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The Clause Complexing System of Chinese Students' Academic Writing

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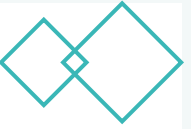




- **Clause complex** is grammar's way of showing "that" and "how" the process going together in a sequence that relates to each other.
- When **Master** and **PhD** students are applying clause complexes in **transmitting specialized knowledge** (Hyland, 2009; Swales, 1990, 2004) in their theses, they not only have specific characteristics in choosing words or phrases to construe meaning, but also differ from each other in putting them together into a sequence that are related to each other.
- Even some students have problems of how to organize a structure from a clause to above clause complexes.



Research Questions

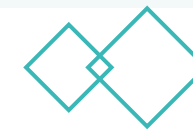


- 1. **How** are logico-semantic types (projection and expansion) **realized**?
- How do they work in clause complexes in the corpus?
- 2. Are there **differences (similarities)** between MA theses and PhD dissertations? Which?
- 3. Socio-biographical variation?
- **level: development** projection PhD > projection MA
- expansion PhD > expansion MA
- 4. How can we **explain** differences?
- 5. **Improve** students' writing?





Definition



- **Clause complex:**
- “A combination of two or more clauses into a larger unit, with their **interdependence** normally shown by explicit signals such as conjunctions.” (Thompson, 2014: 186)
- “A combination of clauses related **paratactically** or **hypotactically** but not through embedding; the mode of combination is the mode of organization of the **logical** subtype of the **ideational metafunction**.” (Halliday, 2014: 428-432)
- It covers two regions:
 - 1. closer to the pole of **circumstantial augmentation**, there are clause combinations where one clause is dependent on a dominant clause, the two thus being of **unequal** status (as in when a happened, b happened);
 - 2. closer to the pole of **cohesive sequences**, there are clause combinations where the two clauses are interdependent on one another, the two having **equal** status (as in a happened, then b happened). (Halliday, 2014: 434-35)





Distinguishing



Clause: a sentence with only one Theme (normally subject) and Rheme (usually indicating by predicate verbs), e.g.

||| The fourth part (Theme) is (Rheme) designed to account for the methodology. ||| ---- CMAC15_03_76

Clause complex: a sentence with more than one clauses, e.g.

|||The fourth part is designed to account for the methodology, || **and** the fifth part is proposed to discuss the results. |||

“1+2” : paratactic expansion – extension – addition: and

Complex clause: a clause with embedding, e.g.

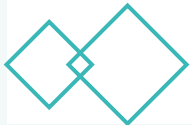
||| The fourth part is designed to account for the methodology [[which is applied in this project]]. |||

Simple clause: a clause without any embedding, e.g.

||| The fourth part is designed to account for the methodology. ||| ---- CMAC15_03_76

Clause nexus: two clauses connected by any logico-semantic relation in a clause complex, e.g.

|||The fourth part is designed to account for the methodology, || **and** the fifth part is proposed to discuss the results. |||





Analyzing Framework

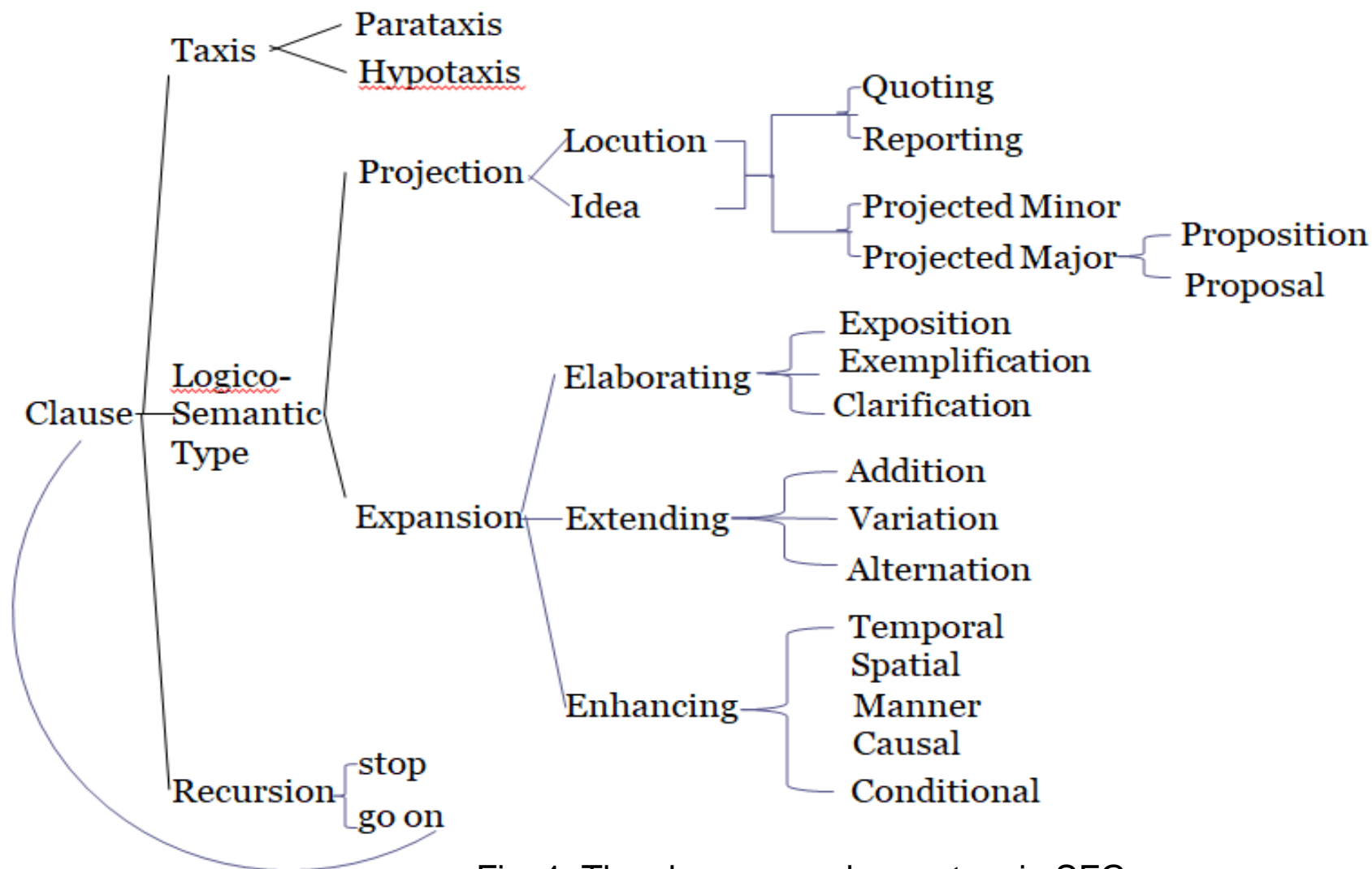


Fig. 1. The clause complex system in SFG



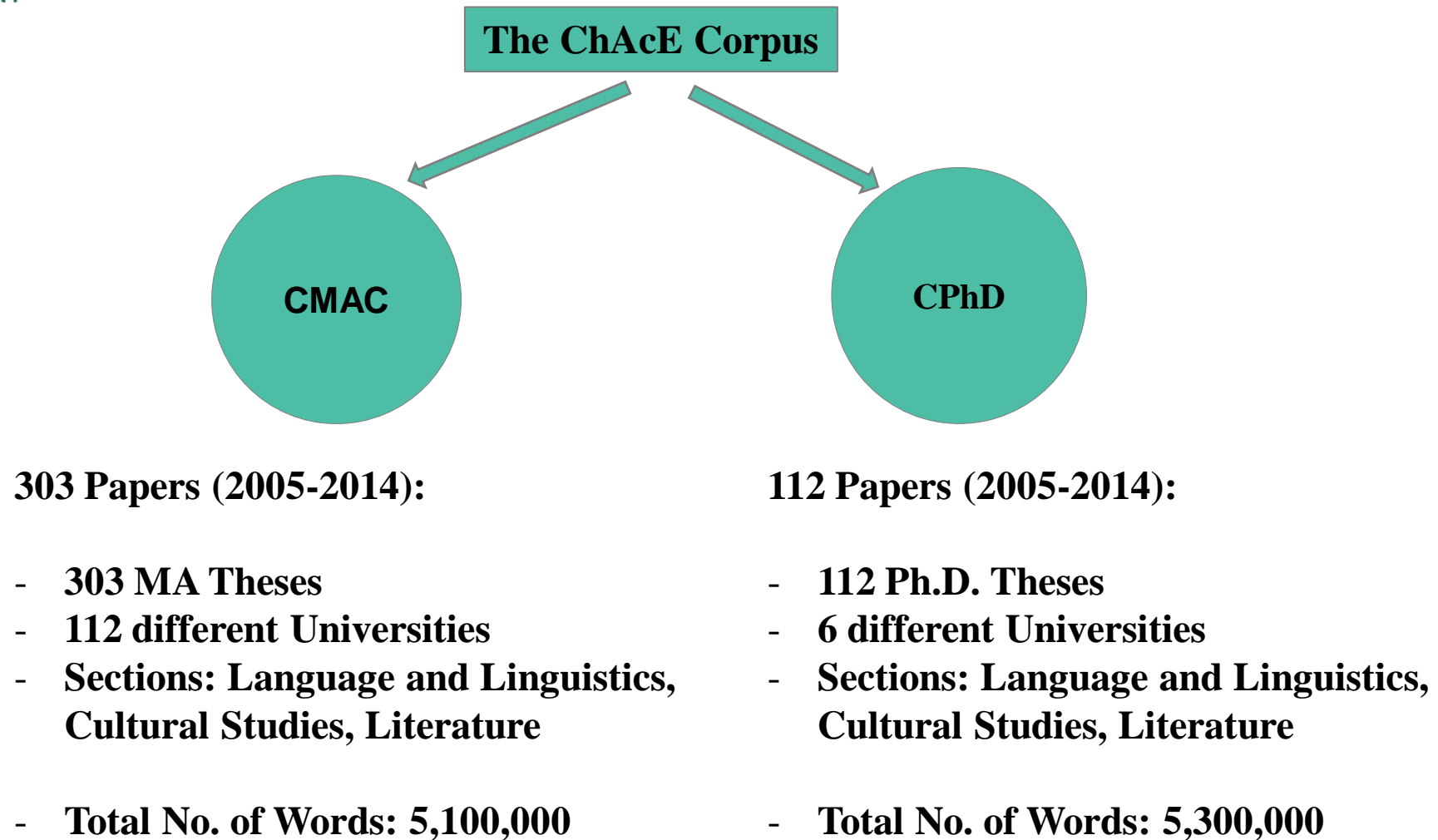


Fig. 2. Constituent Parts of the ChAcE Corpus, downloaded from CNKI and Duxiu Net



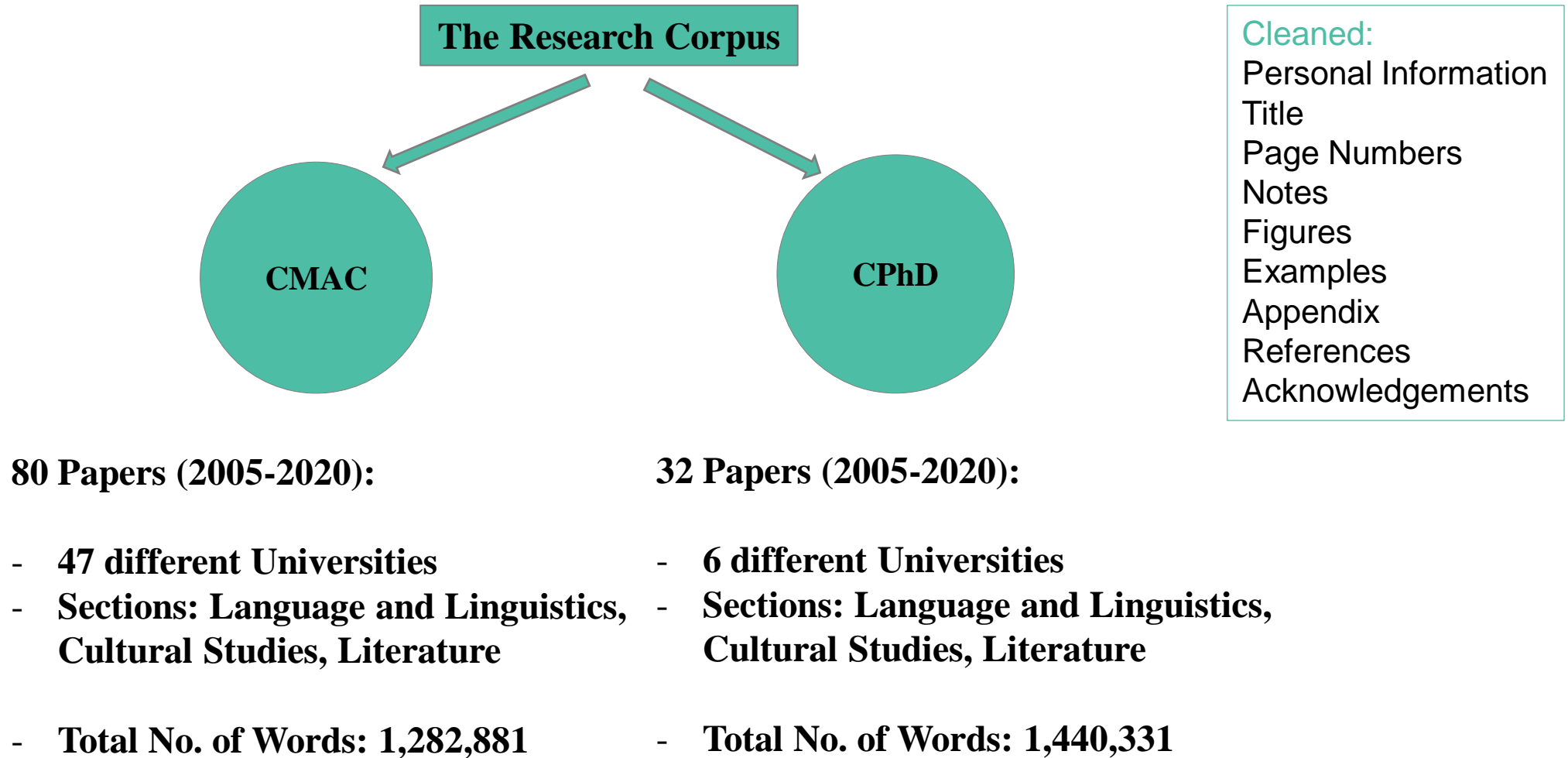


Fig. 3. Constituent Parts of the Research Corpus, part from the ChAcE and part from CNKI



SysFan - [SysFan]

文件(F) 编辑(E) 查看(V) 插入(I) 格式(O) 记录(R) 脚本(S) 窗口(W) 帮助(H)

记录 2881 3606 / 114930 已找到 (未排序)

显示全部 新建记录 删除记录 查找 排序

布局: Clause Complex 查看方式: 预览

Text Grammatical Boundaries Phonological Transcription Exchanges Generic Stages
 Clause Complex Tone Group Exchange
 Clause Foot Proposition/Proposal

Clause Complex Summary

TextID: CMAC18_02 A Contrastive Study of British and American New Reports on China's Belt and Road Mode [medium]
 ComplexID: CMAC18_02_414 Speaker:

In contrast, American newspapers use can in the example 5 to slander China, || they believe || that China will threaten those who hamper BRI's implementation, || and at same time, American newspapers imply || that some countries signed cooperation agreements with China under China's threat, || which is definitely not true.

Analysis status
 Analysis: continuation

Analysis Notes

Clause Divider || Create Clause Records

Clause ID	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Clause
CMAC18_							1	In contrast, American newspapers use can in the example 5 to
CMAC18_						α	+2	they believe
CMAC18_					1	β		that China will threaten those who hamper BRI's implementation,
CMAC18_				α	x2			and at same time, American newspapers imply
CMAC18_			α	β				that some countries signed cooperation agreements with China
CMAC18_			= β					which is definitely not true

Fig. 4. The annotation of clause complex in the interface of SysFan, 28,350 in MA and 28,257 in PhD





Example 1

TextID Mode [medium]

ComplexID Speaker

He is also the first one to prove || that Shakespeare's sonnets were a classic of poetry, || which solidified its poetic status, || and since then, academic began to explore the poetics of Shakespeare's sonnets with different theories of poetics.

Analysis status

Analysis: continuation

Analysis Notes

Clause Divider

Clause ID	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Clause
CMAC18_							α	He is also the first one to prove
CMAC18_					α	1	β	that Shakespeare's sonnets were a classic of poetry,
CMAC18_					= β			which solidified its poetic status,
CMAC18_						x2		and since then, academic began to explore the poetics of

α ' β : hypotactic projection: reporting, mental, idea, proposition: prove
 1x2: paratactic expansion: enhancement: temporal, later: and since then
 α = β : hypotactic expansion: elaboration: clarification: which





Example 2

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TextID Mode [medium]

ComplexID Speaker

When the students are asked || what they would most like to be able to do in a foreign language, || they say || they want to be able to speak it || and this obviously implies [[being able to understand || what another person says]].

Analysis status

Analysis: continuation

Analysis Notes

Clause Divider

Clause ID	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Clause
CPhD08_0						α	$\alpha\beta$	When the students are asked
CPhD08_0						α	β	what they would most like to be able to do in a foreign language,
CPhD08_0					α	1	α	they say
CPhD08_0					α	β		they want to be able to speak it
CPhD08_0					α	+2		and this obviously implies [[being able to understand
CPhD08_0					α	β		what another person says]]

- α $\alpha\beta$: hypotactic expansion: enhancement: temporal, same time: when
- α β : hypotactic projection: reporting, verbal, locution, proposition: say
- 1 +2: paratactic expansion: elaboration: addition, additive: and
- α β : hypotactic projection: reporting, verbal, locution, proposition: say
- α β : hypotactic projection: reporting, mental, idea, proposition: understand





Example 3

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Clause Complex Summary

TextID Mode [medium]

ComplexID Speaker

The former has already been reviewed in the first section || as all the elements of narratives are embedded in text, || while the latter emphasizes the cognitive activity, || i.e. how people understand and comprehend the narrative come to the fore.

Analysis status

Analysis: continuation

Analysis Notes

Clause Divider

Clause ID	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Clause
CPhD20_0						α	α	The former has already been reviewed in the first section
CPhD20_0						$\alpha \times \beta$		as all the elements of narratives are embedded in text,
CPhD20_0						1	$+\beta$	while the latter emphasizes the cognitive activity,
CPhD20_0						=2		i.e. how people understand and comprehend the narrative come

$\alpha + \beta$: hypotactic expansion: extension: addition, adversative: while
 $\alpha \times \beta$: hypotactic expansion: enhancement: cause, reason: as
 $1=2$: paratactic expansion: elaboration: exposition: i.e.





Summary

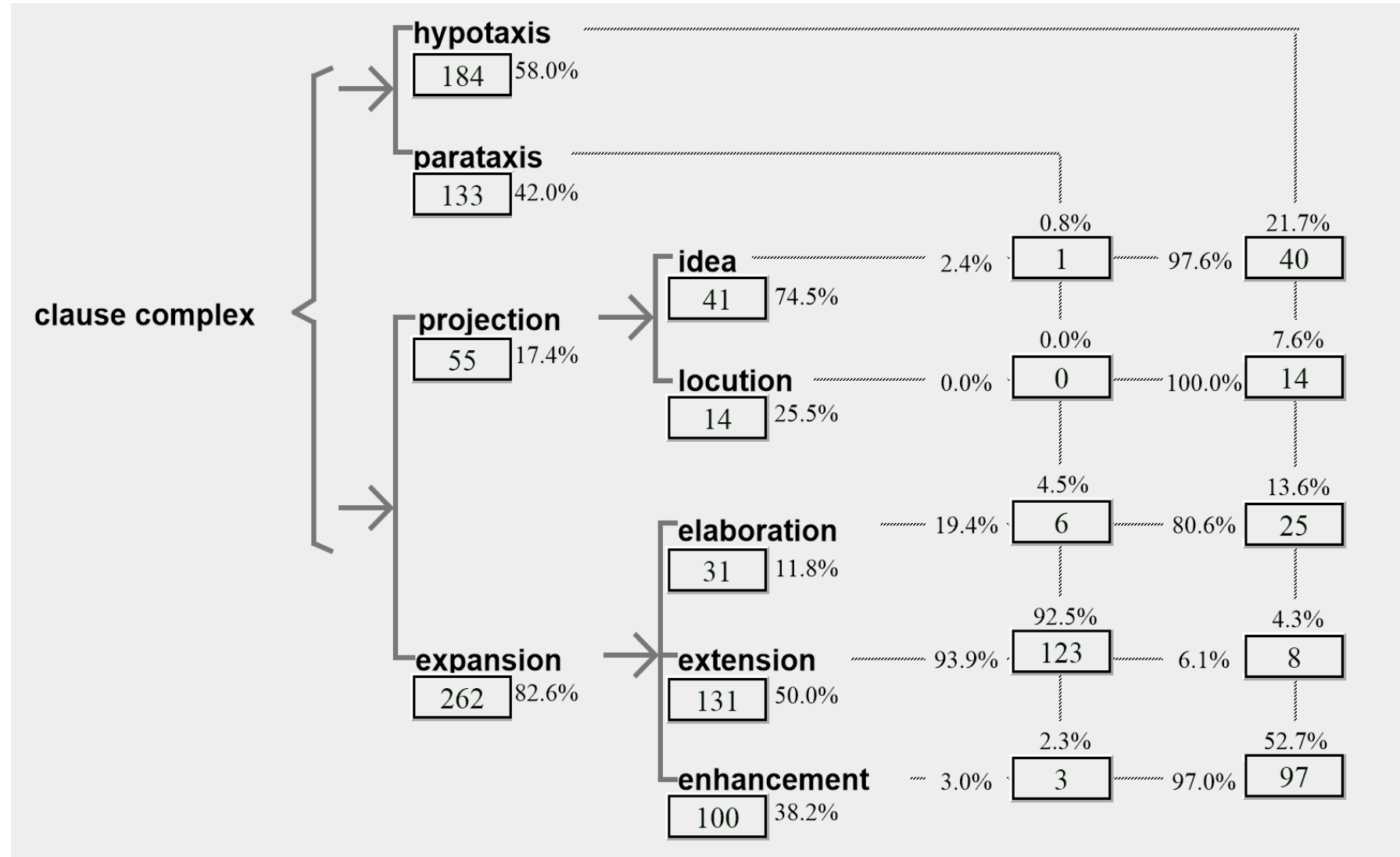


Fig. 5. The annotation result of a text, an example from CMAC09ME_24

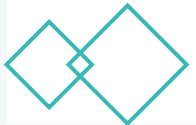




Expected Results



	MA	PhD
1. the average number of words in each clause complex		<
the average percentage of clause complexes in each text		<
2. clause nexuses found on level 5-7		<
the average percentage of clause nexuses on the 1st and 2nd level		>
3. the average percentage of parataxis		>
the average percentage of hypotaxis		<
the average percentage of projection and expansion respectively		=
4. the average percentage of idea, reporting, hypotactic idea, hypotactic locution		=
almost more than 2/3 in each text in both MA's and PhD's are idea		
more than 90% in each text in both MA's and PhD's are reporting, hypotactic idea and hypotactic locution		





Expected Results



	MA	PhD
5. the average percentage of paratactic expansion is lower than that of hypotactic expansion		
the average percentage of paratactic expansion		>
the average percentage of elaboration in each text in both MA's and PhD's are no more than 20%, that of enhancement in both groups has a largest proportion, with extension being in the middle		
the average percentage of elaboration		=
the average percentage of extension		>
the average proportion of enhancement		<
more than 75% are hypotactic elaboration in both groups		
the average percentage of hypotactic elaboration		<
more than 80% are paratactic extension and hypotactic enhancement in both groups		
the average percentage of paratactic extension		>
the average percentage of hypotactic enhancement		<
6. in the whole CC system, the range of the percentage of each category		<
7. the usage of specific words/phrases to convey meaning		<
8. taking year into account		=

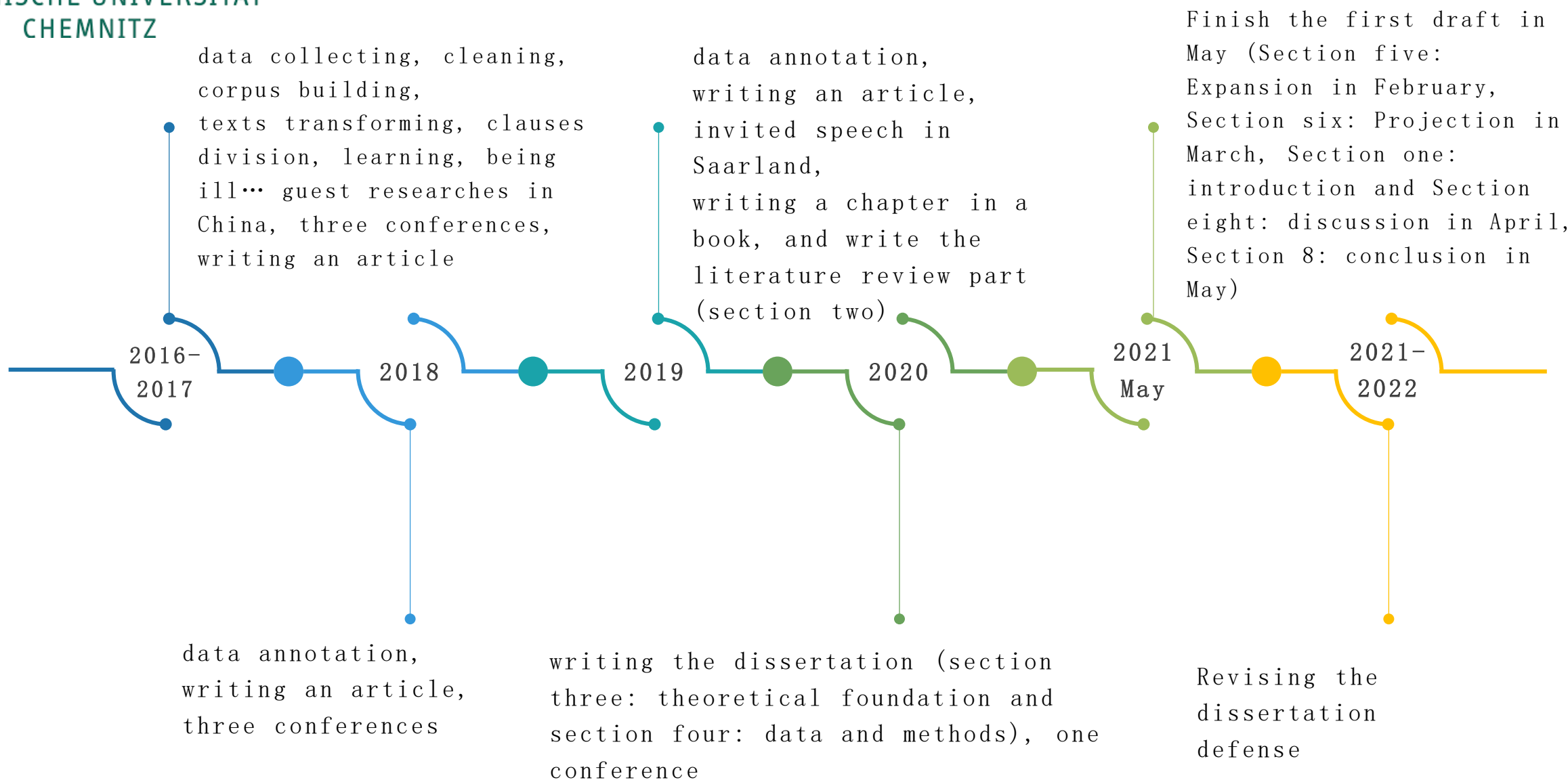




Time Chart

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