DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONDITIONALS:
A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF CHINESE YAOSHI AND YAOBUSHI IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT
This study explores Mandarin Chinese yaoshi and yaobushi constructions in both spoken and written discourse from the perspective of grammaticalization. Although the conditional markers yaoshi and yaobushi seem antonymous, there are some asymmetries between them in conditional constructions. Adopting a synchronic approach, this study discusses the semantic-pragmatic uses of yaoshi and yaobushi. In addition, we also show their semantic development from the propositional domain, to the textual domain, and from there to the expressive domain, viz. a semantic development whereby the meanings of the lexical items change from less to more situated in the speaker’s mental belief and attitude. By investigating the development of yaoshi and yaobushi, we can describe more accurately their various usages in contemporary Chinese and explain the asymmetries between their uses in conditionals. It is concluded in this study that the differences in their grammaticalization, subjectification and intersubjectification included, influence not only their occurrences in conditionals but also their pragmatic functions in discourse.

Key words: conditional, grammaticalization, subjectivity, intersubjectivity

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, conditionality has aroused the interest of many researchers. Conditionals, defined as the syntactic constitution “if P, (then) Q”, are common syntactic configurations which can express causal relationship, potentials, possibilities, and hypotheticality, and so on, in discourse to convey explanation and argumentation. Such a construction, composed of two parts—one part expresses a certain condition and the other establishes a certain logical relationship with the expressed condition, can directly reflect the language user’s ability to reason about alternatives, uncertainties, and unrealized contingencies (Ferguson et al. 1986).

The literature on Mandarin conditionality has provided a wide variety of information based on functional analysis with respect to semantics, pragmatics, and discourse/textual aspects of different conditional constructions. Conditional markers in Mandarin, such as ruguo(shuo) ‘if’, ruguoshuo… dehua ‘if’, jiashe ‘suppose (that)’, jiashe ‘given that; provided that’, wanyi ‘in case’, chufei ‘unless’, zhiyao ‘only if’, (yao)buran ‘otherwise; or’, fouze ‘otherwise; or’, jishi ‘even if’, jiusuan ‘even if’, yaoshi ‘if, yaobuhsi ‘if not; if it is not the case that’, and so on, have been closely examined and discussed with their corresponding pragmatic functions in the past (Li and Thompson 1981; Eifring 1988; Wu 1994; Su 2005; Yang 2007; Lai 2010; just to name a few). Despite the fact that a large number of studies have investigated Chinese conditional markers, yaoshi and yaobushi have received comparatively less attention. Both of the markers yaoshi and yaobushi are profuse in our daily conversation and newspaper reports. Though their semantic and pragmatic properties have been evaluated in some studies, most of the studies rely entirely on examples without actual contextual support. Detailed comparisons between yaoshi and yaobushi

According to philosophers and logicians, conditionals are defined as a relation between two propositions, the protasis (P) and the apodosis (Q). In other words, two parts are contained in a conditional construction: the factual implication or hypothetical situation (viz. protasis) that sets the condition under which another proposition would be true, and the consequence (viz. apodosis).
based in a larger context have not been made. For example, Eifring (1988) points out that the use of *yaobushi* is mostly counterfactual\(^2\). Wu (1994) provides a detailed analysis of the linguistic forms and functions of Chinese counterfactual conditionals. Her study shows that besides context, Chinese has explicit linguistic cues (such as *yaobushi* ‘if not’) and structures (typically ‘if ... then ...’) for counterfactual expressions. However, Eifring (1988) and Wu (1994) focus on their syntactic structure and semantic content in sentences without much consideration about their uses as seen in interaction and discourse.

Adopting cognitive and pragmatic approaches, Su (2005) and Yang (2007) examine Chinese conditionals in terms of their discourse functions. Su pinpoints the important roles played by context and the pragmatic concerns necessary in the interpretation of Chinese conditionals. Yang distinguishes two types of counterfactuals between the typical *yaoshi*- and *yaobushi*-constructions, arguing that counterfactuality in *yaoshi* construction is implicated while that in *yaobushi* construction is asserted. Though both analyses, i.e. Su (2005) and Yang (2007), are illuminating, they do not differentiate *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* in much detail\(^3\). Lai (2010), based on genuine conversations, examines the pragmatic functions of Mandarin conditionals. Lai (2010) presents a general view on how and why Chinese speakers manipulate conditional markers to encode their attitudes, intentions, or evaluations. However, specific conditional markers such as *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* with different communicative values are not specified in his study. These previous studies have revealed some characteristics and peculiarities of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*, but their explanations on the uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* remain fragmentary.

*Yaoshi* and its negative counterpart *yaobushi*, which parallel English

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\(^2\) Before Eifring (1988), many linguists believed that Chinese never marks counterfactuality at all (e.g. Chao 1959; Li and Thompson 1981; Bloom 1981, 1984; Au 1984). Eifring rejects the view by providing counterfactual conditionals from classical Chinese as well as modern Chinese. According to Eifring, the negative *if*-word *yaobushi* ‘if not; were it not the case that; had it not been the case that’ is an important counterfactual cue in Chinese.

\(^3\) Su does not focus on particular conditional markers, while Yang discusses how mental spaces are built in conditional constructions. Structural and pragmatic contrasts between *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* are not discussed.
‘if’ and ‘if not; if it is not the case that’, are used to connect the antecedent and the consequent in conditionals. It is intriguing that there is asymmetry between the use of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*, two antonymous conditional markers. To be more specific, *yaoshi* conditionals can have different interpretations; they can express the future (real), the present (hypothetical), and the past (counterfactual) conditionality\(^4\) (Li and Thompson 1981:647), while *yaobushi* construction is only associated with counterfactuality (Eifring 1988). Inspired by the previous studies, the present study takes a corpus-based approach to analyzing the uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* in written and spoken Chinese discourse. The present study aims at answering the following questions:

1. What causes the asymmetry between the use of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*? Is the asymmetry related to their grammaticalization?
2. Is there any difference in the distribution and/or use of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* in the two different discourse modes?

In this study, the uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* are accounted for mainly from the aspect of grammaticalization, with a focus on the synchronic dimension to explore their functions and uses in Chinese discourse. The synchronic database is adopted because the purpose of this study is to show the discourse-pragmatic uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*, showing the semantic development of lexical items from the propositional domain, to the textual domain, and from there to the expressive domain\(^5\).

\(^4\) Conditionals without explicit negative markers, i.e. without *bushi* ‘not’, can have different interpretations. For example, there are three interpretations (i.e. the future, the present, and the past conditionality) for the sentence 要是你看到我妹妹, 你一定知道她懷孕了 ‘If you see my younger sister, you certainly kow that she is pregnant; If you saw my younger sister, you would know she was pregnant; If you had seen my younger sister, you would have known that she was pregnant.’ On the other hand, a contrary-to-fact message is conveyed through the use of *yaobushi*, for example, 這感謝丁先生, 要不是他, 我們就進不去了 ‘We did appreciate Mr. Ding. Without him, we could not enter the room’. Unlike English conditionals which have to fulfill a morphosyntactic requirement, the reading of a Chinese conditional may depend heavily on the word order and the discourse context in order to be properly interpreted.

\(^5\) That is, a semantic shift toward greater subjectivity and becoming increasingly associated with the speaker’s attitude.
The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 1 is an overview of the study, which states the motivation and the research questions of this study. In Section 2, a review of previous studies on the grammaticalization of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* is provided. Section 3 describes the theoretical frameworks and the data used in this study. Section 4 is concerned with the results, i.e. classification of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* in our database. Section 5 is devoted to a detailed discussion of the uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* based on our written and spoken data. Section 6 focuses on the subjectification and intersubjectification of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*. Finally, section 7 concludes the study.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Previous research on the grammaticalization of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* has been mostly conducted from the diachronic perspective (e.g. Eifring 1988; Ma 2002; Ji 2009; Huang 2012; among others). They have provided certain explanations for the origin, the path, and the evolution processes of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi*, as stated below.

According to Ji (2009), *yaoshi* is composed of two lexemes: *yao* and *shi*. *Yao* is a conjunction with the sense of hypotheticality, while *shi* is, traditionally speaking, a copula in Chinese, i.e. a linking verb, similar to English ‘be’, which links a subject and complement (Li and Thompson 1981:147). The origins of *yao*, as Ma (2002) and Ji (2009) point out, can be traced back to as early as the Pre-Qin period. *Yao* was originally a noun referring to the body part ‘waist’ in Archaic Chinese. Different uses of *yao*, either as a noun or a verb, coexisted by the end of the Pre-Qin period in Archaic Chinese. The use of *yao* as a modal verb emerged later through metaphorical extension (You 1998; Ma 2002; Ji 2009). Different modality senses of *yao*, from deontic to epistemic, came about during the 3rd and the 6th centuries (Huang 2012). The adverbial uses of *yaoshi* are extension of the modal *yao* and the copula *shi*, as claimed by Traugott (1989), You (1998), Ma (2002), Ji (2009), among others.

The evolution of *yaobushi*, as claimed by Ma (2002) and Ji (2009), is different from that of *yaoshi*. The negative counterpart of *yaoshi*, i.e.
yaobushi, is surmised to result originally from ruo-bushi (若不是) ‘if it is not the case that’ with the hypothetical interpretation in the Tang Dynasty. After the grammaticalization of yao used as a conditional marker, ruo ‘if’ was gradually replaced by yao in early modern Chinese. Thus, the conditional yaobushi may evolve from ruo-bushi showing the speaker’s hypotheticality toward the proposition described in the protasis. The frequent collocation of yao+ bushi motivates a reanalysis for them to become a lexical unit.

In short, the development process of yaoshi and yaobushi has evolved mainly from yao. The Chinese yao was originally a noun and a verb, and with the use of language, it has derived functional uses as a conjunction and a conditional marker. Metaphor and metonymy are two strategies of semantic extension of the conditional markers yaoshi and yaobushi (You 1998).

3. METHOD

3.1 Theoretical Framework

To explore the different uses of yaoshi and yaobushi, grammaticalization theory is employed in this study. Grammaticalization generally refers to the linguistic process whereby lexical items become more grammatical and grammatical items develop new grammatical functions over time (Traugott 1988:406; Hopper and Traugott 1993: xv; Traugott and Dasher 2002:81). In other words, the major concern of grammaticalization theory is the genesis and development of grammatical forms. The discussion of grammaticalization focuses on semantic shift, along a unidirectional cline from referential (propositional) to non-referential meaning (Traugott 1989), a semantic-pragmatic change in which propositional (ideational) content can gain either textual (cohesion-making) and expressive (interpersonal) meanings or both, as schematized in the following cline:

propositional > ((textual) > (expressive))
Thus, two important processes are observed along the development of grammatical forms: subjectification and intersubjectification. Subjectification, defined by Traugott (1995:32), is “a pragmatic-semantic process whereby meanings become increasingly based in speaker’s subjective belief/state/attitude toward the proposition.” Intersubjectification, on the other hand, is “the explicit expression of speaker/writer attention to the ‘self’ of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense and a more social sense (Traugott 2003:126). When communicating, the speaker not only expresses the propositional meaning but also conveys the expressive meaning, which shows the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of language.

In this study, great emphasis is placed on the synchronic dimension to explore the different uses of yaoshi and yaobushi. We will address the semantic and pragmatic meanings of yaoshi and yaobushi in modern Chinese and discuss their possible paths of grammaticalization from the purely linguistic to the pragmatic.

3.2 Data Collection

This study investigates Chinese yaoshi and yaobushi constructions in both written and spoken discourse. The written data source for the current study of written Chinese conditionals comes from the United Data Bank (UDNDATA). It is a newspaper database of the United Daily News group, the largest news group in Taiwan, including the United Daily News, Economic Daily News, and United Evening News. The corpus could be considered a hybrid genre as it contains both spoken and written genres, with newspaper discourse often mixed with interviews and quotations. To examine the various uses of yaoshi and yaobushi in Chinese discourse, we searched for yaoshi and yaobushi among the texts in the data source UDNDATA from April 1, 2012 to May 31, 2012 (two months in total).

The spoken corpus in this study comes from naturally occurring two-party or multi-party conversations. All the conversations are between adults, mainly face-to-face conversations and some interviews on radio and TV programs. The diverse parties in these conversations include students, colleagues, and housewives, and the situations occur at
home, at a dormitory, and at work. In the interview data, some of the TV/radio single-interviewee interviews are hosted by two people (totaling 380 minutes and 10 seconds), whereas in others there is only one host/hostess. The interviewees include celebrities like political figures, expert analysts, and other figures who discuss entertainment, education, athletics, medicine, and other similar topics. The total length (of the recordings in the data) is about 70 hours. The data were taped via audio cassettes and transcribed into intonation units.

There are a total of 185 tokens of yaoshi and 32 of yaobushi identified in the data. On the whole, yaoshi occurs more frequently than yaobushi in the corpus (185 vs. 32). Yaoshi is found to be more prevalent than yaobushi either in the written data (90 vs. 28) or in the spoken data (95 vs. 4), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The occurrence of yaoshi and yaobushi in the written and spoken data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yaoshi (%)</th>
<th>Yaobushi (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>90 (76)</td>
<td>28 (24)</td>
<td>118 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken</td>
<td>95 (95)</td>
<td>4 (5)</td>
<td>99 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185 (95)</td>
<td>32 (6)</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. CLASSIFICATION OF YAOSHI AND YAOSHISHI: DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONDITIONAL USE

The various uses of the two seemingly antonymous expressions in the data, either written or spoken texts, are presented and discussed below. Examination of the two expressions for their respective uses will provide us with a more complete picture of their usage in contemporary Chinese.

The meaning of yaoshi found in the data can be classified into two types, i.e. direct and indirect conditional use, or central and peripheral ones as Quirk et al. (1985) propose. The central use of the conditional

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6 The data are transcribed according to the notations proposed by Du Bois et al. (1993).
marker *yaoshi* expresses a direct condition, conveying that the situation in the apodosis is directly contingent on that of the protasis. Many tokens of *yaoshi* in our data are used in such a standard way and have the status as connectives designating a causal, logical, and sequential relationship between the two clauses. The direct conditional *yaoshi* conveys a strong link between the if-clause (P) and the main clause (Q), as illustrated in example (1).

(1) (The following is a report on a famous hotel restaurant—the Howard Hotel. A chef in the Howard, Guo-Dong Wu, claimed that MSG (monosodium glutamate) will no longer be used in their cuisine.)

但「食物新鮮最重要」，吳國棟說，

*But food fresh most important* Wu Guo-Dong say

食材要是新鮮自然就有鮮甜的味道，

ingredient if fresh naturally then have fresh-sweet taste

‘The chef said that the freshness of food is most important. If the ingredients are fresh, then the food will taste sweet naturally.’

(2012-0504 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

The conditional in (1) conveys that the situation in the apodosis (i.e. the food will taste sweet naturally) is directly contingent on that of the protasis (i.e. if the ingredients are fresh). Logically speaking, the event (or state) in the protasis is the sufficient condition for the realization of the event (or state) described in the apodosis. Besides, a cause-effect relation (i.e. the fulfillment of the condition in the protasis is the cause of the realization of the events in the apodosis) and a sequential temporal relation, as indicated by the adverb *jiu* ‘then’, are also involved in the above conditional sentence. Such conditionals, classified as content conditionals by Sweetser (1990), express the speaker’s perception of the relationships of the events or state of affairs in the external world.
Two subtypes of direct conditionals can be found: one is to propose optionality (i.e. *yaoshi* as a possible hypothesis marker), while the other is to express counterfactuality \(^7\) (i.e. *yaoshi* as a non-possible hypothesis marker), as demonstrated in examples (2) and (3) below:

\((2)\) (A, a female kindergarten teacher, is talking to B, a female housewife, about her job and the opportunities to be a qualified teacher in high school.)

\[
\begin{align*}
B: & \quad \text{代課老師也很好。} \\
& \quad \text{daikei laoshi ye hén hǎo} \\
A: & \quad \text{啊不過，_} \\
& \quad \text{a buguo} \\
& \quad \text{PRT but} \\
& \quad \text{我想說，_} \\
& \quad \text{wo xiang shuo} \\
& \quad \text{I think speak} \\
& \quad \text{..我沒有<C教育學分C>_} \\
& \quad \text{wo meiyou jiaoyu xuefen} \\
& \quad \text{I no have teaching credit} \\
& \quad \text{..啊而且，_} \\
& \quad \text{a erqie} \\
& \quad \text{PRT but} \\
& \quad \text{...我又有教，} \\
& \quad \text{...wo you zai jiao} \\
& \quad \text{I again at teach} \\
& \quad \text{..<E Melody E> 啊._} \\
& \quad \text{Melody a} \\
& \quad \text{Melody PRT} \\
& \quad \text{...較忙啊，_} \\
& \quad \text{jiao mang a} \\
& \quad \text{busier PRT}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^7\) These two subtypes of *yaoshi*-conditionals correspond to ‘open’ and ‘hypothetical’ classification in Quirk et al.’s (1985) classification of conditionals.
..不然, /
\[\text{buran}\]
otherwise
\[\text{要是 可以 的話}^{8}, \backslash\]
\[\text{yaoshi keyi dehua}\]
if can in case
..我 就 可以, /
\[\text{wo jiu keyi}\]
I then can
\[\text{當 <C 代課 老師 C> 啊}^{-}\]
\[\text{dang daike laoshi a}\]
as substitute teacher PRT\footnote{PRT is the abbreviation for particle. Other abbreviations used in the interliner translations are as follows: CL= classifier; LOC= localizer; ASP= aspect marker; BEI = Chinese 被 bei; DE = Chinese 的 de; Q= final question marker; BA = Chinese 把 ba.}

B: ‘Being a substitute teacher is good, too.’
A: ‘but, I don’t have teaching credits and I am still teaching Melody. So I am quite busy. Otherwise, if possible, I’d like to be a substitute teacher.’

(Conversation in spoken data)

(3) (A witness described the scene of an accident where a drunken driver ran over an old man and then escaped.)

\[\text{當時 他在旁邊 店家 聽到 『砰』 一聲,}\]
\[\text{dangshi ta zai pangbian dianjia tingdou peng yisheng}\]
then he at side store hear bang one sound
\[\text{看到 老翁 被 撞 彈飛,}\]
\[\text{kan dou laoweng bei zhuang tanfei}\]
see old man BEI bump fly
\[\text{沒 多久 一 辆 車 向 車禍 現場,}\]
\[\text{mei duoji yi liang jiaochu que chong xiang chehwo xianchang}\]
not long one CL car but rush toward car accident spot

\footnote{Dehua ‘in case; if’ is also a conditional marker in Chinese.}
碾過老翁，
nianguo laoweng
run-over old man

「當時他要是被攔下，一定被打死」。
dangshi ta yaoshi bei lanxia yiding bei dasi
then he if BEI stop must BEI beat die

At that time, he was standing by the store around the accident spot. Then he heard a bang. He saw an old man being bumped away. Soon, a car sped up toward the spot and ran over the old man again. The witness said, “If the driver had been stopped then, he would have been beaten to death.”

(2012-0412 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

Examples (2) and (3) show the typical use of yaoshi. Yaoshi-clauses express the possibility of a state or event in potentially real or irrealis situations. Yaoshi in (2) is a strong conditional which makes a possible prediction for the future (i.e. she would be a substitute teacher in high school if she has the required credits for teaching). It is used to propose the possibility and intensify the hypotheticality of the proposition. The use of yaoshi in (3), also a hypothetical use, serves to mark counterfactuality. Yaoshi functions as a counterfactual marker, together with the time reference dangshi ‘at that time’ in (3). Yaoshi in (3) conveys a counterfactual reading since the condition was not fulfilled (i.e. the driver was not stopped and thus he was not beaten to death at that time→ if not P, then not Q). It is also used as a kind of predictive conditional. The speaker’s hypotheticality carried by yaoshi is extended in this construction from the real world to the convictional world10.

The other type of yaoshi is indirect conditional use. The indirect conditional yaoshi expresses an indirect condition in which the condition

10 In fact, the distinct sense of yaoshi explicated above is fuzzy if the meaning is understood from the conditional alone without taking the context or background into consideration. Take example (3) as an example. Without the context and background knowledge, the yaoshi-sentence can either signal the counterfactual reading for a past event or mark an open condition (i.e. a possibility) for the future.
is not related to the situation in the main clause. The indirect conditional *yaoshi* is thus used “peripherally” and “non-standardly”: the reading of *yaoshi* is extended from the semantic level of denoting the causal, logical, and sequential relation between P and Q to the pragmatic level of stance marking and other pragmatic functions. For instance:

(4) (The following is an international report on a former Japanese mayor who was calling for voters to support a young candidate in the coming mayoral election.)

>要是我們這些老人家不支持他，
who still will support him

`yaoshi women zhexie laorenjia bu zhichi ta`
if we these old people not support him

`shei hai hui zhchi ta ne?`
who still will support him PRT

‘Mr. Suzuki came from Tokyo to rescue us. If we, the old generation, do not support him, who will support him?’

(2012-0508 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

The use of *yaoshi* in (4) is indirect conditional, i.e. there is no causal-consequential relation between P and Q as a defining property of direct conditionals. In (4), *yaoshi* is used in a rhetorical interrogative, delivering the speaker’s attitude, belief, or opinion toward the proposition in the protasis instead of expressing the possibility or contrary-to-reality. Such an interrogative is not used for the sake of asking for an answer but used for a rhetorical effect. The speaker’s real intention is to deliver his attitude toward the proposition that they all should support the young mayoral candidate, Mr. Suzuki. Here, *yaoshi* is

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11 The indirectness lies in the fact that the event in the antecedent does not directly cause the happening of the event in the consequent. The speaker usually makes an inference from a known fact expressed by the antecedent.
not mainly used to proffer an alternative suggestion; it is instead employed to make a point without the expectation of a reply.

The indirect conditional *yaoshi* can also be used for expressing politeness or evaluation. In such conditionals, the structural relation between the two clauses is relaxed, as exemplified below.

(5) (A, a doctor, is giving advice for losing weight.)

\[ A: \text{那 你 要是,} \]
\[ \text{na ni yaoshi} \]
\[ \text{that you if} \]
\[ \text{要是 你要是} \]
\[ \text{真的 是 肥胖的人,} \]
\[ \text{zhengde shi feipangde ren} \]
\[ \text{really be fat person} \]
\[ \text{我想 藥物 的 } \]
\[ \text{woxiang yaowu de} \]
\[ \text{I think medicine DE} \]
\[ \text{助是可} \]
\[ \text{xiezhu shi keyi de} \]
\[ \text{assist be ok DE} \]
\[ \text{B: 嗯嗯,} \]
\[ \text{umum} \]
\[ \text{umum} \]
\[ \text{A: 只要 沒有 對 什麼 藥物 有 特殊 禁忌 的話,} \]
\[ \text{zhiyao meiyou dui shemo yaowu you teshu jinji dehua} \]
\[ \text{so long as no to what medicine have special restriction in case} \]

A: 'If you are really fat, I think medicine is helpful (for you to lose weight).'</n
B: '[Um].'
A: 'As long as you don’t have any medical contraindication.’

(Interview in the spoken data)

Prior to (5), A’s interlocutor has asked whether it is of help for her to lose weight by using some medicine. A then tells her that some medicine can help if she is really fat. Here, the use of *yaoshi* in (5) is
politeness-oriented, serving as a hedge to reduce or mitigate the face-threatening power of the dispreferred response (‘you are really fat’) and to convey politeness. It is the proposition in the apodosis, (i.e. ‘medicine can be of help sometimes’) which matters. Yaoshi is used for the sake of politeness, in which the speaker softens the assertion and therefore avoids potential impoliteness in interaction. It is almost impossible, unnecessary as well, to obtain a content-level reading in this type of conditional. The indirect conditional yaoshi with hypothetical space is used so that it seems to allow choices; or by decreasing the assertability of the statement, the addressee’s concern in face-saving is facilitated (Su 2005).

The above examples are evidence that in many conditionals, meaning is extended from concrete causal relation such as real-world causality to more abstract and subjective relations. The direct and explicit relationship between P and Q has reduced and deviated to an indirect and implicit one. Indirect conditionals can be categorized further into subtypes, such as epistemic and speech act interactional ones according to Sweetser’s (1990) cognitive analysis. In a word, the conditional marker yaoshi with the core interpretation of hypotheticality can extend to be used indirectly, i.e. from content domain to epistemic and speech act domain, from causal to non-causal. The different uses of yaoshi in the database are summarized in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Written</th>
<th></th>
<th>Spoken</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct conditional yaoshi</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect conditional yaoshi</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Epistemic conditionals can be extended further to express three subtypes of semantic relationships. They are premise-conclusion, statement-comment and statement-explanation relations (Sweetser 1990).
Compared to *yaoshi* in our data, its negative counterpart *yaobushi* is relatively rare (90 vs. 28 in written discourse and 95 vs. 4 in spoken discourse). It is mainly used to mark a hypothetical situation and indicate counterfactuality. That is, *yaobushi* is mostly a direct conditional marker because of the causal relationship between P and Q, as exemplified in (6):

(6) (The following is a report on the winner of a competition of wrapping dumplings.)

范秀英笑著說
Fan Xiu-Ying smile ASP say
→ 要不是因為很多觀眾「太緊張」，
yaoobushi yinwei henduo ren guan sai tai jinzhang
if not because many people view contest too nervous
「我可以包得更快！」
wo keyi baode geng kuai
I can wrap more fast

‘Xiou-Ying Fang smilingly said that she was “too nervous” because of too many spectators. If not so, “I could have wrapped faster.”’

(2012-04-06. UDNDATA, Written discourse)

*Yaobushi* in (6) is a marker of counterfactuality expressing a contrary-to-fact reading. The speaker in (6), a winner in the contest of wrapping dumplings, said that she could have wrapped the dumplings faster if there had been not so many spectators on the spot. There is a cause-effect correlation in the interpretation of such conditionals (i.e. because of many spectators, she was so nervous that she could not wrap faster). Therefore, the use of *yaobushi* is essentially causal. An inherent relation to a factual state of affairs is set up through the use of *yaobushi*. It is used as a direct conditional marker.

In addition to the direct conditional use for the counterfactual hypothesis, *yaobushi* can be employed in the conditional clause to
provide alternatives of the proposition following it, as exemplified in (7):

(7) (The citizens in New Taipei City complained about the police for the car towing policy.)

"要不是没人拖，要就是拖过头！"

Example (7) shows that yaobushi is used as an alternative marker expressing the sense of ‘either…or’. This disjunctive use of yaobushi is non-hypothetical because the focus of the sentence is to express the speaker’s attitude (i.e. the speaker is not satisfied with the policy of
towing cars in New Taipei City) instead of showing hypotheticality. Table 3 below presents the frequency of yaobushi with respect to their distinct use in the written and spoken data.

Table 3. The types of yaobushi in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Written</th>
<th></th>
<th>Spoken</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetical (conditional)</td>
<td>25(^{13})</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-hypothetical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. EVOLUTION OF YAOSHI AND YAOBUSHI AS CONDITIONAL MARKERS

5.1 Syntactic Change

A closer observation of yaoshi shows that the bond between yao and shi is so strong that yao and shi have merged and developed into an independent lexical unit, i.e. a single word, different from the collocation of two words such as ruguo-shi, or zhiyao-shi\(^{14}\). The following examples show the varying degrees of bonding between shi and the preceding adverbial conjunctions yao and ruguo:

\(^{13}\) Some instances of yaobushi in written data are indirect conditionals, though they still convey the sense of counterfactualilty. Among the 25 tokens of yaobushi, there are three instances used as indirect conditionals.

\(^{14}\) The copular marker shi, as Dong (2004) points out, has become a word-internal element of many lexical items. The conditional marker yaoshi seems to undergo fusion across a morphological boundary from [yao + shi] to [yaoshi] through reanalysis.
(8) (The following is a comment on democracy vs. efficiency brought forth by a columnist in the New York Times.)

要是美国能做一天中国有多好！
yaooshi meiguo neng zuo yitian Zhongguo you duo hao
if America can do one-day China have much good
在这一天里，
azai zhe yitian li
at this one day LOC
我們可以制定所有正確的法律規章，
women keyi zhiding suoyou zhengquede falü guezhang
we can enact all correct law policy
克服民主政治難以作成決策的最差部份。
kefu minzhu zhengzhi nanyi zuocheng juece de zueicha bufen
overcome democracy politics hard made policy DE worst part

‘How I wish that the U.S. would be like China for a day. During that day, we could enact all the appropriate legal regulations and overcome the most difficult part in the process of forming policies in our democratic society.’

(2012-04-10 UDNDATA, Written Discourse)

(9) (A young actor, Bo-Ling Chen, denied the rumor that the actress Lun-Mei Gui was his intimate friend as well as his soulmate. Instead, he told the reporter that the actor Zu-Ming Fang was his best friend.)

陳柏霖否認說：
Chen Bo-Lin fouren shuo
Chen Bo-Lin deny say
「不是，是房祖名，
bushi shi Fang Zu-Ming
not be Fang Zu-Ming

49
他如果 是女生，我 就會 愛 他。」

‘Bo-Lin Chen denied (the fact), saying that “No. My close friend is Zu-Ming Fang. If he is a female, I would fall in love with him.”’

(2012-0401 UDNDATA, Written Discourse)

In (8), shi in yaoshi behaves like a lexical internal element which cannot be separated from yao. It is not a copula linking a subject and complement, and it is not a focus marker showing emphasis, either. Yao and shi here fuse into a single word and [yaoshi] is used as a direct conditional marker expressing the meaning of hypothetical counterfactuality. However, in (9), shi is independent of the conjunction ruguo. Shi in (9) is a copular verb, used to link the complement. It introduces the description, i.e. being a female, which characterizes the subject.

In our data, there are still, though not many, instances where yao has not completely converged with the copula/focus marker shi to become a single word, as manifested in (10).

(10) （The speaker, a female about 40, is talking about her marriage.)

L: ..<Q 我 再 也 不 愛 你 了 Q>..
    wo zai ye bu ai ni le
    I again also not love you PRT
...
...
...ta shuo
    he say
→ ..<Q 我 要是 你 Q>,
    wo yao shi ni
    I if be you
..<Q 我 現在 馬上 打包 Q>..
    wo xianzai mashang dabao
    I now immediately pack
Direct and Indirect Conditionals: A Corpus-based Study of Chinese Yaoshi and Yaobushi

(0) <Q 坐 飞机 回 台湾 Q>
   zuo feiji hui Taiwan
take plane back Taiwan

…(2.7) 我 当时 就是 <E shock E>,
   wo dangshi jiushi shock
   I then just shock
   ..我很 震驚,\
   wo hen zhenjing
   I very astonished

L: ‘He said, “I do not love you anymore. If I were you, I would pack my luggage right now and take a flight back to Taiwan.” I was shocked then. I was very astonished.’
   (Interview in Spoken Data)

Shi in (10) may also perform the syntactic function of a copula to link a noun to a subject, though the sense of counterfactual hypothesis is expressed as well. In (10), shi is syntactically used as a focus marker and is pronounced with stress to show emphasis. Such instances of yaoshi are considered to be in the transitional phase because shi is still used for emphasis.

Many instances of yaoshi should be viewed as an individual unit, i.e. the presumed copular/focus marker shi has merged with yao to become a new lexical item yaoshi. Shi has developed from a determiner to a copular verb and then to a focus marker. Becoming a lexical internal element is a further development of shi, from an independent unit to a phonologically unstressed element attached to another lexical item, as other studies propose (e.g. Chang 2003; Dong 2004). The development process of yaoshi can be diagrammed in Figure 1.

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15 This is the evidence that the grammaticalization process of yaoshi is still going on. It might be possible that in this case, the underlying structure would be [要是+是你] in which ‘shi’ plays a role in each part and thus serves as a pivot in linking both.

16 The grammaticalization process is still going on, and as a result, it gives birth to many newly emergent conjunctives and adverbs (Dong 2004).

The syntactic evolution track of yaoshi, as shown in Figure 1, may start from a verb phrase (VP) consisting originally of two lexemes yao and shi. Gradually, the syntactic boundary is reanalyzed and yaoshi develops other syntactic functions such as ADV with a hypothetical sense. It then gives rise to grammatical functions and is fronted to the utterance-initial position, serving as a discourse marker (DM) for textual cohesion and interactional use.17

Following the above analysis on yaoshi, we argue a strong connection between the collocation yao ‘if’ and the compound negator bushi ‘not’ with the counterfactual meaning, which might be closer than that of yaoshi-bushi or ruguo-bushi with the counterfactual reading. A general observation in our dataset shows the connection between yao and bushi is so strong that no element is observed to intervene between the two in our data, as example (11) illustrates. Conversely, ruguo-bushi is often observed to be separated by other elements, such as the subject, as demonstrated by example (12), taken from Li (1994:23).

(11) (The young drug user was seen using drugs by his mother on the scene. His mother begged him to stop it. The drug user did not listen to his mother. Instead, he blamed his mother for her calling the police, which caused him to be put in prison.)

沒想到他不理會,
mei xiangdao ta bu lihui
no think of he without listen

[17] The adverbial yaoshi can be further divided into clause-internal adverbial and sentence adverbial. The conditional yaoshi is found to be clause-internal first. With its scope broadened, it takes the scope of the whole proposition, acting as a sentence adverbial. As the scope expands beyond the sentence level and over a stretch of discourse, it develops as a discourse marker. Yaoshi, serving as a DM, can be used for topic marking and discourse organization. Its use as a textual and interpersonal marker will be shown in section 6.3.
還翻舊帳說

hai fan jiu zhang shuo
still dig old debt speak

→「上次要不是你報警，」
shang ci yaobushi ni bao jing
last time if not you call police
「我也不會被抓去關！」
wo ye bai hui bei zhuo qu guan
I too cannot BEI capture to put in jail

當著母親的面就打起海洛因。
dangze mu qin de mian jiu da qi hailuoying
toward mom’s face then inject ASP heroin

‘It did not occur to his mother that he wouldn’t listen, and would even bring up the past by saying “if you hadn’t called the police I wouldn’t have been put in prison.” He then injected heroin in front of his mother.’

(2012-0414 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

(12) 如果她不是到美國去唸書(了),
ruguo ta bushi dao Meiguo qu nianshu (le)
if she not-be to U.S. go study (ASP)
我就會去找她談談。
wo jiu hui qu zha o ta tan tan
I then will go find her chat-chat
‘If she had not gone to the U.S. to study, I would have contacted her to have a chat.’

(taken from Li 1994: 23)

Varying degrees of lexicalization\(^{18}\) can be observed in the above examples of *yaobushi* and *ruguo-bushi*. In (12), *ruguo-bushi* is separated

\(^{18}\) Lexicalization, a specific type of development of new lexical items, is a gradual process whereby a grammatical combination undergoes semantic/pragmatic idiomaticization, which results in idiosyncratic contentful meaning of a new lexical item (Brinton and Traugott 2005:96).
by the subject ta ‘she’, though the function of its marking counterfactuality is not altered. This reveals a clear boundary between ruguo and bushi. On the other hand, in (11), yaobushi as a whole is observed as a distinct lexical unit, which typically serves as a counterfactual hypothesis marker.

The closeness of yaobushi can be confirmed via its comparison with yaoshi-bushi. It is observed that yaoshi-bushi is not a preferred counterfactual construction (Eifring 1988:203). In our database, we can only find one instance of yaoshi-bushi, which is used non-counterfactually:

(13)  (A famous singer is talking about how to protect his voice.)
B: ...(H) 然後, \r\n   ranhou
   then
  \r\n  \r\n  →  第一 要是 你 不是 正常./
   diyi yaoshi ni bushi zhengchang
   first if    you not be    normal
  \r\n  第一要是 你不是正常
   first if you not be normal
  \r\n  可能你已經受嚴重的=_{-}
   keneng ni yijin shou yanzhongde
   maybe you already receive serious
  \r\n  傷害了聲帶\r\n   shanghai le shengdai
   hurt ASP vocal cord

B: ‘Then… first, if you do not (pronounce) correctly, if the way you sing is not correct, you might hurt your vocal cords badly.’

(Interview in the spoken data)

As shown in (13), the connection between yaoshi-bushi is not so tight as that in the word yaobushi. Collocation of yaoshi and bushi can be separated by other elements, such as the subject ni ‘you’ in (13), while
yao-bushi has developed from once independent elements into a single unit via grammaticalization.

Based on the diachronic studies of Eifring (1988), Ma (2002), and Ji (2009), we propose that the hypothetical adverbial yao, originating from the modal yao, has the meaning parallel to ruoyao or ruo ‘if’ in Classical Chinese (Ma 2002). Ruo ‘if’ was prevalently used in texts written in Classical Chinese, which was replaced by yao gradually in modern colloquial Chinese after the grammaticalization of yao with the function of serving as a conditional marker. In other words, conditional yao-bushi may evolve from ruo-bushi (若不是) showing the speaker’s hypotheticality toward the proposition described in the protasis. The frequent collocation of yao+bushi thus motivates a reanalysis for them to become a lexical unit. Its meaning with propositional content gains gradually either textual or pragmatic meanings, i.e. used as a discourse marker with the broadening of scope from clause level to sentence or even discourse level, serving rhetorical or polite functions in interaction. The development of yaobushi can be diagrammed in Figure 2 below.

![Figure 2. The grammaticalization process of yaobushi](image)

5.2 Semantic Development: from Modal to Conditional

Below, we address the semantic change of yaoshi, particularly focusing on yao, because the conditional use of yaoshi evolves mainly from yao, and shi usually carries no semantic or syntactic function. This subsection proposes a possible semantic change path with reference to previous studies on the diachronic development of yaoshi and yaobushi.

The origins of yao can be traced back to as early as the Pre-Qin period, as stated in most etymological studies and reference books. Yao

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19 Ruo-bushi, a marker of counterfactuality, still can be found in today’s Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese.

20 See Dong’s (2004) discussion on shi.
was originally a noun that referred to the body part ‘waist’ in Archaic Chinese (Ma 2002; Ji 2009; Xie 2010). The semantic extension of the sense of ‘importance’ is accordingly developed from the use of yao as a noun, indicating something important. Its semantic function extended from a concrete meaning to a more abstract meaning gradually. The use of yao as an attitude verb with the basic meaning of ‘want; desire; volition’ emerged later through metaphorical extension. The attitude verb yao became associated by degrees with what speakers or subjects want to accomplish instead of relating to reality. Yao evolved gradually from a main verb to a modal, from a concrete domain to an abstract domain, and from a major category to a minor category. Yao, similar to yu 欲 ‘want’, in Classical Chinese, has a sense of modality and the function of serving as a conditional marker (Ji 2009). The use of yu puts an emphasis on the volitive sense while yao is flexible with different senses, including deontic, volitive, and epistemic use. Yu has declined and is thus restricted to being used on formal occasions or in texts written in Classical Chinese while yao occurs much more frequently on informal occasions and in colloquial texts, appearing in interactional contexts.

With the inherent semantic nature of yao which expresses the basic meaning of ‘desire’ or ‘want’, various grammatical functions are developed, such as a main verb, a modal verb, an adverbial, and a conditional connective. There are thus several distinct yet related

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21 The use of yao, associated with the meaning of ‘want’ or ‘desire’, is an attitude verb which deals with what the speaker wants to accomplish instead of truth or reality. For example, in the sentence 我要见你 wo yao jian ni ‘I want to meet you’, yao is an attitude verb with the sense of volition.

22 The various uses of yao as a modal verb can be manifested in the following examples:

(A) 学习 要 没有 (deontic)  
Xuexi yao meiyou  
‘One has to be honest in learning.’

(B) 他要见你 (volitive)  
Ta yao jian ni  
‘He wants to meet you.’

(C) 天 要 下雨了 (epistemic)  
Tian yao xiyu le  
‘It is going to rain.’
meanings of yao in today’s Chinese discourse. The development of the conditional yao starts from the main verb use yao ‘want’, which indicates the desire for the possession of a concrete entity to a modal yao23 ‘will’ with the meaning of desiring the realization of abstract notions, of events, or of actions, and finally to an adverbial and discourse marker for conditionality and counterfactuality. Yao used as a modal collocating with the copular verb shi24 is prevalent in our database, as shown in (14) and (15):

(14) (The excerpt is concerned about the reader commenting on the love affair of Wang Jian-Ming.)

每個人都會有低潮的時候，
mei-ge ren dou hui you dichao de shihou
everyone all will have low-wave time
都該選一個臥榻，
dou gai xuan yi ge wota
gle all should choose one bed
讓自己好好修復，
rang ziji haohao xiu fu
let self good restore
但這個臥榻要是安全的合理合法的，
dan zhe ge wota yao shi anquande heqinghefa de
but this bed should be safe reasonable and legal
王建民選了一個錯誤的臥榻。
Wang Jian-Ming xuan le yi ge cuowude wota
Wang Jian-Ming choose ASP one CL wrong bed

‘Everyone would feel down at times, and should find a bed to rehabilitate. But this bed should be safe and legal. Wang chose the wrong bed.’

(2012-0425 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

23 The deontic and volitive senses of the modal yao are surmised to derive from main verb yao ‘want’, and the epistemic yao denoting future is presumed to originate from the previous deontic use denoting desire and obligation (Huang 2012).
24 The [yao+ shi] string in (14) and (15) is used as [modal + main verb].
(15) (The following is a writing sample about a girl’s dream.)

感覺自己羽翼伸展
gan-jue ziji yuyi shenzhan
feel self wing spread
灰煙抖落四處
huiyan douluo shichu
gray smoke shake down everywhere
冬日的陽光此時雲而出
dongri de yangguang cishi yun er chu
winter DE sunlight now cross cloud and out
帶著細細魅影
dai zhe xixi meiying
bring ASP thin ghost shadow
眼看又要潔淨的開始
yan kan you yao shi jiejingde kaishi
eye see again will be clean start

'(When you are dreaming), you will feel that you spread your wings, shaking the dust around. Then the winter’s sunlight comes out of the cloud, appearing with some shadows. It seems to be a good start again.'

(2012-0419 UDNDATA, Written discourse)

In (14), yao is used as a typical modal verb, with a deontic meaning ‘ought to; have to’, laying restriction to the following proposition. Yao in this example indicates moral or social obligation, conveying the sense that Jian-Ming Wang should be faithful to his wife and should not have love affairs with other women. On the other hand, the use of yao in (15) is an epistemic modal in the data, in which yao serves as a future marker. It indicates an assertion or predication about future possibility, suggesting that a new beginning will come. The future marker of yao(shi) is closely related to its modality use, as claimed by Bybee, Pagliuca and Perkins (1994). It is claimed that the epistemic yaoshi denoting future originates from the previous deontic use of yaoshi denoting both desire and obligation (Traugott and Dasher 2002). The epistemic meaning
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derives from deontic meaning because of subjectification$^{25}$ of the semantic implications (Traugott 2003).

The adverbial uses of \[^{ya}shi\] are extensions of the modal yaoshi, as claimed by Traugott (1989), You (1998), Ma (2002) and Ji (2009). The assumption is strongly supported by the fact that their meanings are closely related. Adverbials, such as ruo-yaoshi ‘if’ and zhi-yaoshi ‘only if’ conveying the meaning of possibility and hypothesis, express uncertainty for future events$^{26}$. Their use is more or less associated with the modal yaoshi dealing with what the speaker wants to accomplish. Such adverbials carry the sense of possibility and uncertainty and evolve further into the conditional connective and discourse marker yaoshi. It is not surprising that the conditional yaoshi is derived from the modal yaoshi, especially future potential marker yaoshi. To put it differently, the conditional yaoshi is an extension of the modality use of yaoshi, epistemic yaoshi in particular, which is associated with the speakers’/subjects’ attitude towards the realization of an action or event. The examples (14) and (15) illustrate the co-existence of different usages of yaoshi. The different uses of yaoshi discussed so far may fall generally into three major categories, i.e. premodal, modal, and postmodal, based on modality semantics, as represented in Figure 3.

$^{25}$ Subjectification is a mechanism by which meanings are recruited to encode and regulate the speaker’s attitudes and beliefs. See further discussion in section 6.

$^{26}$ Both ruo-yaoshi ‘if’ and zhi-yaoshi ‘only if’ are conditional markers, as shown in the following examples:

(A) 若 要 是 提早 完成 報告，我 還 可以 去 慢跑。
ruo yaoshi tizao wancheng baogao, wo hai keiyi qu manpao
‘If I can finish the report ahead of time, I can have time to jog.’
(2006-11-07, UDNDATA)

(B) 只 要 是 節能 機種，每 台 都 可以 申 请 補助。
zhi yaoshi jieneng jizhong, mei tai dou keyi shenqing buzhu
‘If your air conditioner is the energy-saving one, you can apply for the government subsidy.’
(2012-05-31, UDNDATA)
Figure 3 shows the semantic change paths of `yao(shi)` from the main verb use with the core meaning of ‘want; desire’ to the conditional and hypothetical maker `yao shi ‘if’. It is obvious that the semantic function of `yao shi` extends from a concrete meaning (the desire for the possession of a concrete entity) to a more abstract meaning, which then involves more and more speaker subjectivity (future prediction and possibility). The three phases of development coincide with three tendencies in semantic change presented by Traugott (1989:409-10). Traugott’s point is that most semantic change starts first from the concrete, physical domain to the abstract, psychological domain and then, to a textual, metalinguistic situation; i.e. meaning shift proceeds from propositional (objective, ideational) level to the expressive (i.e., subjective, speaker-oriented level).

5.3 Pragmatic Inferencing and Strengthening

Semantic change is inseparable from pragmatics. It is assumed that semantic extension or meaning transfer has to meet pragmatic requirements\textsuperscript{27}, i.e. to be motivated by conversational implicature\textsuperscript{28}.

\textsuperscript{27}In the work on semantic regularity, Traugott and Dasher (2002:24) point out that the chief driving force in the process of regular semantic change is pragmatic: “the context-dependency of abstract structural meaning allows for change in the situations of use, most particularly the speaker’s role in strategizing this dynamic use.”

\textsuperscript{28}Grice (1989) provided a theoretical framework to discuss the notion of “implicature” in linguistics. The meaning of an expression is “what is said” plus “what is implicated”. The latter refers to what the speaker means, but does not explicitly say. Grice (1989)
Conversational implicature refers to an abstract meaning or function arising from the context and it is cancelable but nondetachable (Levinson 1983). Many scholars suggest that the conventionalization of conversational implicature (Levinson 1983, 1995) or the strengthening of informativeness (Traugott 1988; Traugott and Dasher 2002) should be the major forces motivating grammaticalization. If-conditional constructions in natural languages, unlike pure logical conditions, show mutual dependency between antecedent and consequent. The conditional relationship between events or states of affairs can be strengthened, weakened or deviated from and the primary force at work is pragmatic strengthening or pragmatic enrichment. The conditions in the real world, when observed and construed with subjective involvement such as attitudes, beliefs, and emotions, can be transmuted because the speaker’s commitment to the proposition in an if-clause is flexible and subject to pragmatic contexts. The pragmatic meanings are motivated and strengthened while the original semantic meanings are fading in language use. More specifically, the contextual concepts become lexicalized and combine with the original word meaning and finally become conventionalized. This is called “context-induced reinterpretation” in Heine’s model of grammaticalization (1991) and “pragmatic strengthening” in Traugott (1988). Most recently, Traugott and Dasher (2002:35) further established an Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change (IITSC) to account for ‘the conventionalizing of pragmatic meanings and their reanalysis as semantic meanings (for details, see Traugott and Dasher 2002). Because

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29 Three levels of meanings are distinguished as follows:

(a) coded meaning: convention of a language at a given time
(b) utterance-type meaning: generalized invited inference (GIIN) associated with certain lexemes that are specific to a linguistic community
(c) utterance-token meaning: invited inferences (IIN) (i.e. conversational implicature) that have not been crystallized into communally used implicatures

Coded meanings derive from utterance-type meanings, which in turn develop through utterance-token meanings.
of the inferencing process from the context, the conditional markers yaoshi and yaobushi are thus given new innovative meanings in terms of their present meaning, i.e. marking hypothesis, in the context in communication, which will be illustrated below.

The development of the direct conditional use of yaoshi to the indirect conditional use of yaoshi exemplifies the strengthening of the informativeness or enrichment of the pragmatic function. It seems possible that the indirect conditional yaoshi develops from the direct conditional yaoshi, and the counterfactual yaoshi from the strong conditional yaoshi. Consider example (10) again, repeated below for the convenience of the reader:

(10) (The speaker, a female about 40, is talking about her marriage.)

L: .. < Q 我 再 也 不 愛 你 了 Q>.

.. wo zai ye bu ai ni le
I again too not love you PRT

...他 說, he say

..< Q 我 要 是 你 Q>,

.. wo yao shi ni
I if be you

..< Q 我 現在 馬上 打包 Q>,

.. wo xianzai mashang dabao
I now right away pack

(0) <Q 坐 飛機 回 台灣 Q>

zuo feiji hui Taiwan
take plane come back Taiwan

...(2.7) 我 當 時 就 是 <E shock E>.

wo dangshi jiu shi shock
I then ADV be shock
I was shocked then. I was very astonished.

(Interview Data)

The use of *yaoshi* in (10) is not purely a conditional marker showing the (im)possibility of the proposition described in the protasis. Instead, it is used to strengthen the speaker’s attitude, i.e. undesirability of the marriage. It displays a range of attitude, cognitive, and interactional properties. Instead of expressing the causal and logical meaning, a pragmatic meaning ‘stance marking’ is invited when *yaoshi* occurs in a specific context such as (10). *Yaoshi* functions as an epistemic marker which indicates the speaker’s stance or attitude on the content conveyed in the conditional construction. A new innovative meaning of *yaoshi* in terms of a present meaning in the context is strengthened so as to be more informative and relevant in communication. Moreover, since *yaoshi* prefaces the speaker’s subjectivity, it is used as a politeness marker to express indirect request and remark or to mitigate the effect brought about by the face-threatening acts (FTAs) for interaction purpose. The use of *yaoshi* makes the statement less direct and forceful, and thus maintains the interaction smoothly.

6. **SUBJECTIFICATION AND INTERSUBJECTIFICATION OF *YAOSHI AND YAOBUSHI***

6.1 From Objectivity to (Inter-)Subjectivity

In the process of grammaticalization, what is strengthened in pragmatically enriched meaning is usually the speaker’s subjective belief, judgment, evaluation, or attitude. There is a tendency to develop from non-subjective to subjective to intersubjective meanings, i.e. from meanings that merely express a particular state of extra-linguistic world,
to meanings that allow the speaker’s or writer’s general point of view to be expressed, to meanings that serve to specifically express the speaker’s or writer’s attitude towards the hearer or reader or their needs.

Subjectification is a correlate of grammaticalization, resulting in pragmatic strengthening (Traugott 2003:633). The use of conditional markers, which originally express objective meanings with minimal concern of the interlocutors’ perspective, conveys abstract, speaker/writer-oriented meaning, including the epistemic attitude toward the proposition. They develop into epistemic markers to strengthen the speaker’s belief state; for example, *yaoshi* in example (16) subjectively expresses the speaker’s attitude toward the statement in the consequent clause:

(16) (This is a report on a mother, who is worried much about the fact that her son asked her to care for his new-born baby.)

→ 你哥哥的女兒要是帶回來，
*ni gege de nüer yaoshi dai huilai*
your elder brother’s daughter if bring back
我 要 照顧 她，
*wo yao zhaogu ta*
I want care her
還 要 照顧 你 爸爸，
*hai yao zhaogu ni baba*
still want take care of your father

According to Traugott and Dasher (2002:40), such shifts typically involve increase in scope, from meaning that functions at the propositional level, to meanings with scope over the proposition, to meanings with scope over the discourse unit. Thus, Traugott and Dasher outline four general tendencies for semantic change, presented below (*s-w = scope within; s-o = scope over*):

| truth-conditional | > | non-truth-conditional |
| content | > | content/ procedure | > | procedure |
| s-w proposition | > | s-o proposition | > | s-o discourse |
| non-subjective | > | subjective | > | intersubjective |
If your brother brings his new-born daughter back, I will have to take care of the baby as well as your father. What should I do?

(2012-04-23UDNDATA, Written discourse)

In (16), the speaker is worried about taking care of her son’s new-born baby as well as her old spouse at the same time. The meaning in (16) becomes increasingly based on the speaker’s subjective beliefs/attitudes toward the propositions, hence more subjective. The use of *yaoshi* conveys the speaker’s subjective attitude toward the situation, i.e. she is not quite willing to take care of the new-born baby because she still has to take care of her old spouse—a heavy burden for her, in addition to expressing the possible hypothetical condition. The causal relation between the antecedent and consequent is presented implicitly and indirectly. The change from the direct conditional to indirect conditionals mirrors a process of extension from the objectively encoded to subjectively encoded *yaoshi*-conditional construction. Meanings are recruited by the speaker to encode attitudes and beliefs (i.e. subjectification).

Since linguistic communication crucially involves the speaker’s attention to the addressee/reader as a participant in the speech event, Traugott (2003) further proposes the development of intersubjectification from subjectification, emphasizing the correlated and parallel relationship between the two. Intersubjectification fulfills the need of the speaker or writer to express his concern of interaction and show his attention to the addressee or reader as a participant in the communication. The concerns of the addressee are taken into consideration in addition to the speaker’s own concern in interaction. In other words, the intersubjectification may serve as concomitant of subjectification at a later stage (Su 2005). Both subjectification and intersubjectification are motivated by the need of the speaker/writer to address the epistemic and interpersonal aspect of meaning.
6.2 Subjectivity Difference between Yaoshi and Yaobushi

Subjectification is a gradient phenomenon, ranging from being more objective to being more subjective. In other words, the degree of subjectivity in different types of conditionals may be different. There are varying degrees of subjectivity and intersubjectivity involved with the use of yaoshi- and yaobushi-marked conditionals, which can be accounted for from the syntactic, semantic, and the pragmatic perspectives.

Syntactically, the use of mood particles, such as 呢 ne, 呀 ya, and 啊 a, connotes the speaker’s subjective evaluation and attitude (Zhu 1998). Their use is motivated by the speaker’s subjective attitude to highlight the significance of the utterance. That is, the speaker subjectively judges certain information to be more significant and uses them to call for the addressee’s attention. In addition, punctuation is, in part, an attempt to reveal and emphasize the speaker’s emotion and evaluation involved in written communication. Either a question mark or an exclamation mark is prevalent in written discourse in conveying the speaker’s subjective judgment toward both the proposition and the discourse progression. Examination of these subjective elements in conditionals in our written data, as shown in Table 4, helps us compare the difference of subjectivity between yaoshi and yaobushi.

31 In addition to the punctuation marks and mood particles, yaoshi occurs frequently with the hypothetical marker dehua ‘if’ and ruguo ‘if’ in spoken data, which are also strongly subjective.
Table 4. *Yaoshi* and *yaobushi* co-occurring with mood particles and punctuation in the written data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>yaoshi</th>
<th>yaobushi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exclamation mark</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question mark</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood particle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood particle together with punctuation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (percentage)</strong></td>
<td>27 (90%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>30 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As revealed in Table 4, subjective elements (including mood particles and some form of punctuation) occur more often in *yaoshi*-conditionals than *yaobushi*-conditionals. (27 vs. 3)\(^{32}\). Their use enhances the speaker’s subjectivity; i.e. it helps encode strongly the speaker’s perspectives and attitudes within the hypothetical world, as shown in the following example (example (4) is repeated below for the convenience of reference):

(4) (The speaker was calling for the Japanese voters to support this young candidate.)

```
鈴木君從東京來拯救我們，
Lin-Mu jun cong Donjin lai zhengjiu women
Suzuki Mr. from Tokyo come save us
→要是我們這些老人家不支持他，
yaoshi women zhexie laorenjia bu zhichi ta
if we these old people not support him
```

\(^{32}\)Though this is partly because the total number of *yaoshi* is higher than that of *yaobushi* (90 vs. 28) in the written data, this is an important clue for us to see their difference in subjectivity.
It is obvious that the expressivity/subjectivity involved increases with the use of mood particle 呢 ne and the question mark ‘?’ in the above example33, which is in accord with Grice’s (1975) Maxim of Manner and Levinson’s (2000:31) M-heuristic: “Specially marked expressions signals marked intention”. Co-occurrence of yaoshi with the mood particle and the question mark helps yaoshi strengthen the speaker’s subjective belief.

In terms of a semantic-oriented perspective, yaoshi expresses the speaker’s speculation towards the situation denoted by the proposition in the conditionals. Since the use of yaoshi describes a non-assertive event or state (Yang 2007; Xu 2005), it is subject to pragmatic contexts and hence more subjective-oriented; i.e. the speaker’s own concern in interaction is highlighted. To put it differently, the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the yaoshi-clause is quite flexible and the reading of the conditional is determined ultimately by pragmatic considerations. For example, a conditional sentence such as 要是你看到我妹妹，你一定知道她懷孕了 要是你看到我妹妹，你一定知道她懷孕了 yaoshi ni kandao wo meimei, ni yiding zhidao ta huaiyun le could have three possible interpretations: ‘factual’, ‘hypothetical’, and ‘counterfactual’, respectively (Li and Thompson 1981:647), because the speaker’s commitment to the yaoshi-clause is subject to his or her judgment and evaluation about the propositional content in the yaoshi-clause. The commitment ranges from certainty to negation. Such ‘hypotheticality’ or ‘uncertainty’ expressed by yaoshi, imputable to a generalized conversational implicature that can be canceled in context, is more of a pragmatic nature than part of its coded semantics.

33 The force of subjectivity will not be so strong and clear if these elements are deleted.
Yaobushi, on the other hand, is not strongly related to speculative manner; accordingly, the subjectivity expressed in the yaobushi-conditionals is comparatively less than that in yaoshi. Yaobushi is canonically a counterfactual marker which is used to describe a situation that occurred. Thus, what is conveyed in the yaobushi-marked protasis is a factual situation. In this regard, it is claimed that yaobushi is more objective, when compared to yaoshi, because the use of yaobushi is linked to truth and associated with a more objective description.

Pragmatically speaking, the effect of subjectivity involved in different types of conditionals is not the same. In the direct conditional, the content of the two clauses are conditionally related in an obvious way. The speaker’s imprint that is left in this type of conditional is not so deep, and the degree of the subjectivity is therefore low. Direct conditional constructions are considered as a prototypical objective description of the relationship of real-world events, which convey logical, causal, and sequential relationships between P and Q. On the other hand, the subjectivity in indirect conditionals is higher than that in direct conditionals. This kind of conditional construction is used by the speaker to express an atypical logical conditional relationship. That is, indirect conditionals express a conditional relationship in the abstract mental and social domain (i.e. indirect, implicit and no logical cause-effect relations hold). They are the extended form of the direct conditionals, motivated by the force of subjectivity. The distribution of yaoshi and yaobushi in direct and indirect conditionals in our data is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of yaoshi and yaobushi in direct and indirect conditionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>yaoshi</th>
<th></th>
<th>yaobushi</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>written</td>
<td>spoken</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct conditionals</td>
<td>41 (45)</td>
<td>36 (37)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22 (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect conditionals</td>
<td>49 (55)</td>
<td>59 (63)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90 (100)</td>
<td>95 (100)</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>25 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 indicates that the use of yaoshi has extended from the direct and explicit causal relation between P and Q to the indirect and implicit one. It is subjectivity that brings about the extension of yaoshi. The high frequencies of the indirect conditional yaoshi mean that yaoshi is lexicalized via pragmatic strengthening, subjectification in particular. Compared to yaoshi, yaobushi occurs less frequently in indirect conditionals. This shows that the degree of subjectivity of yaobushi is not as strong as that of yaoshi. In terms of Sweetser’s (1990) three domain model, we may draw the conclusion that yaobushi falls considerably in content and epistemic domains but yaoshi drops considerably in epistemic and speech act domains.

6.3 Intersubjectivity Differences between Yaoshi and Yaobushi

The mechanism of intersubjectification can help explain how the indirect use of yaoshi and yaobushi reflect and supply communicative needs. The development of the mitigation function carried by these two markers represent a further increase in intersubjectivity, subsequent to their development of epistemic functions.

Semantically speaking, the meaning of yaoshi is more intersubjective than that of yaobushi. Yaoshi is less assertive and less certain than its negative counterpart yaobushi. When it is used in context, it indicates that the speaker is not sure whether the hearer shares his beliefs. The assumption presented conditionally by the use of yaoshi is not an assumption about facts, but an assumption about optimal communication and successful interaction: hypotheticality is an appeal with the implication of alternatives to mitigate or hedge, and thereby potential rudeness is avoided (Su 2005). Yaoshi-conditionals reveal features characteristic of polite expressions, that is, tentativeness, leaving options to the hearer, making a proposal and suggestion or indirect disagreement at the interactional level.

Pragmatically, yaoshi is used much more frequently than yaobushi (90 vs. 28 in written data and 95 vs. 4 in spoken data) with varying functions since the speaker’s commitment to the proposition in the yaoshi-clause is quite flexible and subject to pragmatic contexts. The
distribution of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* across different discourse types, both written and spoken, is presented in Table 6. The uses of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* as discourse markers are classified under the two main functional categories of textual and interpersonal functions from the discourse-pragmatic perspective\(^{34}\).

Table 6. The distribution of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* in different discourse modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Written data</th>
<th>Spoken data</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yaoshi</td>
<td>Yaobushi</td>
<td>Yaoshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 reveals that *yaoshi* is used more frequently at the interpersonal level than *yaobushi* (36 vs. 3 in written data and 38 vs. 1 in spoken data). It clearly shows that *yaobushi* occurs less frequently at the interpersonal level. There are only four occurrences of *yaobushi* used at the interpersonal level in both discourse modes (three in the written data and one in the spoken data). On the other hand, the use of *yaoshi* at a textual and interpersonal level is in balance (54 vs. 36 in written data and 57 vs. 38 in spoken data, i.e. 60% vs. 40% in both of the two modes). This shows that *yaoshi* is not only subjective but also intersubjective. They

\(^{34}\) As stated earlier in section 3, Traugott (1989) argues that semantic-pragmatic change in the initial propositional (ideational) content can gain either textual (cohesion-making) or expressive (interpersonal) meanings. The textual meaning is about the verbal world, with a focus on the flow of information in a text. The interpersonal meaning is about the social world, especially in the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, its negotiation and its maintenance. The various discourse-pragmatic functions of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* identified are not confined to one single function. But, in calculation, we just consider their primary function in the context. In the written data, *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* conveying the writer’s or the subject’s attitude to the text instead of logical relations are identified as interpersonal markers. For example, *yaoshi* in (1) is a textual marker which is used mainly for discourse organization and logical appeals. On the other hand, *yaoshi* in (4), which is used for emotional appeal, is an interpersonal marker.
contribute a lot to the development of a relationship with the reader/listener and help realize an interpersonal aim. For example, the use of yaoshi in (5) in section 4 enables the speaker to effectively manage the addressee’s potential loss of face and to avoid overt disagreement and conflict in social interaction. It is used as a softener, in order to save face for the addressee.

The link between conditionality and politeness (i.e. the intersubjective concern of the addressee) has been well established. It is argued that the more hypothetical the proposition is the less assertive and more polite it is, because a conditional is a politeness strategy which provides a new layer for the speaker and listener to join in together (Hsiao 2005:14). Thus, with yaobushi, when the hypothetical degree drops, so does the degree of politeness because the use of yaobushi clearly asserts the reading of counterfactuality instead of hypotheticality. Because of the lower hypotheticality yaobushi carries, it would be more favored than yaoshi, in cases of menace or accusation, as exemplified by the conditional sentence in example (11), repeated below for reference:

(11)  (The drug user blamed his mother for calling the police.)

```
上 次 要 不 是 你 報 警，
shang ci yaobushi ni baojing
last time if not you call police
我 也 不 會 被 抓 去 關。
wo ye bu hui bei zhua qu guan
I too not will BEI capture to put in jail
‘If you had not called the police, I would not have been put in prison last time.’
```

To sound threatening or accusing, the yaobushi-construction is preferred in (11). Such conditionals, in rejection of the consideration of politeness, are applied as face-threatening acts rather than suggestions or expectations. In other words, the concern of the addressee is not taken into consideration in such yaobushi-constructions.

With the evidence found in this study, we can reasonably claim that yaoshi displays a higher degree of intersubjectivity and politeness than yaobushi. While being a marker of a subjective epistemic stance, the use
of *yaoshi* is also motivated by intersubjective concern, i.e. the concern of the addressee is under consideration.

7. **CONCLUSION**

This study probes into the grammaticalization of *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* from a synchronic database, explicating their semantic-pragmatic uses, their evolution, and their subjectification and intersubjectification in order to have a better understanding of their distinct uses in discourse. The results obtained in this study, based on the two sets of data (i.e. the written newspaper corpus and the naturally-occurring spontaneous conversation), suggest that the asymmetry in their use is related to their evolution. Both *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* have undergone grammaticalization, but they show differences in the process of grammaticalization. *Yaobushi*, different from the reanalysis of *yaoshi*, i.e. from [yao+shi] to [yaoshi], may have evolved from [ruo+bushi]. *Ruo* was gradually replaced by *yao* in modern colloquial Chinese after the grammaticalization of *yao* with the function of conditional marker. Their development follows the general principles of semantic bleaching and pragmatic strengthening in the theory of grammaticalization (Traugott 1988, 1989), evolving from a lexical form to a grammatical one. Their referential function is weakened and their pragmatic function is strengthened because of grammaticalization.

The findings in our study also show that *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* are different in their degrees of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The use of *yaoshi* signifies the speaker’s strong emotional state and thus it is more (inter-)subjective than that of *yaobushi*. *Yaoshi* has a stronger tendency than *yaobushi* toward interpersonal reading. *Yaoshi* is used more often than *yaobushi* in that it is more (inter-)subjective, addressee-oriented, and interactive-based.

Both of the conditional markers *yaoshi* and *yaobushi* display a range of attitudinal, cognitive, and interactional properties, which are strongly associated with their respective cases of grammaticalization. They form a related group marking conditionality but are employed to perform different discourse-pragmatic and epistemic functions.
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Direct and Indirect Conditionals: A Corpus-based Study of Chinese Yaoshi and Yaobushi

直接和間接條件句：
華語「要是」和「要不是」的對比探析
－以語料庫為本

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本文以語法化(Grammaticalization)理論來對漢語條件句標記「要是」和「要不是」進行對比分析。漢語條件句標記「要是」和「要不是」看似反義，但使用上並不對稱。本文採用共時的語料考察，就兩者語意語用上的功能、語法化的過程、及主觀化和交互主觀化的程度進行探討。本文發現，兩者語法化現象的發展不同，兩者主觀性及交互主觀性也有所不同。此差異不只造成兩者在條件句上的出現頻率的不同，兩者在篇章中的語用功能也不相同。

關鍵字: 條件句、語法化、主觀性、交互主觀性