'

Cantonese

- (41) Ngo **wa** dou m ji hai m hai keui tao ga je.  
I **think** all NEG know COP NEG COP he steal PART PART  
'I think I do not know whether he stole (it) or not.'  
(example from Chui 1994)

### 2.3. As Complementizers Following Saying and Informative Verbs

In examples (42) to (44), Mandarin *shuo*, Taiwanese *kong* and Cantonese *wa* have all evolved into complementizers introducing a sentential complement when they are preceded by an informative verb such as *ask* or *answer*. In these examples, *shuo*, *kong* and *wa* can neither be marked for aspect nor retain the literal meaning of 'say'. Similarly, the embedded sentence in these sentences indirectly expresses what the subject in the main clause has asked or answered. In addition, sentences, *shuo*, *kong* and *wa* in these sentences are all optional occurrences. Thus they should be analyzed as complementizers instead of utterance verbs.

Mandarin

- (42) Li Ji huida **shuo** (\*le) meiyou ...  
Li Ji answer **SHUO** (\*ASP) NEG  
'Li Ji answers "NO".'

Taiwanese

- (43) Ising huitap **kong** (\*goe) : 'tsiN to ai tsunbi ho.'  
doctor answer **KONG** (\*ASP) money all must prepare in-hand  
'The doctor answers (that), "The money must be in hand."  
(example from Cheng 1993)

Cantonese

- (44) John man ngo **wa** (\*kwo) nisyu yau bouji.  
John ask me **WA** where have newspaper  
'John asks me where the newspaper is.'

### 2.4. As Complementizers Following Cognitive Verbs

In these modern dialects, Mandarin *shuo*, Taiwanese *kong* and Cantonese *wa* as complementizers can follow a cognitive verb other than *think*.

For instance, in (45) *shuo* as a complementizer follows *xiang* 'think' and in (46) it follows *guji* 'estimate'. In (47) and (48) in Taiwanese, *kong* as a complementizer follows *siuN* 'think' and *sionsin* 'believe'. In (49) and (50) in Cantonese, *wa* follows *soeng* 'think' and *tsitou* 'know'. For the same token, the embedded sentence in these examples indicates what has been thought, estimated, believed or known by the subject in the main clause. Again, *shuo*,

*kong* or *wa* in these sentences is an optional occurrence, thus it is a complementizer instead of a verb.

Mandarin

- (45) Benlai hai xiang **shuo** (\*le) ruguo ta jiang koshi de shiqing.  
originally still think **SHUO** (\*ASP) if he OM oral-test POSS thing  
'Originally (I) still thought that if he handles the oral tests ... '
- (46) Hai you yi zhong guji **shuo** (\*le) keneng yu shou yi wei tongxiang ...  
still there-is one CL estimate **SHUO** (\*ASP) maybe there-is accept one  
CL people-from-the same county  
'It was estimated that it might relate to someone from the same county ... '

Taiwanese

- (47) Hit le lang siuN **kong** (\*koe) : 'nasi edang o tiu than tsiN e honghoa ... '  
that CL someone think **KONG** (\*ASP) if be-able learn ASP earn money  
POSS way  
'That man thinks (that), "If (I) can learn the ways to make money ... "'
- (48) Goa sionsin **kong** (\*koe) I iteng bo phien goa.  
I believe **KONG** (\*ASP) he must NEG lie I  
'I believe that he did not lie to me.'

Cantonese

- (49) Ngo soeng **wa** (\*kwo) tse nei ke tinwa ta jat ha, tak ma?  
I think **WA** (\*ASP) borrow you POSS telephone dial one CL O.K. Q  
'I think that I'd like to borrow your phone, may I?'
- (50) John tsitou **wa** (\*kwo) Mary hai Meihgwok laiH ge.  
John know **WA** (\*ASP) Mary be America come PART  
'John knows that Mary is from America.'

2.5. Taiwanese *Kong* as a Sentence-Final Particle

Taiwanese *kong* as in (51) has also evolved into a sentence-final particle which has no parallels in Mandarin and Cantonese. This *kong* as a sentence-final particle can only occur in declarative or imperative sentences but never in interrogative ones (Chen 1989).

- (51) A Tiong si Taipak lang **kong**.  
A Tiong be Taipei person **PART**  
'A Tiong is from Taipei.'

3. Discussion

In classical Chinese, I showed that at the first stage, the complementizers only occur with saying, or informative verbs, but NEVER with cognitive verbs. At the

later stage, a complementizer has extended its domain to occur not only with saying and informative verbs, but also with cognitive verbs. As for the cognitive verbs preceding a complementizer, only *xunsi* 'think', *siliang* 'think' and *sichun* 'contemplate' are found in all of these works.

However, in Modern Taiwan Mandarin, Taiwanese and Cantonese, a complementizer evolving from a saying verb can occur with other cognitive verbs like know, believe, decide or agree. Consequently, the historical development of reported speech in Chinese fulfills Givon's (1980) hypothesis.

#### Abbreviation

ASP	Aspect
CL	Classifier
COP	Copular
PART	Particle
POSS	Possessive
Q	Question

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