The Syntax of Exclamation in Tsou and Its Implications

This paper investigates the syntax of exclamation in the Formosan language Tsou from a cross-linguistic perspective. It has been reported in the literature that the syntax of exclamation varies significantly across languages. In Germanic and Romance languages, exclamatives are typically led by a *wh*-word such as *what* and *how* (Elliot 1971, 1974; Zanuttini & Portner 2003; Masullo 2017). In Sinitic languages, exclamatives are normally expressed by a special template comprised of an intensifier plus a final stance particle (Liu & Lien 2006; Yang 2017; Shu 2018). Turning to Austronesian languages, nominalization has often been identified as a prominent feature of exclamatives (Potsdam 2011; Kaufman 2011; Moyse-Faurie 2011; Sung 2015). Importantly, Potsdam (2011) points out that exclamatives are exclusively nominal in Malagasy and that its sentential force is located in the D(eterminer). Against this backdrop, the present paper reports yet another type of exclamative attested in Tsou and demonstrates that unlike Malagasy, Tsou situates its exclamative force in the C domain, despite being lack of *wh*-exclamatives or final stance particle exclamatives. In Tsou, exclamatives can be divided into three major types in terms of special exclamative particles attested in the sentence-initial position. Type I is led by the exclamative particle *bx(ntxntxhx)* or *mainecumo*, denoting a general exclamation, as in (1a-b). Type II is characterized by the exclamative particle *echichi*, indicating an exclamation on one's adversity, as in (2). Type III is headed by the exclamative particle *tonkunku*, expressing the speaker's fury over a highly undesirable situation, as in (3). We suggest that Types I-III share a syntactic structure of complex sentence, where the speaker's affection and the extent leading to the exclamation occur as the matrix clause, with the exclamative target encoded by a subordinate clause. We place the special exclamative particles in the C domain for the following reasons. First, they precede a specific complementizer *na*, as in (1-2a). This indicates that they should be merged above the regular C. Second, they can be followed by a topic, as in (4). This suggests that they should be merged above TopP. Third, they occur sentence-initially like an auxiliary, but, unlike an auxiliary, they do not attract bound pronouns, as in (5a-b), indicating that they are merged above the regular CP. Fourth, the anaphoric extent verb that patterns with them is ineligible for the auxiliary, as in (6a). This aligns them with a reason *wh*-word, as in (6b), revealing that they are merged at least as high as a reason *wh*-word in the C domain. Fifth, they are excluded from subordinate clauses, display the MCP effects, as in (7). This implies that they may be merged in the top SAP. It is also noteworthy that nominalization does occur in Tsou exclamatives but is restricted in the subordinate clause (cf. (1a-b)). It is thus concluded that in Tsou the exclamative sentential force is represented by a special particle in the C domain.

(1) Type I

    a. *bx   na   maica   ci   hia-si   mikuzkuzo!*
       EXCL C   so   SUB   NMLZ-3SG   look.bad
       'How bad-looking he is!'

    b. *bx   na   maica   ci   hia-si   yonghu!*
       EXCL   C   so   SUB NMLZ-3SG.GEN   pretty
       'How pretty she is!'

(2) Type II

    a. *echichi   na   maica   ci   la-ta   'aoko   tma'congo!*
       EXCL   C   so   SUB HAB-3SG all.the.time sick
       'How miserable she is for being sick all the time!'

    b. ?? *echichi   na   maica   ci   mi-ta   atpxtx!*
         EXCL   C   so   SUB RL.INTR-3 win

(3) Type III

    a. *'ae'e, tonkunku   ci   suoyo   ta   feango!*
       INTJ   EXCL   SUB   fall   OBL   hole
       'Damn, how irritating it is to be falling into a hole!'

    b. ?? *'ae'e,   tonkunku   ci   mi-ta   mealx!*
       INTJ   EXCL   SUB REAL-3SG.ABS generous

(4) *bx   si   fkoi   ci   yonta phingi-a!*
    EXCL TOP snake   SUB   be.at   door-A
    'How astonishing it is for the snake being right at the door!'

(5) a. *bx   na   maica   ci   mi-ta=cu   uk'a!*
       EXCL C   so   SUB REAL-3SG=COS not.exist
       'How sad it is for his passing away!'

    b. **bx-ta   na   maica   ci   mi=cu   uk'a!*
       EXCL-3SG C   so   SUB REAL=COS   not.exist

(6) a. *bx   na (*mo) maica!*
       EXCL C   REAL so
       'How incredible it is!'

    b. *manci=s'a (*mo)   maica?!*
       why.C=S'A   REAL   so
       'How could it be?!'

(7) **mo mxchx <u>ne   bx   ci</u>   mo   maine'e!*
    REAL rain   SUB EXCL SUB   REAL return

Selected references Kaufman, Denial. 2011. Exclamatives and temporal nominalizations in Austronesian. Potsdam, Eric. 2011. Expressing exclamatives in Malagasy. Sung, Li-May. 2015. Why exclamatives in Budai Rukai.