

COMPLEMENTATION IN CLASSICAL MALAY

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This paper investigates the structure of a certain construction type in Classical Malay in which two verbs share an argument. The construction has been interpreted as a serial verb construction by Cumming (1991) and as a part of the 'sentence elaboration' by Ajamiseba (1983). We will show that syntactically it is best analyzed as a type of infinitival complement. It should be noted that the term 'complement' is used here in a wider sense to include some clauses that may not strictly be clausal arguments.

The Classical Malay Hikayat

The language referred to as Classical Malay is a historical precursor of modern Malay and Indonesian. Extant text materials in Classical Malay include legal texts, poetry, and a prose genre known as the hikayat. Most linguistic research on the language has concentrated on the latter narratives (Becker 1979, Ajamiseba 1983, Hopper 1983, Cumming 1991), due partly to the peculiar linguistic constraints on poetry and partly to the ready availability of several hikayat in scholarly editions. We will follow this tradition in the present paper.

Although they are 'written language', the hikayat, which mostly date from the 17th to 19th century, were most likely recited orally in front of an audience. The preponderance of clause-initial 'punctuation words' (i.e., words like *maka*, *hatta*, *syahdan*, *arakan*, and *demikian*, which indicate a sentence or clause boundary) in the hikayat texts has been linked to the unique requirements involved in the oral performance of a written text.

Basic Malay syntax

Classical Malay sentences are organized around a *pun*-marked theme constituent, which expresses old or given information, and a rhematic *-lah*-marked constituent, which presents new information. This central *pun*- *-lah* structure may be preceded by a contextualizing constituent, often a time or place modifier. One or several punctuation words usually open the sentence:

- (1) Maka setelah keesokan hari-nya maka jaring dan jerat
 then after tomorrow day-DEF then net and trap
 pun di-tahan orang-lah.
 TOP PASS-set person-COM

'The following morning nets and snares were set'.

In sentence (1), the punctuation word *maka* is followed by the time adverbial *setelah keesokan harinya* [literally, 'after the tomorrowing of the day']. The noun phrase *jaring dan jerat pun* 'nets and snares' forms the topic constituent while the verb phrase *ditahan oranglah* 'were set (by people)' constitutes the rheme.

A sentence may lack either a *pun* or a *-lah* marked constituent, or both, if they are not to be foregrounded, as in sentences (2) and (3).

- (2) Maka Paya Tu Kerub Mahajana pun ber-anak
 then TOP INTR-have:child
 se-orang laki-laki.
 one-person male

'Paya Tu Kerub Mahajana had one son'.

- (3) Maka sembah orang tua itu: 'Nama patik Encik Tani'.
 then speak:respectfully person old the name slave

'The old man said: "My name is Encik Tani".'

The absence of both markers is particularly common in introductions to direct speech passages, as in example (3), since the direct speech is relatively more foregrounded in such sentences, whereas the introduction mainly serves as a subsidiary device to allow the audience to track the identity of the speaker.

When there is no *pun* marked topic in a sentence, the *-lah* suffixed constituent may be focussed by moving it to the clause-initial position:

- (4) Dan pangkalan itu-lah tempat Encik Tani
 and landing:stage that-COM place Encik Tani
 naik turun me-rawa.
 go:up go:down TA-catch:prawns

'And that landing stage was the place where Encik Tani used to go up and down to catch prawns'.

Sentence (5) illustrates that the *puh- -lah* center may be followed by additional information which elaborates the main proposition.

(5) Syahdan maka Paya Tu Antara pun ke-raja-an-lah
 moreover then TOP become-king-COM

meng-ganti-kan ayahanda baginda itu.
 TA-change-TRANS father majesty that

'Then Paya Tu Antara became king, succeeding his father'.

The elaboration component is underlined in sentence (5). In the present paper, we will be most concerned with this latter element.

Ajamiseba (1983) utilizes the division between the initial contextualizer, the *puh- -lah* center, and the final elaboration as the basis for an analysis of Malay sentences into three formal elements, which he refers to as the precore, the core, and the elaboration, respectively. His analysis has the advantage that it isolates the *pun- -lah* center as a single unit. However, he bases his analysis purely on the constituents that are formally marked with either *pun* or *-lah*, disregarding the internal structure of the precore and of the elaboration.

As a result of this strict formal definition of the core, Ajamiseba is led to misanalyze the structure of any sentence in which the main clause includes any constituents beyond the particular elements that are marked with *pun* or *-lah*. For example, the interpretation of the 'punctuation words' as clause-initial markers of an S-boundary is well established in Malay linguistics and accepted by Ajamiseba as well (1983: 46). In his analysis of sentence (6), however, he interprets *maka* as a final element of the precore (Ajamiseba 1983: 65). Ajamiseba's presumed precore is underlined in this example:

(6) Setelah baginda men-dengar sembah orang itu maka
 after majesty TA-hear homage person that then

baginda pun ber-angkat ber-jalan kepada tempat itu.
 majesty TOP INTR-depart INTR-walk to place that

'After his majesty heard the man's report, he departed for that place'.

His analysis is consistent with the formal criteria that he set up insofar as *maka* precedes the topic *baginda pun* and so ought to be part of the precore; but it runs counter to the well-established generalization that punctuation words mark the initial position of a clause.

Similar problems arise with Ajamiseba's formal notion of the elaboration as that component that follows the *-lah* marked element. His analysis of sentence (7), for example, (1983: 62) explicitly notes that the elaboration consists of the prepositional phrase *dari atas gajahnya* 'from his elephant' and the clause following it:

(7) Maka baginda pun *turun-lah* dari atas gajah-nya
 then majesty TOP descend-COM from top elephant-3

semayam di-dalam khemah di-adap oleh segala
 sit.in:state in-inside tent PASS-face by all

menteri hulubalang ra'yat sekalian.
 minister officer people all

'Then he descended from his elephant to sit in state in a tent faced by all the ministers, officers, and all the people'.

Again, Ajamiseba's analysis may be formally consistent; but it makes the unlikely claim that the prepositional phrase *dari atas gajahnya* forms a unified constituent with the following clause, with which it does not contract a semantic relationship, but not with the predicate *turunlah* 'descend', with which it does belong semantically.

The crucial insight that leads to an analysis which avoids these problems is that the main clause can contain more than the *pun* and *-lah* marked entities. A main clause will regularly begin with some punctuation word(s), followed by the *pun-lah* core and, frequently, further, oblique constituents. With respect to the sentences discussed so far, this analysis enables us to state that the main clause in sentence (6) begins with *maka baginda pun*, with the initial punctuation word *maka*, while the main clause in (7) includes the oblique prepositional phrase *dari atas gajahnya*. It therefore fits the semantic facts of such oblique phrases as well as the well-known behavior of the punctuation words. The elaboration will, then, be limited to any clauses following the main clause.

Syntactic properties of complement clauses¹

This section deals with the syntactic properties of the elaboration component in the sense that was defended in the preceding section. The elaboration of sentence (5), therefore, consists of the clause *menggantikan ayahanda baginda itu* 'succeeding his father' while the elaboration of sentence (6) encompasses the clause *berjalan kepada tempat itu* 'walk to that place'. The elaboration of sentence (7) is internally complex with its two constituent clauses *semayam didalam khemah* 'sit in state in a tent' and *diadap oleh segala menteri hulubalang ra'yat sekalian* 'faced by all the ministers, officers, and all the people'. Here, the second of these two clauses functions as subordinate to the first.

Cumming (1991) has interpreted the matrix verb together with such complement clauses as serial verb constructions. Indeed, these constructions share several universal characteristics of verb serialization: first, there is no complementizer between the two predicates; secondly, the second verb lacks an overt subject; and thirdly, the non-overt syntactic subject of the second verb is also a participant of the higher clause. Sentence (6) is repeated here without the contextualizing *setelah* 'after' clause to illustrate these facts:

- (6) maka baginda pun ber-angkat ber-jalan kepada tempat itu.
 then majesty TOP INTR-depart INTR-walk to place that
 'His majesty departed for that place'.

In (6), no complementizer intervenes between the verbs *berangkat* 'depart' and *berjalan* 'walk' that would indicate subordination of the second verb. While *berjalan* lacks any overt argument of its own, it is clear that *baginda pun* 'his majesty', the subject of the first verb, also functions as its understood subject.

Despite these obvious similarities with serial verb constructions in other languages, the Malay sentences under discussion here have a number of other characteristics which are quite incompatible with all but the most superficial notions of what constitutes verb serialization. The Classical Malay complements differ from serial verbs in their syntactic behavior, are semantically independent, and have distinct discourse functions. We will turn our attention to the latter point first.

Whatever the merits of his formal syntactic analysis, from a discourse perspective, Ajamiseba (1983) was clearly correct in assuming a tripartite structure for Classical Malay sentences. Such sentences contain a propositional core which can be modified by a preceding contextualizing constituent and a following elaborating

clause. Both, the contextualizer and the elaboration, therefore, contribute independent discourse functions from the main clause. In sentence (8), for example, the contextualizing *setelah* clause expresses an independent assertion from the main clause *maka baginda pun berangkat* 'his majesty left' which is temporally sequenced with the main clause assertion; it is coded as a dependent rather than as a main clause in its own right because it expresses only subsidiary information that does develop the main story line, which follows the progress of the king:

(8) Contextualizer:

Setelah sudah segala menteri hulubalang
after already all minister officer

di-titah-kan oleh baginda masing-masing
PASS-order-TRANS by majesty each

dengan ketumbukan-nya, ...
with man-3

'After all the ministers had been given their orders, each
with his own men, ...'

Main clause:

... maka baginda pun berangkat ...
then majesty TOP leave
'... his majesty left ...'

Elaboration:

... kembali ke Kota Maligai.
return to town
'... to return to the town of Maligai'.

The final clause in (8), *kembali ke kota Maligai* 'return to the town of Maligai', further traces the actions of the king by specifying the purpose of his leaving as well as his next action. In parallel to the relation between the contextualizer and the main clause, this elaboration clause, thus, expresses a separate pragmatic function from the main clause. At the same time, however, its dual function as a purpose clause and a continuation of the main plot accounts for the fact that it is coded as the elaboration clause to *maka baginda pun berangkat* instead of forming a main clause of its own. On the pragmatic level, then, the elaboration clause parallels the contextualizer, in that both contribute a discourse function

(11) Hatta ada sekira-kira dua jam lama-nya
 next exist about two hour long-DEF

maka ber-bunyi-lah suara anjing itu me-nyalak.
 then INTR-sound-COM voice dog that TA-bark

'Then, after about two hours, sounded the voice of the dogs barking'.

Finally, there are cases where a conjunction breaks up a sequence of verbs even though all of the conditions for a serial verb construction are given, in that there is a single subject which relates to all the verbs in the sequence. Sentence (12) is an example of this situation:

(12) Maka baginda pun ber-temu dengan sebuah rumah
 then majesty TOP INTR-meet with one-CL house

orang tua laki-bini duduk me-rawa dan men-jerat.
 person old husband-wife sit TA-catch:prawn and TA-set:snare

'Then he found a house where an old couple lived catching prawns and setting snares'.

The underlined sequence in example (12) contains three verbs, *duduk* 'sit', *merawat* 'catch prawns', and *menjerat* 'set snares', each of which is linked to a single overt subject noun phrase, *orang tua laki-bini* 'an old married couple'. This is the typical configuration for the occurrence of verb serialization cross-linguistically, yet, these verbs do not enter into a serial construction. Instead, they are coded by means of coordination, utilizing the conjunction *dan* 'and'.

In summary, then, it can be said that the two verbs in Classical Malay complementation structures behave independently of each other syntactically and not as one syntactic unit. They are connected not by means of serialization but rather by subordinating the second verb to the former in a dependent complement clause. Conversely, Malay often takes recourse to other constructions like coordination even where the characteristic cross-linguistic prerequisites for the appearance of a serial verb construction are given.

With regard to their semantic structure, finally, the Classical Malay sentence types under review here do not fit the

characteristics of serial verb constructions either. As Schiller (1991) has pointed out, the fundamental semantic property of verb serialization is that it expresses a single event. If one is to follow this argument, any sequence that codes separate events in whatever semantic proximity they might be, say purpose or temporal proximity, can not be a serial verb construction. Interestingly, the presumed Classical Malay examples of verb serialization do not generally encode a single event in this sense but separate related events. This is really true for all of the examples given in this paper as well as for any other examples that I am aware of. It is therefore not surprising from this semantic perspective if these Malay constructions do not fit the structural expectations for serial verb constructions either.

Cumming (1991: 75-77) offers four sentences that she considers instances of single events being expressed in a serial verb construction. All four are given here:

- (13) Sebermula maka Raja Suran pun ber-kira-kira
 at:first then king TOP INTR-think-REDUP

hendak me-nyerang negeri Cina.
 want TA-attack country China

‘At first, Raja Suran thought he would like to attack China’.

- (14) Raja Gongga Shah Johan me-lihat Raja Suran datang.
 king TA-see king come
 ‘Raja Gongga Shah Johan saw Raja Suran come’.

- (15) Kalakian maka nenek kebayan itu ber-mohon
 next then grandmother that INTR-ask

pulang ke rumah.
 go:home to house

‘Then the grandmother asked to go home’.

- (16) Maka Raja Kida Hindi pun me-nyuruh-kan
 then king TOP TA-order-TRANS

perdana menteri meng-himpun-kan segala rakyat.
 prime minister TA-gather-TRANS all people

'Then Raja Kida Hindi ordered his prime minister to gather all the people'.

It should be noted that each of these verb sequences encodes a single event only if the event notion is given in a loose interpretation to comprise 'anything that can potentially occur in a particular situation'. If a more precise notion of eventness is applied, (16) involves two distinct events, one of ordering and one of gathering people, as Cumming correctly notes; similarly, asking and one going home in (15) constitute two distinct actions, and so on. Cumming's best example is (13), since it involves two emotions, thinking and wanting, which necessarily occur together: Wanting can not occur without the occurrence of thinking. Even here, though, they are distinct actions in principle.

Our discussion in this section has, thus, shown that the elaboration component of a Classical Malay sentence is not to be analyzed as an instance of verb serialization but rather as an instance of a dependent complement clause which is subordinated to the main clause predicate.

These complement clauses share an argument with the matrix predicate which can have a variety of grammatical functions in the matrix but must bear the subject relation in the complement clause (Cumming 1991, Müller-Gotama 1991). Insofar as they are subjectless dependent clauses, these complement clauses can, therefore, be analyzed as a type of infinitival.

Given this interpretation, the construction should not strictly be limited to the elaboration component of a sentence but should occur elsewhere where a non-finite clause may be called for. An example for this is presented in (17), where two infinitival clauses are used as part of the initial contextualizing clause. The labelled bracketing indicates their syntactic relation to each other:

(17) Maka pada masa Paduka Nenda ber-angkat
 then at time INTR-leave

[_{s1}pergi [_{s2}ber-buat negeri ke Ayutia_{s2}]_{s1}]
 go INTR-make country to Ayutia

maka patik pun di-kerah orang
 then slave TOP PASS-summon person

pergi meng-iring-kan Duli Paduka Nenda
 go TA-accompany-TRANS

berangkat itu
leave that

'When Paduka Nenda left to to build a settlement at Ayutia, we were summoned to go and accompany the departing Duli Paduka Nenda'.

Notes

1. The presumed serial verbs are underlined in all numbered examples in this section.

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|------|----------------|-------|-------------------------|
| CL | Classifier | REDUP | Reduplication |
| COM | Comment marker | TA | Transitive active |
| DEF | Definite | TOP | Topic marker |
| INTR | Intransitive | TRANS | Transitive |
| PASS | Passive | 3 | Third person possessive |

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