

# From Discourse and Referential Hierarchy to Clause-linking in Some Oceanic Languages

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The focus will be on the clause-linking functions of topic or focus markers and of demonstratives or definite markers, which indicate discourse or referential hierarchy. Though these morphemes are not, strictly speaking, conjunctive heads, they are markers of syntactic hierarchy when their scope extends to clausal level, corresponding to various types of subordination. Since they have no specific semantics, their interpretation is context-dependent and relies on other morphemes (adverbs or TAM markers).

Where do such clause-linking devices fall on the cline from co-ranking coordination to hierarchized subordination? What types of clause-linking do they express? What degree of grammaticalization into full-fledged conjunctions do they display?

The paper will also address the evolution paths of some of these morphemes, especially those which originate from sequential and additive coordinators or connectors and which specialize or grammaticalize into topic or focus markers and further on into subordinators.

Nêlêmwa (VOS, Oceanic, New Caledonia, Bril 2002)

- (1) a. **Xe** i khabwe a kââma-n khabwe: "**xe** shuva?"  
TPC 3SG say AGT father-POSS.3SG say TPC be.how?

'(and) So, his father says: "so what's it like?"'

- b. Fââlô **xe** fââlô-dame mwa na bwa dau na Uvea ...  
travel TPC travel-up.here SEQ LOC on island LOC Ouvéa

'As for this (top), this travel (top), this travel up here from the island of Ouvéa ...'

- c. Na i tâlâ **xe** hla hoe.  
and 3SG hear TPC 3PL call

'And he hears that they are calling.'

Manam (SOV, Oceanic, PNG, Madang Province, Lichtenberk 1983)

- (2) a. [RuaNá-da rúa Ne-Ø maN di-doQ-i-a-rú-**be**]  
friend-1.INCL two DX1-3SG chicken 3PL-take-3SG-BF-DU-**and**

[di-QaN-aN-í-a-ru].  
3PL-eat-RED-3SG-BF-DU

'Our two friends caught a chicken **and** are eating it.'  
(1983: 489)

b. [RuaNá-da rúa Ne-Ø maN di-QaN-aN-í-a-ru]  
friend-1.INCL two DX1-3SG chicken 3PL-eat-RED-3SG-BF-DU

[di-doQ-i-a-rú-**be**].  
3PL-TAKE-3SG-BF-DU-**FOC**

'Our two friends are eating a chicken **after** catching/  
having caught it (first).' (1983: 490)

Takia (SOV, Oceanic, Papua New Guinea; Ross 2002: 241 sq.)

(3) a. Ta i-win na i-**k man an** dal na i-mul  
NEG 3SG-win DUR R-B TPC DEM path LOC 3SG-return

(lit. he does not win <sup>topic</sup>, *that* he turns back)

'(When) he does not win [the race], he turns back.' [p,  
given this > q].

b. Id mala-d y-of da-**k en** panu na  
1INCL.PL eye-1INCL.PL 3SG-close IMPF-**B** DX1 village loc

t-au wa  
1INCL.PL-go IRR

(lit. our eyes are closing, *this* we will go home)

'(As) we are sleepy, we will go home.'