

Aspect in Marathi in a Cross-dialectal Perspective

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Abstract

This paper presents aspectual system in the selected regional varieties of Marathi and then compare the aspectual system of these dialectal varieties with that of the standard dialect of Marathi. Comrie (1976) describes perfectivity as viewing a situation externally, from outside, with no reference to its internal temporal structure, while imperfectivity allows the viewing of the situation from within, making explicit reference to the internal temporal structure. Aspect in Marathi has previously been studied by Dhongde (1984: 468) who observes that aspect markers are more important than tense markers in Marathi, for example, English past is matched by Marathi perfective plus present. Tense auxiliaries are either dropped or merged with aspect marker in many cases. Deo (2006: 228) examines aspect in Marathi in a diachronic perspective; she observes that the rise of tense distinctions in the form of tense auxiliaries and the semantic effect this development has on the tense/aspect systems in New Indo-Aryan languages needs detailed investigation. The present study attempts to address this need by examining synchronic variation in the aspectual systems in selected Marathi dialects. This study tries to fill the gap by providing synchronic data analysis of aspectual systems in regional varieties of Marathi. The data is drawn from an on-going survey of Marathi dialects at the Deccan College, Pune. In this study, we found that the selected three varieties have three-way aspectual distinction i.e. perfective, progressive and habitual. We also found that progressive is marked with different markers in the selected varieties as compared to perfective and habitual markings. Inceptive is used to show progressivity in Chandgad and Shirol data.

Keywords: Aspect, Variation, Marathi Dialects, Perfective, Imperfective

1. Introduction

The goal of this study is to present aspectual system in regional varieties of Marathi, i.e. Chandgad (Kolhapur district), Shirol (Latur district) and Yerla (Nagpur district) villages, in Maharashtra state and compare it with the standard dialect of Marathi. The focus is to examine synchronic variation in aspectual systems of these varieties (see Section 2.1 below for the details about selection of varieties and area of data collection).

Even though, this study is focused more on aspectual system in the selected regional varieties of Marathi, we have to consider aspect and tense systems together in Indo-Aryan languages like Marathi.

Tense is a deictic category, i.e. locates situations in time, usually with reference to the present moment, though also with reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation; one could state the difference is situation internal time (aspect) and situation external time (tense) (Comrie 1976: 5). Comrie (1976) further describes

perfectivity as viewing a situation externally, from outside, with no reference to its internal temporal structure, while imperfectivity allows the viewing of the situation from within, making explicit reference to the internal temporal structure. Tense is grammaticalized expression of location in time.

Inflections occur in successive layers to the right of the lexical base in the New Indo-Aryan (NIA) verbal paradigm. Although in some Northwestern languages, some elements occur to the left of it under special conditions e.g. negation/ question words. The basic pattern given for NIA finite verb by Masica (1991: 258) is as follows;

Verb Stem + Aspect Marker + (concord) + Tense/ Mood Marker + (concord)

One or the other concord marker may be absent in one paradigmatic form or another in NIA languages, although both are present in number of paradigmatic forms in a number of languages. This pattern may behave differently in NIA languages. This does not cover non-finite forms (Masica 1991).

After the discussion on inflectional categories e.g. concord, aspect, and tense/ mood and then on language specific paradigms, the author points out that how many of these forms actually function in a given register or regional or class dialect is an important question (Masica 1991).

Aspectuality and temporal relations are often directly expressed by operators on the verb root, but also on a more conceptual level. These operators often have scope over the entire predicative relation, giving it aspectual specification which is integrated in the temporal frames of reference through specifying the relations therein (Descles and Guentcheva 2012).

The meanings associated with perfectivity/ perfective/ imperfective show that there are conceptual distinctions that many languages express more or less directly, either through grammatical markers, or through syntactic periphrases, and that the logical temporal models have not, a priori, succeeded in capturing them on a formal level. Initial observation of the grammatical (and lexical) markers in languages is necessary in order to progressively establish a general, coherent conceptual system that would moreover enable a general cognitive interpretation (Descles and Guentcheva 2012).

To establish a typology of tense-aspect systems cross-linguistically, it is necessary to have recourse to a general conceptual system in order to draw up a conceptual semantic map (Descles and Guentcheva 2012).

An analysis is provided on how Early Romani aspectual opposition (perfective: non-perfective) and tense opposition (remote: non-remote) is preserved in present-day tense, aspect and mood (TAM) system in Romani dialects. Matras further illustrates that the internal renewal is common in arrangement of categories in borderline of TAM, namely the domain Present-Subjunctive-Future. And contact induced developments are confined mainly to aktionsart and to conditional and quotative modality. Further, some implications related to the stability of categories in areal contact situations are drawn (Matras 2001).

This research paper provides thorough account of Romani TAM categories and its historical development through different stages. This research is related to the studies in Indian languages to understand TAM across dialects of a language, internal development as well as contact-induced development in dialects and in the selected language.

A comprehensive survey of tense/ aspect/ mood marking on NP constituents across the world's languages are presented in Nordlinger and Sadler 2004. The authors point out that the general assumption in linguistic theory is that the categories of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) are inflectional categories of verbal classes only. In a number of languages around the world, nominals and other NP constituents are also inflected for these categories. Two distinct types

are identified: Propositional Nominal TAM where nominal carries TAM information relevant to the whole proposition, and Independent Nominal TAM where TAM information encoded on the nominal is relevant only to the NP on which it is marked (Nordlinger and Sadler 2004).

Aspect in Marathi has previously been studied by Dhongde (1984) who observes that aspect markers are more important than tense markers in Marathi, for example, English Past is matched by Marathi perfective plus present. Tense auxiliaries are either dropped or merge with aspect marker in many cases.

Deo (2006) examines aspect in Marathi in a diachronic perspective; she observes that the rise of tense distinctions in the form of tense auxiliaries and the semantic effect this development has on the tense/aspect systems in New Indo-Aryan languages needs detailed investigation. This study tries to fill the gap by providing synchronic data analysis of aspectual system in regional varieties of Marathi.

The data are drawn from an on-going project, 'The Survey of Dialects of the Marathi Language' at the Deccan College, Pune.

Research Question: Does aspectual system vary in regional dialects of Marathi?

Hypothesis: Aspectual system doesn't vary in regional dialects of Marathi.

2. Methodology

This section details the methodology of data collection and data analysis.

2.1. Method of data collection

The data were elicited from the native speakers of selected three regions of Maharashtra, at least from three speakers of each selected district i.e. Chandgad (Kolhapur), Shirol (Latur), and Yerla (Nagpur). The selected regions are geographically as well as linguistically significant. Firstly, Chandgad is situated in Kolhapur district at Maharashtra-Karnataka border. It is a transition area of Marathi (Indo-Aryan), Konkani (Indo-Aryan) and Kannada (Dravidian) languages. Secondly, Shirol is situated in Latur district at Maharashtra-Karnataka border. At Shirol, the influence of Marathi and Kannada languages was observed. Lastly, Yerla is situated in Nagpur district at Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh border. Former two regions share the contact across Indo-Aryan and Dravidian language families while the latter region share contact between languages of Indo-Aryan family. These regions are shown in Fig. 1 below.

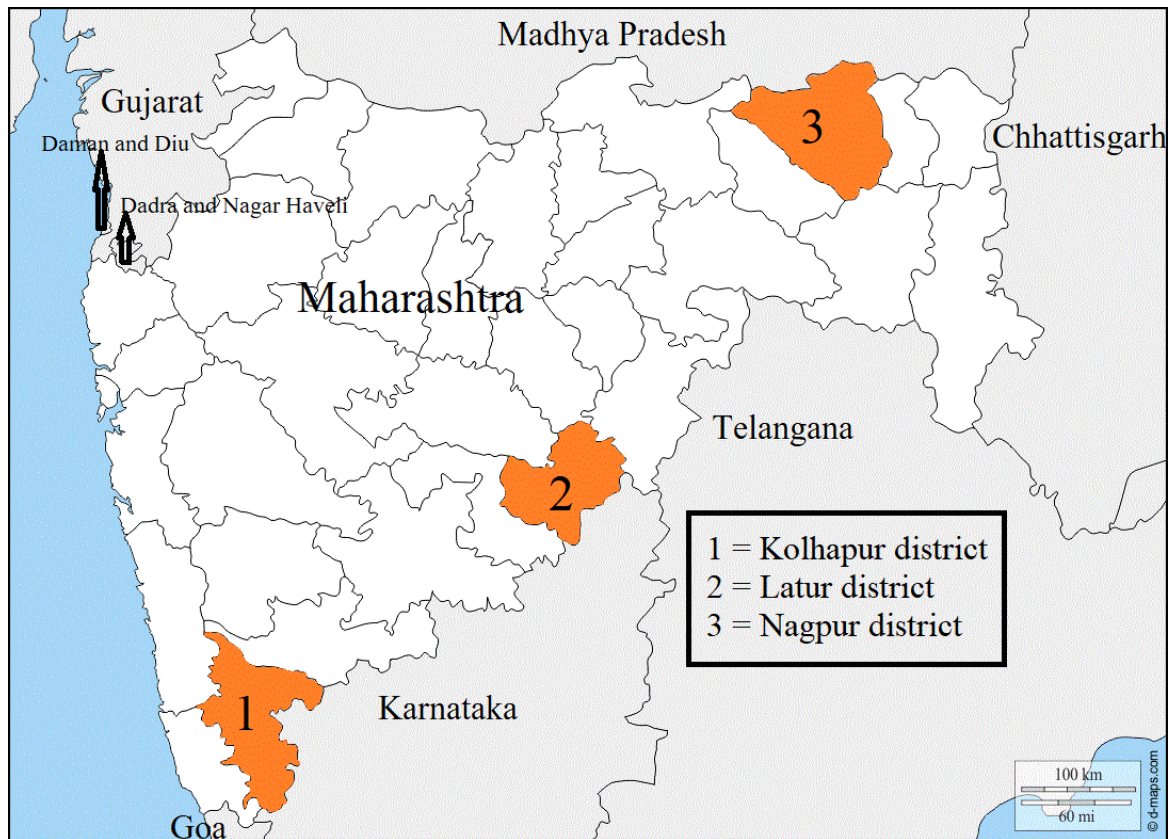


Fig. 1. Selected regional varieties of Marathi

Source: https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=8844&lang=en

After explaining the method of data elicitation, the method of data analysis is explained in Section 2.2 below.

2.2. Method of data analysis

To elicit and examine synchronic variation in the aspectual systems in regional varieties of Marathi, the study uses a multi-pronged approach. Elicited verb paradigms are used in addition to speaker responses to a questionnaire and video tools which were developed collaboratively by the project team. We have also collected narratives and stories from the native speakers. The data were recorded during fieldwork and then the data were transcribed.

While presenting the data in each example, the actual spoken data is given in italics in Line 1, the morphologically segmented data is given in Line 2, the morph by morph interlinear glosses along with grammatical information are provided as per Leipzig convention in Line 3, and the translation of each sentence is given in Line 4.

The data from the selected three regional varieties are compared with standard dialect of Marathi. The focus of analysis is to examine the synchronic variation in the aspectual systems of selected regional varieties of Marathi. The observations based on these comparisons are described in Data Analysis section.

3. Data analysis

3.1 The system of Standard Marathi

The examples from the standard dialect of Marathi are shown in this section;

(1) *tyane* *amba* *k^halla*
tya-ne amba k^ha-ll-a
3SGM-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM
He has eaten (a) mango.

(2) *to* *amba* *k^hat ahe*
to amba k^ha-t ahe
3SGM mango eat-PROG BE.PRS
He is eating (a) mango.

(3) *to* *amba* *k^hato*
to amba k^ha-t-o
3SGM mango eat-HAB-3SGM
He eats (a) mango.

(4) *to* *amba* *k^haycha*
to amba k^ha-ayc-a
3SGM mango eat-HAB.PST-3SGM
He used to eat (a) mango.

These examples show aspectual markings in Standard dialect of Marathi as summarized in Table 1 below;

Table 1. Standard Dialect of Marathi

Standard Dialect of Marathi	
PFV	-l
PROG	-t
PRS- HAB	-t
PST- HAB	-ayc

Now in Section 3.2.1 below, we will see the Chandgad data;

3.2.1 Aspect in Chandgad data

(5) *tyanə* *amba* *k^hallyan*
tya-nə amba k^ha-ll-yan
3SGM-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM
He has eaten (a) mango.

(6) *tinə* *amba* *k^hallin*
ti-nə amba k^ha-ll-in
3SGF-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGF
She has eaten (a) mango.

The examples (5) and (6) above show perfective aspect in Chandgad variety. It is marked by suffix ‘-l’.

Now we will go through the progressive aspect in the examples below;

(7) *to* *amba* *k^haulay*
to amba k^ha-ul-a-y
3SGM mango eat-PROG-3SGM-PRS
He is eating (a) mango.

(8) *ti* *amba* *k^hauley*
ti amba k^ha-ul-e-y
3SGF mango eat-PROG-3SGF-PRS
She is eating (a) mango.

(9) *to* *amba* *k^haulalla*
to amba k^ha-ula-lla
3SGM mango eat-PROG-PST.3SGM
He was eating (a) mango.

(10) *ti* *amba* *k^haulalli*
 ti *amba* *k^ha-ula-lli*
 3SGF *mango* *eat-PROG-PST.3SGF*

She was eating (a) mango.

The examples (7) to (10) above show progressive aspect in Chandgad. It is marked by the suffix ‘-ul’ in examples (7) and (8) and ‘-ula’ in examples (9) and (10) above. We observe in the above examples that progressive in Chandgad data is marked by the inceptive marker (of standard Marathi) -u plus *lag* meaning ‘come to touch’.

The inceptive in standard Marathi is formed by compounding the verb *lag* ‘come to touch’ with the main verb (V1) marked with the inceptive marker -u or the desiderative marker -*ayla* (Dhongde & Wali 2009).

Now we will see the examples of habitual aspect in Chandgad below;

(11) *to* *amba* *k^hatay*
 to *amba* *k^ha-t-ay*
 3SGM *mango* *eat-HAB-BE.PRS*

He is eating (=eats) (a) mango.

(12) *ti* *amba* *k^hatay*
 ti *amba* *k^ha-t-ay*
 3SGF *mango* *eat-HAB-BE.PRS*

She is eating (=eats) (a) mango.

In examples (11) and (12) above, we find that ‘-t’ plus present tense is used to show present habitual in Chandgad data. ‘-t’ plus present is used to show present progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the same construction is used to show present habitual in Chandgad data.

Now see the examples (13) and (14) below for past habitual in Chandgad data;

(13) *to* *amba* *k^hait* *hota*
 to *amba* *k^ha-it* *hot-a*
 3SGM *mango* *eat-HAB* *BE.PST-3SGM*

He used to eat (a) mango.

(14) *ti* *amba* *k^hait* *hoti*
 ti *amba* *k^ha-it* *hot-i*
 3SGF mango eat-HAB BE.PST-3SGF
 She used to eat (a) mango.

In examples (13) and (14) above, we find that ‘-it’ plus past tense is used to show past habitual in Chandgad data. ‘-t’ plus past is used to show past progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the almost similar construction is used to show past habitual in Chandgad data.

The above examples show aspectual markings in Chandgad data as summarized in Table 2 below;

Table 2. Chandgad (Kolhapur) Dialect of Marathi

Chandgad (Kolhapur) Dialect of Marathi	
PFV	PFV
PROG	PROG
PRS- HAB	PRS- HAB
PST- HAB	PST- HAB

Now in next Section 3.2.2 below, we will see the Shirol data;

3.2.2 Aspect in Shirol data

(15) *tyanə* *amba* *k^halla(y)*
 tya-nə *amba* *k^ha-ll-a-y*
 3SGM-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM-BE.PRS
 He has eaten (a) mango.

(16) *tinə* *amba* *k^halla(y)*
 ti-nə *amba* *k^ha-ll-a-y*
 3SGF-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM-BE.PRS
 She has eaten (a) mango.

The examples (15) and (16) above show perfective aspect in Shirol variety. It is marked by suffix ‘-l’. There is tense marking -y and it is optional.

Now we will go through the progressive aspect in the examples below;

(17) *tyanə* *amba* *k^haulalləy*
 tyanə *amba* *k^ha-ulall-ə-y*
 3SGM mango eat-PROG-3SGM-BE.PRS
 He is eating (a) mango.

(18) *tinə* *amba* *k^haulalliy*
 tinə *amba* *k^ha-ulall-i-y*
 3SGF mango eat-PROG-3SGF-BE.PRS
 She is eating (a) mango.

(19) *tyanə ~ te* *amba* *k^haulaltə*
 tyanə ~ te *amba* *k^ha-ulal-t-ə*
 3SGM mango eat-PROG-PST-3SGM
 He was eating (a) mango.

(20) *tinə* *amba* *k^haulalti*
 tinə *amba* *k^ha-ulal-t-i*
 3SGF mango eat-PROG-PST-3SGF
 She was eating (a) mango.

The examples (17) to (20) above show progressive aspect. It is marked by the suffix ‘-*ulal*’. The observation can be made here that progressive in Shirol data is marked by the inceptive marker (of standard Marathi) -*u* plus *lag* meaning ‘come to touch’.

Now we will see the examples of habitual aspect in Shirol data below;

(21) *tyanə* *amba* *k^hatəy*
 tyanə *amba* *k^ha-t-ə-y*
 3SGM mango eat-HAB-3SGM-BE.PRS
 He is eating (=eats) (a) mango.

(22) *tinə amba k^hatyay*
 tinə amba k^ha-t-ya-y
 3SGF mango eat-HAB-3SGF-BE.PRS
 She is eating (=eats) (a) mango.

In examples (21) and (22) above, we find that ‘-t’ plus present tense is used to show habitual in Shirol data. ‘-t’ plus present is used to show progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the same construction is used to show habitual in Shirol data. This happens only in 3SG examples.

We find ‘-t’ as habitual marker for 1SG, 1PL, 2SG, 2PL and 3PL. Unlike 21 and 22 above, tense is not marked here. See the examples of 1SG and 2SG in (23) and (24) below;

(23) *mya amba k^hatu*
 mya amba k^ha-t-u
 1SG mango eat-HAB-1SGM
 I eat (a) mango.

(24) *tu amba k^hatus*
 tu amba k^ha-t-us
 2SG mango eat-HAB-2SGM
 You (sg) eat (a) mango.

Now see the examples (25) and (26) below for past habitual in Shirol data;

(25) *to amba k^hayca*
 to amba k^ha-ayc-a
 3SGM mango eat-PST.HAB-3SGM
 He used to eat (a) mango.

(26) *ti amba k^hayči*
 ti amba k^ha-ayč-i
 3SGF mango eat-PST.HAB-3SGF
 She used to eat (a) mango.

The suffix used to show past habitual is ‘-ayc’. This marking is similar to standard dialect of Marathi.

The above examples show aspectual markings in Shirol data as summarized in Table 3 below;

Table 3. Shirol (Latur) dialect of Marathi

Shirol (Latur) dialect of Marathi	
PFV	-l
PROG	-ulal
PRS- HAB	-t
PST- HAB	-ayc

Now in next Section 3.2.3 below, we will see the Yerla data;

3.2.3 Aspect in Yerla data

(27) *tyanə* *amba* *k^halla*
 tya-nə amba k^ha-ll-a
 3SGM-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM
 He has eaten (a) mango.

(28) *tinə* *amba* *k^halla*
 ti-nə amba k^ha-ll-a
 3SGF-ERG mango eat-PFV-3SGM
 She has eaten (a) mango.

The examples (27) and (28) above show perfective aspect in Yerla variety. It is marked by suffix ‘-l’.

Now we will go through the progressive aspect in the examples below;

(29) *t^ho* *amba* *k^haun* *rayla (~rahila)*
 t^ho amba k^ha-un rayl-a
 3SGM mango eat-CP PROG-3SGM
 He (is) eating (a) mango.

(30) *t^he* *amba* *k^haun* *rayli (~rahili)*
 t^he *amba* *k^ha-un* *rayl-i*
 3SGF *mango* *eat-CP* *PROG-3SGF*
 She (is) eating (a) mango.

In examples (29) and (30) above, we find '*rayl*' ~ '*rahil*' as progressive marker. The neighbouring Hindi language has '- *rəh*' as progressive marker. So, this marker could have been borrowed from Hindi in Nagpur variety of Marathi.

Here we find tendency of dropping present tense auxiliary. More than 90 percent times, progressive is marked without the present tense auxiliary in the data. This is unlike standard dialect of Marathi where present tense auxiliary comes with almost all progressive (present progressive) examples.

As opposed to this, see examples (31) and (32) below from the same variety where past tense auxiliary is always present with progressive (past progressive) examples.

(31) *t^ho~to* *amba* *k^haun* *rahila* *hot-a*
 t^ho *amba* *k^ha-un* *rahil-a* *hot-a*
 3SGM *mango* *eat-CP* *PROG-3SGM* *BE.PST-3SGM*
 He was eating (a) mango.

(32) *t^hi~ti* *amba* *k^haun* *rahili* *hot-i*
 t^hi *amba* *k^ha-un* *rahil-i* *hot-i*
 3SGF *mango* *eat-CP* *PROG-3SGF* *BE.PST-3SGF*
 She was eating (a) mango.

Now we will see the examples of habitual aspect in Yerla data below;

(33) *to~t^ho* *amba* *k^hato*
 to *amba* *k^ha-t-o*
 3SGM *mango* *eat-HAB-3SGM*
 He eats (a) mango.

(34) *ti~t^hi* *amba* *k^hate*
 ti *amba* *k^ha-t-e*
 3SGF mango eat-HAB-3SGF
 She eats (a) mango.

Here we find ‘-*t*’ as habitual suffix in Yerla data in examples (33) and (34) above.

Now see the examples (35) and (36) below for past habitual in Yerla data;

(35) *to* *amba* *k^hayca*
 to *amba* *k^ha-ayc-a*
 3SGM mango eat-PST.HAB-3SGM
 He used to eat (a) mango.

(36) *ti* *amba* *k^hayč*i**
 ti *amba* *k^ha-ayč-i*
 3SGF mango eat-PST.HAB-3SGF
 She used to eat (a) mango.

In examples (35) and (36) above, we find that ‘-*ayc*’ suffix is used for past habitual marking. This marking is similar to standard dialect of Marathi.

The above examples show aspectual markings in Yerla data as summarized in Table 4 below;

Table 4. Yerla (Nagpur) dialect of Marathi

Yerla (Nagpur) dialect of Marathi	
PFV	- <i>l</i>
PROG	- <i>rayl</i> ~ <i>rahil</i>
PRS- HAB	- <i>t</i>
PST- HAB	- <i>ayc</i>

4. Summary of the findings

The table 5 below shows the summary of aspectual marking found in the selected varieties;

Table 5. Aspect in the dialects of Marathi

	Chandgad, Kolhapur	Shirol, Latur	Yerla, Nagpur	Standard dialect
PFV	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>
PROG	<i>-ul ~ -ula</i>	<i>-ulal</i>	<i>rayl ~ rahil</i>	<i>-t</i>
PRS- HAB	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>
PST- HAB	<i>-it (+PST)</i>	<i>-ayc</i>	<i>-ayc</i>	<i>-ayc</i>

1. Perfectivity is marked by *-l* in all the three selected varieties. Standard dialect of Marathi also marks perfectivity with the *-l* suffix.

Progressive aspect is marked with different makers in these varieties i.e. *-ul ~ ula* in Chandgad, *-ulal* in Shirol, *rayl ~ rahil* in Yerla and with *-t* in standard dialect of Marathi.

Habitual is marked with *-t* in all three selected varieties.

In Chandgad, *-it* is the suffix used for habitual and *-ayc* is used in Shirol, Yerla and standard dialect of Marathi.

2. a. We observed in the data that progressive in Chandgad data is marked by the inceptive marker (of standard Marathi) '*-u*' plus '*lag*' meaning 'come to touch'.
b. We found that '*-t*' plus present tense is used to show present habitual in Chandgad data. '*-t*' plus present is used to show present progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the same construction is used to show present habitual in Chandgad data.
c. We found that '*-it*' plus past tense is used to show past habitual in Chandgad data. '*-t*' plus past tense is used to show past progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the almost similar construction is used to show past habitual in Chandgad data.
3. a. Progressive aspect is marked by the suffix '*-ulal*'. We observed that progressive in Shirol data is marked by the inceptive marker (of standard Marathi) *-u* plus *lag* meaning 'come to touch'.
b. We found that '*-t*' plus present tense is used to show habitual in Shirol data. '*-t*' plus present is used to show progressive in standard dialect of Marathi but the same construction is used to show habitual in Shirol data. This happens only in 3SG examples. We found '*-t*' as habitual marker for 1SG, 1PL, 2SG, 2PL and 3PL where tense is also not marked.
c. The suffix used to show past habitual is '*-ayc*'. This marking is similar to standard dialect of Marathi.

4. a. We found 'rayl' ~ 'rahil' as progressive marker. The neighbouring Hindi language has 'rəh' as progressive suffix. This marker is borrowed from Hindi in Nagpur variety of Marathi.
- b. Here we find tendency of dropping present tense auxiliary. More than 90 percent times, progressive is marked without the present tense auxiliary in the data. This is unlike standard dialect of Marathi where present tense auxiliary comes with almost all (present) progressive examples.
- c. As opposed to this, in the Yerla variety where past tense auxiliary is always present with progressive aspect (in past tense sentences).

5. Conclusions

From the findings in the above section, we can draw conclusions as shown in Table 6, Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9 as follows;

Table 6: Standard dialect of Marathi

	PRS	PST	FUT
PFV	-l	-l	-l
PROG	-t	-t	-t
HAB	-t	-ayc	-

Table 7: Chandgad (Kolhapur) dialect of Marathi

	PRS	PST	FUT
PFV	-l	-l	-l
PROG	-ul	-ula	-it
HAB	-t	-it	-

Table 8: Shirol (Latur) dialect of Marathi

	PRS	PST	FUT
PFV	-l	-l	-l
PROG	-ulal	-ulal	-t
HAB	-t	-ayc	-

Table 9: Yerla (Nagpur) dialect of Marathi

	PRS	PST	FUT
PFV	-l	-l	-l
PROG	rahil	rahil	-t
HAB	-t	-ayc	-

Three-way distinction i.e. Perfective, Progressive and Habitual, is found in aspectual system in selected three varieties.

Present habitual is distinguished from past habitual in the selected three varieties.

We find systemic difference in progressive aspect. We have similar progressive marking across three tenses in standard dialect of Marathi, but in all three varieties we find different marking in future tense compared to present and past tense.

The findings of the selected three varieties, strengthen the hypothesis that the aspectual system doesn't vary in regional dialects of Marathi.

Acknowledgements

I thank my supervisor Prof. Sonal Kulkarni-Joshi for her valuable comments. I also thank Deccan College, Pune and Rajya Marathi Vikas Sanstha, Mumbai for their grants and support.

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