

## ASPECTUAL PROPERTIES IN ROTINESE

Jermy Imanuel Balukh  
School of Foreign Languages CN Kupang

### *Abstract*

Rotinese is an Austronesian language spoken by more than 200.000 people in the island of Rote, Semau and some parts of Timor Island in Indonesia. Linguistic research on Rotinese previously has been done by some people (Jonker, 1903; Fox, 1986; FanggidaE et al, 1996; Kumanireng at al, 2000). However, many morphosyntactic and semantic features are still not well-described. Aspect is among others. Three questions to be answered in this analysis are (1) how are verbs classified with respect to the internal temporal structure of the event they denote? (2) what evidence is there for determining a verb's aspectual class membership, and (3) does Rotinese grammaticalize aspect? If the answer is 'yes', then what grammatical properties apply and if the answer is 'no', then how does Rotinese operate aspect? The analysis is a descriptive basis (Comrie, 1978; Payne, 1997; Givon, 1984), that neither formal syntactic theory nor semantic theory is applied.

This paper focuses on the internal structure of situation described by various classes of verb; state and dynamic, punctual and durative, and telic and atelic, and how these interact with other (grammatical) aspectual opposition; perfective, imperfective, and perfect. It is semantically clear that state and dynamic situation are distinguished by whether the situation involves change or not. As state in Rotinese requires no effort, then it cannot apply when expressing progressive meaning, imperatives, and modified by adverb of manner, *faa-faa* 'slowly' and *neni tean* 'quickly'. Meanwhile, dynamic situation involves necessarily change and it is subject to an input of energy, and, therefore, it is in Rotinese automatically punctual, which has no internal temporal structure. For durative situation, which refers to situation that lasts for a certain period of time, Rotinese has lexical and morphological operation. Morphological operation is indicated by reduplication, both full and partial reduplication. Telic and atelic situations are distinguished by whether an event has a well-defined terminal point or not. Telic has clear end point, while atelic has not. One good test for telic and atelic in Rotinese is by applying preposition *losa* 'until' and adverb *kada* 'only'. The preposition *losa* indicates that the situation described by the verb is atelic, while the adverb *kada* indicates telic situation. Another test is by clause combining where main clause contextually indicating complete action is telic, while subordinate one indicating continuous action is atelic. Relating the various classes of verb to grammatical aspects, it is shown that state, punctual, and telic verbs in Rotinese can express perfective meaning. Perfective can also be expressed by resultative forms marked by particle *heni* (away from the subject) and *ala* (belong to the subject) that indicate the successful completion of a situation. Dynamic, durative, and atelic verbs can express imperfective meaning. Imperfective in case of progressive can be expressed in four ways; (1) periphrastically constructed by clause combining, (2) prefix *ka-* applied to durative verbs with definite article *ndia*, (3) relative prefix *mana-* as the answer to questions contextually indicating progressive meaning, and (4) locative preposition *nai*. Meanwhile habitual situation is periphrastically expressed by time adverbial *tungga faik* 'everyday'. Perfect in Rotinese is periphrastically expressed by the particle *so* 'already' that indicate a currently relevant state brought about by the situation.

*Keywords:* aspect, situation, event, time, change, description