

Symmetric and asymmetric coordinated phrases in Gan-Qing Mandarin

Xuping Li

Zhejiang University

xupingli@zju.edu.cn

This paper makes a syntactic analysis of coordinated nominal phrases in the Linxia dialect of Gan-Qing Mandarin, which is spoken in Gansu Province, in Northwest China. It is a contact language that has some Altaic languages as its substratum, e.g. Turkish or Mongolian (Zhang 2013). Two of the interesting facts related to our discussion are that (a) Linxia Mandarin has a mixed word order of SOV and SVO, and (b) it features a case system.

At a first glance, three types of coordinated phrases can be identified in this language: (i) DP1+*la*+DP2, (ii) DP1+DP2+*la*, and (iii) DP1+*la*+DP2+*la*, where the marker *la* can either follow the first conjunct or the second, or even both. We assume that the marker *la*, originally a comitative case marker in Altaic languages, is a substratum-transferred grammatical feature. We are interested in finding out (a) whether and how these three types of coordinated phrases are derivative from one to the other and (b) whether it is the same *la* that is used in all these three phrases.

The three types of conjunction phrases are distinguished from each other in the following regards. First, they exhibit a subject/object asymmetry. DP1+*la*+DP2 is allowed in both subject and object positions, whereas DP1+DP2+*la* and DP1+*la*+DP2+*la* are restricted to the subject position only. Second, only DP1+*la*+DP2 can be modified by RCs or possessors, but neither DP1+*la*+DP2+*la* nor DP1+DP2+*la* can. Third, DP1+DP2+*la* stubbornly has a collective reading, whereas DP1+*la*+DP2 and DP1+*la*+DP2+*la* are ambiguous between collective and distributive readings.

To account for the above differences, we propose that (i) the marker *la* in DP1+DP2+*la* retains the use of comitative case in Altaic; (ii) *la* sandwiched between DP1 and DP2 is reanalyzed as a conjunct. Following the complementation structure of coordinate complexes (de Vries 2005), *la* heads the functional projection of ConjP, which takes DP1 as its specifier and DP2 complement. Depending on whether DP2 is case-marked by *la* or not, we will make a distinction between symmetric and asymmetric coordinated phrases in the sense of Weisser (2017) and Boskovic (2009).