

Coordinative Conjunctions in Chinese Dialects: A Typological Study

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Abstract

Wu (2003) investigated a number of coordinative conjunctions and stated that the coordinative conjunctions in Chinese were developed through the grammaticalization path: verb > comitative preposition > coordinative conjunction. Liu and Peyraube (1994) studied the historical texts from pre-Qin to Song Dynasties and they reached the same conclusion as Wu (2003). Liu (2003), however, argued that the coordinative conjunction *ta?* 搭 in the Wu dialect was grammaticalized directly from the verb. Despite that research has been carried out to investigate the use of coordinative conjunctions in Chinese dialects and classical Chinese, none of the previous research mentioned the situation in the Yue dialect. This present research aims at reconstructing the grammaticalization path of the coordinative conjunctions in several varieties of Yue as spoken in the Guangdong Province. The grammaticalization processes observed in Yue are to be compared with those in other Chinese dialects.

Three findings are obtained in this study (i) The coordinative conjunctions in Guangdong Yue were developed from two possible grammaticalization paths, of which Path II is not observed in other Chinese dialects. Path I: verb > comitative preposition > coordinative conjunction (for animate nouns) > coordinative conjunction (for all nouns) > coordinative conjunction (for all nouns and adjectives) Path II: verb > coordinative conjunction (for adjectives) > coordinative conjunction

(for all nouns and adjectives) (ii) For those lexical items from which the coordinative conjunctions in Chinese dialects were developed, there is a tendency that they share similar semantic properties, named as 'physical proximity', and (iii) two implicational hierarchies were observed in Chinese dialects, namely comitative > allative > ablative > locative, and comitative > allative > benefactive.