

## **Subordination and coordination in language-contact situations**

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### **Description**

It is well-known that language contact is one of the most important drivers in language change and linguistic diversity worldwide (Mithun 2025). Because most humans speak or are exposed to more than one language in their lifetime, contact phenomena are ubiquitous in languages around the world.

Subordinating and coordinating conjunctions are among the grammatical elements that are especially susceptible to being borrowed (Matras 2007: 54). For example, many indigenous languages of Mesoamerica and South America have borrowed subordinators and coordinators from Spanish or Portuguese (Mithun 2012; Stolz & Stolz 1996a, 1996b). Similarly, based on a sample of 137 languages spoken within the former Soviet Union, Stolz & Levkovych (2022) report widespread borrowing of conjunctions from Arabic, Persian, and Russian. In Italy, several non-Romance varieties have also borrowed conjunctions from Italian (Levkovich 2025).

Loan conjunctions have mostly been analyzed through the lens of borrowing hierarchies. A widely cited example is Matras's (2007: 54–56) proposed hierarchy which suggests that adverbial subordinators marking causal, concessive, conditional, or purposive relations are more often borrowed than others, such as temporal subordinators. As for coordinators, an implicational hierarchy has been put forward by Matras (1998: 301–305), according to which adversative 'but' coordinators are more easily borrowed than disjunctive 'or' and conjunctive 'and' coordinators. This reflects a broader trend in language contact research, where the borrowing of grammatical elements is examined not just in terms of frequency, but also through the functional and semantic properties that influence their likelihood of transfer. Other studies of borrowed conjunctions are concerned with their phonological adaptation. Both the form and meaning of subordinators and coordinators may be replicated in the other language relatively intact (see Olguín Martínez 2023 for a number of examples in Mesoamerican languages). However, there are cases in which the forms of subordinators and coordinators are adjusted to some degree to fit the phonological structure of the recipient language. The mechanisms by which subordinators and coordinators are adapted are complex and have been the subject of much research and debate.

While the studies mentioned above have advanced our theoretical and typological understanding of subordination and coordination in language contact situations, much more work remains to be done in this field.

### **Aims of the workshop**

The workshop will bring together original research that contributes to our understanding of subordination and coordination in language-contact situations. We welcome contributions on any given language, family, or macro-area, as well as broad typological studies. The workshop will pave the way for the analysis of understudied aspects of subordination and coordination in language-contact situations. Potential contributions include, but are by no means restricted to, the following:

1. **Hybrid constructions**. In language-contact situations, there are cases in which loan conjunctions and autochthonous strategies of subordination may not only coexist as competitors but also combine to give rise to typologically unpredictable hybrid constructions (Stolz & Levkovych, submitted). For instance, there are cases in which adverbial clauses may appear with an autochthonous subordinator while main clauses occur with a borrowed coordinator (see Olguin Martínez 2022 for a number of examples in Mesoamerican languages). This phenomenon has been described by Bertinetto & Ciucci (2012) as “para-hypotaxis”. The authors propose the following scheme: subordinator + dependent clause + coordinator + main clause. The questions are: Are hybrid constructions transitory stages of a process that ultimately leads to a structural readjustment? Do hybrid constructions arise more often with certain logical or temporal relations than in other contexts? Can hybrid constructions be described as (sometimes discontinuous) unitary constructions?

2. **Beyond loan conjunctions**. Recent studies have shown that recipient languages may not only borrow conjunctions from a donor language, but also adopt additional properties of the source construction in which such conjunctions occur, including lexical preferences, such as the range of verb lemmas appearing in a given constructions, and the discourse-pragmatic and conversational functions (Olguin Martínez 2024a; Olguin Martínez & Gries, in press). These findings align with recent Usage-Based Construction Grammar approaches that emphasize the need for an integrative, non-modular perspective on language contact (e.g., Boas & Höder 2018, 2021). This raises several important questions: Why do speakers of recipient languages not only borrow conjunctions, but also broader constructional features of complex sentences? What socio-cognitive factors shape these patterns of borrowing and adaptation in contact scenarios? What statistical or quantitative methods can be employed to analyze such multifaceted linguistic phenomena?

3. **Discourse narrowing and widening**. From a discourse-pragmatic perspective, loan conjunctions sometimes cover a different functional load than their source. Their function in the recipient language may be narrower, broader or entirely different from the corresponding marker in the donor language (Matras 2020: 160–161; Mithun 2025: 471–472; Olguin Martínez 2024b, in press). The questions are: What are the ranges of factors that contribute to the processes of discourse narrowing and widening? How do patterns of discourse narrowing and widening differ across different types of language contact scenarios? Are certain types of clause-linking devices (e.g., causal, temporal, conditional) more prone to discourse narrowing or widening in language contact situations?

Please send provisional abstracts of no more than 300 words (excluding references) in PDF format by November 10, 2025 to:

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If the workshop is approved, authors will be asked to submit revised 500-word abstracts according to the SLE guidelines

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