

Coordinating Conjunctions in Sinitic Languages and Beyond:

Towards a New Typology

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Abstract

The thesis presents a typological study of coordinating conjunctions in Sinitic languages (Chinese dialects) and other languages of the world, with emphasis on grammaticalization pathways via which conjunctions arise. The aim of this research is two-fold: to reconstruct the main grammaticalization paths of coordinating conjunctions in Sinitic languages, and to make typological generalizations and classifications vis-à-vis the found pathways through cross-linguistic comparison based on a large enough sample of the world's languages. Accordingly, the main body of this thesis is divided into two parts.

Part 1 traces three major sources of coordinating conjunctions in Sinitic languages. (i) Comitative verbs. Our study begins by examining the grammaticalization path of [comitative > conjunction] in Yue from diachronic and synchronic perspectives (with data from 47 modern varieties of Yue and 19 early Cantonese colloquial texts). The generalizations obtained are verified with other Chinese dialects (113 dialects). It is also observed that the use of morphologically complex disyllabic conjunction is a commonly attested in southern Chinese dialects; and the conjunction HE 和 in Chinese originated from its [co-patient] function. (ii) Causative verbs. The polygrammaticalization path of causative verbs including HAN 喊, *huan* 喚, JIAO 教, etc. is reconstructed based on the data from 257 Chinese dialects. (iii) The numeral item *liangge*. Our data from 125 Chinese dialects suggest

that the grammaticalization of *liangge* in Gansu-Qinghai and Hunan-Hubei dialects is a result of the combined force of internal change and language contact (with local non-Sinitic languages).

Part 2 proposes a new typology of coordinating conjunctions with additional data from non-Sinitic languages. The expanded database consists of first-hand data from 278 languages / language varieties (with 645 grams) and second-hand data from 829 languages/language varieties (with 888 grams). We formulate a hypothesis that receives strong support from our sample (98.8% of 158 languages), i.e., the *Adjacency Hypothesis*, which states that a comitative marker is eligible to be grammaticalized into a coordinating conjunction if it is placed directly adjacent to two NPs such as (co-)agents and (co-)patients. Furthermore, we propose that WITH-languages can be divided into three Subtypes: the co-agent type, the co-patient type, and the bisyndetic type. Our cross-linguistic survey also reveals an extensive distribution of the polysemy of coordinating conjunctions and pluralizers (including the numeral TWO, dual/plural affixes, dual/plural pronouns, and associative plurals), which is attested in 84 languages in our database, scattering across various language families and distributed in different continents. Therefore, it is suggested that the AND/WITH dichotomy (Stassen 2000) should be modified so that languages can be classified into AND-languages, WITH-languages and TWO-languages. Moreover, a semantic map of coordinating conjunctions and relevant functions is constructed. Comparing with previous maps by Haspelmath (2004), Zhang (2016), among others, our map enjoys a higher resolution with the node [NP-conjunction] divided into [animate conjunction] and [inanimate conjunction], and the node [comitative] into [co-agent] and [co-patient], which may bring a better understanding on how a gram expands its function through the animacy hierarchy.