

High vs. low ‘again’: Mandarin *you* vs. *zai* and Cantonese *-faan* vs. *-gwo*

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1 Introduction

Exceptional scopal behavior of ‘again’-type elements

(1) a. Context

Zheng Qiuhong de ku xi heji, ku de wo you xiangxin aiqing le! «Jueshi Qianjin» li
Zheng Qiuhong de ku xi zhen de hen rang ren xinteng ...

[[This is] a collection of Greenly Zheng’s crying scenes; [she] cried so much that I believed in love again! Greenly Zheng’s crying scenes in *Lust for Gold* are really distressing; ...]

b. You rang wo xiangxin-le aiqing!

AGAIN let I believe-PFV love

‘[She] let me again believe in love!’

Not: #‘She again let me believe in love!’

let > AGAIN > *believe*

#AGAIN > *let* > *believe*
(Ifeng.com 2019)

The exceptional scopal behavior is schematized in (2). We will show that Cantonese postverbal ‘again’-type elements also display similar patterns, but in a reversed direction: embedded ‘again’ may acquire exceptional wide scope.

(2) *Exceptional scopal behavior in embedded contexts*

a. *Preverbal ‘again’ in Mandarin: **Pronounced high, interpreted low***

[AGAIN [V_{matrix} ... [V_{embedded} ...
 └────────────────┘ “skipping” the matrix, operating on embedded events

b. *Postverbal ‘again’ in Cantonese: **Pronounced low, interpreted high***

[V_{matrix} ... [V_{embedded}-AGAIN ...
 ↑ └────────────────┘ taking wide scope over matrix events

Two correlations We observe that the availability of the scopal behavior, despite being highly contextually dependent, is contingent on two syntactic factors — namely, the choices of (i) ‘again’-type elements and (ii) embedding predicates, both related to an **aspect projection** (AspP, or more specifically, outer aspect phrase):

(3) *Two asymmetries in the exceptional scopal behavior*

- a. The choice of ‘again’-type elements: only *you* and *-faan* (but not *zai* and *-gwo*).
We propose two positions of ‘again’: high ‘again’ in AspP vs. low ‘again’ within vP.
- b. The choice of embedding predicates: only nonfinite clause-taking predicates.
Nonfinite clauses may be as small as vP, lacking the AspP to license high ‘again’.

Road map

- ii. Preverbal 'again' in Mandarin and its scopal behavior
- iii. High 'again' and low 'again'
- iv. Proposal
- v. Postverbal 'again' in Cantonese and the split aspect approach
- vi. Conclusion

2 Preverbal ‘again’ in Mandarin and its scopal behavior

(4) *Preverbal ‘again’ in Mandarin: Pronounced high, interpreted low*

[AGAIN [V_{matrix} ... [V_{embedded} ...
 └────────────────┘[↑]

“skipping” the matrix, operating on embedded events

2.1 Choice of ‘again’-type elements

Liu (2021, to appear) and C.-T. J. Huang (2022) report that preverbal *you* ‘again’, when appearing in the matrix clause, may take narrow scope and directly operate on the embedded predicates (e.g., ‘go’ in (5a)). Metaphorically, the scope of the matrix predicate ‘want’ is “skipped.” Notably, we observe that another preverbal ‘again’ *zai* does not show the same skipping effects.

(5) Context

(Yesterday, reluctant to travel but forced by his boss, Xiaoming took a business trip to Hong Kong for some work, but he did not manage to finish it before he came back. Today, ...)

(cf. Lin & Liu 2009)

a. Matrix *you* scopally “skipping” ‘want’

(Afraid of getting fired due to his unfinished work, he wants to go to Hong Kong again to finish it.)

Xiaoming you xiang [qu Xianggang (le)].

Xiaoming AGAIN want go Hong.Kong PRF

Narrow scope: ‘Xiaoming wants to again go to Hong Kong.’

Wide scope: #‘Xiaoming again wants to go to Hong Kong.’

#AGAIN > want > go, ✓want > AGAIN > go

b. Matrix *zai* NOT scopally “skipping” ‘want’

(It is believed that he will want to go to Hong Kong again to finish it.)

#Xiaoming hui zai xiang [qu Xianggang].

Xiaoming will AGAIN want go Hong.Kong

Only wide scope: #‘Xiaoming will again want to go to Hong Kong.’

#AGAIN > want > go, *want > AGAIN > go

2.2 Choice of matrix predicates

The availability of this scope skipping effect depends on the choice of matrix predicates. Only nonfinite clause-taking predicates can be “skipped”:

(6) *Context*

(During the 2003 SARS outbreak, Xiaoming was so ignorant that he thought that SARS was just a flu, and he did not believe in the existence of coronavirus. After the outbreak, coronavirus was not found anywhere. In 2019, however, Xiaoming became an epidemiologist and collected a sample that contained the COVID-19 virus. Now, he does believe that there had appeared coronavirus, and it appeared again.)

a. #Xiaoming you xiangxin [chuxian-le guanzhuangbingdu].

Xiaoming AGAIN believe appear-PFV coronavirus

Only wide scope: #‘Xiaoming again believes that there appeared coronavirus.’

**believe > AGAIN > appear*

b. Xiaoming xiangxin [you chuxian-le guanzhuangbingdu].

Xiaoming believe AGAIN appear-PFV coronavirus

‘Xiaoming believes that there again appeared coronavirus.’

believe > AGAIN > appear

‘Believe’ differs from ‘want’ and ‘intend’ in taking a *finite* clause (C.-T. J. Huang 2022), presumably a CP. ‘Want’ and ‘intend’ take a nonfinite clause with a smaller size (e.g., TP/wollP or vP). An extensive examination reveals that the narrow scope interpretation of *you* is only allowed with nonfinite clause-taking predicates, listed in (7a). In other words, *you* cannot “skip” across a finite clause boundary.

(7) *Clause-taking predicates*

- a. *Nonfinite clause-taking predicates, which allow matrix you’s scope skipping*
bi ‘force’, *dasuan* ‘intend’, *jihua* ‘plan’, *jueding* ‘decide’, *mingling* ‘order’, *quan* ‘persuade/urge’, *rang* ‘let’, *shefa* ‘try’, *tingzhi* ‘stop’, *tiyi* ‘propose’, *tuijian* ‘recommend’, *weixie* ‘threat’, *xiang* ‘want’, *xuanze* ‘choose’, *zhunbei* ‘prepare’, ...
- b. *Finite clause-taking predicates, which disallow matrix you’s scope skipping*
faxian ‘discover’, *fouren* ‘deny’, *gaosu* ‘tell’, *huaiyi* ‘suspect’, *queren* ‘confirm’, *renwei* ‘think’, *shengming* ‘declare’, *shuo* ‘say’, *xiangxin* ‘believe’, *zhidao* ‘know’, ...

(Liu to appear; cf. C.-T. J. Huang 2022)

(8) *Generalizations*

- a. The exceptional scopal behavior is found only with you but NOT with zai.
- b. The exceptional scope can only cross a nonfinite clause boundary but NOT a finite clause boundary.

3 High ‘again’ and low ‘again’

3.1 Embeddability

A contrast between *you* and *zai*, observed by [Lin & Liu \(2009\)](#), is their embeddability. Whereas *you* cannot surface in an embedded nonfinite clause, *zai* can:

- (9) a. *Xiaoming keyi [you lai] le.
Xiaoming be.permitted AGAIN come PRF
Intended: ‘Xiaoming has been permitted to again come.’ (Lin & Liu 2009: 1186)
- b. Xiaoming keyi [zai qu Taipei].
Xiaoming be.permitted AGAIN go Taipei
‘Xiaoming is permitted to again go to Taipei.’ (Lin & Liu 2009: 1195)

- (10) Xiaoming xiang [zai /*you qu Xianggang].
Xiaoming want AGAIN AGAIN go Hong.Kong
(Intended:) 'Xiaoming wants to again go to Hong Kong.'

On the other hand, both *you* and *zai* are embeddable by finite clause-taking predicates:

- (11) a. Xiaoming xiangxin you chuxian-le guanzhuangbingdu.
Xiaoming believe AGAIN appear-PFV coronavirus
'Xiaoming believes that there again appeared coronavirus.'
- b. Xiaoming xiangxin hui zai chuxian guanzhuangbingdu.
Xiaoming believe will AGAIN appear coronavirus
'Xiaoming believes that there again appeared coronavirus.'

(12) *Generalizations*

- a. *You* exhibits exceptional scopal behavior and canNOT surface in an embedded nonfinite clause.
- b. *Zai* does NOT exhibit exceptional scopal behavior and can surface in an embedded nonfinite clause.

(13) *Correlation 1*

An 'again'-type element exhibits exceptional scopal behavior *iff* it canNOT surface in an embedded nonfinite clause.

3.2 Compatibility with aspectual elements

You and *zai* also show a contrast with respect to their compatibility with aspectual suffixes. Only *you* but not *zai* may operate on predicates with aspectual affixes:

(14) *Only you but not zai compatible with the aspectual suffix -le*

a. jiu you qu-le Jingdu

so AGAIN go-PFV Kyoto

'so, [I] went to Kyoto again'

(Books.com.tw n.d., accessed June 23, 2022)

b. *jiu (hui) zai (yijing) qu-le Jingdu

so will AGAIN already go-PFV Kyoto

Intended: 'so, [I] went to Kyoto again (already)'

(cf. ✓ zai qu)

Note that a narrow scope reading of *zai* under *-le* is possible, as indicated by the position of the aspectual adverb ‘already’:

- (15) yijing zai qu-le yi-ci
already AGAIN go-PFV one-time
‘went once again already’

The progressive prefix *zai* shows a similar contrast:

- (16) a. Wo jia de mao you zai gan guai shi le.
1SG home POSS cat AGAIN PROG do weird thing PRF
'The cat in my home is doing weird things again.'

([Books.com.tw](#) n.d., accessed June 23, 2022)

- b. *Wo jia de mao hui zai zai gan guai shi. (cf. ✓ zai gan)
1SG home POSS cat will AGAIN PROG do weird thing
Intended: 'The cat in my home will be doing weird things again.'

(17) *Generalizations*

- a. *You* exhibits exceptional scopal behavior and is compatible with aspectual elements.
- b. *Zai* does NOT exhibit exceptional scopal behavior and is NOT compatible with aspectual elements.

(18) *Correlation 2*

An 'again'-type element exhibits exceptional scopal behavior *iff* it is compatible with aspectual elements.

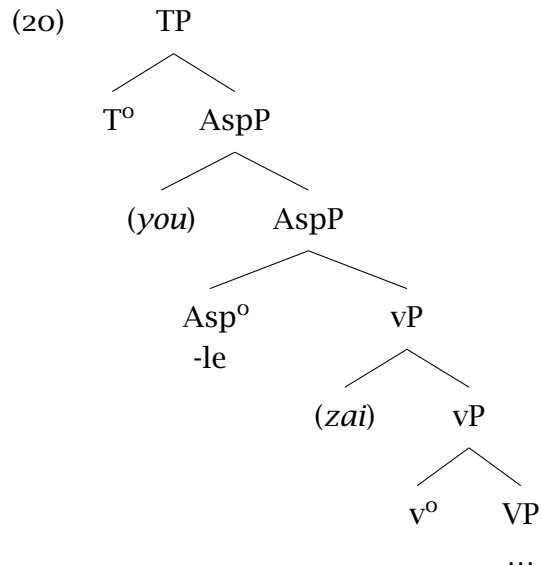
4 Proposal

(19) *Two ingredients of the proposal*

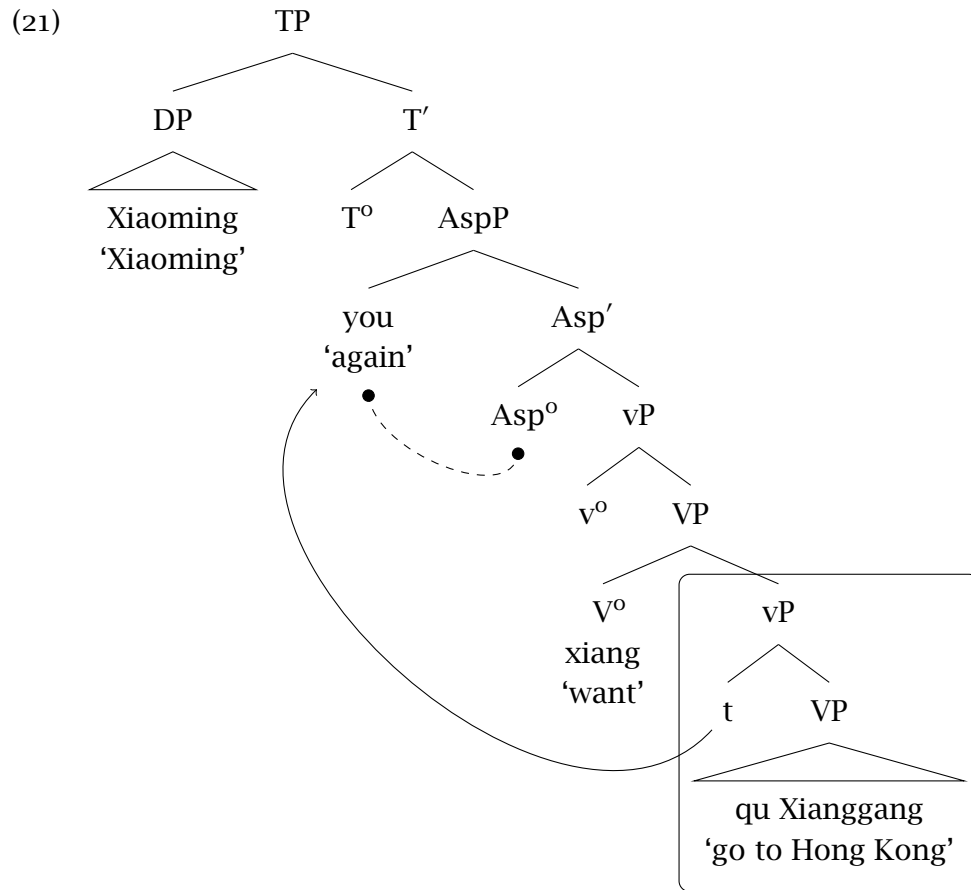
- a. There are two surface positions of ‘again’ (Lin & Liu 2009): **high ‘again’** associates with and moves to **AspP**, while **low ‘again’** does not move and stays within **vP**.
- b. **Nonfinite** clauses may be as small as **vP**, lacking AspP (C.-T. J. Huang 2022, Liu to appear).

4.1 Derivation

We suggest that both *you* and *zai* are base-generated at the vP level, but they surface in different positions (cf. [Lin & Liu 2009](#)). **Only** *you* but not *zai* surfaces in a **higher** position at the AspP level:



The association of *you* with AspP is achieved by **movement** of *you* (Liu 2021, to appear):

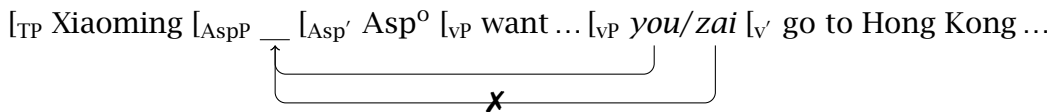


(Subject movement and head movements are omitted.)

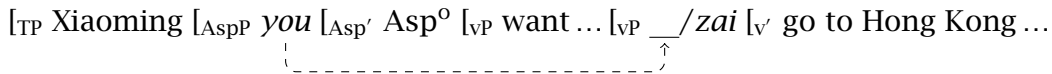
In (5) ‘Xiaoming wants to again go to Hong Kong’, *you* first moves to the specifier position of the matrix AspP. Then, it reconstructs for narrow scope, “skipping” the scope of the matrix predicate ‘want’. No reconstruction is possible for *zai* due to the lack of movement; that is, *zai* is always interpreted locally:

(22) *Preverbal ‘again’ “skipping” matrix predicates*

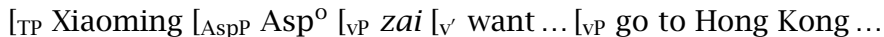
a. *Movement of you*



b. *Reconstruction of you*



c. *Local interpretation of zai*



4.2 Aspectual projection and finiteness in Chinese

It has long been observed that aspectual suffixes take matrix scope when they are embedded in nonfinite clauses (Li 1990, Grano 2014, N. Huang 2018, C.-T. J. Huang 2022). This phenomenon is dubbed *aspect lowering*:

(23) *Aspect lowering only possible across nonfinite clause boundaries*

- a. *Nonfinite clause embedded by C.-T. J. Huang's type II predicates*

Zhangsan (congqian) quan Lisi [jie-**guo** yan].

Zhangsan before persuade Lisi quit-EXP cigarette

'Zhangsan has persuaded Lisi to quit smoking (before).'

Not: #'Zhangsan persuades Lisi to have quit smoking (before).'

(C.-T. J. Huang 2022: 18, adapted)

- b. *Finite clause embedded by C.-T. J. Huang's type I predicates*

Zhangsan shuo [Lisi jie-**guo** yan].

Zhangsan say Lisi quit-EXP cigarette

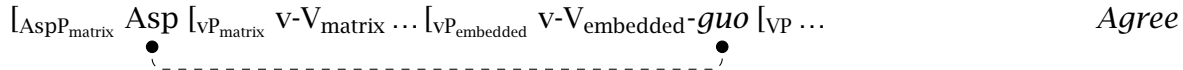
'Zhangsan says that Lisi has quit smoking.'

Not: #'Zhangsan has said that Lisi quits smoking.'

(C.-T. J. Huang 2022: 32, adapted)

Aspect lowering provides crucial evidence for the structure of nonfinite clauses. It has been proposed that nonfinite clauses **lack a local AspP**. (That is, they are vPs.) Hence, the aspectual suffixes need to be licensed by the matrix AspP through agreement, acquiring matrix scope:

(24) *Aspect lowering as Agree (Grano 2014, N. Huang 2018, C.-T. J. Huang 2022)*



- (25) a. Finite clause: **CP** (with AspP).
 b. Nonfinite clause: maybe as small as **vP** (without AspP).

5 Postverbal 'again' in Cantonese and the split aspect approach

Apart from the counterparts of the two 'again' adverbs (*jau* and *zoi*), Cantonese additionally has two postverbal elements of 'again': verbal suffixes *-faan* in (26) and *-gwo* in (27) ($\neq$ experiential *-gwo*):

- (26) *Verbal suffix -faan: repetitive/restitutive/resumption*

(*Zhan 1958, Cheung 1972, Chang 1996, Tang 2001, Fong 2007, Peng 2010*)

Ngodei hai-**faan** gosyu ginmin.

repetitive

1PL at-AGAIN there meet

'Let's meet there again.'

(*Peng 2010*: 96)

- (27) *Verbal suffix -gwo: repetitive with "fixing" undesirable outcomes of previous events*

(*Cheung 1972, Chang 1996, Chen & Lin 2006, Yan 2009*)

Mhoi nei se-**gwo** keoi laa1!

please 2SG write-AGAIN 3SG SFP

'Please rewrite it!'

(*Cheung 2007*: 156)

We observe a similar exceptional scope behavior in *-faan*. Strikingly, the availability is, again, subject to two syntactic factors: (i) the position of ‘again’ and (ii) the size of embedded clauses.

- We show that our proposal carries over to postverbal ‘again’ elements, which display an even closer resemblance to aspect lowering.
- Moreover, the Cantonese patterns also offer novel evidence for the split aspect analysis, enabling a cartographic representation of high and low ‘again’ elements.

5.1 Scopal behavior of postverbal *-faan* and *-gwo* in Cantonese

The exceptional scope behavior involves the wide scope of an embedded postverbal ‘again’ across a clause boundary. That is, ‘again’ can be pronounced low but interpreted high:

(28) *Postverbal ‘again’ in Cantonese: Pronounced low, interpreted high*

[V_{matrix} ... [V_{embedded} -AGAIN ...
 ↑
 -----]

taking wide scope over matrix events

This is a mirror image to preverbal ‘again’ adverbs, which may be pronounced high and interpreted low.

When postverbal *-faan* and *-gwo* attach to embedded predicates, only *-faan* may take scope over ‘want’, as shown in (29a). The embedded predicate denotes an event that cannot be repeated (i.e., killing the boss), favoring the plausible wide scope reading of repeated (or resumed) desire. In contrast, *-gwo* cannot take scope over ‘want’ (29b). Only the infelicitous narrow scope reading ‘killing the boss again’ is available.

(29) *Embedded ‘again’ taking wide scope over ‘want’ in Cantonese*

(When Ming was a gangster, he always wanted to murder his maniac boss, though he never tried to. He no longer wanted so after he left the gang. Today, he met his boss on the street, who insulted and slapped him. Ming is so angry that he wants to kill him again.)

a. Aaming (jau) soeng [(#jau /#zoi) deoilam-**faan** keoi daailou].

Ming AGAIN want AGAIN AGAIN kill-AGAIN 3SG boss

Narrow scope: ‘#Ming wants to again kill his boss.’

Wide scope: ‘Ming again wants to kill his boss.’ AGAIN > *want*, #*want* > AGAIN

b. #Aaming (jau) soeng [(#jau /#zoi) deoilam-**gwo** keoi daailou].

Ming AGAIN want AGAIN AGAIN kill-AGAIN 3SG boss

Only narrow scope: ‘#Ming wants to again kill his boss.’

*AGAIN > *want*, #*want* > AGAIN

Interestingly, the wide scope reading of embedded *-faan* disappears with predicates like 'believe' in (30). The wide scope reading can only be obtained by attaching *-faan* to the matrix 'believe'.

(30) *Embedded 'again' not taking wide scope over 'believe' in Cantonese*

(Ming quit being a Christian years ago. Today, he had a traffic accident, and heard God's voice when he was badly injured. He once again believes that God exists.)

a. #Aaming (jau) seon [(#jau /#zoi) jau-**faan** san].

Ming AGAIN believe AGAIN AGAIN exist-AGAIN God

Only narrow scope: #'Ming believes that there is again God.'

*AGAIN > *believe*, #*believe* > AGAIN

b. Aaming (jau) seon-faan [jau san].

Ming AGAIN believe-AGAIN exist God

Wide scope: 'Ming believes again that there is God.'

AGAIN > *believe*

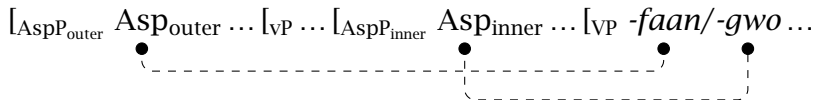
The sensitivity to finiteness is exactly what we have seen for the scope skipping effects of *you*. The wide scope interpretation of *-faan* is only allowed with non-finite clause-taking predicates, listed in (31).

- (31) *clause-taking predicates in Cantonese and wide scope -faan*
- a. *Nonfinite clause-taking predicates allowing embedded -faan to take wide scope*
bik ‘force’, *hyun* ‘persuade/urge’, *giu* ‘ask’, *ceng* ‘invite’, *paai* ‘send’, *soeng* ‘want’,
daasyun ‘intend’, *gaiwaak* ‘plan’, *zeonbei* ‘prepare’, *hoici* ‘start’, *hoji* ‘may’, *gam*
‘dare’, *hang* ‘be willing’, ...
 - b. *Finite clause-taking predicates disallowing embedded -faan to take wide scope*
jingwai ‘consider’, *(soeng)seon* ‘believe’, *geidak* ‘remember’, *gong* ‘say’, *syunbou*
‘declare’, *honang* ‘be possible’, ...

5.2 Analysis of wide scope *-faan* in Cantonese

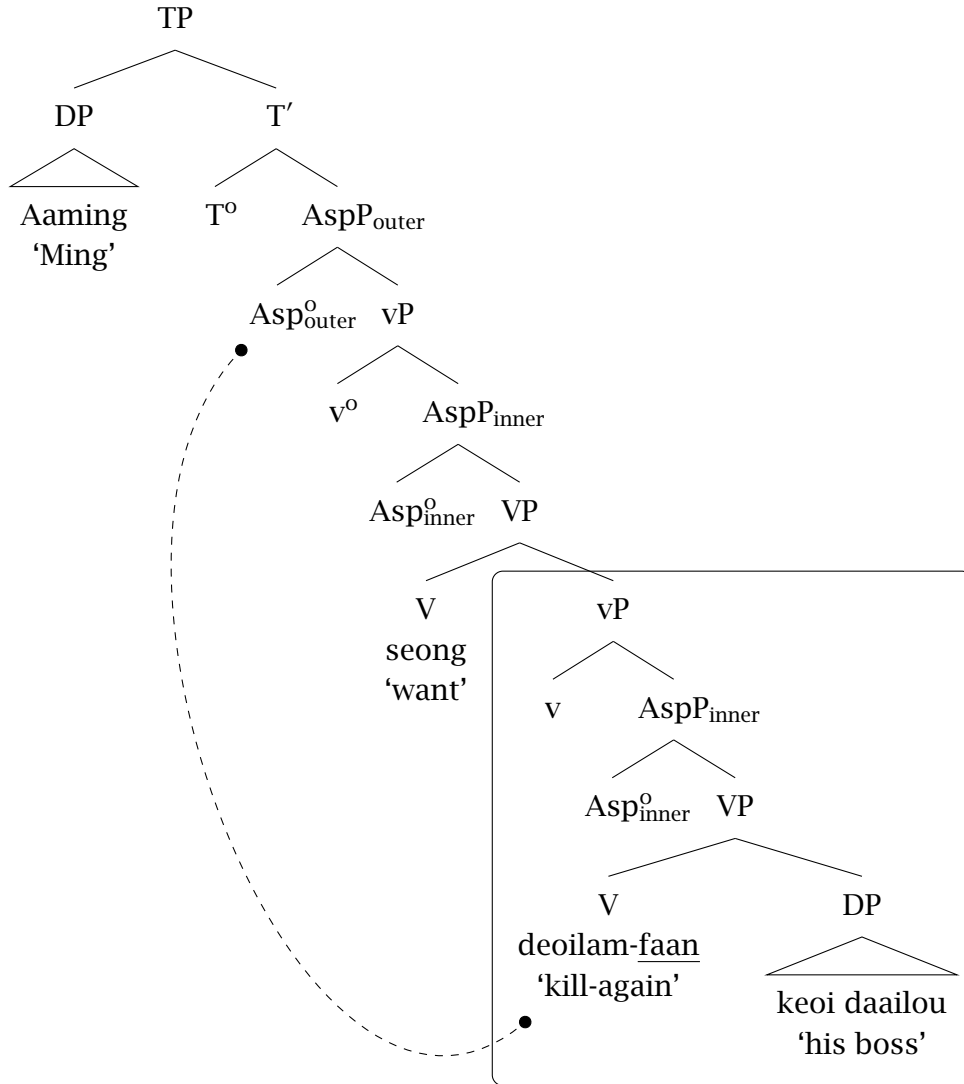
We propose that in Cantonese, both *-faan* and *-gwo* are base-generated in the vP layer, as part of V under the lexicalist hypothesis. *-Faan*, just like aspectual suffixes, agrees with the outer aspect head outside vP. *-Gwo*, in contrast, only agrees with the inner aspect head inside vP:

(32) *Postverbal 'again' in Cantonese: Agreement*



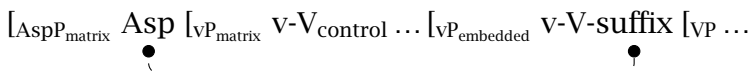
-*Faan* agrees with matrix Asp to take wide scope over ‘want’ in (29) ‘Ming again wants to kill his boss’:

(33) *Postverbal ‘again’ taking wide scope through agreement*



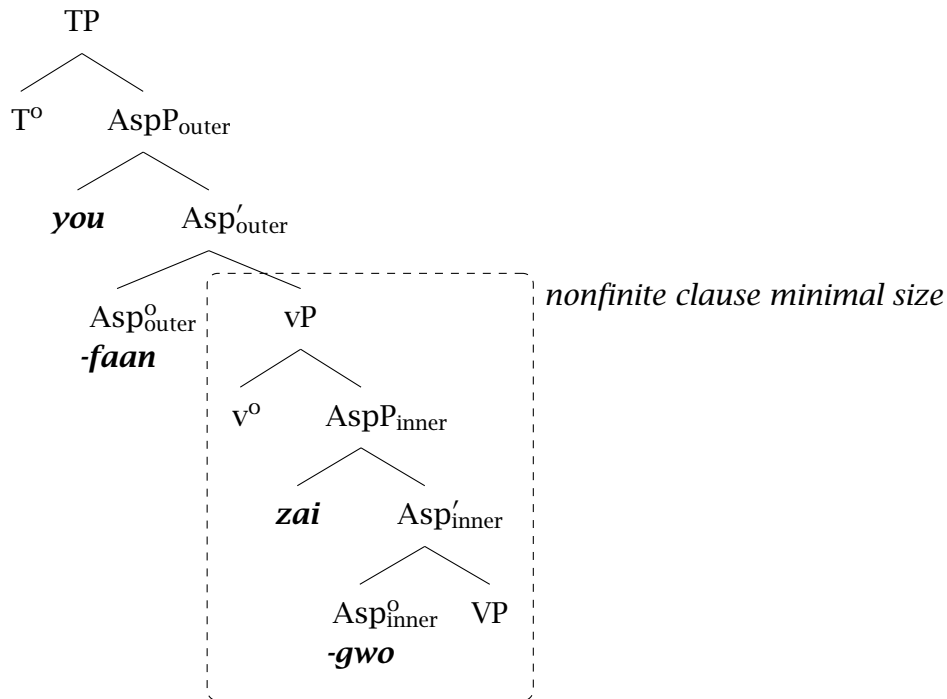
Such an agreement is not available for *-gwo*, leading to the lack of wide scope readings. The Agree relation is comparable to that in aspect lowering:

(34) *Aspect lowering as Agree (Grano 2014, N. Huang 2018, C.-T. J. Huang 2022)*



Agree

(35) *Cartography of 'again' elements in Chinese (associated positions)*



6 Conclusion

Takeaways

- There are two positions for ‘again’: **high ‘again’ above the vP level (at outer aspect)** vs. **low ‘again’ below vP level (at inner aspect)**.
- This is attested for preverbal *you* vs. *zai* in Mandarin and postverbal *-faan* vs. *-gwo* in Cantonese.
- The two positions provide a unified explanation for differences of ‘again’ in the exceptional scopal behavior across **nonfinite** clause boundaries and the ability to operate on **outer aspect** and **inner aspect**.