

## A META-SEQUENTIAL PREFIX IN NEASU

ABSTRACT. In Neasu [nɣ<sup>55</sup>su<sup>13</sup>] (Tibeto-Burman, China), there is a complexity-awareness marker, the prefix *ao-*, which is attached to simple clause adverbs to transform them into complex clause conjunctions, and to complex clause conjunctions to change them to higher-order discourse linkers.

Adverbs (only in simple clauses)	Conjunctions (only in coordinate clauses)	Higher-order discourse linkers (stratifies discourse portions)
nu ‘or’	<b>ao</b> nu ‘or’	---
nyi ‘and’	<b>ao</b> nyi ‘and also’	---
set ‘just now, only then’	<b>ao</b> set ‘therefore’	---
ze ‘already’	ze ‘then, thereupon’	<b>ao</b> ze ‘finally, in the end’
jiit ‘all; before’	<b>ao</b> jiit ‘moreover’	---
---	<b>ddet</b> ‘but’	<b>ao ddet</b> ‘by contrast’

Examples are provided below.

(1) Neasu (Tibeto-Burman: Guizhou Province, Weining County)

- a. ngop heat nu nap heat xip bbu ddu hxit nvut. | DP-linker  
1P EX or 2P SG 3P SG to word speak EXP  
 ‘We **or** you spoke to him.’
- b. xip keap seat ddu hxit, ao nu eap zheat ddu hxit xip wo mat se. | TP-linker  
3P SG how word say or what word say 3P SG GET NEG know  
 ‘He does not know how to put it **or** what to say.’

- (2) a. ngop a ngat nyi a bba wo hxaop. | DP-linker  
1P SG child and father GET see  
 ‘I saw the child **and** his father.’
- b. ngop wo map jjo, ao nyi xip wo map gal. | TP-linker  
1P SG GET NEG hear and 3P SG GET NEG understand  
 ‘I do not hear it **and** he does not understand it.’

- (3) a. ngop ap mgeap nyi set lyip. | Simple clause adverb  
1P SG tomorrow only then come  
 ‘I will **not** come **until** tomorrow.’
- b. xip heat tao seat zeal, ao set nap heat ggup ddvep hngul. | TP-linker  
3P PL DEM:DD do therefore 2P PL do perfectly must  
 ‘They do it in this way; you **therefore** must do it perfectly.’

- (4) a. ngop shel mu ze wo set ggol. | Simple clause adverb  
1P SG early already GET know DP  
 ‘I knew it **already** very early.’
- b. ngop wo jjo ggop, ze ni mop sha-map-hea. | TP-linker  
1P SG GET hear DP then heart calm-NEG-calm  
 ‘I heard it **whereupon** I became very upset in my heart.’
- c. ao ze vu mi xip ao zap. | Higher-order discourse linker  
finally king 3P SG grant  
 ‘**Finally**, the king granted him [his request].’

- (5) a. xip heat jiit ddeat ddao nap leat. | Simple clause adverb  
 3P PL all exit 2P SG go | “all”  
 ‘They **all** went out to (where) you (were).’
- b. xip heat tao nap heat jiit rraop. | Simple clause adverb  
 3P PL here 2P PL before be, live | “before”  
 ‘They lived here **before** you (did).’
- c. ngop heat jiit zzu, ao jiit nryp ndaop ggol. | TP-linker  
 1P PL all eat moreover wine drink DP | “moreover”  
 ‘We have all eaten, **moreover** drunken wine.’
- (6) a. xip neat sul ngea, ddet xip sha mba hxit geal xi | TP-linker  
 3P SG Neasu COP but 3P SG Chinese language speak can still | “but”  
 ‘He is Neasu, **but** he can also speak Chinese.’
- b. ao ddet ngop hxit nap dvut... | Higher-order discourse linker  
by contrast 1P SG say 2P SG Tell | “by contrast”  
 ‘**By contrast**, I tell you...’

The meta-sequential (Grundy 2000) prefix *ao-* increases the complexity of the scope domain of the marker it is attached to. On the view that dependent clauses of coordinate clauses occupy the slot of specifiers of CP, we define the scope domain of Y and the concept of complexity in the following way.

- (7) Definition of scope domain (based on Safir, 2004)  
 The domain  $D_X$  of a constituent X is the minimal maximal projection containing X and an *aunt* of X.
- (8) Definition of degree of complexity of a scope domain  
 $c(X) = n$  (n natural number) iff  $D_X$  contains  $TP_1, \dots, TP_n$  such that
- for all  $i, j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ :  $TP_i \neq TP_j$ ;
  - there is no other TP contained in  $D_X$  and different from  $TP_1, \dots, TP_n$ .

We can describe the degree of complexity of *ao*-linkers as follows.

- (9)  $c(ao-X) = c(X) + 1$ .

### References:

- Grundy, P. (2000). *Doing Pragmatics*. New York: Arnold.
- Safir, K. (2004). *The syntax of anaphora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.