A Mandarin Map for Dutch Durativity

Parallel text analysis as a heuristic for investigating aspectuality

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Introduction

- Aspectuality: Internal temporal properties, e.g. imperfective, static, telic, punctual...
 - Rosa stuck the sticker in her planner \rightarrow terminative
 - Jody was swimming in the lake
- \rightarrow 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-byside, 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

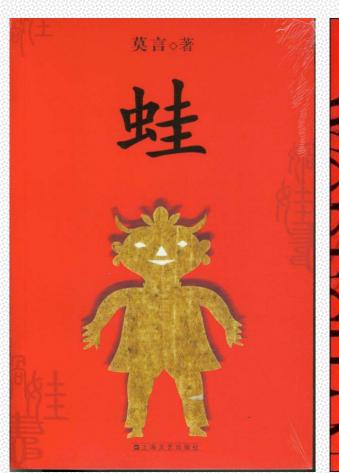
- Parallel text analysis: align translation with its original and systematically investigate a (set of) linguistic element(s).
- Test case: theoretical and methodological considerations.
- Position in the field (vis-à-vis comparative approaches) 'Conventional' comparative research: presuppose that conceptual content X is expressed by Y and Z in languages I 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.

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.

Crosslinguistic heterogeneity

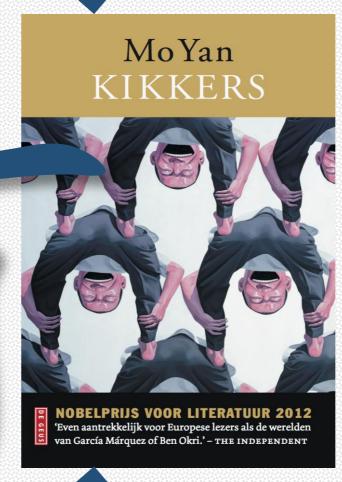
Linguistic inventories differ crosslinguistically. Conceivably, durative marking in Mandarin need not imply overt marking in Dutch in all cases.

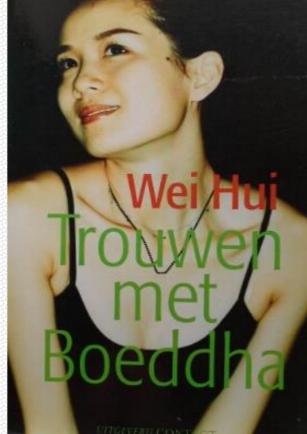


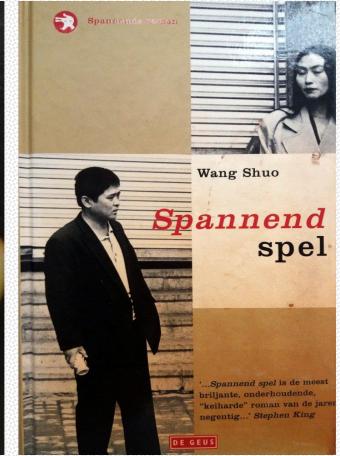


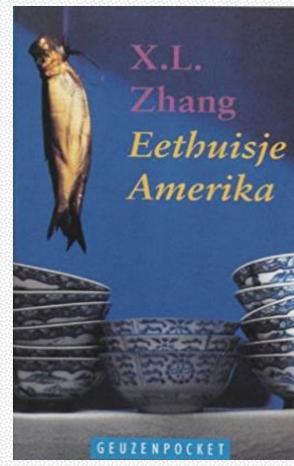












5 Discussion

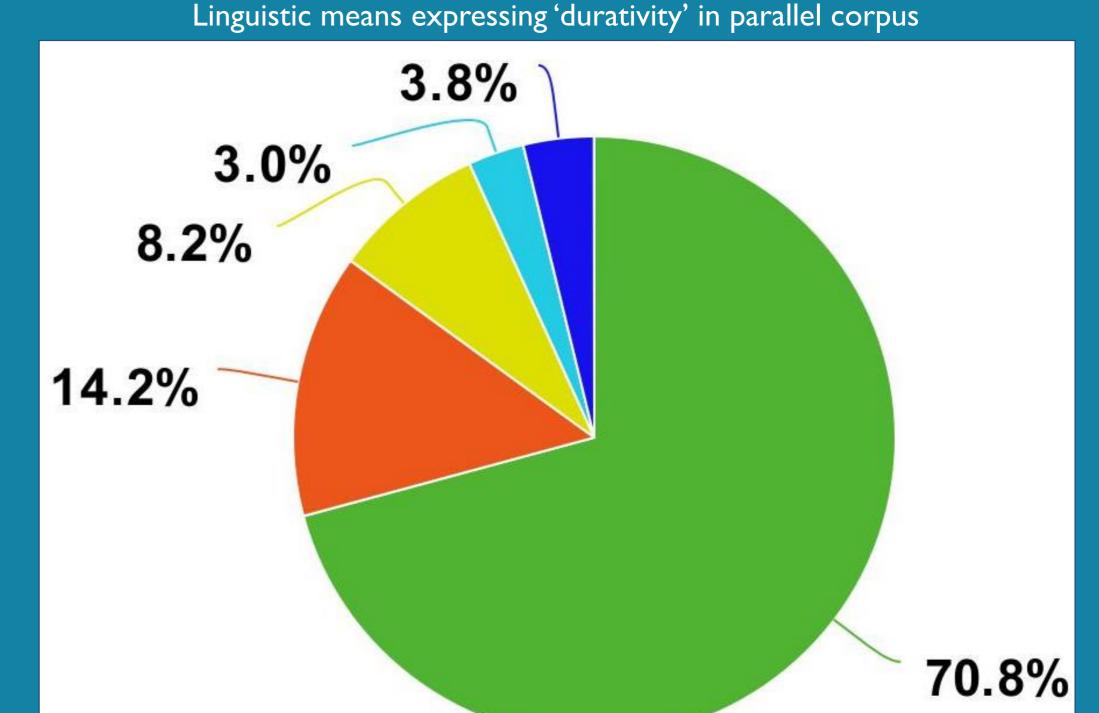
- Some limitations; not a general 'map', but a Mandarin map for Dutch durativity:
- As a heuristic starting point, the map is necessarily **hypothetical**;
- The map is likely inexhaustive, since durativity was defined specifically in terms of one (Mandarin) language element;
- The map provides no information on the **constraints** of the linguistic tools.
- Outcome I: 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.

Procedure

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

Results

- Unmarked: Durativity not overtly marked, but some processes observable that influence aspectual interpretation ('readings'): pluractionality and 'non-delimitation'. (3) and (4), respectively, illustrate:
 - 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.
 - 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).
 - Hij **zat** onrustig op zijn bed heen en weer **te draaien**. [posture verb + infinitive] 'He was [sat] twisting and turning restlessly on his bed.' 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? Aan het uiteinde daarvan waren rode doeken gebonden. [temporal: verbal complement]
 - 'Red pieces of cloth were tied to its ends.' 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)



Unmarked (70,8%)

Compound tense (8,2%)

Posture constructions (14,2%) Other auxiliaries (3%)

n/a (3,8%)