

Sorbonne Université/China Scholarship Council program 2021

Thesis proposal

Title of the research project: Functional Analysis of Subordination in Modern Mandarin

Keywords: subordination; subordinator; complex sentence; syntax; mandarin

Joint supervision: no

Joint PhD (cotutelle): no

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Doctoral school (N°+name): ED V (0433) Concepts and languages

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Subject description (2 pages max) :

1) Study context

In recent years, studies of subordination in Mandarin have become increasingly important in grammatical research, much progress has been made: the analysis and description of the logical semantics of subordinate connectors, such as XING (2001), WANG (1994); the deep connotation and pragmatic features of Chinese subordinate sentences, such as LI&THOMPSON (1981), EIFRING (1994), PAN&PAUL (2018); the combination of diachronic evolution and synchronic change of subordinate connectors using the theory of grammaticalization, such as LI&LIU(2007), YAO(2011), etc. The research perspective has been greatly extended, and various new foreign linguistic theories have been widely applied, which has helped to update new approaches to analyzing Chinese subordinate clauses. Nevertheless, there are still problems to be deepened, current research mainly

focuses on the semantic characteristics of subordinators, the syntactic analyzes are not provided enough. In many articles, only subordinate conjunctions and adverbs are analyzed as subordinate connectors, complex subordinators are rarely mentioned. Subordinators, which occur as both morphemes and unit complexes, reflect the internal relationships of clauses within complex sentences. The main difficulty lies in the treatment of morphemes which can be used as subordinators or as adverbs in other contexts.

Unlike previous research, our research aims to do a functional analysis and a systematic description of subordination in modern Chinese from the original corpus, both in written context (press articles) and in oral context (conversations). Imagination and linguistic creation are more easily expressed in the actual use of language. It is therefore interesting to observe the type and frequency of subordinate clauses within the specific corpus. The variation will be researched and analyzed in order to predict the evolution of complex sentences in Modern Mandarin. We will analyze the syntactic behavior of subordinate connectors in order to clearly distinguish them from adverbs which have different compatibilities. We will also deal in detail with the different functions that the subordinate clause can assume with respect to the predicate of the main clause.

2) Details of the proposal

Our thesis will be structured around four parts:

The first part, which will be the basis of our research, will offer a panoramic view of the research context, the data source, the research plan and the methodology. This part mainly provides an overview of past and present studies on subordination in Chinese.

The second part will be a detailed study of the general characteristics of subordination in modern Chinese. We will identify the class of subordinate connectors according to their syntactic behavior and their mutual exclusion. The paradigm of each class will be treated by presenting each of the morphemes or unit complexes which compose it without forgetting to give their variants of signifier as well as their trait of meaning according to the context if necessary.

The third part will consist in studying the syntactic functions assumed by the subordinate clause with respect to the predicate of the main clause. For each of the functions assumed, we will discuss the semantic nuances that can be implemented, thus making it possible to make a cross synthesis between syntax and semantics.

The last part will be devoted to the analysis of evolution and syntactic change, focusing on identifying innovations and phenomena of grammaticalization.

3) References

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6. LI Jin xia & Yun LIU, *Fu jiu lei xing de yan bian (Evolution of the types of complex sentences)*, Yanji: Han yu xue xi, 2007, 000(002): 20-26
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8. PAN Victor Junnan & Waltraud PAUL, *The syntax of complex sentences in Mandarin Chinese: a comprehensive overview with analyses*, Linguistic Analysis, Volume 42, Issue 1-2, 2018
9. WANG Wei xian, *Han yu fu ju xin jie (New Explanation of Chinese Complex Sentences)*, Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 1994
10. XING Fu yi, *Han yu fu ju yan jiu (Research on Chinese Complex Sentences)*, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2001

4°) Profile of the Applicant (skills/diploma...)

I have a bachelor's degree in language science and a postgraduate degree in linguistics from Sorbonne University, with two years of work experience in language education. I have a solid knowledge of linguistics and fluent communication skills of Chinese (mother tongue), French (C1 level) and English (approximately B2 level). I have been studying Chinese syntax since the postgraduate period, I am dedicated and capable of research work. With my firm determination, I hope to deepen my professional ability, improve my academic knowledge and obtain fruitful scientific research results through doctoral study and research in my favorite field.

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Object: Acceptance letter for CSC-SU scholarship 2020

In English:

- Student's last name, first name birthdate and diploma
- Research theme / disciplinary field
- Presentation of the thesis and the thesis' director
- Skills (among which level in english and french)

Ecole doctorale - signature and stamp



IFD - signature and cachet