On the syncretism of τ₅⁵ 到 'arrive' and its pathway of grammaticalization in the Pingjiang dialect (Sinitic)

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On the syncretism of tau⁵⁵ 到 ‘arrive’ and its pathway of grammaticalization in the Pingjiangiang dialect (Sinitic)

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The Pingjiang dialect (Chengguanzhen variety) of Gan is a Sinitic language spoken in the northeast Hunan Province bordering Jiangxi and Hubei. The present paper sets out to analyze the polyfunctionality of the verb *ταυ* to ‘reach, arrive’ in Pingjiang and propose a possible pathway of grammaticalization for it.
1. Background

Locating on the border of Hunan, Jiangxi and Hubei Province, the inhabitants of Pingjiang County practice the different dialects. The following maps show the geographical location and the dialectal diffusion of Pingjiang.
1. Background

Map 1. the location of Pingjiang County
1. **Background**

Bao & Yan. 1986:

- Subgroups 1, 2 & 3: Gan (赣语);
- Subgroups 4 & 5: Xiang (湘语);
- Subgroup 6: Hakka (客家话).

Map 2. Dialectal diffusion in Pingjiang (Zhang. 2009)
2. tau⁵⁵ 到 in the Chengguan dialect of Pingjiang

- Lexical verb ‘reach, arrive’;
- Verbal resultative;
- Allative ‘to’;
- Locative ‘at’, ‘within’;
- Ablative ‘from’;
- Comitative ‘with’ & Coordinative conjunction ‘and’;
- Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’;
- Dative ‘to’;
- Semi-disposal marker;
2.1. Lexical verb ‘reach, arrive’

Like Standard Mandarin, tau⁵⁵到 is a lexical verb in the Chengguan dialect meaning ‘reach, arrive’:

(1) 我到哒屋。

ŋə²¹ tau⁵⁵ ta⁴² ɯ⁴².

1SG arrive PFV house

I’ve arrived home.
2.2. Verbal resultative

tau⁵⁵到 is also a verbal resultative in the Chengguan:

(2) 我 看 到 只 鸟 落 □ 飞。

η²¹ kʰan⁵⁵ tau⁵⁵ tʂa⁴² tiau³⁵ lo⁴² ko³⁵ fi³³.
1SG see RES CLF bird PROG there fly

I saw a flying bird.
2.3. Allative ‘to’

tau\(^{55}\) 到 can also be an allative preposition ‘to’ in the Chengguan dialect:

(3) \[\text{只} \quad \text{伢-} \quad \text{走到} \quad \text{河里去} \quad \text{哒。}\]

\[\text{i}^{35} \quad \text{tša}^{42} \quad \text{ŋa}^{13-} \text{tsei}^{42} \quad \text{tsœu}^{35} \quad \text{tau}^{55} \quad \text{xo}^{13} \quad \text{li}^{42} \quad \text{tei}^{55} \quad \text{та}^{42}.\]

This boy walked into the river.
2.4. Locative ‘at’, ‘within’

Unlike the Standard Mandarin, tau$^{55}$ 到 is a locative preposition in the Chengguan dialect, as shown below:

(4) 我 今 夜 不 出 去，到 屋 里 吃 饭。

ŋo$^{21}$ tɛi$^{33}$ ia$^{22}$ pei$^{42}$ tʂuei$^{42}$ tɛh$^{55}$ tau$^{55}$ u$^{42}$ li$^{42}$ tɛʰia$^{42}$ fan$^{22}$.

1SG tonight NEG out go at house inside eat rice

I won’t go out this evening and will have diner at home.
2.4. Locative ‘at’, ‘within’

Apart from the meaning ‘at’, \(\tau^5\) 到 can also express the meaning ‘within, among’:

(5) 尔 到 笔 内 里 选 一 只。
\(n_2^1 \tau^5 i^3 \eta^5 pi^4 lai^2 li^4 ci^3 i^4 tsa^42\).

2SG within this some pen inner inside choose one CLF

Choose one within these pens.

The locative function of \(\tau^5\) 到 is not rare in Sinitic languages, as in the Jishui dialect (Gan), the Ruicheng dialect and the Wenxi dialect (Mandarin 官话) (Li & Wu. 2018).
2.5. Ablative preposition ‘from’

In the structure: $tau^{55} + NP_{(place)} + V_{(deprivation)}$, $tau^{55}$ 到 is employed as an ablative preposition ‘from’:

(6) 钱 到 尔 压 岁 钱 内 里 出。

this some money from 2SG new year’s money inside take out

You should take out this money from your new year’s money.

This ablative function of $tau^{55}$ 到 resembles a lot Câng 共 of Southern Min (Chappell, Peyraube & Wu. 2011. 323-324).
2.6. Comitative ‘with’

When \( \text{tau}^{55} \) is used as a comitative preposition ‘with’, we can add an adverb before it:

(7) 佢 尽 到 我 佢

He often quarrels with me.
2.7. Coordinative conjunction ‘and’

tau⁵⁵ to can also be a coordinative conjunction:

(8) 多 吃 水 果 到 蔬 菜
more eat fruit and vegetable
Eat more fruits and vegetables.
2.8. Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’

ταυ\textsuperscript{55} 到 can be used as a benefactive or malefactive preposition in the Chengguan dialect:

(9) 我 孃 到 我 买 哒 只 笔。

\[\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{ŋo}\text{21} & \text{li}\text{42} & \text{nioŋ}\text{13} & \text{tau}\text{55} & \text{ŋo}\text{21} & \text{mai}\text{21} & \text{ta}\text{42} & \text{tσa}\text{42} & \text{pi}\text{42} \\
1SG & POSS.KIN mother & for & 1SG & buy & PFV & CLF & pen
\end{array}\]

My mother bought a pen for me.
2.8. Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’

\( \text{tau}^{55} \) can be used as a benefactive or malefactive preposition in the Chengguan dialect:

(10) 佢到我把我只杯打烂哒。

\( e^{21} \quad \text{tau}^{55} \quad \eta^{21} \quad pa^{35} \quad t\check{s}a^{42} \quad pai^{33} \quad ta^{35} \quad lan^{22} \quad ta^{42} \)

He has broken my cup (broken the cup for me).
2.9. Dative preposition ‘to’

When *tau*⁵⁵到 is used as a preposition to introduce the indirect object, the verb must be a ‘speech verb’ as the following examples show:

(11) 快 去 到 尔 □ 娘 爷 报 喜。

quickly go to 2SG POSS.KIN parents announce good news

Go and tell your parents this good news.
2.9. Dative preposition ‘to’

This kind of preposition (must occur with ‘speech’ verb) can be found in many Sinitic languages, such as $ai^{55}$ 挨 in Kaiyuan dialect (Zhu. 2013) and $kēn$ 跟 in South-western Mandarin (Li & Liu. 2015).
2.10. Semi-disposal marker

tau$^{55}$ can introduce the undergoer of the action in the disposal construction, but only in three specific structures.

a. $tau^{55} + O_1 + V [+\text{causative}] + O_2$

(12) 到他急出哒一身汗。

DM 3SG worry out PFV one CLF PART sweat

He is so worried that he sweats inside-out.
2.10. Semi-disposal marker

b. tau^{55} + O_1[+entity] \ + V + O_2[+part]

(13) 他 到 橘 子 剥 哒 皮。

3SG DM orange peel PFV skin

He peeled the orange (of its skin).
2.10. Semi-disposal marker

c. $\text{tau}^{55} + \text{O}_1 + \text{V} + \text{O}_2 [+\text{instrument}]$

(14) 到 桌 子 罩 块 布。

$\text{tau}^{55} \quad \text{tso}^{42} \quad \text{tsi}^{35} \quad \text{tsau}^{55} \quad \text{kuai}^{55} \quad \text{pu}^{55}$

DM desk cover CLF cloth

Cover the desk with a piece of cloth.
3. Pathway of grammaticalization of $tau^{55}$ 到

Verb $tau^{55}$ 到 ‘arrive’

- Locative ‘at’
  - Ablative ‘from’
- Allative ‘to’
  - Coordinative Conjunction ‘and’
    - Comitative ‘with’
      - Benefactive ‘for’
        - Dative ‘to’
        - Semi-disposal marker

Figure 1. The pathway of grammaticalization of $tau^{55}$ 到 in the Chengguan dialect
3.1. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > allative ‘to’

Tong (2006):

“‘到’由表示处所、时间位置到为另一动作提供处所时间位置，完成了由动词到介词的转化[……]经历了普通动词 – 次要动词 – 介词这样一个变化过程。When *tau* 到 becomes an element which indicates the time or the place for another verb, it has accomplished the transition from verb to preposition […] the process is: verb – second verb – preposition”
3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’


Assume that the source structure is:

\[ S + \text{tau}^{55} \text{到} \text{‘arrive’} + \text{NP}_1 \text{(place)} + V_2 + (\text{NP}_2) \]

(15) 我 到 操 坪 里 等 你。

\[ \eta o^{21} \text{tau}^{55} ts^hau^{33} phian^13 li^{42} ten^{35} n^{21} \]

1SG arrive playground inside wait 2SG

I’ll go to the playground and wait you there.
3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’

When we concentrate on the verb $ten^{35}$ 等 ‘wait’, $tau^{55}$ 到 becomes a second verb, and the action ‘arrive’ is no longer important: $tau^{55}$ 到 acts as an element which introduces the $NP_{\text{place}}$:

$$(16) \text{我到操场里等你。}$$

$\eta o^{21} \ tau^{55} \ ts^h au^{33} \ p^\text{hiaŋ}^{13} \ li^{42} \ ten^{35} \ n^i^{21}$$

1SG preposition playground inside wait 2SG

I’ll wait you (when I arrive) to the playground.
3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’

Besides, there is no elements which can keep the ‘movement’ properties of *tau*〈sup〉55</sup> 到, *tau*〈sup〉55</sup> 到 could be interpreted as a stative preposition, compare:

(17) 我 到 房 里 吃 饭。

ηo<sub>21</sub> tau<sup>55</sup> u<sup>42</sup> li<sup>42</sup> tɛʰiə<sup>42</sup> fan<sup>22</sup> 1SG at house inside eat rice

I’ll have dinner at home.

(18) 我 到 房 里 去 吃 饭。

ηo<sub>21</sub> tau<sup>55</sup> u<sup>42</sup> li<sup>42</sup> tɛʰi<sup>55</sup> tɛʰiə<sup>42</sup> fan<sup>22</sup>. 1SG arrive house inside go eat rice

I’ll go home for dinner.
3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

‘Semantic change’ (‘词义变化’, Liu, Cao & Wu. 1995. 164-166) triggered by the context.

The source meaning: locative preposition ‘at’

(19) 尔到塘里游泳。

\[ n^2_{21} \text{ tau}^{55} i^{35} \text{ thon}^{13} \text{ li}^{42} i^{13} \text{ yuen}^{55} \]

2SG in this pond inside swim

You swim in the pond.
3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

The meaning of the verb brings another interpretation for the preposition tau\textsuperscript{55}到 (bridging context):

(20) 尔到塘里钓鱼。
\( n^2_{11} \quad \text{tau}^{55} \quad i^{35} \quad \text{thoŋ}^{13} \quad li^{42} \quad \text{tiau}^{55} \quad η^{13} \)
\text{2SG in/from this pond inside fishing}
You fish in this pond/You get the fish from the pond.
3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

Then, when the NP\(_{(\text{place})}\) is a place where human being cannot physically ‘stay’, the target meaning ‘from’ becomes the only interpretation: it depends on the specific context (‘deprivation’ verb)

(21) 尔到塑料袋里拿鱼。

\begin{verbatim}
2SG from plastic bag inside take fish
\end{verbatim}

You take the fish from the plastic bag.
3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

Context-induced reinterpretation (Heine. 2002)

The source meaning of tau\textsuperscript{55} 到: verb ‘arrive’:

(22) 我 到 长 沙 要 两 个 钟 头。

ηo\textsuperscript{21} tau\textsuperscript{55} tʂʰoŋ\textsuperscript{13} sa\textsuperscript{33} iau\textsuperscript{55} lion\textsuperscript{21} ko\textsuperscript{55} tʂɛŋ\textsuperscript{33} tʰœu\textsuperscript{13}

1SG arrive Changsha need two CLF hour

It takes me two hours to go to Changsha.
3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ $\rightarrow$ conjunction ‘and’

When $\text{tau}^{55}$ is used to connect two NPs$_{\text{place}}$, it can be interpreted as ‘to’ semantically, but it is still a verb syntactically:

(23) $\text{Pingjiang}$ $\text{tau}^{55}$ $\text{Changsha}$ $\text{need}$ $\text{two}$ $\text{hour}$

It takes two hours from Pingjiang to Changsha.
Then \( \text{tau}^{55} \) is used to connect two NPs (human):

\[(24) \quad \text{佢屋⾥从大人到细人}
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{e}^{21} & \text{li}^{42} & \text{w}^{42} & \text{ts}^{h} \text{en}^{13} & \text{thai}^{22} & \text{nin}^{13} & \text{tau}^{55} & \text{ci}^{55} & \text{nin}^{13} & \text{xa}^{22} & \text{ts}^{h} \text{en}^{55} & \text{in}^{21} & \text{te}^{h} \text{i}^{42} & \text{lian}^{13} & \text{ci}^{55}.
\end{array}
\]

From adult to children, everyone likes snacks in this family.
3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

When $ts^h\bar{\eta}13$ 从 ‘from’ is removed, we can translate the phrase as either ‘from A to B’ or ‘A and B’:

(25) 佢屋⾥⼤人到细人[……]

e21 li42 wu42 li42 thai22 nin13 tau55 ci55 nin13[……]

3SG POSS.KIN house inside big people to/and small people

The adults and the children of his family/ From the adults to the children […]
3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

Finally, the allative meaning is ruled out:

(26) 我买哒苹果到梨子。
    ɲo21 mǎi21 ʈǎ42 pʰin13 kuə̂35 tau55 ɿi13 ʈsə̌35
    I bought the apple and the pear.
3.5. Conjunction > comitative ‘with’

This evolution is rare (antigrammaticalization), but it is not impossible (cf. Wu. 2017; Jiang. 2012. 2014). We assume here this evolution in the Chengguan dialect due to ‘analogy’, compare (26) with (27):

(27) 我 买 哇 苹 果 同/凑 梨 子。

ŋo\textsuperscript{21} mai\textsuperscript{21} ta\textsuperscript{42} pʰin\textsuperscript{13} kuø\textsuperscript{35} thəŋ\textsuperscript{55}/tʂʰa\textsuperscript{55} li\textsuperscript{13} tʂ\textsuperscript{35}

1SG buy PFV apple and pear

I bought the apple and the pear.

τau\textsuperscript{55} 到, thəŋ\textsuperscript{55} 同 and tʂʰa\textsuperscript{55}凑 share the same functions as conjunction, comitative, benefactive, dative and demi-disposal preposition.
3.6. Comitative > beneficative ‘for’

Context-induced reinterpretation

In the structure ‘NP\(_{(\text{agent A})}\) + \text{tau}^{55}\text{到} + \text{NP}\(_{(\text{agent B})}\) + V [+reciprocal]’, \text{tau}^{55}\text{到} is a comitative preposition:

(28) 我\text{到}尔 □ □。
\eta^{21}\text{tau}^{55}\eta^{21}\text{tɕiɛ}\text{tɕin}^{33}
1SG with 2SG quarrel

I quarrel with you.
3.6. Comitative > beneficative ‘for’

When the verb doesn’t demand two agents, it is possible to interprete the agent B as a beneficial:

(29) 我 到 尔 去 买 菜。

ηo21 tau55 η21 te4i55 mai21 ts4ai55
1SG with/for 2SG go buy fresh food
I will go buy fresh food with/for you.
3.6. Comitative > beneficative ‘for’

When the verb demandes a beneficial, it is more natural to interprete $\text{tau}^{55}$ 到 as a benefactive preposition:

(30) 我 到 尔 整 病。

$\eta o^{21}$ $\text{tau}^{55}$ $\eta i^{21}$ $\text{tʂan}^{35}$ $\text{phian}^{22}$

1SG for 2SG heal illness

I will cure you (I will cure the illness for you).

$\text{tau}^{55}$ 到 is still on its way of grammaticalization (bridging context > switch context): we cannot rule out the comitative interpretation in (29); in (30), with some specific verbs, the benefactive interpretation is the only one.
3.7. Benefactive > dative ‘to’

In $\text{NP}_1 + \text{tau}^{55}$ 到 (benefactive) + $\text{NP}_2 + \text{V}_{\text{speech}}$, we have tendency to interpret $\text{tau}^{55}$ 到 as a dative preposition ‘to’, compare (31) and (32):

(31) 我 到 尔 写 信。

\begin{align*}
\eta_0^{21} & \quad \text{tau}^{55} & \quad \eta_1^{21} & \quad \text{cia}^{35} & \quad \text{cin}^{55} \\
1\text{SG} & \quad \text{for/to} & \quad 2\text{SG} & \quad \text{write} & \quad \text{letter}
\end{align*}

I write a letter for you/I write you a letter.
3.7. Benefactive > dative ‘to’

When the verb demands an direct/indirect object, and there is no element which can take on this position, we interpret the element as an IO, thus becomes a dative preposition:

(32) 我到尔话。

\( \eta_o^{21} \ tau^{55} \ n_i^{21} \ u\alpha^{22} \)

1SG to 2SG talk

I talk to you.
3.8. Benefactive > semi-disposal marker

The disposal marker function of *tau*\(^{55}\) 到 is still on its way of grammaticalization, compare (33) and (13):

(33) 我 到 尔 剥 哒 咕 个 橘 子。

\[ \text{I peeled an orange for you.} \]
3.8. Benefactive > semi-disposal marker

(13) 他 到 橘 子 剥 咋 皮。

3SG DM orange peel PFV skin

He peeled the orange (of its skin) / He peeled the skin for the orange.

Therefore, we regard it as a subset of the benefactive function.
4. Conclusion

- In this paper, we have analyzed the syncretism of *tau*₅⁵ 到 in the Chengguan dialect, and we assume that the context-induced reinterpretation plays a key role in its process of grammaticalization on the one hand, and the analogy on the other hand;

- Every step of the grammaticalizational chain can be found in other Sinitic languages, but the total evolution is quiet rare;

- In the future, we would like to study the dialects of the counties which bordering Pingjiang to see if the contact influences exist.


5. References


5. References


5. References


5. References


5. References

