

The Acquisition of Temporal Markers *Tadi* and *(S)udah* in Jakarta-Indonesian Speaking Children

The present study examines the development of two temporal markers, *tadi* and *(s)udah*, in three Jakarta-Indonesian (JI) speaking children. According to Sneddon et al. (2010:225), *tadi* ‘a while ago, just before; originally’ is an adjunct of relative time to indicate that an action or event has occurred in the past within the twenty-four hour period, as in (1). On the other hand, *sudah* ‘already’ is a temporal marker within a predicate which signifies that an action has either occurred, as in (2), or already begun and is in progress, as in (3) (pg. 204-205).

- (1) *Mereka berangkat tadi.* ‘They left a short time ago.’ (from Sneddon et al., 2010: 225)
- (2) *Ali sudah bangun.* ‘Ali has woken up.’ (from Sneddon et al., 2010: 204)
- (3) *Dia sudah tidur.* ‘He has gone to bed/he is asleep.’ (from Sneddon et al., 2010: 205)

As reflected in the above examples, both *tadi* or *(s)udah* can be used to modify a predicate which depicts an action or event which happens in the past. However, *tadi* or *(s)udah* are actually two different linguistic categories. *Tadi* is a tense marker for “past time” (cf. Sundanese *tadi* in Dahl, 1985) because an event/action which is marked by *tadi* always occurred in the past relative to the speech time (see Wagner’s (1999) definition of *tense*). In addition, when *tadi* co-occurs with an aspect marker, such as *lagi* (progressive aspect) and *(s)udah* (perfect aspect), it always precedes the aspect marker (see Cinque’s, 1999, proposal of universal hierarchy of functional heads). Whereas, *(s)udah* is a perfect aspect marker because “the aspect endowed by *(s)udah* is more specifically a resulting state” (Grange, 2011: 44; see also Dahl, 1985) and also an ingressive aspect when it modifies stative verbs (Grange, 2011). Grange (2011) also points out there are cases in which *(s)udah* is a valuation modality, instead of an aspect marker, as in (4).

- (4) *Sudah muda, berprestasi lagi* ‘Not only (is she) young, (but she) gets good result.’ (from Grange, 2011: 44)

The research questions of this study are as follows: 1) at what age do JI speaking children begin to produce *tadi* and *sudah*? 2) Do JI speaking children make errors in their early use of the two temporal markers; and, if they do, what are the errors? This study intends to analyze the following two factors that potentially contribute to the acquisition of temporal markers in young children: the input frequency and ability to understand the concepts of tense and grammatical aspect (see Wagner (1999) for the argument that children have understood the concepts of tense and grammatical aspect at about two and a half years old).

References

- Cinque, G. (1999). *Adverbs and Functional Heads: A Cross-Linguistics Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dahl, Ö. (1985). *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Grange, P. (2011). Aspect in Indonesian: free markers versus affixed or clitic markers. Proceeding of the International Workshop on TAM and Evidentiality in Indonesian Languages, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 17-18 Februari 2011.
- Sneddon, J., Adelaar, A., Djenar, D. N. & Ewing, M. C. (2010). Indonesian Reference Grammar (2nd Edition). Crows Nest (NSW): Allen & Unwin.
- Wagner, L. (1999). *The Semantics and Acquisition of Time in Language*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.