The definite marker in Balinese

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The presence of the definite suffix -*é* (-*né* after vowel) is a distinctive feature that Balinese exhibits among the languages in the Western Malayo-Polynesian languages spoken in Indonesia. Most of the languages do not have a special marker for indicating definiteness, while some languages, such as colloquial Malay and Javanese, employs the third person genitive suffix (-*nya* in Malay, -(*n*)*é* in Javanese) as a definite marker, as a result of semantic extension. Sentence (1) is an example of colloquial Malay. The third person genitive form *nya* in The NP *garam-nya* 'salt-3GEN' may be interpreted as some third person that can be identified by the speaker and the hearer or the definite marker, indicating the salt is identifiable from the linguistic or non-linguistic context, for example, being present at the place of utterance.

(1)　*ambilkan　garam-nya*

　　　take　　　salt-3GEN　　"Take his salt." or "Take the salt (e.g. on the table)."

Sentence (2) and (3) are Balinese examples corresponding to example (1) above. In sentence (2) below, the NP with -*é* refers to the entity that is linguistically or non-linguistically identifiable. Unlike Malay and Javanese, the form is distinguished from the third person genitive suffix -*né*, which occurs in example (3).

(2)　*jemakang　uyah-é*!

　　　take　　　salt-É　　　'Take **the** salt (e.g., on the table).'

(3)　*jemakang　uyah-né*!

　　　take　　　salt-**3GEN**　　　　　'Take **his/ her/ its/ their** salt.'

This study aims to describe the semantic conditions in which the suffix -*é* occurs. From the elicited examples, we could see that the suffix -*é* Balinese exhibits almost the same semantic range as English definite article does, in that it indicates that the referent of the NP is linguistically or non-linguistically identifiable. From the Balinese translation from the English examples in which the definite article occurs, we can see that the Balinese suffix –*é* exhibits the three main use of English definite article, that is, the situational use, the anaphoric use, and the associative use. Only the difference is that the –*é* suffixed NP in Balinese does not refer to a referent that is clearly unfamiliar to the addressee, even though the referent can be identifiable from the larger situation or general

knowledge.