

A Uniform Structure of the Temporal Adverbial Clauses in Mandarin Chinese

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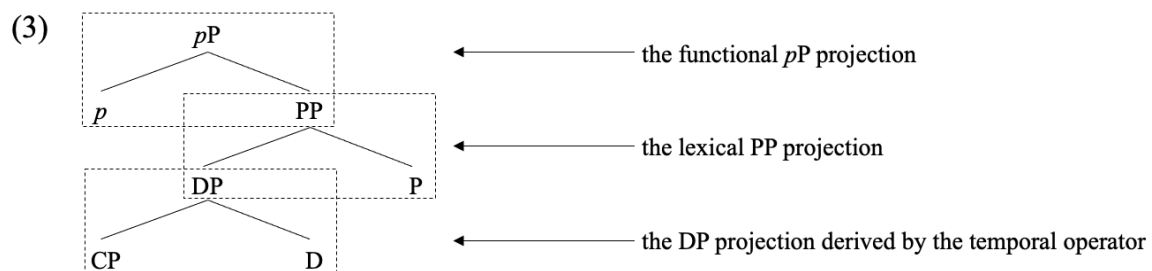
In Mandarin Chinese, both the external and internal syntax of temporal adverbial clauses (TACs) share a number of characteristics across categories, which is controversial to tell whether these are similarities over differences or the other way around. For example, according to Pan & Paul (2018)'s description:

- (1) [PreP (*Zài*) [DP [CP *tāde shìyè qǐshǐ*] de *shíhou*]], *tāde shēngwàng bù gāo* (*zài...*).
 at his career begin DE time his reputation NEG high
 'When his career began, his reputation was not high.'
- (2) [PreP (*Zài*) [PostP [DP [CP *tā dú dàxué*] Ø] *yǐqián*]], *tā hé fùmǔ yīqǐ shēnghuó* (*zài...*).
 at he study university before he with parents together live
 'Before he went to university, he lived with his parents.'

the data above reflect the syntax of Chinese TACs in three aspects:

- i. TACs are realised by different categories: the *when*-adverbials correspond to the DP headed by *shíhou* 'time', and the *after/before*-adverbials correspond to the PostP headed by *yǐhòu/yǐqián* 'after/before'. Both of them can be embedded in the PreP headed by *zài* 'at'.
- ii. The appearance of *zài* 'at' depends on the distribution of TACs relative to the position of the associated matrix clauses: though *zài* 'at' is optional when TACs are in the sentence-initial position, it is obligatory while in the sentence-internal and sentence-final positions.
- iii. The embedded DP structure is universal across TACs, but the internal construction varies: in *when*-adverbials, an overt element heads the DP and forms an adjunct relative construction; while in *after/before*-adverbials, it is a covert element that heads the DP, making it obscure to judge whether there still exists a relative construction.

In this paper, I propose that these differences can be accounted for by a uniform underlying structure based on the Split-PP hypothesis (cf. Svenonius 2007):



By arguing (i) the ubiquity of the functional P, (ii) differences between *pP* and *PP*, and (iii) the relation between the embedded *DP* and the temporal operator, this paper will eliminate the differences of TACs' structures on the surface, and uncover the uniformity that underpins the derivation of this temporal construction.

Keywords: temporal adverbial clauses, Split-PP hypothesis, operator movement

References

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Svenonius, P. (2007). Adpositions, particles and the arguments they introduce. In: Reuland, E., Bhattacharya, T., and Spathas, G. (eds.) *Argument structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 71-110.