

# The grammaticalization of ‘shuo’ in modern Taiwan Mandarin

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This paper is intended as an investigation of the grammaticalization of ‘shuo’ in modern Taiwan Mandarin and the degree of its changing from a content word to a function word. ‘Shuo’ originally functioned as a verb (see example 1); afterwards it also functioned as a complementizer (C- see example 3); finally it has reportative function and can also be a counter-expectative marker. That means it is a discourse marker (DM- see example 2 and 4) in a later phase.

In this study, we designed test sentences on the basis of intuition. ‘Shuo’ was placed in the initial place (see example 2), inside (see example 3), and final part (see example 4) of the sentences respectively in the questionnaires to test the degree of acceptance by the Taiwan Mandarin speakers. This study will report the percentages of acceptance for ‘shuo’ in different places, and further analyze the degree of grammaticalization respectively. Another point being examined about complementizer ‘shuo’ is Givon’s (1980) ‘binding hierarchy’. He indicated that a complementizer initially only showed up with the verbs like ‘say’ or ‘tell’, etc. In the second stage, it also appeared with the verbs like ‘think’, ‘know’ or ‘believe’, etc. In the last stage, it can show up with the verbs like ‘decide’ or ‘agree’, etc. This study will report our quantitative results to see whether they agree with Givon’s points of view or not. In addition, social factors (age, sex, and mother tongue) will also be examined and discussed in the study. This research will report if ‘shuo’ has different degrees of grammaticalization in different social groups. Finally, the conclusion about the overall grammaticalization of ‘shuo’ will be presented.

## Examples

(1) *ta shuo ta yao lai*  
he said he would come  
‘He said that he would come.’

(2) *shuo you zhe zhong ren*  
DM there is such a kind guy (DM= discourse marker)  
‘How come there is such a guy like him!’

- (3) *lao shi you ti dao shuo yao kao shi*  
 teacher has mentioned C be going to give an exam  
 (C= complementizer)  
 ‘The teacher mentioned that she would give an exam.’
- (4) *ta shi zai dui ni hen hao shuo*  
 she certainly treat you very well DM (DM= discourse marker)  
 ‘She certainly treats you very well.’

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