Directional Constructions in Taiwanese

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1. Introduction

This paper attempts to describe the semantic and syntactic features of directional constructions in Taiwanese.

By a directional construction we mean a syntactic construction that denotes the movement of an object (animate and inanimate, an agent or a patient) from one L(ocation)1 at T(ime)1, to L2 at T2. By Taiwanese we mean the southern Min variety of Chinese[1] that is spoken by more than 80 percent of the population of Taiwan. Being descriptive in nature, this paper will not make any reference to the simmilarities and differences between Taiwanese directional constructions and those of other varieties of Southern Min. Some references will be made, however, to those in Mandarin because that is the variety of Chinese for which there are descriptions of directional constructions[2].

Taiwanese is similar to other varieties of Chinese in that it expresses direction in two parts of the sentence: the verb complex and the coverb phrase. A verb complex consists of one, two, or three verbs, as in *lâi* 'come', *thèh-khi* 'take it thither' and *thèh-chhut-khì* 'take it out', respectively[3]. A coverb phrase of

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1. For a description of the variety of Amoy Min spoken in Malaysia see Bodman (1955, 1958). For a general description of Taiwanese syntax see Cheng (1982).
2. See Chao (1968), Teng (1975), Lu (1977) for descriptions of directional constructions in Mandarin.
3. Taiwanese forms are given in the romanisation that has been most widely used in Taiwan. For its description see Cheng, R. and Cheng, S. (1977). Nasalized vowels, however, which are usually indicated by a raised "n", are indicated by a "*" in this paper.

direction consists of a coverb and a locative noun phrase, as in *tuì hȧk-hāu* 'from school or toward school', *kàu hȧk-hāu* 'arrive at school', *lài hȧk-hāu* 'come to school', or *kàu o. – pang chia* 'to the blackboard here'. How these two basic elements appear in the sentence will be discussed in Section 2, The Basic Directional Constructions.

Taiwanese shares several semantic and syntactic characteristics with the rest of the Chinese language family, features that set this language family apart from other language families such as Indo-European and Altaic. Taiwanese exhibits these family traits even more strongly, in fact, than Mandarin.

Verbs denoting direction are not clearly distinguishable by their form and by their syntactic behavior from case markers denoting direction. In Mandarin thet distinction between a verb and a coverb is occasionally blurred in the sense tha a coverb (or preposition, as it is sometimes called) can also be used as a verb in certain contexts. In Taiwanese, while this is also true, the same words in the same context may be regarded also as a coverb or a verb, or both. In Mandarin only a coverb or a verb can appear between the main verb and a locational noun, as in (a) and (b).

(a) Tsǒu tào wàimièn lái

walk–to–outside–come

走到外面來

walk outside here.

(b) Tsǒu húi hsüéhhsiào ch'ü le

walk–return–school–go

走回學校去了

(He) walked back to school there.

In Taiwanese a succession of three or even four verbs and coverbs can occur, as shown below.

(c) Kiâ* chhut–lâi gōa–bīn

walk–exit–come–outside

行出來外面〔走到外面來〕

Walk out here!

(d)　Kiâ* lâi kàu tī gōa-bīn

walk–come–reach–at–outside

行來到於外面〔走到外面來〕

(He) walked out (and he is outside).

(e)　Lán kiâ* chhut-lâi-khì kàu gōa-kháu

We(inclusive) walk-exit-come-go-arrive-outside

〔咱行出來去到外口〔咱們走到外面去吧〕

Let's walk (until we are) outside.

(f)　I pê lỏh khì kàu tī ē-kha

he-crawled-descend-go-arrive-at-bottom

伊爬落去到於下腳〔他爬到下面去了〕

He crawled down (and now he is at the bottom).

In Mandarin there seems to be general agreement that *tao waimien lai* 'come to outside hither' is a complement consisting of the coverb phrase *tao waimien* 'to outside'.　In Taiwanese sentences (c) through (f) determining what are coverbs and what are verbs is a problem that can not be solved easily.

Taiwanese and Mandarin also share the richness of information piled up in the complement portion of resultative constructions (V–R).　In a V–R construction the main verb (V) denotes the effort action and the complement (R) the aimed consequence.　Taiwanese shows, however, much richer contrasts in the complement. After the main verb, several verbs or coverbs can occur, each with its own denotation, as can be seen in examples (c)–(f) above.

Another feature of Chinese languages is that information concerning the direction of movement of the intransitive subject or transitive object with regard to the speaker, is obligatory in many contexts.　Such a grammatical requirement is essentially comparable to the requirement in English that there be an overt indication of the temporal relation of the main predicate event with respect to the time of the speech event (i. e. , tense)···a requirement that may sound illogical to speakers of other languages.

Direction with respect to the speaker's location is expressed by the verbs *khì* 'go' and *lâi* 'come', each of which can appear as either a main verb or as part of a complement, and by *chia* 'here' and *hia* 'there', words which function to make a non–locative noun into a locative one. Thus in English one can say,

(g) Move it to the school!

without indicating the direction of the movement with respect to the speaker. In Taiwanese, and probable in most other varieties of Chinese, such information is obligatory.

(h) Poa* lâi hȧk–hāu

　　move–come–school

　　搬來學校〔搬到學校來〕

　　Please move it to the school (here).

(i) Poa* khí hȧk–hāu

　　move–go–school

　　搬去學校〔搬到學校去〕

　　Move it to the school (there).

If one compares Taiwanese and Peking Mandarin, one finds that the verbs 'come' and 'go' appear more frequently in Taiwanese than in Mandarin, as they can occur directly before the locative noun, and are often replaced by Mandarin *tào* 'to' or *shàng* 'go to'.

In English a non–locative noun can occur as the object of the prepositions 'from' or 'to'. In Taiwanese, *chia* 'here' or *hia* 'there' is required to make the noun locative. Thus, even if *lâi* 'come' or *khì* 'go' is not used, the two locative formatives will indicate whether a movement is toward the speaker (i. e., *chia* 'here, or a place near the speaker') or away from the speaker (i. e., *hia* 'there, or a place away from the speaker'). Thus, an English sentence like

(j) Move it to the blackboard (till it reaches the blackboard) is translated by either (d) or (e).

(k) Poa* kàu o.–pang chia

　　move–reach–blackboard–here

　　搬到烏板這仔〔搬到黑板這裏〕

Move it to the blackboard here.

Move it till it reaches the blackboard here.

(1)   Poa* kàu o. –pang hia

move–reach–blackboard–there

搬到烏板彼仔〔搬到黑板那裏〕

Move it to the blackboard there.

Move it till it reaches the blackboard there.

There are three more special features of Taiwanese that are not shared by Mandarin. Two of these features have something to do with the general tendency of Taiwanese to express richer constrast in directional complements. These features are: (1) the ability to focus directional complements through the use of certain modal and temporal expressions, (2) the ability of directional complements to express gradable qualities, and (3) the ability for the main verb to be part of a manner adverbial phrase. These three features will be discussed in Sections (3), (4), and (5), respectively.

2.   Basic Directional Constructions

For convenience of presentation, directional constructions are divided into two types here: those that express a destination (marked by *lài* 'come to', *khì* 'go to', or *kàu* 'arrive at' and those that express a location merely as a reference point of direction and not as a destination to be arrived at (marked by *ǹg* 向 'toward' or its variants *tùi* 對, *ùi* 對, *àn* 按). Both types may include a point of origin marked by *tùi* 對 'from' (which is in free variation with *ùi* 對, *àn* 按).

Unlike English and earlier Chinese, in which both the point of origin and the destination appear after the main verb, the ordering of these elements in Taiwanese (and in Mandarin as well) follows the temporal sequence of their reference[4]. The 'from' phrase (which denotes the location of the locomotive object prior to the execution of the verb action) is placed before the verb, whereas the 'to' phrase (which denotes the location of the locomotive object as a result

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4.   See Tai (MS).

of the verb action) is placed after the verb (see 2. 1). As for the 'toward' phrase, either position is possible, however there is a tendency to place it after the verb. Where there is a 'from' phrase, however, it must be placed after the verb (see 2. 2).

2. 1 Locomotion Specifying Destination

These directional constructions are divided into two types: (1) those using intransitive verbs, and (2) those which use transitive verbs. The former denote the locomotion of the subject, the latter denotes that of the object of the verb.

2. 1. 1 The Subject of an Intransitive Verb as the Locomoting Object

The major basic combinations of the main verb complex and the coverb phrase, which together denote a paricular type of locomotion, are listed below.

PT1   S (tùi PL) V1 kàu (tĭ) PL

PT2   S (tùi PL) (V1) (V2) V3

PT3   S (tùi PL) (V1) (V2) V3 PL

PT4   S (tùi PL) (V1) (V2) V3 kàu PL

PT5   S (tùi PL) (V1) (V2) V3 tĭ PL

PT6   S (tùi PL) (V1) (V2) V3 kàu tĭ PL

PT7   (tuùi) PL (V1) (V2) V3 S

Notes   S=Subject

        PL=Place word, or locative expression

        kàu 到= 'arrive at'

        tĭ 於= 'at' 'to be at'

        V1=main verb

        V2=*khí* 起 'ascend', *lòh* 落 'descend', *chhut* 出, *jip* 入 'enter', *tńg* 轉 'return', *kòe* 過 'cross over', *óa* 依 'close', *khui* 開 'away'.

        V3=khì 去 'go', lâi 來 'come'

Examples

PT 1

    a.   I (tùi lāi-bĭn) kiâ* kàu gōa-kháu
        she-(from-inside)–walk–till–outside

伊（對內面）行到外口〔他（從裏頭）走到外頭〕

She walked (from the inside to the) outside.

PT 2

a. I (tùi lāi-bīn) kiâ*-chhut-lâi

she-(from-inside)-walk-exit-come

伊（對內面）行出來〔他（從裏頭）走出來〕

She walked out (from inside).

PT 3

a. I (tùi lāi-bīn) kiâ* tńg-lâi gōa-kháu

she-(from-inside)-walk-return-come-outside

伊（對內面）行轉來外口〔他（從裏頭）走回外頭來〕

She walked back outside (from inside).

PT 4

a. I (tùi lāi-bīn) kiâ* tńg-lâi kàu gōa-kháu

she-(from-inside)-walk-come-outside

伊（對內面）行來到外口〔他（從裏頭）走到外頭來〕

She walked outside (from inside).

PT 5

a. I (tùi Tiong-Kok) (tńg) lâi tī Bí-Kok

she-(from-China)-return-come-(to)-(at)-America

伊（對中國）（轉）來於美國〔他（從中國）回到美國來〕

She came (back) to America (from China).

PT 6

a. I (tùi Tiong-Kok) lâi kàu tī Bí-Kok

she-(from-China)-to-come(to)-(at)-America

伊（對中國）來到於美國〔他（從中國）到美國來〕

She came to America (from China).

PT 7

a. (Tùi) chhù-laī cháu-chhut-lâi chit-ê se*-hūn-lâng

(from)-house in-run-ezit-come-ome-M-stranger

對厝內走出來一個生分人〔（從）屋裏跑出來一個陌生人〕

From inside the house there ran out a stranger.

One special feature of Tw is the possibility of using the directional verb complex (V1 V2 V3) before a place word. (e. g., PTs 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12). Moreover, either or both the directional preposition *kàu* 'to', 'up to', 'until', 'arrive at' and the locational preposition *tī* 'at', 'in', 'on' can occur between the directional verb complex and the place word. The presence of *kàu* is an indication of the arrival of the subject at the location specified by the place word. The use of *tī*, on the other hand, is a signal of an emphasis on the presence of the subject at the location. Compare the following examples and note the shifts of meaning which result from the absence or presence of *kàu* and/or *tī*.

(8) a. I kiâ*-tńg-lâi gōa-kháu.

伊行轉來外口〔他走回外頭來〕

He walked back outside (hiter)

   b. I kiâ*-tńg-lâi kàu gōa-kháu.

伊行轉來到外口〔他走回外頭來〕

He walked back (hither) until he arrived outside.

   c. I kiâ*-tńg-lâi tī góa-kháu.

伊行轉來於外口〔他走到外頭來〕

He walked back (hither) and now he is outside.

   d. I kiâ*-tńg-lâi kàu tī gōa-kháu.

伊行轉來到於外口〔他走回外頭來〕

He walked back (hither) outside and he is now outside.

In a clause with injunctive meaning (i. e., future action) *tī* 'at' has to be replaced by *tiàm* (or *tàm*, *tòa*) 'onto'.

(8) e. Chhiá* lí the'h chhut lâi tiàm chia.

please-you-take-exit-come-onto-here

請你提出來店這仔〔請你拿到這裏來〕

Please bring it over here.

f.　I siū*–beh kiâ*–chhut–lâi–tiàm gōa–kháu.

he–think of–walk–exit–come–onto–outside

伊想欲行出來店外口〔他想要走到外面來〕

He was thinking of walking outside.

Tiàm 店 'onto' cannot be used when *kàu* 到 'arrive at' is presented. Note that *kàu* 'up to', *tiàm* 'onto', or *tī* 'at' cannot occur without a place word, whereas the directional verb complex (V1 V2 V3) can. Thus the *gōa-kháu* 'outside' can be omitted in (a) but not in (b), (c), and (d). For this reason we regard *kàu* 'until' and *tī* 'at' as coverbs or prepositions, but *lâi* 'to', 'hither', and *khì* 'to', 'thither' as part of the directional complement in (b), (c), and (d). As for the *lâi* in (a), it can be regarded as a part of both the verb complement and the coverb.

With PT 7, the inverted subject has to be an indefinite noun. It is a pattern that is used frequently when the speaker wants to present it as new information in particular.

Note that V3 is obligatory except in PT 1 where *kàu* is presented.

2.1.2　*With the Object of a Transitive Main Verb as the Locomoted Object*

PT 9　S (chiong) O (kā) V1 kàu (tī) PL

PT 10　S (chiong) O (kā) V1 (V2) V3

PT 11　S (chiong) O (kā) V1 (V2) V3 PL

PT 12　S (chiong) O (kā) V1 (V2) V3 (kàu) (tī) PL

PT 13　S V1 O *kàu* PL (V3)

PT 14　S V1 O (V2) V3

PT 15　S V1 O (V2) V3 (kàu) (tī) PL

Notes:　O＝Object

chiong 將 'disposal'

kā 共 'inflictive'

Examples

PT 9

a.　I chiong toh-á kā poa* kàu gōa-kháu.

he–take–table–inflictive–move–arrive–outside

伊將桌子共搬到外口〔他把桌子搬到外頭〕

He moved the table out.

PT 10

  a. I chiong toh–á kā poa*＝chhut–lâi.

he–take–table–inflictive–move–exit–come

桌將桌仔共搬出來〔他把桌子搬出來〕

He moved the table out here.

PT 11

  a. I chiong toh–à kā poa* chuut–lâi kàu gōa–kháu.

he–take–table–inflictive–move–exit–come–outside

伊將桌仔共搬出來外口〔他把桌子搬到外頭來〕

He moved the table out here.

PT 12

  a. I chiong toh–á kā poa* lâi (kàu) (tĭ) gōa–kháu.

he–take–table–inflictive–move–come–(arrive)–(at)–outside

伊將桌仔共搬來（到）（於）外口〔他把桌子搬到外頭來〕

He moved the table out here.

PT 13

  a. I poa* toh–á kàu gōa–kháu lâi.

he–more–table–to–outside–come

伊搬桌仔到外口來〔他搬桌子到外頭來〕

He moved the table out here.

PT 14

  a. I poa* toh–á chhut＝lâi.

he–move–table–exit–come

NB "＝" precedes syllables whose tonal contrasts are neutralized due
to weak stress.

伊搬桌仔出來〔他搬桌子出來〕

He moved the table out here.

PT 15

    a.   I poa* toh–á chhut–lâi (tī) gōa–kháu.

            he–move–table–exit–come–till–at–outside

            伊搬桌仔出來（於）外口〔他搬桌子出來〕

            He moved the table out here.

What has been said about the addition of *kàu* 'arrive; up to; until' or *tī* 'at' to intransitive verbs in 2.1.1 also applies here for transitive verbs. Note, however, that the place word describes the location of the object in these patterns and not that of the subject.

In each of these patterns it is possible to insert the coverb phrase *tuì* PL 'from' either before *chiong O* or after it as in sentences (16).

(16)   a.   I tùi lāi–bīn chiong toh–á kā poa*＝chhut–lâi

            he–from–inside–take–table–ka–move–out–thither

            伊對內面將桌仔共搬出來〔他從裏頭把桌子搬出來〕

            He moved the table out to this place from inside.

    b.   I chiong toh–á tùi lāi–bīn kā poa*＝chhut–lâi

            he–take–table–from–inside–ka–move–out–thither

            伊將桌仔對內面共搬出來〔他把桌子從裏頭搬出來〕

            He moved the table from inside to outside.

When the *chiong...kā* is not used it is possible to use V1 in front of the object as in Pattern 13, 14, and 15. The same V1, moreover, can be repeated after *V1 O* if *V1* O is old information.

2.2 *Locomotion Specifying Direction (ǹg 'toward') only*

This type of directional constructions of locomotion are divided into two sets, again on the basis of whether the main verb is transitive or intransitive.

2.2.1 *With an Intransitive Main Verb*

PT 17   S (tùi PL) ng PL V (V2) (V3)

PT 18   S (tùi PL) V1 ǹg/tùi PL (V2) V3

Examples

PT 17

    a.   I ng góa chia kiâ*=(chhut) lai.

        He–toward–I–here–walk–(exit)–come

        伊向我這仔行（出）來〔他向我這裏走（出）來〕

        He walked (out) towards me.

PT 18

    a.   I kiâ* tùi góa chia lâi.

        he–walk–toward–I–here–come

        伊行對我這仔來〔他向我這裏走來〕

        He walked towards me.

2.2.2 *With a Transitive Main Verb*

    PT 19   S (*siòng* or *ǹg*) (tùi) PL V1 O (V2) V3

    PT 20   S V1 O tùi PL (V2) V3

    PT 21   S (chiong) O (kā) tùi PL V1 (V2) V3

    PT 22   S (chiong) O (kā) V1 *tùi* PL (V2) V3

Examples

    PT 19

    a.   I siòng–tùi góa chia khian kiû kòe=lâi.

        he–aim–toward–me–here

        伊相對我這仔摔球過來〔他對著我把球扔過來〕

        He threw the ball at me.

    PT 20

    a.   I tìm chit–ki iân–pit tùi góa chia lâi.

        he–throw–one–M–pencil–toward–me–come

        伊擲一支鉛筆對我這仔來〔他對著我扔一支鉛筆過來〕

        He threw a pencil at me.

    PT 21

    a.   I chiong gín–á tùi góa chia tìm=lai.

        he–take–child–toward–I–here–throw

        伊將囝仔對我這擲來〔他把孩子朝著我這裏投過來〕

        He tossed the child over toward we.

    PT 22

a. I chiong chio̍h–thâu tìm tùi góa chia lâi.

    he–take–stone–throw–toward–I– here–come

    伊將石頭擲對我這來〔他把石頭投向我這兒來〕

    He threw the stone in my direction.

Tùi 'from' which always occurs preverbally, has the variants, *ùi* and *àn*, as stated before. Note that this same group of coverbs can denote 'toward' in a postverbal position. Problems of ambiguity arise when *tùi PL* occurs preverbally as in (23a).

(23) a. Tùi hia khì

      from/toward–there–go

      對彼仔去〔向著那裏去，從那裏去〕

      'Go there' or 'Go from there'.

Ambiguity is resolved when another place word occurs after the verb. In this case *àn* (or *tùi*, *ùi*) is read as 'from' because there should be no more than one coverb phrase that means *from PL* in the same clause. The one preceding the verb should be interpreted as a *from phrase*. Another clue is the combination of the directinal ending *khì* 'go; hither; go there' or *lâi* 'come; hither; come here', on the one hand, and *chia* 'here' or *hia* 'there', on the other.

    b. Tùi chia khì

      from/*toward–here–go

      對這仔去〔從這裏去〕

      Go (from here).

    c. Tùi hia lâi

      from/*toward–there–come

      對彼仔來〔從那裏來〕

      Come (from there).

    d. Tùi chia lâi

      *from/toward here come

      對這仔來〔向這裏來〕

      Come (toward) here. (i. e., Come this way)

Each of the four examples above has an intransitive main verb. A similar problem of ambiguity is also found in sentences where the main verb is a transitive verb. Likewise, a strategy similar to the one discussed above resolves the ambiguity.

e.　Tùi hia khian=khì.

　　from/toward–there–throw–hither

　　對彼仔摔去〔從那裏投去，向那裏投去〕

　　Throw it from there.　Throw it (toward) there.

f.　Tùi chia khian=khi.

　　from/*toward–here–throw–hither

　　對這仔摔去〔從這裏投去〕

　　Throw it there (from here).

g.　Tùi hia khian=lâi.

　　from/*toward–there–throw–hither

　　對彼仔摔來〔從那裏投來〕

　　Throw it here (form there).

h.　Tùi chia khian=lâi.

　　*from/toward–here–throw–hither

　　對這仔摔來〔向這裏投來〕

　　Throw it (toward) here.

3.　Focus on the Directional Complement by Modal and Temporal Expressions

In Taiwanese it is possible to focus directional complements by placing certain modal or temporal expressions immediately before them. A directional complement may be a directional verbal ending (V2 V3), a coverbal phrase (COV PL), or a combination of the two. The modal and temporal expressions that can focus directional complements are limited to the following[5]:

(24)　　$\bar{u}$ 有 'did'

5.　See Cheng (1974, 1979) for a more detailed discussion of the meaning of this construction and modal expressions.

bô 無 'did not'

ē, ē-tit, ē-tit-thang, ē-tàng 會得通，會當 'can'

bē, bē-tit, bē-tit-thang, bē-tàng 鱠得通 'cannot'

tih-beh 呸欲 'about to'

iáu-boē 猶未 'not yet'

Verbal Ending

(25) a. I poa* toh-á poa* bô chhut=khi.

he-move-table-move-did not-exit-go

伊搬桌仔搬無出去〔他沒有把桌子搬出去〕

He moved the table but did not move it out (side).

b. Góa pn̄g chia̍h bē lo̍h=khì.

I-rice-eat-cannot-down-go

我飯食鱠落去〔我飯吃不下去〕

I cannot swallow the rice.   I have no appetite.

c. I kiâ* bē-tit-thang ji̍p-lâi lāi-bīn.

he-walk-cannot-enter-come-inside

伊行鱠得通入來內面〔他不能走到裏頭來〕

He cannot walk inside (here).

d. Hit-pún chheh thó iāu-bōe tò-tńg=lâi leh.

that-M-book-ask-not yet-return-come-yet

彼本册討猶未轉來哩〔那本書還沒要回來〕

That book was requested but it has not yet been returned.

Coverbal Phrase Ending

e. Toh-á kā poa* ū kàu-ūi bo?

Table-ka-move-have-reach-place

桌仔共搬有到位無？〔你把桌子搬到了嗎？〕

Did you move the table until it arrived the place?

f. I io̍h-á thun iáu-bōe kàu bak-tó‧ chiū tn̄g-khùi.

he-drug-swallow-not yet-reach-stomach-then-die

伊藥仔吞猶未到腹肚就斷氣〔他藥還沒有吞到肚子裏就斷了氣〕

He died before the drug reached his stomach.

g. Lō· sī hn̄g kah kiâ* lóng bē-tit-thang kàu tè.

way-is-far-so that-walk-all-cannot-reach-the-place

路是遠到攏行獪得通到地〔路那麼遠我們怎麼走都走不到〕

The road was so far away that (we) could not reach it no matter
how we walked.

h. Hit-pún chheh góa thak iāu-bōe kàu chit-pòa* leh.

that-M-book-I-read-not yet-reach-one-half-still

彼本冊我讀猶未到一半哩〔那本書我還沒念到一半〕

I have not read halfway through the book yet.

Verbal Ending and Coverbal Phrase

i. Toh-á giâ tih-beh khì kàu gōa-kháu ah.

table-lift-about to-go-reach-outside-already

桌仔共迎呧欲去到外口啊〔桌子快搬到外面去了〕

The table has been moved and is almost ouside (there).

j. Chheh kià iáu-bōe khì kàu Bí-Kok leh.

book-mail-not yet-go-reach-America-still

冊寄猶未到美國哩〔書還沒寄到美國呢〕

The book was mailed but it has not reached America yet.

Focus on the complement is different from that on the whole verb phrase in two respects.

The speaker figures that the main verb is not new information at the time when the sentence is uttered. In other words, when the addressee is assumed to have knowledge about the effort denoted by the main verb, the modal or temporal expression is placed immediately before the complement to indicate that it is the complement that conveys the very information of interest for the addressee. Sentence (a) thus is appropriately said in response to an inquiry such as,

k. Góa to ū khòa* lâng teh poa* toh-á, ná-ē iáu-koh tī chia?

I-though-see-people-progressive-move-table-how come-still-at-here

我都有看人哪搬桌仔，哪會猶擱於這仔？〔我看見有人在搬桌子，怎麼還在這裏？〕

I saw people moving the table, but why is it still here?

One the other hand, if the addressee were to ask where the table is or what he did in the afternoon, then sentence (a1) and (a2), respectively, would be proper responses.

(25)　a1.　Toh-á i bô poa*=chhut-khì.

　　　　　table–he–did not–move–exit–go

　　　　　桌仔伊無搬出去〔桌子他沒有搬出去〕

　　　　　As for the table, he did not move it out (there)。

　　　a2.　I bô poa* toh-á chhut=khi.

　　　　　he–did not–move–table–exit–go

　　　　　伊無搬桌仔出去〔他沒有搬桌子出去〕

　　　　　He did not move the table out (there).

Another situation in which the complement is focused is when one wants to bring out the fact that despite the action denoted by the main verb (i. e., the effort), the aimed consequence denoted by the complement failed to be realized (bô), is yet to be realized (iáu-bōe), or is about to be realized (tih-beh). Sentence (d) thus unequivocally expresses the fact that the action of asking for the books return has been taken, but that despite this action, the book has not been returned. Sentence (d1), on the other hand, is noncommittal about the request. It is possible that the request for the return of the book has not been made at all.

(25)　d1.　Hit-pún chheh iáu-bōe thó tò-tńg-lâi leh.

　　　　　that–M–book–not yet–ask–return–come

　　　　　彼本冊猶未討轉來哩〔那本書還沒有要回來〕

　　　　　They have not yet requested the return of the book.

In an injunctive sentence the intended goal denoted by the complement can be focused by the causative marker hō. 'in order to; make; let; in order that; so as to make'.

(26)　a.　I toh-á siū*-beh kā poa* hō. chhut=khì.

he-table-want-inflictive-move-so as to make-exit-go

伊桌仔想欲共搬互出去〔他想把桌子搬出去〕

He wanted to move the table so that it would be outside.

b.　Pn̄g thun hō. loh=khi chiah kóng ōe.

rice-swallow-make-decend-go-then and only then-speak

飯吞互落去才講話〔把飯吞下去才說話〕

Speak only after you have swallowed the rice.

c.　Chheh kā theh-theh hō. chhut=khi.

book-inflictive-take-take-make-exit-go

册共提提互出去〔把書拿出去〕

Take the book out!

Note that without a subject, a sentence with *hō.*, as in (b) and (c) tends to be interpreted as an imperative. *Hō.* can also be used in an indicative sentence where a past event is described.

d.　I ioh-á kā thun-thun hō. loh=khi a.

he-medicine-inflictive-swallow-swallow-make-decend-go

伊藥仔共吞互落去啊〔他把藥吞下去了〕

He has swallowed the medicine.

In all cases the optional insertion of *hō.* denotes additional attention to the realization of the intended consequence. This applies when the intended consequence is a negative one, as is the case in (e).

e.　I thiau-kang kā kiâ* hō. bô kàu-ūi.

he-purposefully-inflictive-walk-so that-does not-reach-place

伊刁工共行护無到位〔他故意沒有走到目的地〕

He purposely walked so that he would not reach his destination.

A reduplicated verb in Taiwanese gives the additional sense of 'to quickly act'. It occurs only when there is some complement, directional or otherwise. It can be modified by an adverb denoting rapidness (e.g., *kín* 'quickly' or *chhìn-chhái* 'carelessly'), but not one that denotes steadiness or carefulness (e.g., *bān-bān-á* 'slowly', *bān-bān-á* 'steadily' or *sè-jī* 'carefully').

f. Kín kā thun–thun–hō.–lȯh–khì.

quickly–inflictive–swallow–swallow–make–decend–go

緊共吞吞互落去〔快吞下去〕

Swallow it quickly.

In an injunctive sentence, when *lâi* 'let me, let us'[6] precedes a predicate and denotes first person participation in a future action, another *lâi* can immediately precede the verbal ending *khì* 'go', if it occurs in the sentence. This means *lâi* 'let me, let us' is inserted between V1 V2 and V3 instead of between V1 and V2 V3. With such an addition the preverbal *lâi* can be retained or deleted without any change in meaning. Therefore (a) can be restated as (b), and (c) can be restated as (d).

(27) a. Lán lâi kiâ* chhut–khì gōa–kháu.

we(inclusive)–let's–walk–exit–go–outside

咱來行出去外口〔咱們走到外面去吧〕

Let's walk outside.

b. Lán (lâi) kiâ* chhut–lâi–khì gōa–kháu.

we(inclusive)–(let's)–walk–exit–let's–go

咱（來）行出來去外口〔咱們走到外面去吧〕

Let's walk outside.

c. Toh–á lán lâi kā poa*=chhut–khì.

table–we(inclusive)–let's–inflictive–move–exit–go

桌仔咱來共搬出去〔咱們把桌搬到外面去吧〕

Let's move the table out.

d. Toh–á lán (lâi) kā poa*=chhut–lâi–khì.

table–we–(let's)–inflictive–move–exit–let's–go

桌仔咱（來）共搬出來去〔桌子咱們來把它搬出去〕

Let's move the table out.

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6. Lin (1975).

4. Intensification of the Directional Complement (V2 V3) by a Degree Expression

Another feature that makes the Taiwanese directional complement rich in expressiveness is its ability to take a degree expression[7] as in the following construction.

(28) V1 (Conjunction) Degree V2 V3

Conjunction=*hō.* 互

tiòh 著

kah 到，甲

liáu 了

Degree=*chin* 'very' *kai* 'very' 眞

chiok 'very' 足

siong-tong 'guite' 相當

*siu** 'excessively' 傷

bô-kàu 'not enough' *ū-kàu* 'sufficiently' 無够，有够

bō-gōa, bō-sím-mih, bô-chiok 'not very' 無偌、無什麼、無足

Comparative construction

(28) a. Chit-ki chhì chhàk kah chiok jìp=khì è.

this—M—splinter—pierce—conjunction—very—enter—go—final particle

這支刺鑿甲足入去的〔這根刺插進去很深〕

The splinter pierces deep inside.

b. I-á khǹg liáu siu* chhut=khì.

chair—placed—conjunction—too—exit—go

椅仔置了傷出去〔椅子放得太靠外頭了〕

The chair is placed too far outside.

c. Góa kiâ* pí lí khah=jìp=khi.

I—walk—more than—you—more—enter—go

我行比你卡入去〔我走得比你還靠裏頭〕

I walked further inside than you did.

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7. For a detailed discussion of Taiwanese degree expression see Cheng, S. (1980).

d. Teng-á kòng hō. khah jíp=lóh-khì leh.

nail–hammer–so as to make–more–enter–go–command particle

釘仔摃互卡落去咧〔把釘子打進去一點〕

Hammer the nail down further.

e. I ê chih thóng siōng chhuta=lâi.

he–modifier formative–stretch out–most–exit–come

伊的舌凸上出來〔他的舌頭伸得最長〕

His tongue stretched out furtherest.

f. I che liáu bô gōa óa=khì.

he–sit–conjunction–not–very–close–go

伊坐了無偌依去〔他坐得不怎麼近〕

He did not sit very close (to somebody or something).

g. Khiā khah khui=khì leh.

stand–more–away–go–command marker

佮卡開去咧〔站開一點〕

Stand farther apart!

When there is no conjunction, the whole sequence functions as a tone sandhi group, as in (e) and (f). (There is no conjunction in (c). But the optional tone sandhi boundary after the personal pronoun is a phenomenon of the language in marking a noun phrase. When the noun phrase is not a pronoun the boundary is obligatory)[8]. It still holds that when there is no conjunction the main verb and the complement are not divided by a tone sandhi group boundary. On the other hand, the tone sandhi group boundary that always occurs after a conjuction makes the two parts of the construction loosely related. Additional evidence of the looseness of this relationship can be seen in the possibility of inserting an element after the conjunction, like a subject *kha* 'foot' in (h).

h. Kiâ* tiòh kha chiok thià*.

walk–conjunction–foot–very–painful

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8. Cheng (1968).

行著腳足痛〔走起來腳很痛〕

When I walk, my feet hurt very much.

The fact that the directional verbal ending can be modified by a degree means that the quality denoted by it is something gradable and comparable. Since their equivalents in English or Mandarin are not gradable, it is hard to translate these gradable Taiwanese constructions into those languages.

In Taiwanese, those parts of speech that can take degree expressions are adjectives, emotive verbs (e.g., *hīn* 'hate', *liáu-kai* 'understand'), and some auxiliary verbs (e.g., *ē-hiáu* 'can'). Another part of speech that can marginally be modified by a degree expression is the locative noun.

> *chiok lāi-bīn* 足內面 'very much inside'
>
> *kài gōa-kháu* 蓋外口 'very much outside'
>
> *siōng téng-bīn* 上頂前 'uppermost'
>
> *khah thâu-chêng* 卡頭前 'more to the front'
>
> *chiok ē-kha* 足下腳 'extreme bottom'

Though the grading of these locative nouns is very different from that of the directional verbal ending in terms of syntax, the two constructions are more or less equivalent semantically.

Sentences (a) and (a1), (b) and (b1) are synonymous.

(28) a1. Chit-ki chhì chhák-jip-khì kah chiok lāi-bīn è.

　　　this–M–splinter–pierce–enter–go–conjuction–very–inside

　　　這支刺鑿入去甲足內面的〔這根刺插得很深〕

　　　This splinter goes very deep inside.

　　b1. Í-á khǹg liáu siū* gōa-kháu.

　　　chair–place–conjunction–too–outside

　　　椅仔置了傷外口〔椅子放得太靠外頭了〕

　　　The chair is placed too far outside.

There are several types of degree expressions, but only those types listed above (viz, the comparative construction [coverb–noun adverb], the intensifier adverbs, the negatives [*bô*, *bē*], and the combination of the last two [Neg. +

Adverb and Adverb+Neg.]) can modify directional verbal endings. Other types of degree expressions (e. g., postverbal adverb, conjunction-complement, and reduplication) which are possible with the adjectives can not occur, however, with directional complements.

When a directional verbal ending is followed by a coverbal phrase (Coverb+ Locative), the former cannot be modified by a degree expression. The latter can, however, as in (a1). This is an indication that the directional verbal ending is modifiable by a degree expression because it contains some locative meaning. When a locative is covertly expressed it is the location and not the direction or motion that is modified by a degree expression.

Another restriction on the modification of the directional verbal ending (V2 V3) is that when V2 is *kòe* 'over; across' or *tò-t́ng* 'return' no such modification is possible.

> **kài tò-t́ng=khì* *蓋倒轉去 'very-return-go'*
> **chin kòe=khì* *眞過去 'very-cross-go'*

5. V1 as Part of Manner Adverbal

If Taiwanese is peculiar in having extra devices for focusing or intensifying the directional complement, it also has a very special way of indicating focus on the main verb that, as a rule, denotes the manner of locomation. The device is nominalising the main verb by adding *ê* '-ing' and prefix the resulting nominal with the coverb for instrument and manner *iōng* 'with'. When the main verb is so nominalised in a coverbal phrase, the one in the original slot usually gets deleted if the verb is intransitive (PT 29) but remains in the same slot if the verb is transitive (PT 30).

PT 29   S *iōng* V1 e (V2) V3

PT 30   O *iōng* e kā V1 (V2) (V3)

(29) a.   Lán ài iōng cháu è khì.

we-have to-with-run-nomialiser-go

咱愛用走的去〔咱們得跑到那裏去〕

We have to run to get there.

b. I iōng pê ė chhut=khì.

he-with-crawl-exit-go

伊用爬的出去〔他爬出去的〕

He crawled out.　He went out by crawling.

(30) a. Chit-tè toh-á iōng giâ ė giâ-bē=chhut-khì, aì iōng lêng ė.

this-measure-table-with-lift-nominaliser-lift-cannot-exit-go,　have to-
with-carry downward-nominaliser

這塊桌仔用迎的迎艚出去，愛用撐的〔這張桌子扛不出去，要抬出去〕

You cannot get the table out by lifting it high; you have to carry it
without raising it high.

That the *iōng*-phrase is the focused element and not the directional com-
plement is based on the following observations:

1. The directional verbal complex (V2) V3 can be deleted but the *iōng*-phrase
cannot, as exemplified in sentence (30a).　This indicates which is the more
essential element in the sentence.

2. A sentence such as (29b) above is a proper answer to a 'how' question.　For
example, in the sentence that follows, *án-ná* 'how' is the focused element
and is answerable by the *iōng*-phrase in (29b).

I án-ná chhut=khì?

he-how-exit-go

伊按仔出去？〔他怎麼出去的？〕

How did he get out?

3. When the *sī...ê* construction, another focus device, is used, *sī* should be
placed before the *iong*-coverb, and not before the main verb.　As in the case
of the *shih...te* construction in Mandarin (see Cheng, 1981) what immediately
follows the confirmative *sī* is the focused element.

(29) b1. I sī iōng pê ė chhut=khì ė.

he-is-with-crawl-nominaliser-exit-go-nominaliser

伊是用爬的出去的〔他是爬出去的〕

It is by crawling that he got out.

6. Conclusion

In concluding this article we would like to point out features of Taiwanese syntax that are not shared by Mandarin. It is hoped that such an analysis will contribute to better understanding of how Chinese 'dialects' differ from one another.

1) It is possible in Taiwanese for four or even five verbs and coverbs to occur between a main verb and a locative noun denoting destination. The distinction between coverb and verb in such a construction is much more difficult to define in Taiwanese than in Mandarin.

2) In Taiwanese there is an overt distinction between location for an indicative action (*tī*) and that for an injunctive action (*tiàm*). In Mandarin the coverb *zài* is used for both situations.

3) In Taiwanese the coverb denoting 'from' and that denoting 'toward' are usually identical (*tùi, ùi, àn*).

4) In Taiwanese the directional complement can be singled out for focus.

5) In Taiwanese the directional verbal ending (e. g., *li̍p-khì* 'enter') can be modified by a degree expression.

6) In Taiwanese the main verb can be nominalised to take the manner coverb, *iōng* 'with'.

In his *Grammar or Spoken Chinese*, Chao (1968) stated that 'there is practically one univeral Chinese grammar'. Given the fact that the Taiwanese grammatical features discussed above counter-indicate that claim, I feel that it is not practical to speak of a universal Chinese grammar in its strict sense.

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