

Understanding *Le* in Mandarin: Developments and Insights from 1988 to 2025

Pu Meng^{1,a,*}

¹Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, United States

a. pmeng@gmu.edu

*corresponding author

Abstract: The focus in this study is on the Chinese grammatical marker *le* (了) between the years 1988 and 2024. It aims at knowing its structure, meaning, use, and historical change. There are two primary varieties of *le*: the verbal *le* and the sentence-final *le*. It is used for indication of completion, state change, and providing context. Research indicates that verbal *le* marks the endpoint of an event and draws attention to this because of its syntactic position in a sentence. In other words, *le* serves to connect topics and structure information for various situations, studies show. At the end of a sentence, *le* often conveys the speaker's emotions or perspectives and adds color to conversations. This study studies *le*'s many uses and makes a case for studying its structure, meaning, and use together. It offers a novel perspective on understanding Chinese grammar, comparing with other languages, and enhancing Chinese as a second language.

Keywords: Mandarin *le*, syntax and semantics, pragmatic function, diachronic evolution, Chinese grammar

1. Introduction

Mandarin Chinese has a unique grammar system. *Le* is a common marker that shows different meanings in sentences [1]. It has two main uses based on its position in a sentence: post-verb *le* and sentence-final *le* [2]. Post-verb *le* shows that an action or event is finished or has happened [3]. It mainly acts within the verb phrase to emphasize the time boundary of the event. It can mark a completed action, indicating that it has ended, such as Example (1) [4].

(1) *Ta1 chi1 liao3 fan4.* (他吃了饭。)

He eat *liao3* (perfect marker) meal.

'He has eaten a meal.' (Unless otherwise cited, all data and Examples are from the author.)

When *le* is combined with a result complement, it emphasizes the result or effect of the action, such as Example (2) [5].

(2) *Ta1 da3 po4 liao3 bei1zi.* (他打破了杯子。)

He hit break *liao3* (perfect marker) cup.

'He broke the cup.'

When *le* is combined with a quantified object, the object with a precise quantity makes the event boundary clear, such as Example (3) [2].

(3) *Ta1 mai3 le liang3 ben3 shu1.* (他买了两本书。)

She buy le (perfect marker) two CL (classifier) book.
'She bought two books.'

The *le* after a verb is mainly used for dynamic verbs (such as run and write) and, in some cases, can be combined with state verbs (such as tall and fat), but mainly indicates a change of state [1].

Secondly, the sentence-end *le* is a pragmatic particle used to express context-related information or guide the listener's cognitive state. It is usually not directly related to completion but marks a change of state, a shift in proposition, or the introduction of new information [6]. The sentence-end *le* can indicate a change of state, marking the difference between the current state and the past, such as Example (4) [6].

(4) *Tian1qi4 bian4 leng3 le.* (天气变冷了。)

Weather become cold le (state change marker).
'The weather has become cold.'

The sentence-ending *le* can emphasize new situations and guide conversations or actions, such as Example (5) [6].

(5) *Wo3men gai1 zou3 le.* (我们该走了。)

We should leave le (new situation marker).
'We should leave now.'

The sentence *le* can strengthen the tone and express a pragmatic ending or attitude, such as in Example (6) [4].

(6) *Wo3 zhi1dao4 le.* (我知道了。)

I know le (completion/emphatic marker).
'I got it!' / 'I understand now!'

The sentence-ending *le* can modify declarative sentences, reminding the listener that a particular fact has become a reality [1], such as Example (7) [1].

(7) *Ta1 hui2 jia1 le.* (他回家了。)

He return home le (current relevant state marker).
'He has gone home.'

When the word *le* appears after a verb and at the end of a sentence at the same time (i.e., a "double *le* structure"), the two words each have different semantic functions: the word *le* after a verb marks the completion of an action; the word *le* at the end of a sentence emphasizes the current state or introduces a new situation, such as Example (8) [1].

(8) *Ta1 mai3 le shu1 le.* (他买了书了。)

He buy le (perfect marker) book le (new situation marker).
'He has bought the book (and now there is a new situation).'

As an important grammatical marker in Chinese, the core functions of *le* include marking completion or boundary (*le* after verbs); expressing state changes, or introducing new information (*le* at the end of a sentence); in the double *le* structure, it comprehensively reflects the completion of the action and the switching of the new state. From 1988 to 2025, people have explained *le* from different perspectives, and even the conclusions of some studies cannot be mutually inclusive. In other words, with the changes of the times, the usage and understanding of *le* have also changed. This study will conduct a literature study on what *le* is to summarize the most comprehensive frontier understanding or explain the new findings of this study.

2. Grammar and Syntactic Analysis

Regarding cross-linguistic comparison, *le*'s syntactic and semantic position as a resultative predicate can be explored. The Chinese *le* can be compared with components in other languages. The semantic and syntactic commonality between the Dutch verb prefix *ge* and the Chinese aspect marker *le* reveals their functions in indicating the realization of an event reaching its endpoint. These two markers are not limited to high-order syntactic positions (tense or aspect). However, they are embedded in verb phrases (VP) as the center of resultative clauses. Active verbs are usually non-terminal and must be marked by adding result clauses or transparent objects, while *ge* and *le* further strengthen the realization of this endpoint. In terms of syntactic structure, although the surface order of the two languages is different, similar semantic functions are achieved through complex syntactic processes. In Dutch, *ge* often combines verb prefixes to form past participles, while in Chinese, *le* appears after verbs or predicates. They pointed out that the Chinese *le* has dual functions: one marks the realization of the end point of an event (such as event completion), and the other only marks the existence of the endpoint (such as unfinished actions). There are also *be* and *ver* with similar functions in Dutch, but their syntactic and phonological characteristics are significantly different from *ge*. Sybesma and Wyngaerd provided a cross-language comparative perspective on grammatical research and revealed the complex interactive mechanism between event endpoint and semantic realization [7].

Regarding the syntactic embedding and role of *le* as the predicate of the result clause, Sybesma explored the function and position of the verb *le* in modern Chinese from the perspective of semantics and syntax and proposed that *le* is not only a perfective marker, but also a result predicate, embedded in the verb phrase and serving as the core of the result clause [5]. The traditional view is that *le* is an aspect marker above the verb phrase (VP). However, this study proposes a more complex function and position of *le* through syntactic analysis and semantic exploration [5]. Regarding syntactic position, *le* is in the verb phrase's internal structure and is the result clause's predicate [5]. For Example, in (9), *le* indicates that the result of "broken" caused by the activity of "breaking" has been realized:

(9) *Ta1 shuai1sui4 le hualping2.* (他摔坏了花瓶。)

He throw-break *le* (perfect marker) vase.

'He threw and broke the vase.'

From a semantic perspective, *le* can indicate three states: completion, termination, and realization [5]. For Example, completion can be seen in (10), which indicates that the action is completed and the object is specific:

(10) *Ta1 xie3 le yi1 feng1 xin4.* (她写了一封信。)

She write *le* (perfect marker) one CL (classifier) letter.

'She wrote a letter.'

Termination and realization are manifested in state changes [5]. For Example, (11) indicates a state change from non-frozen to frozen:

(11) *Hu2mian4 jie2 bing1 le.* (湖面结冰了。)

Lake-surface freeze ice *le* (state change marker).

'The lake has frozen.'

Regarding the role of *le* in the result clause structure, it forms a clause with the object to provide the end point of the event, for Example, (12) [5]:

(12) *Ta1 yong4 wan2 le zhe4 zhi1 bi3.* (他用完了这支笔。)

He used finish *le* (perfect marker) this CL (classifier) pen.

'He used up this pen.'

Through a comprehensive study of the syntactic embedding and semantic functions of *le*, a unified framework is proposed. This framework regards *le* as an embedded result predicate, solving a phenomenon that could not be explained in previous studies [5].

Regarding the syntactic position and specific semantic functions of *le* after the verb and *le* at the end of the sentence, according to the syntactic and semantic characteristics of *le* in Chinese, it is divided into *le* after the verb (verbal *le*) and sentence. The two usages of the final *le* (sentential *le*) show significant differences in function and syntactic position [2]. *Le* after the verb is mainly used as a quantitative marker, which is closely related to the completion of the event and is usually expressed as the perfective aspect [2]. For Example, Example (13) marks the completion of an action and has quantitative properties:

(13) *Ta1 he1 le san1 bei1 cha2.* (她喝了三杯茶。)

She drink *le* (perfect marker) three CL (classifier) tea.

‘She drank three cups of tea.’

The sentence-ending *le* is considered a contrast focus marker, and its function depends more on the context used to indicate assertion or emphasis [2]. For Example, (14) indicates a change in state from continuous rain to rain has stopped:

(14) *Yu3 ting2 le.* (雨停了。)

Rain stop *le* (state change marker).

‘The rain has stopped.’

When the word *le* appears after a verb and at the end of a sentence at the same time, a “double *le* structure” is formed, which is similar to the perfect tense in English, indicating the completion of an action and the association of the current state [2]. For Example, the sentence “he bought vegetables” can be understood as “he has already bought vegetables”:

(15) *Ta1 mai3 le cai4 le.* (他买了菜了。)

He buy *le* (perfect marker) vegetable *le* (new situation marker).

‘He has already bought the vegetables.’

The function of *le* should be distinguished based on its syntactic and semantic roles rather than being judged solely based on its linear position [2].

Regarding the role of the aspect marker *le* in-displacement sentences, this paper explores the role of two aspect markers in Chinese, *le* and *zhe*, in displacement sentences (Locative Inversion Construction, LIC) and their impact on discourse function [8]. Displacement sentences refer to the “Loc+V+NP” structure, such as *Shu1 bie4 fang4 zai4 shu1jia4 shang4.* (书被放在书架上。). “A book is placed on the bookshelf,” where “bookshelf” is a location phrase that describes the placement of an object. This structure is not only used with subjectless verbs. It can also include verbs with implied subjects, like *fang4* (放) “put” or *gua4* (挂) “hang” [8]. Below are the functions and features of these two aspect markers. *Zhe* presents a continuous result state, emphasizing the static result after the action is completed [8]. For Example, (16) describes the state of the painting rather than the action:

(16) *Qiang2 shang4 gua4 zhe yi1 fu2 hua4.* (墙上挂着一幅画。)

Wall on hang *zhe* (state marker) one CL (classifier) painting.

‘A painting is hanging on the wall.’

The word *le* indicates a completed event, usually to comment on a specific scene [8]. For Example, (17) emphasizes the completion of the action of hanging the painting:

(17) *Qiang2 shang4 gua4 le yi1 fu2 hua4.* (墙上挂了一幅画。)

Wall on hang *le* (perfect marker) one CL (classifier) painting.

‘A painting was hung on the wall.’

From the perspective of dialogue function, the displacement sentence pattern using *zhe* (着) introduces or reintroduces noun phrases in the scene, such as describing a specific state in the environment. The displacement sentence pattern using *le* is more used to comment on or state the completion state of a specific scene [8].

This section discusses the Chinese aspect marker *le*'s complex syntactic and semantic functions and reveals its unique linguistic significance through cross-language comparative studies. In cross-language comparisons, the Chinese *le* has similarities with the Dutch verb prefix *ge*, both used to mark the realization of an event reaching its endpoint, emphasizing the completion of an event or the change of state. The study points out that *le* is embedded in a verb phrase as the predicate of a result clause to indicate an event's result or endpoint. Its function is not limited to perfective aspect marking but also includes the state of marking the endpoint's existence. In syntactic analysis, the *le* after the verb is usually combined with a result complement or a quantified object to strengthen the result of the action or the quantity boundary, and in some cases, it can mark the change of state verbs. The *le* is used as a particle at the end of a sentence to indicate a change in state or to introduce new information. It can signal a change of state, a shift in meaning, or a recent development. When the *le* after the verb and the *le* at the end of the sentence appear simultaneously, a "double *le* structure" is formed, which respectively marks the completion of the action and the relevance of the current state, similar to the perfect tense in English. The role of *le* in the displacement sentence structure (Locative Inversion Construction) was also analyzed and compared, along with its differences with *zhe*, thus pointing out the functional division of *le* in the description of dynamic events and result states. These studies improved the understanding of *le* and offered a new perspective for deciphering syntax and semantics across languages.

3. Semantic and Pragmatic Functions

Le meaning boundary is the most common, but usage varies [4]. The particle *le* has two common usages that are important for meaning [4]. It has *le* as a case study, and it shows how you change the meaning by importing a change in context (change its time and mood), and this is studied through *le* with the help of Relevance Theory [4]. The analysis shows that *le* after a verb is a perfective marker in many cases. For example, in (18), *le* shows the action is complete and emphasizes its result:

- (18) *Ta1 du2 le liang3 ben3 shu1.* (他读了两本书。)
 He read *le* (perfective marker) two CL (classifier) book.
 'He read two books.'

To mark completion, *le* appears after a verb, research shows [4]. It also displays a [4] "result" or "state change." For example, in (19), *le* indicates that what was broken is the cup because it was broken:

- (19) *Bei1zi shuai1 sui4 le.* (杯子摔碎了。)
 Cup fall break *le* (result marker).
 'The cup broke.'

The *le* at the end of a sentence connects the state or action to [4]. For example, in (20), *le* indicates a new state or a sense of urgency about the action.

- (20) *Wo3men gai1 chu1fa1 le.* (我们该出发了。)
 We should depart *le* (current relevant state marker).
 'We should depart now.'

As the analysis of modern Chinese narrative texts, *le* is multifunctional and not just [4] a single marker. The *le* after the verb in (21) indicates the event is completed, and the *le* at the end of the sentence emphasizes the update of the present state [4].

(21) *Ta1 mai3 le cai4 le.* (他买了菜了。)

He buy le (perfective marker) vegetable le (state change marker).
'He has bought the vegetables.'

An explanatory framework for *le* was introduced. It emphasizes what context in its meaning. This framework accounts for the complexity of *le* with respect to indicating time, mood, and results [4].

This research examines the semantic layers and combination principles of the double-*le* sentence pattern. It analyzes the two primary uses of *le* in Mandarin: predicate *le* and sentence-final *le*. It discusses their roles in a double-*le* sentence together. In this context, sentence structures and their meanings [1] get the attention they deserve because they payoff the category complexity that towel actions and interactions have on the development of grammar. The perfective marker called predicate *le* represents a happening that has come to an end [1]. In (22), for example, the predicate *le* marks the running event's end.

(22) *Ta1 pao3 le yi1 gong1li3.* (他跑了一公里。)

He run le (perfective marker) one kilometer.
'He ran one kilometer.'

The sentence-ending *le* acts as a transition marker. It shows the difference between the current state and the earlier state [1]. For example, in (23), the sentence-ending *le* marks the weather changing from warm to cold.

(23) *Tian1qi4 leng3 le.* (天气冷了。)

Weather cold le (state change marker).
'The weather has turned cold.'

The predicate *le* and the sentence-final *le* can appear together in a sentence. This forms a "double *le* sentence pattern" that combines the meanings of both [1]. For example, in example (24), the predicate *le* shows the event of eating is complete, and the sentence-final *le* highlights the update of the current state.

(24) *Ta1 chi1 le fan4 le.* (他吃了饭了。)

He eat le (perfective marker) meal le (state change marker).
'He has eaten the meal.'

3.1. Conversation and Interactive Subjectivity

Regarding the subjective expression function of *le* in natural conversation, through the analysis of natural conversation data, it is found that *le* has two primary forms: sentence-end *le* (S-*le*) and post-verb *le* (V-*le*). Sentence-end *le* is more used to emphasizing the change of state or the current relevance; post-verb *le* marks the completion of the event or the relationship between tenses. These two forms have the traditional grammatical functions of perfective aspect and perfect tense and are also closely related to expressing the speaker's subjective views [9].

Regarding the interactive role of sentence-final *le* in dialogue, it is not only a standard grammatical marker but also shows a high degree of intersubjectivity, coordinating the overall consensus in the dialogue and guiding the interaction between participants [10]. *Le* often appears at turn-taking points in the dialogue. Its function is not only to update the common ground of the dialogue but also to promote the continuation of the dialogue by triggering the other party's response (such as response expression or echo) [10]. In more formal transitions, *le* may also trigger a longer and richer response from the listener [10]. Compared with *le* after the verb, *le* shows more interaction, and the listener may respond after hearing it [10]. The study shows that *le* has a subjective function in conversations. It can be divided into sentence-final *le* (S-*le*) and post-verb *le* (V-*le*). Sentence-final *le* is used to show state changes or current relevance. Post-verb *le* marks the end of events or the tense relationship [9].

Sentence-final *le* has strong subjectivity in conversations. It helps the conversation move forward by adjusting the shared context and prompting listener reactions [10]. Sentence-final *le* stands out more in interaction, often leading to richer responses and playing an important role at turning points in conversations.

The double *le* sentence pattern marks the end of an event. The *le* at the end of the sentence emphasizes the importance of the current state. It is proposed that the predicate *le* acts under the *le* at the end of the sentence, and the *le* at the end semantically processes the event boundary marked by the predicate *le* [11].

Regarding the two semantic interpretations of the sentence-final particle *le*, namely "state change" and "contrary to expectations," this paper explores the semantic role of the sentence-final particle *le* (sentential *le*) in Chinese, focusing on the relationship between its two interpretations of "state change" and "contrary to expectations" [6]. By adopting the concepts of speaker presupposition and common ground, the study believes that using *le* at the end of a sentence involves the following two aspects [6]. First, the state changes its interpretation [6]. When *le* indicates a state change, it usually refers to the change of the state expressed by the sentence at the current moment, such as from never happening to already happening [6]. For Example, Example (25).

(25) *Ta1 chulsheng1 le*. (他出生了。)

He born *le*(state change marker).
'He borns.'

Second is the interpretation contrary to expectations [6]. When *le* conveys a meaning contrary to expectations, the sentence's content violates the listener's or the usual assumptions or expectations in the context [6]. For Example, in example (26).

(26) *Dan4shi4 ta1 zou3 le*. (但是他走了。)

But he left *le*(state change marker).
'But he was left.'

Regarding the meaning and use of *le* with verbs (V-*le*) in Chinese. It looks at the reasons for its different meanings in terms of grammar and semantics. V-*le* usually shows dynamic events. It can also show ongoing states in some cases. The change from dynamic events to ongoing states is known as "aspectual coercion." The change is based on the sentence composition, the part of the subject, and modifiers such as *yi3*.

This part is analyzing different senses and functions of the Chinese aspect marker *le* in various contexts. Essentially, the meaning of *le* is boundary. The verbal *le* after a verb indicates what is about to happen/what comes after the action of doing. It can also demonstrate variations in outcomes or states. For instance, in *Bei1zi po4 le* (杯子破了), the *le* indicates that the action of falling is the cause of the cup breaking. The *le* at the end of the sentence indicates the situation that is now and that this may be a change or new situation. There can be an overlap between these two types of *le*. To illustrate, in the double *le* structure of (12), the verbal *le* signals the completion of the action while the sentential *le* emphasizes the updating of the current state. Sentential *le* can also indicate "state change" or "contrary to expectations." A state change is when we transition between a state that is not present to a state that does exist. At the same time, "contrary to expectations" conveys unexpected information. Finally, regarding the semantic flexibility and aspectual coercion of *le*, studies have pointed out that the verb plus *le* (V-*le*) form is used for dynamic events and can also express continuous states through semantic adjustments in specific contexts. This phenomenon is jointly influenced by grammatical structure, subject semantic features, and modifiers (such as *yi3*). In summary, *le* shows a high degree of flexibility and complexity at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels, and its semantic interpretation often depends on the specific context and its interaction with other components of the sentence.

4. Diachronic Linguistics and Grammaticalization

Regarding the grammaticalization process of *le* from ancient to modern Chinese, two uses of *le* in modern Chinese are discussed: verbal *le* after the verb and sentence-final *le* at the end of the sentence [12]. The author proposes that *le* has a unified semantic function: marking relative anteriority [12]. *Le* originated from the main verbs of ancient Chinese and gradually developed into a functional word in modern Chinese after the grammaticalization process [12]. In actual use, the use of verbal *le* is sometimes optional.

Regarding the evolution of the grammatical position of *le* in modern Chinese, Shi believes that two processes are involved [12]. First, with the emergence of "result structure" in language, some instances of *le* were reanalyzed as complements of new morphological structures. Second, other verb instances began to lose verbal nature, becoming sentence subjects and appearing only in time clauses. These processes changed the position of *le* from after the verb complement to before the verb complement [12].

In summary, this part of the study focused on the grammaticalization process of the Chinese auxiliary word *le* and its position evolution. First, about the grammaticalization of *le*, Shi proposed that *le* originated from the main verb in ancient Chinese and gradually evolved into a functional word in modern Chinese through grammaticalization [12]. There are two main uses of *le* in modern Chinese: verb-like *le* after the verb and sentence-like *le* at the end of the sentence. The author believes that *le* has a unified semantic function, marking relative anteriority. In actual language use, verbal *le* is sometimes optional and influenced by internal and external language factors. Secondly, regarding the evolution of the grammatical position of *le*, Shi analyzed the two key processes it has undergone [12]. First, with the emergence of "result structure" in Chinese, some instances of *le* were reanalyzed as complements in the new morphological structure; second, some verbal *le* gradually lost their verbal function, became the subject of the sentence, and only appeared in the time clause. This evolution led to the position of *le* shifting from after the verb complement to before the verb complement. In summary, these studies reveal the grammaticalization path and position adjustment process of *le* from ancient Chinese to modern Chinese and clarify the historical background of its functionalization and position change in modern Chinese.

5. Language Acquisition and Teaching

Regarding the acquisition pattern and semantic understanding of *le* by Chinese children, based on cross-linguistic research, it was found that children tend to use perfective markers (such as *le*) for telic predicates in their early years. Children can distinguish between the perfective aspect and past tense: *le* is used not only for past events but also for uncompleted events, indicating that *le* is not entirely bound to the past tense. Children can distinguish between perfective aspect and finality: *le* sometimes co-occurs with non-final verbs, indicating that *le* is not used solely to mark finality. Children can correctly distinguish and use the verb suffix *le* and sentence-final *le* at an early age [13].

Regarding the mastery of the perfective aspect marker *le* by second language learners, the focus is on analyzing whether the use of *le* by intermediate-level learners in specific contexts conforms to the rules of the target language and comparing the performance of learners and heritage speakers (HS) with Chinese background. Foreign language learners tend to add less *le* rather than more *le*; they fail to fill in the correct place where *le* is needed. This phenomenon may be because teachers often emphasize that *le* is not a past tense marker in English, which leads learners to be overly cautious and avoid adding *le* to the text. Learners perform poorly on perfective verbs (such as *qu4* (去)) and achievement verbs (such as *dao4* (到)) that require *le* but perform better in state verbs and non-perfective contexts that do not require *le*. Genetic learners perform better than foreign language

learners in the accurate use of *le* overall, probably because they have been exposed to Chinese for a longer time and have a more prosperous language exposure environment [14].

Regarding using authentic materials to teach sentence-final *le*, Su and Tao pointed out that *le* is a complex grammatical feature in Chinese, mainly because it has rich pragmatic functions, and similar structures are often lacking in learners' native languages [15]. The study used real movies and TV clips as teaching materials and designed classroom activities and assessment methods to show how to teach *le* at the elementary level. The advantages of using authentic materials are emphasized, such as improving students' sensitivity to contextual and communicative factors, and it is advocated that the teaching difficulties of *le* can be solved through contextualized teaching methods [15].

Regarding non-native learners' use of the multifunctional particle *le*, Li and others believe that the most widely studied aspect marker in Chinese is *le* [16]. In addition to being used as a perfective aspect marker to indicate the completion of an action, it can also be used as a sentence-final particle to indicate the current relevant state. People who learn Chinese as an L2 will learn and use *le* within the grammar framework, but the use of *le* is quite flexible. Due to the optional use of *le* in some contexts, advanced Chinese speakers use it less frequently than L2 learners [16].

In summary, the study shows that Chinese children tend to use *le* for terminal verbs when they learn it early can distinguish between perfective and past tenses and terminal and non-terminal verbs and master the rules of using *le* after verbs and at the end of sentences earlier [13]. Second-language learners show difficulty using *le*, often missing it when needed, especially in completion and achievement verbs [14]. Teaching *le* with real-life materials helps learners understand its practical use better. Advanced learners, however, use *le* less often. This shows they need to develop more awareness of context during learning.

6. Conclusion

This study looks at research on the Chinese *le* over the past few decades. It explains its use in syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. The *le* is a multifunctional marker. It marks the completion or end of an event and helps connect context. The study shows that *le* after a verb marks the end of an action or a change in state. *Le* at the end of a sentence highlights a shift in state or context.

This study would also like to provide a brief overview of the research on the functions of *le* based on the framework in the foregoing section. It provides fresh insights on *le* at language studies and contrast. It also looks into *le* use in teaching and learning contexts. They recommend context-based teaching, using different contexts in order to show learners how *le* is used differently. It offers a basis for future investigations of *le*'s roles in syntax, meaning, and use. It also points to new methods for tracing language history and comparing languages.

References

- [1] Soh, H. L., & Gao, M. (2006). *Perfective aspect and transition in Mandarin Chinese: An analysis of double-le sentences*. In *Proceedings of the 2004 Texas linguistics society conference* (Vol. 107, p. 122). Somerville: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- [2] Wang, C. (2018). *The syntax of le in Mandarin Chinese* (Doctoral dissertation, Queen Mary University of London).
- [3] Shi, Z. (1988). *The present and past of the particle 'LE' in Mandarin Chinese*. University of Pennsylvania.
- [4] Ljungqvist, M. (2003). *Aspect, tense and mood: context dependency and the marker le in Mandarin Chinese*.
- [5] Sybesma, R. (1997). *Why Chinese verb-le is a resultative predicate*. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*, 6(3), 215-261.
- [6] Soh, H. L. (2009). *Speaker presupposition and Mandarin Chinese sentence-final-le: a unified analysis of the "change of state" and the "contrary to expectation" reading*. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 27, 623-657.
- [7] Sybesma, R., & Wyngaerd, G. V. (1997). *Realizing end points: The syntax and semantics of Dutch ge and Mandarin le*. *Linguistics in the Netherlands*, 14(1), 207-218.
- [8] Zhang, L. (2008). *Locative inversion and aspect markers le and zhe in Mandarin Chinese*. In *Proceedings of the 20th North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL-20)* (Vol. 2).

- [9] Chang, L. H. (2003). *Linguistic Subjectivity and the Use of the Mandarin le in Conversation*. The University of New Mexico.
- [10] Lu, L. W. L., & Lily, I. (2009). *Speech in interaction: Mandarin particle Le as a marker of intersubjectivity*. *Zeitschrift für interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht*, 14(1).
- [11] Li, W. (2017). *Aspectual coercion: Interpretations of V-le in Mandarin Chinese*. *International Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, 4(1), 22-61.
- [12] Shi, Z. (1989). *The grammaticalization of the particle le in Mandarin Chinese*. *Language Variation and Change*, 1(1), 99-114.
- [13] Chang, H. H. (2013). *The aspect marker-le in early child Mandarin*. *Journal of Universal Language*, 14(1), 7-54.
- [14] Shi, Y. (2013). *ANALYSIS OF L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE OF PERFECTIVE LE IN MANDARIN*. *Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching*, 20, 40-54.
- [15] Su, D., & Tao, H. (2018). *Teaching the Mandarin utterance-final particle le through authentic materials*. *Chinese as a Second Language Research*, 7(1), 15-45.
- [16] Li, X., Bayley, R., Zhang, X., & Cui, Y. (2022). *An investigation of the use of the multifunctional particle-le by second language learners of Mandarin Chinese*. In *Variation in Second and Heritage Languages* (pp. 15-42). John Benjamins.