

Aspectual properties in Rotinese

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1. Introduction

Verbal alternation concerning ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of situation that is best known as aspect becomes an enormously cross-linguistic concern (Timberlake, 2007; Levin and Hovav, 2005; Comrie, 1978). Eastern Indonesia as a linguistic area (Klamer *et al*, 2007) hosts hundreds of languages with varied typology, including the typology of aspect (Himmelmann, 2005). Although the typology of aspect of Austronesian languages is not comprehensively and specifically described by Himmelmann (2005), it has been understood cross-linguistically that aspect may be expressed by means of inflectional morphology or by means of a periphrasis (see Comrie, 1978) in which a variety of linguistic phenomena are accounted for (Levin and Hovav, 2005).

This paper discusses about the aspect of Rotinese, an Austronesian language spoken by more than 200.000 people in the island of Rote, Semau and some parts of Timor Island in Indonesia. While previous linguistic works on Rotinese have convincingly disclosed typological features of Rotinese (Jonker, 1915; Fox, 1986; Fanggida *et al*, 1996; Kumanireng *et al*, 2000), many morphosyntactic and semantic features are still not well-described, including, among others, aspect. 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? The analysis is a descriptive basis (Timberlake, 2007; Comrie, 1978; Payne, 1997; Givon, 1984), in that no formal theoretical framework 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. The discussion begins with the inherent meaning of verbal aspect in §2, followed by aspectual operations in §3, and finally the conclusion is presented in §4.

2. Inherent Meaning of Verbal Aspect

2.1 State and Dynamic

It is semantically clear that state and dynamic situation are distinguished by whether the situation involves change or not (Comrie, 1978:49). 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 (Comrie, 1978). The examples (1) and (2) below indicate state situation with the verbs *bubuluk* 'know' and *lamahele* 'believe'.

- (1) *Hataholi-la bubuluk sila nahu-n ia*
 people-PL know 3pl dispute-3POS this
 'People knew their dispute'

- (2) *Hu lamahele no ina mane lak ia lopolinu-n*
 because 3pl-believe with woman king former this care-3POS
 ‘As they believe that by the former queen’s care’

There is no specific marker in Rotinese to express progressive meaning, but clause combining (see §3.2) in which only non-stative can apply. Therefore, the example in (3) is ill-formed with the verb *bubuluk* ‘know’ while the verb *tete* ‘mown’ of the subordinate clause in (4) indicates nonstative that is good for progressive.

- (3) **Au u te hataholi-la bubuluk sila nahu-n*
 1sg 1.go conj people-PL know 3pl dispute-3POS
 ‘When I was there, the people know their dispute’

- (4) *Au u te ana tete osi*
 1sg 1.go conj 3sg mown garden
 ‘When I was there, he is mowing in the garden’

The examples in (5) and (6) indicate that only nonstatives occur as imperatives.

- (5) **bubuluk sila nahu-n!*
 know 3pl dispute-3POS
 ‘Know their dispute!’

- (6) *La’ok makando!*
 walk 2.straight
 ‘Keep on walking!’

When adverbs of manner *fafaa* ‘slowly’ and *neni tean* ‘quickly’ are applied to modify the verbs, then only nonstatives occur with adverbs of manner as shown in (7) and (8) below.

- (7) **Hataholi-la bubuluk sila nahun fafaa/ neni tean*
 people-PL know 3pl dispute-pos slowly/ bring strength
 ‘The people know their dispute slowly/ quickly’

- (8) *Ana la’ok fafaa/ neni tean*
 3sg walk slowly/ bring strength
 ‘He walked slowly / quickly’

Expressions for dynamic events typically refer to actions which involve a volitional agent (Himmelman, 2005: 67). In sentences (9), (10), and (11), the events of jumping, going, and pecking are overtly under control of the agents.

- (9) *Nakaboku neni busa fui-la taladan*
 3.jump 3.to dog wild-3pl middle
 ‘He jumped to the wild dogs’

- (10) *Duas la’o lakando*
 both go 3pl.continue
 ‘Both of them kept going’

- (11) *Ana tutu heni pa dui*
 3sg peck away meat bone
 'It pecked away the bone'

2.2 Punctual and Durative

Punctuality and durativity in Rotinese are distinguished lexically and morphologically in case of reduplication. Punctual events occur in an instant in time while durative implies continuity. Durativity is indicated by the situation that lasts for a certain period of time, while punctuality does not have any duration, not even duration of a very short period (Comrie, 1978:41, 42). The verbs *kisufani* 'sneeze' in (12) implies a situation that lasts in a very short time so it is punctual but *nalaik* '3.run' in (13) implies an event that occurs not in instant in time but its termination needs a certain period of time. The event of running will not terminate until he reaches the targeted point.

- (12) *Ana kisufani*
 3sg sneeze
 'He sneezed'

- (13) *Ana nalaik mai*
 3sg 3.run come
 'He ran here'

Punctual situation can shift to durative situation by verb reduplication, both partial and full reduplication. The evidence is that reduplicated verbs indicating durativity can indicate progressive meaning. The verb *memete* 'look around' in (14) is derived from the verb *mete* 'look'. The partial reduplication implies that the event of looking does occur not only once (Balukh, 2005:50). She of course looked many times from one place to another to find the man. The evidence that the reduplication is used as a means to convey durativity (see Himmelmann, 2005:14) is indicated by the sentence in (15). The event of *papake* 'dress up' of the subordinate clause is in progress when interrupted by the event *mai* 'come' of the main clause. The termination of *papake* 'dress up' is still indefinite. Some other reduplicated verbs are shown in (16) below.

- (14) *Ana me-mete touk*
 3sg RED-look man
 'S/he looks around the men'

- (15) *Tolano-n-ala mai te ana bei pa-pake*
 sibling-3POS-pl come but 3sg still RED-wear
 'Her siblings came when she was still dressing up'

- (16) *Partial reduplication*
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| <i>hasa</i> | 'to buy' | → | <i>hahasa</i> | 'shopping' |
| <i>tati</i> | 'to cut' | → | <i>tatati</i> | 'cut continuously' |
| <i>mete</i> | 'to look' | → | <i>memete</i> | 'look around' |
| <i>ndolo</i> | 'to wander' | → | <i>ndondolo</i> | 'wander about / visit' |
| <i>kame</i> | 'to touch' | → | <i>kakame</i> | 'touch continuously' |

<i>la'u</i>	'to scoop up'	→	<i>lala'u</i>	'scoop around'
<i>natane</i>	'to ask'	→	<i>natatane</i>	'ask continuously'
<i>fepa</i>	'to hit'	→	<i>fefepa</i>	'hit continuously'
<i>tuduk</i>	'to point'	→	<i>tutuduk</i>	'point continuously'
<i>sii</i>	'torn out'	→	<i>siisii</i>	'torn up'
<i>la'ok</i>	'to walk'	→	<i>lala'ok</i>	'walk around'

Full reduplication of verbs also indicate shift from punctual to durative situation. While the partial reduplication expresses continuous action which can apply in progressive, full reduplication expresses repeated action, in this case best known as iterative, which cannot apply to express progressive meaning. The example in (17) with the verb *tati-tati* 'cut repeatedly' modified by the intensifier particle *mesan* 'prt' suggests that no other ways s/he applied, but cutting. Using the reduplicated verb *tati-tati* 'cut repeatedly' without the particle *mesan* 'prt' indicates a situation that the event of cutting is repeatedly done with no specific intention. The particle *mesan* cannot modify punctual verb as shown in (18). Some other full reduplication are shown in (19) below.

- (17) *Kada ana tati-tati mesin*
 only 3sg RED-cut prt
 'S/he keeps on cutting'

- (18) **Kada ana tati mesin*
 only 3sg cut prt

- (19) *Full Reduplication*

<i>tati</i>	'to cut'	→	<i>tati-tati</i>	'cut repeatedly'
<i>bo'o</i>	'to cough'	→	<i>bo'o-bo'o</i>	'cough repeatedly'
<i>tutu</i>	'to peck'	→	<i>tutu-tutu</i>	'peck repeatedly'
<i>hela</i>	'to pull'	→	<i>hela-hela</i>	'pull repeatedly'
<i>fiti</i>	'to kick'	→	<i>fiti-fiti</i>	'kick repeatedly'
<i>seti</i>	'to shift'	→	<i>seti-seti</i>	'shift repeatedly'
<i>hule</i>	'to ask for'	→	<i>hule-hule</i>	'ask for repeatedly'
<i>lo'o</i>	'to hew'	→	<i>lo'o-lo'o</i>	'hew repeatedly'

2.3 Telic and Atelic

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 (Comrie, 1978:45). One good test for telic and atelic in Rotinese is by applying preposition *losa* 'until' and adverb *kada* 'only' to add time adverbial. The preposition *losa* 'until' indicates that the situation described by the verb is atelic, while the adverb *kada* 'only' 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. The example (20a) indicates atelic situation in which the event of cultivating the rice field has no terminal point; no one knows when the work terminates. Meanwhile, the example (20b) suggests telic situation. The event of cultivation will of course cease when the two rice fields will have been completely cultivated.

- (20) a. *Ala tao hadeoe*
 3PL make rice.field
 ‘They cultivate rice field’
- b. *Ala tao hadeoe dua*
 3PL make rice.field two
 ‘They cultivate two rice fields’

The examples in (21) provide evidence that time adverbial does not necessarily indicate telic situation. Although the preposition *losa* ‘until’ in (21a) designates certain period of time, in case of two months building, the completion of the house is still indefinite, thus it is atelic. It is evinced by sentence (21b) which is ill-formed with preposition *losa* ‘until’ when the situation is telic. The telic situation in (21c) is acceptable with *kada* ‘only’ because the adverb emphasizes the end point of the event.

- (21) a. *Ana tao uma ndia losa bulak dua*
 3sg make house Def until month two
 ‘He built the house two months long’
- b. **Ana tao uma dua losa bulak dua*
 3sg make house two until month two
 ‘He built two houses two months long’
- c. *Ana tao uma dua kada bulak dua*
 3sg make house two only month two
 ‘He built two houses only in two months’

Clause combining in (22a) suggests two clauses in which the event of main clause interrupts the event of subordinate clause. Here, the second clause must be atelic since it indicates continuous situation whose end point is still unsure. To make the end point of the event obvious in (22b), the clause combining is impossible.

- (22) a. *Afik ai miu te ala tao hadeoe*
 yesterday 1exc go but 3PL make rice.field
 ‘When we went there yesterday, they were cultivating rice field’
- b. **Afik ai miu te ala tao hadeoe dua*
 yesterday 1exc go but 3PL make rice.field two

3. Aspectual Operations

3.1. Perfective

A very frequent characterization of perfectivity is that it indicates a completed action; all parts of the situation are presented as a single whole (Comrie, 1978:16-17). In Rotinese, the verbs expressing state, punctual, and telic situation denote perfective meaning. Perfective meaning is also indicated by resultative construction, which is periphrastically marked by particles *heni* and *ala*. Another construction that can also express perfective meaning is the agentless passive morphologically marked by *nana-* *-k*. The examples in (23), (24), and (25) are taken from the data (1), (12), and (20b), which express state, punctual, and telic respectively. The sentence (23) indicates a situation, in case of dispute, is already known by

people. People's knowledge on their dispute is complete and will never change except the situation changes. The data (24) with the verb *kisufani* 'sneeze' indicates a situation completed in an instant time. Meanwhile, situation described in (25) suggests that the event of cultivation will not continue when the two rice fields are finished.

- (23) *Hataholi-la bubuluk sila nahu-n ia*
 people-PL know 3pl dispute-3POS this
 'People knew their dispute'

- (24) *Ana kisufani*
 3sg sneeze
 'He sneezed'

- (25) *Ala tao hadeoe dua*
 3PL make rice.field two
 'They cultivate two rice fields'

Perfective meaning can also be expressed by resultative construction; indicating the successful completion of a situation (Comrie, 1978). The sentences in (26) illustrate resultative construction with particle *heni* which indicates the resultant is away from the subject (Balukh, 2005). The particle indicates that the event of pecking the bone in (26a) has been completely finished and the result is that the bone is not there any longer. In (26b), the situation suggests that the event 'the wind ruined the roofs' has been completely finished and what people witness is that the houses no longer have roofs. In (27), the situation with particle *ala* suggests that the event of taking the blanket has been completely finished and the result is that the blanket is not there any more, it goes to the subject. Meanwhile, the example in (28) uses agentless passive form (Balukh, 2009) which also expresses resultative meaning; the result is that the dog was hit, who hit and when it was hit are indefinite.

- (26) a. *Ana tutu heni pa dui*
 3sg peck RES meat bone
 'He picked the bone with his snout'

- b. *Ani fupu heni basa uma-la puni-n-ala*
 wind blow RES all house-pl roof-3-pl
 'The wind ruined all the roofs of the houses'

- (27) *Ana ho'i n-ala lafa*
 3sg take 3.RES blanket
 'He took the blanket (for himself)'

- (28) *Busa ndia nana-femba-k*
 dog Def PAS-hit-fc
 'The dog was hit'

3.2 Imperfective

Imperfective looks at the situation from inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation (Comrie, 1978:4). In general, imperfectivity is subdivided into two distinct concepts, namely habituality and continuousness or progressiveness.

Imperfective meaning in Rotinese involves no specific marker. Habitual meaning is expressed periphrastically with the presence of time adverbial *tungga faik* ‘everyday’ in sentence-initial position as in (29) or sentence-final position as in (30). The adverbial indicates a certain type of event that regularly takes place from time to time (Payne, 1997:241). Progressive meaning also involves no specific marker, but other grammatical markers which contextually express progressive meaning.

- (29) *Tungga faik, dua-sala leu dala*
 follow day two-PL go fishing
 ‘Everyday, both of them go fishing’

- (30) *Inak-ala sele hadeoe tungga faik*
 woman-PL plant rice.field follow day
 ‘The women plant rice in the rice field everyday’

There are four ways to express progressive meaning in Rotinese; (1) periphrastically constructed by clause combining, (2) relative marker *mana- -k* (see Balukh, 2005:61) implying progressive when used as the answer to the question indicating progressive, (3) relative marker *k- -k* (cf. Kumanireng *et al*, 2000) applies for durative verbs to express progressive with definite (Def) article *ndia*, and (4) locative preposition *nai* indicating present event contextually indicates progressive meaning. The clause combining in (31) indicates that the subordinate clause must be progressive; the event of planting rice begins before my visit and still continues after my visit. The presence of the past time adverbial with the intention of modifying the subordinate clause in (31c) is impossible. Another example is given in (32).

- (31) a. *Au u te inak-ala sele hadeoe*
 1sg go prt woman-PL plant rice.field
 ‘When I went there, the women were planting (rice) in the rice field’
 b. *Afik au u te inak-ala sele hadeoe*
 yesterday 1sg go prt woman-PL plant rice.field
 ‘When I went yesterday, the women were planting rice in the ricefield’
 c. **Au u te afik inak-ala sele hadeoe*
 1sg go prt yesterday woman-PL plant rice.field
- (32) *Ala mai te au bei adiu oe*
 3pl come prt 1sg still take.bath water
 ‘When they came, I was still taking a bath’

The relative marker *mana- -k* that indicates the actor of an action can convey progressive meaning when attached to punctual verbs. The definite article *ndia* ‘Def’ is obligatory because it refers to subject of the verb which is definite. The examples shown in (33) suggest that the event of coughing by the actor *Tinus* is still in progress when someone asks. When the coughing is finished, then the expression in (33b) will be impossible. Meanwhile, the relative marker *k- -k* applies for durative verbs as shown in (34). The event of crying is in progress when someone asks.

- (33) a. *Se mana-bo'o-k ndia?*
 Qw REL-cough Def
 'Who is coughing?'
- b. *Mana-bo'o-k ndia Tinus*
 REL-cough Def name
 'The one who is coughing is Tinus'
- (34) a. *Se k-amatani-k ndia?*
 Qw REL-cry Def
 'Who is crying?'
- b. *Nita ndia k-amatani-k ndia*
 name Def REL-cry Def
 'Nita is the one who is crying'

Preposition in Rotinese also gives contribution to expressing progressive meaning. The two prepositions *nai* and *neme* in (35) and (36) respectively show the contrast between the on going event and the finished event of writing the letter. The data in (35) with the preposition *nai* expresses a situation that the writing of the letter is in progress when people are talking about him. Meanwhile, preposition *neme* in (36) indicates that the event of writing the letter is already finished and now he is not there any more.

- (35) *Ana tao su-sulak nai dalek ele*
 3sg make RED-write prep inside there
 'He is writing letter in the room'
- (36) *Ana tao su-sulak neme dalek ele*
 3sg make RED-write prep inside there
 'He wrote letter in the room'

3.3 Perfect

Perfect describes a currently relevant state brought about by the situation expressed by the verb (Payne, 1997:239). In Rotinese, perfect is lexically marked by particle *so* 'already' (see also Bybee et al 1994:54 in Lindfors, 2003:33), which appears in sentence-final position. With particle *so*, semantically translated as 'already', the sentence in (37) has implication that the event of faint still occurs now, while (38) indicates that the child ever visited Kupang but now he is already in another place. As perfect meaning is lexically indicated, then the particle *so* can be applied to any type of verbs.

- (37) *Ana sapala'o so*
 3sg faint already
 'He has fainted'
- (38) *Kakanak ndia neu neme Kota so*
 Child Def 3.go 3.in Kupang already
 'The child has ever been in Kupang'

4. Conclusion

The discussion on the verbal aspect of Rotinese draws the following conclusion. 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. 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* and *ala* that indicate the successful completion of a situation, as well as *nana-* *-k* construction. Dynamic, durative, and atelic verbs can express imperfective meaning. Progressive can be expressed in four ways; (1) periphrastically constructed by clause combining, (2) relative marker *k-* *-k* applied to durative verbs with definite article *ndia*, (3) relative marker *mana-* *-k* 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. As perfect is lexically indicated by particle, then it can be applied to any type of verbs.

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