

Workshop on TAM markers and evidentiality in Indonesian Languages

Abstract proposal

Aspect in Indonesian: free markers versus clitic markers

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In Indonesian, the expression of aspect generally rests on free pre-verbal markers like *telah* (perfective), *akan* (uncertain/future). Besides, some clitic or affixes that indicate voice or deverbal nominalization can additionally convey an aspect meaning.

The free aspect markers are often entangled with modality meanings. We will inventory 15 pre-verbal aspect/mood markers (*sedang, tengah, lagi, semakin, terus, masih, tetap, sempat, sudah, telah, pernah, baru, belum, akan, bakal*) and propose a sorting of their aspectual (and modal, if applicable) features. A particular attention will be given to the marker *sudah*, which displays different modal and/or aspectual meanings.

Contemporary written Indonesian seemingly uses more and more markers combinations: two preverbal aspect/mood free markers preposed to the verb. Using the internet as a corpus, we found 72 different combinations of two aspect markers. The rules of markers combination highlight the core features of each marker. For instance, a perfective marker can stand in the first position when combined with a semelfactive marker, but the reverse is not true. More generally, switching the position of the markers in a combination will evince another meaning, i.e. xy is not synonymous with yx . We will propose three construction rules that account for the markers combinations.

Most of the Indonesian flexional clitics are described according to their features in terms of transitivity or diathesis. The lexical affixes are commonly depicted either as classifiers or in relation to other semantic features. This labelling is effective, but conceals aspectual features possibly specified by the Indonesian clitics/affixes. We will examine the aspectual features of the verbal prefix *ter-* (so called “accidental passive”) as opposed to the passive prefix *di-*. We will also deal with a less known aspectual opposition between the deverbal nominalization confix *peN- -an* and suffix *-nya*.

The proclitic *ter-* may express, beside voice, a ‘resultative state’ e.g. *Buku ini tertulis dalam bahasa Indonesia* “this book has been written Indonesian”. It implies the completion of an event, while *di-* does not indicate whether the event is completed or not, e.g. *Buku ini ditulis dalam bahasa Indonesia* “this book is written in Indonesian (currently being written or has been written)”. For ‘achievement’ verbs (where the event is represented as a bounded whole), the prefix *ter-* can only indicate the perfective aspect, e.g. *terbunuh* “killed”, thus will be incompatible with the progressive aspect marker *sedang*, e.g. **sedang terbunuh* “being killed”.

The confix *peN- -an* forms nouns and may express progressivity, e.g. *pendidikan* “education, activity of educating” whenever it is possible to oppose it to *-an*, e.g. *didikan* “education, acquired knowledge”. This opposition is more clear-cut when comparing nominalisations of dynamic verbs by *-nya* and by *peN- -an*, e.g. *dibunuhnyanya Munir* “the murder of Munir, the fact that Munir has been killed” versus *pembunuhan Munir* “the murder of Munir”, regardless of whether the event is completed or not.

We will argue that the deverbal nominalization using *-nya* retains in fact a predicative role, embedding the indication of a perfective aspect. Moreover, the perfective aspect specified by *ter-* or *-nya* will additionally lead to the localization of the event in the past, if no other indication of time is available in the context.

Finally, we will examine the rules that forbid the co-occurrence of a free aspect marker and a clitic aspect marker (like *ter-* or *-nya*), or that allow them to appear simultaneously, providing a wealth of nuanced aspect and modality meanings.