

COMPLEMENTATION IN MALAY

by

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses complementation in Malay, in particular on finite versus non-finite complements. The paper shows that since Malay is a non-inflectional language, its auxiliary verbs, in particular the aspectual auxiliaries will render a clause finite. It will be argued that the Malay complementizer system; that is the nature of a complement clause, i.e. finite or non-finite is triggered by the choice of complementizers in COMP.

The organization of the paper is as follows. First we will give a general background of the language. A description of the Malay auxiliaries follows. In the next section, the discussion distinguishes the realizations of two universal constituents, (INFL)ection and (V)erb in the Malay verbal system. Finally the paper discusses finite and non-finite complement clauses in Malay.

2.0. GENERAL BACKGROUND OF MALAY

Malay is a configurational language with fixed positions for subject Noun Phrase (NP), INFL, and Verb Phrase (VP). Word order is of prime importance in the language since it does not make use of declension or conjugation. There are no overt marking on NPs for Case, nor do there exist any agreement phenomena between the subject NP [NP,S] and the verb. The verb is not marked for any inflection. Tense is often expressed by context, adverbs of time or the auxiliaries.

The basic word order in a declarative sentence is Subject-INFL-Verb-Object. The direct object usually follows immediately after the verb. The indirect object and oblique NPs typically occur with prepositions. Some basic examples are in (1) below:

- (1) a. Ali telah membeli buku di kedai semalam.
Ali has act-buy book at shop yesterday

‘Ali bought a book at the shop yesterday’

- b. Ali membeli sebuah jam untuk ibunya.
 Ali act-buy one-cl. watch for mother-his

'Ali bought a watch for his mother,

- c. Ali memberi RM10.00 kepada dana itu.
 Ali act-give RM10.00 to fund the

'Ali gave RM10.00 to the fund'

3.0. AUXILIARIES IN MALAY

What has been generally accepted as auxiliaries in Malay are the following closed class of lexical items:

(2) a. Aspects

{ pernah }	'completed'
{ sudah }	
telah	'has' (perfective)
sedang	'in the process of' (progressive)
akan	'will' (future)

b. Modals

{ hendak }	'want'
{ mahu }	
ingin	'wish'
harus	'may'
mesti	'must'
{ boleh }	'can/able'
{ dapat }	

Aspects and modals can occur individually or co-occur in a sentence.

- (3) a. Ali akan ingin pergi memancing bila cuaca baik,
 Ali will wish go act-fishing when weather good

'Ali will wish to go fishing when the weather is good'

- b. Ali telah boleh balik ke rumah setelah berada di rumah
 Ali has can return to house after stay at house

sakit selama tiga hari.
sick for three day

'Ali has been able to return home after staying at the hospital for three days.'

If the order is reversed, the sentences are ungrammatical.

(4) a. *Ali ingin akan pergi memancing bila cuaca baik.

b. *Ali boleh telah balik ke rumah setelah berada di rumah sakit selama tiga hari.

Furthermore, each element (i.e. aspect and modal) can occur recursively. (Nik Safiah Karim 1978) points out that the "obligation" class modals can occur only as the first element in a modal-modal sequence, and the other two classes, "intention and ability", can occur freely, i.e. before or after each other. As for aspects, their recursiveness is more constrained. (Soemarmo 1976) indicates the existence of recursive occurrences of the aspects and refers to it as the "progressivization" process. Some examples are below.

(5) a. Mereka akan sedang tidur bila kita tiba.
they will prog. sleep when we arrive

'They will be sleeping when we arrive'

b. Mereka akan sudah tidur ketika itu.
they will has sleep time the

'They will have slept by that time'

The order of the elements, i.e. aspect and modal, may not be interrupted by any other constituent, just as no constituent may interrupt an adjective and the noun it modifies.

(6) a. Penduduk kampung sudah boleh menuai padi semalam.
occupant village has can act-harvest rice yesterday

'The villagers were able to harvest the rice yesterday'

b. *Penduduk kampung sudah semalam boleh menuai padi.

(7) a. Akan dapatkah mereka membajak sawah itu?
will can-Q they act-plow field the

'Will they be able to plow the field'

- b. *Akankah dapat mereka membajak sawah itu?

Note that in (6b), the order is interrupted by an adverb and in (7b) is interrupted by the question particle **KAH**. Hence, the ungrammaticality of the sentences.

As noted earlier, Malay verbs are not inflected for tense. Tense is determined by context, adverbs of time or the auxiliaries, i.e. the aspects. In particular, simple and past tenses are determined by context or adverbs of time. consider the sentences below.

- (8) a. Petani itu menuai padi.
farmer the act-harvest rice
- i. 'The farmer harvests the rice'
ii. 'The farmer harvested the rice'
- b. Petani itu menuai padi semalam.
farmer the act-harvest rice yesterday
- 'The farmer harvested the rice yesterday'
- c. Petani itu akan menuai padi.
farmer the will act-harvest rice
- 'The farmer will harvest the rice'

The favoured reading for (a) is in the present tense. Any other readings result from the context in which the sentence occurs. For example, in a discourse concerning the past time, it will have a past interpretation. The interpretation that (a) cannot have are the future, the present perfect, and the past perfect tenses, since the equivalent of these English tenses have to be overtly expressed by the aspect **akan** 'will', the aspect **sudah** 'already' or **pernah** 'completed', or a combination of both.

- (9) a. Ali sudah pergi ke Kota Kinabalu.
Ali has go to Kota Kinabalu
- 'Ali has already gone to Kota Kinabalu'
- b. Ali pernah pergi ke Kota Kinabalu.
Ali has go to Kota Kinabalu
- 'Ali has been to Kota Kinabalu'