

More on the Aspect Marker *tsɿ* in Wu Dialects*

1. Among William S-Y. Wang's many contributions is his penchant to instigate others to do research. As one of the beneficiaries, I am happy to return on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday to a problem he started me on many years ago.

In 1978, it occurred to me that the etymology of the Wu perfective-durative suffix *tsɿ* is 著. At the time the field of diachronic grammar of Chinese dialects did not exist, and I had no idea what to do with my discovery. Since William Wang and I both grew up in Shanghai, I thought a fellow Wu speaker would be interested in the etymology of one of the most frequently used particles. So I mentioned it to him in a letter. Back came a letter urging me to write an article. I did. The article was duly published in the 1979 (Vol. 7, No. 1) issue of the *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*. Since then, I have written another article (Mei, 1989). Without his encouraging letter of 1978, none of this would have happened.

The results obtained so far may be summarized under two headings. (1) The same etymon 著 *zhù* is used differently as a grammatical particle in different dialects. As Mandarin *.zhe*, it is a durative suffix; as Wu *tsɿ* C1 or *zɿ* C2, it is a perfective-durative suffix; as Southern Min *ti* C2 or Fuzhou *tyɔ?* D2, it is a post-verbal locative particle. (2) The word 著 *zhù* was originally a verb meaning "to attach to, to stick to" in Old Chinese (Wang Li, 1958: 308). The pathway of its grammaticalization as a post-verbal constituent is as follows:

V + verb > V + locative particle > V + resultative complement > V + aspect marker

Hakka and some Southwestern Mandarin dialects use *tau* B1 到 or its cognate as aspect marker, resultative complement, and locative particle, illustrating the same pathway of grammaticalization (Lin Ying-chin, to appear).

2. Since I have already written two articles on this topic, why a third? The embarrassing truth is that it took me some time to realize that while the etymology of *tsɿ* is sound, it is not fully established. Looking back at my earlier efforts, I think the textual evidence is strong, and the explanation of grammatical development quite adequate. The problem lies in phonological derivation, especially the phonetic value of the final.

The *Qieyun* dictionary (601) (hereafter "QY") of Lu Fayan distinguishes a pair of rhyme categories 鱼 and 虞, which Karlgren has reconstructed as -jwo and -ju. I will call the 鱼 rhyme "Fish" and the 虞 rhyme "WORRY" and abbreviate them as "F" and "W". Following usual practice, I will also use the level tone rhymes F and W to refer to their respective counterparts in rising and departing tones.

* 本文原载 In Honor of William S-Y. Wang, 1994 年。

The etymon 著 (hereafter ZHU) belongs to the F rhyme, and its Middle Chinese initial is ㄓ知 (or ㄑ澄). As a first step in determining its phonological history, let us examine how other words with the same MC final and similar initials are pronounced in Shanghai and Suzhou.

The word for ‘pig’ 猪 Mand. *zhū* has the same MC initial and final as ZHU. In some contexts the word for ‘pig’ is pronounced *tsy* A1 in Shanghai, e.g. *tsy nioʔ* 猪肉 ‘pig meat, pork’, *tsy niʔ iaŋ* 猪牛羊 ‘pig, cattle, sheep’. There are however two Shanghai curse words, *tsi lu* 猪鲁 ‘pig’ and *tsi doʔ se* 猪头三 ‘obnoxious person, pest’, in which the word for ‘pig’ is pronounced *tsi*. Since curse words and grammatical particles are both likely to belong to the vernacular stratum, the parallel development of *tsi* A1 ‘pig’ and *tsi* ‘aspect marker’ initially led me to propose the etymology.

Dialect surveys currently available present a confusing picture.

			Suzhou (1960)	Shanghai (1960)	Shanghai (Karlgren)
F	ZHU	Aspect marker	<i>tsi</i>	<i>tsi</i>	
F	猪	Pig	<i>tsy</i>	<i>tsi</i>	<i>tsy, tsi</i>
F	除	Remove	<i>zy</i>	<i>zi</i>	<i>tsi</i>
F	著	Prominent	<i>tsy</i>	<i>tsi</i>	<i>tsi</i>
W	株	Tree trunk	<i>tsy</i>	<i>tsi</i>	<i>tsi</i>
W	厨	Kitchen	<i>zy</i>	<i>zi</i>	<i>tsi</i>
W	住	Reside	<i>zy</i>	<i>zi</i>	<i>tsi</i>

All these words have MC supradental initials (知 彻 澄). The first two columns are from Jiangsu Sheng (1960), whose values for Shanghai differ from those given in Karlgren (1948). If we trust Jiangsu Sheng (1960), we will have to conclude that (1) F and W have merged in Suzhou and Shanghai, and (2) the development from ZHU to *tsi* for the aspect marker is regular in Shanghai but irregular in Suzhou.

Could Suzhou have borrowed the aspect marker *tsi* from Shanghai? Unlikely. First, this aspect marker, written as 子 (*tsi*), had already appeared in the *Mountain Songs* (山歌 *Shange*), a collection of folk songs in the Wu dialect by the Suzhou writer Feng Menglong (1574-1645). Second, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Suzhou was the prestige dialect for the lower Yangtze region. If borrowing was involved, the direction would have to be from Suzhou to Shanghai, but not the other way around. So the question remains, how did ZHU become *tsi* in Shanghai and Suzhou?

3. Yan Zhitui (531-591) said in the *Family Instruction of the Yan Clan* “northerners pronounce *śju* 庶 (F) as *śju* 戍 and *ńzju* 如 (F) as *ńzju* 儒 (W)”, and again, “most northerners pronounce *kju* 举 (F) and *kju* 莒 (F) as *kju* 矩 (W)”. As stated in the

Preface to the QY, Yan Zhitui was one of the eight scholars who gathered in 581 at the house of Lu Fayan to discuss phonology. Among the eight, Yan and two others were southerners speaking the Jinling (now Nanking) dialect of the southern capital; the rest were northerners speaking the Loyang dialect of the old northern capital. These scholars, representing the two prestige dialects of the time, met in 581 to discuss their differences in pronunciation in order to arrive at a common standard for rhyming. The QY was later compiled by Lu Fayan according to their recommendations.

The northern pronunciation Yan referred to was the Loyang dialect, which, as his statements indicate, lacked the F/W distinction. We know from Yan's statements and the rhyming practice of southern poets of the fifth and sixth centuries that the distinction was present around the Lake Tai region in southern Jiangsu (Luo Changpei, 1931). The F/W distinction is also present in the *fanqie* spellings in the *Yupian* 玉篇, compiled by Gu Yewang (519-581), a native of Suzhou (Cf. Malmqvist 1968: 70-71). As a speaker of the Jinling dialect, Yan was representing the old Wu dialect for which the Jinling dialect of the capital served as the standard. Clearly, the F/W distinction in the QY was based upon the Old Wu dialect. The question then arises whether this distinction is still preserved in the same region. If so, it may throw some light on the phonological history of the aspect marker *tsi*.

The two most important southern cities during the fifth and sixth centuries were Jinling, also called "Jiankang" or "Jianye", and Suzhou, then called "Wu". Jinling was the capital of the Southern dynasties, and the language spoken then was a form of Old Wu. But the modern Nanking dialect is a form of lower Yangtze Mandarin. Suzhou is an ancient city on the northern shore of Lake Tai, with a history dating back to the Warring States Period. During the fifth and sixth centuries, members of the educated elite from Suzhou went to Jinling in large numbers to serve in the government (Liu Shufen, 1992: 274 ff.) – a fact which suggests that dialects of Jinling and Suzhou were similar if not identical. Yan Zhitui, a native of Jinling, in the *Family Instructions* mentioned several distinctions peculiar to the Southern dialect. Every one of these distinctions can be found in the *fanqie* spellings in the *Yupian* of Gu Yewang, a native of Suzhou. With Nanking (earlier Jinling) so thoroughly transformed by Mandarin influence, Suzhou stands out as the Wu dialect most likely to show an affinity to the Old Wu dialect.

There are three book-length reports on Wu dialects in addition to Y.R. Chao's (1928) pioneering monograph: a survey of the dialects of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province (Jiangsu Sheng, 1960), a description of the Shanghai dialect (Xu Baohua *et al.* 1988), and a description of the Suzhou dialect (Ye Xiangling, 1988). There are also many articles on individual Wu dialects. When one reads this literature, two conclusions immediately come to mind. First, in all Wu dialects, the F and W rhymes have merged for the majority of words. Second, the F/W distinction has disappeared from the Wu dialects without a trace. The first conclusion is valid; there is a stratum in Wu, almost certainly of Northern origin, in which the F and W rhymes have merged. The second conclusion is more apparent than real. What these dialect reports have recorded are mostly reading pronunciation of individual characters. The inclusion of popular or colloquial forms is haphazard. When popular or colloquial forms are included, they are more often than not

accompanied by misleading etymologies. The reason seems to be that many Chinese dialectologists specializing in Wu do not have the concept of phonological strata, although this concept is commonplace among linguists working on Min (Norman 1979; Yang Hsiu-fang 1982). Under the erroneous notion that a single set of phonological rules governs the derivation of modern Wu forms from Middle Chinese, the authors of these dialect surveys either fail to record doublets, or hide the older forms in some unlikely places in their reports.

There are however three notable exceptions. Li Rong (1980) and Zhang Huiying (1980a) respectively noted that words in the F rhyme with MC velar initials have doublets in Changshou and Wenling, and have unrounded vowels in Chongming. Chang Kun (1985: 221-222) pointed out that the F/W distinction is preserved for some words with MC supradental and palatal initials in certain Wu dialects in southern Zhejiang. We will extend their results and show that there are at least two phonological strata in Wu, one in which F and W have merged, and the other in which F and W remain distinct.

The data will be presented in four tables, arranged according to classes of MC initials. Each table consists of two parts. The upper part contains words in both F and W; in that part the F words and the W words have the same modern finals. The lower part contains F words only; their modern finals are different from the modern finals of the F words (in the same dialect) in the upper part, although words from both parts have the same type of MC initials. Abbreviations of names of dialects are as follows: SZ, Suzhou; SH, Shanghai; CM, Chongming; JX, Jiaxing; CS, Changshou; NB, Ningbo; JH, Jinhua; WY, Wuyi; WL, Wenling; WZ, Wenzhou; PY, Pingyang; YX, Yinxian.

			SZ	SH	JX	NB	JH	WY	WL	WZ	PY
W	主	Master	tsy	tsi	tsy	tsy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tsi	tśy, tsy
F	处	Place	tshy	tshi	tshy	tshy	tśhy	tśhy	tśhy	tshi	tśhy, tshy
W	住	Reside	dzy	dzi	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzi	dzy, dzy
F	书	Book	sy	si	sy	sy	śy	śy	śy	si	śy, sy
W	树	Tree	zy	zi	zy	zy	zy	zy	zy	zi	zy, zy
F	猪	Pig		tsi	tsi			tśi	tsi	tsei	tśi, tsi
F	煮	Boil	tsi	tsi		tsi	tsi	tśi	tsi	tsei	tśi, tsi
F	鼠	Rat	si	tshi		tshi				tsei	tśhi, tshi
F	苎	Hemp	zi	zi		dzi		dzi	dzi	dzei	dzi, dzi
F	箸	Chopsticks							dzi	dzei	dzi, dzi

Table 1

			SZ	SH	JX	YX	JH	WY	WL	WZ	PY
W	趋	Approach	tshi tshy	tshy	tśhy	tshy				tshi	
W	需	Need	si si	sy sy	śy śy	sy	sy śy		śy	si si	śy, sy śy, sy

W	须	Beard	səu	su			su			
W	娶	Marry	tshi	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshɿ	tshy
W	趣	Fun	tshi	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshɿ	tshy
F	序	Order	zi	zy	dzy	zy	zy	zy	zɿ	zy,zy
W	聚	Gather	zi	zy	dzy	zy	zy	zy	zɿ	zy,zy
F	絮	Fluff	si	si	dzy	sɥ	si, sy		sɿ	sɿ
F	蛆	Maggot	tshi	tshi	tshi					tshei tshɿ
F	徐	Surname	zi	zi	dzi	zi	zi, zy		zei	zi,zi

Table 2

			SZ	SH	CS	NB	JH	WL	WZ	PY
F	助	Help	zəu	zu	dʒɥu	dzu	zu		zəu	zu
F	初	First	tshəu	tshu	tshɥu	tshu	tshu	tshu	tshəu	tshu
F	楚	Surname	tshəu	tshu	tshɥu	tshu	tshu		tshəu	tshu
W	数	Count	səu	su	sɥu	su	su		sɿ, səu	su(N) sy(V)
F	梳	Comb	sɿ	sɿ	sɿ	sɿ	su		sɿ	sɿ
F	锄	Hoe	zɿ	zɿ	zɿ	zɿ	zɿ	zɿ	zɿ	zu

Table 3

			SC	SH	CM	CS	NB	JH	WL	WZ	PY
W	具	Prepare	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy		gy	dzy	dzy
W	驱	Drive	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy	tshy		tshy	tshy
F	据	Occupy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy		ky	tśy	
F	举	Raise	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy	ky	tśy	tśy
F	渠	Gutter	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy			gy	dzy	dzy
F	拒	Resist	dzy	dzy	dzy	dzy		dzy	gy	dzy	dzy
W	句	Sentence	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy	tśy		ky	tśy	tśy
F	锯	A saw	kɛ	kɛ	kei	kɛ			kie		
F	去	Go	tshi	tshi	khi	khe	tshi	khə	kie	khei	khi
F	渠 (他)	He		fi	fi	gɛ	dzi	gə	gie	gi	gi
F	鱼	Fish	ɿj	ɿj	fiŋei	ŋɛ	ɿj		ɿj	ɿj	
F	虚	Hollow	hɛ	hɛ	hei	hɛ			he		
F	许	Promise	hɛ	hɛ				xə			
F	许	That there	hɛ	hɛ						hi	

Table 4

The tables show that there are two phonological strata in Wu dialects. The one which kept F and W distinct is the earlier stratum inherited from old Wu; the one in which F and W have merged is the later stratum. These two strata can be correlated with two waves of migration, both from the north. Philological sources indicate that the date of the earlier stratum must be before the end of the sixth century. The date of the later stratum is uncertain.

Our study of the F/W distinction in Wu dialects is part of a larger project whose aim is to reclassify Chinese dialects and to reconstruct Old Wu. I will now briefly describe the work in progress and relate it to previous scholarship.

Karlgren (1954: 212) assumed that Middle Chinese – the Tang koine – is the ancestor of all modern dialects. Insofar as he also assumed that no dialects existed before Tang, his view is directly contradicted by the Preface to the *Qieyun* and other philological sources. The alternative is to reconstruct at least two Middle Chinese dialects, and to derive modern dialects, not from the all-encompassing Middle Chinese, but from these MC dialects. The first step in that direction has already been taken by Pulleyblank (1984). In his book, Middle Chinese is divided into two periods; Late Middle Chinese is essentially the Chang'an dialect of the eighth and ninth century; Early Middle Chinese corresponds to the *Qieyun*. Within Early Middle Chinese, there are two dialects, northern and southern. The southern dialect is what we have called “Old Wu”. In reconstructing the southern dialect of EMC, Pulleyblank used evidence from colloquial Min and Old Sino-Vietnamese. But there is reason to believe that Old Wu features are also preserved in other dialects, for example in the earlier stratum of Modern Wu. The question then arises as to which dialects contain reflexes of Old Wu as one of the phonological strata.

The first step is to characterize Old Wu on the basis of the *Yupian* and other philological data. The F/W distinction is one of the characteristic features of Old Wu; there are others which I will not try to describe here. The next step is to take this blueprint of Old Wu and compare it with phonological features of modern dialects. By this procedure it is possible to classify modern dialects into two groups, those with an Old Wu stratum and those without.

With Old Wu stratum: Wu, Min, Northern Gan, Old Xiang

Without Old Wu stratum: Mandarin, Yue, Kejia

The geographic distribution of the dialects with and Old Wu stratum coincides remarkably well with the territory of the Southern Dynasties. Jinling – or Jianye – was for more than two centuries the capital of the Southern dynasties and the political and culture center of South China. Evidently the Old Wu dialect, for which the capital dialect of Jinling served as the standard, spread westward along the Yangtze River to present day Jiangxi and Hunan and southward to the coastal plains of Fujian.

Yue and Kejia, according to this analysis, are descendants of Late Middle Chinese. These dialects came to their present locations as the result of Late Tang or post-Tang migrations from the north.

In describing a dialect, it seems desirable to include information such as how many strata there are in that dialect, and the characteristics of each stratum. Such a format would bring descriptive dialectology closer to historical dialectology.

Old Wu should be reconstructed on the basis of all available data. But that will have to wait until the completion of a chronological stratification of Wu, Min, Old Xiang, and Northern Gan.

4. Let us now return to the problem of deriving the aspect marker *tsi* from ZHU in Suzhou.

Table 1 includes the following F words in Suzhou with final *i*. Below I give both the literary and colloquial pronunciation of these words, cite the sources for the colloquial forms, and add ZHU to the list.

			Literary	Colloquial	Sources
F	苧	Hemp		<i>zi</i>	Yuan Jiahua, 1983: 72
F	煮	Boil	<i>tsy</i>	<i>tsi</i>	Wang Ping 1987: 73
F	鼠	Rat	<i>tshy</i>	<i>si</i>	Ye Xiangling 1988: 17, 61
F	ZHU	Aspect marker	<i>tsy</i>	<i>tsi</i>	

Table 5: Suzhou F words with MC supradental and palatal initials

It is immediately apparent that in the colloquial stratum, the development of *tsi* ‘aspect marker’ from ZHU follows the same rule as the words for ‘hemp’, ‘boil’ and ‘rat’, and is regular in that sense. It is also clear that the notion of “regular development” should be indexed to phonological strata. ZHU > *tsi* is irregular in the later, literary stratum but perfectly regular in the earlier, colloquial stratum.

In a study of Suzhou tone sandhi, Xie Zili (1982: 252) has shown that the tone sandhi behavior of *tsi* ‘durative-perfective aspect marker’ is exactly like that of another aspect marker *kəu* C1 过. This implies that the tone of *tsi* is C1, which is what one would expect from ZHU 著, a departing word in MC with voiceless initial.

Turning now to the Shanghai case, we are faced with a different problem. For F words with MC supradental and palatal initials, all Wu dialects except Shanghai have two strata, one in which F and W have merged, and the other in which F and W remain distinct (see Table 1). Shanghai has only one stratum, in which F and W have merged, and in that

stratum the development of tsi from ZHU is regular. Why is Shanghai exceptional among Wu dialects?

The answer lies in older descriptions of the Shanghai dialect. Especially valuable are Joseph Edkins, *A vocabulary of the Shanghai dialect* (1869) and *Grammar of colloquial Chinese, as exhibited in the Shanghai dialect* (1868). There is also J.A. Silsby, *Complete Shanghai Syllabary* (1907), incorporated in the “Word list of Chinese dialects” of Karlgren’s *Études* (1915-26); below I cite from the Chinese translation (1948) of Karlgren’s *Études*.

			Edkins	Karlgren	Jiangsu Sheng
			(1869)	(1915-26)	(1960)
W	主	Master	tsy	tsy	tsi
F	居	Place	tshy	tshy	tshi
W	住	Reside	dzy	dzy	zi
F	书	Book	sy	sy	si
W	树	Tree	zy		si
F	猪	Pig	tsi	tsi, tsy	tsi
F	鼠	Rat	si, sy	si, tshi, tshy	tshi
F	ZHU	Aspect marker	tsi		tsi

In 1869, Shanghai was like any other Wu dialect, with two phonological strata, an earlier one in which F words are pronounced i and a later one in which F words are pronounced y. Then came the Suzhou influence, which brought the y pronunciation for earlier i words; the change as recorded in Karlgren (1915-1926) was by lexical diffusion. My own Shanghai dialect acquired during the 40’s is of that variety. Finally, the uniform i pronunciation as recorded in Jiangsu Sheng (1960) is a post-1949 innovation. As Xu Baohua (1982: 268) has noted, for northern immigrants who came to Shanghai in large numbers after 1949, the vowel y [ɥ] is difficult to pronounce; substituting i [ɿ] for y made things easier. That is why in terms of the post-1949 Shanghai pronunciation, ZHU > tsi ‘aspect marker’ looks perfectly regular. But this is just a mirage. ZHU tsi had occurred long ago in the Shanghai dialect, as a relic of the Old Wu dialect; it was only when other words “caught up” with this phonological change that Shanghai became an exception among Wu dialects.

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再论吴语态貌词尾“仔”字

这篇主要是从吴语音韵史的观点说明，“著”字怎么会在苏州话、上海话里变成态貌词尾“仔”字。

(1) 苏州、上海、崇明、金华、宁波、温岭、温州等吴方言都有两个时间层次，一个鱼虞相混，一个鱼虞有别。(2) 在鱼虞有别的层次里，苏州话有四个知章系声母的鱼韵字今音韵母说-ɿ: 猪、煮 tsɿ、鼠 sɿ、苎 zɿ。(3) “著”是知系声母的鱼韵字，按照这四个字的演变规律，在苏州话里也会变成 tsɿ “仔”音。

(4) 现在的上海话，知章系声母的鱼韵字跟知章系声母的虞韵字韵母没有区别。但艾约瑟 1869 年记的上海音，知章系声母的鱼虞韵字还能看出有两个层次，鱼虞相混的层次元音说-ɿ，鱼虞有别的层次元音说-ɿ 如“猪” tsɿ，“鼠” sɿ，完成貌词尾 tsɿ。

本文还提到两点。第一，现代吴语鱼虞有别的层次是承继南朝的江东方言。第二，现代汉语方言可以分成两大类。南朝的江东方言保存在闽语、吴语、北部赣语里。官话、客家话、广东话的前身是唐代北方话，这三种方言里大概没有江东方言的成分。