

## Finiteness and Pseudo-Affixation in Sri Lankan Malay

Sri Lankan Malay (SLM) is a radical contact language that has by all accounts undergone extensive typological change, however this is distributed unevenly across the grammar. Its major lexical categories appear to manifest an increase in morphological complexity, when compared with what we find in other Malay contact varieties, such as Ambonese Malay. This appearance of morphological complexity can be attributed to a certain degree of restructuring, due in part to the collective trilingualism of SLM speakers in Tamil (though diminishingly), Sinhala, and SLM itself. Under a syntactic account of morphological structure, however, the ostensible morphological complexification of SLM nouns and verbs remains rather limited. I will discuss the relatively conservative SLM verb and will show that the extent of new functional affixation is minimal, although string adjacency and PF processes create an impression of morphological complexity. The verb is subject to raising which is not driven by attraction by tense, aspect, modality, and negation, as in Tamil, but simply by a finiteness feature. The finiteness contrast is arguably the most radical morphosyntactic accretion to have developed in Malay in Sri Lanka.

In the matrix clause in (1) – curly braces demarcate the apparent complex verb – tense (past in this example) precedes the lexical verb, to which it is obligatorily adjacent, and aspect (completive in this example) *follows* the lexical verb, to which it is also obligatorily adjacent. (This adjacency itself, which is the basis for the apparent complex verb, is itself a contact linguistic innovation.)

- (1) Farida sɛ pɛ buk { so tulis abis }.  
 Farida 3S POSS book TNS write ASP  
 “Farida finished writing her book.”

If we assume the affixation of x-zero elements to follow from their cyclical left-adjunction to successive c-commanding heads, then the verb in (1), having raised to the left of aspect and apparently no further, has not been prefixed to the higher functional head hosting tense features, but is merely adjacent to it. Likewise in the tense-marked and nominalized embedded clause in (2), tense also immediately precedes the lexical verb.

- (2) [ Farida sɛ pɛ buk { so (\*abis) tulis nya } ] Karima { so suka }.  
 Farida 3S POSS book TNS ASP write ACC Karima TNS like  
 “Karima liked Farida writing her book (in the past).”

We might assume that the verb is left-adjoined to an aspectual head between the base position of the verb and the functional head hosting tense. We might assume then that aspect attracts the verb. However in the first clause in (3), which is a participial adjunct clause (not tense-marked and therefore not finite), the completive aspect marker *as* (= *abis* < *habis*) *precedes* the verb *pi*.

- (3) mæsigit naŋ { as pi }, Farida [ sɛ pɛ buk { mæ tulis naŋ } ] { so mulai }.  
 mosque to ASP go Farida 3S POSS book NONFIN write P TNS begin  
 “Having gone to the mosque, Farida began to write her book.”

The example in (3) shows us that the verb does not in fact raise *for* aspect, to which it initially adjoins, just as it does not raise *for* tense, to which it *never* adjoins. Since the verb *does raise* in finite contexts and not at all in non-finite contexts, I propose that verb movement within the inflectional domain is triggered by finiteness only. The finite verb adjoins to an intermediate FinP projection below tense. Modality and finite negation, which raise to check tense independent of the verb, are generated above FinP. Their competition for adjunction to the single functional head hosting tense features has placed a grammatical-pragmatic burden on SLM speakers. I will briefly discuss a solution to this, attributable to Sinhala-Malay bilingualism.

Ultimately, as in Ambonese Malay, functional material at the left edge of the SLM verb is not syntactically part of the verb itself. That is not the case in Tamil, whose verbs are subject to genuinely agglutinating word formation processes, nor in Sinhala, whose verbs feature less affixation than is found in Tamil, although still more than is found in SLM. (Sinhala verbs also display *ablaut* and other phonological alternations which we do not find in SLM at all.)

The left edge morphemes in SLM appear to be atomic (and limited to one per verb), however there is evidence that more than one feature can be simultaneously present in the relevant node, which I take to be T-zero. This is the only position in which overt tense contrasts can appear, as in (4).

- (4a) Farida sɛ pɛ buk { (n)anti tulis }. *anti* is in T  
 Farida 3S POSS book TNS write  
 "Farida will write her book."
- (4b) \* Farida sɛ pɛ buk { tulis nanti }. *nanti* is ungrammatically  
 Farida 3S POSS book write TNS  
 "Farida will write her book." extraposed

As in (5), we can interpret tense features as implicitly present, even when only negation is visible.

- (5) kəmarin Farida sɛ pɛ buk { tər tulis }. *tər* is in T  
 yesterday Farida 3S POSS book NEG write interpreted as [+PAST]  
 "Yesterday Farida did not write her book."

In (6), we find hard evidence for this in the form of a fused morpheme.

- (6) bəsok Farida sɛ pɛ buk { tuma tulis }. negation is adjoined to T  
 tomorrow Farida 3S POSS book NEG.TNS write  
 "Tomorrow Farida will not write her book."

Modals can never appear in verbal contexts in which tense is explicitly banned (7).

- (7) \* məsigit nang bolɛ pi, Farida sɛ pɛ buk { so tulis }.  
 mosque P MOD go Farida 3S POSS book TNS write  
 "Having gone to mosque, Farida wrote her book."

Negation assumes a different phonological shape in minus-tense contexts (8).

- (8) məsigit nang jan pi, Farida sɛ pɛ buk { tər tulis }.  
 mosque P NEG go Farida 3S POSS book NEG write  
 "Not having gone to mosque, Farida did not write her book."

These empirical facts justify the association of finite negation and modality with tense at spell-out, although I will claim that only tense is generated in T. Negation and modality, respectively, must adjoin to it. The functional features exemplified in (4) through (6) are generated in inflectional head positions to the left of Fin-zero, which is itself the position to which the verb itself raises (and no higher). While the SLM verb does raise for finiteness, a substantial innovation attributable to language contact, it adjoins to aspect only *in order to* raise to finiteness. This of course yields affixation. The functional material generated to the left of the verb, however, remains syntactically unassociated with it, as we find in antecedent Malay varieties spoken in Indonesia and Malaysia.