

# Perfective ‘already’ in Cantonese-English bilingual children: A case of relabeling or grammaticalization?

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## Abstract

The emergence of perfective ‘already’ is attested in Cantonese-English bilingual children and a number of Southeast Asian contact languages. Analyzing the use of already in Cantonese-English bilingual children, we find that both the semantic and syntactic properties of the Cantonese [zo<sup>2</sup> ... laa<sup>3</sup>] construction are mapped on *already*. While the emergence of perfective ‘already’ is usually discussed under the framework of grammaticalization (e.g., Matthews & Yip, 2009), this paper demonstrates that it should also constitute a case of relabeling. Based on our analysis, we will discuss the relationship between relabeling and grammaticalization, and argue that the two research frameworks are complementary instead of mutually exclusive.

**Keywords:** perfective ‘already’, Cantonese-English bilinguals, language contact, grammaticalization.

## 1. Introduction

Relabeling (aka relexification) is a semantically driven mental operation which “consists in assigning a lexical entry a new label derived from a phonetic string drawn from another language” (Lefebvre, 2015, p. 1). It plays a key role in a wide range of language contact situations, from L2 acquisition at the individual level to contact language formation (e.g. creole genesis) at the communal level (Lefebvre, 1998, 2008). The concept of relabeling is theoretically appealing as it

represents a uniformitarian approach to language contact studies which can potentially address the connection between bilingual development and contact language formation, and is consistent with Mufwene (2001)'s important notion that all kinds of linguistic innovations and changes observable at the communal level must logically stem from the idiolectal level. As Lefebvre (2008) illustrates, relabeling is (partly) synonymous with several different terms commonly used in the literature of language contact, such as calquing, transfer, and reanalysis.

Grammaticalization, on the other hand, is considered a separate process (Lefebvre, 2009), despite its relevance to semantic inference. The emergence of perfective aspect in Cantonese-English bilingual children, a phenomenon revealing the intriguing parallels between bilingual development and contact language formation, constitutes the focus of this study. The English utterances of Cantonese-English bilingual children show a number of parallels with Singapore Colloquial English (Singlish) (Yip & Matthews, 2007), one of which is the use of bare verb forms together with already when inflectional morphemes such as the *-ed* and *-en* verbal suffixes are required in Standard English (1-4).

#### **Cantonese-English bilingual children's English** (Yip & Matthews, 2007)

- (1) You wipe your mouth **already**? (Kasen 3;00)
- (2) You swallow the short teeth **already**. (Timmy 3;01)

#### **Singlish** (Bao, 2005)

- (3) I wash my hand **already**.  
'I have washed/washed my hands.' (Bao, 2005, p. 239)
- (4) I see the movie **already**.  
'I have seen/saw the movie.' (Bao, 2005, p. 238)

Matthews & Yip (2009) argue that the emergence of perfective already presents a case of ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization, and make an important observation that both the [V *zo2* ... *laa3*] and [V *saai3* ... *laa3*] constructions may serve as the models for interlingual identification. Meanwhile, if we adopt the concept of relabeling, we don't have to invoke the theory

of grammaticalization. Instead, “what is being transferred into the creole is a lexical item with all of its functions, thus a multifunctional lexical entry” (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 180). In this case, the emergence of perfective *already* can be viewed as a result of transfer of both the lexical and grammatical functions of some corresponding Cantonese (substrate) lexical entry to the English (superstrate) *already*. Given that Lefebvre (2009) does acknowledge that grammaticalization plays a role in creole genesis, we would like to ask what different roles do relabeling and grammaticalization play in contact situations? Is it necessary (and feasible) to draw a clear distinction between them?

To address these questions and other relevant issues, we first review and discuss issues concerning grammaticalization (especially those occurring in contact situations) (Section 2), thereby outlining a framework for analysis. We then analyze how *already* develops into a perfective marker in Cantonese-English bilingual children, and report findings on the bilingual children’s use of *already* in terms of function and placement (Section 3), which lay the foundation for the discussion of issues concerning grammaticalization and relabeling (Section 4).

## 2. Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization theory is concerned with the emergence and development of grammatical forms and constructions. According to Hopper & Traugott (2003, p. 18), the phenomenon of grammaticalization refers to “the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions”. A typical example in English is the grammaticalization of the motion verb *go* into an auxiliary which expresses immediate futurity, as in “He’s going to go to school soon” (Bybee et al., 1994; Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Interestingly, the grammaticalization of a motion verb meaning *go* into a future marker has occurred independently in a wide range of languages, such as English, French, Bari, Sotho, Zulu, Margi, Bassa, Klao, Igbo, Ecuadorian Quechua, Tamil, Basque (Heine & Kuteva, 2002), suggesting that such a phenomenon may be shaped by some universal processes of grammatical change, which may include the inherent conceptual link between *go* and the sense of futurity.

### 2.1. Contact-induced grammaticalization: an overview

Until recently, grammaticalization has typically been viewed as a “language-internal” process as there used to be a widespread assumption among linguists that grammatical structure, or syntax, cannot be “borrowed” (Heine & Kuteva, 2010). However, new findings from a number of fields, particularly areal typology (Ansaldò, 2009; Dahl, 2004; Enfield, 2013; Heine & Kuteva, 2003, 2005) and creole studies (Arends et al., 1994), have provided abundant evidence to demonstrate that grammaticalization could result from “external” factors such as geographical clustering and substrate influence. In their seminal work on grammaticalization, Hopper & Traugott (2003, p. 230) also acknowledge the important link between language contact and grammaticalization, concluding that “[c]ontact has been an important factor for most languages, and a strictly monogenetic view of grammaticalization is ultimately inappropriate”.

Analyzing data from a wide range of languages, an important observation highlighted by Heine & Kuteva (2005) is that the principles of grammaticalization are the same regardless of whether or not language contact is involved. Similarly, Matthews & Yip (2009) see contact as a catalyst driving change along pathways of grammaticalization, and suggest that “the general principles of grammaticalization are applicable, not only to the substrate language(s) in which grammaticalization originally took place, but also to the contact language affected by it” (Matthews & Yip, 2009, p. 373).

For example, while the use of equivalents of ‘already’ as a perfective aspect marker (the focus of this study) is observed in contact varieties such as the English-based Singlish (Bao, 2005), the Spanish-based Zamboanga Chabacano (realized as *ya*) (Steinkrüger, 2013) (5), and the Portuguese-based Papi Kristang (realized as *ja*) (Baxter, 2013) (6), it is noteworthy that such a grammaticalization process has also developed ‘internally’ in languages like Inuit and Buli (Bybee et al., 1994).

- (5) *Éle ya-matá pwérko gat Alyá gránde* (Steinkrüger, 2013)  
 3SG PFV-kill pig really there big

‘S/he killed a really big pig there.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: 1 = 1st person; 2 = 2nd person; 3 = 3rd person; CLF = classifier; NEG = negation; PASS = passive; PERM = permissive; PFV = perfective; PL = plural; PRT = particle; SFP = sentence-final particle; SG = singular.

- (6) *Eli ja bai mar onti anoti* (Baxter, 2013)  
 3SG PFV go sea yesterday night

‘S/he went fishing last night.’

Such an observation is consistent with Mufwene (2001, 2008)’s argument against the distinction between “internally motivated change” and “externally motivated change”. Contact plays a crucial role in Mufwene’s approach to language evolution as he maintains that all kinds of linguistic change are made possible by the interaction between different idiolects, regardless of whether they are artificially labelled as “internally motivated” or “externally motivated”. In short, although grammaticalization may be triggered in contact situations, its underlying principles remain unaffected.

## 2.2. Ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization

Heine & Kuteva (2005, p. 80) distinguish “two main types of contact-induced grammaticalization depending on whether or not there exists already a model source-to-target grammaticalization process to be replicated”. If no such model exists, the process is referred to as ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization (whereas the other type is known as replica grammaticalization). The mechanisms involved in the transfer of grammatical concept or structure from the model language (M) to the replica language (R) in ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization are as follows:

- (7) Ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization (Heine & Kuteva, 2005, p. 81)
- a. Speakers notice that in language M there is a grammatical category Mx.
  - b. They develop an equivalent category Rx in language R on the basis of the use patterns available in R.
  - c. To this end, they draw on universal strategies of grammaticalization, using construction Ry in order to develop Rx.
  - d. They grammaticalize category Ry to Rx.

This process, according to Hickey (2010, p. 155), is “an unconscious one and persists even with speakers who have considerable target language proficiency”.

The use of *already* as a perfective aspect marker in Singlish is an example of ordinary contact-

induced grammaticalization, in which a new grammatical category was developed in the replica language (Singlish, a contact variety of English) due to transfer from the model languages (Southern Sinitic and Malay varieties). Compared to Standard English, Singlish seldom employs inflectional morphology. Its aspectual system, as Bao (2005, p. 237) puts it, is “essentially the Chinese system filtered through the morphosyntax of English”. For example, *already* occurs after uninflected verbs to mark perfective aspect without involving any inflectional morpheme. This is consistent with the use of the perfective aspect marker *liau*<sup>51</sup> in Hokkien, one of the most important substrate languages in the formation of Singlish (Ansaldo, 2009):

- (8) a. *He eat already [Singlish]*  
 He eat PFV  
 ‘He has eaten’
- b. *i*<sup>55>33</sup> *tsiaŋ*<sup>5>32</sup> *piŋ*<sup>33>21</sup> *liau*<sup>51</sup> [*Hokkien*]  
 3SG eat rice PFV  
 ‘He has eaten’

In this case, the Singlish speakers grammaticalized a lexical item into an aspect marker instead of using inflectional morphology to mark perfective aspect, following the aspect-marking strategy of the substrate languages.

### 3. Emergence of perfective *already* in Cantonese-English bilingual children

The use of *already* as a perfective marker in Cantonese-English bilingual children was first discussed in Kwan-Terry (1989) and further investigated in Yip & Matthews (2007). According to these studies, the bilingual children’s development is parallel to the development of *already* as a perfective aspect marker in Singlish, which is used in post-verbal or clause-final position to express perfective notions such as completion and change of state. Such a use of *already* is observed in all nine children in the Hong Kong Bilingual Child Language Corpus (Yip & Matthews, 2007), regardless of their dominant language (Szeto et al., 2017). The question is – why is *already* (but not any other lexical item) identified as a perfective marker?

### 3.1. *Already and the Cantonese [zo2 ... laa3] construction*

The development of *already* into a marker of perfective aspect is attested in a number of languages (see Section 2.1). The existence of such parallel developments is suggestive of some inherent conceptual links between the semantics of *already* and the sense of perfectivity.

The English adverb *already* is often associated with completed events, which makes it a natural perfective aspect marker. For example, in (9), the event of starting is completed when the event of arriving occurs.

- (9) The performance had **already** started when we arrived.

However, as Traugott & Waterhouse (1969) and Soh (2009) point out, in addition to a “change of state” interpretation, an important feature associated with the use of *already* is that the assertion made by the sentence is contrary to what one may expect or assume (referred to as the “contrary to expectation” interpretation by Soh (2009))<sup>2</sup>. For example, the sentence in (9) implies that the performance began earlier than expected. A more noticeable example involving a “contrary to expectation” sense is given in (10), where B uses *already* to correct A’s wrong assumption B hasn’t finished his/her homework yet.

- (10) A: You have to finish your homework first.  
 B: I’ve finished my homework **already**!

As Soh (2009) demonstrates, the semantics of *already* is similar to the Mandarin sentence-final particle *le*, which corresponds closely to the Cantonese *laa3* (Matthews & Yip, 2013). The Cantonese *laa3* is a sentence-final particle which functions to express current relevance (Matthews & Yip, 2013) or a change of state (Cheung, 2007). It often co-occurs with the perfective aspect marker *zo2* to describe a completed event which has current relevance, thus entailing a change of state, as in (11), where there must be a prior state in which the speaker has not returned home.

- (11) *Ngo5 faan1-zo2 uk1kei2 laa3*  
 1sg return-PFV home SFP

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<sup>2</sup>As Soh (2009, p. 624) demonstrates, the “change of state” and “contrary to expectation” interpretations are independent of each other. In some contexts, *already* may only carry the “contrary to expectation” interpretation without any “change of state” interpretation (but not the other way around).

‘I have returned home’

Like *already*, the [*zo2* ... *laa3*] construction may express senses of “change of state” and “contrary to expectation” simultaneously. For example, the utterance of B in (12) is associated with a sense of “contrary to expectation” because the fact that “B has eaten” is in contrast with A’s inviting B to join him/her for a meal. At the same time, B’s utterance also conveys the meaning that the eating event is completed and s/he has changed from a state of “not having eaten” to “having eaten”. (13) is the English equivalent of (12), in which *already* carries the “change of state” and “contrary to expectation” readings.

- (12) a. *Heoi3 m4 heoi3 sik6 faan6 aa3?*  
 go NEG go eat rice SFP  
 ‘Will you go and eat the meal?’
- b. *Ngo5 sik6-zo2 je5 laa3*  
 1SG eat-PFV thing SFP  
 ‘I’ve already eaten’

- (13) A: Let’s go eat, shall we?  
 B: No, I’ve **already** eaten.

Although the [*zo2* ... *laa3*] construction shares some properties with *already* in the above example, the differences in acceptability between (14) and (15) suggest that they differ in the obligatoriness of the “contrary to expectation” reading when responding to a neutral yes/no question, the use of [*zo2* ... *laa3*] construction is perfectly acceptable, but the use of *already* in (16) sounds unnatural to native speakers. This is because the “contrary to expectation” reading inherently associated with *already* is incompatible with a neutral context; meanwhile, the use of [*zo2* ... *laa3*] construction in (14) does not pose a problem because it is not obligatorily associated with a “contrary to expectation” reading. See Szeto et al. (2017) for a more detailed analysis of the congruence between *already*, *zo2*, and *laa3*.

- (14) a. *Maai5-zo2 bun2 syu1 mei6 aa3?*  
 buy-PFV CLF book NEG SFP?  
 ‘Have you bought the book?’



- b. *Maai5-zo2 laa3*  
 buy-PFV SFP  
 ‘Yes, I have’

- (15) A: Have you bought the book?  
 B: Yes, I have **already** bought it.

Based on the above analysis, the high degree of semantic overlap between *already* and [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction makes it likely for the bilingual children to identify the former with the latter. If this is the case, two predictions follow. First, *already* will undergo semantic bleaching and no longer be obligatorily associated with a ‘contrary to expectation’ interpretation. Second, given that Cantonese [*zo2 ... laa3*] always occurs post-verbally, we predict that *already* will have a strong tendency to occur post-verbally in the bilingual children’s utterances, unlike the monolingual use of *already*, which can also occur pre-verbally.

### 3.2. *The use of already in bilingual children*

Based on the analysis presented in Section 3.1, the high degree of semantic overlap between *already* and [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction makes it likely for the bilingual children to identify the former with the latter. If this is the case, we would expect *already* to undergo semantic bleaching and lose the obligatory “contrary to expectation” reading. Consistent with our prediction, there are cases in which the bilingual children’s use of *already* is unlikely to be associated with a “contrary to expectation” interpretation. In (15), the child appears to be replying to a neutral question by indicating that the sending action is completed. There appears to be no specific presupposition suggesting a “contrary to expectation” interpretation.

- (16) Investigator: Did you send him to the hospital  
 Child: I send **already** (Timmy 3;01)

Moreover, one child is observed to use *already* when asking yes/no questions with no presupposition about whether the enquired actions should have been done, as illustrated in (16). The data supports our hypothesis that *already* is identified with the [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction and undergoes semantic bleaching in the bilingual children, losing its obligatory association with the “contrary to

expectation” reading.

(17) Child: You **already** eat?

Investigator: Mm?

Child: Okay, you wipe your mouth **already**? (Kasen 3;00)

*Already* is expected to have a strong tendency to occur post-verbally in the bilingual children due to influence from the Cantonese post-verbal [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction. The corpus data confirm this prediction. As shown in Table 1, *already* predominantly occurs post-verbally (90%) in the bilingual children<sup>3</sup>. Five out of nine children produced *already* only in post-verbal position. Bilingual children’s strong tendency to place *already* in post-verbal position is contrasted with monolingual children’s clear preference for preverbal placement of *already*. As shown in Table 2, pre-verbal *already* is used more often than post-verbal *already* (69.9% vs. 30.1%) in the monolingual children. Fisher’s (1954) exact test shows that the differences between the two groups are highly significant ( $p < .0001$ ). The results support our hypothesis that the bilingual children have identified *already* with the Cantonese [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction.

#### 4. Relabeling or grammaticalization?

By now there is ample evidence suggesting that *already* is identified with the [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction by the bilingual children, as reflected by its semantic and syntactic properties. In this section, we will first discuss whether the emergence of perfective *already* constitutes a case of relabeling in Lefebvre’s sense. Then we will come back to the questions raised in Section 1 - what different roles do relabeling and grammaticalization play in contact situations? Is it necessary (and feasible) to draw a clear distinction between them?

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<sup>3</sup>The post-verbal category can be further divided into immediately post-verbal *already* and sentence-final *already*. The strong preference for the latter reflects the syntactic properties of the Cantonese sentence-final particle *laa3*. Kathryn appears to be an outlier in this regard – unlike all the other bilingual children, she has slightly more preverbal use, like the monolinguals do. We suspect such a difference may be due to the fact that Kathryn’s recording started at a much later stage than the other children (see Table 2). At such an age period, the target-like tense/aspect forms may gradually emerge in the bilingual child at the expense of the non-target perfective *already*. See Szeto et al. (2017) for a more detailed discussion.

Name	Pre-verbal already	Post-verbal already
Timmy	1	12
Sophie	0	20
Alicia	0	4
Llywelyn	0	3
Kathryn	4	3
Charlotte	1	11
Janet	0	24
Kasen	5	18
Darren	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11 (10%)</b>	<b>99 (90%)</b>

Table 1: The placement of *already* in the Cantonese-English bilingual children

Name	Pre-verbal already	Post-verbal already
Adam	14	4
Eve	2	2
Sarah	14	3
Lara	5	5
Thomas	16	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51 (69.9%)</b>	<b>22 (30.1%)</b>

Table 2: The placement of *already* in the English monolingual children

#### 4.1. Perfective *already* as a case of relabeling

In relabeling, a lexical entry from the substrate language (18a) is assigned a new label derived from a phonetic string drawn from the superstrate language (18b), and the original phonological representation is eventually removed, yielding (18c). Thus, the resultant lexical entry carries the substrate semantic and syntactic properties with a phonological representation derived from the superstrate language (Lefebvre, 2015, pp. 1-2):

		/phonological representation/ <sub>i</sub>
a.		[semantic features] <sub>i</sub>
		[syntactic features] <sub>i</sub>
(18)	b.	/phonological representation/ <sub>i</sub> /phonological representation/ <sub>j</sub>
		[semantic features] <sub>i</sub>
		[syntactic features] <sub>i</sub>
	c.	/phonological representation/ <sub>j</sub>
		[semantic features] <sub>i</sub>
		[syntactic features] <sub>i</sub>

As discussed in Section 3, the bilingual children's *already* manifests both the semantic and syntactic properties of the Cantonese [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between this case and cases of relabeling discussed in Lefebvre's work, where the substrate lexical entry involved is typically a polysemous word with both lexical and grammatical functions, such as the Quechua *tiya-ri-*, which means 'to sit', 'to live', 'there is', or serves as a locative marker. By contrast, *zo2* and *laa3* are not independent lexical entries; instead, they must combine with content words to perform grammatical functions. Here, if we extend the applicability of relabeling to constructions, the emergence of perfective *already* in the Cantonese-English bilingual children arguably constitutes a case of relabeling, where the semantic and syntactic features of the Cantonese [*zola3*] construction are mapped onto the English *already*, as exemplified in (19):

	C-E Bilingual children	Cantonese [ <i>zo2...laa3</i> ]	English <i>already</i>
			<i>already</i>
(19)	Semantics	[+ completion]	[+ completion]
		[+ change of state]	[+ change of state]
		[± contra-exception]	[+ contra-exception]
	Syntax	[+post-verbal]	[+post-verbal]
		[-pre-verbal]	[+pre-verbal]

In other words, the Cantonese [*zo2 ... laa3*] construction is assigned a new label derived from the phonetic representation of the English *already*. The high degree of semantic congruence between [*zo2 ... laa3*] and *already* has triggered the relabeling process.

As illustrated above, whether the emergence of perfective *already* represents a case of relabeling solely depends on whether we will extend the applicability of relabeling beyond individual lexical entries. Regardless of whether a lexical entry or construction is involved, the underlying mechanisms are arguably the same - a new label derived from a superstrate phonetic string is assigned to a substrate lexical entry or construction.

#### 4.2. *Two terms for one and the same mental process?*

As discussed in Section 2, the emergence of perfective *already* (both in Cantonese-English bilingual children and contact languages) can be studied under the theoretical framework of (contact-induced) grammaticalization. Now that we also consider it a case of relabeling, we may seem to have created a paradox and have to seek ways to reconcile the two theoretical frameworks.

Lefebvre (2009) makes a distinction between relabeling and grammaticalization, and maintains that the former is the main process in the creation of a creole's lexicon, which applies to both lexical and functional items. Given that relabeling is semantically driven, Lefebvre (2009, p. 297) argues that grammaticalization may come into play "when a substrate lexical entry could not have been relabelled because of its lack of semantic content, or because of the absence, in the superstrate language, of an appropriate form to relabel the substrate entry". This statement can be understood as follows in cases where the grammatical items co-exist with their lexical source in the substrate language, the semantic and syntactic properties of this lexical entry (including those of its derived grammatical categories), can be transferred to the emergent creole through relabeling. Meanwhile, in cases where a particular substrate grammatical category lacks a clear lexical source or an exponent which is congruent with the superstrate structure, a new lexical entry manifesting the properties of that grammatical category will be developed in the creole by means of grammaticalization. Notably, such a distinction between relabeling and grammaticalization is strongly reminiscent of that of the two main types of contact-induced grammaticalization, which depends on "whether or not there exists already a model source-to-target grammaticalization process to be replicated" (Heine & Kuteva, 2005, p. 80). The type of contact-induced grammaticalization comparable to relabeling in its narrow sense (which targets lexical entries but not constructions) is termed replica grammaticalization, in which a grammaticalization process is transferred from the model language to the replica language. For example, in Cantonese, the word for 'give' *bei2* is believed to have undergone the grammaticalization pathway 'lexical verb > permissive marker >

passive marker' (Lord et al. 2002). While still retaining the lexical meaning of 'give', as illustrated in (20), *bei2* has also developed into a grammatical marker.

- (20) *Ngo5 bei2-zo2 bun2 syu1 keoi3*  
 1SG give-PFV CLF book 3sg

'I've given him/her a book.'

- (21) *Aa3maa1 m4 bei2 ngo5 tai2 din6si6*  
 mother NEG PERM 1SG watch television

'My mum doesn't let me watch TV.'

- (22) *Ngo5 bei2 keoi5 daa2-zo2 jat1 haa5*  
 1SG PASS 3SG hit-PFV one PRT

'I was hit by him/her once.'

In (21), *bei2* functions as a permissive marker, expressing the sense that 'my mum doesn't give me the permission to watch TV'. In (22), *bei2* functions as a passive marker, expressing the sense that the speaker is the patient of the hitting action. Interestingly, Yip & Matthews (2007, p. 243) observe that Cantonese-English bilingual children use give as a grammatical marker in English, i.e. permissive *let* in (23a) and passive marker in (24a), apparently recapitulating the grammatical development pathway of *bei2*:

- (23) a. (appearing in swimsuit) Daddy, I **give** you see. (Sophie 3;04)

- b. *Baa4baa1 ngo5 bei2 nei5 tai2*  
 daddy 1SG PERM 2SG see

'Daddy I let you see'

- (24) a. (points to scratched leg) Here is **give** Timmy scratch. (Sophie 3;06)

- b. *Ni1dou6 hai6 bei2 Timmy waa2-can1 ge3*  
 here be PASS Timmy scratch-PRT SFP

'Here is scratched by Timmy'

From the perspective of relabeling, the Cantonese equivalents (23b-24b) of the child's utterances illustrate that *give* manifests both the semantic and syntactic features of the Cantonese *bei2*.

Meanwhile, in many cases, it is not possible to “replicate” the grammaticalization pathway of a substrate grammatical item, either because of the absence of a clear lexical source of the grammatical item concerned or that of a corresponding superstrate structure (which often results from a lack of clean typological fit between languages in a given contact situation). Under such circumstances, ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization will be brought into play, through which the substrate grammatical categories will be developed in the superstrate language on the basis of the use patterns available in the latter (see Section 2.2). The emergence of perfective *already* in Cantonese bilingual children, as well as parallel developments in Singlish and other Southeast Asian creoles, represent cases of ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization triggered by the typological differences between the substrate and superstrate languages (Szeto et al., 2017).

The driving force and underlying mechanisms of the two types of contact-induced grammaticalization are essentially identical - speakers of the model (substrate) language would expect the same grammatical distinctions in the replica (superstrate) language when they acquire the latter as a second L1 or an L2. Consequently they would search for equivalents in the superstrate language to categories in the substrate language with which they are already familiar. In both cases, the speakers draw on universal strategies of grammaticalization to develop a new grammatical category in the contact language. The only difference lies in the availability of a salient grammaticalization pathway which can be transferred from the substrate to the superstrate. Therefore, it makes perfect sense to consider ordinary contact-induced grammaticalization and replica grammaticalization to be two subtypes of the same kind of mental operations.

However, if we maintain a rigid distinction between relabeling and grammaticalization by restricting the former to cases involving lexical entries with concrete semantic content, we may essentially be giving two names to a single type of mental process. Moreover, as relabeling in its narrow sense may still involve the emergence and development of grammatical forms from lexical items, there is no good reason to treat relabeling and grammaticalization as two distinct processes in contact scenarios. The roles of relabeling and grammaticalization are schematically illustrated in Table 3.

Contrary to Lefebvre’s (2009) position, we see a high degree of overlap between relabeling and grammaticalization. However, we share Lefebvre’s view that relabeling plays a major role in creole genesis and other types of contact-induced change. Given that the development of grammatical categories from lexical items can be driven by the conceptual links between them (see Section 2), the

transfer of lexical meaning in contact situations can potentially trigger the subsequent development of grammatical categories. Therefore, the notion of relabeling can provide a coherent framework for

	Relabeling	Grammaticalization
Transfer of lexical meaning, e.g. Fongbe <i>hù</i> ‘to murder/to mutilate’ > Haitian Creole <i>ansasinen</i> ‘to murder/to mutilate’ (Lefebvre, 2008, pp. 92-93)	+	-
“Replication” of grammaticalization pathway, e.g. permissive and passive <i>give</i>	+	+
Emergence of new grammatical categories based on substrate constructions, e.g. perfective <i>already</i>	$\pm^4$	+
Development of grammatical categories without language contact	-	+

Table 3: Roles of relabeling and grammaticalization

the emergence of new lexical meaning as well as new grammatical categories in contact scenarios (provided we accept that relabeling can also be applied to constructions). On the other hand, the theory of grammaticalization provides a research framework for the emergence and development of grammatical categories, regardless of whether language contact is involved.

## 5. Conclusions

Unlike its counterpart in Standard English, the *already* in Cantonese-English bilingual children lacks the obligatory “contrary to expectation” reading and has a strong tendency towards post-verbal placement, manifesting both the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the Cantonese [zo2 ... laa3] construction, which arguably constitutes a case of relabeling. Although relabeling is only applicable to lexical entries with semantic content in previous studies, given the similar underlying mechanisms involved, the notion of relabeling should be extended to constructions in order to provide a coherent framework for studying grammatical change in contact scenarios. Further, instead of making a rigid distinction between relabeling and grammaticalization, we see a lot of parallels between these two notions and argue that they can serve as complementary research

<sup>4</sup>In its narrow sense, relabeling only targets individual lexical entries with solid semantic content. In that case, the emergence of perfective *already* does not constitute a case of relabeling. However, as we argue in Section 4.1, the notion of relabeling should be extended to constructions.



paradigms for the study of language change.

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