Abstract

Appearances can be deceiving:
a preliminary corpus study of de yangzi ‘appearance of’ in Mandarin

Recently there has been a growing body of research on nominalizations (e.g. Malchukov 2006, Ntelitheos 2006, Yap et al. 2007, Horie 2008, Noonan 2008, among others). Of particular interest is the robust crosslinguistic development in East Asian languages where nominalizers typically originate as referential nominals and over time grammaticalize into some subordinators or pragmatic markers when recurrently collocating with other lexical or grammatical items (Yap & Matthews 2008). For instance, the nominalizer de in Mandarin, when collocating with hua ‘speech’, may function as a topic marker, a conditional subordinator, or a pause marker (Jiang 2004). In light of these studies, this paper investigates the functions and development of a previously neglected collocation in Mandarin, namely, that of the nominalizer de and the noun yangzi ‘appearance’. Moreover, following Brinton & Traugott’s (2005) integrated approach to lexicalization and grammaticalization, I argue that de yangzi is a case of grammaticalization, rather than of lexicalization, as assumed by Jiang (2004) for de hua, which undergoes a development not different from de yangzi.

The data under investigation are drawn from two sources: the NCCU Corpus of Spoken Chinese (NCCU-CSC) for the synchronic data and the Academia Sinica Tagged Corpus of Early Mandarin Chinese (AS-TCEMC) for the historical data. The result shows that de yangzi ‘appearance of’ (DYZ for short) demonstrates two strikingly different syntactic structures, each encompassing two different types of functions. When yangzi serves as the head of its preceding nominalized constituent marked by de, DYZ has a referential function. On the other hand, when reanalyzed as a single unit, DYZ takes on a non-referential function. Both the referential and non-referential function of DYZ can be seen in Modern Mandarin (as reflected in NCCU-CSC) and Early Mandarin (as reflected in AS-TCEMC), but crucially the non-referential use seems to be a later development on account of its low frequency in Early Mandarin (1 out of 36, as opposed to 6 out of 11 in Modern Mandarin). In Modern Mandarin, DYZ may refer to (i) a look or countenance; (ii) an air, manner, or demeanor; (iii) a scene or sight. In Early Mandarin, however, DYZ may refer to (i) a look or countenance; (ii) an air, manner, or demeanor; (iii) a rule, convention, or custom; (iv) a sample or model; (v) a piece of writing. For the non-referential function, DYZ expresses epistemic or evidential meanings in Modern Mandarin, but only epistemic meanings in Early Mandarin. Importantly, there is only one such token in Early Mandarin, and it collocates with haosi ‘look like; seem’. It is believed that the collocation of haosi with de yangzi creates a “bridging context” (see Heine (2002: 86), where the new epistemic interpretation is foregrounded.
Data

A. Modern Mandarin: from NCCU Corpus of Spoken Chinese

1. Referential function

a. look; countenance

(1) M1: .. ke3shi4 wo2 xiang3 kan4 Xiao3xian2
    but  1SG want  see  Xiao3xian
    ‘But I want to see Xiao3xian.’

F2: .. she2me xiang3 kan4 .. zen3me kan4
    what  want  see  how  see
    ‘What (do you mean you) want to see (her)? How can you see (her)?’

M1: .. kan4-zhe .. kan4-zhe ni3 [de yang4zi]
    see-IMPF  see-IMPF 2SG DE YANGZI
    ‘(I wanna) see, see your face.’

M2: [a ni3 yong4] ..<L2 notebook L2> a
    PRT 2SG use  laptop  PRT
    ‘Well, you can use a laptop (to see her).’ (M005-CN-NF-MFMF-MYMY_303-306)

b. air; manner; demeanor

(2) 1 .. na4 ran2hou4 wo3 jiu4 xiang3-dao4 Xiang1gang3
    PRT  then  1SG EMPH think-ACMPL Hong.Kong

2 .. ran2hou4 wo3 jiu4 xiang3-dao4 Xiao3qiao2
    then  1SG EMPH think-ACMPL Xiao3qiao

3 .. ran2hou4 wo3 jiu4 xiang3-dao4 ta1 li3bai4wu3 de yang4zi
    then  1SG EMPH think-ACMPL 3SG Friday  DE YANGZI

4 .. ran2hou4 jiu4 jue2de2 hen3 sheng1qi4
    then  EMPH feel very angry
    ‘And then I thought of Hong Kong. And then I thought of Xiaoqiao. And then I thought of the way he was on Friday. And then (I) felt very angry.’
    (M010-CN-NF-MM-YY_42)

c. scene; sight

(3) ...(1.5) er2qie3 na4 xue2di4 hai2 shuo1 she2me .. xin4shi4dan4dan4
    and  that  male.junior.classmate  even  say  what  confidently
    de shuo1 .. ta1 kan4-dao4 wo3 gen1 ta1 shou3qian1shou3 de yang4zi
    PRT  say  3SG see-ACMPL 1SG and  3SG hold.hand.in.hand  DE YANGZI
    ‘And that male junior classmate even said something, confidently said that he saw the scene of me and her holding hand in hand.’ (M010-CN-NF-MM-YY_158)
2. Non-referential function

a. epistemic (indicating commitment to the truth of knowledge)

(4) F1: hon ... a ming2tian1 xiu1jia4 a
    BC PRT tomorrow have.a.day.off PRT
    ‘Hmm, so he has a day off tomorrow?’
F2: bu4 zhi1dong4 .. ke2yi3 rang4 ta1 zhi4ji3 xuan3 de yang4zi
    NEG know can let 3SG self choose DE YANGZI
    ‘I don't know. It seems that they can choose (which day to be off, but I’m not sure
    about it).’ (M008-CN-NF-FFM-OYO_290-291)

b. evidential (indicating sources of knowledge)

(5) ran2hou4 ta1men jiu4 ... kai1shi3 ying3be2 yao4
    then 3PL EMPH begin prepare about.to
    ye3can1 de yang4zi a
    picnic DE YANGZI PRT
    ‘And then (judging from their action) it looks like they begin, are about to picnic. And
    then after having dealt with (that), Minnie and Mickey are talking while that ox next
to him tells them to look over.’ (M023-NRT-SM-MF-YY_3)

B. Early Mandarin: from Academia Sinica Tagged Corpus of Early Mandarin Chinese

1. Referential function

a. look; countenance

(6) bi3 bie2ren2 biaozhi4 xie1, you4 sheng1-le yi4 zhang1 qiao3 zui3,
    than others beautiful a.little also born.with-PFV one CF eloquent mouth
tian1tian1 da3ban4 de xiang4 ge Xi1shi1 de yang4zi.
    everyday dress.up PRT resemble CF Xishi DE YANGZI
    ‘(She’s) a little more beautiful than others, and was also born to be eloquent. Everyday
    (she) dresses up like (the ancient beauty) Xishi.’ (Chap. 74, Dream of the Red Chamber)

b. air; manner; demeanor

(7) shang4hui2 ta1 yao4 na2 yu4 chu1 qu4, bian4 shi4 yao4
    last.time 3SG about.to take jade exit go EMPH COP about.to
tuo1shen1 de yang4zi, bei4 wo3 jiu1zhu4.
    escape DE YANGZI PASS 1SG catch
    ‘Last time (when) he was about to get out taking the jade away (with him), that is, (when
    he took on) an air of being about to escape, (he) was caught by me.’ (Chap. 120, Dream
    of the Red Chamber)
c. rule; convention; custom

(8)  ai, bu2ya4 kuan3 ta1, qie3 an4zhe za1men jia1
PRT PROH care 3SG temporarily according.to 1PL house
xian1qian2 de yang4zi ban4 qu4.
previous DE YANGZI do go
‘Well, don’t care about him. For the moment just go do (it) according to the previous
convention in our house.’ (Chap. 110, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

d. sample; model

(9)  ta1 dao4 ming2ri4 guo4lai2 yu3 ni3 ke1tou2, hai2 yao4 ti4 ni3 zuo4 xie2.
3SG reach tomorrow come.over COM 2SG kowtow also want BEN 2SG make shoes
zuo2ri4 shi3 ya1tou ti4-le Wu2 jia1 de yang4zi qu4-le.
yesterday order handmaid replace-PFV Wu family DE YANGZI go-PFV
‘Tomorrow she will come over to kowtow to you, (and) also wants to make shoes for
you. Yesterday (she) already ordered a handmaid to go get Wu family’s samples (of

e. a piece of writing

(10)  Bao3yu4 zhi3 dao4, “yan4tai2 xia4 shi4 she2me? yi2ding4 you4 shi4
Baoyu point say inkstone bottom COP what must again COP
na3 wei4 de yang4zi, wang4j4i4-le shou1 de.” Qing2wen2 mang2 qi3
which CF DE YANGZI forget-PFV put.away PRT Qingwen hurriedly lift
yan4 na2-le chu1 lai2, que4 shi4 yi4 zhang1 zi4tie3er2.
inkstone take-PFV exit come but COP one CF note
‘Baoyu pointed (to it) saying, “What is that under the inkstone? It must be somebody’s
writing, (which s/he) forgot to put away. Qingwen hurriedly lifted the inkstone and take
(it) from under, only to (find that) it’s a note.’ (Chap. 63, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

2. Non-referential function
Epistemic (indicating commitment to the truth of knowledge)

(11)  gang1 kua4 jin4 men2, zhi3 jian4 deng1kuang1 can3dan4,
just stride.over enter door only see light gloomy
yin3yin3 you3 ge nu3ren2 na2-zhe han4jin1zi,
vaguely EX CF woman take-IMPF waistband
hao3si4 yao4 shang4diao4 de yang4zi
seem about.to hang.onself DE YANGZI
‘As soon as (she) entered the door striding over (the doorsill), (she) saw the light was
gloomy (and that) vaguely there was a woman taking a waistband, (who) seemed about
to hang herself.’ (Chap. 111, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)
Abbreviations

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<td>ACMPL</td>
<td>accomplishment</td>
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<td>BC</td>
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<td>emphatic</td>
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References


Yap, Foong-ha, Pik-ling Choi & Kam-siu Cheung. 2007. Delexicalizing *di*: How a Chinese noun evolves into a nominalizer, with attitude. MS. Chinese University of Hong Kong.