The Syntax of the Final Particle *K'ɯ* in Changde Dialect

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Abstract: Based on syntactic comparisons of the verb *k'ɯ* and the final *k'ɯ,* the final verb *k'ɯ* and the final particle *k'ɯ*, it argues that the final particle *k'ɯ*, as a declarative marker, is a head of ForceP to specify an irrealis event.

Keywords: syntax; particle; *k'ɯ*; Force

This article focuses on the syntax of the final particle *k'ɯ*. First, we concentrate on two kinds of distinctions, namely, the verb *k'ɯ* and the final *k'ɯ*, the final verb *k'ɯ* and the final particle *k'ɯ*. Then, the function of the final particle *k'ɯ* is provided.

1 The Verb *k'ɯ* and the Final *k'ɯ*

In Changde dialect, there are two *k'ɯ*s, a verb *k'ɯ* and a sentence final particle *k'ɯ*. Although they are homonyms, they differ in meaning and phonetics. See (1).

(1) a. 他去学校哒。
     T'a55 **k'ɯ24** ɕio13ɕiau35 ta.
     3S   go   school   PRT
     'He has gone to school.'

    b. 今遭会热死去。
     Tɕin55tsau55 xuei35 ŋe35   sɿ21   **k'ɯ**.
     today   will   hot   die   PRT
     'It will be extremely hot today.'

Semantically, *k'ɯ* in (1a) is a directional verb, indicating an activity, whereas *k'ɯ* in (1b)*,* as a final particle, serves as an assertive function to reinforce the torridity of the weather.

Moreover, these two *k'ɯ*s syntactically differ from each other. As a verb, *k'ɯ* definitely can be modified with adverbs. Nevertheless, the final particle *k'ɯ* cannot go with adverbs directly. See (2).

(2) a. 他硬是会热死。
     T'a55 ŋən35sɿ35   xuei35   ŋe35   sɿ21.
     3S   definitely   will   hot   die
     'He definitely feels extremely hot.'

   b. *他会热死硬是。
     *T'a55 xuei35 ŋe35   sɿ21   ŋən35sɿ35.
      3S   will   hot   die   definitely
     INTENDED READING:'He feels extremely hot definitely.'

  c. *他会热死硬是去。

*T'a55 xuei35 ŋe35 sɹ21   ŋən35sɹ35 **k'ɯ**.
3S   will   hot die   definitely   PRT
INTENDED READING: 'He definitely feels extremely hot.'

The contrast between (2a) and (2b) shows that the adverb *ŋən35sɹ35*, which modifies the event *xuei35 ŋe35 sɹ21*, is positioned in front of the event linearly. Accordingly, the possibility of modifying the event is ruled out in (2c), for the adverb is ought to precede the event. The adverb is then reduced to modifying the final *k'ɯ*, the ungrammaticality of which indicates that *ŋən35sɹ35* is incompatible with *k'ɯ*.

An interesting observation is found in their interactions with Negation. Consider (3).

(3) a. 他没有去学校。
    T'a55 mei55 iou21 **k'ɯ35** ɕio13ɕiau35.
    3S   NEG   have   go   school
    'He has not been to school.'

   b. 他不会把你害死去。
    T'a55 pu35 xuei55 pa21 li55 xai35sɹ21 **k'ɯ**.
    3S   NEG   will   make 2S   kill   PRT
    'His behaviour will definitely make you in trouble.'

In (3a), The negative element *mei55iou21* directly denies an occurrence of the event of going to school, the sentence then receives a negative interpretation. By contrast, although the final particle *k'ɯ* goes with the negation harmoniously in (3b), it achieves an affirmative reading.

Why should this be? If we take a closer observation of the data, we may find that it often co-occurs with the verb *xuei55*. As Zheng (2002) points out, the pattern *xuei55...k'ɯ* encodes an assertive tone on the possibility of a proposition. In this connection, consider the example (4).

(4) a. 这伢会蠢死去。
    Tse35 ŋa xuei55 tɕ'yn21sɹ21 **k'ɯ**.
    this kid will   very.stupid   PRT
    'The kid is extremely stupid.'

   b. 这中药会把你苦死去。
    Tse35 tsoŋ55io35   xuei35 pa21 li55 k'u21sɹ21   **k'ɯ**.
    this Chinese.medicine will   make 2S   very.bitter   PRT
    'The Chinese medicine tastes very bitter.'

Just like its counterpart *huì* in Mandarin, *xuei35* can either denote a deontic or an epistemic meaning. What does the modal verb indicate when it co-occurs with *k'ɯ*? In this connection, consider (5).

(5) a. 他会把你害死。
    T'a55 xuei35 pa21 li55 xai35sɹ21.
    3S   will   make 2S   kill

Reading 1: 'His behavior will cause you in trouble.'
Reading 2: '(I think), his behavior will (probably) make you in trouble.'

b. 他不会把你害死。
T'a55 pu55 xuei55　pa21　li55　xai35sʅ21.
3S　NEG will　　make　2S　　kill
Reading 1: ' His behavior can't make you in trouble.'
Reading 2: '(I think), his behavior will (quite probably) make you in trouble.'

The sentence (5a) is ambiguous for *xuei35* may either encode a deontic interpretation in Reading 1 or an epistemic interpretation in Reading 2. As a result, when the negation *pu55* occurs in the sentence (5b), it has two contrastive readings. In the deontic interpretation of Reading 1, it conveys the negation of the event. In the epistemic interpretation of Reading 2, it reinforces the probability of the event.

Then, let's reconsider the example (3b). A puzzling aspect of the sentence is that it conveys an affirmative meaning in a negative form. For convenience, the example (3b) is repeated as the following (6).

(6) 他不会把你害死去。
T'a55 pu35　xuei35　pa21　li55　xai35sʅ21 **k'ɯ**.
3S　NEG　will　　make　2S　　kill　　PRT
'His behaviour will definitely make you in trouble.'

Even though the sentence is in a negative form, the sentence indicates the likelihood of the event. The same observation is made for the example (5b) under an epistemic reading. In this sense, we may arrive at the conclusion that when the modal verb collocates with *k'ɯ*, only the epistemic interpretation survives.

Based on the observations, we may assume that the particle *k'ɯ* is out the scope of negation, which differs from the behavior of the verb *k'ɯ*. Moreover, the collocation of *pu35* and the epistemic modal *xuei35* may convey an affirmative meaning for emphasis. That's why the example (6) receives a definite interpretation.

Hitherto, we have distinguished the sentence final particle *k'ɯ* from the verb *k'ɯ*. Two *k'ɯ*s behave differently in the syntax. Their interactions with the TP internal can be shown as follows (the detailed analysis of their interaction with modal verbs and imperative markers is omitted here):

Table 5-1　Different interactions with TP internal

	Adverbs	Modal verbs	Imperative markers	Negations
Verb k'ɯ	+	+	+	+
The final k'ɯ	-	-	-	-

In the table above, "+"indicates that *k'ɯ* can be affected by the elements. " -" indicates that *k'ɯ* can't be affected by the elements.

At this stage, we can assume that the verb *k'ɯ* is a part of a proposition while the particle *k'ɯ* is out of a proposition.

2 The Final *qu* and the Final *k'ɯ*

Hitherto, we have distinguished the sentence final particle *k'ɯ* from the verb *k'ɯ*. Interestingly, in Mandarin Chinese, the counterpart *qu* also can be located at the sentence final. Can these two words be identified as the same type? In this connection, consider (7) below:

(7) a. 你找个地方睡会去。
    Ni zhao ge difang   shui   hui   **qu**.
    2S find CL place   sleep   a.while   qu
    'You (had better) find a place to have a sleep.'

                             (Lu 1985:22)

    b. 俺会热死去。
     Uan55 xuei35 ŋe35   sɿ21   **k'ɯ.**
     1S   will   hot   die   PRT
     'I feel extremely hot.'

If both *qu* and *k'ɯ* perform the assertive function, the prediction is that the deletion of them should be equally felicitous, because in this case, a final particle only serves to reinforce the assertion. However, the prediction is not completely borne out. As we can see, although the deletion of *k'ɯ* is felicitous in (8a), it is not in (8b).

(8) a. 俺会热死。
    Uan55   xuei35 ŋe35 sɿ21.
    1S   will   hot   die
    'I feel so hot.'

    b. #你找个地方睡会。
     Ni zhao ge difang   shui   hui.
     2S find CL place   sleep   a.while
     INTENDED Reading :'You'd better find a place to have a sleep.'

Moreover, if *k'ɯ* and *qu* in the example (7) are preposed in a sentence, they behave differently. Observe the example (9).

(9) a. *俺会去热死。
    *Uan55 xuei35 **k'ɯ**   ŋe35 sɿ21.
     1S   will   PRT   hot   die
     INTENDED READING: 'I feel extremely hot.'

    b. 你去找个地方睡会。
     Ni **qu** zhao ge difang   shui   hui.
     2S go find CL place   sleep   a.while

'You'd better find a place to have a sleep.'

If we prepose the particle, the sentence (9a) turns out to be ungrammatical. By contrast, the proposing of *qu* in (9b) doesn't affect its grammaticality. [1]

It is worth mentioning that *k'ɯ* is free to sentences indicating different time of events, while *qu* is confined to sentences indicating the future events. Consider the examples given in (10).

(10) a. 昨儿会热死去。
   Ts'o13ə13   xuei35 ŋe35 sɿ21 **k'ɯ**.
   yesterday   likely   hot   die   PRT
   'It was extremely hot yesterday.'

   b. 今遭会热死去。
   ə13tɕin21 xuei35 ŋe35 sɿ21 **k'ɯ.**
   now   likely hot   die   PRT
   'It is extremely hot now.'

   c. *你昨天找个地方睡会去。
   Ni zuotian   zhao   ge difang   shuihui   **qu**.
   2S yesterday find   CL place   sleep   qu
   INTENDED   READING: 'You   should   find   a place   to   have   a   sleep yesterday.'

   d. 你现在找个地方睡会去。
   Ni xianzai zhao ge difang shuihui **qu**.
   2S now   find CL place sleep   qu
   'You'd better find a place to have a sleep now.'

K'ɯ can be used in (10a) indicating the past event, or in (10b) indicating the present event. By contrast, *qu* is confined to the future event. It is incompatible with a past event in (10c). It is to be noted that although *qu* is compatible with *xianzai*, the event *to find a place to have a sleep* indicates a future event.

One point merits further elaboration. The final *k'ɯ* is restricted to telic activities in sentences while the final *qu* is confined to the atelic. In this connection, consider contrasts such as:

(11)a. 这药真的要吃死人去。
   Tse13 io35   tsən55ti iau35   tɕ'i35 sɿ21 ŋən13   **k'ɯ**.
   this   medicine really   want   eat   die   people   PRT
   'This medicine may really kill people.'

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[1] Lu (1985:22) notes that the final *qu* in the pattern "VP+*qu*" can be preposed into the structure "*qu* +VP" only if the event VP and the action *qu* is initiated from the same agent in the structure "VP +*qu*".

    b. *这药真的难吃去。

       * Tse13 io35   tsən55ti   lan13tɕʻi35 **kʻɯ**.

        this   medicine really   bitter   PRT

        INTENDED READING: 'This medicine really tastes bitter.'

    c. 我一定要问问去。

      Wo yiding   yao   wenwen **qu**.

      1S definitely   want   ask   qu

      'I will ask (someone about it) definitely.'

    d. *我一定要问清楚去。

      *Wo   yiding   yao   wen   qingchu **qu**.

      1S   definitely want   ask   clearly   qu

      INTENDED READING: ' I will ask someone and make it clear.'

We then observe the performance of *kʻɯ* is only compatible with telic activities, like *tɕʻi35 sɿ21 ŋən13* in (11a). Nevertheless, the final *qu* co-occurs with the atelic verb, like *wenwen* in (11c).

    From what we have said so far, it might seem plausible to conclude that the final *qu* and the final *kʻɯ* behave differently. It is proved that *kʻɯ* is a sentence final particle while *qu* is a verb. As for the reason why *qu* is positioned at the final, we will not pursue it any further in the article.[2]

    The significant advantage of their distinction is that it may provide solutions to the problems above. On the one hand, the assumption that *kʻɯ* is analyzed as a final particle offers us an interesting account of syntactic performances in the previous examples. In (7a), since *kʻɯ* serves as an assertive function, it follows that its deletion doesn't affect the grammaticality of the sentence. Moreover, unlike the behavior of the verb *qu* in (8b), the final particle can't be preposed in (8a). Besides, the final *kʻɯ* is open to the events with different tenses and an inanimate subject, for it is out of scope of a proposition.

    On the other hand, the postulation that *qu* is a verb provides an interesting account of puzzling aspects in the examples above. In (7b), the deletion of *qu* will definitely affect the semantic meaning of the sentence, for it is claimed to be a verb. Furthermore, if the assumption is right, it follows that it is preposed as a predicate in (8b) and confined to an animate subject in (11) by virtue of the properties of a directional verb .

    Thus far, we have distinguished the final *qu* and *kʻɯ*. The former is as a verb while the latter is a particle. Is it possible that all the final *kʻɯs* in Changde belong to a particle? In this connection, consider the following data (For convenience, the

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[2] Based on a semantic approach, Lu (1985) observes that there are six types of VP+*qu* in mandarin, namely, the direction of patients, the direction of agents, the destination of agents' mobility, the direction of agents' mobility, the direction of patients' mobility and VP as a purpose of *qu*. All the final *qu*s are analyzed as a verb. Moreover, the relation between the structure VP and the final *qu* discussed in this dissertation exhibits a kind of purpose (Lu 1985:22).

example (7b) is repeated as (12a)):

(12) a. 俺会热死去。
　　　 Uan55 xuei35 ŋe35　sʅ21　**k'ɯ.**
　　　 1S　　 will　 hot　 die　 PRT
　　　 'I feel extremely hot.'

　　 b. 她看电影去。
　　　 T'a55 k'an35 tian35in21 **k'ɯ**.
　　　 3S　　 watch　 movie
　　　 'She is going to watch a movie.'

If all the sentence final *k'ɯ*s perform the assertive function, the prediction is that the deletion of *k'ɯ* should be equally felicitous, because in this case, the final particle *k'ɯ* only serves to reinforce the assertion. However, the prediction is not completely borne out. As we can see, it is infelicitous in (13).

(13) #他看电影。
　　 #T'a55 k'an35 tian35in21.
　　　 3S　　 watch　 movie
　　　 INTENDED READING: ' He is going to watch a movie.'

A minor descriptive detail to note is that the final *k'ɯ* in (12b) behaves similar with the final *qu* in Mandarin. Accordingly, it can be identified as a final verb too. For the sake of clarity, we label the final verb as *k'ɯ*1 , and the particle as *k'ɯ*2.

At this point, we may generalize the syntactic differences between the particle *k'ɯ* and the final verbs, as shown below:

Table 5-2 The different performances of the particle *k'ɯ* and the final verbs

	The inanimate	Telic	Past or present tense	Deletion	Preposing
qu or *k'ɯ*1	-	-	-	-	+
*k'ɯ*2	+	+	+	+	-

In the table above, " +" indicates the final word is compatible with the relevant items; "-" signals its incompatibility.

3 *K'ɯ* as a Clause-typing Marker

Based on the different performances of final *k'ɯ*s, we suppose constraints of the final particle *k'ɯ₂* in Changde dialect.

(14) **Constraints of *k'ɯ*2**
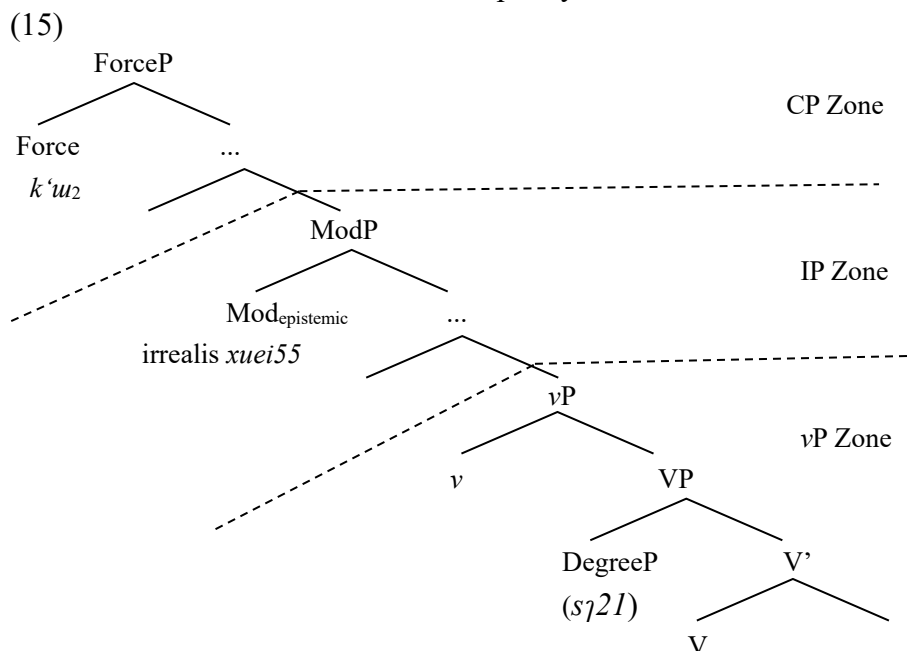When it is identified as a sentence final particle,
(I) it is compatible with *xuei*35 under an epistemic reading.
(II) it occurs with telic events.

Then, what is the contribution of *k'ɯ₂* in a sentence? One way of accounting for

the felicity of *k'w₂* is to suppose that the particle acts as a clausal type marker to identify a sentence type. Concretely speaking, *k'w₂* is uttered to mark a declarative sentence. Unlike the particle *ne₂,* which invariably specifies all the wh-questions in Mandarin,[3] we assume that *k'w₂* serves to mark a certain declarative sentence. To put it in nutshell, the particle exclusively specifies a declarative sentence which conveys an irrealis event.

The evidence leading to the claim is on the basis of the constraints elaborated in (14). As is shown, the final *k'w₂* is read off a particle on the condition that the modal verb *xuei35* is under an epistemic interpretation. In the spirit of the function of the modal verb *hui* in Mandarin (Tsai 2015:15), we assume that the epistemic modal *xuei35* in dialect signals irrealis. Accordingly, a sentence tagged with *k'w₂* is restricted with an irrealis event in the declarative.

Given what we have discussed so far, we might suppose that the particle, as a declarative marker, is a head of ForceP to specify an irrealis event, as shown below:

(15)

ForceP

Force ...

k'w₂

CP Zone

ModP

Mod_epistemic ...

irrealis *xuei55*

IP Zone

*v*P

v VP

*v*P Zone

DegreeP V'

(*sɤ21*)

V

A few remarks about the hierarchy are quite necessary. We assume that the endpoints in the telic events serve as a degree marker to reinforce the state, like the word *sɤ21*. In the spirit of Rizzi and Cinque (2016), we argue that the syntax of the modal verb *xuei55* is under the IP split analysis. By virtue of the functions of *k'w₂*, we claim that the particle is located at the functional category, CP. In this sense, the final particle in CP layer echoes with the relevant constituents in different layers, say, *xuei55* in IP zone, the degree marker in *v*P zone. Thus, the syntax of the particle *k'w₂* is read off only if the degreeP and ModP are overtly realized in *v*P layer and IP layer respectively.

References:

Rizzi, Luigi. (2004) *The Structure of IP and CP*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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[3] Paul (2014, 2015) argues that *ne₂*, as a head of ForceP, is to mark a wh-question in Mandarin.

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