

## The Origin and Development of the ‘Progressive/Durative’ Aspectual Markers in the Eastern Min Dialects

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This article examines the origin of the ‘progressive/durative’ aspectual markers in three Eastern Min dialects spoken in Fuzhou, Luoyuan and Xiapu and explores their respective diachronic development. Through the comparative method, it shows that the ‘progressive/durative’ markers in Eastern Min have undergone the following development:

Prepositional Phrase[著+[許+裡]] + V > Progressive Marker[著+[許+裡]] + V  
V + Prepositional Phrase[著+[許+裡]] > V + Durative Marker[著+[許+裡]]

The evidence suggests that the ‘progressive/durative’ markers in Eastern Min come from a primary preposition phrase structure [著\*tjok8+[許\*hy3+裡\*lai3]], in which every constituent should be reconstructed. The early periphrastic preposition structure is simplified individually in three Eastern Min dialects.

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|------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Xiapu   | *tjok8 *hy3 *lai3 > tyk8 hai5      | Progressive/Durative |
| 2. Luoyuan | *tjok8 *hy3 *lai3 V > tyek8 hai5 V | Progressive          |
|            | V *tjok8 *hy3 *lai3 > V hai5       | Durative             |
| 3. Fuzhou  | *tjok8 *hy3 *lai3 > lai3 > le0     | Progressive/Durative |

It is clear that Xiapu maintains early structure either progressive or durative marker in substance and Fuzhou omitted the preceding two elements and left the final element \*lai3 behind. As for Luoyuan, the preposition structure split into two forms conditionally.

It has been noticed by scholars that the different ‘progressive/durative’ aspectual markers in Chinese dialects are grammaticalized from a preposition phrase structure (Liu 1996). Furthermore, the locative complement of the structure should be indicated. As mentioned above, the distal locative demonstrative \*hai5 ‘許裡’ should be reconstructed in the primary PP structure. According to the phenomena in Eastern Min, we have every reason to speculate that the key factor which induced the PP structure to be the ‘progressive/durative’ aspectual marker is \*hy3 ‘許’.

Key words: Eastern Min dialects, progressive aspectual marker, durative aspectual marker, grammaticalization, historical linguistics