

Functional variations motivated by the Cooperative Principle in Chinese conjunctions

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According to Yuan-Ren Chao (1968), the frequent sentence pattern in Chinese conversations is the 'minor sentence', which is not in subject-predicate form but occurs as verbal expressions or nominal expressions. So, in Chinese conversations, a question and the answer of it can be topic-comment relation as a full sentence in narratives. In this paper, it is suggested that an adjacency pair can be a complex sentence relation as well, which is achieved by two participants in the conversation. Under the effect of the Cooperative Principle, forward-linking conjunctions, such as *suoyi* (so) and *danshi* (but), are preferred in the turn initial positions rather than backward-linking conjunctions, such as *budan* (not only) or *suiran* (although). The conjunctions occur in different use, such as content, reasoning, speech act (cf. Sweetser 1990), and discourse marker (cf. Schiffrin 1987). Conjunctions concerning speech act show more dependence on the discourse structure than those concerning content and reasoning. Sequentially, they obtain the emergent meaning from the discourse. The interpretation and the function of a conjunction in conversations are susceptible not only to its position in a turn but also to the topic continuity between the turns.

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