

## The Grammaticalization of *Khuann* in Taiwanese Southern Min

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This paper examines the syntactic and semantic changes of *khuann*, a verb of visual perception, in Taiwanese Southern Min (henceforth TSM). It basically undergoes a change in semantic domain from visual perception to cognition. As a result of grammaticalization, *khuann* even takes on a range of functions featuring a complementizer, a tentative marker or a marker of protasis in a conditional.

The core meaning of *khuann* is ‘to watch (an object)’, as in *i le khuann hong keng* ‘he was sightseeing’, which shows the visual perception as one of the five senses. Traugott (1989) proposes that changes of meanings will lead to the internal described situation, and *khuann* in TSM is a case in point. There exists, for example, a change of semantic domain from perception based on the external described situation to cognition based on an internal described situation, as in *khuann cheng heng chia kuat teng* ‘only when knowing the situation can I make the decision’ where *khuann* can be construed as a marker of protasis in a conditional. Cheng (1989) shows that the sentence-initial *khuann* can act as a complementizer as (1) shows. The syntactic function of *khuann* is to link the previous proposition and the following one and it underscores the speaker’s evaluation.

- (1)        *khuann li i-au kam ko bo tai-chi tio ma lang bo*  
           watch you after dare again not matter then scold person no  
           ‘By my judgment, you would not dare to scold others again without reasons.’

The frozen expression *khuann mai* can induce the meaning ‘try to do a little bit in a short duration.’ *Khuann mai* can be a tentative marker when occurring in the sentence-final position in a mild hortative sentence, as in (2).

- (2)        *li khi ban chi pe lai hoo gua chia khuann mai*  
           you go pick one handful come give I eat watch search  
           ‘You pick a handful of (litchi) for me to try the flavor of it.’

The finding of this paper shows that in the process of grammaticalization, the old form (as a verb) and the new forms (as a complementizer or a particle) of *khuann* co-exist in synchronic state explainable in terms of the principles of grammaticalization proposed by Hopper (1996). And *Khuann* in different syntactic positions exhibits the distinct syntactic and semantic changes in the process of grammaticalization.

### References

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