Abstract for SCOL

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Title: Classifier-Noun Constructions in the Yongjia Dialect of Wu Chinese

Key Words: Wu Chinese; Classifier-Noun Constructions; ClP structure; Quantifier-rising

This research explores features and variations of classifier-noun constructions in the Yongjia Dialect of Wu Chinese. Specifically, we investigate three categories: A1-type, A2-type, and B-type constructions, with a particular focus on their phonetic forms, referential meanings, syntactic distributions, syntactic structures, and pragmatic functions. We aim to uncover the factors contributing to the observed differences among them. This study serves as a contribution to the description and analysis of classifier-noun constructions in the Yongjia dialect, thereby enriching the field of dialect typology. We hope that our findings will inspire further investigation and refinement in this academic domain.

First of all, based on the phonetic forms, particularly the tones, we categorize classifier-noun constructions in the Yongjia Dialect into two types, A-type and B-type. Second of all, within the A-type, further divisions are made depended on referential meanings and syntactic distributions, resulting in A1-type and A2-type. In this categorization, we identify and classify A1-type, A2-type and B-type. In terms of phonetic forms, the classifiers in A1-type and A2-type maintain their inherent tones. Classifiers in B-type undergo tone sandhi with any checked-tone classifiers retaining their checked tone. In terms of referential meanings, A1-type are indefinite classifier-noun constructions and are semantically interpreted as 'one+classifier.' A2-type and B-type represent two distinct definite classifier-noun constructions. Building upon Sheng Yimin et al.'s (2016) framework, we classify A2-type as quasi-article classifier-noun constructions and B-type as quasi-demonstrative classifier-noun constructions. Unlike Shaoxing dialect, A2-type in Yongjia dialect primarily function as non-differential neutral demonstratives (similar to the 'the+NP' constructions in English). B-type, on the other hand, can exhibit both differential and non-differential neutral demonstratives (similar to 'this/that+NP' constructions in English), with the specific referential meaning depending on the

context, gestures, and non-linguistic cues. Regarding syntactic distributions, these three types of classifier-noun constructions do not exhibit rigid constraints, though they do display specific distinctions. A1-type serves as subjects within the structure '...也冇/也未/也弗+(VP).' They seldom function as topics or as subjects in embedded clauses unless comparing multiple objects (two or more). In contrast, A2-type and B-type share similar syntactic distributions. Regarding the standalone use, A1-type and A2-type cannot stand alone, while B-type can stand alone. A1-type cannot be used in possessive structures, whereas A2-type and B-type can. In terms of syntactic constructions, contrary to Li & Bisang (2012), we argue that indefinite A1-type adopt the interpretation of 'pure quantities' (A. Li, 1998), characterized by a NumP structure rather than a ClP structure. Classifiers in A2-type and B-type have undergone Cl-to-D raising, moving from its original position to the determiner position, resulting in DP structures.
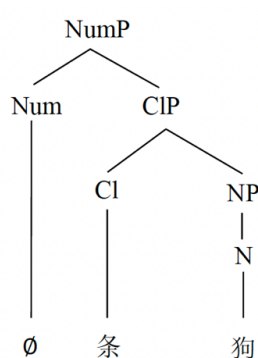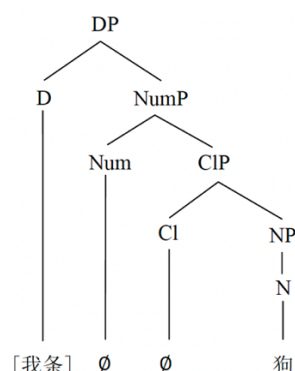

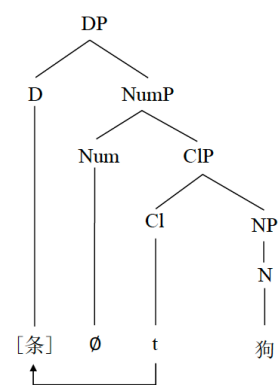Figure1: Tree of A1-type　　　Figure2: Tree of A2-type　　　Figure3: Tree of B-type

In the realm of pragmatic functions, A2-type and B-type fulfill various functions, including situational use, discourse-deictic use, tracking use/anaphoric use, recognitional use, and large situational use, while A1-type classifiers lack these functions.

[1] Li, Xuping, Bisang, W. Classifiers in Sinitic languages: From individuation to definiteness-marking. *Lingua*, 122(2012), 335-355, 2012.

[2] Li, Y.-H.A. Argument determiner and number phrases. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 29(4), 693-702, 1998.

[3] Sheng Yimin et al. The Quasi-article Type and the Quasi-demonstrative Type: Two Types of Definite CL-NP Constructions in the Shaoxing Dialect of Chinese. *Essays on Linguistics*, (01), 30-51, 2016.