

A Mandarin Map for Dutch Durativity

Parallel text analysis as a heuristic for investigating aspectuality

Maarten Bogaards (Leiden University)

1 Introduction

- ❖ **Aspectuality:** Internal temporal properties, e.g. *imperfective, static, telic, punctual*...
 - (1) *Rosa stuck the sticker in her planner* → *terminative*
 - (2) *Jody was swimming in the lake* → *durative*
 - ❖ **Research problem:** Aspectuality is expressed highly *diffusely* in Dutch—contrary to tense: from aspectual verbs (e.g. *worden* 'to become') to schematic constructions (e.g. *aan het V zijn* 'to be V-ing').
 - ❖ **Methodological solution:** Parallel text analysis (Lu & Verhagen 2016): compare original and translated texts side-by-side, to analyze linguistic tools in translation's language.
 - ❖ **Methodological opportunity:** Aspectuality is highly grammaticalized in Mandarin Chinese, e.g. verbal suffix *着 zhe*: 'marker of durative aspect'. Employ *zhe* as a heuristic!
- **Purpose 1:** Mapping out the expression of Dutch durative aspect, in terms of Mandarin *zhe*.
- **Purpose 2:** Test case for Parallel text analysis (theoretically and methodologically).

2 Parallel text analysis

- ❖ **Parallel text analysis:** align translation with its original and systematically investigate a (set of) linguistic element(s).
 - ❖ **Test case:** theoretical and methodological considerations.
- 1 Position in the field (vis-à-vis comparative approaches)**
'Conventional' comparative research: *presuppose* that conceptual content X is expressed by Y and Z in languages 1 and 2, and compare Y and Z with respect to X.
! Parallel text analysis: no presuppositions about language 2: 'division of labor' between *source* and *target* language.
 - 2 Sensibility assumption**
Author(s) and translator(s) are taken to be *sensible text producers*: the conceptual content of a linguistic element in the source language is assumed to be expressed sensibly with the linguistic tools available in the target language.
 - 3 Crosslinguistic heterogeneity**
Linguistic inventories differ crosslinguistically. Conceivably, durative marking in Mandarin need not imply overt marking in Dutch in all cases.



5 Discussion

- ❖ Some limitations; not a general 'map', but a *Mandarin map* for Dutch durativity:

 - 1 As a heuristic starting point, the map is necessarily **hypothetical**;
 - 2 The map is likely **inexhaustive**, since durativity was defined specifically in terms of one (Mandarin) language element;
 - 3 The map provides no information on the **constraints** of the linguistic tools.

→ **Outcome 1:** Elaborating previous accounts of Dutch aspectuality; novel, more unitary way of relating diffuse expressional means within one conceptual domain, with some concrete building blocks (viz. posture verbs, participles, copulatives).

→ **Outcome 2:** Concretized and refined methodological procedures of parallel text analysis; demonstrated its potential as heuristic point of departure for innovative linguistic inquiry.

3 Procedure

- 1 Align 500 instances of durative *zhe* with their Dutch translations (first 100 in 5 novels; 5 different writer(s)/translator(s));
 - 2 Locate *zhe*'s durativity in a (set of) linguistic element(s) in the translation (if marked overtly!);
 - 3 Label the items.
- **Challenge:** no *a priori* set of possible 'labeling options'
- **Solution:** label the items in a 'back and forth' process

4 Results

- ❖ **Unmarked:** Durativity not overtly marked, but some processes observable that influence aspectual interpretation ('readings'): pluractionality and 'non-delimitation'. (3) and (4), respectively, illustrate:
 - (3) *Ze ontblootte haar achterste, maar bedekte haar borsten, alsof er nooit iemand met zijn handen aan had gezeten.* [pluractionality]
'She **bared** her buttocks', but **covered** her breasts, as if no one had ever touched them with their hands.
 - (4) *De hoeven en de wielen pletten de eenzame zandweg.* [non-delimitation?]
'The hooves and wheels **flattened** the lonely dirt road.'
- ❖ **Posture constructions:** Varying configurations with posture verbs (i.e., *zitten* 'to sit', *staan* 'to stand', and *liggen* 'to lie'): most notably, the posture progressive as in (5), and combinations with participles as in (6).
 - (5) *Hij zat onrustig op zijn bed heen en weer te draaien.* [posture verb + infinitive]
'He was [**sat**] **twisting and turning** restlessly on his bed.'
 - (6) *Er stonden dozen met lege bierflesjes en colablikjes opgestapeld.* [posture verb + participle]
'Boxes with empty beer bottles and coke cans **were [stood] stacked** there.'
- ❖ **Compound tense and copulatives:** Temporal auxiliary (*zijn* 'to be' or *hebben* 'to have') plus participle, as in (7), OR analysis as copula *zijn* (participle as nominal complement), as in (8). Gradual interpretation?
 - (7) *Aan het uiteinde daarvan waren rode doeken gebonden.* [temporal: verbal complement]
'Red pieces of cloth **were tied** to its ends.'
 - (8) *Alle ruime, hoge kamers waren bewoond.* [copulative: nominal complement]
'All the spacious, tall rooms **were occupied**.'
- ? *What is the perfect doing in the durative domain?* → Resultativity (resultant state)

Linguistic means expressing 'durativity' in parallel corpus

