

# Constructional integration in grammaticalization: A cross-linguistic study of complementizer in Mandarin and English

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Cross-linguistic commonalities of complementizer have been systematically investigated to date. Dichromic evidence has illustrated how *that* involve from pronoun to complementizer (Hopper & Traugott, 2003:191). Its equivalent in Mandarin is considered by preceding study (Liu, 2004) to be “*Dao*”, which is grammaticalized from a verb meaning *to say*. Our analysis suggests that things are not so straightforward: apart from the functional affinities, “*Dao*” and *that* have drastic difference in performing their grammatical roles should they appear in direct or indirect speech. “*Dao*” is admissible in subordinating a direct speech, but considered inappropriate in indirect speech; while *that* is acceptable, or occasionally alternative, in indirect speech, but anomalous in introducing direct speech.

We adhere to the assumption that while changes are replicable across languages and certain property of grammaticalization, like unidirectionality, may be universal, grammaticalization, conceived as a study revealing the ongoing cognitive forces behind morphosyntactic changes, is language-specific, that is, it is intertwined with an individual language’s structure. By presenting a contrastive examination of the grammatical markers, our primary goal is to supplement traditional analysis of “*Dao*” and *that* with new ideas from the perspective of distinction. This study adopts a cognitive grammar approach to better account for this cross-linguistic difference. Cognitive grammar, initiated as a comprehensive and unified theory seeking to provide a felicitous framework for investigating linguistic structure, regards integration of constitutive elements of a construction as a pivotal factor in grammaticalization (Langacker, 2011). However, this approach has been downplayed and less appreciated in analyzing grammaticalization heretofore, and literature is certainly not replete with explicit discussions.

The current study makes it clear that the generalization of “*Dao*” in “*V-Dao*” construction is driven by the asymmetry of profiling between two constituents of the composite construction, in which the meaning of “*Dao*” is overlapped with the verb, whose status is more salient and contributes its profile to the composite construction. There is variant degree of overlap: “*Dao*” is alternative in “*SAY-Dao*”, revealing a full overlap, but a must for “*V-Dao*” construction, in which overlap is only partially implemented when verbs are of cognition and perception. This implies the grammaticalization of “*Dao*” is not completed, if not incipient. “*SAY-Dao*” is a quotative grammatical marker being schematic for the finite clause deriving from it and bearing quotative qualification. The entrenched uses of “*SAY-Dao*” introducing direct speech further render “*SAY-Dao*” a progressive characteristic pragmatically, namely “*SAYING-Dao*”, which makes “*SAY-Dao*” infelicitous in indirect speech. Such a generalization cannot seamlessly be made from “*V-Dao*” to “*VING-Dao*”, which seems to indicate that graded overlap of component structures may contribute to semantic gradation of construction. The case of “*Dao*” serves as a convincing example in exhibiting partial compositionality of constructional meaning. Reanalyzed from a pronoun, the historical grammaticalization process of *that* is also governed by conceptual integration, but it is the finite clause that *that* integrates with, with diverse degree of overlap as well. Thus *that* is redundant due to its full overlap with the proposition in introducing direct speech. As such, conceptual overlapping mechanisms of “*Dao*” and *that* are not the same, but rather disparate.

The analysis suggests that cognitive grammar approach, whose proposition could not have been more germane to the current matter, is compatible with grammaticalization, and conceptual integration is cross-linguistically evident, despite typological difference.

## References

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