

## Taiwan Southern Min Denominal Verbs<sup>\*</sup>

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Little research has been done on Taiwan Southern Min denominal verbs. This paper explores their syntactic and semantic characteristics. Chan & Tai (1995) provide an abundance of lexical entries for TSM denominal verbs, but without proposing any syntactic description. This paper, on the other hand, presents the syntactic distribution of TSM denominal verbs, demonstrating that some of them can participate in the locatum/location alternation. In addition, it examines four common syntactic patterns for TSM denominal verbs that convey a variety of aspectual information. This study thus contributes to an understanding of the aspectual properties of TSM denominal verbs and, as opposed to Harley's (1999) theory, it argues against any strong aspectual correlation between TSM denominal verbs and their source nouns.

Key words: denominal verbs, aspect, aktionsart, Taiwan Southern Min

### 1. Introduction

The present study focuses on denominal verbs in Taiwan Southern Min (henceforth TSM). Denominal verbs are defined here as verbs formed directly from a noun base. For example, in Taiwan Southern Min the noun *phinn7* 'nose' can be used as a verb *phinn7* 'to smell' and *liu2* 'button' as *liu2* 'to button'. A fair amount of work has been done on English denominal verbs (Clark & Clark 1979, Fodor 1981, Pinker 1989, Hale & Keyser 1992, 1998, Kiparsky 1997, Harley 1999, Gottfurcht 2008). Clark & Clark categorize types of English denominal verbs and point out that the verbal conversion is related to pragmatic accounts. Fodor (1981) offers an innateness acquisition explanation of the nature and origins of the denominal verbal lexicon. Hale & Keyser (1992, 1998) rely on syntactic principles to account for the syntactic derivation of English denominal verbs. Kiparsky (1997) provides a semantic generalization about denominal verbs, especially for

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location and locatum verbs. Kiparsky suggests that the syntactic behavior of English denominal verbs is related to their semantics and other general cognitive principles. Following Kiparsky, Gottfurcht (2008) adopts a semantic approach to inquire into the causes that determine the creation and interpretation of English denominal verbs.

Mandarin Chinese denominal verbs also have been extensively examined (cf. Liu 2000, Zhou 2000, Xu 2001, He 2006) but not many investigations have focused on denominal verbs in Southern Min. Chan & Tai (1995) need to be singled out because they have made a comprehensive description of denominal verbs in three Chinese dialects: Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taiwan Southern Min. Their paper provides abundant comparative data on these three Chinese dialects, with lexical lists of denominal verbs given with the corresponding nouns. They follow Clark & Clark's (1979) study, whereby English denominal verbs are classified into nine semantic categories,<sup>1</sup> to identify the categories of Mandarin denominal verbs but claim that Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taiwanese denominal verbs only fall into four categories: locatum, location, goal, and instrument verbs while proposing a frequency hierarchy among the different categories of denominal verbs.<sup>2</sup> Despite their careful description, Chan & Tai's (1995) study mostly focuses on illustrating denominal verbs in the three dialects. It is thus difficult to further explore in greater depth the syntactic behavior of Chinese denominal verbs. For example, is the verb transitive? How does the verb take its complement? What are the syntactic alternations for the verb? These syntactic issues are not dealt with in previous studies.

Unlike previous research, the present paper does not put much emphasis on investigating the noun-verb conversion process or discussing primitives for conceptual structures of denominal verbs. Some difficulties can be encountered in identifying the derivational status of certain words. English often uses derivational morphemes to create new stems belonging to different word classes. For example, *-en* can help an adjective become a verb, such as *wide/widen* and *worse/worsen*; *-ize* changes a noun into a verb, such as *fossil/fossilize* and *summary/summarize*. Contrary to the noun-verb pairs with overt marking (e.g. *-en*, *-ize*), expressions like *bottle*, *function*, *question*, *powder*, *bag*, *saddle* can not only serve as a noun, but also as a verb. The examples derived from their nominal bases without involving overt marking are assumed to be English denominal verbs. However, this English definition cannot fully apply to Chinese in which verbs are

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<sup>1</sup> These nine categories include: location (ground the plane), locatum (powder the nose), goal (group the actors), source (cream the butter), experiencer (witness the accident), instrument (rope off the area), duration (vacation in Mexico), agent (parent the children), miscellaneous (lunch on a hotdog).

<sup>2</sup> The instrument verbs are observed to be the highest in the hierarchy for the three Chinese dialects.

rarely morphologically marked. The lexical entries of TSM denominal verbs shown in this paper mostly follow the ones offered in Chan & Tai (1995). This paper also assumes the two following verb groups to be near homophonous denominal verbs. The first group contains verbs with systematic tonal alternation with their nominal bases. For example, the *chi7-chih4* ‘lick-tongue’ pair shows a tonal difference: Chan & Tai (1995) notice that the verb consistently occurs in Yang-Qu (Tone IIIv, the lower-departing tone) in this type of verb-noun pair. In addition, in the verb-noun pair like *teng3-teng1* ‘nail-nail’, the verb always occurs in Yin-Qu (Tone IIIu, the upper-departing tone). Since the tonal difference forms a systematic pattern, I consider the *chi7-chih4* ‘lick-tongue’ and *teng3-teng1* ‘nail-nail’ pairs to be near homophonous denominal verbal pairs. Furthermore, I also observed that in several examples the suffix *-a2* is often attached to the nominal forms. Some examples refer to the offspring of humans and animals, such as *kau2-a2* ‘puppy’ and *niau1-a2* ‘kitten’; some examples refer to inanimate entities, such as *kin1-a2* ‘scarf’, *beh4-a2* ‘wheat’, *kau1-a2* ‘hook’, *hu5-a2* ‘written charm’, *ioh4-a2* ‘medicine’, *liu2-a2* ‘button’, *lak4-te7-a2* ‘pocket’, *pong7-a2* ‘scale’, *te7-a2* ‘bag’ and *giap4-a2* ‘clip’. The suffix *-a2* is basically assumed to be a diminutive marker indicating the small size or the state of being familiarly known, lovable, pitiable or contemptible (cf. Chen 1999). The nominal form is attached by the suffix due to its semantic need. This paper also considers verbs with these noun-*a2* base forms to be denominal verbs.

We do not aim to classify denominal verbs according to Clark & Clark’s (1979) work. Rather, the present study attempts to: (i) describe lexical properties of denominal verbs in Taiwan Southern Min; (ii) illustrate the idiosyncratic features of denominal verbs; and (iii) investigate the aspectual nature of the verbs to explore the correlation between the source noun and the derived verb. The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 provides a general introduction. In §2, the data are presented. In §3, the main characteristic features of the denominal verbs, and the repetition of the verb and its parent noun are introduced. In §4, a locatum and location alternation of denominal verbs is shown. In §5, the aspectual properties of denominal verbs are investigated. In addition, the present study further collects sentence data from the Taiwanese Concordance Corpus which is administered by Un-gian Iunn.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The corpus contains data collected from novels, letters, academic articles, poems, and speeches. It includes at least 3,000,000 Taiwanese words. The corpus can be found by Un-gian Iunn’s website: [iug.csie.dahan.edu.tw/iug/Ungian/ungian.asp](http://iug.csie.dahan.edu.tw/iug/Ungian/ungian.asp)

## 2. Data on Taiwan Southern Min denominal verbs

This section presents the data for Taiwan Southern Min denominal verbs, based on verbal transitivity. Most TSM denominal verbs occur in a transitive sentence pattern with [V + O] form (see §2.1). Denominal verbs can also feature an object-preposed pattern, [O + V], which is discussed in §2.2.

### 2.1 The transitive pattern: [V + O]

Most TSM denominal verbs are found to be transitive and are immediately followed by an object. The data, transcribed according to the Church Romanization, are shown as follows.

- (1) *phinn7* ‘to smell’ (noun: *phinn7* ‘a nose’)  
 U7 lang5 ai3 phinn7 phang1 e5 bi7  
 have people love smell fragrant ADJ<sup>4</sup> smell  
 ‘Some people like to smell a fragrant smell.’
- (2) *te7* ‘pocket’ (noun: *te7* ‘a pocket’)  
 a. Li2 te7 chit4 khoan2 mih4 beh4 cho3 siann2-mih4  
 2SG bag this kind thing want do what  
 ‘What do you want to do to bag this kind of thing?’  
 b. Lak4-te7-a2 te7 pong7-a2: bo5 chinn5 e5 i3-su3  
 bag-pocket-DIM pocket scale-DIM without money NOM meaning  
 ‘To put a scale in a pocket indicates “no money”.’
- (3) *pong7* ‘to weigh’ (noun: *pong7* ‘a scale’)  
 Pong7 the2 tang7 e5 kiat4-ko2, cheng1 ka1 chit8 kong1-kin1  
 weigh body weight NOM result increase add one kilogram  
 ‘The result of weighing the body is that one kilogram has increased.’
- (4) *pau1* ‘to pack’ (noun: *pau1* ‘a pack’)  
 a. Iong7 tam5 sann1 pau1 thau5-khak4  
 use wet clothes pack head shell  
 ‘Use a wet piece of clothing to wrap the head.’

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<sup>4</sup> The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ADJ: adjective marker; CL: classifier; DAT: dative marker; DIM: diminutive; GEN: genitive; NEG: negation; NOM: nominalizer; PART: sentence-final particle; PASS: passive marker; PERF: perfective aspect; PHAS: phasal marker; PL: plural; Q: question marker; SG: singular.

- b. Thau5-khak4    pau1    chit8    tiau5    oo1    kin1  
 head shell    pack    one    CL    black    scarf  
 ‘The head was wrapped in a black scarf.’
- (5) *tiam2* ‘to dot’ (noun: *tiam2* ‘a dot’)  
 Hoo1 lang5    tiam2    iu5    cho3    ki3-ho7  
 PASS    people    dot    oil    make    marker  
 ‘(You are) marked by people.’
- (6) *koo5* ‘to paste’ (noun: *koo5* ‘paste’)  
 a. Lai5    tau3    koo5    iu5-phio3  
     come    help    paste    stamp  
     ‘Come and help paste the stamps.’  
 b. Koo5    chit8    keng1    lau5-a2-chhu3  
     paste    one    CL    building-DIM-house  
     ‘Paste a building.’
- (7) *le5* ‘to plow’ (noun: *le5* ‘a plow’)  
 Kho3    chit8    chiah4    gu5    ka7    lang5    le5    chhan5    koe3    jit8  
 rely    one    CL    cattle    KA    people    plow    field    pass    day  
 ‘(He) relies on one ox to plow the fields for others.’
- (8) *chhat4* ‘to paint’ (noun: *chhat4* ‘paint’)  
 I1    chhat4    thang1-a2    kap4    chhat4    piah4  
 3SG    paint    window-DIM    and    paint    wall  
 ‘He painted the window and the wall.’
- (9) *so2* ‘to lock’ (noun: *so2* ‘a lock’)  
 Siann2-mih4    lang5    so2    chit4-e5    mng5  
 what    people    lock    this    door  
 ‘Who locked the door?’
- (10) *chi7* ‘to lick’ (noun: *chi7* ‘tongue’)  
 Ka7    lan2    io5    boe2,    chi7    lan2    e5    chhiu2  
 KA    1PL    wave    tail    lick    1PL    GEN    hand  
 ‘(It) waved its tail at us and licked our hands.’
- (11) *pe5* ‘to rake’ (noun: *pe5* ‘a rake’)  
 Li2    seng1    khi3    pe5    nng7    oann2    moai5    tan2    goa2  
 2SG    first    go    rake    two    bowl    congee    wait    1SG  
 ‘First go eat some congee and wait for me.’

All the TSM verbs involved in (1)-(11) are transitive with a [V + O] pattern, including *phinn7* ‘to smell/nose’, *te7* ‘to pocket/pocket’, *pong7* ‘to weigh/scale’, *pau1* ‘to pack/pack’, *tiam2* ‘to dot/dot’, *koo5* ‘to paste/paste’, *le5* ‘to plow/plow’, *chhat4* ‘to paint/paint’, *so2* ‘to lock/lock’, *pe5* ‘to rake/rake’. Harley (1999) points out that event-denoting denominal verbs need to be transitive. Harley’s statement is close to our observation, i.e. the most TSM denominal verbs are event-denoting transitive verbs.

## 2.2 The preverbal object pattern: [O + V]

This section presents data in which a verb does *not* precede its object; instead, the object occurs preverbally. Since the objects are preposed, verbs in this section are not recognized as intransitive verbs. The fact that TSM denominal verbs can join the object-preposed construction shows that the verbs are used like genuine verbs which occur in the two most common sentence patterns in TSM. The data are exemplified as follows.

- (12) *pau1* ‘to pack/wrap’ (noun: *pau1* ‘a pack’)  
 Iong7 kin1-a2 ka7 bin7 pau1 kah4 ba7 chiu4-chiu4  
 use scarf-DIM KA face wrap to close tight-tight  
 ‘She used the scarf to closely cover her face.’
- (13) *chhiam2* ‘to fork’ (noun: *chhiam2* ‘a fork’)  
 Chit8 e5 chit8 e5 iong7 thih4 chhiam2 ka7 lang5 chhiam2 loh4 khi3  
 one CL one CL use metal fork KA people fork fall go  
 ‘One by one, they forked people by using the metal forks.’
- (14) *tiam2* ‘to dot’ (noun: *tiam2* ‘a dot’)  
 Ka7 ai3 khau3 ki3, khi3 tiam2 tiau7 a1  
 KA love cry birthmark go dot away PART  
 ‘She removed the love-crying birthmark.’
- (15) *chhia1* ‘to carry with a car/cart’ (noun: *chhia1* ‘a car/cart’)  
 Hoo7 lang5 ka7 goa7 chhia1 chhut4-khi3  
 PASS people KA 1SG car exit-go  
 ‘I was carried out by a cart.’

Object-preposing occurs commonly in TSM. In Lee (2008), I discussed the various syntactic distributions of preverbal objects in Southern Min and pointed out that when a verb is accompanied by an aspectual marker, a phasal marker, or assorted types of complements (e.g. a resultative complement or a locative complement), the object is

basically found to occupy the preverbal position, with the word *ka* frequently employed to mark the preverbal object (cf. Cheng & Tsao 1995, Tsao 2005). A similar situation is observed in Mandarin (cf. Chao 1968, Huang 1982, Travis 1984, Tang 1990, and Sybesma 1992). The postverbal constraint in Mandarin dictates that a verb cannot be followed by both an inner object and a complement (such as a resultative or a locative complement). The best solution to avoid violating the postverbal constraint is to place the object in a preverbal position by either: (i) generating a *ba* construction with an overt *ba* or a covert *ba*; or, (ii) topicalizing the object. Lee (2008) shows that the postverbal constraint is stricter in Southern Min than in Mandarin, as in (16).

- (16) a. \*Goa2 khoann3 soah4 chheh4 ah4 (Taiwan Southern Min)  
 b. Wo3 kan4 wan2 shu1 le (Mandarin)  
 1SG read finish book PERF  
 'I have finished reading the book.'

In addition to the postverbal constraint, the preposed object is observed to hold a property of specificity which also helps a noun to move to a preverbal position.

In addition to the [O + V] pattern or [*ka* O + V] pattern, some denominal verbs can act like unaccusative predicates, but the examples are scarce in TSM. The word *tih4* 'drip' is found to join the unaccusative construction, as in (17).

- (17) *tih4* 'to drip' (*tih4* 'a drop')  
 a. I1-e5 bak8 sai2 i2-keng2 tih4 loh4 lai5  
 3SG-GEN eye tear already drip fall come  
 'His tears have already fallen down.'  
 b. U7 bak8 sai2 tih4 tam5 i1-e5 kha1  
 have eye tear drip at 3SG-GEN foot  
 'There are tears dripping at his foot.'

### 3. Repetition of TSM denominal verbs

A very special characteristic of TSM denominal verbs is that they often co-occur with their base nouns. This repetition is not frequently found in English on which current understanding of denominal verbs is mainly based. The present paper contributes to the existing literature by showing this particular property in TSM. The data with verb-noun repetition are presented by classifying them into three types of configurations: [V<sub>i</sub> N<sub>i</sub>], [N<sub>i</sub>... V<sub>i</sub>] and [V<sub>i</sub>... V<sub>D</sub> N<sub>i</sub>].

### 3.1 V<sub>i</sub> N<sub>i</sub>

Some TSM denominal verbs can take their source nouns to be objects which immediately follow the verb. Examples are shown as in (18)-(20).

- (18) *liu2* ‘to button’ (noun: *liu2* ‘a button’)  
 Hit4 e5 san1 hoe3 e5 boe7 hiau2 liu2 liu2-a2  
 that one three year NOM NEG know button button-DIM  
 ‘That three-year-old boy does not know how to button.’
- (19) *pau1* ‘to pack’ (noun: *pau1* ‘a pack’)  
 I1 pau1 ang5-pau1 hoo7 khan1-hoo7  
 3SG pack red-pack<sup>5</sup> DAT nurse  
 ‘He put some money in the red envelope for a nurse.’
- (20) *chhat4* ‘to paint’ (noun: *chhat4* ‘paint’)  
 Tioh8-ai3 peh4 chiunn5 lai5 chhat4 iu5-chhat4  
 must climb wall come paint oil-paint  
 ‘We must climb the wall to paint.’

An example like *tui1 kui1 tui1* ‘to pile (something) together as a pile’ forms another type of repetition. The object of the verb *tui* ‘pile’ is preposed and the goal noun *tui* ‘a pile’ reiterates the verb.

- (21) *tui1* ‘to pile up’ (noun: a mound)  
 Ka7 che1 tui1 kui1 tui1 thang1 cho3 chha5 sio1  
 KA this pile together pile may do firewood burn  
 ‘Pile them up together and (they) can be used as firewood.’

It is observed that the verbs that join in the [V<sub>i</sub> N<sub>i</sub>] form are classified into locatum verbs, location verbs and goal verbs based on Clark & Clark’s (1979) categories, with *liu2* ‘button’, *chhat4* ‘paint’ as locatum verbs and *pau1* ‘pack’, *tui1* ‘pile’ as goal verbs.

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<sup>5</sup> The ‘red pack/red envelope’ is a cultural tradition whereby Chinese people express their thankfulness, congratulations and blessings to the persons to whom the ‘red envelope’ is given. The ‘red envelope’ usually contains money.



### 3.2 $N_i \dots V_i$

As discussed above, there are rich data using a preposed preverbal object in TSM. The repetitive noun also often occurs preverbally,<sup>6</sup> as in (22)-(29).

- (22) *liu2* ‘to button’ (noun: *liu2* ‘a button’)  
 Goa2 ka7 goa7-i1 e5 liu2-a2 liu2 khi2-lai5  
 1SG KA outer clothes NOM button-DIM button up  
 ‘I buttoned up the buttons of the outer clothes.’
- (23) *te7* ‘to bag’ (noun: *te7* ‘a bag’)  
 a. I1 iong7 te7-a2 te7 khi2-lai5, khng3 ti7 peng1-tu5  
 3SG use bag-DIM bag up put at fridge  
 ‘He used a bag to pack it and put it in the fridge.’  
 b. Beh4-a2 iong7 po3-te7 te7 leh4, sang3 khi3 kang1-tiu<sup>n</sup>5  
 wheat-DIM use cloth-pocket pocket PERF send go factory  
 ‘The wheat is pocketed in pockets and sent to a factory.’
- (24) *pong7* ‘to weigh’ (noun: *pong7* ‘a scale’)  
 Toa7-e5 pong7-a2 thang1 lai5 ka7 pong7  
 big scale-DIM can come KA weigh  
 ‘The big scale can be used to weigh it.’
- (25) *kau1* ‘to hook’ (noun: *kau1* ‘a hook’)  
 Kau5 khi3 the5 chit8 ki1 kau1-a2 beh4 lai5 kau1 kau2-a2  
 monkey go take one CL hook-DIM want come hook dog-DIM  
 ‘The monkey went to take a hook to hook the dog.’
- (26) *phinn7* ‘to smell’ (noun: *phinn7* ‘a nose’)  
 Iong7 chiam1 phinn7-a2 ka7 chia1-mih4 phinn7 phinn7 leh4  
 use sharp nose-DIM KA food smell smell PERF  
 ‘It used its pointed nose to smell the food.’
- (27) *giap4* ‘to clip’ (noun: *giap4* ‘a clip’)  
 Chit8 chiah4 hoo5-li5 boe2-liu1 hoo7 giap4-a2 giap4 tioh8  
 one CL fox tail PASS clip-DIM clip PHAS  
 ‘The fox’s tail was clipped.’

<sup>6</sup> I have examined a total of 92 sentences extracted from the Taiwanese Concordance Corpus containing a base noun and its denominal verb. Among these examples, 21 tokens display a  $[V_i N_i]$  pattern; 61 tokens a  $[N_i \dots V_i]$  pattern and 10 tokens a  $[V_i \dots V_D N_i]$  pattern. That is, 66% of these sentences occur with a preverbal noun and a following co-indexed denominal verb.

- (28) *chi7* ‘to lick’ (noun: *chih4* ‘tongue’)  
 Iong7 chih4 chi7 i1-e5 bin7 kah4 chhiu2  
 Use tongue lick 3SG-GEN face and hand  
 ‘It used its tongue to lick his face and hand.’
- (29) *chhia1* ‘to carry with a car’ (noun: *chhia1* ‘a car’)  
 Ka7 han1-chi5 hoo7 gu5-chhia1 chhia1, chhia1 kau3 chhu3  
 KA sweet potato PASS cattle cart car car to house  
 ‘(S/he) had the sweet potatoes carried by the cattle cart to the house.’

Notice that the verbs with a preposed repetitive source noun can be all identified as instrument verbs, like *liu2* ‘button’, *te7* ‘bag’,<sup>7</sup> *pong7* ‘weigh/scale’, *kau1* ‘hook’, *phinn7* ‘smell/nose’, *giap4* ‘clip’, *chi7* ‘lick’, *chhia1* ‘car’.

### 3.3 $V_i \dots V_D N_i$

I also found examples of a denominal verb occurring with its source noun which is found usually to be a complement of directional verbs, as shown in (30).

- (30) *te7* ‘to bag’ (noun: *te7* ‘a bag’)
- a. A1-hoe1 chiu7 ka7 goo7-chap4 khoo1 te7 jip8 kho3-te7-a2  
 A-hoe then KA fifty dollar bag enter trouser-bag-DIM  
 ‘A-hoe then put the fifty dollars into the bag in her trousers.’
  - b. Niau1-a2 te7 loh4 po3-te7: bo5 bang7  
 kitten-DIM bag fall bag without hope  
 ‘That a kitten is bagged into a bag indicates “no hope”.’

Although there are not many data,<sup>8</sup> the verb type in the [ $V_i \dots V_D N_i$ ] pattern is believed to fall into the location verb category.

### 3.4 Summary of noun-verb repetition

The noun-verb patterns and their corresponding verb classes are summarized in (31).

<sup>7</sup> The word *liu2* ‘button’ and *te7* ‘bag’ can be assumed to be instrument verbs because they bear the syntactic status of the instrumental {*iong* ‘use’}-phrase as in {*iong liu-a liu sang* ‘use buttons to button clothes’} and {*iong te-a te mih* ‘use a bag to carry things’}.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, this type of data can only be found in the example with the verb *te7* ‘bag’.

- (31) a.  $[V_i N_i]$ : locatum verbs, goal verbs  
 b.  $[N_i \dots V_i]$ : instrument verbs  
 c.  $[V_i \dots V_D N_i]$ : location verbs

This finding matches our understanding of TSM argument realization. A locatum and a goal are frequently projected as objects at the syntactic level. The object then occupies the postverbal position with a  $[V_i N_i]$  configuration. The repetition of (31a) is thus derived. Moreover, because the instrument in Chinese (including TSM) mostly occurs preverbally, the  $[N_i \dots V_i]$ -instrument verbs' assemblage shown in (31b) is readily comprehensible. As for the last repetition pattern, (31c), Chinese location is often realized within a directional verbal phrase. It is not surprising to find location verbs occurring in a  $[V_i \dots V_D N_i]$  configuration.

#### 4. Locatum and location alternation

Some TSM denominal verbs exhibit multiple functions. This section introduces the verbs that can take both locatum and location as their direct objects. For example, in (32), the verb *teng3* 'nail' takes a locatum (the thing/person that is nailed to some place) as its object as in (32a), and the same verb can also take a location (the place that something/somebody is nailed to) as its object as in (32b).

- (32) *teng3* 'to nail'
- a. In1 beh4 teng3 i1 ti7 sip8-ji7-ke3  
 3PL will nail 3SG at Cross  
 'They will nail him to the Cross.'
- b. Ia1-so1 teng3 sip8-ji7-ke3 e5 koo3-su7  
 Jesus nail Cross NOM story  
 'the story that Jesus was nailed to the Cross'

This alternation is similar to the English locative alternation which displays an argument alternation in two syntactic frames. The pair of sentences basically describes an entity, the locatum, coming to be at a particular location through the action of an agent (cf. Rappaport Hovav et al. 1993, Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005), such as (33).

- (33) a. Bill sprayed paint on the wall.  
 b. Bill sprayed the wall with paint.

However, it is not easy in the corpus to find a parallel example pair with a perfect alternation as in (33). I still found four pairs of examples like (32), (34), (35), and (36) involving verbs participating in one or more argument alternations.

(34) *pau1* ‘to pack/wrap’

- a. Goa2 beh4 khai1-si2 pau1 jio7-chu7 khun3 a1  
1SG will start pack diaper sleep PART  
‘I will start to wear a diaper while sleeping.’
- b. Thiah4 ang5 chhe<sup>n</sup>1-hoan1-e5 sann1 lai5 pau1 hit4 liap8 thau5  
tear red aborigines-GEN clothes come pack that CL head  
‘Tear the red aborigines’ clothes to wrap that head.’

(35) *chhat4* ‘paint’

- a. Tioh8-ai3 peh4 chiunn5 lai5 chhat4 iu5-chhat4  
must climb wall come paint oil-paint  
‘We must climb the wall to paint.’
- b. I1 chhat4 thang1-a2 kap4 chhat4 piah4  
3SG paint window-DIM and paint wall  
‘He painted the window and the wall.’

(36) *koo5* ‘to paste’

- a. Mng5 teng2 koo5 kim1 hu5-a2  
door top paste golden written charm-DIM  
‘A golden written charm was pasted on the top of the door.’
- b. Liah8 i1 beh4 lai5 koo5 piah4  
catch 3SG will come paste wall  
‘Catch him to paste him to the wall.’

In (34a), (35a), and (36a), the verbs *pau1* ‘pack’, *chhat4* ‘paint’ and *koo5* ‘paste’ take a locatum as their objects, while in (34b), (35b), and (36b), a location functions as object.

Furthermore, there are about 378 sentences found in the corpus with location or locatum objects among a total of 1,270 utterances. The frequency of location objects, 267 tokens, is more than locatum objects, 111 tokens. The data show that location-examples exceed locatum-examples by a ratio of 2.5 to 1. In addition, the denominal verbs with locatum objects are observed to be mostly derived from instrumental base nouns, while the denominal verbs with location objects are from various types of base nouns, including instrumental nouns.

## 5. Aktionsart and aspectual properties

In some recent work, the aspectual properties of denominal verbs have attracted the attention of linguists. For instance, Harley (1999) explores the telicity relationship between source nouns and denominal verbs. By showing the identical aktionsart properties of the source noun and the denominal verb, she posits that the verbs derived from count nouns are telic and those derived from mass nouns are atelic. Harley's conclusion is based on the temporal adverbial 'in' and 'for' tests, as shown in (37):

- (37) a. Mary saddled the horse in 5 minutes/#for 5 minutes.  
 b. John boxed the computer in an hour/#for an hour.  
 c. Susan watered the garden in an hour/for an hour.  
 d. Bill greased the chain in 5 minutes/for 5 minutes.

The present study does not follow this *in-or-for* test which successfully helps identify the telicity in English data. However, I believe that TSM has its own unique syntactic mechanisms to verbalize aspectual information. After carefully examining the TSM data, at least four expressions V-*tioh*, V-*khi-lai*, *teh*-V and VV are found to convey TSM aktionsart, including phasal and aspectual functions.

### 5.1 V-*tioh*

Following Chao (1968), Cheng (1992, 1997), Lien (1995), Tang et al. (1997), and Tsao (1998), Lien (2001, 2005) makes a distinction between phase and aspect. He assumes that *tioh8* is a phase marker. According to Lien, phase refers to the inherent temporal constitution of a situation with reference time and speech time. Aspect, on the other hand, denotes types of temporal situations as viewed from the standpoint of the speaker. In addition to an example of phase marker *tioh8*, TSM aspect markers are exemplified by *ah* or *leh*. Unlike the aspect marker *ah*, *tioh8* is syntactically closer to the main verb as in *chiah8 tioh8 ah* 'ate' rather than *chiah8 ah tioh8*. Moreover, *tioh8* can be employed in the TSM probability VC construction, as in *chiah8 e7 tioh8* 'can eat' rather than \**chiah8 e7 ah*.

Some TSM denominal verbs are found to accompany the phase marker *tioh8*, such as *phin7 tioh8* 'smell', *tih4 tioh8* 'drip', *kau1 tioh8* 'hook', *koo5 tioh8* 'paste', and *bang7 tioh8* 'net', as shown in (38)-(42).

- (38) Tak8-ke1 long2 it4-tit8      phin7 tioh8 bak8-li7 e5 phang1 bi7  
 everybody all continuously smell PHAS jasmine ADJ fragrant smell  
 'Everybody continuously smelled the fragrant smell of jasmine.'

- (39) U7 hoo7 tih4 tioh8 thau5 bin7  
 have rain drip PHAS head face  
 ‘There are rain drops dripping on the head and face.’
- (40) Kau1-a2 kau1 tioh8 kau2-a2  
 hook-DIM hook PHAS dog-DIM  
 ‘The hook hooked the puppy.’
- (41) Li2 bak8-chiu1 sai2 koo5 tioh8!  
 2SG eye shit paste PHAS  
 ‘Your eyes are pasted with shit!’
- (42) Bo5 loa7 ku2, to7 bang7 tioh8 chin1 che3 hi5  
 NEG that long then net PHAS very many fish  
 ‘Not long afterwards, many fish were netted.’

By showing the above data with denominal verbs, I support Lien’s (2001) observation that *tioh8* takes on the phasal function of achievement. In addition, there are two types of activity verb with which *tioh8* can co-occur, involving volition and not involving volition. TSM denominal verbs present the two semantic types and they both denote achievement.

## 5.2 V-*khi-lai*

The expression *khi2-lai5* ‘raise-come’ is assumed to be a TSM directional complements which can signal aspectual relations. Lien (1997) points out that the directionals are derived from lexical verbs. They develop into functional markers to complement main verbs and frequently appear in Chinese dialects. The corresponding form of TSM *khi2-lai5* in Mandarin is *qi-lai*, and it can perform four functions: directionality, inchoativity, completion, and conditionality (cf. Chang 1994). However, it is found that the TSM denominal verbs mostly serve to express inchoativity and completion. The examples are shown as in (43)-(47).

- (43) a. Iong7 oo1 sok4-ka1 lok4-a2 pau1 khi2-lai5  
 use black plastic bag-DIM pack up-come  
 ‘Use a black plastic bag to wrap it up.’
- b. An2-ne1 pau1 khi2-lai5 chiu7 si7 sang1 ian5 loo  
 this way pack up-come exactly be three layer PART  
 ‘Wrap it up this way, then, it is a three-layered one.’

- (44) Ka7 mng5 chhoann3 khi2-lai5  
 KA door bar up-come  
 ‘Bar the door.’
- (45) Goa2 ka7 mng5 so2 khi2-lai5  
 1SG KA door lock up-come  
 ‘I locked the door.’
- (46) a. In1 chiong7 kam2-cheng5 peng1 khi2-lai5  
 3PL dispose feeling ice up-come  
 ‘They freeze their feelings.’  
 b. Kin2 ka7 peng1 khi2-lai5 khng3  
 hurry KA ice up-come put  
 ‘Hurry, freeze it.’
- (47) Na7 chhio3 chit8 e7, bin7 phoe5 to7 jiau5<sup>9</sup> khi2-lai5  
 if smile one CL face skin then wrinkle up-come  
 ‘If I smile, my facial skin wrinkles.’

Notice that the arguments in the above sentences do not undergo an upward change of location. *Khi-lai* in the VC sequences *pau khi-lai* ‘packed’ as in (43), *chhoann khi-lai* ‘barred’ as in (44), *so khi-lai* as in ‘locked’ (45) convey completive meaning; while *peng khi-lai* ‘freeze’ as in (46), *jiau khi-lai* ‘wrinkle’ as in (47) express inchoative meaning. The completive *khi-lai* indicates a completion of the action involved by the attached verb; the inchoative *khi-lai* displays an aktionsart of the attached verb with emphasis on the beginning part of a situation.

### 5.3 *Teh-V*

TSM preverbal *teh4* is considered to be an aspectual expression which performs a progressive function. Some denominal verbs are found to take the progressive marker *teh4*, as is shown in (48)-(51).

<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to find intransitive denominal verbs in the corpus. The word *jiau5* is the only example found in a total of 28 denominal verbs. Chan & Tai (1995) point out that TSM instrument verbs appear to be the most common, goal verbs the next, and locatum/location verbs the least common. An event with instrument, goal, location, or locatum usually contains more than one argument. Harley (1999) also observes that event-denoting denominal verbs need to be transitive. TSM denominal verbs thus rarely serve as intransitive verbs.

- (48) Teh4 lau5 teh4 tih4  
 PERF flow PERF drip  
 ‘It is flowing and dripping.’
- (49) Che7 ti7 chenn2 pinn1 teh4 se1 thau5 chang1  
 sit at well side PERF comb head hair  
 ‘(She) was sitting at the side of a well and combing her hair.’
- (50) Khi3 giu2 lai5 teh4 kau1 hi5  
 go pull come PERF hook fish  
 ‘(He) went to pull the thing and was hooking a fish.’
- (51) Chhan1-chhiunn7 gong7 gu5 teh4 le5 chhan5  
 like stupid cattle PERF plow field  
 ‘(I act) like a stupid ox plowing fields.’

Tang (2000) points out that *teh4* can only precede an activity verb to indicate the proceeding of the action. The verbs *tih4* ‘drip’, *se1* ‘comb’, *kau1* ‘hook’ and *le5* ‘plow’ in (48)-(51), responding to Tang’s observation, are activity verbs.

## 5.4 VV

TSM employs the reduplication of verbs to convey tentative, attenuative, and repetitive aspects. I found some TSM denominal verbs to adopt this verbal reduplication mechanism. The following instances of *chiam* ‘needle’, *pau* ‘pack’, and *chi7* ‘lick’ mainly reveal the attenuative and repetitive aspects. Similar to the *teh*-V pattern, verbs with VV form are required to be activity ones.

- (52) *chiam1* ‘to prick someone with a needle’ (noun: *chiam1* ‘a needle’)  
 Goa2 ka7 li2 chiam1 chiam1 leh4, khui1 chit8 thiap4 ioh4-a2  
 1SG KA 2SG needle needle PERF open one CL medicine-DIM  
 hoo7 li2  
 DAT 2SG  
 ‘I’ll give you acupuncture and then give you a prescription.’
- (53) Peng1-siunn1 poann3 chiah4 ke1, tok4 tok4 paul paul leh4  
 fridge half CL chicken chop chop pack pack PERF  
 ‘Chop and then pack half of the chicken in the fridge.’
- (54) Han1-chi5 chiah8 liau2 chhiu2 koh4 chi7 chi7 leh4  
 sweet potato eat finish hand also lick lick PERF  
 ‘When he had finished eating the sweet potatoes, he licked his hands.’



It is noteworthy that the postverbal particle *leh* is observed to consistently accompany the VV replication in the above examples. This fact agrees with Cheng's (1988) assertion that TSM verbal reduplication always co-occurs with a following complement of which the particle *leh* serves as a possibility.<sup>10</sup>

### 5.5 Denominal verbs and telicity

In this section, I have provided four syntactic patterns often used in TSM to express aspectual properties. The four syntactic structures respectively convey different aspects which are summarized in (55)-(58).

- (55) V-*tioh*: achievement  
e.g. *phin7* 'smell', *tih4* 'drip', *kau1* 'hook', *khoo5* 'paste', *bang7* 'net'
- (56) V-*khi-lai*: inchoative and continuous  
e.g. *pau1* 'pack', *chhoann3* 'bar', *so2* 'lock', *peng1* 'freeze', *jiau5* 'wrinkle'
- (57) *teh*-V: progressive  
e.g. *tih4* 'drip', *se1* 'comb', *kau1* 'hook' and *le5* 'plow'
- (58) VV: attenuative, repetitive, tentative  
e.g. *chiam1* 'needle', *pau1* 'pack', *chi7* 'lick'

A denominal verb is not restricted to appearing in only one possible syntactic form. There are some overlaps among the denominal verbs participating in the different syntactic patterns. Furthermore, the TSM denominal verbs occurring in this paper are assumed to be activity verbs. First, the word *tioh8* is used to indicate an instantaneous realization of an event which is usually designated by an activity verb. In addition, based on the textual evidence of *Li Jing Ji*, Lien (2005) points out that *tioh* mostly combines with activity verbs. Similar to Lien's observation, *tioh* frequently attaches to activity verbs in the data provided above. Second, the directional aspectual marker *khi-lai* indicates the commencement of an action and that the activity remains in a certain state. *Khi-lai* is also observed to occur with an activity verb. Third, the progressive marker *teh* is commonly assumed to modify an activity verb. Lastly, Tang (2000) points out that only activity verbs can join the VV reduplication form. The four aspectual markers support the idea that TSM denominal verbs are basically activity verbs. On the other

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the particle *leh4*, deictic elements like *jip8* 'enter', *chhut4* 'exit', *khi2* 'raise', *loh4* 'fall', *lai5* 'come', and *khi3* 'go' can also follow VV reduplication (cf. Cheng 1988:440-441). When a VV reduplication form occurs with *leh4*, it is assumed to convey an attenuative aspect.

hand, the nature of an activity verb will also determine the selection of aspectual markers. This finding enables us to further investigate the aspectual properties of TSM denominal verbs. Since denominal verbs are developed from their source nouns, it is presumed that there exists an aspectual correlation between the base nominal and the derived verb. We explore this correlation at the end of this section.

Jackendoff (1992) proposes the semantic feature of boundedness ( $[\pm\text{bounded}]$  or  $[\pm b]$ ) to distinguish between count and mass nouns. Jackendoff defines a count noun to be an object where *one cannot divide its referent up and still get something named by the same count noun*, for example, *an apple*; and a mass noun to be a substance that *one can divide its referent up and still get something describable (as the same thing)*, for example, *'water'*. This feature system can be applied to TSM as in (59).

- (59) a.  $[+b]$ : count nouns (e.g. *pau1* 'pack')  
 b.  $[-b]$ : mass nouns (e.g. *peng1* 'ice')

Following Jackendoff (1992), TSM denominal verbs should be mostly classified as count nouns and marked with the feature  $[+b]$ , such as *phin7* 'nose', *kau1* 'hook', *bang7* 'net', *pau1* 'pack', *chhoann3* 'bar', *so2* 'lock', *jiau5* 'wrinkle', *se1* 'comb', *le5* 'plow', *chiam1* 'needle', *chi7* 'tongue' and *chhat4* 'paint'. On the other hand, the mass nouns are very scarce, *khoo5* 'paste' and *peng1* 'ice' fall into this category.

In line with Jackendoff,<sup>11</sup> Harley (1999) further points out that the aspectual properties of nominal meanings have a parallel in the derived verbal ones. The same method to distinguish count and mass nouns can be applied to event types. She proposes a clear list to illustrate this analogue.

- (60) From Harley (1999:76, ex.(6))

	Thing	Event
+bounded	apple	flash
-bounded	water	sleep

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, Harley assumes that count and mass nouns respectively evolve into telic and atelic verbs.

As far as TSM denominal verbs are concerned, the frequent aspects conveyed by these verbs are argued to be achievement, completive, inchoative, progressive, and repetitive, as shown in (55)-(58). The aspects of achievement and completion are used to describe telic events, while progressive and repetitive aspects denote atelic events.

<sup>11</sup> The feature of boundedness has been noted by many other linguists (Gruber 1967, Talmy 1978, Bach 1986, among others.)

However, the verbs attached by the achievement marker *tioh* are not all derived from count nouns. For example, *khoo5* ‘paste’ is not countable. Moreover, most of the verbs attached by the progressive marker *teh* have a [+bounded] feature and connect to telic events. Verbal reduplication also does not follow the rule of a [+bounded] noun linking to a telic event. Only the inchoative affix *khi-lai* seems to obey the linking rule that mass nouns are associated with atelic events.

Based on the data mentioned above, I conclude that TSM denominal verbs do not inherit the aspectual properties of their parent nouns. In other words, the aspectual selection restriction of TSM denominal verbs does not tie in the restriction of their nominal sources. These aspectual findings of TSM denominal verbs disagree with Harley’s theory on the relationship between English denominal verbs and their aktionsart.

## 6. Concluding remarks

The present study investigates the Taiwan Southern Min (TSM) denominal verbs and their syntactic and semantic characteristics. A large quantity of data with TSM denominal verbs is provided, especially their syntactic distribution rather than their lexical entries. Previous research on Chinese denominal verbs mostly focuses on the classification of denominal verbs or the derivation process of noun-to-verb development. The present study not only discusses their syntactic properties of TSM denominal verbs but also their semantic behavior, specifically aktionsart. It is found that most TSM denominal verbs are transitive and can be immediately followed by their objects in [V + O] form; less commonly they also allow their objects to occur in a preverbal position, [O + V].

The most intriguing finding is the iteration of the denominal verb with its source noun. Three types of syntactic configurations are observed: [V<sub>i</sub> N<sub>i</sub>], [N<sub>i</sub>...V<sub>i</sub>] and [V<sub>i</sub>...V<sub>D</sub> N<sub>i</sub>]. The TSM denominal verbs surprisingly employ the repetition mechanism frequently. As far as verb types are concerned, locatum and goal verbs tend to occur in the [V<sub>i</sub> N<sub>i</sub>] sentence pattern, while instrument verbs prefer the [N<sub>i</sub>...V<sub>i</sub>] pattern and location verbs appear in the [V<sub>i</sub>...V<sub>D</sub> N<sub>i</sub>] pattern. The selection between semantic verb types and the repetition sentence patterns is assumed to be constrained by Chinese word order (cf. Tai 1985). For example, an instrument appears before the verb when the event involves an instrument and a triggered activity. In an example such as *use a nail to nail something*, the repetitive noun will occupy the preverbal position.

The locatum/location alternation is also discussed in this paper. I have not found any data in the TSM corpus that exhibits the locatum/location alternation as in English. However, I have discovered some TSM denominal verbs which can take a locatum or a

location as object. The locatum/location alternation shown in TSM data seems to be closer to the locative alternation.

The last section of this paper focuses on the aspectual features of TSM denominal verbs. Four commonly used patterns for TSM denominal verbs were found to convey aspectual information: *V-tioh*, *V-khi-lai*, *teh-V*, and VV reduplication. They respectively manifest achievement, completion, inchoativity, progression, and attenuative repetition. The aspectual correlation between the denominal verbs and their parent nouns was further explored. According to Jackendoff (1996), the event is connected by a structure-preserving binding relation. In the case of TSM denominal verbs, the verb is linked to its base noun, but unlike the English data, TSM denominal verbs are aspectually independent from the nominal sources.

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## 論台灣閩南語之名轉動詞

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本文探討在台灣閩南語 (TSM) 中，名詞轉化為動詞後，此類動詞的語法及語意特色。過去研究台灣閩南語名詞動用的文獻不是很多，其中，Chan & Tai (1995) 呈現了大量的語料，但是沒有語法上的討論。本文列出 TSM 名轉動詞的語法分布，並提出 TSM 的名轉動詞也有其獨特的處物/處所 (locatum/location) 句型轉換。此外，本文還提出四種語法形式，來說明 TSM 名轉動詞常會以這些形式來表達其動貌 (aspect)。本文根據這些語法特性，探討 TSM 名轉動詞特有的動貌性質。本文發現 TSM 名轉動詞的動貌性質，非常不同於英語的現象 (參看 Harley 1999)。本文論證 TSM 的名轉動詞與其來源名詞之間，在動貌特徵上，彼此並無強相關。

關鍵詞：名轉動詞，名詞動用，動貌，動相，台灣閩南語