

The dual status of the demonstrative *gam*² in Cantonese

Tommy Tsz-Ming Lee

City University of Hong Kong

The 28th International Conference on Yue Dialects (Yue 28)

December 13-14, 2024

Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Anaphoric *gam*
- 3 Non-anaphoric *gam*
- 4 Grammaticalization
- 5 Conclusions

Introduction

- The demonstrative *gam* in Cantonese
 - Non-nominal anaphora
 - Clausal or adverbial usage
 - No distal and proximal distinction

Entity	Time	Place	Degree	Manner	Quality
呢個 個個	呢陣 個陣	呢度 個度	咁 <i>gam</i> ³	噉 <i>gam</i> ²	噉 <i>gam</i> ²

- (1) a. Adverbial: (條繩) 咁長都唔夠嘍。 (Sio and Tang 2007, (55))
- b. Adverbial: 佢噉做野唔得架。 ((1))
- c. Clausal: Peter係噉架。 ((51))

Introduction

- Indeed, *gam* is found in contexts that do not fit the above picture.

- (2) a. 阿明去買咖啡，我都想 噏做 。
- b. 阿明以為頭先落雨，我都係 噏以為 。
- (3) a. 張三想幫吓手 噏 啫。 (Peng 2003, (10))
- b. 張三食咗啲咩 噏 呀？ (Lee 2018)
- c. 張三淨係鍾意瑪麗一個 噏 囉 (Lee 2018)

Introduction

- This talk revisits the different usages of *gam* in Cantonese, with special focus on its (non-)anaphoric nature.
 - The loss of anaphoricity
 - The missing heads
 - SFP-like usages
- I compare the grammaticalization path of adverbial *gam2* with the adnominal marker *de/ge3*, and reveal a parallel pattern in both nominal and nominal domain.

Introduction

- Some *gams* are idiomatic, and I will set them aside.

(4) a. Continuative: 阿明 係噉 喊，喊到天光都唔停。

b. “Free choice”: 你 係噉意 買份生果上去探佢啦。

c. Verbal suffix: 佢食 噉 一個蘋果。 (Tang 2003)

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Anaphoric *gam***
- 3 Non-anaphoric *gam*
- 4 Grammaticalization
- 5 Conclusions

Anaphoric *gam*

- Clausal *gam* vs. Adverbial *gam* (Chao 1968; Lu 1980)
- Typically,
 - Adverbial *gams* are pre-verbal.
 - Clausal *gams* appear in predicate position.

Anaphoric *gam*

- C1: Clausal *gam*

(5) **Matrix clauses:** 噉呀，我畀先啦。

(6) **Embedded clauses:**

a. Clausal subject: 噉唔係幾好嘞。 (Peng 2003, (6))

b. Manner clause 佢唱歌唱成噉嘅。 (Sio and Tang 2007, (30))

c. Relative clause: 噉嘅男人 (Sio and Tang 2008, (36a))

d. Noun complement clause:
(兩公婆嗌交) 噉嘅事 (Cheung 2007, p.99)

e. Subordinate clause: 如果噉，可以考慮插班。

Anaphoric *gam*

- C2: Clausal *gam* with incorporation

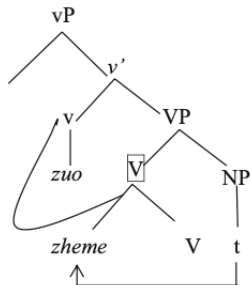
- (7) a. 阿明去買咖啡，我都想 噉 做。 *gam*+DO
- b. 阿明以為頭先落雨，我都 噉 以為。 *gam*+attitude verb
(AV)

- Gam* appears preverbally, but it does not convey a manner reading.
- Rather, it conveys the underlined, clausal meaning.

Anaphoric *gam*

- Wei and Li (2016) proposes in Mandarin that
 - DO is a light verb heading ν P;
 - the verbal anaphora is a complement of a null V;
 - it incorporates onto V (which further moves to) ν .

(44) Structure of *zheme-zuo*



(8)

(p.200)

Anaphoric *gam*

- This incorporation account extends naturally to Cantonese *gam-zou*, and also to the *gam*+AV case.
- Importantly, in the absence of the light verb, incorporation becomes optional.

- (9) a. 阿明以為頭先落雨，我都以為（係）**噉**。 AV+*gam*
 b. cf. *阿明去買咖啡，我都想做**噉**。 DO+*gam*

- Also, nothing can interven between *gam* and the attitude verb.

- (10) a. ??阿明以為頭先落雨，我都係**噉**一直以為。
 b. cf. 阿明以為頭先落雨，我都係一直**噉**以為。

Anaphoric *gam*

- A1: Manner and degree *gam*

(11) a. Manner: 阿明靜靜地食飯，我都噉食飯。

b. Degree: (條繩) 咁長都唔夠啲。

- *Gam2* is designated to manner, whereas *gam3* to degree.

(12) *Temporal/locative antecedent

a. *阿明頭先三點食飯，我都噉食飯。

b. *阿明頭先喺屋企食飯，我都噉食飯。

Anaphoric *gam*

- A2: **Appositional *gam***
- In contrast with its clausal counterparts, adverbial *gams* can co-occur with their antecedent (Cheung 2007).

(13) a. 我 靜靜地 噉 食飯。

b. 阿明 馬馬虎虎 噉 做野唔得架。

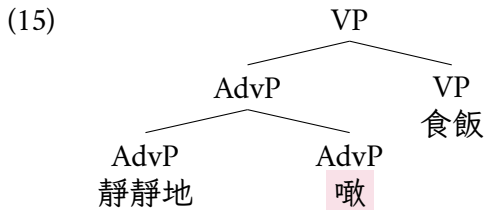
(14) a. 條繩有 三米 咁 長。

b. 架車有 火車 咁 快。

- It does not give rise to a sense of redundancy.

Anaphoric *gam*

- Cheung (2007) suggests that these cases are indeed **apposition structures**.



- In these cases, *gam*₂ can be deleted without affecting the meaning.

- (16) a. 我 靜靜地食飯。
- b. 條繩 三米長。

Interim summary

- All the above cases of *gam* are anaphoric, to a clausal or to an adverbial.

Type	left	<i>gam</i>	right	Syntactic status	Anaphoric?
C1	/	<i>gam</i> ₂	/	predicate	Yes
C2	/	<i>gam</i> ₂	DO/AV	incorporated predicate	Yes
A1	/	<i>gam</i> _{2/3}	VP	adverbial	Yes
A2	adverbial	<i>gam</i> _{2/3}	VP	appositional adverbial	Yes

Table 1: The distribution of *gam* and its syntactic status, part 1

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Anaphoric *gam*
- 3 Non-anaphoric *gam*
- 4 Grammaticalization
- 5 Conclusions

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- P1: adverbial particles
- Peng (2003) argues that *gam* is grammaticalized as a structural particle, since, the presence of *gam* affects the meaning of an adverbial.

(17) Peng (2003, p.549)

- 佢好快^噏寫完封信，交咗畀我。 (manner)
- 佢好快寫完封信，你唔使急。 (temporal)

(18) Sio and Tang (2007)

- 佢好明顯^噏避開你啦。 vs. 佢好明顯避開你啦。
- 佢突登^噏kick你架。 vs. 佢突登kick你架。

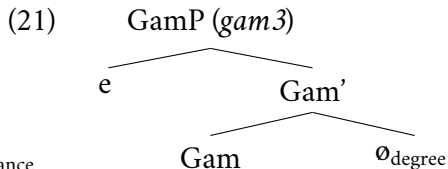
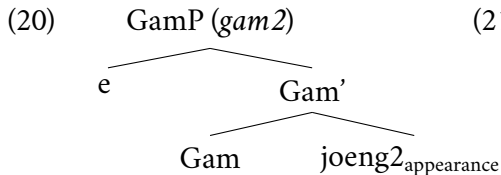
Non-anaphoric *gam*

- But this argument is not decisive, since the meaning contrast can be attributed to the manner requirement of appositional *gam*₂.
 - And no similar contrast is observed with *gam*₃
- The structural particle status is, however, better supported by the obligatory presense of *gam* in some cases.

- (19) a. 我地粒聲唔出 *(噉) 行 (Peng 2003, p.550)
- b. 馬仔又聰明又機靈 *(噉) 問…… (p.550)
- c. 佢好冷淡 *(噉) 問 (p.550)
- d. 條繩成個人*(咁) 長

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- Following Sio and Tang (2007), *gam* in this usage can be analyzed as a functional morpheme heading an adjunct projection, taking two arguments.
 - The 1st argument determines the manner/degree meaning.
 - The 2nd argument can be a manner/degree adverbial or a relevant pro-form.



- In this usage, *gam* loses its anaphoric nature.

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- Indeed, when *gam* is optional in a sentence, it is difficult to determine whether it is an apposition (A2) or a structural particle (P1).

- (22) a. 我 靜靜地 (噉) 食飯。
- b. 條繩有 三米 (咁) 長。

- I suggest that this serves as the bridging context between A2 and P1.

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- P2: *gam* as a sentence-final particle (Lee and Wong 2018)
- In some cases, *gam2* appears clausal-finally.

- (23) a. 張三想幫吓手 噉 啫。 (Peng 2003, (10))
- b. 張三食咗啲咩 噉 呀？ (Lee 2018)
- c. 張三淨係鍾意瑪麗一個 噉 囉 (Lee 2018)
- d. 如果你學過少少日文 噉 ，可以考慮插班。

- In other words, the adverbial structure loses its head (i.e., the modifiee).

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- I suggest that *gam2* develops a SFP usage.
 - Similar to its demonstrative counterpart, the SFP *gam2* introduces ***ad hoc event kinds*** of the associating proposition (cf. Umbach and Gust 2014; Arsenijevic, Kratochvil, and Sio 2015).
 - By raising a set of propositions (of the same kind), the speaker avoids commitment to a particular proposition.
- This account is specific to *gam2*, as it originally refers to manner/quality/situation.
 - This explains why *gam3* does not develop a similar usage, as it lacks the same degree of flexibility.

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- Note that this change is reminiscent of the intermediate stage of how the structural particle of Mandarin *de* develops into a SFP.
 - Re-referencing:** a usage that turns the property denoted by *X-de* into the entity that performs X (cf. 轉指用法) (Zhu 1983)

- (24) a. 那是我吃過的東西。 (structural particle)
- b. 那是我吃過的（東西）。 (re-referencing)
- c. 那是我吃過的。 (assertion particle)

Non-anaphoric *gam*

- One may suggest this usage involve the *clausal* counterparts of apposition structures. I argue against this possibility.

(25) *Gam*2 can appear in interrogative clauses

a. [今日想傾乜野] 噏呀？

b. [餵紅蟲又洗唔洗消毒] 噏呀？

forum

(26) *Gam*2 does not take interrogative clauses as antecedents.

阿明想知道阿芬今日想傾乜野，*我都想知道噏。

- (Plus, C2 disallows apposition structural.)
- This speaks against an apposition structure, and *gam* in this usage is best regarded as head missing.

Interim summary

- *Gam2* develops two non-anaphoric, particle usages (P1 and P2), whereas *gam3* develops one such usage (P1).

Type	left	<i>gam</i>	right	Syntactic status	Anaphoric?
C1	/	<i>gam2</i>	/	clause	Yes
C2	/	<i>gam2</i>	DO/AV	incorporated clause	Yes
A1	/	<i>gam2/3</i>	VP	adverbial	Yes
A2	adverbial	<i>gam2/3</i>	VP	appositional adverbial	Yes
P1	adverbial	*(<i>gam2/3</i>)	VP	adverbial particle	No
P2	clause	<i>gam2</i>	/	sentence-final particle	No

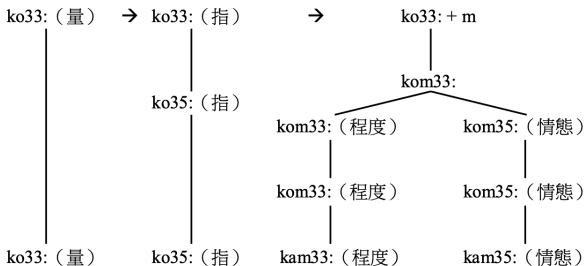
Table 2: The distribution of *gam* and its syntactic status, final

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Anaphoric *gam*
- 3 Non-anaphoric *gam*
- 4 Grammaticalization**
- 5 Conclusions

Grammaticalization

- Cheung (2007): classifier *go3* → (distal) demonstrative *go3* → *gam3* (*go3*+mat ‘that+thing’)



- Lai and Wu (2020): classifier *go3* → ~~(distal) demonstrative *go3*~~ → *gam3* (*go3*+mat ‘that+thing’)
 - Since Cantonese lacks DEM+N structure, and *gam* do not distinguish distal/proximal usage.

Grammaticalization

- Zooming in onto the development of clausal/manner *gam*2:

- Classifier → Non-nominal demonstrative ...

- (27) a. C1: Peter係噏架。 clausal anaphor
- b. C2: 阿明去買咖啡，我都想噏做。 clausal anaphor
- c. A1: 佢噏做野唔得架。 manner anaphor
- d. A2: 我靜靜地噏食飯。 manner anaphor
- ... → grammatical particles
- (28) a. P1: 我地粒聲唔出噏行。 adverbial particle
- b. P2: 張三食咗啲咩噏呀？ SFP

Grammaticalization

- Indeed, this path pattern with the adnominal marker in other Chinese languages, which also originates from the classifier.
- Using Yangchun Yue 陽春粵語 as an example (Qiu 2024):

量词 → 指示代词_{近指} → **结构助词** → 句末助词

① 一个鸡腿

(量词)

② 个係佢屋。

(指示代词, 表近指。)

③ 那本係我个(书)。

(结构助词, 领属标记。)

④ 那盘至_才係新鲜个肉。

(结构助词, 定语标记。)

⑤ 那本书係我昨天采书店睇过个(书)。

(结构助词, 关系化标记。)

⑥ 佢应承来个。

(句末助词, 表示肯定语气。)

Grammaticalization

- Interestingly, Qiu (2024) suggests that the head missing in the adnominal structures serves as a necessary condition for the SFP usage.

- ① 个只手袋係佢用旧企。
- ② 你戴个对耳环係佢戴过企。
- ③ 你睇那本书係我睇熟通了企。
- ④ 那套校服係我着通了企好久企。



隐含中心语

- She examines a number of southeast dialects and minority languages, and establishes the following correlation.

+转指用法, +句末助词

+转指用法, -句末助词

* -转指用法, +句末助词

-转指用法, -句末助词

Grammaticalization

- This correlation is also supported by the difference between *gam2* and *gam3*.

- Only *gam2* develops an SFP usage (P2), as it allows missing a head.

- (29) a. 阿明粒聲唔出 噉 行。 (30) a. 條繩成個人 咁 長。
- b. 阿明粒聲唔出 噉。 b. *條繩成個人 咁。

- *Gam3* (still) strictly requires the presence of heads, and thus does not develop an SFP usage.

- (31) a. *張三想幫吓手 咁。
- b. *張三食咗啲咩 咁？

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Anaphoric *gam*
- 3 Non-anaphoric *gam*
- 4 Grammaticalization
- 5 Conclusions**

Conclusions

- Take-home messages: **the different usages of *gam***

Type	left	<i>gam</i>	right	Syntactic status	Anaphoric?
C1	/	<i>gam</i> ₂	/	clause	Yes
C2	/	<i>gam</i> ₂	DO/AV	incorporated clause	Yes
A1	/	<i>gam</i> _{2/3}	VP	adverbial	Yes
A2	adverbial	<i>gam</i> _{2/3}	VP	appositional adverbial	Yes
P1	adverbial	*(<i>gam</i> _{2/3})	VP	adverbial particle	No
P2	clause	<i>gam</i> ₂	/	sentence-final particle	No

Table 3: The distribution of *gam* and its syntactic status, final

Conclusions

- The grammaticalization path of the classifier into SFPs in the **nominal** and **non-nominal** domain bears significant similarities.
- Classifier → Non-nominal demonstrative ...

- (32) a. C1: Peter係噉架。 clausal anaphor
- b. C2: 阿明去買咖啡，我都想噉做。 clausal anaphor
- c. A1: 佢噉做野唔得架。 manner anaphor
- d. A2: 我靜靜地噉食飯。 manner anaphor
- ... → grammatical particles
- (33) a. P1: 我地粒聲唔出噉行。 adverbial particle
- b. P2: 張三食咗啲咩噉呀？ SFP

Residue issues

- The discourse functions of *gam*₂, compared to *ge*₃.

- (34) a. Entity: 呢本書係我 嘅 。
- b. Kind: 呢本書好似字典 嘅 。
- (35) a. Assertion: 呢個麵包係幾好食 嘅 。
- b. Approximation: 呢個麵包係幾好食 嘅 。

Residue issues

- An additional usage of *gam*2: after SFPs.
- *Pro*-sentences (cf. 代句詞)?

- (36) a. 因為我哋先係課室入邊嘅嘅主人吖嘛 咁樣樣 transcript
- b. 即係傾向係期望佢係會自動自覺交呀 咁樣 ? transcript

- Two possibilities of development
 - An extension of the clausal usage (C3)
 - An extension of the SFP usgae (P3)

Residue issues

- Perhaps related to the buzzwords in Taiwan Mandarin?

(37) Taiwan Mandarin (cf. 醬子; Wei (2020))

- 就是互相介紹認識彼此朋友這樣
- 可能覺得都是白色的這樣～～
- 可能市區逛逛，找個咖啡廳坐坐這樣
- 同名同姓 不同爸媽這樣
- 10點從高雄出發這樣？
- 然後吃東西或者喝東西都是他們兩個人分吃這樣
- 我都還沒說詳情他就已經可以啊好啊可以啊這樣

Acknowledgments

- Earlier versions are presented at FoCaL-7 (HKSYU, 2024), and The 5th Workshop on Sentence-final Particles in Modern Chinese (GDUFS, 2024).
- I thank Dr. Yik-Po Lai for discussions and comments.

References I

- Arsenijevic, Boban, Frantisek Kratochvil, and Joanna Ut-seong Sio. 2015. "Equative and Similative Demonstratives in Sinitic and Beyond." *Proceedings of 15th International Symposium on Chinese Languages and Linguistics*.
- Chao, Yuen Ren. 1968. *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cheung, Hung-nin Samuel. 2007. *Xianggang Yueyu yufa de yanjiu [Cantonese as spoken in Hong Kong] (revised edition)*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

References II

- Lai, Yik-Po, and Dazhen Wu. 2020. *Adverbial Demonstratives in Chinese Dialects*. Handout of talk at 2020 Annual Research Forum of the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, CUHK.
- Lee, Margaret Chui Yi. 2018. “Assertion , Addressee’s Commitment and the Cantonese particle *gam*2.” *University System of Taiwan Working Papers in Linguistics* 10:85–112.
- Lee, Tommy Tsz-Ming, and Hok-Yuen Wong. 2018. “Epistemic indefinites and reportative indefinites in Cantonese.” In *Proceedings of the 32nd Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation (PACLIC-32)*. Hong Kong: Association for Computational Linguistics.

References III

- Lu, Jian-ming. 1980. “Hanyu kouyu jufali de yiwei xianxiang [Dislocation in the syntax of colloquial Mandarin Chinese].” *Zhongguo Yuwen* 1:28–41.
- Peng, Xiaochuan. 2003. “Gam: a Cantonese structure particle.” In *Proceedings of The 8th International Conference on Yue Dialects*, 546–557. Chinese Social Science Publication.
- Qiu, Dezun. 2024. *The particle go in Yangchun Yue*. Handout of talk, the 10th Inter-Regional Forum on Dialectal Grammar, CUHK.
- Sio, Joanna Ut-Seong, and Sze-Wing Tang. 2007. “The indexical expressions *gam*₂ and *gam*₃ in Cantonese.” *Studies in Cantonese linguistics* 2:55–73.

References IV

- Sio, Joanna Ut-Seong, and Sze-Wing Tang. 2008. "Some Notes on *gam*₂ and *gam*₃ in Cantonese." In *Selected Papers from the 2006 Annual Research Forum of the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong*, edited by Colleen Wong, 98–108. Hong Kong: The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong.
- Tang, Sze-Wing. 2003. *Hanyu Fangyan Yufa de Canshu Lilun [A Parametric Theory of Chinese Dialectal Grammar]*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Umbach, Carla, and Helmar Gust. 2014. "Similarity demonstratives." *Lingua* 149 (PA): 74–93.

References V

- Wei, Ting-Chi. 2020. "Pronominal Predicates and Event Structure in Mandarin Chinese." *Journal of Taiwan Languages and Literature* 15 (2).
- Wei, Ting-Chi, and Yen-Hui Audrey Li. 2016. "How to *do so* in Mandarin Chinese." *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 25:183–212.
- Zhu, Dexi. 1983. "Zizhi he zhuanzhi: hanyu mingcihua biaoji "de, zhe, zhi, suo," de yufa gongneng he yuyi gongneng [Self-referencing and re-referencing: the syntax and semantics of nominalizer "de, zhe, zhi, and suo" in Chinese]." *Fangyan [Dialect]* 1:16–31.