Introduction

Idioms are considered to be unanalyzable because the meanings of idioms cannot be derived from simple composition of each literal part. However, we demonstrate that idioms are analyzable within the cognitive semantics perspective whereby the situation or scene of the speaker is used to determine the situated meanings. This study aims to explore the polysemous meanings of *xia* idioms in Mandarin in terms of cognitive semantic. For example, the lexical word *xia* ‘下’ in the following idioms (1), (2) and (3) denotes different meanings. *Xia* in example (1) and (3) is concerned with metaphorical or metonymical meanings while example (2) serves as a verb.

(1) *tian1xia4tai4ping2* 天下太平
‘sky-below-too-peaceful = the world is at peace’

(2) *shuang1guan3qi2xia4* 雙管齊下
‘two-tubes-together-down = to paint a picture with two brushes at the same time; work along both lines’

(3) *xia4li3ba1ren2* 下里巴人
‘below-neighborhood-bumpkin-people = popular literature or art; simple and crude folk songs’

Many cognitive linguists suggest that polysemous words can be characterized by metaphor, metonymy and different image schemas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Johnson, 1987; Sweetser, 1990). On the other hand, lexical polysemy, one kind of semantic change, develops by the process of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Györi, 2002). Chou (1999) pointed out the semantic development and grammaticalization of polysemous opposite words for up and down, *shang4* ‘上’ and *xia4* ‘下’ are motivated by the fact that vertical spatial notion involves human beings' basic cognitive directional senses.

The polysemous word *xia* in Mandarin idioms denotes locative expressions (e.g. *hua1qian2yue4xia4* 花前月下 ‘flowers-front-moon-under = ideal setting for a couple in love’), and functions as a main verb (*dui4zheng4xia4yao4* 對症下藥 ‘aim-illness-below-medicine = to suit the medicine to the illness; to take the right remedial steps to correct a shortcoming’) or a verbal complement (*jie2xia4liang2zi* 結下樑子 ‘tie-down-beam-[suffix] = to create a beam; to incur the enmity’).

There are two objectives intended to be achieved by this research. First, to explain the
semantic extension of xia by illustrating how conceptual structures are or become embodied in our physical experiences, by referring to image schema theory, metaphoric mapping and metonymy. Secondly, to display Mandarin speakers’ cultural cognition model underlying the metaphorical conceptualization in xia idioms.

The study is organized as follows: (1) introduction, (2) literature review about the semantic extension of xia, (3) the theoretical framework as concerned with metaphor, metonymy and grammaticalization explanations for the semantic extension, (4) analysis of the collected data, including the basic schema of xia, metaphorical and metonymy extension, and xia as verbs and verbal complement, (5) a discussion regarding Grammaticalization paths of Xia and Mandarin speakers’ cultural perspectives, and (6) our conclusions.

**Literature Review**

Scott (1989: 306) suggested that the basic meanings of shang and xia involve the use of vertical direction and location. But shang and xia are also widely used to indicate temporal meanings, by embedding dimensions of verticality into temporal conceptions. For example, in terms of time perspective, shang is related to previous states; whereas, by contrast, xia refers to the next or the following. Scott (1989) opined that this may be related to the Chinese writing system which is classically required to be written vertically from top to bottom, as providing evidence that Mandarin speakers consider the upper position shang to be “previous”. Whereas, lower position xia is related to the notion of “next”. Therefore, we say shang4li3bai4 上禮拜 ‘the upper week = last week’ and xia4zhou1 下週 ‘the lower week = next week’. Scott (1989: 308) maintained that there are Mandarin speakers’ cultural values that trigger these metaphorical mappings between vertical relations and temporal expressions. However, Scott did not explain further which Mandarin speakers’ cultural values induce the semantic extension of shang and xia. According to Su (1994: 84), vertical shang and xia used as temporal expressions exhibit that time flows in a cyclic pattern, like the curve of a sine wave. Specifically, xia is the next in sequence to shang rather than the opposite of shang. For instance, xia4geyue4 下個月 ‘next month’ follows sequentially to shang4geyue4 上個月 ‘last month’.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that many metaphorical models involve spatial domains as their source domains. For instance, in English, we find that the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN, is embedded in the expression John is feeling a bit
down today. Similarly, Mandarin idioms encompass figurative meanings achieved by metaphor or metonymy so that we can find myriad *xia* idioms embracing metaphorical meanings as in the previous examples (1) and (3). Chou (1999: 91-100) stated that the basic meaning of *xia* is concerned with spatial meaning which could expand to non-spatial meanings through the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. For example, as seen when ABSTRACT DOMAIN IS LOCATION (ENTITY), LOW STATUS IS DOWN, and BAD IS DOWN where several conceptual metaphors result from the semantic extension of *xia*. As proposed by Chou (1999: 99), semantic development of *xia* could be realized through metaphorical mapping processes such as where we take an INSTRUMENT FOR THE EVENT, such as *xia4qi2* 下棋 ‘play chess’, or PART FOR THE WHOLE, such as *shou3xia4* 手下 ‘subordinates’ in which the phrase could be realized as ‘followers’ because the body part *shou3* 手 ‘hand’ signifies the WHOLE of a person or a group. Apparently metonymy is involved with the cognitive mechanisms, and triggers the metaphorical mapping from concrete to abstract. Thus, metonymies can be reflected in idiomatic expressions.

Liu (1989: 31-33) makes a general categorization of post-verbal complements of *xia*, which includes three separate senses: directional meaning, resultative meaning and static meaning. The directional complement not only indicates the direction of the action, but also reveals the goal when completing the action, as presented in example (4). A second sense of post-verbal complement is found in resultative meaning, such as by displaying the concept of having been “contacted and then become a fixed state”. Example (5) indicates the notion of this resultative sense. The third sense of *xia* involves static meaning, denoting entry to a new state from dynamic to static (example 6).

(4) *xia*: directional meaning

```
tiao4 xia4 shui3.
跳下水。
```

jump below the water

‘jump into the water.’

(5) *xia*: resultative meaning

```
ba2 xia4 lai2 yi3ge da4 luo2bo.
拔下来一个大萝卜。
```

pull down coming one big turnip

‘uprooted a big turnip from the ground.’
(6) xia: static meaning

yi2 ri4 wei4 ting2 de da4 yu3 zai4 yan3chang4 hui4 kai4shi4
一日未停的大雨在演唱會開始
one day never stop de big rain at concert begin
‘the heavy rain continuing in a day’

hou4 man4 man4 ting2 xi2 xia4 lai2.
後慢慢停息下來。
after slowly stop down coming
slowly stopped when the concert began.’

We assume the categorization of post-verbal complements of xia, suggested by Liu (1989) has some limitations. First, the directional meaning of xia cannot embrace expressions lacking a clear endpoint. In other words, this categorization cannot contain the direction complement without exhibiting a clear goal like mu4 yi3 luo3 xia4 ‘The curtains came down’. Thus, a more comprehensive classification must be entailed. Secondly, the resultative meaning of xia based on the idea of something being “contracted to be fixed” may be blurred so that we cannot classify the abstract meaning of xia with any characteristic result. For example, ding4 xia4 mu4 biao1 ‘set a goal’ may involve in a non-spatial movement from no existence to existence. As for the former sense, xia might undergo the process of grammaticalization, which requires further elucidation. Thirdly, the investigation of xia has neglected the relations among lexical polysemy, semantic extension and grammaticalization. The mechanisms of metaphor or metonymy are appropriately used to account for the multiple and related meanings of the lexical polysemy xia, and the semantic development of xia undergoes the process of grammaticalization exactly.

On the other hand, Huang and Hsieh (2008: 59) noticed differences between grammaticalized complements and general complements in Mandarin. They show grammaticalization can account for the relations between basic senses and metaphorical senses. The results illustrate that the process for a grammaticalized xia can be depicted as follows: downward movement in (7) extends to the meaning of removing in (8), expanding into the stable state after finishing in (9). Example (7) keeps a downward movement in meaning closely related to the directional lexical item xia. Example (8) has discarded any directional connotation of xia in terms of movement. Example (9) has shifted into a
termination, which is not related to directional meaning. Therefore, the processes from (7) to (9) exhibit how meaning abstraction operates by grammaticalization. In other words, through metaphorical mapping, the basic sense of xia concerned with direction movement extends into other non-spatial senses. Somewhat different from Liu’s approach (1989), Huang and Hsieh (2008) introduced grammaticalization to account for the semantic development of xia, which improves our understanding for the related senses of lexical polysemy xia.

(7) liu2 xia4 le yan3lei4.
流下眼泪。
‘tears running down.’

(8) ta1 zhai1 xia4 lao3hua1 yan3jing4.
他摘下老花眼镜。
‘he took off his long-sighted glasses.’

(9) zhe4jian4 shi4 rang4 wo2 liu2 xia4 shen1ke4 de yin4xiang4.
這件事讓我留下深刻的印象。
‘This event left a deep impression on me.’

From the previous studies, we consider that the polysemous word xia has multiple semantic related senses which are derived from the basic senses through the embedded cognitive processes of metaphorical mapping. These spatial and non-spatial senses are structured in a systematic way which may serve to highlight the process of grammaticalization.

Research Framework

Polysemy refers to a linguistic form that has several related meanings. The lexical item xia functions as a localizer, a directional main verb, a directional complement, and resultative complement. This semantic extension can be explained by image-schema, metaphor, metonymy and grammaticalization.

Image schemas indicate different patterns of recurring bodily experiences, which
emerge from our bodily interactions and result from our perceptual understanding of actions and events in the real world (Johnson, 1987). Image schemas exhibit aspects of how we think, reason, and image. The same image schema can be applied to various domains because the internal structure of a single schema may be metaphorically understood (Gibbs, Beitel, Harrington & Sanders, 1994). For example, in English, the BALANCE image schema is metaphorically used to explain different abstract domains of experience, such as balanced views, balanced systems, and balance of justice. Consequently, we utilize these image schemas with myriad experiential to provide our understanding of more abstract domains.

Image schemas are also used to explain spatial relations, such as OVER, UP or OUT. Such image schema are known as orientational image schemas and involves three basic elements of “path”, “trajectory” and “landmark” to characterize the various meanings of prepositions (Brugman, 1981; Lakoff, 1987; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006). Take the preposition, OUT, for example (see Figure 1). Figure 1 is regarded as a “central” image schema in that this mental representation provides unified descriptions.

Figure 1. The central image schema for OUT (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006: 169)

In Figure 1, we see trajectory (tr, hereafter TR), landmark (lm, hereafter LM) and path. TR is a movable entity and LM is a stable reference. The movable entity (TR) will follow a “path” moving from stage to stage. Figure 1 illustrates the central image schema for OUT as in the sentence she went out of the room. TR in the first stage is located at the space occupied by LM. The first stage represents that she went out from where we are. Specifically, the first stage of TR corresponds to the preposition IN. TR follows the path from stage 1 to stage 3. Later, TR moves away from LM and this spatial relation denotes the preposition OUT.

Metaphor plays an essential part in the cognitive linguistic system, associating two
different categories through metaphorical mapping between a concrete and an abstract domain. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintained orientational metaphors involve the description of a concept in terms of space. For example, the sentence *I am feeling up today* reflects the orientational metaphor *HAPPINESS IS UP*. Likewise, metonymy is also closely linked to semantic extension. Kövecses and Radden (1998) view metonymy as a stand-for relationship between two names. Metonymy is rightly treated as one aspect of semantic change in that it involves the use of a single characteristic to identify a more complex entity. For example, the word *sweat* was originally used for ‘perspiration’, but metonymically denotes ‘hard work’, because when one works hard, one perspires; perspiration is thus part of the process of working hard.

Grammarization is one of the mechanisms contributing to semantic extension, which represents the process whereby a lexical item becomes grammatical or undergoes change in grammatical function. Grammarization is a gradual process, which can be displayed by a continuum (Hopper and Traugott, 1993). For example, in Wu’s (2003: 24) study, the motion verb *guo4 過* displays a clear tendency of unidirectionality in its grammaticalization from lexical main motion verb to grammatical aspect marker. Thus, grammarization provides an interpretation for when concrete concepts are used to denote more abstract concepts based on recurrent human experiences. The grammarization process is motivated by the forces of metaphor, metonymic transfer, and context-induced reinterpretation.


**Data Analysis**

In this section we will first show the prototypical sense of *xia* and how it is extended to non-prototypical senses. Then the metaphorical and metonymic extensions of *xia* will be addressed. Finally, *xia* in Mandarin idioms serving as main verbs or postverbal complement is investigated.

1. **The Basic Schema of Xia**

   *Xia* is concerned with the vertical spatial relation, containing a physical higher-position
landmark, the LM, and a physical lower-position trajectory, the TR, in a vertical dimension space (see Figure 2). The dotted lines in Figure 2 show the distance between LM and TR. It should be noted that TR lies in the opposite position of LM in terms of a vertical dimension of space. Yet, TR and LM do not contract each other; namely, TR is located right below the higher-position LM. The xia in the sentence qing3 xiao3xin1 diao4shan4 xia4fang1 de wei4zi4 the sentence qing3 xiao3xin1 diao4shan4 xia4fang1 de wei4zi4 請小心吊扇下方的位置 ‘Please beware of the place right below the ceiling fan’ denotes such prototypical sense of xia. The relative position between the place for caution (TR) and the ceiling fan (LM) lies in the vertical dimension of space. In other words, the prototypical schema for xia is illustrated by the vertical relation between LM and TR in Figure 2.

Furthermore, this prototypical schema of xia can be extended into a non-prototypical sense, which indicates “under” (See Figure 3). While different from the prototypical schema, this non-prototypical sense of xia shows that the target object (TR) is just below the reference object (LM); namely, TR is not restricted to a location right below LM. The use of a dotted line in Figure 3 presents the distance between LM and TR. We find that semantic development of xia from prototypical schema to non-prototypical is reflected through the differences in the relative position between TR and LM. This distinguishes between prototypical and non-prototypical which can be detected by comparison between Figure 2 and Figure 3. Shu4xia4 樹下 ‘under the tree’ illustrates an example of non-prototypical schema of xia where the location under the tree (TR) is not restricted to the exact position right below the tree (LM). In other words, Figure 3 illustrates that the location (TR) is merely lower than the reference object (LM).
To summarize, the prototypical sense of *xia* indicates that the position of target object (TR) is right below the reference object (LM). Later, this sense then extends into non-prototypical senses to refer to “under”. The non-prototypical sense “under” frequently occurs in Mandarin *xia* idioms as examples (10) and (11) indicate.

(10)  
```
gualtian2li3xia4 瓜田李下  
'melon-farm-plum-below = to do up the shoes in a melon-patch and to put on a hat under a plum tree; to be in suspicious circumstances'
```

(11)  
```
hua1qian2yue4xia4 花前月下  
'flowers-front-moon-below = in front of flowers and under the moon; ideal setting for a couple in love'
```

The phrase *tian1xia4 天下 ‘the world’* often occurs in *xia* idioms. *Tian1xia4* originated from the notion of *tian1kong1lia4 天空下 ‘under the sky’* as it undergoes the process of grammaticalization, metonymy and metaphor (Chou, 1999). Therefore, *tian1xia4* denotes a more abstract concept “in the whole world” as in *tian1xia4tai4ping2 天下太平 ‘sky-below-too-peaceful = the world is at peace’*. On the other hand, the semantic extension of *xia* can be described in detail by image schema. Image schema emerges through human bodily experiences and motivate how people think and reason. The structure of a single image schema is understood metaphorically as an interpretation for the interconnected meanings of polysemous words. For instance, the BALANCE image schema reveals our experiences of bodily equilibriums and disequilibriums. Hence, the BALANCE image schema interprets the core meaning of “stand”-ing. This bodily experience can be metaphorically understood and used to comprehend several usages of “stand”. For example, the “stand” in *the clock stands on*...
the mantle is not concerned with bodily experiences. The BALANCE image schema is
extended into other domains to interpret how objects interact with their landmarks (Gibbs,
Beitel, Harrington & Sanders, 1994). The former example provides the explanation for
semantic extension from core meaning to metaphorical senses via image schema. The
metaphorical understanding of a single image schema is also applied to account for the
semantic extension of xia. In this way, the non-prototypical image schema of xia is used to
interpret the temporal sense of xia, referring to “next”, “after” or “the following part”. In
idioms, xia represents the “next time” in examples (12) and (13).

(12) xia4hui2fen1jie3 下回分解
‘below-times-separate-explanation = in next chapter story will tell; next times shows the
follow-up’
(13) xia4bu4wei2li4 下不為例
‘below-never-serve-example =Not to be taken as a precedent; just this once’

2. Metaphorical and Metonymy Extension
Spatial cognition provides one source of metaphors, inducing orientational metaphors
(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:14-21). In investigating xia idioms, there are four types of
orientational metaphors closely related to metaphorical semantic extension. The first
orientational metaphor is PAST IS UP; FUTURE IS DOWN. Here the temporal metaphorical
xia serves as a modifier before a noun, such as (12). Secondly, the orientational metaphor
HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN, which occupies a high frequency in
Mandarin xia idioms, is exhibited in (14) and (15).

(14) xia4qing2shang4da2 下情上達
‘down-situation-up-convey = make the situation at the lower levels known to the higher
authorities’
(15) chan3shang4qi1xia4 諂上欺下
‘toady-up-deceive-below = fawn on high status people and bully those with lower level’

The third metaphor is GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN, which maps the quality into the
vertical relation in space. Some expressions or xia idioms reflect this conceptual metaphor as
illustrated in (16)-(22).

(16) shang4ce4 上策
‘up-strategy = the best strategy’
(17) *xia4ce4 下策*  
‘below-strategy = bad strategy’

(18) *xia4chang3 下場*  
‘below-stage = bad result’

(19) *xia4feng1 下風*  
‘below-wind = disadvantage’

(20) *shang4feng1 上風*  
‘up-wind = advantage’

(21) *gan1bai4xia4feng1 甘拜下風*  
‘voluntary-worship-below-wind = to admit inferiority’

(22) *jiang1he2ri4xia4 江河日下*  
‘river-tributary river-day-below = to go from bad to worse; to be on the decline’

The fourth metaphor is UP IS HEAVEN, DOWN IS EARTH embedded in idioms like (23) and (24).

(23) *shang4you3tian1tang2, xia4you3su1hang2 上有天堂, 下有蘇杭*  
‘up-have-sky-hall-below-have-Su1-Hang2 = there is a heaven above and Su-Hang is below; Su-Hang are rich places just like heaven’

(24) *di4xia4xiu1wen2 地下修文*  
‘ground-below-modify-articles = write-articles-underground; people with excellent talent die early’

The semantic extension of *xia* involves the metaphorical mapping from concrete vertical relation to the abstract concepts pursuant to the concept that ABSTRACT STATE IS LOCATION as in (25) and (26). We discern that here *xia* functions as a condition, premise or presupposition.

(25) *xiang1xing2zhi1xia4 相形之下*  
‘mutual-shape-zhi-below = by contrast’

(26) *zhong4shang3zhi1xia4, bi4you3young3fu1 重賞之下, 必有勇夫*  
‘heavy-reward-zhi-below-must-have-brave-warriors; handsome reward induces people who are willing to do something’

On the other hand, metonymy is relative to semantic extension. Metonymy displays the stand-for relationship so that the use of the function as well as the significant characteristic
represents the whole entity. Generally speaking, metonymy involves signification by THE PART FOR THE WHOLE. Furthermore, the metonymy INSTRUMENT FOR THE EVENT has a foundation in (27) and (28).

(27) xia4bi3ru2shen2 下筆如神
‘lower-pen-like-god = begin to write just like god; the talent for writing’

(28) xian1xia4shou3wei2qiang2 先下手為強
‘ahead-lower-hand-become-strong = to take the initiative is to gain the upper hand’

In the above examples, bi3pen ‘pen’ and shou3hand ‘hand’ are the instruments we use to ‘write’ and ‘do things’, respectively. Thus, the use of these instruments indicates the activity of writing or doing something. Mandarin speakers choose xia, because the direction of bi3pen ‘pen’ is downward when writing. Accordingly, the sense of xia4bi3 referring to a ‘beginning’ is obtained. On the other hand, men2xia4di4zi2 門下弟子 ‘door-under-disciple; there is a wealth of talents’ also provides evidence of metonymy. In this case, men2xia4di4zi2 signifies ‘followers’ through THE PART FOR THE WHOLE processes because the use of the PART, men2門 ‘door’, to represent the WHOLE organization.

3. Xia as Verb or Verbal Complement

This section tackles the dynamic senses of xia, which serve as a verb or verbal complement. The dynamic senses of xia primarily involve directional meaning, metaphorical senses and grammaticalized xia in a causative construction. Through the process of grammaticalization, the sense of xia bleaches out these directional meanings.

Directional Meaning

The directional meaning of xia is divided into downward directional meaning and non-vertical directional meanings, which are demonstrated in Figure 4 and Figure 5 respectively.

In Figure 4, we see that, firstly, directional downward meanings of xia denotes the dynamic TR moving downward from the high position LM1 falling to LM2, the lower position. The dotted circle of TR symbolizes the movable aspects. In addition, the slanting and dotted lines indicate the route of a movable TR. The arrow on the LM2 represents the end point of downward movement. It is worth noting that the downward movement will not always be a vertical falling. For example, xia4che1 下車 ‘to get out of the car’ and xia4yu3 下雨 ‘rainfall’ simply indicate the theme (TR) moves downward. The action of
alighting a vehicle or rainfall pouring does not necessarily involve both vertical and downward movement, but at least downward movement is obligatory. That is, the downward movement is the basic element for xia as downward directional meaning. Accordingly, xia lexicalized as a transitive verb appears as shown in Figure 4. As to Mandarin xia idioms, xia in xia4che1yi1shi3 下車伊始 (1) ‘below-car-its-start = the moment one alights from the official carriage; the moment one takes up one's official post’ as the main verb preceding the noun che1 車 ‘car’ exhibits the downward direction. However, in the perspective of the whole idiom xia4che1yi1shi3, xia is not the subject. Instead, the noun shi3 始 ‘the moment’ is the subject or the topic of this idiom. The verbal phrase xia4che1 in this idiom serves as the adjective to modify the noun shi. In short, the downward direction meaning of xia demonstrates a downward movement. This directional meaning is metaphorically understood via the prototypical schema based on our recurring bodily movements. Namely, when downward orientation takes place, there will be a dynamic trajectory (TR) moving from a higher-position LM1 to a lower-position LM2 in a vertical dimension of space. It is shown that xia has undergone the semantic development and then expresses the directional downward as well as is lexicalized as a verb.

Secondly, we discuss another version of the directional meanings of xia that is not concerned with the downward movement. In this case, xia expresses the dynamic TR moves away from SOURCE without involving a downward or vertical direction, as presented in Figure 5. The dotted line is used to display the effect of keeping away from the SOURCE. The SOURCE is treated as a stationary landmark (LM). The xia in Figure 5 denotes
movement or a departing meaning, such as **yun4dong4yuan2 xia4chang3 xiu1xi2** 運動員下場休息 ‘sportsmen left the court to rest’. Specifically, this directional meaning regarding non-vertical movement is lexicalized by **xia** as a main verb. **Xia** with the metaphorical sense denotes the removal or leaving sense, which is found in Mandarin **xia** idioms, for example, **qi2hu3nan2xia4** 騎虎難下 ‘ride-tiger-hard-below = riding-tiger-is-difficulty-to-retreat; to have no way to back down’. In addition, A location noun following **xia** indicates SOURCE in Figure 5. For example, **xia** precedes the location noun **tang2** ‘堂’, which denotes the sense of leaving the original place. In Mandarin idiom **xia4tang2qiu2qu4** 下堂求去 ‘below-hall-ask-leave = to leave the place where one stays and to ask for leaving; the wife wants to divorce her husband’ is interpreted that the wife wants to leave the original place; that is, the wife wants to divorce and leaves her husband. We see **xia** as a verb indicating the metaphorical sense of taking one’s leave.

![Figure 5. Non-vertical direction meaning of xia](image)

### 3.1 Metaphorical Sense of Xia in Causative Constructions

The causative construction refers to a phrase consisting of a verb prior to an adjective or another verb (Wang, 1980: 401-403). This verbal phrase conveys the sense that agents perform actions, which make further behaviors occur or certain states persist. For example, **nong4huai4** 弄壊 ‘make-bad; break’ reflects the causative construction embracing a verb prior to an adjective, which denotes a cause and effect relationship. **Xia** in causative constructions can involve either a main verb (e.g. **luo4jing3xia4shi2** 落井下石 ‘fall-well-below-stones = throw stones into the well; takes advantages of one’s difficulties’) or a verbal complement (e.g. **dao3xia4** 倒下 ‘fall-down; to collapse’). **Xia** as a main verb in causative construction combines both CAUSE force and directional meaning. Specifically, **xia** indicates AGENT causes THEME (TR) to move downward or AGENT acts on THEME so that it causes the THEME to move downward (see Figure 6). The concrete line is used to present the force caused by AGENT and the dotted line exhibits the route of a movable THEME (TR). The arrow represents this movable route will continue or persist.
Figure 6. *Xia* in causative construction

From the expression *xia4 shui3 jiao3* 下水餃 ‘cook dumplings’, based on the perspective of human body, we see the downward movement of dumplings. *Xia* functions as a verb, followed by a noun phrase which is the THEME in the conceptual structure. Furthermore, *xia* in (29) and (30) belong to Causative Constructions with a directional meaning. Example (29) exhibits that the stones, as caused by agents, are falling down, therefore, *xia* is the main verb that describes the causative action on the stone (THEME). Likewise, *xia* in (30) is treated as a causative construction with directional meaning. This idiom represents someone causing medicine to go from mouth down to stomach. The movable route of the medicine is in a downward direction in terms of human perspective. In short, *xia* with a directional meaning in causative constructions serves as a main verb followed by a THEME (TR), such as in (29) and (30).

(29) *luo4 jing3 xia4 shi2* 落井下石
‘fall-well-below-stones = throw stones into the well; takes advantages of one’s difficulties’

(30) *dui4 zheng4 xia4 yao4* 對症下藥
‘aim-illness-below-medicine = to suit the medicine to the illness; to take the right remedial steps to correct a shortcoming’

On the other hand, *xia* manifests that the movement of the THEME comes through the force of the action. Namely, one action causes THEME to move downward and this action is lexicalized as the verb preceding *xia*. As example (31) shows, the action of ‘rolling’ presented by *yao2* 搖 causes THEME *chuang1 zi* 窗子 ‘window’ to move downwardly. Accordingly, the second type of *xia* in causative constructions reveals the directional meaning that is the same as the first type of causative construction in examples (29) and (30). These two types
differ in syntactic functions. The first type serves as a main verb (examples (29) and (30)), whereas, the second type is a verbal complement following a main verb (example (31) and (32)). Hence, in the second type, a verb before xia indicates the lexicalization of manner, by which an action occurs. Example (32) is an idiomatic expression belonging to the second type of xia as the verbal complement and directional meaning would be detected.

(31) yao2xia4chuang1zi 搖下窗子
‘roll-below-window-zi = roll down the window’

(32) fang4xia4tu2dao1, li4di4cheng2fo2 放下屠刀，立地成佛
‘put-down-kill-knife = a butcher drops his cleaver, becoming a Buddha; a wrongdoer may become a man of virtue once he does good’

3.2 Grammaticalized Xia in Causative Construction

Xia in causative construction bleaches out the vertical or downward senses through the processes of grammaticalization. Grammaticalized xia in causative construction signifies that an AGENT causes a THEME to detach itself from a SOURCE. The movement does not reveal downward orientation. Figure 7 illustrates grammaticalized xia in causative construction. In Figure 7, the concrete line is used to present the force caused by AGENT and the dotted line exhibits the movement state of THEME.

The grammaticalized xia with an abstract meaning is derived from concrete meaning, such as vertical or directional senses, and then evolves into a grammatical meaning. In other words, the directional lexical meaning is absent in the conceptual structure (Figure 7) because of the metaphorical mapping from a spatial relation to a temporal relation. The grammaticalized xia in causative construction indicates a meaning of achievement. This grammaticalized xia consists of two subcategories. One serves as a verb, signifying “formation” or “creation” as in example (33). Xia4ma3wei1is from Hanshu 漢書 (History of Han Dynasty). Here xia precedes an abstract THEME with the semantic property of the transition from non-existence to existence. We can then interpret that THEME gets rid of the state (SOURCE) and turns into a new state. This transition is comprehended metaphorically by the process moving from non-existence to existence. The other type of grammaticalized xia functions as verbal complement. Xia occurs with an achievement verb of this type, such as yin4xia4zhi3wen2 印下指紋 ‘leave fingerprints’ and ji4xia4ming2zi4 記下名字 ‘take down the name’. The grammaticalized xia denotes that a THEME exists due to the conceptual structure of movement
from no existence (SOURCE) to achievement in the end, as example (34) shows.

Figure 7. Causative construction with the grammaticalized *xia*

(33) *xia4ma3wei1* 下馬威
‘below-horse-threaten = to warn against by enforcing strict disciplinary action when one first takes office’

(34) *jie2xia4liang2zi* 結下樑子
‘tie-down-beam-zi = to create a beam; to incur the enmity’

To summarize, *xia* undergoes the process of grammaticalization by revealing semantic extension from directional to the achievement. With metaphorical mapping, the sense of directional or vertical is bleached and *xia* gradually has evolved into more peripheral and temporal senses.

**Discussion**

In this section, we will examine the semantic extension of *xia* triggered by the process of grammaticalization, and then we will also discuss how the Mandarin speakers’ cultural perspectives underlie the orientational metaphors of *xia*. In order to highlight some certain aspects of Mandarin speakers’ culture, contrastive English language data will be considered.

**1. Grammaticalization paths of Xia**

Although grammaticalization is originally understood as a linguistic phenomenon that is used to describe diachronic development, the synchronic structure of a linguistic unit is still perceivable in terms of its historical development. The *xia* data agree with the general tendency of grammaticalization which is displayed in Table 1 below. The synchronic data reflect grammaticalization paths of *xia* based on the notion that grammaticalization is regarded as a “panchronic process” (Heine, Claudi & Hùninemeyer, 1991:261). “Panchronic process” refers to grammaticalization as conceivable from a diachronic analysis of early
conventionalized forms and from a synchronic analysis of language-use patterns (Wu, 2003).

The lexical item *xia* in idioms shows that its grammaticalization develops from a localizer to non-spatial sense, such as in aspectuality or connectivity. We give two grammaticalization paths of *xia*, shown in Table 1. *Xia* in Mandarin has different meanings and serves various syntactic functions. Path 1 is concerned with the causative construction of *xia* where *xia* serves as either a main verb or verbal complement. On the other hand, Path 2 explains the nominal function of *xia*. These paths exhibit a gradual process of *xia* moving from a lexical item to a more grammatical form. Sweetser (1988, 1990) suggests that grammaticalization brings about semantic bleaching, defined as lexical meaning loss and abstract grammatical senses developing. Path 1 in Table 1 displays the development of the sense of *xia* from the vertical and directional verbs, shifting into non-vertical and detachment meanings, and finally obtaining an aspectual sense. Likewise, path 2 presents the grammaticalization process as involving the tendency to move from the physical localizer, through temporal localizer to connective.

The case of *xia* shows that grammaticalization involves the increase of subjectiveness because grammatical uses denote a subjective attitude of the speaker, such as with the aspectual *xia* and discourse connective *xia*. In terms of Path 1, *xia* initially functions as a verb and denotes a directional meaning. Such a directional sense is a bodily experience that is observable and more objective. Afterwards, *xia* undergoes metaphorical mapping and signifies the sense of leaving as in *qi2hu3nan2xia4* 騎虎難下 ‘ride-tiger-hard-alight = riding-tiger-is-difficulty-to- retreat; to have no way to back down’. This sense extension involves metaphorical mapping from vertical to non-vertical. Finally, *xia* gradually develops into the sense of achievement and has an aspectual function. *Xia* serves as a verbal complement in the causative construction as in *jie2xia4liang2zi* 結下樑子 (see example 34). In this case, *xia* expresses the speaker’s mental state from non-existence to existence. The semantic development of *xia* in Path 1 reflects the general tendency of grammaticalization from lexical to grammatical, as well as from objective to subjective.

In Path 2, *xia* undergoes semantic development from spatial meaning to temporal sense. That is, *xia* is first a localizer and then denotes a temporal sense of “next”. Finally, *xia* undergoes semantic development into an abstract sense as in *xiang1xing2zhi1xia4* 相形之下 (see example 25). In this expression, the sense of *xia* implies the speaker’s attitude or ideas about two contrastive matters, as concerned with cognition. Path 2 exhibits the path of
grammaticalization from concrete to abstract and from objective to subjective.

Grammaticalization processes are also unidirectional. In other words, the development is a transition from a lexical form to a grammatical form, but not vice versa. Consequently, grammaticalization is an ongoing process in chains for xia as shown in Table 1. Old forms and new forms co-exist synchronically and new forms are continually developing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path 1</th>
<th>Lexical</th>
<th>Grammatical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[-vertical]</td>
<td>[-vertical]</td>
<td>[aspectual]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directional</td>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xia4che1yi1shi3</td>
<td>qi2hu3nan2xia4</td>
<td>jie2xia4liang2zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>下車伊始</td>
<td>騎虎難下</td>
<td>結下樑子</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path 2</td>
<td>Lexical</td>
<td>Grammatical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+physical]</td>
<td>[+temporal]</td>
<td>[+cognitive situation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localizer</td>
<td>Afterward</td>
<td>discourse connective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hua1qian2yue4xia4</td>
<td>xia4hui2fen1jie3</td>
<td>xiang1xing2zhi1xia4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>花前月下</td>
<td>下図分解</td>
<td>相形之下</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Chinese Cultural Perspective**

Metaphor is not only grounded in physical experience but also constrained by cultural models. The analysis of Mandarin xia idioms supports the claim that metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary, but have a basis in cultural perspective (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A discrepancy of metaphorical expressions between languages, as in English and Mandarin, for example, may reflect people’s different ways of thinking.

Orientational metaphors contain culture messages, and shed light on cross-cultural similarities and differences. For example, English views UP metaphorically as the future, for example, in coming up; Mandarin uses DOWN to express the same notion as in jie1xia4lai2 捷下來 ‘in the following’. In analyzing Mandarin xia idioms, we find that shang and xia coexist very often in xia idioms as can be seen from the following examples (35)-(39).

(35) shang4xing2xia4xiao4 上行下效
‘up-conduct-below-follow = behaviors of the higher authorities will be emulated by the lower levels’

(36) shang4xia4jiao1kun4 上下交困
'up-below-intersecting-distress = higher authorities and lower levels both have trouble’
(37) shang4xia4xiang1an1 上下相安
‘up-below-mutually-peace = higher authorities and lower levels get along well’
(38) shang4lou4xia4shi1 上漏下湿
‘up-leak-below-wet = the house is humble and poor’
(39) bu4xiang1shang4xia4 不相上下
‘not-mutually-up-below = nearly equal’.

We realize that this type of idiom mostly reflects the orientational metaphor HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN, as examples (35)-(39) show. Hofstede (1980) says that high power distance cultures prefer large power distance so that the hierarchical power structure is rather strict and hard to change. We assume examples (35)-(39) and the orientational metaphors that they reveal show that Mandarin speaking societies involve high power distance society. Accordingly, the impact of the cultural values about higher power distance on people’s language or behaviors can be discerned. For example, title plus surname is a common way to address others in high power distance culture, such as huang2 dong3shi4zhang3 黃董事長 ‘Mr. Huang, the chairman of the board’, in which huang2 is the person’s surname and dong3shi4zhang3 is the job title. We believe the use of shang and xia denotes the notion HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN.

In contrast, some egalitarian western societies are more likely to be low power distance cultures. Hofstede’s (1983) study shows that western cultures consider it important to minimize social inequalities, reflecting the characteristics of individualistic cultures. For example, western cultures take “I” identity in precedence over “we” identity. People from individualistic cultures are more inclined to employ confrontation strategies when handling interpersonal problems, while those from collectivistic cultures are likely to use avoidance, or face-saving techniques (Lusting & Koester, 1996). Thus, people from western are encouraged to speak for themselves and prefer the direct expression of emotions, which is in contrast with what a Mandarin proverb says chen2mo4shi4jin1 沈默是金 ‘silence is golden’. Thus, the English orientational metaphors HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN are reflected in emotional expressions, such as I’ve been feeling down since I lost my job.

Moreover, western culture likes to reveal their emotions directly so that they employ the accessibly perceived vertical dimension words “UP” and “DOWN”, as distinguished from
Chinese culture. Mandarin speakers are more likely to neglect personal affections or ideas, and influenced by the theories of the five elements and their traditional medicine. Compared to English, instead of using orientational metaphors for the description of emotions, Chinese prefers involving more body parts (Yu, 1995), especially internal organs, such as “heart”, “gall” and “liver” to imply emotional states like 提心吊膽 ‘carry-heart-hang-gall = to be haunted with fears’ or 心驚膽戰 ‘heart-fear-gall-war = tremble with fear’.

In short, we believe a Mandarin speaking society like Taiwan is rooted in a high power distance and inclines to employ more body parts in idiomatic expression to describe emotions under the influence of their cultural values.

**Conclusion**

This study discussed the core meanings of *xia* in terms of LM-TR relations exhibited by image schemas, and investigates their metaphorical mappings. A gradual process of *xia* grammaticalization is also shown.

The polysemous *xia* can be categorized into static and dynamic senses. Static senses embrace those meanings like the locative lexical word, temporal meaning and metaphorical meaning. Static senses originated from the prototypical image schema, which indicate that TR is right below LM, and then expanded into the non-prototypical sense of “under”. As for the basic sense of *xia*, it is used to serve as a temporal expression through the conceptual metaphor PAST IS UP; FUTURE IS DOWN, such as in example (10).

Some abstract notions of *xia*, such as when connective, are derived from the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT STATE IS LOCATION. This sense of *xia* is not limited to spatial notion. Furthermore, the semantics of *xia* become general and abstracted from a vertical direction meaning, such as 下車伊始 ‘below-car-its-start = the moment one alights from the official carriage; the moment one takes up one's official post’, by undergoing the process of grammaticalization.

*Xia* initially develops the senses of detachment and then starts to denote meanings for grammatical categories such as aspectuality in example (34). Such phenomena can be accounted for by the fact that spatial cognition is among our basic cognitive abilities, which is utilized to express more abstract ideas. Regardless of the processes of static and dynamic semantic
extension, these phenomena provide evidence that as extension proceeds, directional meaning bleaches and grammatical meaning is obtained. The process of grammaticalization of *xia* reflects the tendency of movement in chains as described by Hopper and Traugott (1993).

Language is a component of culture, and metaphor is one of the important linguistic devices that contains cognitive perception and epitomizes cultural context (Su, 2002). The myriad of Mandarin *xia* idioms involving the combination of *shang* and *xia*, such as examples (35)-(39), indicate the relationships between the upper and lower classes, which derive from the cultural concepts that HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN. We argue that Mandarin speaker’s culture is embedded in a high power distance society because we have had political hierarchies that are more distant and less accessible, both for the sake of a more effective governing mechanism, and due to a large population (Hofstede, 1980). The cultural power distance makes an impact not only on the linguistic system, such as with Mandarin *xia* idioms, but also on language behaviors. On the other hand, speakers in western cultures categorized as individualistic societies are encouraged to express emotions. Such phenomena would be consistent with the fact that English expressions frequently involve the orientational metaphor HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN to express emotions since the UP-DOWN notion is more accessibly perceived.

The study of *xia* idiomatical expressions presents a means to further our understanding of the abstract concepts expressed by metaphor, metonymy, and the underlying grammaticalization as well as revealing Mandarin speaker’s cultural perspective in this context.
Footnotes

(1) According to Online Dictionary of Mandarin Idioms published by Ministry of Education, the idiom *xia4che1yi1shi4* 下車伊始 is also called as *xia4che1zhi1shi4* 下車之始 and infers the moment that the officer has just assumed office. For example, Obama *xia4che1yi1shi4 de di4yi1bu4 jiu4shi4 ti2chu1 zhen4xing1 jing1ji4 de fang1an4* 歐巴馬下車伊始的第一步就是提出振興經濟的方案 ‘When Obama assumed office, he first proposed policies for developing the economy.’
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