

## A Case Study on the Grammaticalization of Adverbs of Quantification in Mandarin Chinese

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This study explores the paths and mechanisms involving the grammaticalization of adverbs of quantification, such as *Zhong*, *Lau*, *Duo*, and *Shao*, in Mandarin Chinese. *Zhong*, *Lau*, *Duo*, and *Shao* are used as pluractional markers indicating habituality (Geenhoven 2004 & 2005). They have undergone some semantic changes from concreteness to abstractness. The quantifiers *Duo/Shao* originally measure objects in the physical domain. Then through metaphorical extension, they can quantify events or processes through the time axis (see examples 1 to 3). The adjective *Lau* originally denotes a span of long life that human beings or living things have been through, then it is extended to denote long human relationships, and finally it denotes a habit long contracted by someone (see examples 4 to 6). Different from *Duo/Shao*, the development of the meaning of *Lau* involves a change from denoting a stative process through time axis to a purely countable dynamic process. The last adverb *Zhong* originally denotes actions to gather, then it denotes all things in physical space. Later *Zhong* denotes nearly one hundred percent of possibility of doing something and can be used to denote a habit; at the latest stage, *Zhong* denotes a precondition in conditional sentences and acts like a connective (see examples 7 to 10).

The grammaticalization of these four adverbs of quantification in Mandarin Chinese obeys Hopper's (1991) principles of grammaticalization, in particular layering, persistence and decategorization. We will show the validity of applying these principles to these cases and the basic mechanism, which feature metaphorical extension, in this study.

- (1) Yong liang hen shao / duo  
Usage quantify very few/many  
"There is little/much utilization"
- (2) Ta shao/duo na le yi kuai  
Pro few/many take par. one piece  
"He got one more/less"
- (3) a. women ke yi duo bi jiao  
we can many compare  
"We can do more comparison and evaluation"  
b. zhexie hua yao shao jiang  
these words must few speak  
"We should talk less"
- (4) wo lau le  
I old par.  
"I am old"
- (5) wo shina jia dian de lau gu ke  
I am that store old customer  
"I am an old customer of that shop."
- (6) Wo shou bu liao ta lau chou yan  
I cannot bear he always smoke  
"I cannot bear his regularly smoking habits."
- (7) You Wang shao jie lai zhong qi cheng  
Let Miss Wang to all its complete  
"Let Miss Wang put them all together"

- (8) hue yi zhong gong you ba ren  
meeting all have eight people  
“There are eight people in the meeting all together.”
- (9) lau nian shi zhong xiang zhua zhu yi qie  
old time always want grab everything  
“When someone gets old, he always wants to grab everything in his hands.”
- (10) Yao ao ye nian shu, ye zhong dei xian chi fan ba.  
must stay up read book have to first eat rice par.  
“Even if you have to stay up to study, you have to eat something first.”

## References

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