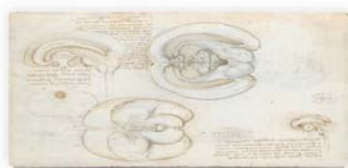


Second language semasiology SLS:

The case of the Mandarin sentence final particle 吧 *ba*

Dr. Vittorio Tantucci
C87 County South
English Language and Linguistics
Lancaster University



Main points of discussion...

- Semasiology in historical linguistics
- Second language semasiology SLS
- The sentence final 吧 *ba* as a case study of SLS
- Conclusions

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Semasiology

- Semasiology regards the formation of polysemies and usages of a construction through time, that is:

Given the form–meaning pair L (lexeme) what changes did meaning M of L undergo? (Geeraerts, 1997).

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Semasiology

- The semasiological model (cf. Traugott & Dasher, 2002: 25):

$$L \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{Form} \\ M_1 \end{bmatrix} > L \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{Form} \\ M_1 + M_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

- Unidirectional clines of change are observed cross-linguistically (i.e. Briton & Traugott 2005; Traugott & Trousdale 2013; Tantucci 2013, 2015)

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Examples of semasiological change

- The polysemy of *as long as*:
'equal in length' → 'equal in time' → 'provided that'.
- The polysemy of *even*:
'evenly' → 'unexpected member of set of alternatives'.
(cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002:25; see also Brinton & Traugott, 2005).

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The semasiology of 干嘛 *ganma*:

- Composed by the verb 干 *gàn* 'to do' and the end-sentence emphatic modal particle 嘛 *ma* (cf. Lü, 1999; Shen, 2003; Qiang, 2007, 2008):

你 来 京 干 么?

nǐ lái jīng gàn me?

you come Beijing do what/INT-PART¹¹

'What are you doing here in Beijing?'

(Qīng 1644-1911 – *Guānchǎng xiànxíngjì* [PKU-CCL])

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The semasiology of 干嘛 *ganma*

- During the 民国 *Mínguó* period (1912–1949), 干嘛 starts to appear in a preverbal position with a new rhetorical interrogative function: *Why would you P?*

你 那 院 里 衣 食 丰 足 ， 干 吗 在 这 里 受 穷 [...] ?
 nǐ nà yuàn lǐ yīshí fēngzú, gānma zài zhèlǐ shòuqióng
 you that courtyard in clothes&food abundant ganma stay here be-poor
 'You would have plenty of clothes and food in that courtyard, why are you staying here and living in poverty?'
 (Mínguó 1912–1949 – *Gǔjīnqínghǎi* [PKU-CCL])

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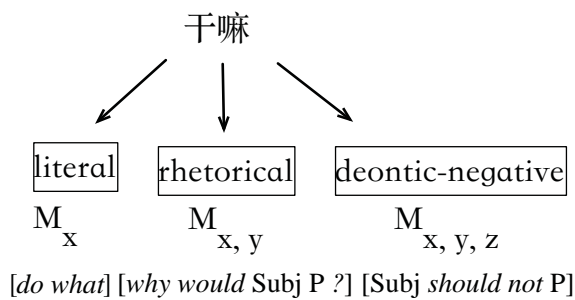
The semasiology of 干嘛 *ganma*

- Since the 1950s, 干嘛 starts to appear in declarative sentences (before then it could only be used in interrogatives) and with first person (generally plural) pronouns:

有 的 同 志 说 ， 我 们 刚 过 上 点 好 日 子 ， 干 嘛 要 去
 yǒu de tóngzhì shuō, wǒmen gāng guòshàng diǎn hǎo rìzi, gānma yào qù
 exist PART¹³ comrade say, we just pass-through bit good day, ganma want go
 冒 这 个 风 险 。
 mào zhè ge fēngxiǎn.
 take this CLAS¹⁴ risk.
 'Some comrades say, we've just had a decent day, we shouldn't go and take such a risk.'

(1995 – *People's Daily* [PKU-CCL])

The polysemy of 干嘛



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What about the SLA of 干嘛?

- From the new 1.200.000 tokens corpus of L2 Mandarin Chinese CLC (cf. Brezina & Xu forthcoming), 初级 *chūjí* 'beginners' section:

file2662113
 你 们 去 美 国 ， 你 们 去 英 国 ， 干 ， 干 嘛 ？ 干 嘛 ？
 nǐmen qù měiguó, nǐmen qù yīngguó, gān, gānma? gānma?
 You go USA you go UK do do what? do what?
 'You go to USA, you go to UK, and then what do you do? What do you do?'

file2662113
 我 们 大 学 毕 业 了 ， 英 语 ， 英 语 ， 英 语 能 干 嘛 ， 做 什 么 ？
 wǒmen dàxué bìyè le, yīngyǔ, yīngyǔ, yīngyǔ néng gānma, zuò shénme
 we uni. graduate PF English English English can do-what do what
 'After graduating from university, English, English English, (we) can do what? Do what?'

What about the SLS of 干嘛?

- The aim of a SLS of 干嘛 would then to see if a unidirectional cline of acquisition of M_y and M_z can be observed in subsequent 中级 *zhōngjí* 'intermediate' and 高级 *gāojí* 'advanced' stages.
- If not, why?

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The case study of the sentence-final particle 吧 *ba*

- The sentence-final 吧 *ba* is described either as a 'marker of uncertainty' (Shie 1991), to 'solicit agreement' (Li & Thompson 1981; Xu 2007).
- Lan (2004) proposes a cline of grammaticalization from a main verb function, to one of a perfect, to the one of a mood marker.
- In Qi (2002) the mood development of 吧 *ba* goes from **directive** → (neg.) interrogative → **DM function**.

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Usages of 吧 *ba*: natives vs 初级 *chūjí* 'beginners'

	directive	(neg.) interrog.	epistemic	DM	Tot
初级	48	33	30	0	151
Native	8	82	40	53	183

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DM function yet to be acquired

初级 -directive

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明天 一起 去 银行 吧
míngtiān yìqǐ qù yínháng ba!
tomorrow together go bank DIR
'Let's go to the bank tomorrow!'

Native speakers-DM (topic introducer)

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那, 换 个 说法 吧, 就是 你 觉得 就是 在 你 人生 当中...
nà, huàn ge shuōfǎ ba, jiùshì nǐ juéde jiùshì zài nǐ rénshēng dāngzhōng...
then, change CLAS saying DM, that-is you think that-is in you life amid
'Ok, then let's put it in another way, you think that in your life...'

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Conclusions

- The new usage-based approach of SLS aims at discovering cognitive similarities and mismatches between historical language innovation and second language acquisition (SLA).
- SLS is statistically measurable and can give important clues as to whether both language-specific and universal clines of language acquisition can be observed and generalized.

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