

From conditional to discourse: A case study of *bo⁵* 無 in Southern Min

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The negation marker *bo⁵* 無 in Southern Min is paradigmatically related to its positive counterpart, the verb *u⁷* 有 ‘to have’, both denoting possession, existence, or habitual, among many others. *Bo⁵* 無 appears in various structural patterns and scopes over noun phrases, verb phrases, modal words, and even sentences. Moreover, it is a multifunctional word with functions like conditional and discourse beyond negation.

This paper investigates *bo⁵* 無 and focuses on its extension from conditional to discourse (including suggestive and refutative). It is observed that *bo⁵* 無 appears in a conditional construction without an explicit conditional marker like *na⁷* 若, so it qualifies as a conditional marker *per se*. This conditional use is further extended to the pragmatically induced suggestive use and refutative use.

We argue that the suggestive and refutative uses are natural extensions of the conditional use. There are two factors that trigger the development. The first is the increase in the degree of certainty in the speaker’s attitude, which weakens the conditional sense. The second is the change (and eventual loss) of the explicit protasis, which eliminates the conditional sense. The rise of the suggestive and refutative senses co-occur with the demise of the conditional sense. This process can be explained by the mechanism described in the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change. The study also provides further evidence and lends support to the universal validness of this theory by placing a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of semantic change comprising the world’s languages.

Keywords: conditional, discourse, suggestive, refutative, semantic change

1. Introduction

This paper investigates the negation marker *bo⁵* 無 in Southern Min and focuses on its usages from a conditional marker to a discourse marker. This discourse marker serves two apparently distinct functions, suggestive and refutative. We argue that the semantic change from the conditional use to the suggestive and refutative uses can be explained by the Invited Inferencing

Theory of Semantic Change. This study in turn contributes to our understanding of semantic change and provides further supporting evidence of this theory. First, we begin with the negation use of the marker *bo*⁵ 無.

A series of negators with a wide range of meanings exist in Southern Min, among them *m*⁷ 不 and *bo*⁵ 無 being the most discussed. While *m*⁷ 不 is a pure negator, *bo*⁵ 無 can be regarded as denoting possession or existence on top of negation, since it is paradigmatically related to its positive counterpart, the verb *u*⁷ 有 ‘to have’, both taking a nominal complement, as in (1a), or a verbal complement, as in (1b). (1a) describes a possessor-possessee relation between the subject and the object, and (2a) describes the presence/absence of the subject’s habit expressed by the predicate.

- (1) a. 伊 {有/無} 車。¹
*i*¹ *u*⁷/*bo*⁵ *tshia*¹.
 3SG U/BO car
 ‘She owns a car. / She does not own a car.’
- b. 我 {有/無} 食 薰。
*gua*² *u*⁷/*bo*⁵ *tsiah*⁸ *hun*¹.
 1SG U/BO eat cigarette
 ‘I smoke. / I do not smoke.’

In addition to being a verb, *bo*⁵ 無 is also a multifunctional word. It appears in various structural patterns and scopes over noun phrases, verb phrases, modal words, and even sentences, as demonstrated in Lien (2015):

- (2) a. Verb + *bo*⁵ 無 + complement + (noun)
 呀 贖 一 尾 掠 無 著。
iah *tshun*¹ *tsit*⁸ *bue*² *liah*⁸ *bo*⁵ *tioh*⁸.
 PRT remain one CL catch BO PH
 ‘The remaining one (fish) could not be caught.’

¹ Throughout this paper, romanization of Chinese characters, English glosses and translation were added by the current author. The abbreviations used in glosses are listed at the end. For brevity, the multifunctional words *bo*⁵, *hoo*⁷, *ka*⁷, *kah*⁴, and *u*⁷ retain their phonetic forms and thus are not glossed.

b. Verb + *bo⁵* 無 + noun

尋 無 頭路 啦。

tshue⁷ bo⁵ thau⁵loo⁷ lah.

find BO job PRT

‘(One) cannot find a job.’

c. *Bo⁵* 無 + (verbal) predicate

啊 古早人 攏 無 穿 鞋， 攏 褪赤腳。

ah koo²tsa²lang⁵ long² bo⁵ tshing⁷ e⁵, long² thng³tshiah⁴kha¹.

PRT ancient:people all BO wear shoe, all go:barefoot

‘In old days, people walked barefoot without wearing shoes.’

d. *Bo⁵* 無 + (adjectival) predicate

啊 伊 出世 無 佬 久。

ah i¹ tshut⁴si³ bo⁵ gua⁷ ku².

PRT 3SG be:born BO so long

‘He was born only recently.’

e. *Bo⁵* 無 + modal + verb phrase

阮 無 愛 共 汝 蹉。

guan² bo⁵ ai³ kah⁴ li² tua³.

1SG BO want KAH 2SG live

‘I don’t want to live with you.’

f. Degree adverb + [*Adj bo⁵* 無 + transitive verb]

此 款 球鞋 真 無 穿。

tsit⁴ khuan² kiu⁵e⁵ tsin¹ bo⁵ tshing⁷.

this kind sneakers really BO wear

‘This kind of sneakers wears out easily.’

g. Degree adverb + [*Adj bo⁵* 無 + noun]

感覺 啊 真 無 面子。

kam²kak⁴ ah tsin¹ bo⁵ bin⁷tsu².

feel PRT really BO face

‘It really feels like losing face.’

h. *Bo*⁵ 無 appears sentence finally

你 有 看 著 無?
*li*² *u*⁷ *khuann*³ *tioh*⁸ *bo*⁵?
 2SG have see PH BO

‘Did you see that?’

i. *Bo*⁵ 無 appears sentence initially

無 我 共 你 倩。
*bo*⁵ *gua*² *ka*⁷ *li*² *tshiann*³.
 BO 1SG KA 2SG hire

‘In that case, let me hire you.’

In (2a) and (2b), *bo*⁵ 無 appears postverbally. In (2c) and (2d), it precedes a predicate, either verbal or adjectival. In (2e), it is followed by a modal, which introduces a verbal predicate. In (2f) and (2g), it combines with a following transitive verb or a noun, and this combination can be modified by a degree adverb. In (2h), *bo*⁵ 無 appears at the end of a sentence and functions like a question marker. In (2i), *bo*⁵ 無 superficially introduces an unsaid conditional proposition and is glossed “otherwise” or “in that case”. We will argue that here *bo*⁵ 無 is actually a discourse marker expressing suggestion, which, together with refutation, are the foci of this study.

The following research question is addressed in our study: What is the mechanism underlying the change from a conditional marker to a discourse marker? To answer this question, this paper will investigate the function of *bo*⁵ 無 as a conditional marker and the change that it undergoes to discourse marker.

The remaining part of this paper is organized as below: §2 presents the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change; §3 discusses the conditional constructions; §4 presents the development of *bo*⁵ 無 from a conditional marker to a discourse marker; §5 presents the analysis; §6 concludes this study.

2. The invited inferencing theory of semantic change

In order to explain the functional change of *bo*⁵ 無 from a conditional marker to a discourse marker, we adopt the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change (henceforth IITSC) by Traugott (1999) and Traugott & Dasher (2002) which states that “[t]he prime objective of IITSC

in which the GIINs are semanticized, and new coded meanings appear. This is Stage II in the figure, where the newly semanticized meaning (M_2) is associated with the conceptual structure (C_b).

3. On conditional constructions

In this section, we briefly present the discussion on conditional constructions from a prototypical perspective. We argue that there are prototypical conditional constructions and non-prototypical ones.

Structurally, a prototypical conditional construction is a complex sentence containing a main clause and a subordinate clause. However, not all subordinate clauses hold a conditional relation with the main clauses. English uses different subordinate conjunctions to indicate different relations, e.g. *if* or *when* for conditional relations, *because* or *since* for causal relations, and *before*, *after*, and *since* for temporal relations.

Semantically, the subordinate clause of a conditional construction corresponds to the *protasis* (or *antecedent*) and the main clause corresponds to the *apodosis* (or *consequent*). According to Haiman (1985) and Comrie (1986), both the protasis and the apodosis are propositions.

If we notate the protasis and the apodosis p and q respectively, then truth-conditionally, a conditional construction is true iff (i) both p and q are true, or (ii) p is false and q is true, or (iii) both p and q are false. To paraphrase, a conditional construction is false iff p is true and q is false. For example (Comrie 1986: 78):

- (3) *If today is Sunday, the priest will be in church.*

This sentence is false iff the priest does not appear in church on a Sunday, otherwise it is true. It seems that it does not matter whether the priest is in church or not on a weekday. However, in natural languages, some situations must be excluded even when they are true. For example:

- (4) *If you go out without the umbrella, you'll get wet.*

This sentence is false iff one goes out without the umbrella and does not get wet. However, in the situation that one goes out with the umbrella and gets wet because the umbrella has many

holes, this sentence would at least be misleading even though it is true, as it violates Grice's Maxim of Quantity requiring appropriate informativeness on the part of the speaker. (4) is not a pure statement, but a mild warning or reminder for the hearer.

In English, the prototypical form of a conditional construction has two alternatives, one beginning with *if/when* and the subordinate clause (expressing the protasis) and followed by the main clause (expressing the apodosis), as (5a) and (5b) show, the other beginning with the main clause (expressing the apodosis) and followed by *if/when* and the subordinate clause (expressing the protasis), as (5c) and (5d) show.

- (5) a. [*If/When* protasis, apodosis]
 b. *If you eat it, you will die.*
 c. [Apodosis, *if/when* protasis]
 d. *You are Mr. Bond, if I am correct.*

Note that a conditional construction may express causation, as in (5b), but it may also express the speaker's personal cognitive process or logical reasoning, as in (5d). This justifies the conception that conditional is a semantic prime that cannot be subsumed under other semantic primes.

The conditional construction also has non-prototypical forms. Culicover (1970; 1972) raises an example (6a) which receives lengthy discussion in Culicover & Jackendoff (1997). Structurally, it consists of coordination of an NP and an S. This violates the requirement that coordinated elements have the same syntactic category. If we paraphrase the NP *one more can of beer* in (6a) as an S as in (6b), then the requirement would be met. If we further look into the semantics of this sentence, it is equivalent to a conditional construction (6c).

- (6) a. *One more can of beer and I'm leaving.*
 b. *You drink another can of beer and I'm leaving.*
 c. *If you drink another can of beer, I'm leaving.*

This mismatch between form and meaning must be explained in some way or another. While mainstream Generative Grammar employs syntactic derivation to account for differences in coordination and adjunction, Culicover & Jackendoff (2005) attribute this mismatch to the

intricacies of CS-SS interface, keeping simple both conceptual structure (CS) and syntactic structure (SS).²

To summarize, we argue that both structural and semantic properties must be taken into account in delimiting the scope of the conditional construction. A prototypical conditional construction is a complex sentence with the subordinator present. There are, however, non-prototypical constructions that may deviate from a prototypical one structurally, although semantically they are the same.

The differences between the prototypical conditional constructions and the non-prototypical ones are also observed in Lien (2020), which discusses the conditional marker *na*⁷ 那 in Southern Min. Lien (2020: 6) shows that *na*⁷ 那, in addition to having the two senses, i.e. *if* and *only*, can be used as a disjunctive coordinator in an A-not-A question, which can be regarded as a special type of alternative questions such as *Do you care for coffee or tea?* (Lien 2020: 7) Also, an alternative statement like *Publish or perish* means the same as *If you don't publish, then you will perish*. (Lien 2020: 7) Therefore, the alternative statement “X or Y” implies “If not X, then Y”, and it is this implication that relates the senses of *or* and *if*.

The historical data from *Go-en* 《語苑》 shows that if *na*⁷ 若 occurs as a subordinator to mark the protasis in conditionals, it occupies a syntactic position higher than a set of function words such as *si*⁷ 是 (focus marker), *u*⁷ 有 (evidential marker), *beh*⁴ 要 (volitional modal verb), *m*⁷ 不 (volitional negative), and *e*⁷ 能 (dynamic/epistemic modal) (Lien 2020: 14).

For data from the later part of the twentieth century and the beginning twenty-first century, *na*⁷ 若 as the marker of protasis in conditionals is higher in hierarchical structures than *si*⁷ 是 (the focus marker), *u*⁷ 有 (evidential marker), *beh*⁴ 卜 (volitional modal), *e*⁷ 會 (epistemic modal), *bo*⁵ 無 (negative evidential marker), *m*⁷ 毋 (negative volitional modal), *khi*³*hoo*⁷ 去予 (agent marker in passives), and *ka*⁷ 共 (preposed patient marker or marker of oblique role) (Lien 2020: 21).

While *na*⁷ 那 marks the protasis, a variety of adverbs or modals can be used to mark the apodosis, *pien*⁷ 便, *tsiu*⁷ 就, and *tiann*⁷-*tioh*⁸ 定著. One motivation of using these words is to disambiguate the polysemous *na*⁷ 那 (Lien 2020: 9–10).

² See, for example, Weisser (2015), who regards the Conditional Coordination Construction (CondCo) as a type of “derived coordination” from a Minimalist perspective.

4. From conditional to discourse: The development of *bo*⁵ 無

This section presents the development of *bo*⁵ 無 from a conditional marker to a discourse marker. The examples here are retrieved from the scripts of the Taiwanese TV drama *The Sun Shines First in Back Mountain* 後山日先照 televised by the Public Television Service Taiwan. The original scripts contain Chinese characters only, so possible errors in glosses and translations are the responsibility of the current author.

4.1 *bo*⁵ 無 as a conditional marker

We believe the conditional use of *bo*⁵ 無 is closely related to *na*⁷ 那. When the conditional marker *na*⁷ 那 combines with the negator *bo*⁵ 無, a new conditional marker *na*⁷*bo*⁵ 那無 is created, which is a negative conditional marker. The following example shows that *bo*⁵ 無 alone is also a negative conditional marker:

- (7) 來旺： 緊 去 換 衫 啦， 無 會 寒 著。(14/23:06)³
*Lai*⁵*ong*⁷: *Kin*² *khi*³ *uann*⁷ *sann*¹ *lah*, *bo*⁵ *e*⁷ *kuann*⁵ *tioh*⁸.
 PN hurry go change clothes PRT BO will cold PH
 ‘Lai-Ong: Go change your clothes now, otherwise you’ll get cold.
 (If you don’t go change your clothes now, you’ll get cold.)’

In this example, *na*⁷*bo*⁵ 那無 can be used interchangeably with *bo*⁵ 無 without changing the meaning.⁴ Moreover, the form [*S*₁, *bo*⁵ 無 *S*₂] here is semantically equivalent to the form [*Na*⁷*bo*⁵ 那無 *S*₁, *S*₂], where *S*₁ is the protasis and *S*₂ is the apodosis of the conditional construction.

Semantically, the protasis is *S*₁, 緊去換衫 ‘changing your clothes now’ and the apodosis is *S*₂, 會寒著 ‘you’ll get cold’. We may safely translate *bo*⁵ 無 loosely into the English equivalent *if not*, or *otherwise*. The speaker believes that there is a causal relation between “not

³ Throughout this paper, the numbers with the format (episode/minute:second) indicate the timestamp of the beginning of the example conversation in the TV drama.

⁴ We are not claiming that *bo*⁵ 無 is derived from *na*⁷*bo*⁵ 那無 or vice versa. This interchangeability suggests that both terms serve the same function to the best, without further implying other relations between them for lack of evidence.

changing clothes now” and “getting cold”. Other plausible translations include *lest*, *for fear that*, and *in case that*.

We did not include the protasis part in our structural description of [*Bo*⁵ 無 + S] because the protasis part may be either an aforementioned linguistic expression, or contextually mutually understood background knowledge, termed *co-text* and *context* respectively.

As an aforementioned information, the protasis in the conditional construction can be omitted. In the following discussion, I will use the term *omitted protasis* for the omitted part beginning with *bo*⁵ 無, and *antecedent* for the substantial meaning (or content) of the omitted protasis, in a way similar to how relative pronouns get interpreted in a relative clause construction.

The relation between the antecedent and the omitted protasis is straightforward in (7). There are, however, examples where the relation is not so straightforward. See the following example:

- (8) 耕土： 阿嬤， 你 共 雅惠 講 啥？ 無 伊 (14/17:41)
King¹thoo²: Ama², li² ka⁷ Nga²hui⁷ kong² siann²? bo⁵ i¹
 PN granny you KA PN say what BO 3SG
 怎會 走去？
tsuann²e⁷ tsau²khi³?
 how:come ran:away
 ‘King-Thoo: Granny, what did you say to Nga-Hui? How come she ran away?
 (Granny, if you didn’t say something to Nga-Hui, how come she ran away?)’

Here, the antecedent “what did you say to Nga-Hui” is a question, but the omitted protasis is “saying something to Nga-Hui”. The two are related but not equivalent. The clause following *bo*⁵ 無 challenges and questions the hearer based on a positive assumption of the antecedent (that the hearer did say something to Nga-Hui that resulted in her leaving).

The antecedent and omitted protasis may be separated by different turns. In the short conversation below, the antecedent of the omitted protasis of the last sentence is actually related to the first sentence “you are thinking of your dad again”.

- (9) a. 再添： 你 攞 在 想 恁 多桑 啊 喔？(7/25:44)
Tsai³thiam¹: *Li² koh⁴ leh⁴ siunn⁷ lin² too⁵¹sang¹¹ ah ooh?*
 PN 2SG again ASP think 2SG.POSS father PRT PRT
 ‘Tsai-Thiam: You are thinking of your dad again?’
- b. 耕土： 毋 是 啦。
King¹thoo²: *M⁷ si⁷ lah.*
 PN NEG COP PRT
 ‘King-Thoo: No.’
- c. 再添： 無 你 是 按nuann 啦？
Tsai³thiam¹: *Bo⁷ li² si⁷ an²nua² lah?*
 PN BO 2SG COP how PRT
 ‘Tsai-Thiam: If you are not thinking of your dad again, then what’s the matter with you (i.e. why are you crying)?’

In Examples (7–9), *bo⁵* 無 is a conditional marker and interchangeable with *na⁷bo⁵* 那無. The omitted protases after *bo⁵* 無 in these examples take as their antecedents the aforementioned propositions in the conversations, with different degrees of straightforwardness. Both *bo⁵* 無 and *na⁷bo⁵* 那無 can be reanalyzed as conjunctions, equivalent to *otherwise* or *in the other case* in English.

The degree of certainty is different among (7–9). In (7), the speaker has a neutral attitude towards the two possible worlds associated with the conditional construction (i.e. “changing clothes” vs. “not changing clothes”). In (8) and (9), the speakers have a more affirmative attitude toward one possible world (i.e. “the hearer said something to Nga-hui” in (8) and “the hearer is thinking of his dad again” in (9)). This is also evident from the difference between sentence types of the consequents in (7–9). In (7), the consequent is a statement. In (8) and (9), the consequents are questions, expressing the speakers’ disbelief towards the hearers. Thus, this increase in certainty from (7) to (9), as well as the interrogative consequents in (8) and (9) may eventually result in the demise of the conditional sense, as will be discussed later.

4.2 Transition from a conditional marker to a discourse marker

There is an intermediate stage when *bo⁵* 無 functions as a conditional marker and a discourse marker at the same time. See the following example:

- (10) 彩雲： 你 是 不 同 意 我 講 的 喔？ 無 你 (16/33:53)
Tsai²hun⁵: Li² si⁷ m⁷ tong⁵i³ gua² kong² e⁵ o? bo⁵ li²
 PN 2SG COP NEG agree 1SG say NML PRT BO 2SG
 有 啥物 看法 哈？
u⁷ siann²mih⁴ khuann³huat⁴ ha?
 have what opinion PRT
 ‘Tsai-Hun: Don’t you agree with me? (If not,) Tell me your opinion.’

Here, if we regard *bo⁵* 無 as a conditional marker, the omitted protasis would be “you agree with me” whereas the antecedent would be “don’t you agree with me?”. They are related but not equivalent.

However, we can also regard *bo⁵* 無 as a discourse marker. It functions like a connecting word between the two sentences. The speaker was affirmative about the truth value of the first sentence (that the hearer did not agree with her), so she offered to suggest that the hearer should tell her the opinion. Here is another example:

- (11) a. 來旺： 你 有 看 著 咱 孫 小姐 (15/49:39)
Lai⁵ong⁷: Li² u⁷ khuann³ tioh⁸ lan² Sun¹ sio²tsia²
 PN 2SG have see PH 1PL.INC PN Miss
 耕梅仔 無？
King¹mui⁵-a² bo⁵?
 PN-DIM BO
 ‘Lai-Ong: Have you seen the granddaughter (of my master’s family), King-Mui?’
- b. 阿樹： 無 看 e 呢。
A¹tshiu⁷: Bo⁵ khuann³ e neh.
 PN BO see PH PRT
 ‘A-Tshiu: No, I haven’t seen her.’
- c. 來旺： 無 你 車 共 我 顧 一下， 咱 四界
Lai⁵ong⁷: Bo⁵ li² tshia¹ ka⁷ gua² koo³ tsit⁸e⁷, lan² si³ke³
 PN BO 2SG car KA 1SG watch:over PH 1PL.INC around

找 看覓啊。

tshue⁷ khuann³mai⁷.

find try

‘Lai-Ong: {?If not/?If that is the case/In that case}, please watch over my rickshaw for a while. Let’s (turning to his other companion) search around.’

Here, Lai-Ong asked A-Tshiu the whereabouts of King-Mui, which A-Tshiu did not know. He then asked A-Tshiu to watch over his rickshaw so that he could continue the searching with his companion. In this interpretation, *bo⁵* 無 can be treated as a conditional marker, with “one having seen the granddaughter King-Mui” being the antecedent. However, *bo⁵* 無 can also be regarded as a discourse marker of suggestion, translated as *in that case* instead of *if that is the case*. Therefore, it begins to lose the conditional sense as a result of the certainty of the speaker (that he already knew that the hearer did not have knowledge of King-Mui’s whereabouts).

4.3 *Bo⁵* 無 as a discourse marker

In this section, we present examples of *bo⁵* 無 as a discourse marker. The conditional interpretation is no longer viable. We propose that there are at least two discourse functions associated with *bo⁵* 無, i.e. suggestion and refutation. First, see the following example:

- (12) 彩雲： 看 你 按呢 笑瞇瞇， 一定 有 (15/11:45)

Tsai²hun⁵: Khuann³ li² an²ne¹ tsio³bi¹bi¹, it¹ting⁷ u⁷

PN see 2SG so smile surely have

啥物 好 代誌 呼。無 嘛 講 出來 乎 我 共

siann²mih⁴ ho² tai⁷tsi³ ho. Bo⁵ ma⁷ kong² tshut⁴lai⁵ hoo⁷ gua² ka⁷

something good event PRT BO also say out let 1SG KA

你 鬥 歡喜 一下。

li² tau³ huann¹hi² tsit⁸e⁷.

2SG help happy PH

‘Tsai-Hun: Look how you smile. There must be something good happening. Why don’t you tell me and let me share your joy?’

Here *bo*⁵ 無 has lost its conditional sense. It is evident that *bo*⁵ 無 here does not have as its antecedent “there must be something good happening”, because if there were nothing good happening, Tsai-hun would not have encouraged the hearer to share the good news with her in the first place.

In this example, the speaker urged the hearer to share with her what was happening; thus the suggestive sense arises. Another example is shown below:

- (13) a. 耕山： 啊 有 啥 撇步， 稍 共 我 (16/52:12)
King¹san¹: *Ah u⁷ siann² phiat⁴poo⁷, sio² ka⁷ gua²*
 PN PRT have what know-how a:little KA 1SG
 教 一下 啦。
ka³ tsit⁸e⁷ lah.
 show PH PRT
 ‘King-San: What’s the trick? Show me.’
- b. 耕山： 無 我 拜 你 做 師父 嘛。
King¹san¹: *Bo⁵ gua² pai³ li² tsue³ sai¹hu⁷ mah.*
 PN BO 1SG worship 2SG do master PRT
 ‘King-San: What if you apprentice me?’

Likewise, here *bo*⁵ 無 has lost its conditional sense. We cannot find the antecedent of the (supposedly) omitted protasis. The speaker simply offered suggestion to the hearer. From the two examples above, we argue that here *bo*⁵ 無 has shifted from a conditional marker to a discourse marker. Here, the construction containing *bo*⁵ 無 is no longer a conditional one. On the contrary, it presupposes a situation which the speaker does not favor, and the speaker offers a suggestion to the hearer in order to change that situation.

The discourse marker *bo*⁵ 無 can also appear in scenarios where a strong conflict is observed between the interlocutors, as the example below shows.

- (14) a. 滿堂： 雅惠 呢？伊 有 啥物 資格 (15/25:22)
Buan²tong⁵: *Nga²hui⁷ leh? I¹ u⁷ siann²mih⁴ tsu¹keh⁴*
 PN PN PRT 3SG have what qualification

做 人 的 老師 啊？假 正經 啦。

*tso*³ *lang*⁵ *e*⁵ *lau*⁷*su*¹ *ah?* *Ke*² *tsing*³*king*¹ *lah.*

do person POSS teacher PRT fake decent PRT

‘Buan-Tong: What about Nga-Hui? She doesn’t behave like a teacher, as she is pretending to be decent.’

b. 耕土： 無 你 是 佢 正經 啦？

*King*¹*thoo*²: *Bo*⁵ *li*² *si*⁷ *gua*⁷ *tsing*³*king*¹ *lah?*

PN BO 2SG COP how decent PRT

‘King-Thoo: And how decent are you?’

c. 滿堂： 你... 你... 你 足 好膽 你...

*Buan*²*tong*⁵: *Li*²... *li*²... *li*² *tsiok*⁴ *ho*²*tann*² *li*²...

PN 2SG 2SG 2SG very daring 2SG

‘Buan-Tong: How dare you ...’

Here *bo*⁵ 無 is followed by a rhetorical question. It has the function of refuting whatever is claimed in the previous utterance. In this example, Buan-Tong was accusing Nga-Hui of hypocrisy, on which King-Thoo disagreed. Furthermore, King-Thoo used the rhetorical question to accuse Buan-Tong, his father, of marrying a second wife (a detail beyond the scope of this conversation). A further example is given below.

(15) a. 滿堂： 阿母 若 卜 補， 我 用 漢藥。 (9/3:32)

*Buan*²*tong*⁵: *A*¹*bu*² *na*⁷ *beh*⁴ *poo*², *gua*² *ing*⁷ *han*³*ioh*⁸

PN mom if want nourish 1SG use Chinese:herb

予 食

*hoo*⁷ *tsiah*⁸.

HOO eat

‘Buan-Tong: If Mom needs nutrients, I’ll prepare Chinese herbs.’

b. 安堂： 若 講 會 chhuai 著 愛 做 會 到。

*An*¹*tong*⁵: *Na*⁷ *kong*² *e*⁷ *tshut*⁴ *lai*⁵ *tioh*⁸ *ai*³ *tso*³ *e*⁷ *kau*³.

PN if say PRT out come then must do PRT arrive

‘An-Tong: Make sure your actions live up to your words.’

- c. 滿堂： 無 你 講 這 是 啥物 意思？
Buan²tong⁵: *Bo⁵ li² kong² tse¹ si⁷ siann²mih⁴ i³su³?*
 PN BO 2SG say this COP what meaning
 ‘Buan-Tong: What do you mean by saying that?’
- d. 滿堂： 你 的 意思 是 我 攏 無 在 顧
Buan²tong⁵: *Li² e⁵ i³su³ si⁷ gua² long² bo⁵ leh⁴ ko³*
 PN 2SG POSS meaning COP 1SG at:all NEG ASP look:after
 阿母 就 對？
a¹bu² to⁷ tioh⁴?
 mom then right
 ‘Buan-Tong: Did you mean I haven’t taken care of Mom at all?’

Here *bo⁵ 無* is followed by an ordinary question. It also has the function of refuting whatever is claimed in the previous utterance. In this conversation, the two interlocutors (brothers in the TV drama) were fighting. The utterance beginning with *bo⁵ 無* carried a strong refutative overtone. Buan-Tong did not agree on what his brother had said and became defensive.

We argue that in the two examples above, *bo⁵ 無* is a discourse marker expressing refutation. There is no way to reconstruct a protasis-apodosis relation in both of them, so they are by no means conditional. The speaker uses *bo⁵ 無* to express discontent and challenge what the interlocuter just said, thus a sense of refutation arises.⁵

5. Analysis

In this section, we explain the mechanism underlying the development of *bo⁵ 無* using IITSC. Starting from the conditional marker exemplified by (7–9), we see that two essential components of a conditional construction exist. The syntactic structure [*S*₁, *bo⁵ 無* *S*₂] (having the meaning of [*S*₁, otherwise *S*₂]) is related to the semantic structure [If not *S*₁’, then *S*₂], where *S*₁’ is the omitted protasis that is a copy or a modified version of its antecedent *S*₁.

⁵ One reviewer reminded that in (12–15), the suggestive/refutative sense may come from the sentence after *bo⁵ 無* instead of *bo⁵ 無* itself. However, all the conversations would sound unnatural without *bo⁵ 無*. We may say that here *無* is a “suggestion licenser” in (12) and (13) and a “refutation licenser” in (14) and (15). Since *bo⁵ 無* here is a function word, having a function of licensing suggestion/refutation can be equated to having a suggestive/refutative sense.

Examples (10) and (11) show that high degree of affirmation can be found in the speaker's attitude. In both examples, although *bo⁵ 無* is still a conditional marker as they meet the structural and semantic requirements in the previous paragraph, high degree of affirmation renders the conditional sense weak. The focus thus shifts to the apodosis, and the meaning of *bo⁵ 無* changes from *if that is not the case* to *in that case*.

In IITSC, the two examples serve as the *bridging context* that makes the semantic change possible. The coded meaning is conditional. With increase of degree of affirmation on the part of the speaker, invited inferences (IINs) appear sporadically and co-exist with the coded meaning (of conditional), thus it is an utterance-token meaning in an IITSC sense. Later on, more such examples are used, resulting in the rise of more frequent and stable generalized invited inferences (GIINs), and an upgrade from the utterance-token meaning to the utterance-type meaning. Eventually, the utterance-type meaning is semanticized and new coded meaning (of discourse) is created.

In Examples (12) and (13), there is no proposition that fits in the protasis-apodosis structure without leading to semantic anomaly. The clause after *bo⁵ 無* is used to persuade the hearer to take action to change current situation so that it would become more favorable from the speaker's point of view. As the clause is like an imperative sentence, it is natural for them to have a suggestive sense.

Similarly in Examples (14) and (15), there is no protasis-apodosis structure available. The use of *bo⁵ 無* is to disapprove the hearer's current conduct, and the clause that follows *bo⁵ 無* is a question used to challenge the hearer. Therefore, a refutative sense arises as a consequence.

Overall, there are two factors that trigger the development. First, the increase in the degree of certainty in the speaker's attitude weakens the conditional sense. Second, the change and eventual loss of the explicit protasis eliminates the conditional sense. The rise of the suggestive and refutative senses co-occur with the demise of the conditional sense.

We can summarize the development of *bo⁵ 無* from a conditional marker to a discourse marker below: At the earliest stage, the speaker has a neutral attitude toward the two possible outcomes in a conditional construction. Later, when the speaker has a high degree of certainty about one possible outcome, the other becomes irrelevant, and thus the conditional sense gets weakened.

At the next stage, the protasis of a conditional construction is missing, and thus the clause after *bo⁵ 無* no longer serves the role of an apodosis. It seems that if the clause is a declarative one, the suggestive sense appears, and if the clause is an interrogative one, the refutative sense

appears. However, this distinction is not so clear-cut. An invented, slightly different variant of (13) is shown below as (13'), where the clause after the initial *bo*⁵ 無 is an interrogative sentence. The initial *bo*⁵ 無 still carries a suggestive sense.

- (13') a. 耕山： 啊 有 啥 撇步， 稍 共 我 教
King¹san¹: *Ah u⁷ siann² phiat⁴poo⁷, sio² ka⁷ gua² ka³*
 PN PRT have what know-how a:little KA 1SG show
 一下 啦。
tsit⁸e⁷ lah.
 PH PRT
 'King-San: What's the trick? Show me.'
- b. 耕山： 無 我 拜 你 做 師父 好 無？
King¹san¹: *Bo⁵ gua² pai³ li² tsue³ sai¹hu⁷ ho² bo⁵?*
 PN BO 1SG worship 2SG do master okay BO
 'King-San: What if you apprentice me?'

We now see that both the suggestive and refutative senses serve a discourse function, and are derived directly from the conditional sense. The evolution of *bo*⁵ can be described below:

(16) Negation marker > conditional marker > discourse marker (suggestive/refutative)

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we present the development from conditional to discourse of the negation marker *bo*⁵ 無. We argue that *bo*⁵ 無 appears in a conditional construction where the content of an omitted protasis is recoverable from its antecedent. With this omission, the conditional use of *bo*⁵ 無 is fixed. When combined with the apodosis of the conditional construction, *bo*⁵ 無 becomes the beginning part of that apodosis superficially. The conditional use may be weakened when the truth value of the omitted proposition is always true. Meanwhile, the pragmatically inferred discourse (either suggestive or refutative) use appears, alongside with the conditional use. Eventually, the discourse use is semanticized, and no more conditional sense can be observed.

The shift from a conditional sense to a discourse sense is also supported by observing that in the former case, *bo⁵ 無* and *na⁷bo⁵ 那無* can be used interchangeably, whereas in the latter case, only *bo⁵ 無* is allowed. Thus it is also evident that *bo⁵ 無* is a multifunctional word and *na⁷bo⁵ 那無* is a dedicated (negative) conditional marker.

In this study, the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change is employed to explain the semantic change from conditional to discourse. Evidence of simultaneously present senses of conditional and discourse also lend support to our analysis. The study also contributes to the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change in providing feedback to the universal validness of semantic change cross-linguistically. This study places a piece in the jigsaw puzzle comprising the world's languages. As Southern Min is a Sinitic language with a large population of speakers, we believe that the road map of semantic change is more complete with this study.

Two factors that trigger the semantic change are the increase of the speaker's certainty of the proposition in the antecedent and the change and eventual loss of the antecedent. Both the speaker and the hearer come up with a consensus that some proposition (either realized by a context or a co-text) is already assumed true, and therefore both the speaker and the hearer pay attention to what would follow given the assumed situation. At a first glance, the suggestive sense and the refutative sense are contradictory to each other, but the two senses are actually common in sharing a current situation not favored by the speaker. The difference between the suggestive use and the refutative use may be due to the subjectivity of the attitude of the speaker. In both cases, the speaker is not satisfied with the previous setup in the context or co-text, so she or he issues a complaint or a suggestion in order to refute the hearer's point of view or to ask the hearer to do something that would be favorable to the speaker.

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List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
AD/R	addressee or reader

ASP	aspect
CL	classifier
CondCo	Conditional Coordination Construction
COP	copula
CS	Conceptual Structure
DIM	diminutive
GIINs	generalized invited inferences
IINs	invited inferences
IITSC	Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change
INC	inclusive
NEG	negation
NML	nominalizer
PH	phrase
PL	plural
PN	proper name
POSS	possessive
PRT	particle
SG	singular
SP/W	speaker or writer
SS	Syntactic Structure

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