

**A CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT:  
A TWO-COMPONENT THEORETIC APPROACH**

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This talk surveys the imperfective aspect markers of Japanese, Chinese, Korean and English, and argues that although the distinction between perfective and imperfective is the most fundamental of aspectual distinctions, analysis of these languages reveals that this distinction can sometimes be murky. A unified account of the imperfective morphology in these languages is presented which relies on the interaction of inherent aspect and viewpoint aspect markers (Smith 1991). It is suggested that the differences among these languages are the results of the different patterns and degrees of grammaticization of their imperfective markers. It is also shown that the interaction of these two components and the notion of prototypical combination predict the pattern of the acquisition of tense-aspect markers in various languages (the Aspect Hypothesis, Andersen & Shirai 1994, Shirai & Andersen 1995).

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