This also is the case: an intralingual study of two additive particles (ia3 and me3) in Hakka

Abstract

Ever since Schiffrin's (1987) pioneering work, research on pragmatic/discourse markers have exploded, and recently quite a few contrastive studies have been conducted, be it intralingual (e.g. Blakemore 2002 on but, however, nevertheless; Oh 2000 on actually and in fact) or interlingual (e.g. Lewis 2006 on English on the contrary and French au contraire). Contrastive studies are especially interesting because they shed light on the subtle way discourse is regulated across and within languages by revealing the similarities and differences between seemingly equivalent markers that are oftentimes non-truth-conditional. And this also shall be the case in the current study, which compares and contrasts two what König (1991) calls additive focus particles in Hakka, namely, ia3 and me3, both translatable as “also”. The data is drawn from a natural conversation (22'13" in length) in the NCCU Corpus of Spoken Chinese (see Chui & Lai 2009), where 18 tokens of ia3 and 39 tokens of me3 were found.

Blakemore (1987) introduced relevance theory to the study of non-truth-conditional discourse connectives such as English also, and, but, and argued that they impose semantic constraints on relevance, which is achieved by one of the three contextual effects (implication, confirmation, or contradiction) they bring about. For instance, while so creates the contextual effect of implication and facilitates the hearer to understand the proposition it prefaces as a conclusion for its preceding proposition(s), after all gives rise to the contextual effect of confirmation and guides the hearer to understand the proposition it prefaces as evidence for its preceding proposition(s). Following this model, Blass (1990) did an interlingual study on English also, German auch 'also', and Sissala mà 'also'. She found that the three contextual effects alone are not sufficient enough to tease apart the crosslinguistic differences of these particles since they all create the contextual effect of confirmation. Thus she distinguished parallel confirmation, whereby one proposition provides evidence for a contextual implication already derivable from its preceding proposition, from backwards confirmation, whereby one proposition provides evidence for its preceding proposition, and showed that while German auch and Sissala mà can be used for backwards confirmation, English also cannot. However, our study illustrates that even the parallel/backwards distinction is not fine-grained enough to account for the functional differences between Hakka ia3 and me3, both of which can be used for parallel and backwards confirmation (e.g. 1~4). So, to fully disentangle the intricacies of the two particles, a hybrid of different approaches are adopted here, including Blakemore's (1987) contextual effects, Blass' (1990) notion of a confirmatory role in the processing of information, König's (1991) typological properties of additive particles, and finally sequentiality in the tradition of conversation analysis.

Structurally, the most frequent position for both ia3 and me3 is TCU-medial (typically between subject and predicate; 14 out of 18 for ia3 and 22 out of 39 me3). However, me3, but never ia3, also occurs at the TCU-initial and TCU-final position, a feature that would be argued as a sign of higher degree ofgramaticalization, which is further backed up by the multiple functions demonstrated by me3 but never by ia3, including scalar use, rhetorical negation, and universal quantification (e.g. 5~7). The only function shown by ia3 but not by me3 is interrogative disjunction (e.g. 8), which might originally arise from the conversational implicature whereby two contradictory propositions in parallel are understood as a case of disjunction since the normal conjunction interpretation would otherwise lead to contradiction. This conventionalization process is much akin to the “V bu V” question in Mandarin, which also consists of two contradictory propositions (V and not V).
Data

(1) ia3 used for parallel confirmation
.. a3 gia1 lai3e2 ... lia2ha3 gau1 ... gued4zung1
PRT 3SG:POSS son now teach junior.high.school
... gia1 xim1kiu1 ia3 gau1 gued4zung1
3SG:POSS daughter-in-law also teach junior.high.school
'His son now teaches at a junior high school, and his daughter-in-law also teaches at a junior high school.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-295)

(2) me3 used for parallel confirmation
... ge3 se3lai3e2 o5 ... ciong3 a1ba1
that boy PRT resemble father
...(7) ge3 ... gia1 a1se3long5 ciong3
that 3SG:POSS son-in-law resemble
...(7) iu3 me3 ciong3 a1ba1
and also resemble father
'The little boy looks like his father, and his son-in-law looks, also looks like his father.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-019)

(3) ia3 used for backwards confirmation
...(8) fan2ziin3 iu1 lo2ngin5ga1 qin3 ma5fan5
anyway have elder-people extremely troublesome
.. lia2ha3 [3 heu3sang1ngin5 3] gong2 mo5 oi3 lo2ngin5ga1
nowadays young.people say NEG want elder.people
.. [4 ziin3gin1 ia3 4] .. ia3 <L2 tau3yan4 L2> o1
seriously also also disagreeable PRT
'Anyway, it's very troublesome to (take care of) the elderly. Nowadays, young people don't like to (live with) their elders. Seriously, (the elderly) are disagreeable.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-089)
(4) me3 used for backwards confirmation

F2: .. qi3 .. ga3 do3 toi5zung1 a3 ma5
    EMP marry reach Taichung PRT PRT
    .. i1sen1 na5 .. ga3 bun1 i1sen1
doctor PRT marry to doctor

F1: .. um .. hon
    BC BC

F2: .. [ me3 he3 ] ko1i [ [ do1 ge3 ] ] o5
    also COP open knife NMLZ PRT

'F2: Then (she) married and moved to Taichung. A doctor, (she) married a doctor.'
F1: I see.
F2: Actually, (he) is a surgeon.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-303~305)

(5) Scalar use of me3

.. he3 .. tung5 a1fui1e2 .. tung5hog8 do3 .. kau2do2 gien3zug4si1
    COP with A-Fui classmate till pass:RESULT architect

.. do3 gin1 me3 mang5 to2
    till now also not-yet marry

.. ng5 di1 mo5
    2SG know NEG

'(He) was A-Fui's classmate until he got the architect (license). Even up to now, (he) is not married yet.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-218)

(6) me3 used in rhetorical negation

F1: (0) gi5 dai3 nai3vi3 a3
    3SG reside which-place PRT

F2: .. tung5 ge3 zag4 gag4biag4 m5 he3 me3
    with that CL next door NEG COP also

.. a1cun1teu5 he3 [ o5 ]
    A-Cun COP PRT

F1: [ o1 ]
    BC

'F1: Where does she live?
F2: (She) doesn't (live) next door with that one, does she? With A-Cun.'
F1: I see.' (H003-CN-C-FFF-261~263)
(7) *me3* used in universal quantification

.. gin1 lia2ha3 qion5pu3 me3 to2 [ ngoi3sen2zii2 ka3 do1 ]

today now all also marry mainlanders more many

'Nowadays it's often the case that (young people) all marry mainlanders'. (H003-CN-C-FFF-137)

(8) *ia3* used in disjunction

... fa5san1 ge3 sii3 nam2 .. nam2 ge3

Fasan NMLZ EMP adopt adopt NMLZ

he3 .. he3 .. do3dai2 he3 ge3 zag4 a1me1 nam2 ge3 mo5

COP COP on.earth COP that CL mother adopt NMLZ NEG

... ia3 he3 fa5san1 ge3 nam2

also COP Fasan NMLZ adopt

'Fasan's (child) was adopted. Was (he) really adopted by that mother? Or was it Fasan (who) adopted him?' (H003-CN-C-FFF-166)

References


