



# The integration of exemplars and prior knowledge in the extension of schematic constructions: evidence from Chinese emerge-hide construction



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## ABSTRACT

In the extension of schematic constructions, there is a correlation between the novel instances' degree of semantic deviance from the central members and their chronological order of appearance. Innovations in this process are not without limit. Neither of the two observations has been convincingly addressed in previous studies, which have been based on either the prototype view of categorization, which lacks informativeness, or exemplar view of categorization, which lacks cognitive economy. A categorization model that includes concrete instances and abstractions benefits from the advantages of both categorization views, while minimizing their weaknesses. This approach, when integrated with knowledge effects, sheds light on the mechanism behind the extension of schematic constructions, a process that is driven by the interaction between prior knowledge and exemplars. On the one hand, attraction to exemplars may lead to innovation. On the other hand, constructional prior knowledge regulates the innovations. That is, because of the anchoring role of constructional prior knowledge, innovation remains conservative. This is clearly evidenced by the history of the Chinese emerge-hide (EH) construction, which is traced back to before the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

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## 1. Introduction

Diachronically, a schematic construction may sanction two types of new instances. Borrowing Langacker's (1987, 2008, 2009) terms, one type is "elaboration," which instantiates the construction without distortion. In other words, it is fully compatible with the specification of the construction but has greater precision and detail. The other type is "extension,"<sup>1</sup> which conflicts with the construction's specification but is "assimilated to the category on the basis of an association or

*Abbreviations:* ADV, adverbial phrase marker; AFF, affix; CONJ, conjunction; CRS, currently relevant state; DUR, durative aspect; EXP, experiential aspect; GEN, genitive; NAME, name; PFV, perfective aspect; PART, particle; pl, plural; PRON, pronoun; sg, singular.

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<sup>1</sup> In the literature on language change, the phenomena similar to what Langacker has termed "extension" have been discussed under different names, e.g., "generalization" in Goldberg (2006, 2009), "diffusional change" in De Smet (2013), "post-constructionalization constructional change" in Traugott and Trousdale (2013). Scholars may have different perspectives with respect to the nature and driving force of these phenomena. For example, for Bybee (2010, 2013) and Goldberg (2006, 2009), extension or generalization is semantically constrained, whereas for De Smet (2013), diffusional change is syntactically constrained.

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perceived similarity” (2008: 18). Extension is a “partial sanction,” which is characterized by some degree of deviance or ill-formedness (1987: 68–69). This paper discusses how different factors interact to affect innovations in the extension of schematic constructions.

Important to the present discussion are the roles that analogy and categorization model play in extension. In the last decade, analogy, whose role in language change was once considered subordinate to that of reanalysis, has been acknowledged by an increasing number of linguists as the motivating factor in language innovation and language learning (e.g., Anttila, 2003; Bybee and Eddington, 2006; Fischer, 2007; Traugott, 2008a,b; De Smet, 2009, 2012, 2013; Bybee, 2013; etc.). Usage-based models of language maintain that analogy has a double status, i.e., as both “a mechanism of language change” and “a strategy of language use and synchronic organisation” (De Smet, 2009: 1731). It is “the primary mechanism of morphosyntactic creativity and a minor mechanism of phonological change” (Bybee, 2010: 58). For example, it has been argued that analogy drives both actualization, the grammatically constrained process in which the reanalyzed item develops new syntactic behavior (De Smet, 2012), and the extension of schematic constructions, the semantically constrained process in which increasingly novel instances are sanctioned (see, e.g., Goldberg, 2006, 2009; Bybee, 2010, 2013; etc.). The categorization models, i.e., the prototype ones and the exemplar ones, differ from one another with respect to the representational abstraction of categories. In the literature on categorization, models that either integrate both prototype and exemplar views (e.g., Smith and Minda, 1998; Vanpaemel and Storms, 2008) or combine prior knowledge with prototype/exemplar representation (e.g., Murphy, 1993; Heit, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001; Lin and Murphy, 1997; Rehder and Murphy, 2003; Harris and Rehder, 2011; etc.) have been discussed.

In the literature on language innovations, both the factors facilitating the production of novel instances of a schematic construction and those constraining this process have been discussed. Studies have shown that in innovation some novel uses or instances appear more readily than others. This argument fits neatly with the predictions of prototype theory, i.e., what Geeraert (1997) called the “modulations of core cases” in diachronic semasiological development. Generally, similarity between innovations and existing patterns plays the key role. For example, according to De Smet (2012, 2013), in actualization, the order of appearance of a reanalyzed item’s different uses is strongly guided by familiarity, which is determined by syntactic and collocational similarities (see De Smet, 2012, 2013 for a valuable review of different proposals regarding this issue). As shown in Peng (2013), the new instances of the Chinese cause-complement pivotal construction (C-PVC) that appear in later historical periods are semantically more distant from central members than those appearing in earlier historical periods. This actually raises a further issue, i.e., whether similarity is the only factor affecting the gradient distance between innovations and existing patterns. Equally interesting is the observation that language innovations are not without limit. This is because language learners know “whether a pattern can be extended for use with new verbs for the sake of production” so as to avoid overgeneralization (Goldberg, 2006: 93) and because “language production and linguistic choices are subject to a variety of functional-cognitive constraints” (De Smet, 2013: 5). In the literature, the limiting of innovation has been attributed to preemption (e.g., Clark, 1987; DiSciullo and Williams, 1987; Goldberg, 1995, 2006, 2009; Marcotte, 2005; etc.). However, as far as extension of schematic constructions is concerned, no attempt has been made to show whether preemption—the existing evidence for which is mostly synchronic—is diachronically attested.

Various theoretical approaches to the mechanism(s) behind the extension of schematic constructions have been proposed (e.g., Goldberg, 2006; Langacker, 2008; Bybee, 2010). A central focus of these studies is how novel instances of schematic constructions are produced. Neither the factors facilitating nor those regulating the innovations have been convincingly addressed. These approaches are usually based on a specific categorization model. The limitations of these approaches are at least partially related to the categorization models on which they build, because neither the pure prototype view nor the pure exemplar view has gone unchallenged (see Section 2.1). The present study explores the factor(s) contributing to the correlation between the novel instances’ degree of semantic deviance and their chronological order of appearance on the one hand, and how diachronic evidence explains language learners’ avoidance of overgeneralization on the other hand, with a focus on the extension of schematic constructions. It argues that the production of novel instances of a schematic construction is driven by the semantic similarities to exemplars but constrained by the construction’s general properties. To examine this view, the long history of the Chinese emerge-hide (EH) construction will be discussed in detail from the perspective of diachronic construction grammar (DCG), which addresses historical change from the perspective of construction grammar. Many studies using this approach have been conducted cross-linguistically, for example, Israel (1996), Hilpert (2008, 2013), Traugott (2008a), Trousdale (2008a,b), Noël and Coleman (2010), and Pattern (2012). Representative theoretical discussions of DCG include Noël (2007), Bergs and Diewald (2008), Traugott (2008a,b), and Trousdale (2008a,b, 2010, 2012) (for a useful summary see Traugott and Trousdale, 2013: 39–40). Barðdal et al. (2015), which offers a broad theoretical exploration of DCG and detailed case studies, presents the most recent advances in the field.

All the synchronic and diachronic data presented in this paper, except for those cited by other scholars, were extracted from the Center for Chinese Linguistics (CCL) corpus, from which the statistical results were manually filtered out. Designed and created by Peking University, the CCL corpus consists of the modern Mandarin section (about 364,454,630 characters) and the Ancient Chinese section (about 208,617,432 characters). Both sections cover a vast array of different genres, including political essays, fiction, drama, libretti, biography, history, news coverage, religious texts (Buddhist and Taoist), miscellanies, notes, dictionaries, academic articles, poetry and Chinese translations of works originally written in English, Russian, French, Japanese, etc.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the categorization models and proposes an approach characterized by the interaction between exemplars and general properties of a schematic construction. In Section 3, the modern Mandarin

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