

The Semantic Categorization of Radical “辵” (*chuò*) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》)

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“同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) is a lexicology study conception of Chinese language and it is referred to the Chinese word that can deduce its original concept meaning from its graphemic structure. This article is an illustrative research encompassing the forming process of radical (部首) “辵” (*chuò*) and the forming process of the radical “辵” (*chuò*)’s category sememe [+ lift the foot to go one’s ways (抬腳上路)]. Based on this, this study analyzed the progress of forming these characters. All the “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) of radical “辵” (*chuò*) constituted a semantic field systematically and contained a common sememe [+ lift the foot to go one’s ways (抬腳上路)].

Keywords: semantic categorization, radical, “辵” (*chuò*), “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*)

Introduction

“同類詞” (*tónglèicí*)¹ is a lexicology study conception of historical Chinese language. Mr. WANG Li (1900-1986)² is the first Chinese scholar to notice this phenomenon of Chinese language. He first promoted this concept in his book *HanYuShiGao* (《漢語史稿》) in 1958, thinking there are two systems of Chinese vocabulary: One is *tónglèicí* (同類詞), the other is paronym graph (同源詞). He said,

“同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) is the clues of Chinese characters to analysis the meaning relationship between them from the angle of radicals (部首); paronym graph (同源詞) is the phonetic clues of the relationship between the Chinese words. (L. WANG, 1958, pp. 538-541)

One Chinese character is approximate to one morpheme, which is the argument basis of this article. From the angle of etymology, we can use these radicals to research the original characters and meanings of Chinese. We can also use these radical clues to research Chinese semantic system.

The following we will use the radical (部首) “辵” (*chuò*) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) as an example to probe the “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) system.³

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¹ The italics behind Chinese characters are Chinese Pinyin (漢語拼音). It is convenient for readers to recognize.

² Mr. Wang Li is one of the founders of modern Chinese Linguistics.

³ In associative character (會意字), indicative character (指事字) and picto-phonetic character (形聲字), the semantic category that radical represented is very different from each other. In this article, we use the radical “辵” of *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) as an example, so there is no distinction.

Radical “辵” (chuò)

Formation Process of Radical “辵” (chuò)

“辵” (chuò) as a Chinese character radical, its graphemic type was “辵” in the Qin and Han Dynasty. XU Shen (許慎, 58-147)⁴ confirmed it as a Chinese radical in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》), compiled about AD 100). “辵” (chuò) itself is also a Chinese character.

First of all, starting with the analysis the interpretation system of *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》):

辵，乍行乍止也。從彳，從止。……讀若《春秋公羊傳》曰：“辵階而走。”⁵ (XU, 1963, p. 39)

“從彳，從止” means “辵” (chuò) is an associative compounds character. The graphemic component “彳” (chì) came from “行” (xíng) (從行省), which omitted (省去) “亍” (chù) when it took part in forming Chinese characters. The explanation of “行” (xíng) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) was:

行，人之步趨也。從彳，從亍。⁶ (XU, 1963, p. 44)

“行” (xíng) itself is also an associative compound Chinese character. “彳” (chì) means “pace” or “trundling” (慢步走). Therefore, the “彳” (chì) as a graphemic component of “辵” (chuò) also means “trundling” (慢步走). “亍” (chù) means “brisk walking” (“趨” qū) or “fast walking”. The meaning of “止” (zhǐ) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) is “cease” or “stop” (停止). The meaning of “乍” (zhà) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) is “sudden” (突然). Then the literal translation of “乍行乍止” (zhàxíngzhàzhǐ) is “a sudden escape and stopped suddenly” (突然逃亡, 突然停止). So “辵” (chuò) can be interpreted as “a sudden escape and stopped suddenly”. The illustrative sentence in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) was selected from *GongYangZhuan* (《公羊傳·宣公六年》). The story is that Zhao Dun (趙盾, the minister) found Jin Lingong (晉靈公, the king) wanted to kill him, then “辵階而走” (chuòjiē’érzǒu), meaning along the steps, Zhao Dun quickly fled. It can be seen that there is literature evidence in the annals of history.

XU Shen analyzed “辵” (chuò) as an associative compound, comprised with “彳” (chì) and “止” (zhǐ). He defined “辵” (chuò) as a Chinese radical. It conformed to the Chinese character’s regularity of its systematic evolution. But there were mistakes in his explanation of the font of “彳” (chì), “止” (zhǐ), and “辵” (chuò).

The oracle bone inscriptions font of the component “行” (xíng) (彳 chì) were “𠂔”, “𠂕”, and the bronze inscriptions of it were “𠂖”, “𠂗”, or “𠂘”. It means “the road extending in all directions”. Take half of it, “彳”, “𠂙”, “𠂚” or “𠂛”, “𠂜”, “𠂝”, the meaning is the same.

The oracle bone inscriptions font of the component “止” (zhǐ) were “𠂞”, “𠂟”, and “𠂠”, and the bronze inscriptions of it were “𠂡”, “𠂢”, and “𠂣”. The glyph was shaped like a foot of a human and it did not mean

⁴ Xu Shen was a famous Confucian scholar and philologist in the Eastern Han Dynasty (東漢).

⁵ 辵，乍行乍止也。從彳，從止。……讀若《春秋公羊傳》曰：“辵階而走。”

Chinese Pinyin: chuò, zhàxíngzhàzhǐyě. Cóngchì, cóngzhǐ....dúruò *ChūnQūGōngYángZhuàn* (《春秋公羊傳》) yuē: “chuòjiē’érzǒu”.

Literal translation: “辵” (chuò), sudden walk sudden stop is. Cong pace, cong stop.... read like *ChunQiuGongYangZhuan* speak, “sudden walk sudden stop steps er (Chinese conjunction) escape”.

Liberal translation: “辵” (chuò) means walk and stop suddenly. Its meaning comes from the two character components.... Its meaning was just like that in *ChunQiuGongYangZhuan* (《春秋公羊傳》), “Zhao Dun (趙盾) walked and stopped suddenly along the steps to escape”.

⁶ 行，人之步趨也。從彳，從亍。

Chinese Pinyin: Xíng, Rénzhībùqūyě. Cóngchì, cóngchù.

Literal translation: “行” (xíng), someone’s step is. Cong pace, cong brisk walking.

Liberal translation: “行” (xíng) means someone’s walking step by step. Its meaning comes from the two character components: One is “彳” (chì), the other is “亍” (chù).

“cease” (停止) as *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) explained. From the Shang Dynasty (商代) to the Warring States Period (戰國), the components “辵” (*chì*) and “止” (*zhǐ*) have not fixed position when participating in the formation of Chinese characters. So it was hard to say the Chinese character radical “辵” (*chuò*) had formed at that time.

From the clerical script (隸書) on, the glyph can be reflected that “止” (*zhǐ*) and “辵” (*chì*) were incorporated into the character radical “辵” (*chuò*). For instance, the font in Qin bamboo slips of the Chinese character “近” (*jìn*) was “𨔵”, in the Mawangdui Silk Books of Han Dynasty (馬王堆漢墓帛書) were “𨔵”, “𨔵”, and “𨔵”. It can be inferred that “辵” (*chuò*) has already had a fixed component position and fixed font shape in one character and obviously become a Chinese character radical (漢字部首).

Word-Making Meaning (造字之意), Original Meaning (本義) and the Lexical Meaning of a Chinese Character

All of the composite characters (合體字) that formed with pictographic component, the components' position, and the order of them are in accordance with the physical image, thus it cannot be changed optionally (N. WANG, 2002, p. 50). From the Shang Dynasty until *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》), the component “止” (*zhǐ*)'s position was always under the graphemic component “辵” (*chì*), meaning “step (止 *zhǐ*) on the road (辵 *chì*)”. The font structure can be described as “從止, 從辵” (*cóngzhǐ, cóngchì*).⁷

As for the original meaning of the words that belong to the department of “辵” (*chuò*) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》), such as the Chinese characters “追” (*zhuī*), “止” (*zhǐ*), “辵” (*chì*), and “自” (*duī*) were its components, but they had a very different function in forming this character: “止” (*zhǐ*) and “辵” (*chì*) were both meaning-symbol and radical of “追” (*zhuī*). “自” (*duī*) was phonetic-symbol (聲符) and meaning-symbol (義符) of “追” (*zhuī*), but not a radical. Therefore, the description of the glyph structure was also different. The structure of “追” (*zhuī*) from the Shang Dynasty until the Warring States Period can be described as “從止, 從自會意, 自亦聲” or “從止, 從辵, 從自會意, 自亦聲”. But the structure of “辵” (*chuò*) was described as “從辵, 從自會意, 自亦聲” in the official script of Qin and Han Dynasty (秦漢隸書) and in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》). When the oracle bone inscriptions font of “追” (*zhuī*) were “𨔵” or “𨔵”, its original meaning was “lift the feet to chase the enemy's army”; when the font of “追” (*zhuī*) were “𨔵”, “𨔵”, and “𨔵”, the original meaning was “lift the feet on the road to chase the enemy's army”. From the word meaning angle, it deepened the meaning of words and reflected the refinement of the thinking logic of the ancients. As for the meaning of “追” in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》, “𨔵, 逐也。”), it occurred after the graphemic component “止” (*zhǐ*) and “辵” (*chì*) merged into the radical “辵” (*chuò*). It was more abstract and generalized. The semantic feature [+lift the feet on the road] ([+ 抬腳上路]) became the common category (共同義素, 範疇義素) of sememe of “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) in the Department of “辵” (*chuò*).

The meaning of the word represented by the same character is usually evolved from concrete to general. We still have “追” (*zhuī*) as an example:

- (1) 《周禮·秋官·脩閭氏》：“而比其追胥者，而賞罰之。”鄭玄注：“追，追寇也。”(SUN, 1987, p. 2920)
- (2) 《正字通·辵部》：“追，逐敵踵其後也。”(ZHANG, 1996, p. 2359)

The above are examples of the specific meaning of “追” (*zhuī*) and the meaning of them is “lift the feet on the road to chase the enemy's army”.

⁷ The significance of this description lies in indicating the Chinese character “辵” was formed with two structural components: “止” and “辵”. And the meaning of “辵” was joined by the two structural components of “止” and “辵”.

The following is an example of the general meaning of “追” (*zhuī*):

(1) 《漢書·貨殖傳》：“以追時好而取世資。”顏師古注：“追，逐也。”(BAN, 1962, p. 3680)

The object of “追” (*zhuī*) was not limited to the enemy’s army. So *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) recorded the general meaning of “追” (*zhuī*).

Categorization of Radical “辵” (*chuò*)

Categorization, Conception and Category Sememe

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the process of human understanding of the world is the process of categorization of the world. Categorization is a high-level cognitive activity in which human beings categorize all things in the world (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001, p. 2; Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 17). On this basis, human beings gain the ability to form a conception, therefore, language symbols make sense (ZHAO, 2001, p. 54). The categorization pays special attention to practice, experience, and recurrent. In practice, people repeatedly cognize the things that can cause feelings and impressions. Thus, there is a mutation in the process of cognition in the brain, which produces the concept. A concept is not only the phenomenon of objective thing, but also the category, features, and essence of things. It also contains the whole of things and the connection between the inside of things. The categorization of things in human beings emphasizes the visual form of objective things. Human beings distinguish the categories according to the natural prototype, rather than analyze the characteristics of things or abstract categories (HU, 2004, p. 4). The formation of prototype category needs four conditions: distinctive features, family resemblance, the varying degree of category membership, and edge ambiguity between categories (Geeraerts, 2012, pp. 160-162). A process of categorization is very slow and the result of it is the concepts emerging in language. But we do not know what happened before the formation of Chinese character and we can only discuss it from the concept of a written record.

The categorization with written records of Chinese character went through at least four stages:

- (1) The first stage is to create words in spoken language;
- (2) The second stage is to create a character for colloquial word;
- (3) The third stage is the overlapping usage of Chinese characters;
- (4) The fourth stage is to organize the Chinese characters into scientific and systematic dictionaries.

Each stroke of Chinese characters in Chinese character system is organized and reasonable. And all of them have been shaped for one thousand years or even thousands of years. The colloquial word in the spoken language, if there is no written record of it, will gradually decline. Chinese characters will also experience the decline without repeated usage. Each time of repeated use of the Chinese characters strengthened the understanding of this category. Categorization is a process of cognitive by class. It is the processes that represent a class of things into words and then represent these words into Chinese characters.

As mentioned earlier, the meaning of a radical showed the category sememes of “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) in the same radical and it is the common sememe of “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) in the same radical. The development process of the character elements from the component to the radical in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) was the categorization process of the radical. It was the categorization process of the category sememes of “同類詞” (*tónglèicí*) in the same radical (部首). It was also the symbolic process of the root of sememe in this radical.

Categorization of The “同類詞” (tónglèicí) of Radical “辵” (chuò)

“辵” (chuò) was an associative compounds Chinese character. Its pattern and structure were from the component “止” (zhǐ) at the bottom up to the component “彳” (chì) at the top. Its meaning was [+ lift the feet (止 zhǐ) on the road (彳 chì)] ([+ 抬腳上路]). “止” (zhǐ) and “彳” (chì) were alone body pictographic character (獨體象形字) and they have been used as an independent component, from oracle bone inscription and bronze inscription. It can be said that from the oracle bone inscription, they have begun to categorize and evolved into radicals. The categorization of “辵” (chuò) experienced the categorization of “止” (zhǐ) and “彳” (chì) and then merged into a whole. From the Warring States period, “辵” (chuò) began to take shape, to the Eastern Han in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) the font was confirmed finally.

There are 132 Chinese characters in the department of “辵” (chuò) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》). There are 30 repeating marks (重文) of Chinese characters. The semantic category of the department “辵” (chuò), from the point of view that “辵” (chuò) was an associative compound, its meaning came from the combination of components. There were two sources of its meaning:

First, the etymological meaning derived from the semantic category of foot (止 zhǐ).

This semantic category formed much earlier. It was a fusion of the semantic categories related to foot (止 zhǐ) and the semantic categories related to roads (彳 chì), which expressed the semantic category of [+ lifting the feet (止 zhǐ) on the road (彳 chì)] or [+ walking up the road] ([+ 抬腳上路], 辵 chuò). For example:

【辵】 The oracle bone inscriptions fonts of “辵” were “𠩺”, “𠩻”, “𠩼”, and “𠩽”. Its meaning was “walking with feet” or “walking”. One of its glyph structure “止” (zhǐ) recorded the class of meaning (義類) and the glyph structure “土” (tǔ) recorded the sound (從止, 土聲). After middle Western Zhou Dynasty, its bronze inscriptions were “𠩺” and “𠩻”. Its meaning was “walking on the road with feet”. It was an associative compound (會意字). Its semantic symbol was formed with “止” (zhǐ) and “彳” (chì), “土” (tǔ) was the phonetic symbol of it. The glyph structure “止” (zhǐ) and “彳” (chì) recorded the class of meaning (義類) (從止, 從彳 會意, 土聲). In the official script of Han and Qin Dynasty (秦漢隸書), it was written as “辵”, “辵”, “辵”, and “辵”. “辵” (chuò) recorded the class of meaning and “土” (tǔ) recorded the sound (從辵, 土聲). *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》): “The meaning of ‘辵’ is walking. ‘辵’ (chuò) records the class of meaning, ‘土’ (tǔ) records the sound (《說文》: ‘辵’, 步行也。從辵, 土聲。)” (XU, 1963, p. 39).

The “同類詞” (tónglèicí) that belong to the radical “辵” (chuò) in *ShuoWenJieZi* (《說文解字》) are: “跡” (feet stretch on the ground while walking, 足展於地《句讀》), “造” (arrive, 至也。《古籀篇》visit, 造訪。《頌器考釋》), “還” (the left and right foot treads on the ground alternately while walking, 足征行相及。《說文解字六書疏證》), “遣” (staggered, it is the ortho-graph of “錯”. 即交錯之本字。《奇觚室吉金文述》), “逮”, “迺”, “迫”, “遏”, “遮”, “迺”, “世”, “遽” (walk continuously, 行步不絕之貌。《說文解字六書疏證》), “迺”, “迺”, “迺”, “迺”, “透”, “邏”, and so on.

Second, etymology semantics derived from the semantic category of “Road” (路).

There was only the semantic category of the [+ road] (路, 彳 chì) in the early stage, later the semantic category of [+ lifting the feet] (腳, 止 zhǐ) was joined and formed the semantic category of [+ walking up the road] ([+ 抬腳上路, 辵 chuò]).

【還】 (Come back from the road). The oracle bone inscription font of “還” (huán) was “𠩺”. “辵” (chuò) recorded the class of meaning and “還” (huán) recorded the sound (從辵, 還聲). In the middle Western Zhou Dynasty, its bronze inscriptions were “𠩺” and “𠩻”. In Bamboo and Silk Books of the Warring States, it was

ZHAO, Y. F. (2001). *認知語言學概論* (An introduction to the cognitive linguistics). Shanghai, China: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (外語教學與研究出版社).

Appendix

The following is a list of nine terms used in Chinese character structure analysis related to this article:

Number	Chinese	English	Connotation
1	同類詞	Tongleici	Tongleici (同類詞) can be the radical clues of Chinese characters to analysis the meaning relationship between the words.
2	同源詞	Paronym graph	In lexical analysis, a set of words which pronunciation and semantics are related to each other and has the same word or morpheme etymology breeding.
3	合體字	Composited character	A Chinese character consisting of two or more than two individual components.
4	會意字	Associative compound	A compound word refers to the combination of two or more than two components to indicate a new meaning.
5	義符	Meaning-symbol	A term used to analyze the shape of a Chinese character. The significance part of phonetic characters category. Meaning-symbol was also an independent Chinese character. The usage of it is to indicate the significance of category symbols in phonetic structure.
6	聲符	Phonetic-symbol	A term used to analyze the shape of a Chinese character. The pronunciation part of picto-phonetic characters structure.
7	重文	Repeating mark	The repeated variant of the character.
8	義類	The class of meaning	The logical category of the concepts represented by words.
9	從	Formed with	Used to indicate the components of a Chinese character.