

## **“*Ajak* of all trades”: Problems with Categorizing Balinese *ajak* Across Discourse Genres\***

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### **0. Introduction**

Determining “lexical categories” has been an elusive enterprise in linguistic analysis. For example, one of these distinctions that are presumed to be applicable in most languages is that of “verbs” versus “nouns”. However, even this distinction is unclear in some cases, e.g. Tagalog and Nootka (Schachter 1985). In a similar vein, “verbs” are especially susceptible to forces that would drastically affect their “verbal” membership. For example, many studies have examined the grammaticization of verbs into prepositions (König and Kortmann 1991, Kortmann and König 1992, Xing 2003, *inter alia*). Other studies such as Hopper and Thompson 1984 address such issues by incorporating discourse-functional considerations into their analysis, with the underlying notion that lexical categories are primarily determined by discourse factors.

This perspective may be refined further if the following questions are addressed: a) how would the determination of lexical categories be affected by discourse genre?; and b) can this comparison provide additional insight into the diachronic development of such categories? Variability across discourse genres appears to characterize *ajak*, a morpheme in Balinese that is traditionally described as a verb of accompaniment. Balinese is an Austronesian language of the Sundic sub-branch spoken primarily on the Indonesian island of Bali.

In written Balinese, this study will show that *ajak* has three manifestations: as a morphosyntactic verb (with verbal morphology), as a preposition-like element in serial verb constructions, and as an incorporated element in quantifying expressions. In spoken discourse, *ajak* is more ambiguous in status: it occurs most frequently in its unaffixed form. The unaffixed form may point towards an advanced stage of grammaticization where *ajak* has developed into a preposition

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and an element within quantifying expressions that encode collectivity among a group of associated referents.

This study further shows that even though the examination of *ajak* across discourse genres illustrates some of the difficulties of determining its exact lexical category/categories synchronically, it provides a rather clear picture of a grammaticization process whereby *ajak* is in the process of losing many of its attested verbal characteristics.

## 1. Data and Methods

The discourse corpora used in this study represent both written and spoken genres of Balinese, as mentioned above. The written Balinese corpus is comprised of eight short stories (*satua bawak* in Balinese) from two edited volumes of modern Balinese literature (Bagus and Ginarsa (eds.) 1978, Jendra (ed.) 1977) and a novel (Manda 2001) that were written in the past fifty years. The spoken Balinese corpus is comprised of a number of short procedural texts, i.e. recipes and related texts, and a long narrative collected by the investigator during the summer of 2003 in Desa Bangah, Bali.<sup>1</sup>

Each corpus was examined for the occurrence of *ajak*, including tokens with any overt verbal morphology, e.g. the prefix *N-* and the suffix *-a*, which will be explained in further detail below. This resulted in 206 tokens for the written corpus. These tokens were then coded for accompanying elements such as following NPs, quantifiers, and preceding verbs. The quantitative findings below reflect only the written corpus. (The spoken corpus only has 25 tokens - not enough to draw any definite conclusions from this corpus, but may provide some further implications nonetheless.)<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The verbal nature of *ajak*

*Ajak*, as noted above, has been traditionally described as a Balinese “verb of accompaniment”. Barber (1977) provides the following definitions: *take with one, take along, invite to do sth with one* (153). This notion of accompaniment is clearly seen in examples (1)-(3) below:

- (1) yadiapin tiang tusing nu dini **ng-ajak** bapa.  
 although I(M) NEG still here N-AJAK father  
 ‘Although I was no longer there **with** Father.’ [WRITTEN: MATEGUL]

<sup>1</sup> Text titles and/or speakers (identified by pseudonyms) are enclosed by square brackets in the examples.

<sup>2</sup> A note on Balinese “speech styles” (after Errington 1988) since the language is perhaps best known for its usage of these socially conditioned styles: almost all the texts used in this study represent low speech styles since *ajak* is considered a low speech style form; the closest counterpart from the higher speech styles would be *sareng*. A future study on the behavior of *sareng* in discourse would be in order.

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- (2) Nah, ...jemak jaja-ne        **ajak**    biu-ne        Tu!  
 okay take    rice.cake-DEF AJAK banana-DEF NAME  
 ‘Okay, ...take the rice cake along with the bananas Tu!’ [WRITTEN: TOGOG]
- (3) ..campur ba to    **ajaka**    gula    to.  
 mix        2    that AJAK-3 sugar that  
 ‘Then you mix [it] along with the sugar.’ [SPOKEN: Bu LIS]

As illustrated above, the notion of accompaniment is the most salient characteristic of *ajak*.

Considering now the degree to which *ajak* is a bona fide verb across these genres, one needs to take into account the degree of co-occurrence between *ajak* and relevant verbal morphology in Balinese. The verbal morphology attested in the data comes in two forms. Firstly, *ajak* can occur with the homorganic nasal prefix *N-*, which has been traditionally described as an “active voice” or “nasal transitive” (Pastika 1999) prefix. I will refer to this as an “Agent Trigger” prefix, a more neutral term based on Cumming’s (1991) analysis of the Indonesian prefix *meN-*.<sup>3</sup> This prefix is illustrated in (4) and (5) below:

- (4) pedas    meme    mati **ng-ajak**    pianak,  
 obvious mother die    N-AJAK child  
 ‘It’s obvious that the mother died **with** her child.’ [WRITTEN: NGANTEN]
- (5) Sing ne kadong dawa    nyatua **ng-ajak** I        Ketut,  
 NEG this because long.time N-story N-AJAK TITLE NAME  
 ‘It’s not because he’s been telling stories **with** Ketut for awhile.’ [WRITTEN: IWANG]

Secondly, *ajak* can occur with the suffix *-a*, which has been traditionally described as a “passive voice” suffix or a third person agent clitic attached to a “zero transitive” form (Pastika 1999). Examples of this are shown in (6) and (7):

- (6) Wayan Tamba nyangkol        meme-n-ne        **ajak-a**    ka bale    dangin.  
 NAME NAME N-carry.in.forearms mother-LNK-3:POSS AJAK-3 to pavilion in.east  
 ‘Wayan Tamba carried his mother in his arms to the eastern pavilion.’  
 [WRITTEN: TOGOG]
- (7) ..bumbune to    **ajaka**,  
 spice-DEF that AJAK-3
- kene    ento dadi    ba        ento kuah ento ba,  
 like.this that become already that soup that already  
 ‘With the spices [mix it], like this it already becomes a soup.’ [SPOKEN: Bu LIS]

Tokens with verbal affixes co-occurring with *ajak* occur less frequently than tokens with no affixation, as seen in Table 1:

<sup>3</sup> In this case, the “trigger” of a clause would be an argument that functions as its “subject”; more crucially, the trigger argument serves as a shared argument in clause combinations.

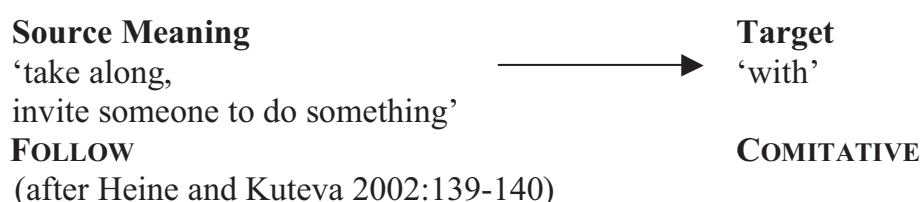
With <i>N-</i>	With <i>-a</i>	Neither	Total
30 (14.5%)	29 (14.1%)	147 (71.4%)	206 (100.0%)

**Table 1: Token frequencies of *ajak* co-occurring with vs. without verbal affixes.**

What does this mean at this point? For the most part, it means that *ajak* occurs most frequently in its unaffixed form, with only about 30% of the tokens having some sort of verbal affixation.<sup>4</sup> Does this necessarily mean that *ajak* can no longer be considered just a verb in Balinese? Although this question cannot be answered at this time, perhaps other functions associated with *ajak* can provide a clearer picture of its lexical status.

### 3. *Ajak* and prepositionhood?

Verbs of accompaniment cross-linguistically are highly susceptible to forces of grammaticization that can gradually lead to their reanalysis as prepositions, cf. Kortmann and König 1992 and Xing 2003. Taking an analysis of semantic source vs. target domain, the grammaticization path for *ajak* would be:



Crucially, this pathway is generally only evident in languages that allow serial verb constructions (König and Kortmann 1991, Kortmann and König 1992). Balinese can be considered such a language if one were to employ the criteria for serial verb constructions given in Englebretson (2003) for a closely related language, (colloquial) Indonesian. According to these criteria, serial verb constructions have the following: (1) the occurrence of two (or more) adjacent verbs without any intervening material, and (2) at least one argument shared between the verbs in question. An example is illustrated in (8):

- (8) kadang-kadang,  
 <sometimes>
- ...(0.7) makatetelun kaden bapa **luas melali**,  
 COLL-REDUP-three-LNK think father **go.out go.around**  
 ‘Sometimes the three of them would think that I went around.’  
 [SPOKEN: PAK MANGKU]

<sup>4</sup> The question remains of whether verbal affixation is that frequent for Balinese in general. To give some idea of how frequent verbal affixation is in a particular discourse genre, the procedural texts used in the spoken corpus contain 522 tokens of verbs: out of these tokens, 126 of them have the *N-* prefix while only 16 have *-a*; in contrast, 282 have no affixation. This initially suggests that verbal affixation is not particularly robust in Balinese procedural texts; the degrees of robustness across genres and related languages have yet to be ascertained.

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Serial verb constructions can also contain *ajak*, as seen in (9). However, with *ajak*, there are cases that are ambiguous as to whether *ajak* is acting as a verbal element in a serial verb construction or a preposition that directly follows the verb, as in (10):

(9) Uduh, suba magede lamun jani mara bapa **matemu ngajak** cening."  
 EXCL already MA-big if now just father **MA-meet N-AJAK 2**  
 ‘Oh, you’ve already become big since the last time I met you.’ [WRITTEN: SAKIT]

(10) ..ba ba meme ngidih tulungan,  
 already take mother N-request assistance

**nyait ..a%jak** dadonge,  
 N-sew **AJAK** grandmother-DEF

..di desa.  
 LOC village

‘I ask for help in sewing [the offerings] with Grandmother in the village.’  
 [SPOKEN: Bu TRI]

In the written corpus, 63/206 tokens of *ajak* (30.6%) occur in serial verb constructions. (In the spoken corpus, there are only three such tokens.)

In order to ascertain the degree to which *ajak* has attained a preposition-like status in Balinese, one must examine the frequency in which unaffixed vs. an affixed forms of *ajak* co-occur with a preceding verb in possible serial verb constructions. In other words, if *ajak* occurs more frequently with verbal morphology, then its verbal status must still be quite strong. Conversely, if *ajak* occurs more frequently without any verbal morphology, then it may be acting as a preposition in these constructions, like in (10). As shown in Table 2, the non-inflected forms of *ajak* are much more frequent in the written corpus (there are no tokens of this type with verbal morphology in the spoken corpus):

With N-	With -a	No verbal affix	Total
15 (23.8%)	4 (6.4%)	44 (69.8%)	63 (100.0%)

**Table 2: Co-occurrence frequencies of inflected vs. non-inflected *ajak* in serial verb constructions.**

Therefore, the data from the written corpus suggest that *ajak* may very well be attaining prepositionhood, at least within the context of serial verb constructions. (The spoken corpus is so limited with respect to this point that nothing can be strongly argued for at this time.)

#### **4. *Ajak* in quantifying expressions**

*Ajak* may also occur as an “adverbial” (for lack of a better term) element in Balinese quantifying expressions – “constructions” as per Fillmore (1989) and Fillmore, Kay, and O’Connor (1988) – with the quantifying element being either a

quantifier or a numeral. Thus, these expressions take the following general forms: [AJAK + Quant] and [AJAK + Num]. Examples illustrating both types of expressions are illustrated in (11)-(15) below:

- (11) *lantas ajak-a makejang gangsar nuun-ang ka tukad-e.*  
 then **AJAK-3 all** hurry N-descend-APPL to river-DEF  
 ‘Then all of them quickly went down to the river.’ [WRITTEN: BUNGA]
- (12) *Nah kemu suba luh ajak makejang*  
 okay thither already woman **AJAK all**  
 ‘Okay, all the women are over there already.’ [WRITTEN: BUNGA]
- (13) *...Apang selamat ajak onya=ng,*  
 PURP well **AJAK all**  
 ‘So that everything is well.’ [SPOKEN: Bu TRI]
- (14) *Kedek nguntul ajak-a dua lantas gangsar ma-jalan.*  
 laugh N-bow.head **AJAK-3 two** then hurry MA-walk  
 ‘The two of them bowed their heads laughing then walked away quickly.’  
 [WRITTEN: BUNGA]
- (15) *Lantas ia ajak patpat nuju ka bale pagongan*  
 then 3 **AJAK REDUP-four** N-head.towards to pavilion gamelan  
 ‘Then the four of them went towards the gamelan pavilion.’ [WRITTEN: BUNGA]

In these expressions, *ajak* provides the notion of collectivity for the groups of referents associated with such expressions, e.g. *ajak dadua* ‘the both of them’, *ajak onyang/makejang* ‘all of them’, and so on (cf. Luna 2003 for a more detailed description). Thus, the notion of accompaniment is still evident in these expressions, albeit in a slightly different form.

There are 40 tokens with numerals and 17 tokens with quantifiers in the written corpus (57/206 tokens altogether: 27.7%). With both quantifiers and numerals, *ajak* tends to not occur with any verbal affixation, although interestingly enough *ajaka* (with the third person agent) is still strongly attested with constructions containing numerals. The figures are shown in Table 3:

NUM with -a	NUM w/o -a	Quant with -a	Quant w/o -a	Total
17 (29.8%)	23 (40.4%)	2 (3.5%)	15 (26.3%)	57 (100%)

**Table 3: Token of affixed vs. unaffixed *ajak* in quantifying expressions.**

On the other hand, the spoken corpus only has five *ajak* tokens in quantifying expressions; only one of these tokens contains the form *ajaka*.

It appears from Table 3 that the overtly verbal form of *ajak* remains in the minority. Furthermore, since the verbal form of *ajak* may only take the form with the third person suffix, i.e. *ajaka*, and that the meaning of *ajak* is slightly altered from the notion of accompaniment illustrated elsewhere, it may be more useful to

consider these forms as lexicalized “adverbial” elements in these quantifying expressions.

### 5. Concluding remarks

In order to address what possible lexical category/categories *ajak* might belong to, the following schema may be instructive:

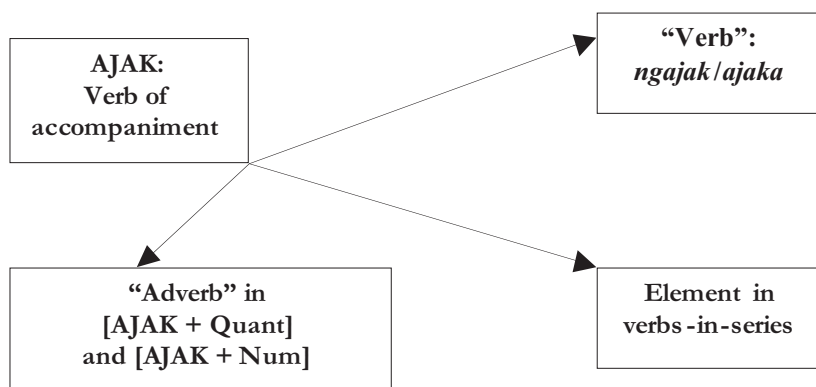


Figure 1: Summary schema of categorizing *ajak* in Balinese discourse.

In this study, it was shown that in written Balinese discourse:

- a) *Ajak* most frequently occurs in its unaffixed form, i.e. it does not behave like a morphosyntactic verb in most cases, even though affixed forms are still attested;
- b) Within serial verb constructions, *ajak* takes on preposition-like characteristics (provided that it does not appear with any overt verbal marking);
- c) Within quantifying expressions, *ajak* and *ajaka* appear to be adverbial elements.

Thus, these three points illustrate the extreme difficulty in determining the exact lexical status of *ajak*.

However, the trends seen in the spoken data, in conjunction with the written data, further suggest that *ajak* is gradually losing its verbal status by not occurring with its associated verbal morphology in Balinese. This suggests that cross-genre examinations are instrumental in determining diachronic processes such as grammaticization.

**Glosses Used:**

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
AJAK	<i>ajak</i> morpheme
APPL	applicative
DEF	Balinese “definite” suffix (- <i>e/-ne</i> )
EXCL	exclamatory particle
LNK	linker
LOC	locative
MA-	Balinese “Subject Trigger” prefix
N-	Balinese “Agent Trigger” prefix
NAME	name
NEG	negative
POSS	possessive
RED	reduplicated form
TITLE	Balinese caste title

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