

**Separate clause source and initial-to-medial pathway: Formation of Chinese epistemic
adverbial and sentence connective *chéng rán***

Modern Chinese *chéng rán* may be used as an epistemic adverbial (shortened as an EA) meaning ‘no doubt’ (see (1a)) and a sentence connective (shortened as a SC; see (1b)).

(1) a *Tā hěn ài nà jǐ zhī xiǎoyā, xiǎoyā yě chéng rán kě'ài.*
 he very love DEM several CLS little.duck little.duck also no.doubt lovely
 ‘He loves those little ducks, and they are **no doubt** lovely.’

b *Chéng rán huàjù yǒu yúlè de gōngnéng, dànshì tā bù yīng lúnwéi*
 although drama have recreation NOMZ function but it NEG should reduce.to

fàn hòu tiándiǎn.

dinner after sweet

‘The drama has its recreational functions, **but** it should not be reduced to the functions equivalent to disserts after dinners.’

Diachronic investigations reveal that both an EA *chéng rán* and a SC *chéng rán* developed from a separated clause *chéng rán* ‘(it is) quite right’ that appeared in the initial position of another clause in Ancient Chinese.

(xx) *Jiēyú yuē: “Wú bú xǔ yě.” Qī yuē: “Chéng rán, bú rú qù zhī.”*
 Jieyu say I NEG agree.to FP wife say quite.right. NEG match leave DEM
 ‘Jieyu said: I don’t agree to it. His wife said: **(It is) quite right**. We had better leave the place.’
 (*Tàipíng Yùlǎn*, 983 CE)

A separate clause *chéng rán* had both an epistemic function and a linking-clause function (see (2)). Its epistemic function followed the hypothetical initial-to-medial pathway argued by Long et al. (2022), and developed into a clause-medial EA (see (3)).

(3) a *Gài Yì zhī shū, chéng rán shì jié jìng jīng wēi.*
 generally Book.of.Changes NOMZ book no.doubt COP clean clear exquisite subtle
 ‘Generally the *Book of Changes* is **no doubt** a book of cleanness, clearness, exquisiteness, and subtlety.’ (*Zhūzǐ Yùlèi*, 1270 CE)

Its linking-clause function developed into a conventionalized SC, and following the hypothetical initial-to-medial pathway, it may also be used in a clause-medial position (see (4)).

- (4) *Zhè zhuāng dōngxī chéngrán bù kě shīluò, dàn yǎnxià wǒmen zhè yī qún*
DEM CLS thing although NEG may lose but currently we DEM one group

rén duànduàn méi gè huíqù de lǐ.

people absolutely have.not CLS return NOMZ reason

‘We can’t lose this thing, **but** currently we have such a group of people, and it makes absolutely no sense for us to return to the site.’ (*Èrnǚ Yīngxióng Zhuàn*, early 19th century)

This study endeavors to establish a hypothetical source construction of separate clauses for the formation of some SCs that is largely neglected by Traugott (2022) and others, and further explains why some SCs may occupy a clause-medial position in the other languages; see English clause-medial SCs *however* in (5a) and *therefore* in (5b).

- (5) a ... A.H.Q. Malta confirmed that one Hurricane had been slightly damaged. This **however** would appear to have been in combat with Bf110s ... (BNC)

b This necessarily entails longer term assistance in comparatively stable situations. We **therefore** particularly value our partnership with SCF through TRANSAID... (BNC)

References:

- Long, Haiping, Francesco Ursini, Bernd Heine, and Yaohua Luo. 2022. Grammatical changes of Modern Chinese sentence adverbial *guoran* ‘it really happens’: A hypothesized external-to-medial pathway. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 42(3): 1–25.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2022. *Discourse Structuring Markers in English*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.