

Formosan Speech Act Mood in Comparative Syntax

Henry Y. Chang

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Abstract

While the syntax-pragmatics interface has received much attention in recent generative literature, relevant studies on Formosan languages are scarce. The present study aims to fill the gap by looking into the speech act mood in two Formosan languages, namely, Tsou and C'uli Atayal, with a special focus on their declarative mood. In light of a cartographic approach which advocates the straightforward placement of a semantic/pragmatic function in an universal syntactic hierarchy (Rizzi 1997, 2004; Cinque 1999), we would map out declarative mood in Tsou and C'uli CP left periphery. Our major findings include (i) in Tsou, particle *'a* encodes emphatic affirmative mood and is incompatible with non-affirmatives such as interrogatives, imperatives, exclamatives, and sentential negation; *'a* heads a Speech Act Phrase (SAP) and is situated on the top of the whole sentence; (ii) in C'uli, particle *ay* represents assuring mood and is incompatible with non-declaratives; *ay* heads a SAP, topping the whole sentence; (iii) both *'a* and *ay* are restricted to the main clause in declaratives, displaying the Main Clause Phenomenon (MCP, Haegeman 2010); (vi) *'a* and *ay* surface in distinct positions: the former in sentence-initial position but the latter in sentence-final position. These findings implicate that (i) SAP should be separated from and placed above ForceP; (ii) SAP is intended for speech act mood and exhibits the MCP, whereas ForceP is intended for clause typing (contra Rizzi 1997, 2004) and does not exhibit the MCP. The syntacticization of speech act mood in Tsou and C'uli accords with Speas & Tenny (2003) and Haegeman & Hills (2013).