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The morpho-syntax of aspect in Xiāng Chinese

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Citation

Lu, M. (2017, September 28). *The morpho-syntax of aspect in Xiāng Chinese*. LOT, Utrecht.
Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/57993>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Title: The morpho-syntax of aspect in Xiāng Chinese

Issue Date: 2017-09-28

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The Morpho-Syntax of Aspect in Xiāng Chinese

This thesis investigates the morpho-syntax of the aspectual system in one variety of Xiāng (namely: Chángshā), which is one of the ten sub-families of Chinese (which are Mandarin, Xiāng, Gàn, Wú, Yuè, Hakka, Mǐn, Pínghuà, Jīn, and Huī).

Two of the idiosyncratic properties in Xiāng Chinese is that one aspect marker is used to express more than one meaning or that more than one element is used to express one aspectual meaning. I base my analysis on the assumption that inner aspect in Xiāng is a three-layered structure: Asp3P, Asp2P and Asp1P.

I focus my investigating on two aspect particles, *ta*²¹ and *ka*⁴¹. Different from previous approaches, I propose a two-particle approach to deal with the multifunction of *ta*²¹. I argue that we have two particles sharing the same morphological form: *ta*²¹_{PERF} and *ta*²¹_{PROG}. The difference between the two particles lies in the different syntactic positions they occupy. I also point out that *ka*⁴¹ should not be treated as a perfective marker as it is previously proposed to be. Instead, I suggest that descriptively, *ka*⁴¹ doubles the already existing endpoint and that it does so to make the endpoint definitive. *ka*⁴¹ is used to block further access to the activity preceding the lexical endpoint (for example, such event cannot be present in the progressive). In the end, I point out that in Chángshā and Xiāng in general, all three Inner aspect positions can be lexically realized. *ta*²¹_{PERF} occupies Asp3°; *ka*⁴¹ and *ta*²¹_{PROG} occupies Asp2°; and a lexical result predicate may be located in Asp1° position.

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ISBN 978-94-6093-249-6



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Linguistics

Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap