

## The project

- ♦ PhD project (2020-2025): *Aspect in Languages without Aspect*
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**Aim** Syntactic comparison of viewpoint aspect in two aspectually divergent languages:

- Mandarin Chinese (aspect-oriented) — V-affixes (-zhe着, -qilai起来, -xiaqu下去...)
- Dutch (non-aspect-oriented) — periphrastic constructions (zitten te 'sit to', aan het 'on the', op het punt 'on the point'...)

**Background** Challenge for Cartographic Syntax, which posits a universal hierarchy of functional (aspectual) projections:

...Asp<sub>continuative</sub> > Asp<sub>progressive</sub> > Asp<sub>prospective</sub> > Asp<sub>ingressive(I)</sub> > **Voice/v** > Asp<sub>ingressive(II)</sub>...

- ♦ Viewpoint aspect is in two clausal zones: [V—v] and [v—T]
  - Cinque: Some aspectual viewpoints occupy either zone (Asp<sub>(I)</sub> and Asp<sub>(II)</sub>)
  - Laca; Ramchand & Svenonius: Two distinct zones (Situations > Events)
  - Cheng: Some viewpoints merge low but get interpreted high (e.g., -le了)

? Where is viewpoint aspect in MC & D? Consistent with Cartography?

## Variable coercion effects

**Aspectual coercion** Viewpoint aspect markers impose selectional restrictions (situation type). Not met? Coerce the offending situation structure into the appropriate type (situation type shift).

E.g., English Progressive: *They're being really annoying right now.*

- ♦ Chief (2007) and Fukuda (2012) independently show that some types of viewpoint aspect allow coercion, while others don't.
- ♦ **New observation** Different manifestations of the same viewpoint aspect vary in whether they allow aspectual coercion.

E.g., English continuative *keep* vs. *on*: *They kept leaving* vs. *#They left on*.

- No (clear) semantic difference. Alternative hypothesis: Syntax-driven.

? If this is a syntactic contrast, can it inform the question (above) of where viewpoint aspect is situated along the clausal spine?

## The data

- ♦ Full study: 4 types of viewpoint aspect—Continuous/Progressive (ongoing), Ingressive ('begin'), Continuative ('continue') and Prospective ('about to')

	Mandarin	Dutch
Continuous/Progressive	-zhe 着 (zhèng)zài (正)在	zitten te 'sit to' aan het...zijn 'be on the...' bezig zijn (om) te 'be busy to'
Ingressive	kāishǐ 开始 'begin' -qilai 起来	beginnen te 'begin to' aan het...gaan/slaan 'go/hit on the...'
Continuative	jìxù 继续 'continue' -xiaqu 下去	blijven 'stay' door-
Prospective	jiùyào 就要 kuài 快...le了	op het punt staan (om) te 'stand on the point to' op...staan 'stand on...'
	<b>Coercers</b>	<b>Mixed Non-coercers</b>

## Assumptions about the VP domain

**Isomorphic mapping** between situation structure and VP phrase structure (inner aspect) (e.g., Ramchand; Travis; Sybesma).

- ♦ Travis/Sybesma-style model of decomposition into
  - [VP] Dynamic predicate Activity e.g., cā 擦 'wipe'
  - [Asp1P [VP]] "TelicityP": Add result state Accomplishment e.g., cāgān 擦干 'wipe dry'
  - [Asp2P [Asp1P [VP]]] "Scale reduction": Multi→Two-point scale Achievement e.g., mài diào 卖掉 'sell off'

**Consequences** Input condition for situation type = c-selection; Coercion = Remapping in one of two flavors:

- Remap in Lexicon, enter syntactic derivation as coerced situation type
- Remap in Syntax, coercion interacts with syntactic properties of the viewpoint aspect construction whose input restrictions are violated

► Type I predicts that non-coercers don't exist; Type II predicts they do.

[1] Cinque, G. 1999. *Adverbs and functional heads*. Oxford: OUP. [2] Rizzi, L. & G. Cinque. 2016. Functional categories and syntactic theory. *Annual Review of Linguistics* 2:139-163. [3] Yan, M. & Y. Yuan. 2024. Three-layered hierarchical structure of Mandarin Chinese aspectual projections. *Lingua* 300. [4] Laca, B. 2004. Romance "aspectual" periphrases. In J. Guéron & J. Lecarme (eds.), *The Syntax of Time*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 425-440. [5] Fukuda, S. 2012. Aspectual verbs as functional heads. *NLLT* 30, 965-1026. [6] Ramchand, G. & P. Svenonius. 2014. Deriving the functional hierarchy. *Language Sciences* 46, 152-174. [7] Cheng, L. 2019. On the interaction between modals and aspects. *English Linguistics* 35, 241-260. [8] de Swart, H. 1998. Aspect shift and coercion. *NLLT* 16, 347-385. [9] Michaelis, L. Stative by construction. *Linguistics* 49, 1359-1399. [10] Chief, L. 2007. Scalarity and incomplete event descriptions in Mandarin Chinese. PhD thesis, SUNY Buffalo. [11] Ramchand, G. 2008. *Verb meaning and the lexicon*. Cambridge: CUP. [12] Travis, L. *Inner aspect*. Dordrecht: Springer. [13] Sybesma, R. Voice and little v and VO-OV word-order variation in Chinese languages. *Syntax* 24, 44-77. [14] Wurmbbrand, S. 2014. Tense and aspect in English infinitives. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45, 403-447. [15] Boogaart, R. Aspect and Aktionsart. In G. Booij et al. (eds.), *Morphology*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 1165-1180.

Know of Variable Coercion Effects in other languages? Want to talk further about Aspect & Comparative Syntax?

Please get in touch!



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## Continuative aspect

- ♦ Continuative ('not stop')—Durative input condition, i.e., [-Asp1·] or [-V·]
- ♦ Achievements incompatible (MC mài diào 卖掉 'sell off' / D verkopen 'sell')

- (1) 他继续卖掉蛋糕。 Tā jìxù mài diào dàngāo. (3) Hij bleef taart verkopen. 3SG continue sell.off cake he kept cake sell 'He kept selling cakes.' 'He kept selling cake.'
- (2) #他卖下去蛋糕。 #Tā mài diào -xiaqu dàngāo. (4) #Hij verkocht taart door. 3SG sell.off -CONT cake he sold cake CONT

- Coercion (iterative/preparatory)
- No coercion possible

? Where are -xiaqu 下去 and -door in the structure, relative to jìxù 继续 and blijven?

## Complementary distribution with [Asp1P]

- ♦ Resultative elements in Asp1<sup>0</sup> (MC cā-gān 擦干, D droog-wrijven 'wipe dry')

- (5) 他继续擦干玻璃。 Tā jìxù cā -gān bōli. (7) dat hij het glas bleef droog-wrijven. 3SG continue wipe-dry glass that he the glass kept dry-wipe 'He kept wiping the glass dry.' 'He kept wiping the glass dry.'
- (6) 他擦(\*干)下去玻璃。 Tā cā- (\*gān-)xiaqu bōli. (8) dat hij het glas door- (\*droog-)wreef 3SG wipe-dry- CONT glass that he the glass CONT- dry- wiped 'He kept wiping the glass (\*dry)!' 'that he kept wiping the glass (\*dry).'

► -xiaqu and door- merge directly above VP

## LOP, bǎ 把 and object/particle climbing

- ♦ Locality diagnostics show that jìxù 继续 and blijven have access to the [V—v] zone:

- (9) Long Object Promotion (LOP): bèi > jìxù (5), [14] (10) Bǎ 把 = little v-head: bǎ > jìxù (3), [13] 这首歌被他们继续唱。 Zhè shǒu gē bèi tāmen jìxù chàng. Tā bǎ bōli jìxù cā-gān. this CLF song PASS 3PL continue singing 3SG BA glass continue wipe-dry 'This song was continued to be sung by them.' 'He kept wiping the glass dry.'

- (11) Object climbing obligatory; Particle climbing optional dat hij <de kamer> <op> bleef <\*de kamer> <op> ruimen that he the room up kept the room up tidy 'that he kept tidying up the room.'

► blijven and jìxù (may) merge below Voice/vP

## Prospective aspect

- ♦ Prospective ('about to')—Telic/Punctual input condition, i.e., [-Asp2·]
- ♦ Activities incompatible (MC zǒulù 走路 'walk' / D lopen 'walk')

- (12) 他就要走路。 Tā jiùyào zǒulù. (14) Hij stond op het punt om te lopen. 3SG PROSP walk he stood on the point COMPL to walk 'He's about to walk.' 'He was about to walk.'
- (13) #他快走走了。 #Tā kuài zǒulù-le. (15) #Hij stond op lopen. 3SG PROSP walk-PRF he stood on walk

- Coercion (onset reading)
- No coercion possible

? Where are kuài 快 and op...lopen in the structure, relative to jiùyào 就要 and op het punt staan?

## Long Object Promotion

- ♦ Locality diagnostic shows that kuài 快 but not jiùyào 就要 has access to the [V—v] zone:

- (17) LOP: %bèi > kuài 天鸿大学还真的是被他们快掏空了? (online) Tiānhóng dàxué hái zhēnshì bèi tāmen kuài tāokōng-le? Tianhong university still really PASS 3PL PROSP empty.out-PRF 'Is Tianhong University really about to be completely wiped out by them?'

► kuài (may) merge below Voice/vP

- (18) LOP: \*bèi > jiùyào 汽车《就要》被他们《\*就要》毁坏了。 Qìchē <jiùyào> bèi tāmen <\*jiùyào> huǐhuài-le. car PROSP PASS 3PL PROSP destroy-PRF 'The car was about to be destroyed by them.'

► jiùyào must merge above Voice/vP

## Wh-intervention effects

- ♦ Cheng (2019) argues that having a low outer aspect position limits the reading of 'how' wh-words (e.g., MC zěnmě 怎么, D hoe): manner is blocked, only causal question. [7]

- (19) Hoe staat zij op bevallen? X Manner how stands she on give.birth ✓ Causal
- (20) Hoe staat zij op het punt te bevallen? ✓ Manner how stands she on the point to give.birth ✓ Causal 'How is she about to give birth?'

► below Voice/vP

► above Voice/vP

## Proposal

- ♦ Variable coercion effects don't correlate with the v-boundary
- ♦ Extra distinction needed within the [v-V] domain to derive effects from Syntax (no phase edge claim!)



- **Proposal** Non-coercers are viewpoint-aspectual projections merged in the inner aspect domain
  - ♦ Generalization of Sybesma's (2021) treatment of perfective -le了 [13]
  - ♦ Restatement of classic idea that aspectual particles = Aktionsart [15]

► **Outer aspect:** s-selection permits coercion ► **Inner aspect:** c-selection blocks coercion