
© The authors, September 2008

Atin, Veronica –
Boynton, Jessica –
Crouch, Sophie E. –
Hill, Peter M. –
Kubo, Kazumi –
Ngo, Thanh –
Przywolnik, Elizabeth.

ISBN: 978-1-74052-174-1
Preface

UWA Linguistics Working Papers was established as a student publication in September, 2008 with three primary goals:

1. **To provide a forum in which students and researchers can present write-ups that are not suitable for formal publication in journals and books.** Anticipated submission types include:
   - proposed lines of inquiry or methodologies
   - difficulties encountered in data collection and analysis
   - preliminary findings and analyses
   - rough drafts with recognised gaps in data and/or reasoning
   - negative results.

   Contributors submit from different levels and terms of study, and are addressing thesis segments about which they have varying degrees of familiarity at the time of submission. Therefore, the papers presented will be at various levels of completeness.

2. **To encourage students to formalise their progress in writing.** In so doing, students and researchers generate tangible results from their research and preliminary drafts that may eventually become publishable texts and/or thesis chapters.

3. **To enable students to better understand each other's research.** Such understanding engenders collaboration and community among the students, and facilitates discussions across the varying subfields that we study. Additionally, this publication of research may reveal overlapping lines of inquiry and common difficulties and strategies, better enabling students to learn from each other's work and, potentially, envision collaborating projects, presentations and publications.

_Students and researchers who are interested in contributing should email:_

_uwa.linguistics.papers@gmail.com_ for submission guidelines and stylesheet.
Foreword

The idea for this first edition of the UWA Linguistics working papers arose after a discussion one lazy afternoon about why we procrastinate and what gives us motivation. A discussion topic, we’re sure, that is common to all postgraduates. We decided that what did motivate us was first and foremost deadlines, but then also the idea of sharing our research with peers and the sense of achievement that comes after printing off a nice weighty pile of pages filled with your own unique (hopefully!) ideas. Thus the Working Papers was born: the ideal medium to share our research progress with friends, co-researchers and peers, coupled with the satisfaction of a meaty document.

In this, our first volume, you will find a wide variety of papers, reflecting the diversity of the field and also the range of expertise of the authors. Peter Hill and Kazumi Kubo have contributed papers addressing methodological concerns. Peter’s paper discusses some of the problems involved in language documentation fieldwork in a remote setting. Kazumi’s paper addresses some aspects of experimental design and execution. Sophie Crouch and Veronica Atin share some preliminary findings about the voice systems of two Austronesian languages. Sophie’s findings focus on the syntax of active and passive voice in Minangkabau whereas Veronica looks at the syntax and semantics interface of voice in Bundu Tuhan Dusun. The next paper was contributed by Thanh Ngo. It examines how temporality is effected in the translation of The Old Man and the Sea from English to Vietnamese. Finally, Jessica Boynton’s work presents some sociolinguistic findings about the Western Desert dialect mesh in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area and the subsequent effect of English language contact in the region.

So we hope this is meaty enough for you... Thank you to all our contributors. We hope the next volume of UWA Linguistics Working Papers will be just as much of a success.

The editors,

Jessica Boynton, Sophie Crouch and Elizabeth Przywolnik.
# Table of Contents

Peter M Hill................................................................................................................................. 1-10  
*Some of the Problems Experienced in my Linguistic Fieldwork*

Kazumi Kubo................................................................................................................................. 11-24  
*The Children’s Understanding of the Past Presupposition in the use of the Past Form in Japanese*

Sophie E Crouch............................................................................................................................. 25-49  
*Active and Passive Voice in Minangkabau: Some Preliminary Findings*

Veronica Atin.................................................................................................................................. 50-62  
*Basic Verb Morphology of Bundu Tuhan (BT) Dusun*

Thanh Ngo....................................................................................................................................... 63-89  
*Translation of Temporality in Narrative Texts from English to Vietnamese*

Jessica Boynton............................................................................................................................... 90-103  
*Observing Language and Language Use in Kalgoorlie-Boulder*
Some of the problems experienced in my Linguistics fieldwork

Peter M Hill

Linguistics PhD Candidate
The University of Western Australia

jumerill@iinet.net.au
The original intent of this paper when prepared for the postgraduate seminar day in July 2007 was to evaluate the ‘success’ of the fieldwork I had just completed in May 2007. The intent, now, in presenting this paper to the UWA Linguistics Working Papers publication is to provide examples of what can be expected, or what can ‘happen’ in the field, for those who are planning to begin their own field research.

The consultant and researcher develop their own pattern of working together in the field, but the language consultant, Maudie Dowton, and I did experience some problems when working on the Aboriginal language, Kurrama. This paper discusses some of these difficulties. First, I examine some problems we experienced in discussing clauses that may express the consequence of a prior action but most often encode a sequence from one event to another. Second, I examine some problems we had in analyzing passive voice constructions. I finish with some general problems we experienced that are inherent to most Linguistic fieldwork.

Maudie and I did resolve some of these difficulties but not all. However, we learnt from the experience. This paper may encourage those who are about to begin their own fieldwork.
From November 2006 to May 2007 I carried out field research into the Kurrama language at Onslow, a town in the Pilbara region of north-west Western Australia. In this research I mainly worked with one language consultant/informant, Maudie Dowton. Maudie is recognized by the Onslow community as the main authority on the Kurrama language. I also worked briefly with Thomas Cox who collaborated with Maudie in a few of the fieldwork sessions. Maudie’s two sisters Lily and Chloe are also recognized as Kurrama speakers but I was unable to work with them during my time in Onslow.

In all, Kurrama is not spoken day to day to any extent in the Onslow community; the children speak only the occasional word and the older people have no real opportunity to speak Kurrama with their descendants. Instead, English is the main language of communication between them. As such, my field research was in part salvage work where data on the Kurrama language was gained mostly from a language ‘rememberer’ rather than one who has the opportunity to speak Kurrama in daily life. This situation had repercussions for the type of language information that I gained in the field sessions with Maudie, and will ultimately effect how I will analyse and write up this data in my thesis.

Listed below are three main factors that will influence my analysis of the field data.

1. In the telling of her stories Maudie often used English rather than Kurrama, even though she intended to use Kurrama – thus I have limited examples of ‘lengthy’ Kurrama use from Maudie.

2. Most of the Kurrama information that I did gain from Maudie was through elicitation – so I cannot be that sure that I have a true understanding of how the language was used ‘naturally’ in the Kurrama speech community in the past.

3. However, I do have several unelicited Kurrama narratives from Algy Paterson that were recorded by Professor Alan Dench in the 1980’s. I will be able to use Algy’s stories as a standard against which I can compare and substantiate the elicited data from Maudie.

I will discuss these factors in this paper. Then I will provide some examples of some of the difficulties that Maudie and I had in discussing Kurrama grammar. First, the difficulties we had in discussing clauses that often encode a consequence of a previous event; second, our unresolved examination of passive clauses that contain ditransitive verbs; and lastly some general difficulties that are inherent within most fieldwork sessions.
1. **The difficulties of gaining language information**

The main focus of my research is on the grammar of simple and complex sentence use in Kurrama. Prior to going to Onslow, I researched what was known about this topic and also prepared for what could be expected by looking at the grammars of other languages of the Ngayarda group to which Kurrama belongs. The main Ngayarda grammars I reviewed were those done by Dench (1988; 1991; 1995) on Panyjima and Martuthunira, and the work on Yindjibarndi carried out by Wordick (1982). Also, Alan Dench has made available to me a series of recordings that he made with Algy Paterson, in the 1980’s, in which Algy tells a long Kurrama narrative and also some shorter Kurrama narratives. I had analysed much of the simple and complex sentence structures used by Algy in these stories, before I went to Onslow, and had found a number of gaps in this language data which I hoped to fill with my field research.

The early sessions with Maudie involved collecting lexical items while we both settled into and established a pattern and procedure of working together. From my literature review I was armed with expectations on what I would find and in the early sessions, despite some ‘teething’ difficulties, things seemed to be as was expected. However, some unexpected data and difficulties did arise as the sessions progressed. For instance, Maudie did not present her narratives wholly in Kurrama and often returned to English in the telling of her stories. She may have been out of practice in speaking Kurrama and had not told a story, or spoken at length, in Kurrama for some time. Also, she seemed to return to English, in the telling of her stories, because she knew I could not understand (straight away) all of what she was saying in Kurrama. Throughout all the sessions with Maudie there remained a misunderstanding that was not quite resolved. In our work together I was concerned with the form of the data that she provided whereas Maudie was justifiably concerned mainly with the content of what she saying. This was definitely a reason for her English story telling; to make sure that I understood the content of her stories.

Over all, some stories told solely in Kurrama would have provided some forms of naturally occurring language data from Maudie. However, only language information gained by elicitation from Maudie will be available for analysis. This has some short comings but will be useful when combined with the narratives that Alan Dench gained from Algy Paterson.

Algy was a fluent speaker of Kurrama who at the time of recording, in the 1980’s, still had the opportunity to speak Kurrama in daily life. In the recordings made with Alan, Algy tells a number of unelicited Kurrama stories. In all, Algy’s corpus will have to act as a standard against
which I will need to measure and confirm Maudie’s information. Yet, as I said before, there are
gaps in Algy’s data, and Maudie and I were unable to confidently fill some of these gaps. For
instance, we had some difficulty in discussing passive voice constructions and also had trouble
talking about Consequential clause constructions.

2. **Difficulties when discussing Consequential clauses**

On a prior postgraduate seminar day, I spoke about clauses in Kurramma that sometimes
encode the consequence of a prior event. In that talk I listed a number of questions about these
clauses that I intended to answer in my upcoming fieldwork. However, in the field sessions with
Maudie it was hard to obtain answers to these questions. Looking back on the list I now see that
they were too abstract for Maudie to answer. Also, Maudie may not have thought specifically about
the use of the Consequential clauses before, and/or did not understand the questions I was asking; in
all probability I was not making sense to her anyway!

For instance, I introduced to Maudie the following Consequential sentence which was taken
from Algy’s corpus. The intent was that I would ask Maudie some questions about it.

(1) **Kurramma**

\[
\text{ngayi} \quad \text{yanku} \quad -\text{nha} \quad \text{wangka} \quad -\text{ngumarnu}
\]

1sg:NOM go/walk -PAST talk -CONSEQ

'I went down to talk to her.'

The following transcript shows the difficulty we had in discussing this sentence (P is myself, Peter;
and M is Maudie).

P. ‘What does that mean?’

M. ‘He pangkarri-nha, he yanku-nha.’

P. ‘He went.. somewhere and then wangka-ngumarnu, what does that mean?’

M. ‘and he said something.’

P. ‘So does that -ngumarnu say that happens after going to see?’

M. ‘Yeh..’

P. ‘You say ngayi yankunha and then I talked?’

M. ‘Yeh ..ngayi wangka-ngumarnu.’

P. ‘So does that wangka-ngumarnu mean it happened after he went?’
M. ‘Yeh.’  P. ‘Does it? M. ‘Yeh.’

P. ‘So in English might say - he went and then he talked to her…’

M. ‘Yeh’ P. ‘So is it like a ‘then’?’ M. ‘Yeh…’

In all, in this and other sessions, I really only established that the Consequential suffix seems to encode that the action of the marked verb usually happens after an earlier event, and in English could be translated pragmatically as expressing – ‘and then’ – as in: something happened ‘and then’ the action of the Consequential occurred. I was unable to determine from Maudie whether the Consequential event is always a direct consequence of a preceding event; rather, it seems that it can also be the purpose for the first event, or it may just have a loose relation with the first event where there is no real connection between them, other than occurring in a sequence.

I had prepared to ask, in the questions for Maudie, whether the morphological make up of the Consequential suffix had any bearing on its semantics. The suffix seems to be made up of: an imperfective aspect marker (ngu- or rnu-) + a factitive marker (-ma-) + another imperfective aspect suffix (-rnu); and among the questions I had on this were the following:

i. Does the imperfective aspect in the suffix mark the verb as a background event/scene while other events are happening? … and

ii. Does adding a new event marked with the suffix provide a new background scene to a narrative and thereby move that narrative on/along

iii. Does the factitive ‘-ma’ element denote/express that each marked event is in a process of being made to come about or made to come into being?

My intention was that I would simplify these questions so Maudie could answer, but Maudie and I did not really get to discuss these questions fully. Looking back I can see that they were far too abstract for the discussion that we were able to have. So, answers to questions like these will only be conjecture on my behalf; if they are relevant at all?

3. Difficulties when discussing passive voice constructions

A feature of the Ngayarda languages is that it is possible to construct clauses in passive voice. The most common way to form a Kurramma passive is to attach the derivational suffix -nguli to a transitive verb and then further inflect this derived passive with one of the regular T/A/M
suffixes. The actor or agent arguments of this derivational passive are then marked with instrumental case and the patient or theme arguments are left unmarked with zero nominative case. The marking of arguments of a passive ditransitive verb however is more complex.

As a general rule Dench (1995: 228) reports that in the Ngayarda language, Martuthunira, all the accusative arguments of a ditransitive active verb can appear in turn as nominative subjects in a passive. However, this rule does not hold in the Ngayarda languages, Panyjima and Yindjibarndi, as reported by Dench (1991) and Wordick (1982) respectively. In these languages only one of the two accusative objects of an active ditransitive verb can be assigned nominative case in a corresponding passive, usually the recipient/beneficiary. The remaining patient or theme usually retains its accusative marking in the passive and cannot take nominative case. Below are some examples provided by Wordick (1982: 174) that illustrate this:

(2) Active Yindjibarndi ditransitive clause.

\[
\text{Ngaarta yungku-nha ngayu murla-yi.}
\]
\[
\text{Man give-PAST 1sg:ACC meat-ACC}
\]

‘A man gave me meat.’

This clause can have the corresponding passive where the recipient \textit{ngayi} is assigned NOM case and the theme \textit{murla} retains accusative case:

(3) Passive Yindjibarndi ditransitive clause

\[
\text{Ngayi yungku-nguli-nha murla-yi ngaarta-lu.}
\]
\[
\text{1sg:NOM give-PASS-PAST meat-ACC man-INSTR}
\]

‘I was given meat by a man’.

However, it is not possible to assign nominative case to the theme of the Yindjibarndi ditransitive verb in a passive – that is, \textit{murla} cannot be assigned nominative case in this example:

(4) Ungrammatical Yindjibarndi

\[
\ast \text{Murla-Ø yungku-nguli-nha ngayu ngaarta-lu.}
\]
\[
\text{Meat -NOM give-PASS-PAST 1sg:ACC man – INSTR}
\]

‘The meat was given to me by a man.’

My expectation, prior to discussing passives with Maudie, was that Kurrama also would not allow a patient or theme to be assigned nominative case in a ditransitive passive. However, the sessions with Maudie were not conclusive and in some instances it seemed that it could occur and in
others it seemed that it couldn’t. A factor in this indecision may have been that Maudie had not heard or used Kurrama passive clauses for some time and was a little ‘rusty’ on their use. Also, she may not have wished to disagree with the examples that I provided to discuss with her and may have politely left them unanswered.

Maudie used the recipient in nominative case in the following, as was expected.

(5) Kurrama

\[ngayi\ yungku\ -nguli\ -nha\ murla\ –yi\ nhawu\ -ngku\]

1sg:NOM give -PASS -PAST meat -ACC man -INSTR

‘I was given meat by the man.’

However, she stated that the following was possible, when I presented it to her. Here the theme selects Nominative case:

(6) Kurrama

\[Murla\-\ Ø\ yungku\ -nguli\ -nha\ ngayu\ nhawu\ -ngku\]

Meat - NOM give -PASS -PAST 1sg:ACC man -INSTR

‘Meat was given to me by the man’

Yet when I presented the following to her, she was unsure:

(7) Kurrama

\[Martumirri\-\ Ø\ yungku\ -nguli\ -nha\ ngayu\ pungkanyu\ -lu\]

bread/damper -NOM give -PASS -PAST 1sg:ACC woman -INSTR

‘Damper was given to me by the woman.’

However, Maudie was more willing to accept the following when I presented it to her. Here the theme retains its nominative case but the recipient is ellipsed.

(8) Kurrama

\[Martumirri\-\ Ø\ yungku\ -nguli\ pungkanyu\ -lu\]

bread/damper -NOM give -PASS woman -INSTR

‘Damper was given by the woman.’

In all, Maudie did not give a conclusive answer to this situation. There do not seem to be any examples in Algy’s corpus where a patient/theme is marked nominative in a passive ditransitive
construction. I will need to look again at Algy’s data, but I may not be able to give a definitive answer in my discussion on passives in my thesis. Yet, the fact that I had to present to Maudie the alternatives presented above so that we could discuss them, rather than Maudie presenting them without prompting, suggests that they may not be viable alternatives.

4. Some general fieldwork difficulties

Overall, some of the confusions and uncertainties that Maudie and I experienced in the field sessions may, in part, have been due to the length of time it has been since Maudie spoke Kurrama extensively. But general difficulties that are experienced in most fieldwork situations also influenced the ‘effectiveness’ of the interaction between Maudie and myself. I have already mentioned some of these. Often I did not make myself completely clear to Maudie and she may have been confused by my abstract and sometimes ambiguous questions. Further, Maudie did not seem to be familiar with formal English grammatical terms such as ‘sentence’, ‘clause’ and ‘suffix’ so I had difficulty at times explaining what it was that I was trying to ask. Although, of course, our work was made easier by the fact that Maudie does speak English fluently (unlike my slow acquisition of Kurrama).

There were times, too, when Maudie seemed to politely agree, or just leave something unanswered, rather than disagree or think (within herself) that she was offending me. This is a circumstance that occurs often in Aboriginal and white interaction and it seems that it is not easily avoided. Also, in several of our early fieldwork sessions I often did not allow Maudie enough time to speak and instead interjected before she was able to comment. I tried to avoid this in the later fieldwork sessions. Although, listening back over the tapes of these later sessions there are times when I could kick myself for not waiting for Maudie to comment or rephrase what she was trying to say. Yet, being aware of these short falls and working to avoid them is part of the learning involved in conducting fieldwork.

However, as stated earlier, there was one misunderstanding that remained with us throughout the fieldwork sessions. While I was mostly interested in the grammatical forms that Maudie used in the sessions, Maudie was justifiably concerned with the content of what she said and intended that I understand this content. The task we set out to do, which was mostly instigated by myself, was to research the grammar of Kurrama. Maudie often stated that she wished the young girls in the community would sit down with her and write and record some of her stories. There is much that she can tell but we did not fulfill this wish by focusing on Kurrama grammar. Maybe the
girls will record Maudie’s stories, or I may get the chance, or someone who reads this may be able to help?

5. Conclusion

It may seem that the fieldwork I conducted with Maudie was fraught with problems and difficulties, however this was not so. It is worth emphasizing that most of the sessions with Maudie were productive, and the difficulties that I have described did not occur in the majority. Indeed, we both learnt from our mistakes and this helped in following sessions. Yet, as I have shown above, there are aspects of Kurrama grammar that are unclear in the data, so I will just have to explain in my thesis writing why they are unclear.

Overall, I think Maudie enjoyed our sessions and we both joked and had fun at times. Maudie’s concern for the content of what we were talking about (rather than the form) was evident when we were discussing the verb wanpi ‘to hit’. She was concerned about all the talk about hitting dogs, and the like, as we discussed the uses of this verb. Frustrated she stated indignantly, “You know you shouldn’t hit dogs, they will bite you back! They have feelings too you know!”

She, of course, is right! Thanks Maudie for all that you did for me, and put up with, during our research.

REFERENCES


The children’s understanding of the past presupposition in the use of the past form in Japanese

Kazumi Kubo

Linguistics/ Education PhD candidate

The University of Western Australia

kazumi@cyllene.uwa.edu.au
Abstract

This paper, firstly, reports a result of an experiment which conducted to investigate children’s skills that understand the past presupposition required in the past form use in Japanese. Children of 3, 4, 5 years old group (N = 38) and adult speakers took part in the experiment. Result suggested that children from all age groups have difficulty in understanding the correct presupposition made by speakers when the hot news use is used with a Stative situation. Secondly, I discuss methodological issues which are required to be considered in planning experiments.

0 Introduction

The past research of the tense and aspect acquisition is centered on the semantic meaning of grammatical tense and aspect markers acting as a sentence level. For instance, one of the biggest streams in the field has tested whether or not the lexical aspect effects on the acquisition of the grammatical temporal morphemes. e.g. (Stoll, 1998; Bar-Shalom, 2002), Polish (Bloom & Harner, 1989), Italian (Antinucci & Miller, 1976), English (Bloom, Lifter & Hafitz, 1980; Shirai & Andersen, 1995; Olsen & Weinberg, 1999; Boland, 2003), Turkish (Aksu-Koc, 1998), Chinese (Li & Bowerman, 1998), Greek (Stephany & Voeikova, 2004) and others.

However, recent research in the acquisition tense and aspect by L1 learners, e.g. Vinnitskaya & Wexler (2001), Van Hout (2002) and Kazanina & Phillips (2003), have discussed the pragmatic factors. Interpretations arising from tense and aspect markers can be different from their semantic meanings both in linguistic context, e.g. discourse, and extra linguistic pragmatic information, e.g. knowledge of speakers and hearers. This paper presents i) a result of an experiment which has tested children’s skill of
pragmatic skills required in the use of the past form in Japanese, and ii) methodological issues that I encountered in the process of the experiment.

1 **Background - Japanese tense**

In Japanese, it has been claimed that both tense and aspect are divided in a dichotomised manner. Tense is expressed by the nonpast-past pair; \(-ru –ta\). There is neither future tense form nor perfect in Japanese.

\(-Ta^1\) cooperates both the past and the perfect meanings and can be used in the same way as the “hot news perfect” in English.

In my analysis of \(-ta\), \(-ta\) indicates that time a speaker concerns is included in the post time of the marked situation. That is \(-ta\) only concerns between the time speaker concerns and the time of situation, but not the relationship between the time of utterance and the time of situation. For example, in (1), the time speaker concerns is included in the post time of the final boundary of the situation, *drop*.

(1) Ochita!
drop-PST
“(It’s) dropped!”

If a final boundary is inherently included in a situation as example (1), the post time is found after the final boundary of the situation. However, if the situation does not include a final boundary, speakers and hearers are asked to fill information from context to conceptually make one. When States are marked with \(-ta\) expressing the hot news use, such as (2), the interpretation requires complex pragmatic skills.

---

1 With Klein’s (1992, 1994, etc) framework for the representation of tense and aspect, I present \(-ta\) as TT is in posttime of Tsit, which is based on his German perfekt (Klein 2000), which also allows two types of readings, present perfect type and past tense type, from an identical form which is the present perfect.
Suzuki has found that a bus heading toward him. Seconds before, he was puzzled at the sounds he heard.

“It was a bus!” (Here it is a bus!)

Firstly, the final boundary of a situation needs to be created to assert the final boundary. Hearers have to assume that the States considered here is the one belonging to speakers’ recognition ((b) in (3)), but not the permanent State of “bus being bus” ((a) in (3)). Then, the post time can be inferred, because speakers’ recognition of “bus being bus” can only last for a limited time span. Secondly, the initial boundary of a situation should be conceptually created as the situation is new to speakers. Hearers are invited to infer an “old” situation (shaded zone in (b)) prior to the expressed situation. For example, in (2), a situation prior to “it is bus” should be inferred by hearers.

The presupposed “old” situation before the speaker recognition of “it is a bus” can be any contrastive assumption relating to “it is bus”. This can be “the engine sound is from a truck” or “the sound is actually from the herd of cow in the farm behind the hill”. If the past assumption entails the same truth value as “it is bus”, *e.g.* the *sounds should be from bus*, it is necessarily to insert some linguistic marker to distinguish it from the
expressed phase, i.e. adverbials “yappari” (as I though / as I expected) or “hora! (See!”)\(^2\) or an extra intonation contour.

2 Experiments
This experiment tested whether or not children 3-, 4- and 5-year-old are able to decode the past presupposition used in the past form appearing with States, which was discussed in the previous section.

2.1 Participants
All participants were from a private kindergarten in Tokyo, Japan where most of the children were from middle or higher income family. Children normally stayed in the kindergarten everyday during the week between 9 AM and 2PM or longer. Participants were grouped into three levels by age which coincides with their class based on their school age. 3rd year olds group (3;3-4;3), 4th year olds group (4;6-5;2), and 5th year olds group (5;4-6;3). None of children were diagnosed as having any developmental deficiency. The details of these children were; 3 year olds group (N = 20, mean age = 3;08, range = 3;03-4;03), 4 year olds group (N = 20, mean age = 4;09, range = 4;04-5;03) and 5 year olds group (N = 20, mean age = 5;10, range = 5;03-6;02). 30 adult native speakers took part in each test as a control group.

Participants were shown pictures (powerpoint presentation) with recorded narrations. The first and second slides (Left slide in Figure 1) introduce a setting of story. A boy (Mr. Black) held a birthday party with his friends where all came along with a gift. In the third slide (Right slide in Figure 1), each of friends starts giving a gift to Mr. Black one by one.

\(^2\) Yappari is an adverbial showing fulfilment of speaker’s prediction (Maynard, 1993; Tanaka, 2002) (e.g. yappari, oishii “yappari, it is delicious”. means “it is delicious as I thought”). Similarly, hora! is an emotional marker, which attracts the attention of hearers to the information speakers and hearers share before the utterance (Oshima, 2001).
In the fourth slide, the screen was cut in six boxes as a cartoon like as presented Figure 2. Pictures of each box appeared one by one in accordance with the progress of the story.

In the first and second boxes, the boy was given a gift by one of his guests (Mr. Green), where the boy says “thank you, Mr. Green”. In the third and fourth boxes, he wonders what is in the box and says “nani kana? nani kana? What is this? What is this?”. In the last picture, he opens the box and finds out that the gift was a bicycle appearing with Black’s utterance “jidensha datta! It was a bicycle!”.

After the final picture, the experimenter asks participants “kono “nani kana nani kana” no toki, kurokun natte omotta? When Black said “what is this? what is this?”, what did he think?” by pointing to the third and forth pictures where there was a thought balloon.
with a question mark coming out from Mr. Green. Then the experimenter continued as “jidensha soretomo torakku? a bicycle or a truck?” so the question markers change into two options, a picture of bicycle and a truck respectively.

One option for answer is the same as the gift the boy has just opened (bicycle). The other one is the one which is different from the gift (truck). If participants understand the past presupposition required correctly, their answer should be a truck. Three sets of question with the same construction were asked to participants as Table 1.

| Bicycle Story | shaberu data shovel-copula.pst | shovel | shovel | shovel |
| Bicycle Story | jidensha datta bicycle-copula.pst | bicycle | truck |
| Shovel Story | shaberu data shovel-copula.pst | bucket | shovel |
| Octopus Story | tako datta octopus-copula.pst | octopus | dinosaurs |

### 2.2 Results

Both the total of all questions and each question were statistically analysed.

A Chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between the age and the choice of the correct speaker both in each questions and across questions, $X^2(1, n=232)=71, p<.001$. Every question showed the significant differences across the age
factors. (Q1 is $X^2(1, n=74) =22.2, p < .001$, Q2 is $X^2(1, n=74)=38.2, p < .000$, and Q3 $X^2(1, n=74)=15.7, p < .001$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-hoc;</th>
<th>Whole $(df=3, n=74)$</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADULT-5 $(df=1, n=50)$</td>
<td>$x^2=2.480$</td>
<td>$x^2=10.503$</td>
<td>$x^2=15.85$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$p=.115$ n.s.</td>
<td>$p=.001$</td>
<td>$p=.000068$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT-4 $(df=1, n=50)$</td>
<td>$x^2=9.925$</td>
<td>$x^2=12.004$</td>
<td>$x^2=33.46$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$p=.002$</td>
<td>$p=.001$</td>
<td>$p=.000000073$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT-3 $(df=2, n=38)$</td>
<td>$x^2=6.111$</td>
<td>$x^2=3.29$</td>
<td>$x^2=12.488$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$p=.434$ n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$p=.070$ n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age effects on the choice of answers were found between 3 year olds and adults between in all questions ($p < .001$). Adults exclusively chose the option which was different from the cue sentences. Although 5 year olds preferred the option which was different from the cue item more than younger age groups, the percentage was just over 50 % which could be the result of random choice. By contrast, 3 year olds strongly preferred the other option.

That is, the result reveals that the difficulty to understand the correct presupposition in the hot news use of $–ta$ with States gradually resolves in accordance with maturity. One of the interesting phenomena was the judgment that made by adults, which change along three questions. I will come back to this point in the next section.

3 Methodology issues

This section discusses the methodological issues that I encountered in conducting the experiment above and an experiment (Kubo, submitted) that I had conducted with children before. Particularly I focus on some issues which I think useful for planning future experimental research. More specifically, I deal with methodological issues i)
that should be considered before planning (3.1) and ii) that researchers have to pay attention when dealing with young children (3.2).

### 3.1 Perception of “experiment”

When planning experiments, it is important to take in account how experiments are perceived by participants. Experiments are often regarded as “test” by adults participants, which can be different from “norm of experiments” that researchers are familiar with. This section introduces two phenomena I encountered during experiments, which are due to participants’ understanding of experiments as tests, and due to participants’ understanding of experiments as a reflection of real world.

#### 3.1.1 Experiments = test?

In the previous section, I pointed out that adult speakers changed their judgment along three questions. In other words, in the third question, adult participants chose an item which is the same item as the actual gift as an answer more than the previous two questions.

When the finding has the same values as the presupposition, in other words the past prediction does not contrast with the current situation which is in front of speakers, the current situation with the past form should be overly marked either phonologically or linguistically (see 1). In my experiment, the intonation in all questions was plain, that is, neither rising nor falling intonation, however, adults seemed to be inclined to find a rising intonation with the third question more than the former two questions. One participant mentioned that the speaker in that particular question sounded happier. It could be because after two previous questions, adults were more sensitive to the subtle change in tones of the question.
This effect might be due to the fact that adults become more sensitive to questions, by understanding the experiment as “test”. In the normal test situation in educational institutes, one instance of test evaluates various types of knowledge rather than one particular skill. Therefore, similar types of questions require more attention as it is a “tricky” one. This is not the case with experiments. Experiments tend to evaluate one particular knowledge or skill of participants from various ways.

3.1.2 Experiments = real world?

The opposite effect was seen in an experiment I previously conducted in Kubo (submitted). The experiment implied that children avoid ambiguous answers. An ambiguous answer I mean here is an answer that cannot be chosen either by yes or not, or one of options given.

The experiment asked participants to choose speaker/speakers of a cue sentence from a picture, e.g. Either the left man [Mr. Black], the right man [Mr. Blue] or both Figure 4. The expected answer was set as “both” in the picture, which majority of adults successfully chose. On the other hands, children between 3;7- 5;7 showed strong preference towards choosing one answer.

![Figure 4. Results of Experiment 2 in L1 study; proportion of correct answers](image-url)

When asked “who did say (CUE SENTENCE) ?”, children chose the most suitable one speaker as an answer, whereas adults chose both speakers who can be possible correct answers. In the real world, it is rare that two people say the same thing at the same time.
The children might have made a decision based on their knowledge of the real world. In the context of a quiz or test, the answer should not exclude any numbers of possible answers. Adults are very aware of the fact that the knowledge which is being tested here is about a hypothetic world. On the other hand, children’s choice of answers is opt to reflect the real world. This can be a potential problem when experiments are to be conducted with participants who are not accustomed to take exams, not necessarily with children.

This problem is also seen from literature. In Pérez-Leroux & Schulz (1999), children aged 3-6 year olds were tested the skills that draw inferences from the complement. One story was:

One morning, this boy and his mother made a beautiful cake for after dinner. The boy looked in the bowl and saw a dark spot. The boy thought there was an ant in the bowl. (Pérez-Leroux & Schulz, 1999; 47)

Then, children were asked “was there an ant in the bowl?” An expected answer was “don’t know” or “may be”. However, some children, or even some adults, chose either “yes” or “not”. In reality, there is no “may be” situation. The only situation could be either there was an ant in the bowl or there was not an ant in the bowl. The rest depends on how speakers encode their evidentiality or certainty of the fact.

So far, I have presented two examples (3.1.1 and 3.1.2), experiments are affected by participants’ understanding of experiments, which is different from experiments.

3.2 Trivial issues for L1 experiments research

This section introduces some methodologies issues, which are trivial yet still influences the procedures of experiments.
3.2.1 Colour is important

Children do not like people with dark colour clothes. In the experiment above (2), children were individually invited by the researcher to another room to take part in the experiment. That is, the research had to recruit children from their classroom while they were engaging in their exciting daily activity. It seems that the colour of the clothes the experimenter wore affected the successful rate of the recruitment. Children tended to choose their own activity when the experimenter wore black.

In the experiment session (see above), three people appeared in the picture. They were all called by male reference of terms, e.g. NAME + kun, Mr for young boy. One child posed me a question why the person in the picture is boy even though the boy is painted in pink. In my particular experiment, the colour and genders did not matter the results as the person is not the option of answers. However, these encompass a possible risk that affects results if experimenters are not aware of the fact beforehand.

3.2.2 Computers need a distractor

Children love computers. In this particular experiment, the stimulus was given by a powerpoint presentation. In order to present the stimulus, participants sat in front of a laptop computer. Many children wanted to touch screen, keyboards, and mouse, which could spoil of the session of experiment. During the session, I asked participants, apart from adult control group, to hug a body size Mickey Mouse and Minny Mouse that I brought. By explaining them that Minny Mouse is feeling lonely and needs participants’ tight hug, which could prevent them from touching both computer and recording instrument. Moreover, it seemed that many of the participants were more relaxed after assigned to this job.
4 Conclusion

In this paper, firstly I presented a result of an experiment that tested the children’s pragmatic skills in the use of the hot news use of the past form. The result has revealed that 3, 4, 5 years old children were not able to have the same past presupposition as adults do when the hot news use appears with copula. However, this skill develops with an increase in age. Further studies with older children might provide further insight into the development of adult presupposition understanding.

Secondly, I mentioned some methodological issues that involve with experimental works testing the pragmatic knowledge of speakers. It pointed out that the concept of “experiment” can be understood differently by different groups of participants. Then I presented some trivial methodological skills that influence the collection of the data. This paper, hopefully, can be a value help for the future investigation in the field.

5 References

Kubo, K. (submitted). The acquisition of the use and meaning of the past form -ta both by L1 and L2 learners of Japanese. UWA.


Active and Passive Voice in Minangkabau: Some Preliminary Findings

Sophie Elizabeth Crouch

*Linguistics MA candidate*
*The University of Western Australia*

sophie.crouch@grs.uwa.edu.au
Abstract

This paper, based on a presentation I gave at the UWA Linguistics Postgraduate Seminar Day in November 2007, briefly presents some preliminary findings about voice marking and its interaction with verb class type in Minangkabau, a language spoken in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The paper makes use of Standard Minangkabau data as well as Colloquial Minangkabau data. The paper shows, that like Standard Indonesian, Standard Minangkabau makes use of three voice oppositions: active voice, passive voice, and the pasif semu, which is the preferred passive construction for first and second person actors. In Colloquial Minangkabau many bare verb stems that are unmarked for voice can be found functioning in both active and passive clauses. However, unlike some regional varieties of Malay/Indonesian such as Jakarta Indonesian, Sarang Lan Malay, Mundung Darat Malay and Kuching Malay, in which the bare active has merged with the pasif semu construction, the pasif semu is a distinctive construction in Colloquial Minangkabau.

0. Introduction

This paper will examine the system of voice marking in Standard Indonesian, regional non-standard varieties of Indonesian/Malay, and Minangkabau. These languages mark verbs for active and passive voice but unmarked verb forms also frequently occur.

It will be shown that Standard Indonesian has three voices, active voice, passive voice and object voice, which is also known as the pasif semu or pseudo passive. Active voice and passive voice are marked by the prefixes meN- and di- respectively whereas the pasif

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Ana, my Minangkabau language consultant in Perth for all her time and help with elicitation. My sincere thanks also go to David Gil and Uri Tadmor at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA) for granting me access to use their database of conversational Minangkabau. Many thank yous are also due to Santi, Silvie, Yessy and Hengky, the fabulous MPI EVA Minangkabau research assistants at Universitas Bung Hatta in Padang, Indonesia. Thank you all for your generously given time and all your hard work.
semu verb is unmarked. Unmarked active verbs can also be found in Standard Indonesian and in regional dialects, contact varieties and non-standard varieties of Malay/Indonesian. In Standard Indonesian unmarked forms occur as lexicalised verb forms, whereas in some non-standard varieties the unmarked forms occur because active voice marking is not obligatory. In Standard Indonesian we can distinguish the pasif semu from the bare active by using syntactic tests to show that the object in the pasif semu clause has been raised to subject status. However in some regional and non-standard varieties of Malay/Indonesian, where word order is more flexible and unmarked active verbs are used more frequently than the marked forms, the pasif semu does not appear.

Minangkabau verbs are marked for active and passive voice by the prefixes maN- and di- respectively. The pasif semu is also used in both Standard and Colloquial Minangkabau. Like some regional and non-standard varieties of Indonesian/Malay, Colloquial Minangkabau has flexible word order constraints and shows evidence of the frequent use of unmarked verb forms. It will be argued that Minangkabau bare verb forms are used for a wide range of predicate types, including stative verbs, active verbs and imperatives. The bare forms have also been found to fulfil nominal functions. Despite the frequent use of bare verb forms in the Colloquial register, the pasif semu, which also makes use of a bare verb stem, remains a distinctive construction.

1. Standard Indonesian

Standard Indonesian has three voices: active voice, passive voice and the pasif semu. Verbs are marked for active and passive voice by the prefixes meN- and di- respectively, whereas the pasif semu verb is unmarked. The pasif semu construction, hereafter the P2 construction, can instead be identified by its distinctive ‘auxiliary + actor’ word order. Sneddon (1996) suggests that the P2 construction is motivated by pronoun choice and is the preferred passive construction for first person and second person actors. However, in informal contexts, and in regional and non-standard varieties of Malay/Indonesian, 1st person and 2nd person actors are acceptable in di- passive constructions (Chung, 1976;
Wouk, 1989). Third person actors trigger the use of the *di-* passive construction, hereafter the P1 construction. The correlations between actor pronoun and passive construction choice in Standard Indonesian are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Standard Indonesian preferred passive constructions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor Pronoun</th>
<th>P1 preferred</th>
<th>P2 preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-pronoun</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1. The Syntax of P1 and Active Voice in Standard Indonesian

In Standard Indonesian, to transform an active sentence into passive voice the undergoer is promoted to subject. The undergoer is then moved to preverbal position, the verb is marked for passive voice by the *di-* prefix and the actor is demoted to adjunct and optionally marked by the preposition *oleh* (Cole, Hermon and Yanti, 2007).

(1a). The verb *memukul* is marked for active voice. *Ali* is the subject:

‘Ali **me(m)**-ukul Ahmad.’

Ali AV-hit Ahmad

*Ali hit Ahmad.*

Abbreviations

(1b). The verb *dipukul* is marked for passive voice (P1). *Ahmad* is the subject:

‘Ahmad *di-pukul* ((oleh) *Ali*).’

*Ahmad* **PV-hit** ((by) *Ali*).

*Ahmad was hit (by Ali).*

### 1.2. The Syntax of P2 in Standard Indonesian

In the P2 construction the verb is unmarked for voice and the actor-verb word order of an active sentence is retained. However, the undergoer is preposed to first position and becomes the subject (Chung, 1976). In example (1c) notice that the embedded clause has an ‘auxiliary + actor’ word order: *sudah saya*. In an active clause this sequence should be: *saya sudah*. In a P2 clause the word order is strictly ‘auxiliary + actor’.

(1c). The verb *baca* is marked for passive voice (P2). *Buku* is the undergoer but also the syntactic subject of the embedded clause:

‘Mereka *anggap (bahwa) buku ini sudah saya Ø-baca.*’

3pl believe (that) book this PFCT 1sg Ø-read

*They believe (that) this book, I have read.*

### 1.3. Non-standard Varieties of Malay/Indonesian

There are some regional dialects and contact varieties of Malay/Indonesian that do not have the P2 voice (Cole, Hermon and Tjung, 2006; Cole, Hermon and Yanti, 2007). These varieties include:

- Jakarta Indonesian
- Sarang Lan Malay
- Mundung Darat Malay
- Kuching Malay
In these varieties there is flexible word order and active voice marking is not obligatory. As a result, unmarked active verbs and unmarked P2 verbs are indistinguishable. Since word order is flexible the ‘auxiliary + actor’ of P2 constructions no longer contrasts with the standard ‘actor + auxiliary’ word order in active clauses. Consequently, the P2 construction has merged with the bare active construction.

2. Voice in Standard Minangkabau

Standard Minangkabau has a system of voice oppositions that resembles Standard Indonesian. Active voice is marked on the verb by the prefix *maN*- whereas passive voice is marked by the proclitic *di*- (see Crouch, 2008 for details about the morphophonological properties of these voice markers). Like some regional and non-standard varieties of Malay/Indonesian, Minangkabau also regularly makes use of bare verb stems in active voice constructions. However, as the following discussion will demonstrate, the language also has a distinctive P2 construction in both the Standard and Colloquial registers.

Minangkabau has three classes of verb: stative verbs, dynamic intransitive verbs, and transitive verbs. Each verb class interacts differently with the voice markers. Stative verbs may only combine with *maN*- and *di*- once a second argument has been licensed by the applicative —*an*. Similarly, dynamic intransitive verbs can only be passivised after a transitive form of the verb has been derived using the applicative —*an*. Active transitive verbs can be marked for both active and passive voice without the need for an applicative. However, note that voice marking is not obligatory in Colloquial Minangkabau (see Section 3.2.). These facts about voice marking in Minangkabau are summarised in Table 2.
Table 2. Minangkabau Verb Classes and Voice Affixation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Class</th>
<th>Arguments</th>
<th>Bare Verb</th>
<th>manN-</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statics</td>
<td>1: Undergoer</td>
<td>Obligatory.</td>
<td>+-an</td>
<td>+-an</td>
<td>+-an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>1: Actor</td>
<td>Possible in colloquial register.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>+-an</td>
<td>+-an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Some lexicalised bare forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitives</td>
<td>2: Actor &amp; Undergoer</td>
<td>Possible in colloquial register.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some lexicalised bare forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1. A Note on the Data

There are approximately 12 dialects of Minangkabau (Gordon, 2005; Medan, n.d.) and there is also evidence that a standard form of the language exists for intergroup communication (Adnani, 1971: 4). Moussay (1998) argues that the Padang dialect is the most prestigious variety of Minangkabau and is therefore used as the ‘standard’ variety for inter-dialect communication throughout the Minangkabau homeland. Formal and Colloquial Indonesian is also used by Minangkabau speakers and it seems likely that a Minangkabau-flavoured Colloquial Indonesian koiné would be used for inter-dialect communication as well (Gil, 2003).

The Minangkabau data discussed in Section 2.2. comes from a corpus of elicitation sessions with a native speaker of the Bukiktinggi dialect of Minangkabau. The speaker currently lives in Perth, Western Australia and is also fluent in English and Standard Indonesian. The speaker preferred to use what she referred to as ‘Minangkabau’ as opposed to ‘Bukiktinggi Minangkabau’. She frequently mixed and switched between Minangkabau and Standard Indonesian and her intuitions about Minangkabau grammar also seemed to be heavily informed by Standard Indonesian usage. For these reasons I refer to the data I recorded with this speaker as ‘Standard Minangkabau’.

The Minangkabau data discussed in Section 3 comes from a corpus of naturalistic conversations and narratives collected and maintained by researchers at the Max Planck...
Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA) at Universitas Bung Hatta in Padang, Indonesia. I refer to this data as ‘Colloquial Minangkabau’.

Standard Minangkabau and Colloquial Minangkabau differ considerably. One of the most striking differences between the two data sets is the frequent use of bare verb stems in Colloquial Minangkabau. The Colloquial Minangkabau data is discussed further in Section 3.

### 2.2. Minangkabau Verb Classes

Each of the verb classes listed in Table 2 (stative verbs, dynamic intransitive verbs, transitive verbs), as well as the interaction of each of these verb classes with the Standard Minangkabau voice system, are discussed in turn below.

#### 2.2.1. Stative Verbs

(2a). For stative verbs, the bare form is obligatory:

> ‘Amak berang ka awak.’
> mum angry to 1
> *Mum was angry with me*

(2b). Voice marking is illegal because an actor is not licensed by the verb:

> *‘Amak mamberang ka ‘awak.’*
> mum AV-angry to 1
(2c). Active voice affixation only occurs in combination with applicative morpheme -an. The applicative licenses the required actor argument amak:

‘Amak mamberangan awak.’
mum AV-angry-APP 1
Mum was angry with me/ Mum scolded me.

(2d). The actor, amak, is the pivot:

‘Nampaknyo amak ka mamberangan awak.’
seem-3 mum FUT AV-angry-APP 1
It seems that mum is going to scold me.

(2e). Only the actor pivot amak can be raised:

‘Amak nampaknyo ka mamberangan awak.’
Mum seem-3 FUT AV-angry-APP 1
Mum seems like she is going to scold me.

(2f). Passive voice affixation only occurs in combination with applicative morpheme –an. The applicative licenses the required actor argument amak:

‘Awak diberangan dek amak.’
1 PV-angry-APP CAUSE mum
I was got angry at by mum/ I was scolded by mum.

(2g). The undergoer awak is the pivot:

‘Nampaknyo awak ka diberangan dek amak.’
seem-3 1 FUT PV-angry-APP CAUSE mum
It seems that I’m going to be scolded by mum.
(2h). Only the undergoer pivot *awak* can be raised:

‘Awak nampaknyo ka diberangan dek amak.’
1 seem-3 FUT PV-angry-APP CAUSE mum
*I seem like I’m going to be scolded by mum.*

2.2.2. Dynamic Intransitive Verbs

(3a). For dynamic intransitive verbs active voice affixation is obligatory in Standard Minangkabau:

‘Ambo manyuruak di belakang batang karambia.’
1sg AV-hide LOC behind tree coconut
*I’m hiding behind a coconut tree.*

(3b). In active voice the actor is the pivot. Only the actor, *anak*, can be relativised:

‘Anak nan manyuruak di belakang batang karambia alah lari.’
child REL AV-hide LOC behind tree coconut PFCT run
*The child who hid behind the coconut tree ran away.*

(3c). Passive voice affixation only occurs in combination with applicative morpheme –*an*. The applicative licenses the required undergoer argument *kue*:

‘Kue disuruakannyo.’
1sg PV-hide-APP-3
*The cake was hidden by somebody.*

(3d). In passive voice the undergoer is the pivot. Only the undergoer, *kue*, can be relativised:

‘Kue nan alah masak tu disuruakannyo.’
cake REL PFCT cook DEM:dist PV-hide-APP-3
*The cake that is already cooked has been hidden by somebody*
2.2.3. Transitive Verbs

(4a). For transitive verbs, active voice affixation is obligatory in Standard Minangkabau:

‘Ambo manguduang cimangko.’
1sg AV-cut watermelon
*I cut the watermelon*

(4b). In active voice, the actor is the pivot. The embedded clause is active and the actor, *Ana*, is the pivot:

‘Dikironyo Ana nan manguduang cimangko tu.’
PV-think-3 Ana REL AV-cut watermelon DEM:dist
*They think that it was Ana who cut the watermelon.*

(4c). Only the actor pivot, *Ana*, can be extracted:

‘Ana dikironyo nan manguduang cimangko tu.’
Ana PV-think-3 REL AV-cut watermelon DEM:dist
*Ana, they think, was the one who cut the watermelon.*

(4d). Extraction of the undergoer, *cimangko*, produces an ungrammatical sentence:

*‘Cimangko tu dikironyo Ana nan manguduang.’*
watermelon DEM:dist PV-think-3 Ana REL AV-cut

(4e). For transitive verbs, passive voice affixation is obligatory in Standard Minangkabau:

‘Cimangko tu alah dikuduangnyo.’
watermelon DEM:dist PFCT PV-cut-3
*The watermelon has already been cut by somebody.*
In passive voice the undergoer is the pivot. The embedded clause is passive and the undergoer, *cimangko*, is the pivot:

`Dikironyo cimangko tu nan dikuduang dek si Ana tu.'

*They think that it was the watermelon that Ana cut.*

Only the undergoer pivot, *cimangko*, can be extracted:

`Cimangko tu dikironyo nan dikuduang dek si Ana tu.'

*The watermelon, they think, was the thing cut by Ana.*

Extraction of the actor, *si Ana*, produces an ungrammatical sentence:

*‘Si Ana tu di-kiro-nyo cimangko tu nan di-kuduang.’*

2.3. The *pasif semu* Construction in Standard Minangkabau

In Standard Minangkabau the *pasif semu* or P2 construction is allowed for stative and dynamic intransitive verbs only after the verbs have combined with the applicative morpheme –*an* to license an additional argument. Transitive verbs can freely appear in a P2 construction without the need for an applicative. Like Standard Indonesian, the P2 in Standard Minangkabau is the preferred passive structure for first and second person actors.

In a P2 construction the undergoer is the pivot. In this example, the undergoer, *cimangko*, is the pivot:

`Cimangko nan tu ambo Ø-kuduang jo pisau.’

*That watermelon was cut by me with a knife.*
(5b). Word order in a P2 clause is strictly ‘auxiliary + actor’:

‘Gulai dagiang alah ambo Ø-masak.’
curry meat PFCT 1sg Ø-cook
*I’ve already cooked a meat curry.*

(5c). If we apply the word order of a basic active sentence (‘actor + auxiliary’) then we get an ungrammatical P2 sentence:\n
*‘Gulai dagiang ambo alah masak.’
curry meat 1sg PFCT cook
*(Lit: My meat curry is already cooked.)*

(5d). In this example, the embedded clause is a P2 construction and the undergoer, *gulai dagiang*, is the pivot:

‘Inyo maanggap gulai dagiang alah ambo Ø-masak.’
3 AV-consider curry meat PFCT 1sg Ø-cook
*They think that I’ve already cooked the meat curry.*

(5e). Only the undergoer pivot *gulai dagiang* can be raised:

‘Gulai dagiang di-anggap-nyo alah ambo Ø-masak.’
curry meat PV-consider-3 PFCT 1sg Ø-cook
*The meat curry, they think, has already been cooked by me.*

(5f). Raising the actor, *ambo*, produces an ungrammatical sentence:

*‘Ambo dianggap-nyo gulai dagiang alah Ø-masak.’*

1sg PV-consider-3 curry meat PFCT Ø-cook

---

3 However, note that if we interpret *masak* as stative then we get a grammatical sentence with a slightly different meaning. Due to the word order shift *ambo* is now a possessor rather than an actor so the sentence can mean “my curry is already cooked”.

---

3. Voice in Colloquial Minangkabau

The behaviour of the voice system in Colloquial Minangkabau differs considerably from the behaviour of voice in Standard Minangkabau. This is mainly due to the naturalistic and conversational nature of the Colloquial Minangkabau data. This means that syntactic structures are not so rigidly adhered to because discourse-pragmatic contextual factors play a significant role in the decoding of utterances. The differences also may be due to the fact that Standard Indonesian prescriptivist notions of grammar influence the usage of Standard Minangkabau but not Colloquial Minangkabau. In any case, Colloquial Minangkabau word order is more flexible than word order in Standard Minangkabau. In Colloquial Minangkabau we also find that verbs are frequently unmarked for voice. Nevertheless, the P2 construction is a distinctive construction in Colloquial Minangkabau. The status of the P2 in Colloquial Minangkabau differs from the facts about some regional and contact varieties of Malay/Indonesian described by Cole, Hermon and Yanti (2007), in which the P2 construction has merged with the bare active.

3.1. Word Order

In Standard Minangkabau, word order is typically rigidly adhered to. Active clauses have an ‘actor + verb + undergoer’ word order, P1 clauses have a ‘undergoer + verb + actor’ word order, whereas P2 clauses have an ‘undergoer + actor + verb’ word order. In any case, the pivot typically occupies pre-verbal position. However in Colloquial Minangkabau, word order is much more flexible, as the following examples demonstrate.

Example (6a) comes from a popular children’s song and its unusual word order may be a feature of literary usage. Note that the undergoer *pisang*, ‘banana’, is in post-verbal position. In Standard Minangkabau, *pisang* in this position would be interpreted as the
actor of the clause. However, the discourse context \(^4\) allows speakers to correctly interpret *pisang* as the undergoer pivot of the clause.

(6a). Non-canonical word order. Undergoer pivot *pisang* follows verb:

‘Dibali, dibali pisang, dibali pisang tidak mau makan.’

*PV-buy PV-buy banana PV-buy banana NEG want eat*

*He bought a banana but didn’t want to eat it.*

Similarly in (6b), the undergoer pivot of the clause *Ida* appears in post-verbal position. *Ida* is a participant in the conversation and therefore highly referential. Since the most referential participant in the clause is assigned pivot status, *Ida* is interpreted as the undergoer pivot of the clause even though in Standard Minangkabau *Ida* would be interpreted as the actor since the NP appears in actor position.

(6b). Non-canonical word order. Undergoer pivot *Ida* follows verb:

‘Disuruah lari Ida Ni Da tu.’

*PV-order run Ida TRU-older.sister TRU-Ida DEM:dist*

*Uni, I, Ida was ordered to run.*

In examples (6c) and (6d) notice that the actor pivots *nyo* and *pareman ko* follow the verb. In Standard Minangkabau these NPs would be interpreted as undergoers due to their position in the clause. However, *nyo* and *pareman ko* are topical participants and are therefore understood as the pivots in these active clauses.

(6c). Non-canonical word order. Actor pivot *nyo* follows the verb:

‘Baru awak dari pasa manyuruak nyo.’

*new 1 from market AV-hide 3*

*I had just come out from the market when he hid.*

\(^4\) Please note, since this paper presents preliminary findings I do not explicitly describe the discourse context of each of the examples in detail.
(6d). Non-canonical word order: Actor pivot *pareman ko* follows the verb:

Sadang mamanjek pareman ko nak tibo pak gaek ko.

PROG AV-climb hoodlum DEM:prox EMPH arrive TRU-father old DEM:prox

*Just as the hoodlum was climbing (the tree), right, the old man arrived.*

3.2. Bare Stems

As mentioned above, bare verb stems, i.e. verbs that are unmarked for voice, occur frequently in Colloquial Minangkabau. They appear in all the contexts that bare stems appear in Standard Minangkabau: as stative predicates, as lexicalised bare dynamic forms, as imperatives and as nominal predicates. Bare stems also appear in Colloquial Minangkabau clauses where voice marked forms would appear in Standard Minangkabau. Each of these types of bares stems is discussed and exemplified in Sections 3.2.1. to 3.2.5..

3.2.1. Stative Predicates

Bare verb forms are used obligatorily for stative predicates. In (7a) the stative form *sakik* functions as the predicate of a verb phrase whereas in (7b) *sakik* functions to modify the noun phrase *kaki*, ‘foot’. Stative predicates may be marked for voice but only once the valence of the verb has been increased by the applicative –*an* (see Section 2.2.1.). In (7c) *sakik* has been modified by the applicative –*an* so can appear as the predicate of an active voice clause.

(7a). Bare stative verb *sakik* is predicate of verb phrase:

‘Kaki den sakik.’

foot lsg hurt

*My foot hurts.*
(7b). Bare stative verb *sakik* modifies the noun phrase:

‘Kaki sakik den.’
foot hurt 1sg

*My sore foot.*

(7c). Stative verb *sakik* has been modified by applicative –*an* so can be marked for active voice:

‘Sapatu ko manyakikan kaki den.’
shoe DEM:prox AV-hurt-APP foot 1sg

*These shoes are hurting my feet.*

3.2.2. Lexicalised Bare Dynamic Verbs

In Minangkabau dynamic intransitive and transitive verbs are usually marked for voice. However, there are a number of dynamic verbs in both Standard and Colloquial Minangkabau that cannot be marked for voice without having their valence modified by the applicative –*an* first. I refer to these forms as lexicalised bare dynamic verbs. Members of this class include the verbs, *pai*, ‘go’, *naik*, ‘rise, go up’, and *kalua*, ‘go out’.

(8a). Lexicalised bare dynamic verb *pai*:

‘Inyo pai surang.’
3 go ONE-person

*He went by himself.*

(8b). Lexicalised bare form *pai* cannot be marked for voice:

*‘Inyo mampai surang.’*
3 AV-go ONE-person
(8c). Lexicalised bare form *pai* can be marked for voice once it combines with applicative *–an*:

\[
\text{Pitih tu mampaian ka sayua.}
\]

money DEM:dist AV-go-APP to vegetables

*The money went on vegetables.*

### 3.2.3. Imperatives

Bare forms are also used for imperative verbs. In Colloquial Minangkabau, if the verb is not marked by the imperative clitic *–lah*, bare imperatives can also be interpreted as bare actives.

(9a). Bare verb *balian* can be interpreted as imperative or active:

\[
\text{‘Santi, balian buku untuak Ali.’}
\]

Santi buy-APP book for Ali


(9b). Bare verb *balian* can only be interpreted as an imperative because it is marked by imperative modal clitic *–lah*:

\[
\text{‘Santi, balianlah buku untuak Ali.’}
\]

Santi buy-APP-IMP book for Ali

*Santi, bought a book for Ali.*

(9c). Bare stem *masak* can be interpreted as imperative or active:

\[
\text{‘Masak nasi!’}
\]

cook rice

*Cook the rice!/ I’m cooking rice!*
(9d). The imperative clitic –lah leaves no room for ambiguity. Bare stem masak is an imperative verb:

Masak nasi lah lai!
Cook rice IMP EMPH

Cook the rice!

3.2.4. Nominal Predicates

In both Standard and Colloquial Minangkabau nouns can function as predicates. Nominal predicates can appear as bare stems and can also be marked by verbal affixes.

(10a). Bare nominal stem namo functions as the predicate in this equative noun phrase:

‘Namo anak tu Ana.’
name child DEM:dist Ana
That child’s name is Ana.

(10b). Nominal predicate namo can also be marked by the verbal prefix ba-:

‘Baa kok banamoe Tampat.Durian?’
POSS-what EMPH POSS-name-3 place.durian
Why is it called ‘Tampat Durian’?

(10c). Bare stem namo is still grammatical as a nominal predicate when unmarked by verbal affix ba-:

‘Baa kok namoe Tampat.Durian?’
POSS-what EMPH name-3 place.durian
Why is it called ‘Tampat Durian’?
3.2.5. Verbs Unmarked for Voice

Colloquial Minangkabau differs considerably from Standard Minangkabau in that bare verb stems can function in place of voice marked verb forms. Bare verb stems can be found in both active and passive clauses. Discourse-pragmatic and contextual factors play a significant role in decoding the ‘voice’ of the verb and assigning semantic roles to the participants.

Example (11a) was found in the MPI EVA corpus of conversational Minangkabau. Notice that the verb gadang-gadangan is unmarked for voice. Nevertheless, word order and discourse-pragmatic clues allow the hearer to interpret the verb as active and assign the actor role to nyő and the undergoer role to mata nyō. As examples (11b) and (11c) show, only an active reading is possible for this clause as passivising it produces an ungrammatical sentence.

(11a). Verb gadang-gadgangan is a bare stem but understood as active:

‘Manga nyō gadang-gadangan mato nyō ka aden ceke.’
why 3 RED-big-APP eye 3 to 1sg talk-3
Why are you staring at me, he said.

(11b). Verb gadang-gadangan can be marked for active voice:

‘Manga nyō manggadang-gadangan mato nyō ka aden ceke.’
why 3 AV-RED-big-APP eye 3 to 1sg talk-3
Why are you staring at me, he said.

(11c). Verb gadang-gadangan cannot be passivised in this context:

*‘Manga nyō digadang-gadangan mato nyō ka aden ceke.’
why 3 PV-RED-big-APP eye 3 to 1sg talk-3
Similarly in (12) the bare stem *bali* is unmarked for voice yet it is understood to be passive. It can occur with the passive voice marker *di*- but changing the clause to active voice produces an ungrammatical sentence. In this example the first *nyo* refers to the actor and the NP *tu se nyo* refers to the undergoer. Contextual clues and the fact that *tu se nyo* appears in pre-verbal pivot position allow for a passive interpretation.

(12a). Verb *bali* is a bare stem but understood as passive:

`‘Nyo tu se nyo bali.’`

`3 DEM:dist only 3 buy`

*That was the only thing he bought.*

(12b). Verb *bali* can be marked for passive voice:

`‘Nyo tu se nyo dibali.’`

`3 DEM:dist only 3 PV-buy`

*That was the only thing he bought.*

(12c). Verb *bali* cannot appear in active voice in this context:

`*‘Nyo tu se nyo mambali.’`

`3 DEM:dist only 3 AV-buy`

In example (13) both active and passive interpretations are available for the bare verb *cuci*. *Afif* is the addressee in (13) but in (13b), to make the active interpretation available, *Afif* must also be assigned the actor role. The position of the actor NP after the undergoer in (13b) is allowed since the word order reflects the structure of an inverse question. World knowledge tells us that *muko*, ‘face’, must be the undergoer in (13). This means that even though the undergoer does not appear in canonical pivot position in (13c) a passive interpretation is still available.
The verb *cuci* is a bare stem. Both active and passive interpretations are available:

‘Lah cuci muko Afif?’
PFCT wash face Afif

*Have you washed your face yet Afif?/ Has your face been washed yet Afif?*

(13b). An active voice interpretation is possible for the verb *cuci* in this context:

‘Lah mancuci muko Afif?’
PFCT AV-wash face Afif

*Have you washed your face yet Afif?*

(13c). A passive voice interpretation is also possible for the verb *cuci* in this context:

‘Lah dicuci muko Afif?’
PFCT PV-wash face Afif

*Has your face been washed yet Afif?*

### 3.3. The *pasif semu* Construction in Colloquial Minangkabau

The *pasif semu*, or P2, construction also makes use of unmarked verb stems (see Section 2.3.) however a P2 clause has a distinct word order that distinguishes it from a bare active clause. We saw in Sections 3.1. and 3.2. that Colloquial Minangkabau has flexible word order constraints and also makes frequent use of bare verb stems in place of voice marked verbs. Despite this, the P2 construction is still a distinct construction in Colloquial Minangkabau.

The sentences in (14) provide an example of the P2 construction in Colloquial Minangkabau. The demonstrative *tu* is the undergoer pivot whereas *nyo* is the actor. The verb *takuikan* must be unmarked for voice. Notice in (14b) and (14c) that marking the P2 verb for voice produces an ungrammatical sentence. This is because the word order of a P2 clause in incompatible with a voice marked verb.
(14a). Bare stem *takuikan* is required because clause is a P2 construction:

‘Tu apo nyo *takuikan*?’
DEM:dist what 3 fear-APP
*What is he scared of?*

(14b). Bare stem *takuikan* is required because clause is a P2 construction. Passive voice marking produces an ungrammatical sentence:

*‘Tu apo nyo *ditakuikan*?’*
DEM:dist what 3 PV-fear-APP

(14c). Bare stem *takuikan* is required because clause is a P2 construction. Active voice marking produces an ungrammatical sentence:

*‘Tu apo nyo *manakuikan*?’*
DEM:dist what 3 AV-fear-APP

Similarly in (15a), the bare stem *tanyo*, ‘ask’, is bare because it appears in a P2 construction. In (15a) *apo* is assigned the undergoer pivot role whereas *Ci* is the actor. Evidence that (15a) is in fact a P2 construction comes from the fact that the verb is incompatible with passive and active voice marking, as examples (15b) and (15c) demonstrate. Notice that the word order in (15a) is also representative of a P2 construction. The auxiliary verb *pingin* comes before the actor NP whereas in an active or P1 clause the auxiliary would come between the pivot and the verb.

(15a). Bare stem *tanyo* is required because clause is a P2 construction:

‘Apo yang pingin *Ci* tanyo?’
what REL want TRU-Silvie ask
*What is it that you want to ask Silvie?*
(15b). Bare stem *tanyo* is required because clause is a P2 construction. Passive voice marking produces an ungrammatical sentence:

```
*Apo yang pingin Ci ditanyo?*
```

what REL want TRU-Silvie PV-ask

(15c). Bare stem *tanyo* is required because clause is a P2 construction. Active voice marking produces an ungrammatical sentence:

```
*Apo yang pingin Ci mananyo?*
```

what REL want TRU-Silvie AV-ask

4. Conclusion

This paper presented a brief summary of some of my preliminary findings about voice in Minangkabau. It was shown that like Standard Indonesian, Minangkabau makes use of an active voice construction and two passive constructions: the *di-* passive (P1) and the *pasif semu* (P2). This paper also demonstrated that each of Minangkabau’s three verb classes (stative, dynamic intransitive, transitive) interacts differently with the language’s system of voice morphology.

This paper also showed that Standard and Colloquial Minangkabau differ considerably. Colloquial Minangkabau has more flexible word order constraints when compared to Standard Minangkabau. The Colloquial variety also makes use of bare verb stems in contexts where Standard Minangkabau would use voice marked forms of the verb. This raises questions about the obligatoriness of voice marking and the nature of categoriality in the Colloquial variety of the language.

Despite the fact that the register makes use of bare verb stems and has flexible word order constraints, Colloquial Minangkabau has a distinctive the P2 construction. This is quite different from some contact and regional varieties of Malay/Indonesian in which flexible word orders and the use of bare stems has meant that the P2 construction has merged with
the bare active. Nevertheless, the fact that Standard and Colloquial Minangkabau display a range of different structures supports the idea that data from a range of different registers must be considered to provide a comprehensive description of a language.

References


Basic Verb Morphology of Bundu Tuhan (BT) Dusun

Veronica Atin

*Linguistics PhD Candidate*
*The University of Western Australia*

atinv01@gmail.com
Abstract

The basic verb morphology of BT is characterized by the interaction of voice marking, tense and mood. In Bt, the tense system is a binary past and non-past contrast. The non-past tense may have the interpretation of present or future. Voice constitutes the pivotal category and interacts with tense and mood/aspect. Three voices are distinguished in BT; actor voice (AV), undergoer voice (UG) and goal voice (GV), although at this stage these labels are still tentative. The semantic roles of the voice pivots are discussed with examples of their range of uses.

0. Introduction

Bundu Tuhan Dusun (BT) is a Dusunic language spoken primarily in the area of Bundu Tuhan, in Ranau, Sabah, Malaysia (see Map 1).

---

1 This paper was first presented at the Linguistic Postgraduate Seminar, UWA, 4th December 2006.
Genetically, Dusunic languages are Sabahan languages of the Western Malayo Polynesian (WMP) group of Malayo Polynesian (MP) under Austronesian (AN). WMP constitutes a large cluster of languages that form various genetic sub-groups. These are languages of the Philippines and West Indonesia, Chamorro, Palauan, Malagasy and Chamic (Adelaar, 2005:9). Map 2 shows the distribution of Austronesian languages.

---

2 Map adapted from (Banker and Banker, 1984: 298).
As regard Sabahan languages, there are conflicting views as to its categorisation. Some scholars believe that Sabahan languages should be treated as Philippine type-languages based on their morphosyntax, vocabulary and phonological similarities with languages in the Central Phillipines (see Ross, 1995, Kroeger, 2005). Current view is that there is a North Borneon subgroup involving languages in Sabah, Sarawak and adjacent parts of Kalimantan (Adelaar, 2005). Despite this view, the categorization of Dusunic languages as “Philippine-type” is still popular. Himmelmann (2005) defines Phillipine-type as a term used to refer to the languages in the Philippine as well as languages from

---

3 Map adapted from http://www.uog.edu/cas/Humanities/AnthropologyProgram.htm
neighbouring islands that share their characteristics. He elaborates these typical characteristics as follows:

- symmetrical voices
- at least two non-actor voices
- at least one non-local nominal clitic
- second position pronominal clitic

(Himmelman, 2005:112-4)

Symmetrical voices languages are those with at least two voice alternations marked on the verb, neither of which is clearly the basic form. BT shares all these characteristics, having three voice alternations (Actor, Undergoer and Goal), four non-local nominal clitics (i, di, o, and do) and second position pronominal clitics.

1. Overview of Verb Morphology Interaction in BT

Mood, tense and voice interaction make up the basic verb morphology of BT. Voice is the pivotal category which interacts with mood and tense. Table 1 represents this interaction:

Table 1. Mood, Tense and Voice Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dynamic/Intentive</th>
<th></th>
<th>Stative/Potentive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-past</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Non-tensed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor (AV)</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>-in-</td>
<td>-o^4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergoer (AV)</td>
<td>-on</td>
<td>-in-</td>
<td>-o^4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Voice (GV)</td>
<td>-an</td>
<td>-in-</td>
<td>-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^4 is the orthographic symbol used in BT for glottal stop [ʔ]
There are two moods; dynamic/intentive and stative/potentive. The discussion in this paper is concerned with dynamic/intentive mood only. In BT, the tense system is past and non-past, and there is also a category non-tensed in which the suffixes are never marked for tense. Non-past is devoid of overt marking on the verb and may have present, or future interpretation. Past is marked differently depending on the form of stems as well as the moods. As mentioned earlier, there are three voices in BT; Actor, Undergoer and Goal. The literature on Philippine-type languages reveals that various labels on the voices have been used, and new ones are still being invented, which show that these labels are a continuing matter of debate.

2. Voice Marking

In Dusunic languages, voice gives information about the thematic role of the pivot argument in verbal clauses. ‘Voice’ has also been called ‘focus’ in the past studies on Austronesian languages (Himmelmann, 2002). Choice of voice reflects the thematic role of one designated pivot argument. The term ‘pivot’ is currently the preferred term because linguists are still unable to agree on the appropriateness of the term ‘subject’ with regard to Philippine-type languages (Schachter, 1995, Himmelmann, 2002).

Three voices may be identified in BT, Actor Voice (UV), Undergoer Voice (UV) and Goal Voice (GV). An overt pivot is marked by determiner choice. In BT, there are four non-local determiners; ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘di’ and ‘do and one local determiner, ‘id’. Table 2 shows the role of each determiner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specified</th>
<th>Non-pivot</th>
<th>Locative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specified</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-specified</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Determiners
2.1. Actor Voice

AV is marked by m- with two allomorphs m- and –um-. M- is prefixed to vowel initial stems, and it also replaces a stem-initial bilabial /p/ or /w/. For example:

1) akan ‘eat’ > m-akan
   patai ‘die’ > m-atai
   woyo ‘follow’ > m-oyo’
   pigis ‘cut’ > m-om-igis (=m-poN-pigis)

In the m.om.igis example, poN is a prefix on transitive verbs and some other functions, among others, progressive aspect. In Dusun languages, there is a rich system of derivational morphology, marked by prefixation, and some of the prefixes seem to intrude into the voice system because of their sensitivity to transitivity. PoN- is one of them. –um- is infixed to other consonant- initial stems, such as:

2) tonob ‘set.sun’ > t-um-onob
   suang ‘enter’ > s-um-unsui
   giak ‘shout’ > g-um-iak

2.2. Semantic roles of AV Pivots

AV pivots may have the semantic role of an Agent, Theme of Intransitive Processes or Experiencer. The following examples illustrate this:

3.2.1 Agent
3) momigis oku do daging
   m-poN-pigis oku do daging
   AV-poN-cut 1s NPVNS meat
   I cut some meat.
3.2.2 Theme of Intransitive Processes

4) tumonob no lo tadau
   t-um-onob no ilo tadau
   AV-set cl dem-that sun
   The sun is already setting.

2.2.3 Experiencer

5) mintong i susumakai do tanda
   m-intong i susumakai do tanda
   AV.look.at PVS rider NPVNS sign
   The rider looks at a sign.

2.3. Past Tense and Actor Voice

The past marker –in- infixes after AV m- and before or after AV –um-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m-akan</td>
<td>m-in-akan ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-om-igis</td>
<td>m-in-om-igis cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-um-onob</td>
<td>t-in-um-onob set[sun]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t-um-in-onob</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4. Undergoer voice

UV is marked by –on in the non-past and –o’ in the untensed paradigm. The untensed paradigm is used in imperatives and some other discourse functions. Two types of past tense markings may be distinguished for UV. For normal UV with the pivot semantic role of patient/theme of transitive predicates, experiencer of some bodily sensation predicates, as well as goal of motion, it is indicated by –in-/n-...Ø. For UV with locative pivot, past tense is marked by –in-/n-...-on:
6) akan ‘eat’ pigis ‘cut’ giuk ‘maggot’
   Non-past akan-on pigis-on giuk-on
   Past n-akan p-in-igis g-in-iuk-on
   Non-tensed akan-o’ pigis-o’ giuk--o’

2.5. Semantic Roles of UV pivots

A UV pivot may assume any of the following semantic roles:

3.5.1 Patient/Theme of Transitive Predicates
7) Pigison kui daging
   Pigis-on ku   i daging.
   Cut-UV 1s-cl det meat
   I cut the meat.

8) akano’ i daging!
   akan-o’ i daging
   Eat-UV-NT PVS meat
   Eat the meat!

2.5.2 Experiencer of Some Bodily Sensation Predicates
9) louson oku
   lous-on oku
   hungry.UV 1s
   I am hungry.
2.5.3 Goal of Motion

10) hombo ngoion nu?
    hombo o ngoi-on nu
    where NPVS go-UV 2s.cl
    Where are you going?

2.5.4 Location

11) giukon i mangga’
    giuk-on i mangga’
    maggott-UV PVS mango
    The mango is infested by maggots.

2.6. Goal Voice

The third voice in BT is GV. The non-past form of GV takes the –an marker, the past is marked with –in/n-...an, and the non-tensed form takes the –ai marker. Similar to the UV –o’, the non-tensed form is used in imperatives and some other discourse functions.

12) Pigis ‘cut’ onu ‘give’
    Non-past pigis-an onu-an
    Past p-in-igis-an n-onu-an
    Non-tensed pigis-ai onu-ai

2.7. Semantic Roles of GV Pivots

The GV pivot may have any of the following semantic roles:
3.7.1 Recipient/Benefactive

13) pigisan ku i odu do daging
   pigis-an ku i odu do daging
   cut-GV 1s-cl PVS grandmother NPVNS meat
I cut some meat for grandmother.

14) onuai i tasu do daging!
   onu-ai i tasu do daging
give.UV det dog det meat
Give some meat to the dog!

2.7.2 Adversative Experiencer

15) noluyudan iahai konihab
   no-luyud-an iahai konihab
   pst-flood-GV 1pl-excl yesterday
We got flooded yesterday.

16) napataian iolo do tanak.
   na-patai-an iolo do tanak.
Pst-die-GV 3pl NPVNS child
They suffered the loss of a child.’

2.7.3 Experiencer of bodily sensation

17) tuuhan oku
   tuuh-an oku
   thirst-GV 1s
I’m thirsty.
3. Conclusion

The discussion of voice and tense in this paper has only been with regard to dynamic/intentive mood. Three voices were distinguished in BT; AV, UV and GV. These labels, however, remain tentative. AV forms are either non-past or past, while UV and GV may be in non-past, past or non-tensed forms.

References


### Appendix 1. Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AV-</td>
<td>Actor voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cl-</td>
<td>clitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem-</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GV-</td>
<td>Goal voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVS-</td>
<td>pivot, specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVNS-</td>
<td>pivot, non-specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPVS-</td>
<td>non-pivot, specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPVNS-</td>
<td>non-pivot, non-specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UV-</td>
<td>Undergoer voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s-</td>
<td>first person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s-cl-</td>
<td>first person singular, clitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s-</td>
<td>second person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s-cl-</td>
<td>second person singular, clitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl-incl-</td>
<td>second person plural, inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl-excl-</td>
<td>second person plural, exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s-</td>
<td>third person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl-</td>
<td>third person plural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Translation of temporality in narrative texts from English to Vietnamese

Thanh Ngo

PhD candidate, Education and Linguistics

The University of Western Australia

ngot01@student.uwa.edu.au
Abstract

This paper presents the translation of temporality in 18 passages taken from the English novel “The Old Man and The Sea” and their Vietnamese translations. In English, the temporal status of a situation and temporal relations between situations are explicitly conveyed by the morphological marking of the verbs for tense and aspect. Vietnamese, on the other hand, does not have a grammatical category for tense or aspect. In sentences the verbs are used in their base forms. The central question addressed in this paper is, in the absence of morphological marking of the verbs for tense and aspect in Vietnamese, how do translators of English-Vietnamese texts accommodate the temporal information expressed in the English texts by tense and aspect? Which Vietnamese linguistic devices are utilized to convey the meanings indicated by the English verb forms?

The results show that the translator basically follows the norms of Vietnamese, e.g. by using the base forms of the verbs, occasionally inserting temporal adverbials or time markers, but more often leaving a high degree of ambiguity regarding temporal status of situations. In order to work out the temporal interpretations of the situations in the target texts, pragmatics has to be extensively relied on.

0. Introduction

One of the most difficult tasks for translators is to find linguistic and cultural equivalents for elements that are common in one language, but absent in another language. In Vietnamese/English translation, as practicing translators, point out, the most obvious example of disparity between the two languages comes in the use of verb tenses and aspects. It is so because Vietnamese is a tenseless language while English has a rich aspectuo-temporal system. In English, the temporal and aspectual information of a situation, for example, the time of the situation and whether the situation is on-going or complete, is indicated by the morphological marking of the verbs. On the other hand, since Vietnamese verbs are not morphologically marked for tense and aspect, the interpretation of temporality is heavily reliant on pragmatics or world knowledge. Also, in English narrative, the interaction of tense and aspect, in particular the interaction of viewpoint and situation aspects, form the temporal structure of the text. Viewpoint and situation aspects
are the main linguistic devices for providing the background of the text as well as advancing the narrative time. All this information in Vietnamese, however, is again mostly dependent on the contexts and the knowledge of the world.

Given the great disparity in the temporal systems between the two languages, how do translators convey the temporal information of situations in English narrative texts in Vietnamese and what Vietnamese linguistic devices are exploited to express the time of situations in the conversation and temporal sequencing in the English narrative segments? This paper attempts to find answers to these questions by analysing selected passages of an original English novel and its Vietnamese translation version.

Section 1 below gives a comparison between the Vietnamese and English temporal systems. An account of temporal structure of narrative is taken up in Section 2. Section 3 presents the results of the analysis of the data corpus. Section 4 concludes the paper.

1. Comparison of Vietnamese and English temporal systems

In English, tense and aspect are grammatical categories. English verbs are morphologically inflected to indicate both tense and aspect. Tense is a deictic category, i.e. it relates the time of the situation to another time point, normally the time of speech or a point of reference (Comrie, 1985). Aspect, on the other hand, is not relative to the time of utterance (Comrie, 1976; Jakobson, 1957; Lyons, 1977). It serves to indicate the temporal structure of the situation itself, such as describing whether a situation is ongoing or complete (Comrie, 1976). For example, examining the utterance “Mary wrote a letter” reveals two temporal features of the situation: a) the time of the situation is before the time of speech, thus the utterance carries a past tense; b) the situation is complete, which means the utterance has a perfective aspect.

English is considered to have six fundamental tenses as a result of the relations between the three time points (point of speech (S), point of event (E), and point of reference (R)) proposed by Reichenbach (1947). These tenses are the present tense, the past tense, and the future tense, the present perfect, the past perfect, and the future perfect.
The English two aspects are the imperfective and perfective. The imperfective and the perfective aspects are also referred to as “viewpoint aspects” which are “signalled by grammatical morphemes that contrast, forming a closed system” (Smith, 1997, p. 5). The imperfective focuses part of a situation, including neither initial nor final endpoints (Smith, 1997). In Comrie’s words, the imperfective “looks at the situation from the inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation” (Comrie, 1976, p. 4). The perfective, on the other hand, refers to the totality of a situation including the beginning, middle, and end as a whole (Comrie, 1976; Smith, 1999). It “looks at the situation from the outside, without necessarily distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation” (Comrie, 1976, p. 4). Aspectual meaning of a situation is not only expressed by its viewpoint aspect, but also by situation (lexical) aspect. As Smith (1997) points out, aspectual meaning results from interaction between situation types and viewpoints. The interactions between situation types and viewpoints are an important temporal feature of narrative sequencing, as will be elaborated in Section 2.

Vietnamese, on the other hand, is a tenseless language. Vietnamese verbs are not inflected for tense and aspect. In sentences they are used in their base forms. In other words, there is no grammatical tense in Vietnamese. Most of the time, the interpretation of temporality is heavily dependent on the context and knowledge of the world, or in other words, on pragmatics (Aubaret, 1864; Bulteau, 1953; Cadière, 1958; Nguyễn, 1997; Trân, Bùi, & Phạm, 1940; Trương, 1883). Thompson (1965) states that “Vietnamese verbs are in themselves … timeless. They establish only the fact that a particular action, series of actions or state of affairs is in effect. They depend entirely on the linguistic and situational context for their reference to relative time” (Thompson, 1965, p. 218).

To illustrate the one-form-for-all time references and the importance of context for the interpretation of temporality in Vietnamese, let’s consider the following utterance.

1. Tôi đọc sách
   
   I read book

Depending on the context, this utterance could have the following interpretations.
1a. I am reading a book (books)
b. I read a book (books)
c. I have read a book (books)
d. I was reading a book (books)
e. I read (past tense) a book (books)
f. I will read a book (books)
g. I will be reading a book (books)

Where there is a danger of ambiguity, Vietnamese uses time markers, temporal and aspectual adverbials as an important device for the explicit and specific expression of temporality. See example 2 below.

2. Trước đây tôi sống ở Hà Nội

In the past I live in Hanoi

I lived in Hanoi in the past

In (2), the adverbial ‘trước đây’ locates the situation of “living” in the past and makes explicit that “I” no longer lives in Hanoi at the present moment. Without the adverbial the utterance is ambiguous as to the time it refers to.

2. Temporality in narrative

The functions of tense and aspect in narrative discourse are very different from those in ordinary language. As Fleischman (1990, p. 3) puts it, “[i]t has often been observed that tense usage in narrative is anomalous with respect to a language’s normal use of tenses – that the relationships between time and tense in narrative are not the same as those obtaining in ordinary language”. Due to the nature of narrative as referring to “specific experiences that occurred in some past world (real or imagined)” (Fleischman, 1990, p. 263), the traditional tense in narrative is past tense, which receives the value of presentness and is often referred to as “fictional present”.

A key feature of narrative is that it presents events in a chronological order, or in de Swart’s (de Swart, 2007, p. 13) words, it “involves putting a sequence of events in a temporal
order”. Labov and Waletzky (1966, p. 22) see the strict temporal sequence as “the defining characteristic of narrative”. Comrie (1985) shares a similar view when he defines narrative as “an account of a sequence of chronologically ordered events (real or imaginary), and for a narrative to be well formed it must be possible to work out the chronological order of events from the structure of the narrative with minimal difficulty” (Comrie, 1985, p. 28).

The sequencing of events is referred to by Dry (1981) as the timeline of a narrative. All the events, or to use a more neutral term, situations, that are on the timeline move narrative time forward. These situations are expressed by the perfective aspect. As Smith (1999) observes, sequential interpretation of a narrative is conveyed by perfective event sentences and also temporal adverbials, the later being used much less frequently. The perfective event sentences are thus normally known as foreground sentences. They form “the backbone of narrative” (Linhares-Dias, 2006, p. 70). The situations that are not on the timeline do not propel narrative time, but rather elaborate, explain, or provide further information for the situations that are on the timeline. They are referred to as background sentences and are expressed by the imperfective aspect.

However, the movement of narrative time is not only indicated by viewpoint aspect, but also by situation types. Of the four situation types proposed by Vendler (1967), Accomplishment and Achievement sentences with the perfective viewpoint aspect always propel narrative time (Dry, 1981, 1983; Smith, 1999), since they have an intrinsic natural endpoint. State and Activity sentences, due to their durative, atelic (having no limit or natural endpoint) nature, do not normally advance narrative time. But it is not always the case. According to Dry, “Activity and Stative sentences may move time if it is clear from the context that the situation represented in the sentence is the outcome of a change of state” (Dry, 1983, p. 23). Smith (1999) also argues that perfective Activity sentences can contribute to advancement of narrative time when they present discrete units of the situation or implicitly bounded segments.

The following section presents the findings of the data analysis of 18 passages of the English novel “The Old Man and the Sea”, by Hemingway, and its Vietnamese translation version.
3. Data analysis and findings

3.1. Data corpus

The data consists of one conversation comprising of 68 finite clauses and 17 selected passages of narration taken from the English novel “The Old Man and the Sea”. The reason for the division of the text into conversation and narration is because tense and aspect behave differently across genres, as stated earlier. In conversations (between the characters in this case), tense and aspect have the same function as in ordinary language, i.e. we understand that they relate to the then-speech-time, while in narration their functions have distinct features as shown above.

3.2. Findings

3.2.1. Translation of temporality in conversations

The whole novel consists of only a few conversations. The selected one is the longest, and takes place between the two main characters, the old man and the boy. It comprises 68 utterances, each being classified, for the purpose of the analysis, as a clause with a finite verb, excluding clauses with modal verbs (even though modal verbs can have temporal inferences, they are not of concern in this paper). The tenses used in this context are deictic and have the narrative time as the time of speech, which is taken to be the present time. The verbs that are used in this conversation appear in eight different forms: present simple, present progressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive, past simple, past progressive, future simple, and “going to” future. Their distributions and the Vietnamese translation instances, where explicit linguistic devices (temporal and aspectual markers) are used to convey their temporal meanings, are presented in Table 1.
### Table 1: Frequency of original verb forms and their translation correspondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English original</th>
<th>Vietnamese translation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verb forms and time adverbials</strong></td>
<td><strong>Time markers and adverbials</strong></td>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>vẫn còn (still)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sẽ (future time marker)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present progressive</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present perfect</td>
<td>đã…hôm nay (past time marker…today)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present perfect progressive</td>
<td>đã…mãi (past time marker…forever)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>đã (past time marker)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>đã…rồi (past…already)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hôm…hay (in the past…often)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hay (often)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past progressive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future simple</td>
<td>sẽ (future time marker)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“going to” future</td>
<td>bây giờ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the old days</td>
<td>hôm xưa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequently</td>
<td>luôn luôn</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the morning</td>
<td>mai; sáng mai</td>
<td>1; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>today</td>
<td>hôm nay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>hay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table, the original makes extensive use of the verb forms to indicate temporal information. The translation, on the other hand, contains only a few time markers. For instance, in the original, the present simple tense and the past simple tense appear 42 times and 28 times, respectively, compared to just two present time markers and four past time markers, respectively, in the translation. Moreover, the Vietnamese past time marker ‘đã’, itself or combined with another lexical item, is used to translate different tenses in the original, the present perfect, the present perfect progressive, the past simple, and the past progressive. Or the Vietnamese future time marker ‘sẽ’ is utilized to convey the meaning of both the English present simple tense and the future simple tense. All the temporal adverbials that appear in the original are translated into their equivalent adverbials in Vietnamese.

The results of the analysis are presented according to three patterns that were found in the translation: direct translation or addition of temporal adverbials in the situations where no
temporal adverbials are present in the original, the use of Vietnamese time markers, and non-use of time indication in the translation.

3.2.1.1. Direct translation or addition of temporal adverbials in translation

In all the situations where temporal adverbials are present in the original, the direct translation of the adverbials successfully conveys the meaning represented by the verb constellations (the verbs and their arguments) and the temporal adverbials, even though in the original the adverbials only serve to specify the time of the situation. The target language temporal adverbials function to locate the situations in time as well as give the exact time of the situations. See 5 below, plain font for the original, italic for the translation, and bold for back gloss translation.

5. “He used to come to the terrace sometimes too in the older days” (p 16)

“Hồi xưa hắn cũng hay đến chơi ở Quán” (p 21)

In the old days he also often come play in terrace

It can be seen that without the adverbial ‘in the old days’ the original sentence still makes explicit reference to the past, whereas the Vietnamese sentence would be more likely to have present meaning without the adverbial ‘hồi xưa’. The Vietnamese adverbial of frequency ‘hay’ (‘often’) conveys the habitual meaning expressed by ‘used to’ in the original. Without ‘hay’, the situation would not trigger an habitual interpretation in the translation. It should be noted that the adverbial ‘hay’ is not the direct translation of the original adverb of frequency ‘sometimes’.

This point is supported by the use of ‘hay’, along with another time locating adverbial ‘hồi’ (‘in the past, in the old days’), to convey the meaning of ‘used to’ in the original in another situation, presented in 6 below.

6. “Do you remember when he used to come to the Terrace?” (p 16)

“Cháu có nhớ hồi gần hay đến chơi ở Quán?” (20)

You remember in the past he often come play in terrace?
Here, again, the addition of ‘hoi’ locates the situation of ‘coming’ in the past, whereas the addition of ‘hay’ indicates the repetition of the event. Together they effectively convey the past habitual meaning of the situation indicated by ‘used to’ in the original. Without ‘hoi’ the situation would have the present habitual meaning, while without ‘hay’ the past perfective meaning.

There are three more situations where the additions of temporal adverbials in the translation convey the meanings that are exclusively indicated by the tense and aspect in the original.

7. “The great Dimaggio is himself again” (p 15)

“The great Dimaggio still shape old” (p 20)

8. “I’ve been asking you to” (p 15)

“I past [time marker] invite you long time”

9. “Has he done this for us more than once?” (p 14)

“Past have time which he give us like today [question particle]?”

In (7) the addition of the adverbial ‘van con’ (‘still’) gives the utterance the present meaning, while in (8) the adverbial ‘mai’ (‘forever’) indicates the imperfective aspect. Without ‘mai’, this situation would have a past interpretation, indicated by the past time marker ‘da’. The translator’s tactic combination of the past time marker ‘da’ and the adverbial ‘mai’ proves an effective tool to convey the meaning of the present perfect progressive, which is not available in Vietnamese. Similarly, the combination of ‘da’ and the adverbial ‘hom nay’ (‘today’) in (9) allows for the interpretation of the experiential meaning of the present perfect in the original, which is also not available in Vietnamese.

3.2.1.2. Use of Vietnamese time markers

As seen from Table 1, very few time markers are used to translate the verb tenses and aspects in the original. The past time marker ‘da’ is exploited only twice to convey the past
time meaning expressed by the past simple form in the original. The future meanings conveyed by the future simple tense are mostly translated by the Vietnamese future time marker ‘sẽ’. Three of the seven situations in the simple future tense are translated as such. The use of the time markers in all the above situations effectively conveys the meanings as expressed by the verb forms in the original.

The future time marker ‘sẽ’ is also used to translate the English present simple tense in one situation, as shown in 10.

10. “… I take back the bottles” (p 15)

“... chaị cháu sẽ đem trả lại” (p 19)

… bottle I [future time marker] take back

This situation takes place when a main character (the boy) mentions the bottles of beer the owner of a bar sent to the old man and his (the boy’s) intention to return the bottles to the owner. In the original, the situation is presented in the simple present tense with an habitual meaning. This suggests that the act of taking the beer bottles back to the bar is repetitive. The future time marker ‘sẽ’ in the translation indicates only that the situation has not happened and will take place in the future.

3.2.1.3. Non-use of time indication

Most of the original situations are expressed in the translation by the basic forms of the Vietnamese verbs with no time markers or any other lexical items to indicate the time of the situations. Some of them, mostly those represented by State verb constellations in the present simple tense in the original, can trigger similar interpretations in the translation using our world knowledge and the contextual information available in the text. See, for example, 11.

11. “He’s very thoughtful for us” (p 14)

“Hắn ta tốt bụng đấy chứ” (p 19)

He kind [final particle]
This situation is uttered after the utterance presented in (9) above, which has reference to the speech time (present). As shown above, the translation conveys this reference. Thus, even with no time indication in the translation, our world knowledge tells us that the situation in (11) holds at the present time (narrative time in this case). There are 20 clauses with Stative verbs in the present simple tense which receive the present time interpretation in the translation based on our knowledge of the world.

Similarly, one original situation with an Accomplishment and another with an Achievement in the past simple tense obtain the interpretation of past time reference with the help of context and world knowledge.

12a. “Who gave this to you?” (p 14) (Achievement)

“Ai cho thế?” (p 19)

Who give [question particle]?

12b. “He sent two beers” (p 14) (Accomplishment)

“Ông ta còn gửi cho cả hai chai bia nữa” (p 19)

He also send for also two bottle beer more

In (12a) ‘this’ refers to the foods the boy has brought to the old man. Our world knowledge tells us that the giving took place in the past relative to the speech time. The sending of the beer in (12b) coincides with the foods the bar owner gave to the boy. Accordingly, the translation can be inferred as referring to past situations even though no time indication is available.

However, world knowledge does not account for all situations to allow for the same interpretations as expressed by the verb forms in the original text. With no time indication in the translation, many situations are either ambiguous or trigger different temporal interpretations than those indicated in the original text, especially when there is a shift of tenses in sentences in an immediate context or in the same sentence. Some are exemplified below.

13a. “I have” (old man’s reply to the boy’s remark ‘You can’t fish and not eat’) (p 14)
13b. “There was nothing ever like them. He hits the longest ball I have ever seen” (p 16)

13c. “They say his father was a fisherman. Maybe he was as poor as we are” (p 16)

13d. “When I was your age I was before the mast on a square-rigged ship that ran to Africa and I have seen lions on the beaches in the evening” (p 16)

In the original (13a) has the experiential meaning expressed by the present perfect tense, which indicates that the old man has experienced fishing without eating. The translation does not explicitly convey that the old man has done so, but just stating that he can do it1. (13b), (13c), and (13d) each contains clauses in different tenses. The first clause of (13b) has a temporal relation with an earlier situation which has past time reference. In this clause ‘them’ refers to baseball drives performed in the old park (in the past) by the player referred to as ‘he’ in the second clause. The shift to the present simple tense in the second clause indicates the sudden shift of the topic. Here the boy (utterer) no longer talks about those

1 Dr Marie-Eve Ritz pointed out to me that the meaning of ‘can’ contains an experiential inference, i.e. when someone says that he can do something, he may have an evidence for the claim. The evidence may be that he has been able to do it before. Following that, the translation may have an inference that the man may have gone fishing without eating. In this case the meaning in the translation is inferential, whereas the original situation has a referential meaning.
baseball drives in the old park, but comments on the talent of the player, which still holds at the time of speech. The present tense in this clause has the present habitual meaning. In the translation both situations are understood to take place at the same time as the earlier situation that has a past time meaning.

Similarly, the shift from the past simple tense to the present perfect in (13d) is not conveyed in the translation. Unlike the shift in (13b), the shift in (13d) is a stylistic one. This situation is uttered by the man. He is telling the boy his past experience that took place when he was the boy’s age, which is a long time ago. It is obvious that ‘seeing the lions’ occurs at the same time as being on the ship and running to Africa, which all take places in the past. Accordingly, the situation of ‘seeing the lions’ could have been presented in the past simple tense, which would make the experience a remote one. The present perfect gives the situation a more recent experiential meaning and makes it appear more vivid. This implies that the seeing of the lions is a very exciting experience which has a long lasting effect on the old man’s memory or he may just want to make the experience appear more thrilling for the boy. In the translation this situation is presented as an iterative past event with the adverb of frequency ‘chiếu chiều’ (‘every evening’).

On the other hand, the two original situations in the past simple tense in (13c) is inferred as taking place at the same time in the translation as the situation presented in the present simple tense. The original presents ‘his father being a fisherman’ and ‘he being poor’ as past situations that do not hold at the speech time, while ‘we being poor’ as a present situation which still holds at the time of speech. It is conveyed explicitly that the ‘father’ and ‘he’ at the speech time are no longer poor. The translation gives an indication that the status of ‘being poor’ of all the characters mentioned in (13c) still hold at the speech time.

In summary, most of the original situations are conveyed in the translation in the basic verb forms with no time indication. In some cases the contextual information and world knowledge lead to the interpretation of the meanings as indicated by the verb forms in the original. Where contextual information is not available, the translated situations, which contain no lexical items expressing temporal inferences, may be either ambiguous or misleading. On the other hand, the addition of time adverbials in situations where the
adverbials are not present in the original effectively conveys the meanings as represented by the original verb forms. Similarly, the use of Vietnamese time markers, in most of the situations where they are exploited, allows for the interpretations as are intended by the temporal and aspectual morphological marking of the verbs in the original.

### 3.2.2. Translation of temporality in narration

As stated in Section 2, the main characteristic of narrative is that it presents events in a temporal order. It does not mean, however, that narrative contains only foreground information, i.e. information that moves narrative time forward. It also consists of background information which describes or elaborates the events on the timeline. In English narrative texts foregrounding information is normally expressed by the perfective aspect of Accomplishments and Achievements and certain temporal adverbials, connectives, or clauses. Activities with the perfective aspect can also move narrative time if they are temporally abounded. Background information is indicated by the imperfective aspect. In Vietnamese texts, on the other hand, the distinction between foreground and background is not marked, since the verbs are not morphologically marked for viewpoint aspects. The interpretation of time movement can only obtain by the use of certain temporal adverbials and by pragmatic knowledge. However, as Dry (1983) puts it, “pragmatic knowledge alone does not account for the sequencing [of events]” (Dry, 1983, p. 44). The analysis of the translation of 17 passages of the English novel ‘The Old Man and the Sea’ shows that many situations in the translation are highly ambiguous. It is not easy to work out the chronological order of events from the structure of the narrative in the translation version.

The seventeen paragraphs selected for the analysis consists of 198 clauses, 93 of which present sequenced events, i.e. foreground events. The others are background. The translation comprises of 19 paragraphs with 179 clauses. Only 28 clauses are explicitly presented as foreground, i.e. the foregrounding is indicated explicitly by temporal adverbials such as ‘trước khi’ (‘before’), ‘bây giờ’ (‘now’), ‘đã xế chiều’ (‘in the evening’), ‘đến đúng trưa’ (‘right at noon’), ‘tảng sáng’ (‘early in the morning’), ‘sau cùng’ (‘finally or at last’), ‘rồi’ (‘then’), ‘sau dó’ (‘after that’), ‘bỗng dưng (chốc)’ (‘suddenly, all of a
sudden’), ‘bắt ngò’ (‘suddenly, all of a sudden’); inceptive verbs such as ‘bắt đầu’ (‘begin’); aspectual marker such as ‘xong’ (‘finish, complete’); or temporal clauses such as ‘đêm tới’ (‘when the night falls’), ‘sau khi mặt trời lặn’ (‘when the sun comes down’), and ‘tối đến’ (‘when it gets dark’). Some other clauses can trigger the interpretation of temporal movement based on world knowledge about the natural order of events or the rhetorical relations between the sentences. Many situations can have either foreground or background reading. Section 3.2.2.1 below presents the findings on the translation of background information, followed by the section on the translation of foreground information.

3.2.2.1. Translation of background information

In the original, background information is extensively expressed by the imperfective aspect, i.e. the ‘v-ing’ of Events or the past simple form of States, leaving little room for pragmatic knowledge. In the translation, however, the interpretation of background information is heavily reliant on world knowledge and rhetorical structure expressing simultaneity and temporal inclusion. In general, when background information in the original is indicated by simultaneity or temporal inclusion by the rhetorical relation of Elaboration, it is conveyed in the translation. Examples 14 and 15 illustrate this.

14. **Original**: “(a) He also drank a cup of shark liver oil each day from the big drum in the shack (b) where many of the fishermen kept their gear. (c) It was there for the fishermen (d) who wanted it. (e) Most fishermen hated the taste. (f) But it was no worse than getting up the hours (g) that they rose and (h) it was good for the eyes” (p 30)

**Translation**: “(a) Ngày nào ông cũng uống một lít gan cá mập. (b) Ở trong chỗ chứa đồ nghề của dân chài, lúc nào cũng có sẵn một thùng đầy. (c) Dầu đó bán chữa tự do dùng, (d) nhưng họ bảo rằng mùi nó ghê tòm quá. (e) Thủ hiệu uống dầu đó có khó khăn hơn phải trả đẩy thật sớm như họ không? (f) Hon nữa, dầu đó là một vị thuốc thanh hiếu chữa cảm và cúm.(g) Uống dầu đó cũng sáng mắt nữa” (p 32)

**Back gloss translation**: (a) Each day he also drink one glass oil liver shark. (b) In shack [that] contain gear of fisherman, always have available one drum full. (c) Oil that fisherman free use, (d) but they say that taste of it awful very. (e) Question drink oil
that difficult more than have to get up very early like they [question particle]? (f) Moreover, oil that be one medicine magic treat cold and flu. (g) Drink oil that brighten eye also.

15. Original: “(a) He was happy (b) feeling the gentle pulling and (c) then he felt something hard and unbelievably heavy. (d) It was the weight of the fish and (e) he let the slip down, down, down, (f) unrolling off the first of the two reserve coils. (g) As it went down, (h) slipping lightly through the old man’s fingers, (i) he still would feel the great weight, (j) though the pressure of his thumb and finger were almost imperceptible” (p 35)

Translation: “(a) Sợi dây động nhẹ nhàng,(b) ông lão vui sướng quá.(c) Rồi bỗng dưng nghe thấy một cái gì đó thật cứng, vô cùng là nặng: (d) con cá deo tất cả sức nặng của nó vào sợi dây. (e) Ông lão thả cho sợi dây suột, suột, suột mãi,(f) một tay mở sẵn một trong hai sợi dây dự phòng. (g) Sợi dây kéo xuống mãi. (h) Sợi dây suột rất nhẹ giữa hai ngón tay ông lão; (i) hai ngón tay cầm sợi dây nhẹ như không, (j) thì mà vẫn nghe sức nặng vô cùng là nặng ở đầu dây bên kia” (p 36).

Back gloss translation: (a) Cord move gently, (b) old man happy very. (c) Then suddenly feel something very hard, extremely heavy: (d) [classifier] fish take all weight of it on cord. (e) Old man let cord down, down, down forever, (f) one hand open ready one of two coil reserve. (g) Cord pull down forever. (h) Cord go down very gently between two finger [of] old man; (i) two finger hold cord light as none, (j) yet still feel weight heavy, extremely heavy on other side.

(14) contains only background information. Note that ‘he drink a cup of shark liver oil’ is an Accomplishment, but the adverbial ‘each day’ makes the situation a derived Activity with an habitual meaning (see Smith, 1997 for the account of the principle of adverbial override). This situation is thus backgrounding. The other sentences give further information about this event and have the same temporal reference with it (14a). All of them, except for ‘they rose’, are States in the imperfective aspect. The situation ‘they rise’ is an Activity with an iterative meaning. The whole paragraph does not move the narrative time forward. The background interpretation in the translation obtains also through the temporal adverbial ‘ngày nào’ which is the direct translation of the original ‘each day’. Since the other sentences contain no new information, by default they are understood as
occurring at the same time as the situation indicated by the adverbial. Simultaneous situations do not advance the story time.

Similarly, (15d) and (15f)-(15j) are all background. (15d) is related to (15c) by the relation of Elaboration, a rhetorical relation in which “the second proposition provides more detail about the event described in the first” (Asher and Lascarides, 2003, p 8) and does not enable temporal (and thus narrative) progression. The situation in (15f), an Activity with the imperfective progressive aspect, is understood as being simultaneous with (15e). Likewise, (15h)-(15j) are co-temporal with (15g) which itself repeats the information presented in (15e), thus none of them moves the narrative time forward. The relation of Elaboration between (15d) and (15c) is obtainable in the translation by pragmatic knowledge. The simultaneity in occurrence of the other situations achieves by the repetition of the topic “sợi dây” (‘the cord’), which appears in each one of the seven situations (15d)-(15j) in the translation.

However, when background sentences represent situations as overlapping with the situations in the foreground sentences, in many cases, they receive a foreground reading in the translation, as exemplified in 16 and 17 below.

16. **Original**: “(a) Just then he saw a man-of-war bird with his long black wings (b) circling in the sky ahead of him. (c) He made a quick drop, (d) slanting down on his back swept wings, and (e) then circled again” (p 26).

    **Translation**: “(a) Trước mặt ông lão một con hâp hai cánh dài và đen lượn vòng trên trời. (b) Bỗng chốc nó nghiêng hai cánh hình tam giác (c) rồi lao xuống, (d) rồi lại lượn vòng (p 29)”.

    **Back gloss translation**: (a) Before old man one [classifier] man-of-war bird [with] two wing long and black circling in sky. (b) Suddenly it slant two triangle wing (c) then drop down, (d) then again circle.

17. **Original**: “(a) With his prayers said, and (b) feeling much better, (c) but suffering exactly as much, and perhaps a little more, (d) he leaned against the wood of the bow, and (e) began, mechanically, to work the fingers of his left hand” (p 55)
Translation: “(a) Đọc kinh xong, (b) lão thấy khoan khoái hơn nhiều; (c) những chỗ đau của lão tuy vẩn y nguyên, không chừng còn đau dơn hơn trước. (d) Lão tự ngượng người vào mũi thuyết và (e) vận động máy ngón tay trái như cái máy” (p 53).

Back gloss translation: (a) Read prayers complete, (b) he feel much better; (c) [plural marker] pain of he however still same, maybe more painful than before. (d) He lean against wood [of] bow and (e) move [plural marker] finger left like machine.

(16d) is an interesting example of a background situation being presented as foreground in the translation. The original situation in (16d) temporally overlaps with the situation in (16c). The imperfectivity of the situation is explicitly expressed by the progressive aspect. In the translation (16d) (as (16b) in the translation) is explicitly presented as occurring before (16c) with the addition of the adverbial ‘bỗng chốc’ (‘suddenly’). Without the adverbial the translated situation would not trigger the perception of time movement. On the other hand, the foreground reading (17b) in the translation, which is clearly background in the original, is inferred by the relation of Result. The translation presents the ‘feel much better’ in (17b) as the result of finishing saying the prayers in (17a). The relation of Result presents events in the order they occur (Asher & Lascarides, 2003), and thus propels narrative time.

Also, when background is indicated by temporal inversion expressed by the past perfect tense in the original, the translation does not normally give the background interpretation as conveyed in the original. See examples 18 and 19 below.

18. Original: “(a) …he had his baits out… (b) Each bait hung head down… (c) The boy had given him two fresh small tunas or albacores, (d) which hung on the two deepest lines…” (p 24)

Translation: “(a)…ông lão đã thả xong môi…(b) Mồi con đều thả cái đầu chực xuống… (c) Cậu bé cho ông lão hai con cá thu nhỏ thường gọi là cá bạch. (d) Ông lão buộc hai con mồi đó vào dây câu thả xuống sâu nhất…” (p 27)

Back gloss translation: (a) … old man [past time marker] drop complete bait… (b) Each one drop head down… (c) Boy give old man two [classifier] tuna also call albacore. (d) Old man tie two bait that on line drop deep most…
19. **Original:** “(a) He had pushed his straw hat down on his head (b) before he hooked the fish and (c) it was cutting his forehead.” (p 37)

**Translation:** “(a) Khi ông lão giắt con cá mắc câu xong, (b) ông lão lật chiếc mũ cói ra phía sau gáy, (c) vành mũ cứa vào trán.” (38)

**Back gloss translation:** (a) When old man hook [classifier] fish complete, (b) old man push hat straw back head, (c) trim hat cut forehead.

In the original, (18c) presents a State in the imperfective aspect and is temporally anaphoric to (18a), (18b), and (18d). According to Dry (1983, p. 34), “anaphoric reference to situations will not move time”. (18c) is thus a background sentence. However, the translation triggers the interpretation that (18c) is sequenced to (18b). There is no information in the translation to allow for the interpretation of anaphoric temporal reference of (18c) to the other situations. Thus, in the translation, (18c) triggers a perception of time movement. Also, the translation presents (18d) is sequenced to (18c) (with no information to the contrary, our world knowledge tells us that the giving of the bait takes place before the bait is tied to the string), and thus (18d) propels time too.

Similarly, the anaphoric reference of (19a) to (19b) and (19c) is not conveyed in the translation. Note that (19b) is given information (the event of the fish being hooked is presented earlier in the text) and serves as the reference point for (19a). Both (19a) and (19b) have anaphoric temporal reference to (19c), thus neither of them moves time. Neither does (19c), as it presents the situation with the schemata of an Activity in the progressive aspect. Again, the translation presents the three situations in a chronological order; i.e. the old man hooked the fish, then pushed his hat down, the consequence of which was the cutting on his forehead.

3.2.2.2. Translation of foreground information

3.2.2.2.1. Explicit expression of time movement by the use of temporal adverbials, temporal connectives, or temporal clauses

When time movement is expressed not only by viewpoint aspects and situation aspects but also by temporal adverbials, temporal connectives, or temporal clauses, the direct...
The translation of the adverbials or connectives allows for the interpretation of time movement in the translation. Similar effect is achieved by the addition of temporal adverbials or connectives in the translation. See 20 and 21 below. Italics indicate foreground clauses. The foregrounding of the clauses in the translation is explicitly presented by means of temporal connectives or verbs and adverbials semantically expressing time going by.

20. **Original:** “(a) Just then the stern line came taut under his foot,…, (b) and he dropped his oars and (c) felt the weight of the small tuna’s shivering pull (d) as he held the line firm and (e) commenced to haul it in. (f) The shivering increased (g) as he pulled in and (h) he could see the blue back of the fish in the water and the gold of his sides (i) before he swung him over the side and into the boat” (p 31)

**Translation:** “(a) Cùng lúc đó sợi dây cầu phía sau mũi bỗ ngã tháng ông lão, … (b) Ông lão buông chèo, (c) vớí lấy sợi dây và (d) bất đầu kéo. (e) Ông lão nắm chặt dây bên kia một con cá thu nhỏ dưới dương quả, (f) Ông lão càng kéo lên, (g) nó càng quẫy mạnh. (h) Sau cùng ông lão trông thấy cái lưng xanh và hai cánh ông ánh của con cá. (i) Ông lão nhấc bờ con cá lên (j) rồi liệng xuống sàn thuyền” (p 33)

**Back gloss translation:** (a) Just then line at the back [of] boat pull foot [of] old man, … (b) Old man drop oar, (c) hold line and (d) begin pull. (e) On other side [of] line one [classifier] tuna small shivering hard. (f) Old man as pull, (g) it as shiver hard. (h) Finally old man see back blue and two sides gold of [classifier] fish. (i) Old man lift [classifier] fish up (j) then swung into floor boat.

21. **Original:** “(a) Some time before daylight something took one of the baits (b) that were behind him. (c) He heard the stick break and (d) the line begin to rush over the gunwale of the skiff. (e) In the darkness he loosened his sheath knife and (f) taking all the strain of the fish on his left shoulder (g) he leaned back and (h) cut the line against the wood of the gunwale. (i) Then he cut the other line closest to him…” (p 42)

**Translation:** “(a) Targas, có vật gì rịa con mồi phía sau lão, (b) cái cọc màu lực gây đối và (c) sợi dây bất đầu kéo dài. (d) Trong bóng tối, ông lão chuyển hết sức để nâng của con cá sang vai trái (e) rồi cùi xuống, (f) lấy con dao trong vòng ra và (g) chất
đút sợi dây câu trên mạn thuy. (h) Ông lão chặt nốt sợi dây kia, sợi dây ở ngay gần lão” (p 42)

Back gloss translation: (a) Early morning, something take [classifier] bait behind he, (b) [classifier] stick blue break by half and (c) line begin pull long. (d) In darkness, old man shift all weight heavy [of] [classifier] fish to shoulder left (e) then bend down, (f) grab [classifier] knife in cover out and (g) cut line on wood [of] boat. (h) Old man cut also line other, line close most to him.

Excluding, at this point, all the other clauses that may also move time, it can be seen that (20a, e, i) and (21a, d, h) in the original are foreground clauses explicitly expressed not only by viewpoint aspects and situation aspects but also by temporal adverbials such as ‘then’, ‘just then’, and ‘before’ or inceptive verbs such as ‘commence’ and ‘begin’. According to Dry (1983) ‘before’ “always refers to a boundary point [initial point] of a situation” (p 40), and thus always propels the story time. Likewise, inceptive verbs indicate the beginning of an event, and accordingly, they also always advance narrative time (Dry 1983, Smith 1997). The direct translation of the inceptive verbs (20e and 21d) and temporal adverbs (20a and 21a) in the original triggers similar interpretations of time movement in the translation.

The translator also exploits temporal adverbials to convey the foreground meaning of two more situations (20h and 21g) where temporal adverbials are not present in the original. Original situation (20h) is made foregrounded by the ‘before-clause’ in (20i). As Heinamakki (1974) points out, ‘before’ sequences the point it refers to with a point in the main clause. Sequenced points, according to Dry (1983), move narrative time. In the translation, the addition of the temporal adverbial ‘sau cùng’ (finally, at last) gives the sentence a foreground reading. Without this adverbial, the sentence would be interpreted as background. Interestingly enough, the original adverbial ‘before’ is not translated. Instead, the ‘before-clause’ is presented as two clauses in the translation, with the ‘and into the boat’ being translated as a clause foregrounded by the addition of the adverbial ‘rôi’ (‘then’). The overall achievement, after all, is that the original (20g) receives a foreground interpretation as it does in the original.
Since Vietnamese does not mark viewpoint aspects morphologically, it might then be expected that Vietnamese translators would extensively exploit temporal adverbials or connectives, or verbs expressing time going by to indicate time movement. However, as stated earlier, only 28 out of 93 foreground clauses are translated with those devices. Not all of them are additions. Many are, in fact, direct translation of the original.

3.2.2.2.2. Translation of time movement without the use of temporal adverbials, temporal connectives, or temporal clauses

Without the presence of temporal adverbials, temporal connectives, or verbs semantically expressing time going by, many situations in the translation are highly ambiguous. World knowledge about the natural order of events can lead readers to interpret some situations as foreground. For example, (20b and 21f, g, and h) above, even though in the translation they do not contain any linguistic devices that express time passing, still receive a foreground reading. Our world knowledge tells us that the act of the \"man drop oar\" in (20b) (Vietnamese does not mark plurality) results from his reaction to the pulling of the line in (20a). Thus, the rhetorical relation between (20b) and (20a) is Result. Similarly, pragmatic knowledge helps to determine that the event of taking the knife in (21f) (in the translation version) takes place before the event of cutting the line in (21g). Also, since it is unlikely that the man can cut both lines at the same time, it can be inferred that the cutting of the other line in (21h) follows the cutting of the line in (21g). Thus, even without any linguistic devices that indicate time going by in the translation, these events still receive a sequential reading.

However, pragmatic knowledge alone cannot account for all situations that are presented as foreground in the original. Many original foreground situations are presented as background in the translation. (17) above, repeated here as 22, is an example. See also 23 below.

22. Original: “(a) With his prayers said, and (b) feeling much better, (c) but suffering exactly as much, and perhaps a little more, (d) he leaned against the wood of the bow, and (e) began, mechanically, to work the fingers of his left hand” (p 55)
Translation: “(a) Đọc kinh xong, (b) lão thấy khoan khoái hơn nhiều; (c) những chỗ đau của lão tuy vậy vẫn y nguyên, không chừng còn đau đơn hơn trước. (d) Lão tự ngự vị vào mũi thuyền và (e) vận động máy ngón tay trái như cái máy” (p 53).

Back gloss translation: (a) Read prayers complete, (b) he feel much better; (c) [plural marker] pain of he however still same, maybe more painful than before. (d) He lean against wood [of] bow and (e) move [plural marker] finger left like machine.

23. Original: “(a) It jumped again and again in the acrobatics of its fear and (b) he worked his way back to the stern and (c) crouching and (d) holding the big line with his right hand and arm, (e) he pulled the dolphin in with his left hand, (f) stepping on the gained line each time with his bare left foot” (p 61)

Translation: “(a) “Càng hoảng sợ nó càng vùng vẫy, nhào lộn. (b) Ông lão ngồi xổm (c) cố sức lết lại phía lái, (d) tay phải giữ sợi dây cầu lớn, (e) tay trái kéo con cá hông lên. (f) Mỗi khi kéo đoạn dây (g) lão lại lấy bàn chân lên trên” (p 58)

Back gloss translation: (a) The more [the fish] fear the more it plunge, jump. (b) Old man crouch (c) try to drag himself towards stern, (d) hand right hold line big, (e) hand left pull [classifier] dolphin up. (f) Each time [he] gain one section [of] line (g) he also step foot on [it].

In the original, (22e) is sequenced to (22d) which itself is sequenced to (22a), that is, after finishing saying the prayers, the old man leaned against the wood of the bow and then began to move his hands. All these three situations thus advance the narrative time. As discussed earlier, the translation presents (22b) (background in the original) as sequenced to (22a). Also, (22c-e) are all understood as occurring at the same time. It is interesting to notice here that the translator seems to choose to present (22d) and (22e) as being simultaneous by not translating the inceptive verb ‘begin’, which triggers the sequential interpretation of (22d) and (22e) in the original. Since it is possible to “lean against the wood of the bow” and “work the fingers” at the same time, without the inceptive verb ‘begin’, (22d) and (22e) would have a background reading in the original. The non-translation of the verb ‘begin’ gives the translated situations a background interpretation.
(23b) and (23e) are both Accomplishments in the perfective aspect. As stated in Section 2, according to Smith (1997) and Dry (1983), Accomplishment sentences in the perfective aspect always move narrative time. In the translation, all of the situations receive a background reading. Not only that, the translation does not present the situations in the order they are presented in the original. The original presents the event of the man working his way to the stern first, then the crouching and holding, which overlap with the pulling of the dolphin in. In the translation, on the other hand, the order in which the events appear in the text is: crouching, moving towards the stern, holding the line, and pulling the dolphin, all at the same time. The reversal of 23b (original) to 23c (translation) results in the event of the man working his way to the stern being interpreted as simultaneous with his crouching, that is, in the translation it is understood that the man was crouching and dragging himself towards the stern at the same time. Also, it is possible to hold the line with one hand and pull the dolphin in with the other hand, without the marking of viewpoint aspects on the verbs, the two situations are understood to take place at the same time. The background and foreground distinction in these situations is marked explicitly by viewpoint aspects (perfective (23e) versus imperfective (23f) in the original). This distinction cannot be grammatically marked in Vietnamese. However, temporal adverbials and connectives that can function to put events in order could have been exploited to sequence the events in such cases. It is unclear why such linguistic devices are not utilized very often or consistently in this translation.

In conclusion, overall, the interpretation of both background and foreground is heavily dependent on pragmatic knowledge since Vietnamese does not grammatically distinguish between perfective and imperfective viewpoint aspects. Not many TL linguistic devices are exploited to indicate the background or foreground information as grammatically and lexically presented in the original. For example, temporal connectives or lexical items expressing time going by can be used to indicate the movement of the narrative time, but they are very infrequently utilized in this translation. When pragmatic knowledge alone cannot trigger the interpretations as represented in the original, without the presence of other lexical devices that express temporal simultaneity or overlapping or temporal progression, many original background situations are presented as foreground in the
translation and, vice versa, many original foreground situations are presented as background in the translation.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I have presented the results of the data analysis on how temporal information is translated from English to Vietnamese. The analysis is conducted in two parts, conversation and narration. In conversation the functions of tense and aspect are similar to those in ordinary language, while in narration they behave differently.

The results have revealed that a majority of the original situations are conveyed in the base verb forms in Vietnamese with no linguistic devices to indicate the temporal information of the original situations. In some cases, contexts and world knowledge help to elicit the temporal interpretations as expressed by English tense and aspect. In many cases, however, without other linguistic devices that have temporal inferences, the Vietnamese translated situations are highly ambiguous, some conveying very different temporal meanings from the ones intended in the original.

When temporality of the situations in the original English text is specified by temporal adverbials, the translation of the original adverbials achieves the temporal interpretations as expressed by the verb forms and the adverbials in the original. In some cases, the translator utilizes the Vietnamese temporal adverbials and time markers in places where temporal adverbials are not present in the original. The addition of the target language temporal adverbials also helps to convey the temporal information of the original situations. This suggests that, given the lack of morphological marking of the verbs for tense and aspect in Vietnamese, exploitation of the time markers and temporal adverbials proves an effective strategy for translating English temporal and aspectual information. In this translation, however, the strategy is not practised often enough.

References:


Texts:
Observing language and language use in Kalgoorlie-Boulder

Jessica Boynton

Linguistics MA candidate
The University of Western Australia

jessica@linguistlist.org
Abstract

The city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder has become a settling place for Aboriginal Australians coming from Western Desert groups across the Goldfields region. This paper begins to describe the sociolinguistic environment of the area, in the context of the stolen generation era, the conditions in the various areas where current Aboriginal Kalgoorlie-Boulder residents have lived, and the current social climate of the area. It then attempts to describe the vitality of Aboriginal dialect(s) in the area based on a smattering of data collected during a two-month fieldtrip that was actually intended to result in a grammatical sketch.

The paper begins with a description of the Western Desert dialect mesh and linguistic practices during pre-contact times, then discusses post-contact resettlement (both coerced and voluntary). Structural aspects of traditional language are then presented, followed by a brief overview of current language data that present possible language change or shift.

* It's worth noting that some of what's written here doesn't necessarily reflect my current state of understanding, as this is a document I composed shortly after the postgraduate day in December 2007. Also, there's no introduction or conclusion because, well, it's the sort of socially awkward working paper that doesn't know where it should start or end.
1 Social history

1.1 Traditional

1.1.1 Western Desert dialect variation

The Western Desert dialect mesh is a continuum of interrelated dialects that have varying degrees of mutually intelligibility. The language is traditionally spoken in an area that covers one sixth of the landmass of Australia, from (roughly) Kalgoorlie-Boulder in the Southwest, to Fitzroy Crossing in the Northwest, to Halls Creek in the Northeast, to the Musgrave Ranges in the Southeast.

Bordering dialects are traditionally similar enough to engender easy communication; however, more distant dialects vary widely, having not only differing lexicons but differing core syntax as well. Peripheral dialects show influence from neighboring languages that, potentially, has brought about or strengthened these variations. For example, Northern dialects such as Wangkajunga, Yulparija, Kukatja and Manyjilyjarra exhibit morphological marking of core case on all constituents of a noun phrase, unlike southern varieties of the language such as Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara and Gugada, which mark core case only on the final constituent. This marking of all constituents is also found in Walmajarri, Nyangumarta and to some extent Jaru, three non Western Desert languages that are spoken on the northern border of Western Desert (Jones, 2002:313).

Linguistic influence from neighboring, and in some cases rather distant, language varieties abounds because contact between speakers of variant dialects and languages was very common in traditional times. Small family groups moved together frequently to various areas within a loosely-bounded territory, essentially travelling between scarce water sources for survival. These travelling groups would have frequently come into contact with each other, and even settled together for some periods when weather conditions were especially harsh and arid. Harsh conditions would have also required frequent foraging in areas outside a group's own country, necessitating further interaction with the traditional inhabitants of that country (Hansen 1984). Men especially went on long bushwalks alone, interacting with any groups along their path. Hansen notes, “All this travel meant that such people became very much aware of the linguistic differences of local groups and collections of local groups in many areas.” These interacting groups would have spoken anything from mutually intelligible dialects of Western Desert to distant dialects to completely separate languages.
When interacting with groups speaking different forms of language, accommodation was common, and individuals often learned numerous dialects during the course of their lives to ease communication between groups. This frequent accommodation, among other social and linguistic factors such as tabooing, contributes to the remarkably high rate of synonymy in Western Desert languages (Hansen 1984:8) that sometimes obfuscates degrees of language relatedness. Allen (2003) reports that each Western Desert dialect has a preferred term for an item and a wider array of known alternative terms (reported to average around four per language), with an array of 17 terms on average for a particular meaning across Western Desert in the sample of language spoken in Giles, Balgo, Christmas Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, La Grange, Jagalong and Wiluna provided by Hansen (1984).

At times, the Western Desert would have completely emptied out because low rainfall would have made the area uninhabitable (McConvell??), thus displacing Western Desert peoples into territories where distinct languages were spoken. Archeological evidence suggests that the last such upheaval occurred approximately 1,000 years ago, making the Western Desert language a relatively young one, marked by influence from neighboring languages.

### 1.1.2 Western Desert language and group names

Scattered throughout the Western Desert language territory are any number of named varieties of language that don't necessarily correlate to linguistically distinctive forms of language. Traditionally, the Western Desert peoples moved about in small bands, individuals within the group having affiliations with certain tracts of land based on such connections as birth-place, place of conception, place of initiation, origins of ancestors and burial-place of ancestors. In traditional Aboriginal cultures, there is also a particular language associated with a tract of land; it is seen as having been put there by the creators of the land (Schmidt?). Social and linguistic identity is strongly correlated to connections to the land and, consequently, the speech variety attributed to that land, rather than the actual linguistic forms used. Additionally, groups are referred to by multiple names largely based upon different words that are used in different speech varieties; the name used also depends upon the group identity of the person referring to a particular group (Hansen 1984:7). This phenomenon is further complicated by the generalisation of terms used for specific groups to tag much larger populations, as was often the case in later times when multiple groups resettled into mission areas (Hansen 1984:14). These complications make modern pursuits such as language naming and boundary drawing difficult to say the least.
As an example of the difficulty in language naming in the SWWD, it is unclear whether the terms Wangkatha and Wongie refer to a particular variety of SWWD, to SWWD as a whole, or even to WD as a whole; either term is commonly used to refer to any of these groups. Individuals are typically happy to supply distinctive definitions of both terms; however, these definitions vary by individual (and even by various utterances by the same individual), and terminological boundaries seem vague at best.

1.2 Post-contact

1.2.1 The stolen generation

Forced removal to Mount Margaret Mission put together speakers of a variety of dialects and languages in an environment where English was the only language permitted. As subject to the 1905 Act, all Aboriginal and mixed-descent children were essentially born wards of the State. Authorities could legally remove them from their parents without any formal inspection of their living conditions or treatment, Aboriginality being considered a sufficient offence on the part of the parents to warrant removal. So called 'full-blood' children were typically left to live in their Aboriginal families, while 'half-caste' children, who were almost invariably disregarded by their white fathers and raised by their Aboriginal mothers and oftentimes an Aboriginal father-figure, were removed to missions and care facilities. This fell under the reasoning at the time that Aboriginal peoples were heading towards an inevitable demise from which part-white children should be salvaged. It was generally assumed that Aboriginal culture across Australia would perish quite rapidly, with 'full-bloods' dying out and 'half-castes' being assimilated into white culture.

Those children who were taken were typically put into Mount Margaret Mission, which had the explicit intention of raising and educating them to be able to function in the majority white culture. The inhabitants of the Mission were permitted only limited contact with their Aboriginal parents, limited to occasional weekend or holiday visits. The Bringing Them Home report describes a practice wherein letters that were written to children from their parents were withheld in order to limit contact between the two groups; it is possible, though unreported, that this also occurred in Mount Margaret Mission. The children were forbidden to use their language in the Mission, permitted only to speak English. The children did, however, sometimes sneak language together, and interact with their parents in language during the limited visits allowed. The children were rarely actually provided with the education the Mission was meant to pass on to them, reporting to me that classes were rarely held and little practical instruction was given. Overall, care facilities of this sort did not provide education
to be successful by white standards, training the inhabitants for station or household work rather than white collar professions that white children may have aspired to. The children of the stolen generation were, therefore, essentially cut off from their traditions of Aboriginality, yet denied true access to white society.

Children were lumped together with little or no regard for their tribal affiliations or traditional speech variety; coming from homes where Tjupan, Warnmala, Ngadju, or various other dialects or languages were spoken, most came out speaking only Wangkatha, if any Aboriginal language. In the Mission, then, distinctive dialects were lost either to English or to Wangkatha, the most prominent dialect in the Mission, which may have become a koine in the process of absorbing diverse speakers. This reflects the three types of language loss cited in Schmidt (1991:9), which include traditional languages become replaced by English, another Aboriginal language, or a creole. Schmidt, in fact, identifies the dormitory system, like that in Mount Margaret Mission, as “a major factor contributing to the demise of numerous Aboriginal languages” (1991:12). It is worth noting that many comparatively permanent residents moved to the Mission by choice, and were also affected by the assimilationist policies there (Stanton 1980:119).

1.2.2 Voluntary settlement in urban areas

Settlement in urban areas, such as Kalgoorlie, has likewise thrown together speakers of various dialects and languages in an environment where English is the lingua franca. The population that is now centred in Kalgoorlie hails from diverse traditional areas, where distinct cultural practices and dialects were once practiced. English is by far the primary language spoken, and Wangkatha is the strongest Western Desert dialect of the area; older generations might identify with another language group, but often speak Wangkatha rather than their traditional language. Many of the older generations live in more settled areas (Kalgoorlie, Leonora) but spend a fair amount of time out bush. In many cases, their families (especially the youths) have dispersed over a wide area, and they spend a fair amount of energy travelling from one relative's area to another to spend time with their offspring. This presents a fairly obvious dilemma: living a more traditional lifestyle in the desert vs. being near urbanised family members. Truth is, living a truly traditional lifestyle is no longer an option when family members choose not to, regardless of whether there is adequate freedom of access to land and country.

The social climate in urban areas is often severely racist against people of Aboriginal descent. In my own experiences with a group of white Australians staying in Kalgoorlie, I have encountered
commentary such as, “Tasmania did it right by killing off all the coons”, “That culture deserves to die out - they didn't develop at all for thousands of years!”, “You're studying Aboriginal languages? Like, 'gimme a smoke, brodda'?”, and the mystifying, “Oh, Aboriginal languages are so primitive! I speak a few words, piece of cake!”.

The degree of racism varies by person and setting. Oftentimes, when I'd shared stories of my own experiences in Aboriginal populations, individuals would follow-up their previous comments with observations such as, “Well, I don't mind the ones who keep to themselves, it's just the ones who are drunk in the streets that should be shot”, or “The ones who follow tradition are a beautiful people, but the young ones just sniff petrol all day”. And some only had comments of this sort, with none so negative as those previously mentioned. This somewhat watered-down form divides the Aboriginal population into two or three groups - the romanticised, unseen and even saintly followers of ancient tradition; the worthless, troublesome, drug-seeking disturbers of the peace; and (for some) the commendable, agreeable successfully assimilated. Needless to say, none of these divisions are completely accurate, and individuals of any race or creed are too complex to rightly be stereotyped into any such limited feature-bundles.

I don't intend to assert a generalisation that all white Australians have overarching negative attitudes toward Aboriginal folk. There are also those who interact regularly with their Aboriginal neighbors and even participate in Aboriginal activities. Furthermore, many white Australians I encountered shared with me their positive experiences with Aboriginal people and cultures, and were fascinated to learn what I could share about the languages and cultures I'd studied. However, the overall climate (defined in large part by minority salient examples from either race) is characterised by tense social interactions. In fact, a number of my Aboriginal consultants told me that it helped my research immensely that I was American - not Australian - because, they reckoned, it put people at ease with me. At any rate, the social climate is in large part unsupportive of Aboriginality, including use of Aboriginal language.

2 (Change in) language structure and use

2.1 Traditional Western Desert language

Resources on various dialects of Western Desert are available (Bowe 1999; Burridge 1996; Davenport 1988; Eckert and Hudson 1988; Glass and Hacket 1970, 1979; Goddard 1985; Hansen and Hansen 1974, 1978; Jones 2002; Marsh 1976, 1992; Platt 1972 and Trudinger 1943). Works on SWWD are more limited: for Wangkatha, there are some basic language learners, word-lists, pedagogical
materials, ethnographic resources and lexicons/word-lists. There is virtually no documentation or description of other dialects in the area: a short word-list of Tjupan (reportedly in Brandenstein n.d.) as well as an ethnographic study (Liberman 1978).

Western Desert languages have no fricatives and lack voice distinction in plosives. Each of the five plosives is accompanied by a homorganic nasal. Western Desert generally has only three phonemic vowels: /i/, /u/, and /a/, many dialects having contrastive vowel length in the first syllable of the word, which receives primary stress (Dixon, 2002). The follow consonant chart is taken from Douglas (1998:xii):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labials</th>
<th>Dentals</th>
<th>Alveolars</th>
<th>Retroflexed</th>
<th>Velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>tj</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>rt</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>ny</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>ng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laterals</td>
<td>ly</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>rr</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-syllabic</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western Desert dialects tend to have a phonotactic constraint that requires each word to end in a vowel, with an epenthetic -pa/-ba supplied for words that would otherwise end in a consonant (Dixon, 2002). Southern dialects, however, employ this epenthesis less commonly than Northern dialects (Jones, 2002). In SWWD, epenthetic -pa/-ba seems non-obligatory and speakers identify it as an emphatic marker.

In Western Desert, word fall into two major categories: nominals and verbals, each of which is defined largely by the markings they take (Dixon, 2002; Goddard 1985; Jones, 2003). Nominals include proper nouns, common nouns, adjectives, temporal and spatial modifiers, demonstratives and pronouns, while verbals include simple verbs, co/preverbs, and adverbs. Other smaller parts of speech include particles, ideophones, interjections and conjunctions (Dixon, 2002).

Western Desert dialects use case markings to mark the argument structure of a clause, following an ergative-absolutive alignment system for most nominals. Some dialects follow ergative-absolutive alignment for all nominals (such as Wangkajunga in Jones, 2003), while some split to nominative-accusative alignment for some pronouns (such as Yankunytjatjara in Goddard 1985). SWWD appears 1

---

1 Goddard (1985) does not class time and space modifiers as nominals for Yankunytjatjara, but rather classifies them with the smaller parts of speech.
to condition similarly to the latter group. To refer to sentencial arguments, dialects either use overt bound pronouns (such as those marked on the bound pronominal clitic in Wangkajunga, as discussed in Jones 2003), or full pronouns (as in Yankunytjatjara, discussed in Goddard 1985), or some combination of the two. It is also common for the argument to be ellipted in some dialects, such as those spoken in the SWWD.

Western Desert dialects traditionally have non-configurational word-order, allowing constituents to be ordered according to discourse contraints rather than syntactic ones. Some dialects, such as Wangkajunga (Jones, 2003), allow discontinuous noun phrases and free word order within them. Others, such as Yankunytjatjara (Goddard, 1985), disallow discontinuous noun phrases and have strict word order within constituents. It is worth noting that Wangkajunga marks core case on all elements of a constituent, while Yankunytjatjara marks core case only on the final element, in what is likely a related variation.

2.2 Linguistic changes

Current forms of the SWWD dialects exhibit some level of simplification and crystallisation of some of the structures outlined in the basic description provided above. These changes are a result of internal or external influences that may or may not indicate language mixing, koineisation or language death.

2.2.1 Some discussion of language change

Koines are the result of intense contact between speakers of related dialects or languages who have no lingua franca. This contact eventually results in a stable language that is made up of contributions from related dialects or languages. In the SWWD, Wangkatha's current form may actually be a koine koine of the various dialects and languages that were spoken in Mount Margaret Mission and other areas of mass resettlement.

Mixed languages are the result of intense contact between speakers of two or more language groups where there is some level of multilingualism among at least one language group. Speakers in this language group eventually exhibit code-switching where either language is used in various settings and for various domains. If this code-switching stabilises into a linguistic form, that form is called a mixed language. In the SWWD, code-switching (especially between indigenous dialects and English) may stabilise into a mixed language. However, the amount of traditional language mixed in with
English language in common use is extremely limited.

The term 'language death' is used to describe a language that is used by a limited number of speakers in limited domains. A 'dead' language is typically considered a linguistic form that is no longer used by anyone in any domain. In the SWWD, some dialects that receive inadequate support are falling out of use and are at severe risk of extinction. Many structural characteristics offered to describe language death can also be used to describe language change in general, or are otherwise unhelpful in studying Western Desert dialects. For example, Romaine (1989:377) suggests that dying language do not show uniformity of word order. Because Western Desert is, like Australian languages in general, characterised by unusually free (non-configurational) word order, such a phenomenon can hardly be seen as an indicator of language death.

Campbell and Muntzel (1989:189) posit that dying languages show change toward the dominant language. However, Bavin (1989:267) argues that changes in Warlpiri due to contact with English do not mean it is a dying language. Andersen (1982:91) generalises that dying languages lose lexical, phonological, morphological and syntactic distinctions; but Maandi (1989:232) demonstrates that morphological case distinctions that are being lost in Estonian spoken in Sweden are also being lost in Estonian in Estonia, where it is unthreatened. Evidently, individual structural traits do not serve as reliable indicators of language decline. However, some researchers have associated rapid change with language decline, and a composite of changes that are associated with language death may increase the likelihood that a language is dying. Crystallisation might also demonstrate language decline, reflecting the affect of some language attitudes related to language attrition.

2.2.2 Language change in SWWD?

The alignment system is changing, both in terms of method of realisation and alignment type, from the confidently posited traditional form towards that found in English. The traditional alignment system would have been ergative-absolutive, potentially with a split to nominative-accusative in certain pronouns as found in Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1985). Syntax would have demonstrated non-configurational word order, and core case markings would have been present on all NPs, whether on final elements only (as in Yankunytjatjara, demonstrated in Goddard, 1985) or on every element of the constituent (as in Wangkajunga, demonstrated in Jones, 2003). However, current forms exhibit limited use of ergative-absolutive case markings.

(Nominative-accusative) word order tends to be more rigid than would be expected of the traditional
form, especially when case markings are left off. While traditional case markings are still recognised, they appear to be entirely optional for some speakers.

(1). minyma pungu purndu
   woman hit man
   'the woman hit the man'

(2). minyma-ngku pungu purndu
   woman-ERG hit man
   'the woman hit the man'

(3). minyma-ngku pungu purndu-na
   woman-ERG hit man-ABS
   'the woman hit the man'

(4). * pumdu pungu minyma-nkgu
    man hit woman-ERG
    'the woman hit the man'

(5). * pungu pumdu-na minyma-ngku
    hit man-ABS woman-ERG
    'the woman hit the man'

(6). * pungu minyma-ngku pumdu-na
    hit man-ERG woman-ABS
    'the woman hit the man'

Whether word order is rigid when case markings are present varies by speaker and/or named variety; however, this might also have to do with social constraints I have yet to identify.

When ergative-absolutive case markings are used and constituent order remains free, there is also a tendency to exhibit the recognized potential split to nominative-accusative with first and second person pronouns.
While Dixon (2002:509) identifies loss of case as a common change in Australian languages, he associates it with an increased use of bound pronominals, which are rarely used in Wangkatha, and with prefixing languages, which Western Desert is not. However, the loss of case may not be an indicator of language death. While rare in this particular region, loss of case morphology is a well-documented phenomenon in the world's languages that does not necessarily reflect any decline in the language's vitality.

Distinctions between peripheral cases are eroding. Peripheral case would have been rather robust in traditional forms of the language, with overlaps in meaning and distinctions between various forms of locative, likely including a perlocutionary sense. However, modern language does not frequently exhibit peripheral cases beyond genitive and locative.

While these cases are used very systematically, others seem to be either optional or with easily interchangeable meanings.

While other cases, such as allative and ablative, are identifiable, they don't appear to be used consistently, nor be recognised by all speakers. It seems that they are typically replaced with locative '-angka', regardless of nuanced meaning.

This loss of peripheral case exhibits Andersen's (1982:97) observation that a weakening language will “have fewer morphologically-marked categories”. However, this phenomenon alone is not adequate to consider SWWD as weakening.

3 Language use

Language use in general decreases dramatically as one speaks with younger and younger generations. The lexica of both Tjupan and Wangkatha in the SWWD seem to be falling out of use and failing to be transmitted intergenerationally. The older speakers have some active use of the language, some of them even regularly conversing in language. However, in many cases even the older community members are only language rememberers, not true speakers, and have forgotten many non-salient lexical forms. It is not uncommon for grandparents to mix in some language while addressing young children, who are otherwise typically raised speaking English only. This forgetfulness could be due to: lack of use of the language, as many do not speak language with their children and do not have a regular forum in which to speak with fellow elders; never having learned the language in full in the
first place, as is the case with some who were part of the stolen generation; or senility, as a few of my contacts show other signs of eroding memory, such as forgetting what was discussed in recent conversation.

Speakers in the middle age group sometimes have some knowledge of linguistic structures, and regularly use a handful of term or phrases, especially in conversation with relatives. These lexica are typically either very salient forms or terming personal parts or activities. This lack of language use seems to be due to a lack of language use in the home while growing up, commonly due to negative language attitudes there were adopted by one or more of their parents, or parents' unwillingness to 'confuse' their children's acquisition of English. In those cases where children were in fact brought up in homes where language is commonly spoken, they tend to have good command of language.

The younger generation, including individuals in my own age group, typically have little or no knowledge of the language structure, commanding only a handful of salient terms. This lack of language use clearly has to do with being raised in an environment that lacks steady and robust use of language, oftentimes because the parents did not know enough language to pass it down to their children. Schools may give some training in language but, constituting only a few hours of instruction per week, it is not a bilingual educational environment and cannot provide enough linguistic stimulus to support complete language learning. Furthermore, language use and learning is not supported in later years, so that which is learned in primary school is likely forgotten later in life. Children, therefore, are raised speaking English, adopting only this handful of terms, therefore passing, at most, only this handful down to their children. Without successful intergenerational language transmission, SWWD's future status is bleak at best.

English is utilised as a lingua franca in contact situations. It is my observation that, when speakers of distant dialects need to communicate, they use English rather than complex accommodation strategies that would have been necessary in traditional times. When speakers and non-speakers of language interact, English is used to ease communication and non-speakers are not expected to learn the language in order to communicate. This presents a situation where English is a necessary language for interaction, and traditional language is superfluous.
References


Berndt, Catherine and Ronald Berndt (eds). *Aborigines of the West: Their past and their present*. Perth: University of Western Australia Press.


