

## Aspect marking in the Jieyang dialect

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### Abstract

Tense and aspect are all concerned with the temporal dimensions of verb phrases. However, they differ from each other in their semantic focus. Tense relates an event or the occurrence of a situation<sup>1</sup> to the moment of speaking or to some other situation and is thus deictic. Aspect, on the other hand, makes reference to the properties of situations themselves, that is, it is concerned with “the internal temporal ‘structure’ of a situation” (Payne, 1999: 234). It is a known fact that in Sinitic languages, tense is not a grammatically encoded category but there are rich aspectual systems.

This paper presents a synchronic description and analysis of aspectual marking in one of the Southern Min varieties in the Sinitic language family, the Jieyang dialect<sup>2</sup>, which belongs to a set of dialects collectively known as the Chaoshan dialect (also known as ‘Ch’ao-chou’, ‘Tiechiew’, ‘Swatow’ and ‘Shan-t’ou’, etc.) spoken in the eastern part of Guangdong province in the People’s Republic of China. Although the aspectual categories identified in the Jieyang dialect are similar to other Sinitic languages, this paper will show that the syntactic means to express the different aspectual viewpoints, the range of meanings they possess and thus their scope of use can be different. Furthermore, the paper will also demonstrate that some aspectual markers in the Jieyang dialect are to a less extent grammaticalised than those of the official language, Mandarin.

**Key words:** aspect, bounded, unbounded, situation type, grammaticalization

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<sup>1</sup> Situation is used by Comrie (1976) as a cover term to refer to states, events and processes. Smith (1991, 1994) uses it in a similar way, referring it to the verb and its arguments, adverbials and other syntactic elements, which yield different situation types. I follow both Comrie and Smith in using ‘situation’ to refer to states and events, with the later including activities, processes etc

<sup>2</sup> The data for analysis comes from two sources, the bulk of it is introspective while another source is from natural conversations by native speakers recorded by the author

## 1. Introduction

The discussion of aspect is often carried out in terms of ‘perfective vs. imperfective’. If a situation is presented as an unanalysable whole, without beginning or end points, it is said to be perfective whereas if only part of a situation is presented, it is said to be imperfective (see Comrie, 1976; Dahl, 1985; Chung and Timberlake, 1985; Smith, 1994). The term ‘perfective’ should be distinguished from ‘perfect’ (Comrie, 1976:12), because ‘perfective’ contrasts with ‘imperfective’ and denotes a situation in its entirety, while ‘perfect’ refers to a past situation that has current relevance.

However, Chappell (1989) proposes that the basic division for the category of aspect be divided into bounded and unbounded. Bounded aspect refers to markers which ‘encode that the event or state of affairs has either a definite beginning or endpoint’ while unbounded aspect refers to markers which ‘have neither a limit placed on duration nor definite beginning or endpoints’ (p.96). Such a division enables the classification of inchoatives under the bounded aspect because it typically marks the beginning of a new state of affairs or an event.

Closely related to aspectual distinctions are situation types which refer to the constellation of the main verb, its arguments, adverbials and other syntactic elements (Smith, 1994: 107). Situation types are distinguished by a cluster of conceptual temporal properties such as static vs. dynamic, durative vs. instantaneous, telic vs. atelic. Based on these distinctions, Smith (ibid: 29) identifies five common situation types which are schematised below:

Features of the situation types:

Situation	Static	Durative	Telic
States	[+]	[+]	[-]
Activity	[-]	[+]	[-]
Accomplishment	[-]	[+]	[+]
Semelfactive	[-]	[+]	[-]
Achievement	[-]	[-]	[+]

The following shows the taxonomy of the situation types and examples of Mandarin provided by Smith (1994):

<u>Situation types</u>	<u>Semantic features</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Activity	dynamic, atelic, durative	<i>zǒu</i> ‘walk’, <i>tīng</i> ‘listen’
Accomplishment	dynamic, telic, durative	<i>gài yī zuò qiáo</i> ‘build a bridge’
Semelfactive	dynamic, atelic, instantaneous	<i>tī</i> ‘kick’, <i>qiāo mén</i> ‘knock on the door’
Achievement	dynamic, telic, instantaneous	<i>dǎ-pò</i> ‘break’, <i>shuì-zháo</i> ‘fall asleep’
State	static, durative	<i>zhīdao</i> ‘know’, <i>gāoxìng</i> ‘happy’

In this paper, I adopt the above situation types and examine the aspectual distinctions in the Jieyang dialect under the dichotomy of bounded and unbounded aspect proposed by Chappell (1989). Thus, under the bounded aspect, there are four main categories in the Jieyang dialect: the Perfective<sup>3</sup>(PERF), the Inchoative(INC), the Experiential(EXP), the Delimitative(DEL) and the Tentative(TEN), while under the unbounded aspect, there are two categories: the Progressive(PROG) and the Continuous(CONT). Apart from these grammatical categories, the Jieyang dialect, like other Sinitic languages, employs verbal complements to express the completion/terminative phrase of an event or action. When so function, they are referred to as phase markers (see Chao, 1968: 446-447). What’s more, it also uses the existential verb and its negative form to affirm and deny the occurrence of an event or action. Such a usage, which expresses modality apart from aspect (see Tsao, 1998), is common among the Min dialect group.

The organisation of the paper is as follows: in §2, I look at each of the categories under the bounded aspect as well as other means, such as verbal complements and

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<sup>3</sup> I use an initial capital for these semantic concepts to refer to the aspectual categories in the Jieyang dialect while not using an initial capital for the ‘language independent semantic distinctions’, following the convention established by Comrie (1976).

auxiliaries in coding the perfective meaning. In §3, discussion is concerned with the Progressive and the Continuous which come under the unbounded aspect. The final section, §4, is the summary and conclusion.

## 2. The bounded aspect

### 2.1 The Perfective aspect

The perfective aspect encodes the totality of a situation referred to without reference to its internal temporal constituency (see Comrie, 1976:3). In the Jieyang dialect, the perfective aspect can be coded by different means, which include a grammaticalized marker, lexical verbal complements as well as auxiliaries, as mentioned above. In the ensuing sections, we look at each of these strategies in turn.

#### 2.1.1 The Perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup> <sup>4</sup>

The formal marker of the Perfective aspect in the Jieyang dialect is *liau*<sup>53</sup>, which evolves from and exists alongside the lexical form *liau*<sup>53</sup>, a postverbal resultative complement meaning ‘finish’ (as in ‘*tsiak*<sup>52</sup> *liau*<sup>53</sup>’ - ‘eat up’ and ‘*eng*<sup>11</sup> *liau*<sup>53</sup>’ - ‘use up’). The grammaticalized marker *liau*<sup>53</sup> is cognate with the perfective aspect marker *le* in Mandarin which is claimed to have evolved from the verb *liao* ‘to finish’ (Wang Li, 1980).

Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup> can appear in two positions in the sentence: (i) in post-verbal position in independent clauses (the verb here is taken to include compounds), and (ii) in clause-final position of a subordinate clause in a complex sentence. For the convenience of description and distinction, verb-final *liau*<sup>53</sup> in a single clause is transcribed as *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> and that in a subordinate clause as *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>. In cases where the verb is an intransitive verb that takes no other arguments, the marker *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> naturally occurs sentence-finally. In this sentence-final position, it is phonologically reduced to *lau*<sup>213</sup>, which will be transcribed as such. This sentence-final perfective *lau*<sup>213</sup> should be distinguished from the homophonous sentence-final particle *lau*<sup>213</sup> which expresses current relevant state (CRS)<sup>5</sup>, a notion similar to the English perfect. However, as it

<sup>4</sup> Tones are indicated with tone values rendered in numbers: citation tone is given first followed by the sandhi form. The two numerical values are separated by a hyphen.

<sup>5</sup> The term is adopted from Li and Thompson (1981).

will be shown, sometimes sentence-final *lau*<sup>213</sup> neutralises the perfective meaning as well as CRS.

#### 2.1.1.1 Verb-final Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub>

The perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> encodes the completion of an action or an event. It can occur with inherently bounded verbs such as ‘get up’, ‘(fire) go out’, as in (1) to (2). Note that in the presence of a past temporal expression as in (1), the marker *lau*<sup>53</sup> typically encodes completion while in (2), the marker conflates the perfective meaning as well as CRS.

- (1) i<sup>33</sup> t'arŋ<sup>55-11</sup> zak<sup>5</sup> tsau<sup>53-35</sup> k'i<sup>53-35</sup> lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 3sg just.now get.up PERF  
*She got up a moment ago.*
- (2) kai<sup>55-11</sup> lou<sup>55</sup> kue<sup>213</sup> lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 CL stove extinguished PERF/CRS  
*The stove had gone out.*

*liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>su</sub> can also modify semantically durative activity verbs such as those in (3)-(5). However, quantified phrases which specify the quantity of the direct object; the frequency of the occurrence of the activity; the duration of the activity and the extent of the process must be used to delimit the durative process, making the whole situation presented semantically closed:

- (3) ua<sup>53</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup> tou<sup>55-11</sup> tsur<sup>33</sup> kuaŋ<sup>53</sup> t'oi<sup>53-35</sup> liau<sup>53-213</sup> sã<sup>33</sup>  
 1sg at library read PERF three  
**huŋ<sup>11</sup> po<sup>213-53</sup> tsua<sup>53</sup>**  
 CL newspaper  
*I read three newspapers in the library.* (quantified object)
- (4) i<sup>33</sup> naŋ<sup>55-11</sup> kim<sup>33</sup> zek<sup>5</sup> sio<sup>33</sup> me<sup>11</sup> liau<sup>53-35</sup> kui<sup>53-35</sup> tsua<sup>11</sup>  
 3pl today argue PERF several times  
*They argued several times today.* (frequency)

- (5) ua<sup>53</sup>    taŋ<sup>53:35</sup>    liau<sup>53:35</sup>    puã<sup>213-53</sup>    kai<sup>55-11</sup>    tseŋ<sup>33</sup>t'ou<sup>55</sup>  
 1sg    wait    PERF    half    CL    hour  
*I waited for almost half an hour.* (duration)
- (6) kai<sup>55-11</sup>    nou<sup>55-11</sup>kiã<sup>53</sup>    kim<sup>33</sup>    ni<sup>55</sup>    kuĩ<sup>55-11</sup>    liau<sup>53:35</sup>    ho?    tsoi<sup>11</sup>  
 CL    child    this    year    tall    PERF    very    much  
*The child grew a lot this year.* (extent)

In (7) below, the verb belongs to the Semelfactive situation type. Although it is instantaneous in terms of its internal temporal structure, it is often used in its iterative sense, that is, the event is often interpreted as repeated events rather than as a single event. Verbs of this type also need to be delimited by quantified phrases:

- (7) ua<sup>53</sup>    ka<sup>33</sup>sau<sup>213-53</sup>    liau<sup>53:35</sup>    tsek<sup>52</sup>    me<sup>55</sup>,    kim<sup>33</sup>zek<sup>5</sup>    kai<sup>55-11</sup>  
 1sg    cough    PERF    one    night,    today    CL  
 au<sup>55</sup>    t'iaŋ<sup>213-53</sup>    si<sup>53</sup>  
 throat    sore    die  
*I coughed a whole night and my throat is terribly sore today.*

With VO constructions such as 'tsiak<sup>52</sup>-huŋ<sup>33</sup>' (lit. 'eat-cigarette=to smoke') and 'kaɿ<sup>52</sup>huŋ<sup>33</sup>' (lit. 'tie-marriage'= get married'), the perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> occurs after the compound. This differs from its functional equivalents *le* in Mandarin or *tso* in Cantonese which can be inserted between the V and the O element, as (8b) and (8c) show.

- (8) "They got married last year."  
 a. i<sup>33</sup>naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>    ku<sup>55-11</sup>ni<sup>55</sup>    kaɿ<sup>52</sup>huŋ<sup>33</sup>    lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
          3pl    last.year    get.married    PERF    (Jieyang)  
 b. tamen    qunian    jie    le    hun  
          3pl    last.year    tie    PFV<sup>6</sup>    marriage    (Mandarin)  
 c. keuihdeih    kau nin    git-jo-fan  
          3pl    last.year    marry-PFV-marriage    (Cantonese)

<sup>6</sup> PFV represents 'perfective'.

The examples in (8) show that in the Jieyang dialect, VO constructions such as ‘tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-hup<sup>33</sup>’ and ‘ka<sup>5-2</sup>-hup<sup>33</sup>’ are treated more as inseparable compounds whereas in Mandarin or Cantonese, they function as VO phrase in this context, as commented by Li and Thompson, separability by other constituents is one of the main criteria for distinguishing a VO compound from a VO phrase (1981:73).

The possibility of using the Perfective marker after the O element in the VO compound in the Jieyang dialect reflects the preservation of a feature of Middle Chinese. According to Cheung (1977:56), [verb-object-liao] was a common construction marking perfective aspect in the Bianwen, which are records of religious sermons and folk stories dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also noted in Mei Tsu-lin (1978:9) that the fronting process of ‘liao’ to postverbal position was completed in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. It can thus be said that the perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> in the Jieyang dialect has not yet grammaticalised as a post-verbal suffix, unlike *le* in Mandarin or *jo* in Cantonese.

As [Verb + *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub>] in single clauses marks the cessation of an event prior to the moment of speaking, it typically leads to a past time interpretation. However, the perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> is by no means a past tense marker. The strongest piece of evidence is that it can be used in irrealis contexts such as in conditional clauses:

- (9)    lɯ<sup>53</sup>    na<sup>35-21</sup>    tsiak<sup>5</sup>    liau<sup>53-35</sup>    tsio<sup>53-35</sup>    ioʔ<sup>5</sup>    hã<sup>33</sup>    mo<sup>53</sup>  
          2sg    if        eat       PERF    this        medicine    still    not.good
- naŋ<sup>53</sup>    tsu<sup>35-21</sup>    tsai<sup>53-35</sup>    uã<sup>11</sup>    pak<sup>2</sup>meɿ<sup>2-3</sup>    ioʔ<sup>5</sup>  
          1pl<sub>incl</sub>    then    again    change    other        medicine
- If you find that there is no improvement after taking this medicine, then we will change to other medicines.*

#### 2.1.1.2 Sentence-final *lau*<sup>53</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that in verb final constructions, the Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>suf</sub> naturally occur at the end of the sentence and is phonologically reduced to *lau*<sup>53</sup> (see examples 1-2 above). If the sentence does not have an overt past time expressions, *lau*<sup>53</sup> conflates the perfective meaning as well as CRS, as in (2) above. In other words,

not only does it encode a completed event, it also indicates that this completed event has current relevance (as the range of meanings of CRS expressed by *liau*<sup>53</sup> is similar to those in Mandarin, readers are referred to Li and Thompson 1981 for detailed discussion). For example, in (10), speaker A invited speaker B to have dinner with them but B indicated to the host that ‘he has eaten’, whose current relevance can be: ‘I am full’, ‘I cannot join you for dinner’ or ‘Please go ahead with your meal’ etc. (note that ‘tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-puŋ<sup>11</sup>’ = ‘eat-cooked.rice’, is used intransitively where the O element is interpreted as non-actual and non-specific. It can therefore be omitted):

- (10) A: lai<sup>55-11</sup> kaɿ<sup>2-3</sup> uaŋ<sup>53-35</sup> tso<sup>213-53</sup>tseɿ<sup>2</sup> tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-(puŋ<sup>11</sup>)  
 come with 1pl together eat-(cooked.rice)  
*Come and eat with us.*
- B: ua<sup>53</sup> tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-(puŋ<sup>11</sup>) lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 come eat-(cooked.rice) PERF / CRS  
*I have eaten.*

### 2.1.1.3 Clause-final Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>

Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub> occurs at the end of a subordinate clause followed by a matrix clause. The construction [clause<sub>1</sub> *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>] + [clause<sub>2</sub>] represents two successive events and *liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub> marks the boundedness of the first event because the second event will only happen after the first event has eventuated. In other words, by being followed by the subsequent event(s), the first event is semantically presented as one that has an end point. For example,

- (11) i<sup>33</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup> kuŋ<sup>53-35</sup>tsiu<sup>33</sup> t'ak<sup>5-2</sup> sā<sup>33</sup> ni<sup>55-11</sup> tsu<sup>33</sup> **liau**<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>  
 3sg at Guangzhou study three year book PERF
- tsiã<sup>213-53</sup> ku<sup>213-53</sup> paɿ<sup>2-5</sup>kiã<sup>33</sup>  
 then go Beijing  
*He went to Beijing after studying for three years in Guangzhou..*



*liau*<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub> can also be used in future time contexts, which is another piece of evidence that the perfective marker is not a past tense marker (since tense is not grammatically coded in Sinitic languages):

- (12) tsau<sup>53:35</sup>k'i<sup>53:35</sup>    **liau**<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>    soi<sup>53:35</sup>    meŋ<sup>11</sup>,    soi<sup>53:35</sup>    meŋ<sup>11</sup>    **liau**<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>  
 get.up                  PERF    wash    face    wash    face    PERF
- tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>    mue<sup>55</sup>,    tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>    mue<sup>55</sup>    **liau**<sup>53</sup><sub>sub</sub>    tsiã<sup>213-53</sup>    ts'u<sup>2</sup>  
 eat    porridge    eat    porridge    PERF    then    out
- k'u<sup>213-53</sup>  
 go
- After getting up, wash your face; after washing your face, eat the porridge; after eating the porridge then go out.*  
 (from Cai Junming, 1991: 302)

#### 2.1.1.4 Resultative verb complements expressing completive meaning

Resultative verb complements (RVC) are post verbal lexical elements such as adjectives and verbs which indicate the result state of the action as represented by the verb. For example, 'mue<sup>55-2</sup>-p'ua<sup>213</sup>' ('make-broken'), 'tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-pa<sup>53</sup>' ('eat-full') and 'tui<sup>53:35</sup>-tek<sup>5</sup>' ('pull-straight' [of wires]) are verb-complement compounds. When serving as RVCs, the lexical meanings of such adjectives are quite transparent. However, RVCs can also serve as phase markers or phase complements (see Chao, 1968: 446) which indicate the phase of an action. As RVCs mainly indicate the completive or terminative phase of an action, thus presenting an event as a bounded one, they code the perfective meanings. Compare the following pair which illustrate the use of the same morpheme functioning as a lexical RVC in one context, (13a), and a phase marker as in (13b) (note that *kai*<sup>55-11</sup>-*i*<sup>33</sup> in 13a is a pre-verbal object marker which codes the affectedness of the direct object in the pretransitive construction. See Xu, 2005):

- (13) a. tia<sup>55-11</sup> tia<sup>35-21</sup>-su<sup>213</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup>-i<sup>33</sup> **mue<sup>52</sup>-tek<sup>5</sup>** ne<sup>11</sup>  
 CL electric-wire PRET-3sg make-straight PRT  
*Straighten the electric wire!*
- b. ki<sup>35-21</sup> su<sup>11</sup> tio<sup>5-2</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup>-i<sup>33</sup> **mue<sup>52</sup>-tek<sup>5</sup>** ne<sup>11</sup>  
 CL matter should PRET-3sg make-straight PRT  
*(You) should sort the matter out (Lit. 'You should straighten the matter').*

RVCs which are commonly used to express completive and terminative meanings in the Jieyang dialect include **ho<sup>53</sup>** ('good', 'finish'), **uaŋ<sup>55</sup>** ('complete', 'finish'), **tek<sup>5</sup>** ('straight', 'finish') and **liau<sup>53</sup>** ('finish')<sup>7</sup>. All of them are synonymous, sharing the meaning of 'finish', but **uaŋ<sup>55</sup>** ('complete', 'finish') and **liau<sup>53</sup>** ('finish') can also mean complete consumption of things. For example in (14), **ho<sup>53</sup>**, **tek<sup>5</sup>** and **uaŋ<sup>55</sup>** are interchangeable but not with **liau<sup>53</sup>** while in (15), **liau<sup>53</sup>** and **uaŋ<sup>55</sup>** are interchangeable but not with **ho<sup>53</sup>** and **tek<sup>5</sup>**.

- (14) ki<sup>35-21</sup> su<sup>11</sup> **pai<sup>11</sup>-** **ho<sup>53</sup> / tek<sup>5</sup> / uaŋ<sup>55</sup> / \*liau<sup>53</sup>** lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 CL matter do- RVC CRS  
*The matter has been seen to.*
- (15) ko<sup>213-53</sup> iam<sup>55</sup> **ej<sup>11</sup>-** **liau<sup>53</sup> / uaŋ<sup>55</sup> / \*ho<sup>53</sup> / \*tek<sup>5</sup>** lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 CL salt use RVC CRS  
*[We] have used up the salt.*

In addition to the adjectival RVCs, another common phase marker worth mentioning is the movement verb **k'u<sup>213</sup>** 'to go' which can be used to encode the endpoint of an activity. For example, in (16), the verb denotes a process but 'poi<sup>53</sup> k'u<sup>213-53</sup>' means that the buying process is completed and something is bought:

<sup>7</sup> The list of RVCs is by no means exhaustive. The attempt here is to illustrate the usage of RVCs as phase markers.

- (16) ts'oŋ<sup>2</sup>    tsu<sup>33</sup>    k'eŋ<sup>2</sup>    naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>    **boi<sup>53</sup>**    **k'u<sup>213-53</sup>**    lau<sup>53-213</sup>  
 CL    book    PASS    people    buy-    RVC    CRS  
*The books have been sold.*

Although not used in its primary sense 'to go', the deictic meaning of **k'u<sup>213</sup>** as a phase marker is still apparent, because it can only be used with verbs that denote 'disappearance' and extends from this meaning, 'adversity', which is why it is extensively used in the adverse passive in the Jieyang dialect. (See Matthews, Xu and Yip, 2005). As a result, having bought something which can only be considered a favourable thing cannot be coded by **k'u<sup>213</sup>** but is compatible with the Perfective marker **liau<sup>53</sup>**, as illustrated in (17):

- (17) i<sup>33</sup>    poi<sup>53-35</sup>    **liau<sup>53-35</sup>**<sub>suf</sub>    / (\* **k'u<sup>213-53</sup>**)<sup>8</sup>    kui<sup>53-35</sup>    puŋ<sup>53-35</sup>    tsu<sup>33</sup>  
 3sg    buy    PERF    / (\* RVC)    several    CL    book  
*S/he bought several books*

#### 2.1.1.5 **u<sup>35</sup>** / **bo<sup>55</sup>** and the perfective aspect

**u<sup>35</sup>** is the existential / possessive verb while **bo<sup>55</sup>** is its negative counterpart. Apart from their lexical uses, **u<sup>35</sup>** and **bo<sup>55</sup>** can be used before a VP to assert or deny the occurrence of a specific and completed event in which case they serve as auxiliaries. The affirmative **u<sup>35</sup>** is translatable into English 'did' in its emphatic use. This function of **u<sup>35</sup>** is commonly found in Southern Min dialects (see Tsao Feng-fu, 1998 for discussion on aspectual markers in Taiwanese Southern Min):

- (18) ua<sup>53</sup>    kim<sup>33</sup>zek<sup>5</sup>    **u<sup>35-21</sup>**    k'u<sup>213-53</sup>    tsio<sup>35-21</sup>paŋ<sup>33</sup>  
 1sg    today    have    go    work  
*I went to work today.*
- (19) ua<sup>53</sup>    **u<sup>35-21</sup>**    kio<sup>213</sup>    i<sup>33-11</sup>,    i<sup>33</sup>    tã<sup>213-53</sup>    bo<sup>55-11</sup>paŋ<sup>213-53</sup>    lai<sup>55</sup>  
 1sg    have    call    go    3sg    say    cannot    come  
*I did ask him, but he said he couldn't come.*

<sup>8</sup> Following linguistic conventions, an astrix before a word/phase or sentence indicates its ungrammaticality.

We can say that [ $u^{35}$  /  $bo^{55}$  + VP] presents a bounded event and is thus similar in function to  $liau^{53}_{suf}$  in indicating the perfective viewpoint. However, the two differ in one important respect, that of modality: [VP+  $liau^{53}_{suf}$ ] is void of any modality as it neutrally reports a bounded event, whereas [ $u^{35}$  /  $bo^{55}$  + VP] expresses the speaker's subjective view on whether or not the activity or event is a reality.

## 2.2 The Inchoative aspect

The inchoative aspect 'expresses the onset of an action or state of affairs' (Chappell, 1989:105) and the continuation of it. In the Jieyang dialect, there are three markers coding these meanings: the first one is the disyllabic form  $k'i^{53}lai^{55}$  which is also a lexical verb meaning 'arise', as well as a post-verbal directional complement showing the upward direction of a motion. As an inchoative aspect marker<sup>9</sup>,  $k'i^{53}lai^{55}$  modifies dynamic verbs as well as stative verbs. The second marker is the Perfective  $liau^{53}$ , which is only used with stative verbs and adjectives and expresses inception of a new state. The third marker is  $k'u^{213}$ , derived from the movement verb 'to go' which encodes adverse change of state.

### 2.2.1 Verb + $k'i^{53}lai^{55}$

The use of  $k'i^{53}lai^{55}$  in encoding the initiation of an activity or state of affairs and its continuation is identical with Mandarin Chinese. The closest in meaning in English of Verb +  $k'i^{53}lai^{55}$  is 'when + verb, ...' or 'begin to + verb ...'. For example,

- (20)  $ki\tilde{a}^{35-21}$   $s\tilde{a}^{33}$   $ts'eq^{11}$   $k'i^{53-213}lai^{55-11}$   $ho^{?2}$   $ho^{53-35}t'oi^{53}$   
 CL shirt put.on INC very beautiful  
*The shirt looks quite good (on you) (ie, When the shirt is put on, it looks good on you).*

- (21)  $t'i^{33}si^{55}$   $tsek^2$   $zua^{?5}$   $k'i^{53-213}lai^{55-11}$   $hou^{55-11}sej^{55}$   $tsu^{35-21}$   $tsoi^{11}$   
 weather when hot INC fly then many  
*When the weather gets hot, there will be a lot of flies.*

<sup>9</sup> As this article is purely concerned with how different aspectual meanings are coded in the Jieyang dialect, other uses of will not be discussed here.

### 2.2.2 Stative verb + *liau*<sup>53</sup>

Chung and Timberlake (1986:216) point out that when the concept of semantic closure or boundedness is applied to state situations, it ‘implies a complete change of state, specifying inception rather than cessation’. They also note that many languages in the world use the perfective category to signal inception of a state. The Jieyang dialect conforms to this observation as the perfective marker *liau*<sup>53</sup> also interacts with stative verbs to indicate change of state. Consider (22) where (a) purely describes the general state of a certain road, perhaps a dirt road, but (b) is about a newly paved road: the cement has now dried up. The inception of a new state can also be said about (23b):

- (22) a tiau<sup>55-11</sup> lou<sup>11</sup> hoʔ<sup>2</sup> ta<sup>33</sup>  
CL road very dry  
*The road is very dry.*
- b tiau<sup>55-11</sup> lou<sup>11</sup> ta<sup>33</sup> **lau<sup>53-213</sup>**  
CL road dry PERF/CRS  
*The road has dried up.*
- (23) a kai<sup>55-11</sup> meŋ<sup>11</sup> aŋ<sup>55-11</sup> aŋ<sup>55</sup>  
CL face red red  
*(Her) face is very red.*
- b kai<sup>55-11</sup> meŋ<sup>11</sup> aŋ<sup>55-11</sup> **lau<sup>53-213</sup>**  
CL face red PERF/CRS  
*(Her) face has turned red.*

### 2.2.3 Stative verb + *k'u*<sup>213</sup>

In § 2.1.4, we describe the use of *k'u*<sup>213</sup> in coding the completive meaning with activity verbs. The inception of a new state can also be expressed by this verbal complement, as shown below,

- (24) a. si<sup>53</sup>- k'w<sup>213-53</sup>  
 dead- RVC  
*become dead*
- b. ou<sup>53</sup>- k'w<sup>213-53</sup>  
 black- RVC  
*turned black*

Similar to its completive usage with activity verbs which denotes pejorative meaning, the use of **k'u<sup>213</sup>** after adjectives denotes an adverse change of state, which meaning is not necessarily implied in the construction of [adjective / stative verb + **liau<sup>53</sup>**], as shown in § 2.2.2. As such, adjectives and stative verbs which denote favourable meanings are not used with **k'u<sup>213</sup>** but with **liau<sup>53</sup>**. For example,

- (25) a.. 'became alive'  
 \* uaŋ<sup>5</sup>- **k'u<sup>213-53</sup>** → uaŋ<sup>5</sup> **liau<sup>53-213</sup>**  
 alive- RVC alive PERF
- b. 'remembered'  
 \* eŋ<sup>2</sup>tek<sup>2</sup>- **k'u<sup>213-53</sup>** → eŋ<sup>2</sup>tek<sup>2</sup> **liau<sup>53-213</sup>**  
 remember RVC remember PERF

Furthermore, the change of state encoded by **k'u<sup>213</sup>** is also seen as caused by a prior action or event, which may or may not be overtly expressed in the sentence. For example,

- (26) maŋ<sup>11</sup>au<sup>35</sup> tsu<sup>35-21</sup> huaŋ<sup>2</sup>heŋ<sup>11</sup> tã<sup>213-53</sup> ko<sup>213-53</sup> p'ue<sup>55</sup>  
 later then discover COMP CL skin  
 tso<sup>213-53</sup>ni<sup>55-11</sup> k'eŋ<sup>2</sup>- i<sup>33</sup> **peŋ<sup>5</sup>- k'u<sup>213-53</sup>**  
 why PASS-3sg white- RVC  
*Later, I suddenly discovered that the skin [on my elbow] had turned white.*
- (27) k'aŋ<sup>2-3</sup> ku<sup>53-35</sup> bo<sup>55-11</sup> naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>k'eŋ<sup>2</sup> tsu<sup>35-21</sup> k'eŋ<sup>2</sup>- i<sup>33</sup>  
 too long not.have guest the PASS -3sg  
 m<sup>35-21</sup> tsai<sup>33</sup> loŋ<sup>2-3</sup> zioŋ<sup>2-3</sup>tsoi<sup>11</sup> bi<sup>53</sup> **k'u<sup>213-53</sup>**  
 not know put how.much rice RVC  
*Because (we) hadn't had guests for a long time, I forgot (ie, became not knowing) how much rice to cook (for lunch).*

Note that in the above two examples, *k'eʔ²* is the passive marker and *i³³* is the third person singular pronoun. Together, they serve as an overt marker for unaccusativity in the Jieyang dialect (see Matthews, Xu and Yip, 2005).

### 2.3 The Experiential aspect

The experiential aspect indicates that ‘a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present’ (Comrie, 1976:58). Sinitic languages mark the experiential aspect formally. Smith (1994:116) defines the experiential aspect of Mandarin as ascribing to a subject ‘the property of having experienced the event, rather than presenting the event directly’. Other linguists have also described the experiential aspect along the lines of a general experience, as Cheung (1994:275) points out, the English meaning of ‘ever’ or its negative form ‘never’ underscores the ‘experiential nature of an action’.

In contrast to Mandarin and many other Sinitic varieties, but similar to other Southern Min dialects such as Xiamen and Taiwanese, the vernacular Jieyang employs a pre-verbal marker *pak²* to mark the Experiential aspect. *pak²* exists along the lexical form which means ‘to know’ as in (28a):

- |      |    |                        |                  |                    |    |                                       |                  |                   |                    |
|------|----|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| (28) | a. | ua <sup>53</sup>       | pak <sup>2</sup> | i <sup>33-11</sup> | b. | ua <sup>53</sup>                      | pak <sup>2</sup> | ka <sup>213</sup> | i <sup>33-11</sup> |
|      |    | 1sg                    | know             | 3sg                |    | 1sg                                   | EXP              | teach             | 3sg                |
|      |    | <i>I know her/him.</i> |                  |                    |    | <i>I had taught her/him (before).</i> |                  |                   |                    |

However, due to borrowing from Mandarin, the Jieyang dialect also adopts the strategy by using a post-verbal marker *kue<sup>213</sup>*, cognate with the Mandarin experiential marker *guo*. Like *guo* in Mandarin, *kue<sup>213</sup>* has grammaticalised from a lexical form which can be a verb meaning ‘to cross’, as in ‘kue<sup>213</sup> kio<sup>55</sup>’ (‘to cross the bridge’); ‘to spend time’, as in ‘kue<sup>213</sup> me<sup>55</sup>’ (‘to stay overnight (at a place)’) or as a preposition meaning ‘across/pass’, as in ‘kiã<sup>55</sup> kue<sup>53-35</sup> kio<sup>55</sup>’ (‘walk pass the bridge’).

The *pak²* and the *kue<sup>213</sup>* forms can also combine to produce a hybridised form. Thus, in the Jieyang dialect, there are three ways to mark the Experiential aspect:

- (i) *pak*<sup>2</sup> + VP
- (ii) verb + *kue*<sup>213</sup>
- (iii) *pak*<sup>2</sup> + verb + *kue*<sup>213</sup>

The three forms can all be used to express the prototypical ‘experiential’ meaning of ‘a past experience’ involving an animate subject and to encode that an event involving an inanimate subject has taken place at least once. For example,

(29) A: ‘Have you been to this place?’

- a. *lu*<sup>53</sup> *pak*<sup>23</sup> *k’u*<sup>213-53</sup> *tsi*<sup>53-35</sup> *kai*<sup>55-11</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *hu*<sup>33</sup> *me*<sup>11</sup>  
2sg EXP go this CL place QPRT
- b. *lu*<sup>53</sup> *k’u*<sup>213-53</sup> *kue*<sup>213-53</sup> *tsi*<sup>53-35</sup> *kai*<sup>55-11</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *hu*<sup>33</sup> *me*<sup>11</sup>  
2sg go EXP this CL place QPRT
- c. *lu*<sup>53</sup> *pak*<sup>23</sup> *k’u*<sup>213-53</sup> *kue*<sup>213-53</sup> *tsi*<sup>53-35</sup> *kai*<sup>55-11</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *hu*<sup>33</sup>  
2sg EXP go EXP CL CL place  
  
*me*<sup>11</sup>  
QPRT

B: ‘Yes.’

- a. *pak*<sup>23</sup> (*k’u*<sup>213</sup>)  
EXP go
- b. *k’u*<sup>213-53</sup> *kue*<sup>213-53</sup>  
go EXP
- c. *pak*<sup>23</sup> (*k’u*<sup>213</sup>) (*kue*<sup>213-53</sup>)  
EXP (go) (EXP)

(30) ‘There has been an earthquake here.’

- a. *sio*<sup>53-35</sup> *ko*<sup>213</sup> *pak*<sup>23</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *tseŋ*<sup>53</sup>  
here EXP earthquake
- b. *sio*<sup>53-35</sup> *ko*<sup>213</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *tseŋ*<sup>53</sup> *kue*<sup>213-53</sup>  
here earthquake EXP
- c. *sio*<sup>53-35</sup> *ko*<sup>213</sup> *pak*<sup>23</sup> *ti*<sup>11</sup> *tseŋ*<sup>53</sup> *kue*<sup>213-53</sup>  
here EXP earthquake EXP



The above examples show that the three forms are functional equivalents. However, as can be seen from (29c), the native marker **pak<sup>2</sup>** can be used alone as an answer while the borrowed form **kue<sup>213</sup>** is a verbal suffix. Chappell (1992:84) classifies bat<sup>1</sup>, a cognate and a functional equivalent in Min-Xiamen to **pak<sup>2</sup>** in the Jieyang dialect, as an adverb. However, based on the fact that an adverb cannot stand on its own, **pak<sup>2</sup>** cannot be treated as an adverb here. It is a syntactic strategy to code the Experiential but not yet fully grammaticalised.

The borrowed form **kue<sup>213</sup>**, like its cognate form [verb+ guo] in Mandarin, can also encode ‘inferential evidence’ about a prior event based on an observable state of affairs, which is referred to by Chappell as the inferential type of the evidential (2001b:68). For example, (31a) can be uttered in a context in which the speaker discovered that her books were not in the order she had arranged before:

- (31) a. ko<sup>213-53</sup> tsu<sup>33</sup> ti<sup>11</sup>tiaŋ<sup>55-11</sup> t’aŋ<sup>35</sup> **kue<sup>213-53</sup>**?  
 CL book who touch EXP  
*Who had touched the books?*

This ‘evidential’ meaning, however, is not available to [**pak<sup>2</sup>** + VP] or the combination form [**pak<sup>2</sup>** + verb + **kue<sup>213</sup>**]. This is because of the presence of **pak<sup>2</sup>** which only encodes ‘past experience’:

- (31) \*b ko<sup>213-53</sup> tsu<sup>33</sup> ti<sup>11</sup>tiaŋ<sup>55-11</sup> **pak<sup>2</sup>** t’aŋ<sup>35</sup>?  
 CL book who EXP touch  
*Who had touched the books?*

The dual function of [verb + **kue<sup>213</sup>**] can be seen more clearly in the interrogative and the negative clauses. In the interrogative, the existential verb **u<sup>35</sup>** (which expresses epistemic modality. See Xu 2005) can be used before the verb, as in (32a), to find out whether or not an individual event has occurred. This is not possible with the ‘past experience’ meaning, shown in (32b):

- (32) a. i<sup>33</sup> t'aj<sup>55-11</sup>tsaŋ<sup>2</sup> (\*pak<sup>23</sup>) u<sup>3521</sup> lai<sup>55</sup> tsio<sup>213</sup> bo<sup>55-11</sup>?  
 3sg just.now (\*EXP) have come here not.have  
*Did he come here just now?*
- b. i<sup>33</sup> (\*u<sup>3521</sup>) pak<sup>23</sup> lai<sup>55</sup> tsio<sup>213</sup> me<sup>11</sup>?  
 3sg (\*have) EXP come here QPRT  
*Has he ever been here?*

In the negative, to negate a 'past experience', the negative marker used is the simplex negator **m<sup>35</sup>** ('not'), while negating the occurrence of an individuated event, the negator used in the fused form **bo<sup>55</sup>** which is the negative counterpart of **u<sup>35</sup>**. (33a) and (33b) are the negative answers to (32a) and (32a) respectively:

- (33) a. i<sup>33</sup> t'aj<sup>55-11</sup>tsaŋ<sup>2</sup> bo<sup>55-11</sup> lai<sup>55</sup> tsio<sup>213</sup>  
 3sg just.now not.have come here  
*He didn't come here just now.*
- b. i<sup>33</sup> m<sup>3521</sup> pak<sup>23</sup> lai<sup>55</sup> tsio<sup>213</sup>  
 3sg not EXP come here  
*He has never been here.*

In spoken Jieyang, there is a colloquial form **pak<sup>23</sup>tsia<sup>5335</sup>-tã<sup>213-53</sup>** which consists of the experiential marker **pak<sup>2</sup>**, the fused form of the proximal demonstrative **tsia<sup>53</sup>** ('this.kind.of'. See Xu, 2001) and a grammaticalized complementizer **tã<sup>213</sup>**, lexically, 'to say' (See Xu and Matthews, 2005). The construction can be rendered roughly in English as 'it once happened /occurred that...', and can serve to mark the Experiential. However, it is only used in encoding a past experience that is deemed 'unusual', 'uncommon' and 'extreme' or 'extraordinary' by the speaker:

- (34) i<sup>33</sup>naŋ<sup>55-11</sup> pak<sup>2</sup>-tsia<sup>5335</sup>-tã<sup>213-53</sup> aŋ<sup>33</sup>tsia<sup>53</sup> sio<sup>33</sup>me<sup>11</sup> au<sup>35</sup>,  
 3pl EXP-DEM-COMP husband.wife argue after  
 kai<sup>55-11</sup> gueŋ<sup>5-2</sup> bo<sup>55-11</sup> tã<sup>213-53</sup>-ue<sup>11</sup>  
 CL month not.have say-word  
*It happened once that the coupl had an argument and didn't speak to each other for a whole month!*

## 2.4 The Delimitative aspect and the Tentative aspect

## 2.4.1 The Delimitative aspect

The delimitative aspect presents a situation of short duration and often implies that it is of little importance. The closest meaning in English of this aspect is ‘do...for a while’ or ‘have a...’ as in ‘have a look’ and ‘go for a walk’. The Delimitative aspect in various Sinitic languages such as Mandarin and Cantonese are often expressed through verb reduplication. In the Jieyang dialect, the Delimitative meaning is formally expressed by the di-syllabic marker **tsek<sup>52</sup>e<sup>11</sup>** which derives from a verbal measure complement meaning ‘once’, as shown in (35):

- (35) ua<sup>53</sup> ne<sup>35</sup> p’aŋ<sup>23</sup> i<sup>33</sup> **tsek<sup>52</sup>e<sup>11</sup>** tiā<sup>11</sup>  
 1sg PRT hit 3sg once only  
*I only hit him once.*

As a grammaticalised aspectual marker, **tsek<sup>52</sup>e<sup>11</sup>** are often contracted to **tseŋ<sup>2</sup>**, or even shortened to **e<sup>11</sup>**. The marker **tsek<sup>52</sup>e<sup>11</sup>** or its allomorphs **tseŋ<sup>2</sup>** or **e<sup>11</sup>** follows the main verb or the reduplicated verb form if the verb does not take any object, as in (36).

- (36) tsiak<sup>52</sup>-pa<sup>53</sup> **hiaŋ<sup>2</sup>** **tseŋ<sup>2</sup>** tsiā<sup>213-53</sup> k’u<sup>213-53</sup> t’ak<sup>52</sup>-tsu<sup>33</sup>  
 eat-full rest DEL then go study-book  
*Have a rest after your meal before you go to study.*

The Delimitative marker can occur in two positions if the verb takes an object: it follows the verb if the object is a NP, as in (37), but if the direct object is a pronoun, it occurs after the pronoun, as in (38). This provides further evidence that aspectual markers in the Jieyang dialect are less grammaticalized as post-verbal suffixes.

- (37) ua<sup>53-35</sup> zip<sup>5-2</sup> k’u<sup>213-53</sup> **k’ioŋ<sup>52</sup>** e<sup>11</sup> mueŋ<sup>5-2</sup>kiā<sup>35</sup>  
 1sg enter go take DEL thing  
*I am just going in to get something.*

- (38) ua<sup>53-35</sup> lai<sup>55-11</sup> k'w<sup>213-53</sup> muŋ<sup>11</sup> i<sup>33</sup> e<sup>11</sup>  
 1sg come go ask 3sg DEL  
*I will go and ask him (about this).*

#### 2.4.2 The Tentative aspect

The Tentative aspect is used to express the notion of ‘doing an activity on a trial basis’ or ‘to try something out’. This aspectual meaning is marked by *t'oi*<sup>53</sup>, which is derived from the verb ‘to see’.

The position of the Tentative marker *t'oi*<sup>53</sup> in the sentence depends on whether the verb is intransitive or transitive, and if it is transitive, whether the direct object is a phrase or a clause. When the verb takes no object, the Tentative marker appears after the verb, as shown in (39). If the verb takes an object and if the object is either a pronoun or a NP, the marker is placed after the object, as in (40), but if the object is a clause, the marker is placed after the verb and before the object, as in (41):

- (39) lu<sup>53</sup> ai<sup>213-53</sup> mai<sup>213-53</sup> ts'ej<sup>11</sup> t'oi<sup>53</sup>?  
 2sg want not.want wear TEN  
*Do you want to try it on?*
- (40) tsi<sup>53-35</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup> kue<sup>33</sup> boi<sup>35-21</sup> tiam<sup>55</sup>, tsiak<sup>52</sup>  
 this CL melon not.have sweet eat  
 hu<sup>53</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup> t'oi<sup>53-213</sup>  
 that CL TEN  
*This melon is not sweet. Try that one.*
- (41) lu<sup>53-35</sup> tsiak<sup>52</sup> t'oi<sup>53-35</sup> si<sup>55-11</sup> me?<sup>2</sup>kai<sup>55</sup>  
 2sg eat TEN COP what  
*Have a taste to see what (this) is.*

Semantically, the Tentative aspect is very closely connected to the Delimitative aspect: to try something out implies doing it just a little bit and perhaps only for a short duration. That is why the two aspectual categories often merge to yield the following construction:

verb + tsek<sup>52</sup>e<sup>11</sup> / tse<sup>22</sup> / e<sup>11</sup> + t'oi<sup>53</sup>

For example:

(42) lu<sup>53</sup>      bo<sup>55-11</sup>      eŋ<sup>11</sup>      e<sup>11</sup>      t'oi<sup>53</sup>      tso<sup>213-53</sup>      tsai<sup>33</sup>  
          2sg      not.have      use      DEL      TEN      how      know

u<sup>35-21</sup>eŋ<sup>11</sup>      bo<sup>55-11</sup>?  
          useful      not.have

*How do you know whether it is useful or not when you haven't given it a try.*

### 3. The unbounded aspect

The progressive and the continuous constitute two viewpoints of the unbounded aspect which views part of a situation that includes neither the initial nor the final point. The progressive focuses on internal stages of dynamic situations whereas the continuous focuses on homogenous situations, which are static and resultative. These two aspectual categories in the Jieyang dialect are marked differently: the Progressive is marked by the pre-verbal **to<sup>35</sup>**, and the Continuous by a post-verbal compound marker **to<sup>35-21</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>**, as illustrated in the following contrastive sentences:

- (43) a. i<sup>33</sup>      to<sup>35-21</sup>      tsiak<sup>5-2</sup>-puŋ<sup>11</sup>  
          3sg      PROG      eat-cooked.rice  
          *She is eating.*      (Progressive)
- b. i<sup>33</sup>      tso<sup>35-21</sup>      to<sup>35-21</sup>ko<sup>213-53</sup>  
          3sg      sit      CONT  
          *She is sitting.*      (Continuous)

In addition to **to<sup>35-21</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>**, there is another marker **paŋ<sup>213-53</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>** which is used in the imperative for the Continuous aspect.

### 3.1 The Progressive aspect

Cross linguistically, the progressive forms commonly derive from expressions involving locative elements (Bybee et al., 1994). The Progressive marker **to<sup>35</sup>** derives from a lexical morpheme which is a locative preposition as well as a locative verb. The following shows its lexical uses as well as its grammaticalised use of marking an ongoing activity:

<u>Preposition</u>	<u>Locative verb</u>	<u>Progressive</u>
i <sup>33</sup> k'ia <sup>35-21</sup> <b>to<sup>35-21</sup></b> tsio <sup>213</sup>	i <sup>33</sup> <b>to<sup>35-21</sup></b> lai <sup>35</sup>	i <sup>33</sup> <b>to<sup>35-21</sup></b> tsiak <sup>5</sup>
3sg live at here	3sg be.at home	3sg PROG eat
<i>He lives here.</i>	<i>He is at home.</i>	<i>He is eating.</i>

The Progressive [**to<sup>35</sup>** + VP] does not focus on presenting a situation from outside as a whole, but rather on its internal stages. As such, it is directly available to durative dynamic situations, as illustrated below:

- (44) nou<sup>55-11</sup>kiā<sup>53</sup> **to<sup>35-21</sup>** t'ak<sup>5-2</sup>-tsur<sup>33</sup>, mo<sup>53-35</sup> tsak<sup>2</sup> i<sup>33-11</sup>  
 child PROG read-book not.can disturb 3sg  
*The child is studying. Don't disturb him.*
- (45) uā<sup>33</sup> ma<sup>55</sup> **to<sup>35-21</sup>** li<sup>53-35</sup>lo<sup>7-52</sup>tsiak<sup>5</sup>  
 1sg.gen PROG PROG cook  
*My mother is cooking.*

Sometimes, a location can be specified in a progressive sentence and in such instances, the Progressive marker **to<sup>35</sup>** is usually omitted, since the on-going nature of the activity is implied. However, to add more emphasis on the progressiveness, **to<sup>35</sup>** can still be retained:

- (46) i<sup>33</sup>naŋ<sup>55-11</sup> **to<sup>35-21</sup>** kiu<sup>53-35</sup>-tiō<sup>55</sup> (to<sup>35</sup>) p'ak<sup>2-3</sup>-kiu<sup>55</sup>  
 3pl at basketball-court (PROG) play-ball  
*They are playing ball in the field.*

As Semelfactive situations such as ‘ka<sup>33</sup>sau<sup>213</sup>’ (‘cough’) and ‘p’aŋ<sup>2</sup> muŋ<sup>55</sup>’ (‘knock on a door’) are often used in their iterative sense, they can be presented imperfectively with the marker **to<sup>35</sup>**, as shown in (47), which can only be taken to mean that the event consists of a series of knocks rather than one knock:

- (47) i<sup>33</sup>      **to<sup>3521</sup>**      p’aŋ<sup>2</sup>      muŋ<sup>55</sup>  
          3sg    PROG    hit      door  
*She is knocking on the door.*

Since the progressive viewpoint requires an interval that does not include both the starting and end points, the Progressive **to<sup>35</sup>** is not compatible with instantaneous events such as Achievement situations which do not have a durative internal structure, as (48) shows:

- (48) \* i<sup>33</sup>      **to<sup>3521</sup>**      kau<sup>213-53</sup>      suã<sup>33</sup>-teŋ<sup>53</sup>  
          3sg    PROG    arrive    mountain-top  
*She is reaching the mountain top.*

The Progressive **to<sup>35</sup>** does not usually take adjectives either, since this would involve a contradiction between the dynamic nature of the progressiveness and the stativity of the adjective. For example,

- (49) \* tiaũ<sup>55-11</sup>      lou<sup>11</sup>      **to<sup>3521</sup>**      pẽ<sup>55</sup>  
          CL      road    PROG    flat  
*The road is getting flat.*

However, certain predicative adjectives such as ‘busy’, ‘angry’, and ‘ripe’ which do not describe an intrinsic property are able to occur with the Progressive **to<sup>35</sup>**. This usage implies a process which involves change over time. This temporary nature is evidenced from the use of ‘hã<sup>33</sup>’ (‘still’) in the following two sentences:

- (50) zioŋ<sup>22</sup>tsoi<sup>11</sup>      tiam<sup>53</sup>      lau<sup>53-213</sup>,      hã<sup>33</sup>      **to<sup>3521</sup>**      m<sup>3521</sup>ai<sup>55</sup>  
          how.much    dot      CRS      still    PROG    busy  
*What time is it now? You are still busy?*

- (51) i<sup>33</sup>      hã<sup>33</sup>      to<sup>3521</sup>      sɛ̃<sup>33</sup>k'i<sup>213</sup>,      bo<sup>55-11</sup>      ăi<sup>213-53</sup>      tã<sup>213-53</sup>-ue<sup>11</sup>  
 3sg      still      PROG      angry      not.have      want      say-word  
*She is still angry and still doesn't want to talk.*

### 3.2 The Continuous

The continuous viewpoint presents 'a continuous and stable situation without regard to endpoints' (Smith, 1994:122). In other words, the continuous viewpoint focuses on the durative nature of a static situation and

is thus distinguished from the progressive. In the Jieyang dialect, there are two markers for this aspectual meaning: *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>* in declarative sentences and *paŋ<sup>213-53</sup>ko<sup>213-53</sup>* in imperative sentences.

#### 3.2.1 verb + *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>*

*to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>* comprises of the locative morpheme *to<sup>35</sup>* (see §3.2.1) and the morpheme *ko<sup>213</sup>* which is a locative suffix such as in 'ti<sup>55-11</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>' ('where') and 'tsio<sup>53-35</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>' ('here'). Lexically, *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>* is short for *to<sup>3521</sup>ti<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>* (lit. 'to be at where?' = 'Where is...?') in the spoken language. They have grammaticalized as a Continuous marker, appearing post-verbally. The construction [Verb + *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>*] is resultative. In terms of temporal structure, it means that this verbal constellation focuses on the homogenous state stage after the action terminates. Therefore, verbs that can be modified by *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>* must be those that entail a resulting state. One group of verbs which display this property are one place verbs such as 'tso<sup>35</sup>' 'sit', 'k'ia<sup>35</sup>' 'stand' and 'k'u<sup>55</sup>' 'squat'. Modified by *to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213</sup>*, they describe physical posture and position of 'sitting down', 'standing' and 'squatting' respectively:

- (52) tsek<sup>2</sup>      ts'oŋ<sup>2</sup>      naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>      tso<sup>35</sup>      to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>21321</sup>,      tsek<sup>2</sup>      ts'oŋ<sup>2</sup>  
 one      CL<sub>pl</sub>      people      sit      CONT      one      CL<sub>pl</sub>  
 naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>      k'ia<sup>35</sup>      to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>21321</sup>  
 people      stand      CONT  
*Some people are sitting while some are standing.*



- (53) i<sup>33</sup> hi<sup>53-35</sup> huā<sup>33</sup> k'u<sup>55</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup> ko<sup>21-21</sup> tsiak<sup>5-2</sup> puŋ<sup>11</sup>  
 3sg like squat CONT eat-cooked.rice  
*He likes to eat while squatting down.*

Other verbs which entail a resultant state associated with the termination of an activity include two-place verbs such as ‘put on’, and three-place verbs such as ‘hang’ and ‘put’. The dynamic nature of the activity and its resultant state once the activity terminates can be contrasted by the English verbs ‘put on’ and ‘wear’ respectively. In Sinitic languages in general, the two meanings share the same verb but the resultant state is usually grammatically marked. In Mandarin, for example, *ná* can mean ‘pick up’ or ‘hold’, but the latter meaning of ‘holding’ is indicated by the Continuous marker *-zhe* (which is called the Durative aspect marker by Li and Thompson, 1981: 220):

- (54) a.. ta **zai** **na** baozhi  
 3sg DUR take newspaper  
*S/he is taking (or picking up) newspapers*  
 b.. ta **na-** **zhe** baozhi  
 3sg take- DUR newspaper  
*S/he is holding the newspaper.*

In the Jieyang dialect, the Continuous marker cannot appear as post-verbal suffix like that in Mandarin but must follow the [verb + object] construction, as shown in the ill-formed sentence in (55b) and the grammatically correct form in (55c):

- (55) a.. i<sup>33</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup> k'ioŋ<sup>5-2</sup> po<sup>21-53</sup> tsua<sup>53</sup>  
 3sg PROG take newspaper  
*S/he is taking (or picking up) newspapers*  
 b. i<sup>33</sup> k'ioŋ<sup>5-2</sup> \*to<sup>35-21</sup> ko<sup>21-53</sup> po<sup>21-53</sup> tsua<sup>53</sup>  
 3sg take \*CONT newspaper  
*S/he is holding the newspaper.*

- c.     i<sup>33</sup>        **k'ioʔ<sup>52</sup>**     po<sup>213-53</sup>tsua<sup>53</sup>        **to<sup>3521</sup>ko<sup>213-53</sup>**  
          3sg     take        newspaper        CONT  
          *S/he is holding the newspaper.*

Existential sentences such as ‘there is a picture hanging on the wall’ typically describe a state of an entity existing in a certain location as a result of the action represented by the verb. In Mandarin, the Durative marker -zhe is required for such type of sentences, as in (56a) and (57a). But in the Jieyang dialect, no overt marking is required. Sometimes, however, one can use the existential verb **u<sup>35</sup>** or the post-verbal Perfective **liau<sup>53</sup>** for existential sentences since the state of affairs presented in the sentence can only occur after the action is completed (The Mandarin examples are from Li and Thompson, 1981: 221). (56b) and (57b) are illustrative. Again, if the Continuous marker is to be used, it must appear after the object NP. However, the more colloquial way is to use the locative preposition ‘at’ and the demonstrative ‘there’ after the verb+object construction, as in (56c) and (57c):

(56) ‘There is a photograph hanging on the wall.’

- a. qiang        shang        **gua**        **zhe**     yi        ge        zhaopian  
      wall        on        hang        DUR    one       CL       Photograph
- b. ts'iō<sup>55-11</sup>-teŋ<sup>53</sup>     **kua<sup>213-53</sup>**     (\*to<sup>3521</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>)     (liau<sup>53-35</sup>/u<sup>35-21</sup>)  
      wall-on        hang        (\*CONT)        (PERF / have)
- tiō<sup>33</sup>        siō<sup>213-53</sup>p'iaŋ<sup>213</sup>  
          CL        photograph
- c. ts'iō<sup>55-11</sup>-teŋ<sup>53</sup>     **kua<sup>213-53</sup>**     tiō<sup>33</sup>     siō<sup>213-53</sup>p'iaŋ<sup>213</sup>     **to<sup>3521</sup>**     **hio<sup>213</sup>**  
      wall-on        hang        CL    photograph        at        There

(57) ‘On the glass in the doorway are written four characters.’

- a. zai men-kou-de boli-shang xie-zhe si-ge-zi  
 at door-mouth-ASSOC glass-on write-DUR four-CL-word
- b. muŋ<sup>55-11</sup>-k’au<sup>53</sup> po<sup>33</sup>li<sup>55-11</sup>teŋ<sup>53</sup> **sia<sup>53-35</sup>** (\***to<sup>35-21</sup>**-**ko<sup>213-21</sup>**)  
 door-mouth glass-top write (\*CONT)
- (**liau<sup>53-35</sup>** / **u<sup>35-21</sup>**) si<sup>213-53</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup> zi<sup>213</sup>  
 (PERF / have) four CL word
- c. muŋ<sup>55-11</sup>-k’au<sup>53</sup> po<sup>33</sup>li<sup>55-11</sup>teŋ<sup>53</sup> **sia<sup>53-35</sup>** si<sup>213-53</sup> kai<sup>55-11</sup> zi<sup>213</sup>  
 door-mouth glass-top write four CL word
- to<sup>35-21</sup>** **hio<sup>213</sup>**  
 at there

However, if the object NP is preposed to topic position, the Continuous marker **to<sup>35-21</sup>** **ko<sup>213-21</sup>** is obligatory after the verb, as shown in (58a) and (59a):

- (58) a. paŋ<sup>2</sup> ue<sup>11</sup> **kua<sup>213</sup>** **to<sup>35-21</sup>****ko<sup>213-53</sup>**  
 CL painting hang CONT  
*The painting is hanging (there).*
- (59) a. i<sup>33</sup> saŋ<sup>33</sup> oi<sup>55</sup> **kuã<sup>35</sup>** **to<sup>35-21</sup>****ko<sup>213-53</sup>**  
 3sg pair shoe carry (in hand) CONT  
*He is carrying the shoes (in his hand).*

It should be noted that if a locality is specified, the two morphemes of the Continuous marker need to be split, with the noun denoting the locality appearing between the two morphemes, as shown in (58b) and (59b):

- (58) b. paŋ<sup>2</sup> ue<sup>11</sup> kua<sup>213-53</sup> **to<sup>35-21</sup>** **ts’iõ<sup>55-11</sup>-teŋ<sup>53</sup>** **ko<sup>213-53</sup>**  
 CL painting hang at wall-on SUF  
*The painting is hanging on the wall.*

- (59) b i<sup>33</sup> saŋ<sup>33</sup> oi<sup>55</sup> kuã<sup>35-21</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup> ts'iu<sup>53</sup> ko<sup>213-53</sup>  
 3sg pair shoe carry (in hand) at hand SUF  
*He is carrying the shoes in his hand.*

Similar to the Progressive marker *to*<sup>35</sup>, the Continuous marker *to*<sup>35-21</sup>*ko*<sup>213</sup> cannot occur with states which denote intrinsic property or general quality of an entity, such as 'beautiful', 'clever', or 'stupid'. They can, however, be used with certain predicative adjectives to present a current static situation such as 'to be alive', '(stove) is burning' and '(light) is on' etc. Such states, although on-going and stable at the time of speaking, can change over time:

- (60) buē<sup>53-35</sup> hu<sup>55</sup> hã<sup>33</sup> ua?<sup>5</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>  
 CL fish still alive CONT  
*The fish is still alive.*
- (61) kai<sup>55-11</sup> lou<sup>55</sup> buē<sup>11</sup> kue<sup>213</sup>, hã<sup>33</sup> to?<sup>5</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>  
 CL stove not.yet extinguished still burn CONT  
*The stove is not yet extinguished. It is still burning.*

A static situation can be resultative, that is, they denote a state as a result of or caused by a prior specific event. States such as 'feeling frightened' or 'feeling angry' are examples. The Continuous marker *to*<sup>35-21</sup>*ko*<sup>213</sup> can occur with stative situations of this kind, as shown in (62) and (63). However, with this kind of resultative states, the locative suffix *ko*<sup>213</sup> in the compound *to*<sup>35-21</sup>*ko*<sup>213</sup> is usually omitted:

- (62) t'aj<sup>55-11</sup>tsa<sup>53</sup> tsiaŋ<sup>2</sup> ts'ia<sup>33</sup> sio<sup>213-53</sup>sio<sup>213-53</sup> ts'uŋ<sup>2</sup>-su<sup>11</sup>,  
 just.now CL car almost out-matter  
 i<sup>33</sup> tsĩ<sup>35</sup> hã<sup>33</sup> kiã<sup>33</sup>- si<sup>53</sup> to<sup>35-21</sup>(-ko<sup>213-53</sup>)  
 3sg now still afraid- dead CONT  
*Their car almost had an accident just now and she is still feeling frightened*

- (63) i<sup>33</sup>    tiō<sup>53</sup>    ts'ia<sup>33</sup>    k'eŋ<sup>1</sup>    naŋ<sup>55-11</sup>    t'au<sup>33</sup>-ku<sup>213-53</sup>,    i<sup>33</sup>  
          3sg    CL    car    PASS    people    steal-RVC    3sg  
          k'ɿ<sup>213-53</sup>    si<sup>53</sup>    to<sup>35-21</sup>(-ko<sup>213-53</sup>)  
          angry-    dead    CONT  
          *His bike (or car) got stolen. He is still in such a rage.*

### 3.2.2 Verb + *paŋ*<sup>213-53</sup>-*ko*<sup>213-21</sup>

Differ from Mandarin and many other Sinitic languages, the Jieyang dialect makes a formal distinction between the declarative and imperative in the Continuous aspect. In other words, the markers used to mark the declarative and the imperative respectively are different. In the imperative, the Continuous encodes a command for the speaker to maintain a resultative state. Sentences such as ‘Remain seated’ and ‘Leave the door open’ are illustrative. The marker used for the imperative Continuous is the compound *paŋ*<sup>213-53</sup>-*ko*<sup>213-21</sup> which consists of *paŋ*<sup>213</sup> (‘to put’) and *ko*<sup>213</sup>. As can be seen from the two examples below, the marker *to*<sup>35-21</sup>-*ko*<sup>213-21</sup> used in the declarative sentences cannot be used in the imperative:

- (64) tso<sup>35</sup>    paŋ<sup>213-53</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>    / (\* to<sup>35-21</sup> -ko<sup>213-53</sup>)  
          sit    CONT  
          *Stay seated.*
- (65) kai<sup>55-11</sup>    muŋ<sup>55</sup>    k'ui<sup>33</sup>    paŋ<sup>213-53</sup>-ko<sup>213-53</sup>    / (\* to<sup>35-21</sup> -ko<sup>213-53</sup>)  
          CL    door    open    CONT
- i<sup>33</sup>    to<sup>35-21</sup>    puā<sup>33</sup>    mueŋ<sup>55-2</sup>kiā<sup>35</sup>  
          3sg    PROG    move    thing  
          *Leave the door open. He is moving things.*

## 4. Summary and Conclusion

The discussion has set out to describe the aspectual system of the Jieyang dialect. Based on the distinction between bounded and unbounded aspect, seven aspectual categories have been discussed, which include the Perfective, the Inchoative, the Experiential, the Delimitative, the Tentative, the Progressive and the Continuous. As in

Mandarin and various Sinitic languages, many aspect markers in the Jieyang dialect have their sources in verbs and locative expressions. However, the aspect markers in the Jieyang dialect have also been shown to be less grammaticalised than its counterparts in Mandarin or Cantonese. Two good examples at hand are the Perfective *liau*<sup>53</sup> which has not yet grammaticalised as a pure verbal suffix, and the Experiential marker *pak*<sup>2</sup> which can stand alone as an answer. This is an indication that its verbal property is still retained to a certain extent. The discussion in this paper also shows that like many other Sinitic languages, the Jieyang dialect is synchronically characterised by syntactic strata, reflected in the co-existence of native as well as borrowed forms for different functions. As shown in §2.3, the native form *pak*<sup>2</sup> can only be used to code a past experience whereas the borrowed form, the post-verbal suffix *guo*, has a wider range of meanings. The former can be attributed to the retention of its source meaning ‘to know’, which provide another piece of evidence that it is not a full-fledged grammaticalized marker. That a formal distinction is made between the declarative and the imperative in the Continuous aspect in the Jieyang dialect is salient, a feature not commonly found in other Sinitic languages.

In Table 1 below, I provide a summary of the markers used to code the seven aspectual categories in the Jieyang dialect.

**Table 1 : Aspectual categories, coding strategies and distributions of markers in the Jieyang dialect**

Aspectual categories		Coding strategies	Distribution	
Bounded	Unbounded		Pre-verbal	Post-verbal
Perfective		grammaticalized marker: <i>liau</i> <sup>53</sup>		√
		lexical complements as phase markers		√
		auxiliary verbs: <i>u</i> <sup>35</sup> / <i>bo</i> <sup>55</sup>	√	
Inchoative		grammaticalized marker: <i>k'i</i> <sup>53</sup> <i>lai</i> <sup>55-11</sup> / <i>liau</i> <sup>53</sup>		√
		lexical complement: <i>k'u</i> <sup>213</sup>		√
Experiential		semi-grammaticalized marker: <i>pak</i> <sup>2</sup>	√	
		compound marker: <i>pak</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>tsia</i> <sup>213</sup> <i>tā</i> <sup>213</sup> (for unusual /extreme experiences)		
		grammaticalized marker: <i>kue</i> <sup>213</sup>		√
Delimitative		grammaticalised marker: <i>tsek</i> <sup>52</sup> <i>e</i> <sup>11</sup> / <i>tse</i> <sup>?</sup> <sup>2</sup> / <i>e</i> <sup>11</sup>		√
Tentative		grammaticalized marker: <i>t'ōi</i> <sup>53</sup>		√
	Progressive	grammaticalized marker: <i>to</i> <sup>35</sup>	√	
	Continuous	declarative: grammaticalized marker: <i>to</i> <sup>35-21</sup> <i>ko</i> <sup>213</sup>		√
		imperative: grammaticalized marker: <i>paŋ</i> <sup>213-53</sup> <i>ko</i> <sup>213</sup>		√

Abbreviations used:

1sg	first singular
1pl	second singular
1pl <sub>incl</sub>	first plural inclusive
2sg	second singular
2pl	second plural
3sg	third singular
3pl	third plural
CL	classifier
COMP	complementizer
COP	copula verb
CRS	current relevant state
DEL	delimitative
EXP	experiential
INC	inchoative
RVC	resultative complement
PASS	passive
PRET	pretransitive
PROG	progressive
PRT	particle
QPRT	question particle

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## 揭陽方言體貌系統研究

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### 摘要

時範疇與體範疇均涉及到時間，但它們的語義有所不同。「時」為事件、動作、狀態等提供時間參照點，而「體」涉及的是事件、動作、狀態內部的時間結構。眾所周知，漢語缺乏用語法手段表達的時範疇，但各方言普遍存在體貌範疇。本文從共時角度，描述和分析位於廣東省東部，屬於閩南語系的潮州方言中的揭陽話的體貌系統。本文將揭示，雖然揭陽方言體貌系統中的分類大體能與其他方言對齊，比如有完成、進行、經歷體，也有短時和嘗試貌等，但它們的語義及語法手段都有其獨特的地方。此外，與漢語相比較，揭陽方言的一些體貌標記的虛化程度要相對弱些。

**關鍵字：**體貌，完整體，非完整體，情狀類型，虛化程度