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Between Perfect and Perfective The Meaning and Function of Ambonese Malay *su* and *suda*

1. The search for translation equivalents as a source of investigation

The case of the Ambonese Malay pre-verbal marker *su* provides a good illustration of how tense, modality, and aspect (TMA) features interact in this language.¹ These features are connected with a function of *su* on a higher discourse level, namely creating textual coherence in multi-clause sentences. Furthermore, since the pre-verbal marker *su* is synchronically and diachronically related to the sentence-final particle *suda*, the said TMA and discourse features combine with pragmatic features to express subjective, speaker-oriented values. Stressing the basic interconnectedness of these features and functions, we will show that *su* is definable in terms of the perfect and perfective aspect as defined in the linguistic literature, while *suda* is best characterized as an illocutionary particle expressing a kind of decisiveness.

If *su* and *suda* were unique to Ambonese Malay, the relevance of a feature analysis of these elements would be rather limited. However, there are cog-

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented as a paper at the Fifth International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics, Leipzig, 16-17 June 2001 (Van Minde 2001). The authors wish to thank those present at the symposium and two anonymous reviewers for *Bijdragen* for their critical comments. Of course any shortcomings remain our responsibility. Special thanks are due to the Research School CNWS for the grant given to J. Tjia.

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nate forms in many or most Malay dialects, including the national language of Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia, and of Malaysia, Bahasa Melayu, so that we expect similar meanings and functions, though probably different feature clusters, to occur in these related dialects.

Because studies on Indonesian *sudah* are illuminating for the way in which these Ambonese Malay items function, we will in places refer to these analyses, even though Ambonese Malay *su* and *suda* are the focus of our attention. Conversely, we believe an understanding of the semantics of *su* and *suda* may deepen our insight into the functions of *sudah*. Given the close (synchronic) dialectal connections between standard and Ambonese Malay, we use 'Malay' as an umbrella term covering both standard and regional varieties.

The immediate stimulus for writing this essay was provided by our experience in teaching Indonesian to foreign students, and more specifically, in translating between Indonesian and English or Dutch. In class, the Indonesian TMA marker *sudah* is often uniquely identified with English 'already' and Dutch 'al' – the glosses that bilingual dictionaries usually provide for the entry *sudah*. However, the resultant translations tend to be clumsy whatever the target language.

When a student is faced with the task of translating an English or Dutch text into Indonesian, his/her natural reaction will be to search for Indonesian morpheme equivalents for every scrap of lexical and grammatical information in the source text. Consequently, the resultant Indonesian sentences are frequently over-specified: although they may be grammatical from a purely syntactic point of view, they will contain redundant elements from a discourse point of view. As is well known, grammatical categories from European languages (such as tense, aspect, person, number) cannot be coded in the Malay verb (see note 7 below). Equally important is the fact that, seen from the perspective of European languages, certain information does not need to be encoded in Malay where particular participants and events are sufficiently known to those present in the speech situation because they have been introduced earlier in the discourse. So it is not necessary to render every perfect tense distinction by means of *sudah*, for instance. Note how in example (1b) the perfect tense is encoded in the Dutch auxiliary verb *heeft* and the past participle *gekocht*, which might lead a Dutch student to come up with a rather awkward Malay translation where *sudah* seems out of place.

- (1a) *Vanwaar heeft hij dat horloge?*
Where did he get that watch?
Jam tangan itu dia dapat di mana?

- (1b) *Hij heeft 't gekocht toen hij in Singapore was.*
3Sm have.3S it buy.PERF when 3Sm in S. was

He bought it when he was in Singapore.

(?) *Jam tangan itu sudah dibelinya waktu di Singapura.*

In this case it would be the teacher's task to explain lexical and grammatical differences between Dutch (or English) and Indonesian. In addition, and in a more philosophical vein, the teacher might fruitfully draw the students' attention to the disparate ways in which different languages 'silence' information (Ortega y Gasset 2000; Becker 1998:1-20). Furthermore, the teacher could point out the difference between *Bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar* (the grammatically correct kind of Indonesian that is promoted by the National Center for Language Cultivation and Development, but which sounds rather bookish in non-formal situations) and *Bahasa Indonesia yang wajar* (which refers to a kind of Indonesian that not only is grammatically correct but also sounds natural because it is context-sensitive and attuned to situational factors). The appropriate Indonesian translation in example (1b) could be any of the following alternatives, depending on the required speech style:

(1c) *Jam tangan itu dibelinya waktu di Singapura / Dibelinya waktu di Singapura / Dia membeli jam tangan itu waktu di Singapura / Di Singapura.*

Conversely, a rendering of each instance of Indonesian *sudah* into English 'already' or Dutch 'al' would create an odd impression. The student should be told that in these European languages particular semantic aspects of *sudah* may sometimes be conveyed through tense-aspect inflections, temporal adverbs, focus constructions, or combinations of these, while in other contexts 'already' or 'al' may adequately render the relevant semantic aspect. So if the Indonesian sentence with *sudah* in (1b) had occurred in the source text, the context would determine which of the following translations would be most fitting:

(2) *Jam tangan itu sudah dibelinya waktu di Singapura.*

He bought it when he was in Singapore / He has already bought it when he was in Singapore.

Hij heeft 't gekocht toen hij in Singapore was / Hij heeft 't al gekocht toen hij in Singapore was / Die heeft hij gekocht toen hij in Singapore was.

As we will see below, there are specific contexts in which it would be simply wrong to translate Indonesian *sudah*, or its nearest Ambonese Malay equivalent *su*, with 'already' or 'al'.

In the literature, Indonesian *sudah* has been dealt with most extensively by B.

Kaswanti Purwo (1984:228-37) and N.F. Alieva et al. (1991:370 ff.). The ample space these authors devote to this item suggests that it is a rather 'problematic' word, an element of which the core meaning and the related or subsidiary meanings are not easy to describe. From the above it is clear that *sudah* is synonymous neither with English 'already' nor with Dutch 'al'. Given that few if any lexical items have exact lexical correspondences in other languages, this is not a surprising finding. However, to be able to go beyond this trivial observation, one has to go deeply into the various ways *sudah* is used in natural, primary speech, that is, spoken conversation. For a fuller understanding of *sudah*, as well as many other grammatical morphemes, we simply cannot rely on written texts alone, although even in written standard Indonesian we find *sudah* in contexts that are barely touched upon in the linguistic literature. In Sitor Situmorang's well-known poem 'Si Anak Hilang', for instance, we read:

(3)	<i>Si anak hilang kini kembali</i>
<i>Tak seorang dikenalnya lagi</i>
<i>Berapa kali panen sudah</i>
<i>Apa saja telah terjadi</i> | The prodigal son has now returned
Not a single person does he recognize
How many harvests have passed indeed
How many things have happened |
|-----|---|---|

And in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's prose story 'Dendam' we find the sentence:

(4)	<i>Tenang sadja barisan itu berderap kesetasiun. Tanah betjek dibawah kaki dilalui sudah.</i>
Calmly the troops trotted to the station, paying no attention whatsoever to the muddy soil beneath their feet. |
|-----|---|

When investigating the meaning and functions of *sudah*, it is essential to point out marked cases where *sudah* is a post-clausal instead of a pre-verbal marker – for which Kaswanti Purwo uses the term 'inversion' (Kaswanti Purwo 1984:229; see Alieva et al. 1991:387). To stop there, however, would boil down to relegating these marked cases to the realm of syntactic transformation without loss of meaning. To characterize *sudah*'s moving to the right in examples (3) and (4) as simply serving a literary, aesthetic objective would furthermore be linguistically unenlightening. In what follows we will show that *sudah* may be moved to the right because it has been subject to a particular process of grammaticalization and that placing it in such a marked position is not a semantically neutral syntactic operation, but creates specific semantic-pragmatic effects. This is not to say, of course, that the 'displacement' of *sudah* in (3) and (4) may not have an aesthetic side effect.

To find out more about the complex semantics of *sudah*, we may fruitfully

consult Malay vernaculars, non-standard forms of Malay, dialects that function primarily as spoken modes and are never or only rarely used in written communication.

The focus in this essay will be on the Ambonese Malay TMA marker *su* and pragmatic particle *suda*.² Ambonese Malay pre-verbal *su* is synchronically and diachronically related to the post-clausal pragmatic particle *suda*, and both are cognate with Indonesian *sudah*. Unlike its Ambonese Malay counterpart *su*, the Indonesian aspect marker *sudah* may form the input to various derivational processes. So we find, to name just a few derivatives, *menyudahkan* 'to finish, end, complete something (a task, job, and so on)', *menyudahi* 'to conclude, end something (a talk), fulfil', *bersudah* 'have an end', *mempersudahkan* 'to bring something to a close', *sesudah* 'after', *berkesudahan* 'to have an end' (Echols and Shadily 1989). It is striking how these derived forms share an aspect of completion. So we would like to put forward the hypothesis that historically the core meaning of *sudah* included a sense of (reaching a point of) completion. This is also in line with J. Gonda's statement that *sudah* was borrowed from Sanskrit *śuddha*, which includes such a semantic feature.³

A cursory glance at other forms of colloquial Malay, such as Jakarta Malay (Betawi) or colloquial Malay from the Malay Peninsula⁴, shows the relevance of our analysis for other Malay dialects. An investigation of the Ambonese Malay *su* – *suda* contrast deepens our understanding of a grammaticalization phenomenon that probably occurs in other varieties of Malay as well, namely the development of an originally Sanskrit content word into two different function words, that is to say, a TMA marker and a functionally distinct pragmatic particle.

In section 3 below we will give a semantic characterization of *su* with the aid of the concept of phasal polarity; section 4 is concerned with finding the

² For our analysis we have used field data collected by D. van Minde (see Van Minde 1997), including narrative texts and daily conversations, and elicited data from J. Tjia, who is a native speaker of Ambonese Malay. Our analysis stops at the linguistic level, and we will have nothing to say about the palpable aesthetic effects of moving *sudah* (as in examples (3) and (4) above).

³ 'In Malay *sudah* means "accomplished, done with, finished, over"; it often accompanies verbs indicating termination in point of time. No serious objection can be raised to the idea that this word originates in Skt. *śuddha*- [...] "cleared, pure etc." in the sense of "acquitted, complete"; cf. e.g. Malay phrases such as *ta sudah dengan* "not to be quit of, never to hear the end of it" (lit. "not finished with"); *sudah-lah* "that is the end of it".' (Gonda 1973:565.) We would like to thank Dr. K.A. Adelaar (p.c.) for bringing the Sanskrit origin to our attention. Note also that no reconstruction is found for *sudah* in Wurm and Wilson's list (Wurm and Wilson 1975).

⁴ In Betawi, the variety of Malay indigenous to Jakarta, the reduced forms *da(h)/dè(h)* are pragmatic particles corresponding to the TMA markers *uda(h)/udè(h)* (Samaniri 2001). Sweesun Koh (1990:202-8) gives some details of the colloquial (Malaysian) Malay pre-predicative perfective *sudah/dah*, post-predicative *dah*, and *(u)dah-le/la* in balanced structures of the type *(u)dah-le/la X, Y pulak* 'not only X, but also Y'.

appropriate semantic-pragmatic terms for describing the function of *su* as an aspect marker; section 5 deals with the clause-final pragmatic particle *suda*. Before starting our detailed analysis, however, let us first take a look in section 2 at some of the basic formal and structural properties of *su*.

2. Formal and structural properties of *su*

There are two alternative forms of the TMA marker *su*, namely *so* and *s*. The lowering of the high vowel /u/ to /o/, which is regular in many common word forms, is rare in monosyllables (Van Minde 1997:21 ff.), though apparently function words are an exception to the rule. The single *s* is a case of extreme reduction. It is the result of a strategy that is commonly resorted to so as to increase speech speed in spontaneous conversation. Both *so* and *s* are synonymous with *su*; in other words, they behave syntactically in the same way. The fact that in rapid speech *su* is reduced to the single sibilant *s* is significant when we realize that *su* itself is a reduced derivative of *suda*. It is well known that cross-linguistically there is a tendency for grammatical morphemes to develop from content words. TMA morphology is often the product of gradual re-analysis of former main verbs, which may eventually develop, via intermediate independent auxiliaries, into clitics or inflectional affixes (Givón 1984:270-1). Although the single *s* only occurs in rapid speech, and thus is basically phonetically motivated, the progressive reductive development of the trio *suda* > *su* > *s* resembles the formal changes that accompany grammaticalization processes in agglutinative languages.

The following details are pertinent to the position of *su* within the clause, its relation to *suda*, and its modification scope.

One subtype of Ambonese Malay yes-no questions is typically formed by tagging a negative alternative (introduced by *ka* 'or') to a positive statement. There is a rising intonation in the final part of the sentence, the tag:

- (5) *Se mo pi ka seng?*
 2S want go or no
 Do you want to go? / Will you go?
- (6) *Se su makang ka bal'ong?*
 2S TMA eat or not yet
 Have you eaten (yet)?

From (6) it follows that *bal'ong* 'not yet' is the externally negated equivalent of *su* (see below, section 3). The fact that a combination **seng su* does not

occur, while *su seng* does, moreover points to an analysis of *bal'ong* as a suppletive form of externally negated *su*:

- (7a) *Se su seng mo pi lai?* (7b) **Se seng su mo pi lai?*
 2S TMA no want go also
 Don't you want to go anymore?

Given that *suda* is the only admissible affirmative answer to a yes-no question containing *su*, we conclude that the two forms are not only synchronically related, but also semantically synonymous in the context of this type of question-answer pair:

- (8a) *Se su makang ka blong?* (8b) *Suda (*su)*
 Have you eaten (yet)? Yes.

The fact that only *suda* is possible in (8b) is in agreement with a general rule that short forms cannot constitute a one-word sentence (Van Minde 1997:57).

TMA markers precede the predicate, and their modification scope extends to elements on the right side. Sentences (9a-b) illustrate alternative positions for *su*:

- (9a) *Dong su dudu lama ni; ...* (9b) *Dong dudu su lama ni; ...*
 3P TMA sit long time this
 They have been sitting a long time (now / mind you / ...)

Sentence (9b) is appropriate if it has been established in the preceding discourse that a third party has been sitting (somewhere). In this case, the remainder of the sentence (*su lama ni*) provides new information about this fact. In other words, sentence (9b) has a topic-comment structure. A similar arrangement is found in example (10), under the same pragmatic conditions:

- (10) *Anto guru su lama.*
 3S teacher TMA long time
 He's been a teacher for a long time.

Summarizing the above, and stressing formal and functional asymmetry, we note that *su* (*so*, *s*) is a TMA marker that is synchronically related to the full form *suda*, since the latter occurs as the affirmative reply to a yes-no question. The full form *suda* is also a clause-final discourse particle that is not subject to formal variability. Both *su* and *suda* historically derive from a Sanskrit loanword possessing as primary or core feature accomplishment or termination.

3. *Su* as a marker of phasal aspect

The following simple sentence provides a useful starting-point for a discussion of the semantics of *su*:

- (11) *Ocep su di ruma.*
 O. TMA at house
 Ocep is/was already at home.

Sentence (11) expresses two things at the same time. Firstly, a positive situation (Ocep is at home) is contrasted with a negative situation (Ocep is not at home). Secondly, this negative situation is presented as being temporally adjacent; in this case it immediately precedes/preceded the current situation.

In Van Minde 1997 (p. 228) *su* is labelled as a marker of *phasal aspect*, without much further explanation. The term *phasal aspect* covers two different aspects, however. On the one hand it indicates that *su* is an element functioning in the TMA domain, and on the other hand it stresses the fact that *su* forms a lexical subsystem, together with expressions for 'not yet', 'still', and 'no longer', in a category of so-called phasal polarity expressions. Phasal polarity expressions are expressions used to contrast a particular situation 'with its opposite from a polarity perspective', where 'the two situations are continuatively or sequentially related' (Van Baar 1997:1). The following diagram shows how the basic – that is, language-independent – phasal polarity notions ALREADY, STILL, NOT YET, and NO LONGER are expressed in Ambonese Malay:

Each conceptual element in this diagram can be characterized in relation to the others through two types of negation. First, it can be imagined as corresponding to the outcome of a negation extending over a neighbouring element (external negation): NOT YET is logically equivalent to NOT ALREADY (whereas ALREADY is logically equivalent to NOT NOT YET). Second, it can be

imagined as corresponding to the outcome of a neighbouring element having negation in its scope (internal negation): NOT YET is logically equivalent to STILL NOT (whereas STILL is logically equivalent to NOT YET NOT).⁵

Sentences with *su*, *bal'ong*, *masi*, or *seng ... lai* not only concern situations that imply opposites from a polarity perspective, but also imply that the 'opposite situations' are sequentially related. Essentially, these phasal polarity items are markers of change – a change that either has actually occurred (as in 'already' and 'no longer' expressions) or is expected to occur or hoped for ('still' and 'not yet' expressions).

4. Semantic and pragmatic explanations of *su*

Before proceeding with our analysis of aspect features, it is useful to devote a few words to the nature of tense and modality marking in Malay. The idea that tense, aspect, and modality are actually three subcategories within a single notional space that has time experience as a common basis (Givón 1984:272) has been felt to be most relevant for the present study. In various places it will in fact be necessary to refer to notions that are not aspectual per se.

We will take an elaboration on alternative (present and past tense) translations of Malay sentences as our point of departure. As was said above, tense is not a grammatical category of the Malay verb, and situations may be described without any temporal marking whatsoever. Indonesian sentence (12) lacks any explicit temporal coding, whereas in English the choice between present and past tense is obligatory:

- (12) *Matahari terbit di sebelah timur (dan tenggelam di sebelah barat).*⁶
 sun rØse at side east and go.down at side west
 The sun rises/rose in the east (and sets in the west).

In the initial stages of language acquisition, European students are apt to feel uneasy about what exactly is being proposed in this simple Indonesian sentence, as to them a crucial piece of information seems missing. In other words, to an English-speaking person, for example, the temporal framing of

⁵ Logical equivalence is of course something quite different from lexical or syntactic synonymy. Linguistically speaking, *He is not yet / not already / still not ill* are three different sentences coding different propositions. Moreover, one expression (*not already*) is acceptable in only a very specific context.

⁶ This sentence (part) is taken from Alieva et al. (1991:371), who use it to demonstrate that Indonesian sentences have no special markings when they depict situations that are not tied to any specific time, or have an absolute temporal interpretation ('relasi temporal yang sifatnya mutlak, pankronis').

the situation seems to be unspecified (gloss: rØse). If this sentence were used by, for instance, a primary school teacher, it could very well be meant as a general statement, not tied to any specific point in time or place (non-specific interpretation: 'The sun rises in the east (and sets in the west)'; see Alieva et al.'s 'panchronic' interpretation). But if it came from a descriptive passage in a novel or television documentary, it might well be more specific, in that it might relate directly to the scene being depicted (the here and now of the novel or documentary: 'The sun is rising in the east. The new day will bring both happiness and horror to the newly born cubs in the great Serengeti Plains.'). In this particular context, the description is tied to the moment of speech, the unmarked point on the time axis (present tense / specific interpretation). If we look closely at the Malay and English sentences in (12) *independently of one another*, we may conclude that both are multi-interpretable, that is, both are insufficiently specific as regards tense. The important point is that for a correct interpretation of English and Malay sentences, a knowledge of the context is indispensable, as it provides clues that are essential for the right temporal interpretation.

Needless to say Malay, like any other language, provides opportunities for being more explicit about the location of particular states of affairs on the time axis. It does so on the syntactic level, through various adverbs of time (such as Indonesian *sekarang* 'now', *tadi* 'just now', *nanti* 'presently') or more extensive adjuncts (for example, Indonesian *tahun lalu* 'last year', *waktu dia berangkat* 'when she left'). The use of adverbs and adjuncts places these situations in a primary time frame. Structurally, they operate as modifiers at the clause level, relating the communicated event to some point on the time axis, be it the moment of speech or some other point given in the discourse or the situation. Within this primary time frame, markers at the predicate level denote three kinds of relative TMA relation: anterior (for example, Indonesian *sudah* 'already', *belum* 'not yet'), concurrent (*sedang* 'busy doing ...' (imperfective), *masih* 'still'), and posterior (for example, *akan* 'will', *mau* 'will'). Structurally, TMA markers are placed immediately before the predicate. Since the Ambonese Malay *su* can be used within a primary time frame, it is perfectly acceptable to use it in sentences relating to future situations. Through the clause-modifying adverb *sabantar*, sentence (13) is placed in the future:

- (13) *Sabantar kat'ong sampe, dong su abis makang.*
 presently 1P arrive 3P TMA finish eat
 Presently when we arrive, they will have finished eating.

The use of English present tense in the novel/documentary context in example (12) also has a particular modal effect, for it emphasizes the 'here

and now', that part of reality that we know from direct experience. Thus it enhances the involvement of the reader/listener with what is currently being communicated: he or she is led into, or made part of, the scene (compare with the distant narrative form 'The sun rose [...]. The new day would bring [...]'). Now, whereas English has explicit marking of the verb, Indonesian must find other ways of achieving more or less the same effect, for example, *Matahari terbit di sebelah timur. Hari baru ini akan membawa bahagia maupun kengerian kepada anak-anak singa yang baru lahir di Dataran Serengeti*. The use in the second sentence of the determiner *ini* 'this; these' (which includes a +proximate feature, whereas *itu* 'that; those' has a -proximate feature) brings the scene closer to the reader or listener.

A third, and final, point that should be dealt with in a comprehensive analysis of tense, modality, and aspect concerns the inherently aspectual nature of verbs. The English verb '(to) rise', for instance, is used by itself to denote relatively punctual (bounded) events (*The sun rises in the east*), and usually in an explicitly marked form for durative (unbounded) states (*The sun is rising*). The Indonesian root *terbit*, when used in connection with solar movements, is also relatively punctual, with the pre-verbal *sedang* marking durative (imperfective) states of affairs.⁷ This kind of imperfective marking is achieved in Ambonese Malay through the TMA marker *ada* (related to the verb *ada* 'be (somewhere)'). As can be expected, the imperfective marker *ada* does not combine with verbs that are inherently strictly punctual, such as *mal(a)t'os* 'explode'. Combinations of *ada* with strictly durative verbs such as *tau* 'to know' are also not found. In general, it appears possible to divide Ambonese Malay verbs into three major subclasses based on inherent aspect, namely strictly punctual verbs, strictly durative verbs, and an intermediate subclass of verbs that have both a punctual and a durative meaning. The present essay is not concerned with inherent aspect, but it is clear to us that a comprehensive study on aspect should formulate rules regarding the combinatory possibilities of TMA markers and verbs and the interaction between inherent aspect and external marking of aspect. Although it is frequently held that the categories tense, modality, and aspect are closely interrelated and that it may be quite hard to study any of them in isolation, we have tried to do just that, if only as an analysis strategy and for the sake of argument.

⁷ In transitive verbs, however, the *meN*-root versus plain root opposition creates not only a contrast between actor focus and non-actor focus, but also additional aspectual contrasts: *Baca buku itu* 'Read the book' (bounded event) versus *Ayo, membaca surat kabar* 'Go read newspapers' (unbounded state) (see Kaswanti Purwo 1986). This mechanism is unknown in Ambonese Malay.

In various languages expressions incorporating the meaning 'already' include an early change feature, and English 'already' is one of them. One interpretation of the sentence *Peter is already in Amsterdam* is that the speaker is expressing the idea that Peter is finding himself in Amsterdam sooner than (s)he expected or hoped (see Van Baar 1997:2, 28). It is precisely this feature of the item 'already' that prevents it from being used as a translation equivalent of Indonesian *sudah* in the following sentence:

- (14) *Jam tangan ini saya beli di Singapore tahun 1960 Sekarang*
 clock hand this 1S buy at Singapore year 1960 now
sudah rusak.
 TMA break.down
 I bought this watch in Singapore in 1960. Now it's broken down. (... *Now it's already broken down.)

The context of the clause with *sudah* makes it clear that the speaker has worn the wristwatch for a considerable number of years. That *sudah* can still occur in this context, while English *already* can not, is indicative of the fact that the feature of early change is more evident, more central in *already* than it is in *sudah*. To be sure, we have not come across a single case in which an early change feature is inevitably present in *sudah* – or in Ambonese Malay *su*, for that matter. What Indonesian *sudah* and Ambonese Malay *su* convey is, as was said in the previous section, a change subsuming two features: polar contrast and sequencing with an adjacent (immediately preceding) situation. As a consequence of these combined features, the attention is focused on the initial stages of the new situation. The TMA markers *sudah* and *su* therefore include a subsidiary initial stage feature, which reveals itself through comparison with its near-equivalent *telah*.

Kaswanti Purwo (1984:231) notes the impossibility of interchanging the near-equivalents *sudah* and *telah* in the following sentences:

- (15) *Telah meninggal dunia nenek kami tercinta [...].*
 Our beloved grandmother [named ...] has died.
 (16) *Waktu kami sampai di rumah sakit, nenek sudah meninggal.*
 When we arrived at the hospital, grandmother had already died.

He also notes that *telah* foregrounds the reported event, while *sudah* puts it in the background. To our mind, however, the fact that in (15) grandmother's death is in the foreground is primarily the result of the subject-predicate inversion. That *sudah* and *telah* are not interchangeable is a consequence of the features of polar contrast and sequencing (plus subsidiary initial stage) in

sudah. *Telah* marks a change as well, but instead of a feature of initial stage, it focuses on the situation as a whole ('grandmother is dead') or on the terminal phase of the situation ('grandmother is dying'). The antonym of *sudah* in sentence (16) is *belum* 'not yet'. In (15), on the other hand, *telah* conveys that a process of dying has (now, finally) come to an end. 'Already' is not, indeed cannot be, part of the English translation of this sentence and therefore *belum* cannot be the antonym of *telah* – at least in this context.

The initial stage feature is not the only factor that helps explain Kaswanti Purwo's observation (1984:231) that *sudah* can carry emotive connotations (which, incidentally, are absent in *telah*). The case of Ambonese Malay *su* sheds a different light on this claim, for one of the functions of this element is the conveyance of special relevance or noteworthiness. For instance, in the case of someone reporting the loss of their passport first to the police and then, on the basis of the official statement issued by the police, to the immigration service in order to apply for a new passport (the normal procedure in Indonesia), the appropriate statements at the respective desks are:

<p>(17a) <i>Beta paspor ilang.</i>
 1S passport lost
 I've lost my passport.</p> | <p>(17b) <i>Beta paspor su ilang.</i>
 1S passport TMA lost
 I've lost my passport.</p> |
|--|---|

At the police station the loss is reported in a matter-of-fact style (sentence 17a); all the speaker wants and expects is a single sheet of paper stating the loss. At the immigration office things are quite different, for here a chain of bureaucratic acts has to be set in motion, and so it is important to convince the civil servants of the urgency of one's request. The TMA marker *su* meets this objective: it marks the proposition as being especially relevant. The special relevance / noteworthiness sense is also evident in the following (syntactic) minimal pair⁸:

<p>(18a) <i>Mo ujang ni !</i>
 TMA rain this
 It's about to rain!</p> | <p>(18b) <i>Su mo ujang ni !</i>
 TMA TMA rain this
 It's about to rain (indeed)!</p> |
|---|---|

In both (18a) and (18b) the speaker expresses an expectation or conjecture about the change in the weather. However, in (18b) *su* adds an extra value: the speaker conveys that, for him at least, there is somehow a special reason for commenting on the weather. Here *su* serves to link the objective propositional content of the clause with the realm of presupposition, expectation,

⁸ *Mo* is a TMA particle derived from the verb *mau* 'want, wish' that marks future states of affairs.

hope, and other subjective, speaker-oriented states. So we may say that with the feature special relevance / noteworthiness we enter the sphere of pragmatics and illocution.

The alternative translation with 'indeed' of sentence (18b) points to an analysis from a slightly different angle, as it suggests that, rather than conveying special relevance or noteworthiness, *su* stresses the factuality of the proposition. In the factuality reading, the speaker presents the prospective change of weather as a definite, given fact. Because of the speaker-oriented character of *su* in sentences (17b)-(18b), this factuality feature is explainable as an epistemic modal value pertaining to the realis-irrealis scale.

For yet another feature of TMA marker *su*, discourse explanations are called for. To illustrate this point, we present the following poly-clausal sentences:

- (19) *Lalu bini su lia laki mati, bini sayang*
 then wife TMA see husband dead wife feel.sorry
laki.
 husband

Then, seeing that her husband was dead, his wife felt sorry for him.

- (20) *Skarang babi su mati, la dong bilang: 'Bagemana, babi*
 now pig TMA dead then 3P say how pig
su mati ni, kat'ong pi'.
 TMA dead this 1P go

Now, the pig being dead, they said: 'How about it, now that the pig is dead, let's go'.

- (21) *Kat'ong dua makang. Su mandi abis, makang,*
 1P two eat TMA wash finish eat
lalu kat'ong sisir rambu, konci pintu, la katong
 then 1P comb hair lock door then 1P
dua pulang.
 two go.home

The two of us eat. When we've taken a bath, we eat, then we comb our hair, lock the door, and go home.

- (22) *Su tua, mau pi dansa lai!*
 TMA old want go dance also
 Old as you are, you still want to go out dancing!

It is striking how in sentences (19)-(21) the clause marked by *su* precedes other clauses in the linear sequence. In these cases the contribution of *su* to

the meaning of the sentence is such that it marks the state of affairs referred to by the pertinent clause as preceding in actual time the states of affairs referred to by the following clauses. We will call this the anteriority feature.

The first clause in sentence (22), however, is not given a strictly temporal interpretation. Through metaphorical extension, *su* marks the state of affairs referred to by *tua* as given, as topical. As a result, the status of the information in the following clause rises considerably, in other words, is put into focus. It may conceivably be most appropriate to view this feature as operating on the basis of the temporal, anterior interpretation, hence as a derived, extended feature. Therefore we postulate topicality as a subsidiary feature of anteriority.

Sentences (19)–(21) were taken from folk tales. In narrative texts and other types of connected discourse the anteriority/topicality feature of *su* becomes especially manifest. Evidently in these texts *su* is used as an instrument for event sequencing and in backgrounding-foregrounding strategies, that is, as a tool in creating textual coherence (Hopper 1982; Wallace 1982). Since this cohesive quality of *su* does not operate beyond the sentence in which it occurs, the backgrounding function or effect may be subsumed under the traditional sentence-syntax notion of subordination.

5. Pragmatic explanations of *suda*

In the preceding sections we analysed Ambonese Malay *su* (*so*, *s*) as a phasal polarity marker coding change, that is, a polar contrast between adjacent situations, which also carried a subsidiary initial stage feature. The feature of special relevance or noteworthiness conveys subjective, speaker-oriented information, and closely connected with it is a kind of modal reading where *su* expresses factuality. Finally, on the discourse level *su* co-determines chronological or logical-causal relationships between consecutive clauses due to the feature of anteriority/topicality.

Before proceeding with an analysis of clause-final *suda*, let us first highlight the contrast with the TMA marker *su*. In an Ambonese Malay translation of Indonesian sentence (14), *su* takes the place of TMA marker *sudah*. These two items are translation equivalents in many other contexts, for instance in:

- (23) *Lia, anto su makang.*
 look 3S TMA eat
 Look, he's already eating (that is, he has started eating already) / he has eaten already.

Su in (23) does not necessarily imply that an action/event is completed and finished (and nor does Indonesian TMA marker *sudah*). Therefore, the feature of completion is not at the core of TMA particle *su* (or in Indonesian TMA marker *sudah*). In addition to what was said about the differences between *su* and *suda* in section 2, we have another strong argument here for distinguishing this particle *su* from the full form *suda*, because in the appropriate context, marking an endpoint (completion, accomplishment) is just what full predicative *suda* does:

(24) *Suda*.

Okay (that's enough). (Said, for instance, in a situation where someone is pouring tea for the speaker or assisting the speaker, where the speaker is ordering two boys to stop fighting, and so on.)

Single predicative *suda* may also express resignation or like feelings, which is a way of saying that things are as they are and cannot be changed. Sentence (25), for instance, is a fitting response to someone's account of misfortunes:

- (25) *Ya suda, kat'ong seng kuat to. Mau apa lae?*
 yes *suda* 1P not strong Particle want what also
 That's how it is, we are helpless, aren't we? What else can we do?

All this supports the conclusion that TMA marker *su* has developed further away from its Sanskrit origin (see section 1) than full-form *suda*, which has retained more of its original semantics.

While for some features of *su* reference to higher-level notions is helpful, clearly the function and semantics of clause-final *suda* can only be explained by reference to pragmatic notions. It is very obvious that *suda* is an illocutionary particle that relates the propositional content of the preceding clause to some aspect of the extra-linguistic setting or the linguistic context of the clause. Even its clause-final position is indicative of this, as this is the preferred position for clause modifiers. In clause-final position *suda* has paradigmatic relationships with other clause modifiers such as *mo*, *tu*, *ni*, *lai/lae*, *sakali*, and *e* (Van Minde 1997:250 ff.; Tjia 1992). Some of these have developed from content words, with concurrent formal reduction.

Previously there was no agreement about how clause-final *suda* was distributed over the different mood types (see Van Minde 1997:250, 272; Tjia 1992:56). Now it appears that clause-final *suda* combines with all major types (declarative, interrogative, and imperative):

- (26) Tadi sapa suda?
just now who suda
Who was it again? (What's the name again of the person who came to see me?)
- (27) Beta pi ambe suda?
1S go take suda
Shall I just go and get it?
- (28) Ambe suda.
take suda
Just take it.
- (29) Beta ada tunggu lama-lama ni, de seng datang-datang,
1S TMA wait RED.long this 3S no RED.come
la be pi suda.
then 1S go suda
I was waiting for a long time, (but) he didn't show up, so I just left.
- (30) De su pi suda.
3S TMA go suda
He just went.

In sentences (26-30) the speaker is trying to make a certain dogmatic assertion or statement of unbending decisiveness regarding the preceding proposition through the use of *suda*. In the case of questions asking for information, this decisiveness should be interpreted as urgency. So in example (26) the speaker is not simply asking for someone's identity or name in a neutral fashion, but is also expressing anxiety about this missing information. In (27) the speaker is anticipating possible objections on the part of his interlocutor and so pre-empting these in advance by means of *suda*. And in (28) he is expressing that, as far as he is concerned, there need not be any discussion about whether or not to take a particular item, thus urging his interlocutor to take it.

Descriptive sentences (29-30) show that a change in point of view, that is, a deictic shift, may be involved. Sentences (26-28) are speaker-oriented in two ways. First, where the speaker solicits or conveys information, he is implicitly or explicitly referring to himself as the deictic centre. Secondly, the temporal point of reference for the proposition coincides with this deictic centre: the (here and) now. In (29), however, the speaker is expressing his sense of determination or his conviction at the moment he decided to leave, that is, at a point in time that is located before the moment of speech. In (30) a similar

sense of determination or conviction is involved, but this may belong to the subject of the sentence, namely third person *de 'he'*. In other words, in (30) the speaker may be putting himself in the third person's position, at a time prior to the moment of speech, and thus may be conveying that person's feelings or convictions instead of his own at this moment.

To decide what is the core feature of this clause-final *suda*, it is helpful not only to look at sentences like (26)-(30), but – given the formal identity – also to try and link this full form to full-form *suda* as a one-word sentence. Above we saw that if *suda* is a one-word sentence (and if it is not an answer to a yes-no question containing *su*), the core meaning includes the historical feature of completion/accomplishment. Now, if *suda* is in clause-final position, we can still sense a trace of this completion/accomplishment feature. Because we are dealing with a feature that apparently is cognitively closely associated with completion/accomplishment, we have chosen the term factuality emphasis as a label that accommodates the various readings. In the case of declaratives and imperatives, this feature marks the proposition as a given fact *from the speaker's or the (syntactic) subject's point of view*, even if the state of affairs referred to in the clause has not yet materialized. In the case of interrogatives, *suda* signals special urgency, that is, a kind of emphasis.

If we now return to the Indonesian sentences in examples (3) and (4), we are in a better position to appreciate the subtle nuances introduced by *sudah*. For in (3) *sudah* expresses the narrator's or main character's anxiety when he realizes how much time has passed and it dawns on him that in fact there is no real returning home. Likewise in (4) the narrator seems to have crept into the soldiers' minds and, again through *sudah*, is stressing their determination in trying to reach their goal. Thus Indonesian *sudah*, like Ambonese Malay *suda*, is very much concerned with the attitudes, presuppositions, or convictions of the speaker or, in the case of descriptive sentences, the main character(s).

6. Summary and concluding remarks

In the above we have used cross-linguistic translation as an initial strategy in tracking down systemic correspondences and differences between languages with regard to a single item, namely the 'already' expression in Indonesian, English, and Ambonese Malay. The similarities and differences between Indonesian *sudah* and English *already*, together with the literature on Indonesian *sudah*, provided a useful starting-point for an analysis of Ambonese Malay *su* and *suda*.

A comprehensive analysis of *su* required an approach from three different angles, namely the perspectives of lexico-semantics, pragmatics and illocu-

tion, and discourse or text grammar. Having considered these three domains, we find the following characterization for *su*:

lexico-semantics: change: polar contrast / sequencing with preceding situation, initial stage;
 pragmatics/illocution: special relevance / noteworthiness, factuality emphasis;
 discourse/text grammar: anteriority, topicality.

The analysis of clause-final *suda* is more straightforward, in the sense that it functions primarily in the illocution area, bridging the gap between the objective propositional content of the preceding clause and subjective speaker qualities. Its semantics are nevertheless not always transparent, firstly because factuality emphasis covers a range of psychic faculties, and secondly because these faculties may be located within the speaker or the person(s) to whom the (syntactic) subject refers. This latter deictic indeterminacy, together with a traceable echo of the historical feature of accomplishment or termination, thus causes a certain ambiguity. It is the same ambiguity that enriches literary texts.

In light of the above characterizations, we have labelled *su* 'TMA marker' and clause-final *suda* 'illocutionary particle'.

The idea that aspect needs to be studied from the point of view of semantics, discourse, and pragmatics was inspired by, among others, Hopper's writings (Hopper 1977, 1982). We were also guided by the idea that there are close semantic relations between the categories of tense, aspect, and modality (Comrie 1985:6-23), or even that these belong to a single notional category (Givón 1984:272). An important question that remains to be answered is how *su* and *suda* relate to the seemingly familiar notions of perfective, imperfective, and perfect as described in the linguistic literature.

From a superficial point of view, *su* and *suda* share certain features of the perfective aspect and the perfect as defined by Comrie and Givón.⁹ However, there are at least two obstacles to relating *su* and *suda* to the latter's general definitions. The first is that the said definitions correspond only partially. The second is that the distinction between perfective and perfect may be quite vague.¹⁰ On the assumption that it is possible to ignore minor differences

⁹ Comrie's definitions of perfective and perfect are: 'perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various phases that make up that situation [...]', and 'the perfect indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation' (Comrie 1976:16, 52).

¹⁰ See, for instance, Givón's statement about the perfect: 'Of all tense-aspects in human language, the so-called perfect is by far the most complex. It involves *tense* elements, such as the *time-axis*, *sequentiality* and *precedence*. It also involves four other *aspectual* elements, each overlapping to some extent with other sub-components of the TAM system. More than other com-

between Comrie's and Givón's definitions of the perfect and perfective, we would note the following.

Firstly, as a phasal polarity item, *su*, as we have seen, is basically a marker of change. A change of states is precisely what characterizes events (*Peter arrived in Jakarta*) as opposed to (stative) states (*Peter is in Jakarta*) and processes (*The passengers are arriving*), a distinction which is marked cross-linguistically by the perfective versus the imperfective. When viewed in terms of coding a change of states, Ambonese Malay *su* could be labelled as a marker of the perfective aspect.

Secondly, the feature of special relevance / noteworthiness / factuality is what typically characterizes the perfect as defined by Givón (1984:280) and Comrie (1976:16). Because of this feature, *su* can also be associated with the perfect. The feature of factuality emphasis of clause-final *suda* is related to this specific feature of *su*.

Thirdly, the feature of anteriority / topicality of *su* marks the first event mentioned in a series of clauses as subordinate / background information. Given Hopper's putatively universal distinction between perfective = main-line events and imperfective = supportive/on-going/background (Hopper 1977, 1982), the feature of anteriority/topicality would seem to be more easily reconcilable with Hopper's imperfective than with any other type of aspect. Yet, there are probably insufficient grounds for supposing that *su* bears a relationship to the imperfective aspect. In the first place, the basic unit underlying Hopper's perfective-imperfective distinction is a passage of text (in narrative discourse), while in our Ambonese Malay examples it is a polyclausal sentence. In the second place, the subordinating/backgrounding function may simply be an interpretation that is inspired by the context rather than being attributable to a distinct feature of *su*.

ponents of the system, it spans the entire functional range, from narrow scope semantics to discourse scope pragmatics. The result of all this is a large degree of intra-language complexity of the perfect, as well as subtle but real cross-language variability. In the latter respect, a language may load onto the "perfect" some of its potential range of features, while shifting other potential "perfect" components to other TMA markers. Different languages thus emphasize different sub-components of the perfect. Nevertheless, the incidence of coding all four major sub-components of the perfect with one morphemic category in the TAM system is quite high.' (Givón 1984:278.)

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