

# The Effects of Habitual Grammatical Past

## A Contrastive Study

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## I Introduction

This is a contrastive study of habitual sentences. A sentence in the habitual can be interpreted to refer to a usual past custom or a present custom. The habitual is expressed in English with the idiomatic expression “used to do,” as in “I used to drink coffee.” Some languages, such as Amele (Trans-New Guinea), have a grammatical habitual that functions as shown in (1). In Amele, the habitual element “I” is inserted between parts of the verb inflections. Roberts (1987) presented Amele’s descriptive grammar, classifying the habitual element “I” as a habitual tense marker.

(1) Amele:

Ija	ho-I-ig.
I	come-habitual past-1sg
“I used to come.”	

This study examines the effects of the grammatical habitual by contrasting several languages. Four sample languages were chosen for this study: two with a lexical habitual and two with a grammatical habitual: English and Hungarian on the one hand and Amele and Ma Manda on the other. Ma Manda and Amele are both spoken in Papua New Guinea and belong to the Trans-New Guinea family. This study also clarifies the functions of the grammatical habitual in Trans-New Guinea languages (Foley 2000). English is selected as a typical standard language for linguistic comparison and has many types of available sentences. Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric language and is differentiated from typical European languages. It has productive lexical habitual forms. There have been several previ-

ous studies on the habitual, including Bybee et al. (1994), Tagliamonte and Lawrence (2000), Carlson (2012), and Cristofaro (2004). Habitual forms are related to tense and aspect and are realized grammatically and lexically. In addition, some languages lack a habitual form; instead, they use temporal adverbs, such as “always” and “usually.” This study considers the basic function(s) of the habitual by contrasting the sample languages.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents previous studies on habitual past and language descriptions in Papua New Guinea as well as setting out the aims of this contrastive study. Section 3 presents the data on the habitual past tense or related phenomena in the sample languages. Section 4 provides the habitual features, and section 5 concludes the study.

## II Typology of habitual forms and functions

This section describes the research objectives of this study and considers previous studies on the topic. Then, it introduces the contrastive method of habitual (grammatical and lexical) and identifies the significant points of the study. Overall, this study considers the characteristics of habitual forms in the Trans-New Guinea languages Amele and Ma Manda and provides a basic introduction.

This study provides a contrastive study of habitual forms in a limited number of languages. This sample is not sufficiently large to consider undertaking a typological investigation, but it is sufficient for this study to be able to contrast lexical and grammatical habitual and clarify habitual functions. Furthermore, Amele and Ma

Manda are Trans-New Guinea languages, and both have habitual grammatical forms; this study investigates their habitual forms more deeply.

The habitual aspect usually refers to habitual actions in the past or present. It generally has both tense and aspectual aspects. The habitual aspect has long been an object of studies since the work of Comrie (1976, 1985). Later, Bybee et al. (1994), Carlson (2012), Smith (2013), and others studied the habitual aspect and related phenomena. The semantic aspects and typological significance of habitual constructions have previously been discussed. However, little data has been acquired on habitual sentences in New Guinea languages, and there seems to be insufficient consideration of habitual lexical sentences. Habitual sentences are also related to repeated or continuous actions (*keep-ing*), and Mattiola (2019) studied these.

This study uses four sample languages: English, Hungarian, Amele, and Ma Manda. The examples of English sentences were drawn from descriptive grammar and grammar textbooks, such as Tagliamonte and Lawrence (2000). For Hungarian, we referred to Rounds (2009). For Amele, we consulted the author’s field notes and Roberts (1987, 1990); for Ma Manda, we consulted Pennington (2016).

The forms of each language’s habitual phases (grammatical and lexical) are summarized and characterized. A discussion is conducted on the function of grammatical and lexical habitual expressions.

This section provides a brief introduction to the New Guinea languages. In this study, two New Guinea languages are employed as sample languages. The Melanesian region, including Papua New Guinea and West Papua, is among

the most linguistically diverse regions in the world. The Trans-New Guinea family is a group of 500 languages in Melanesia (cf. Foley 2000, Nose 2021), including Amele and Ma Manda. These languages have a SOV word order and are rich in verbal morphology. They are also rich in tenses, as Foley (2000) and Nose (2020) point out. They tend to have a past tense for the current day, another for yesterday, and another tense of the remote past. For the study of habitual phases and related topics, other recent studies of Trans-New Guinea languages include those of Elliott (2000) and von Prince et al. (2019).

Amele is spoken in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea and has around 5,000–6,000. Roberts (1987) described the grammar of Amele, followed by Nose (2021, 2022). Ma Manda is spoken in Morobe Province, and it has approximately 65,000 speakers (Pennington 2016: 3). Pennington (2016) provided a description of the grammar of Ma Manda.

## 2.1. Contrastive study

This study uses contrastive linguistic methods and functional typology. This study clarifies the cross-linguistic uses of habitual past forms. In particular, it contrasts languages with a grammatical habitual form and those without it. Two example uses of the habitual are given below.

- (2) Grammatical habitual: Amele  
Ija (I) ho-I-ig (come-habitual past-1sg).  
“I used to come.”
- (3) Lexical habitual: English  
I **used to** dance here.  
I **would** smoke at home.

We identify two types of habitual: the habitual with a grammatical form and the lexical habitual, with examples shown in (2) and (3). The habitual grammatical exists as a grammatical morpheme, with the form of the habitual phase embedded within the verb morphology. This form can then be used to express the habitual. Lexical habitual aspects retain their lexical form. Thus, the habitual function is realized in grammar (Amele) and lexicon (English).

The forms used in habitual lexical phases do not feature grammatical morphemes but retain their lexical forms. In addition, these forms may express meanings other than the habitual. That is, a habitual grammatical phrase has a fully grammaticalized form and belongs to the tense or aspectual category, while lexical habitual phrases have only poorly grammaticalized forms or forms that depend heavily on vocabulary and do not belong to the tense or aspect categories.

Finally, this study clarifies certain grammatical features of Trans-New Guinea languages. The Trans-New Guinea languages spoken in the Melanesian area form a large group of more than 500 languages that differ in their grammar and vocabulary. The common grammatical structures of the Trans-New Guinea languages remain to be clarified. If a language retains a unique grammatical form, it has a reason or a motivation for this. This study also compares languages that are different from European languages and provide peculiar behaviors of their habitual aspect.

### III Contrastive data on the habitual

Here, we provide example habitual sentences of our sample languages.

#### 3.1. Amele

Amele is spoken in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. Its word order is SOV, and it has a complicated verb morphology, as shown in (4).

- (4) Ija mala **baga-dugan**.  
I chicken kill-1SG. yesterday's past tense  
"I killed a chicken yesterday."

In this transitive sentence, the direct object "mala" (chicken) does not feature an accusative case marking. The verb phrase "baga-dugan" includes the verb "kill" and the first person singular subject marking, together with the first person singular yesterday's past. Amele features the tense forms present, today's past, yesterday's past, remote past, negative past, negative future, future, and habitual past tense. Roberts (1987: 228) indicated that the habitual past tense describes an event that recurred in the

past, sometime before the time of the utterances. The tense differences between present and habitual tenses are shown below.

- (5) Several present and past tenses in Amele (Roberts 1987: 223–225):

Present: Ija **hu-gina**. "I come." (present tense)  
Today's past: Ija **hu-g-a**. "I came (today)."  
Yesterday's past: Ija **hu-g-an**. "I came (yesterday)."  
Remote past: Ija **ho-om**. "I came (before yesterday)."  
Habitual past: Ija **ho-l-ig**. "I used to come."  
Negative past: Ija **qee (not) ho-lom**. "I did not come."

Amele has a rich tense system, with five past tenses (today's past, yesterday's past, remote past, habitual past, and negative past), as well as two future tenses and a present tense (Roberts 1987). The habitual past is used to express past habits or continuous or recurring events in the past. In Amele, habitual tense

Table 1. Hona "come" conjugation in the habitual past tense

	Present tense	Habitual tense (Roberts 1987)	Habitual tense (my data 2014)
1SG	hu-gi-na	ho-l-om	ho-lig
2SG	ho-go-na	ho-l-om	ho-log
3SG	ho-na	ho-l	ho-loi/ holi on
1Dual	ho-wo-na	ho-lo-h	ho-lob
2&3 Dual	ho-si-na	ho-lo-sin	ho-loig
1PL	ho-go-na	ho-lo-m	ho-lob
2&3 PL	ho-gi-na	ho-lo-in	ho-loig

forms (like other past tense forms) inflect with persons and numbers.

Table 1 presents the habitual tense morphology in Amele. There are dialectal differences (Roberts and my data; Nose 2022: 29–30). The element *-l-* is found in the habitual verb morphology. This study considers that the habitual element *-l-* implies the adverb “sain li” (usually) that was grammaticalized into a verbal element.

The habitual element *-l-* is inserted between the verb stem and the person/number agreement. Roberts (1987) categorized the habitual as a tense category. However, my data, as shown in Table 1, indicate that the habitual element is incorporated into the person/number agreement and makes a kind of portmanteau form.

Semantically, the habitual form (“obigina on”) describes both present action (such as in the lexemes used to/would in English), as shown in (6a–c).<sup>1)</sup>

- (6) Habitual forms in my data:
- Ija cabi-na **obigina on**.  
“I used to go to the garden.” (habitual past)
  - Ija cabi-na **obigina on** ba bila himec **oborin**.  
“I used to go to the garden, but not now.”
  - Ija cabi-na **obigina on** bila ha cabi-na **obiga**.  
“I used to go to the garden, and I do so now as well.”

The habitual form (“obigina on”) can imply both meanings of present action and past (cf. used to/would distinction in English). In (6b), the past habit is characterized as not continuing in the present, and in (6c), it continues in

the present day. Amele speakers report that the habitual past tense can also be used to refer to the present, as in (7). Thus, the habitual form in Amele cannot be regarded as a pure tense category.

- (7) Ija rais      **ji-gina on**.  
I rice eat-habitual.1sg  
“I used to eat rice/ I always eat rice.”

## 3.2. Ma Manda

The second example is that of Ma Manda language, spoken in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. Ma Manda and Amele belong to the same Trans-New Guinea language family but do not have a direct relationship, and their grammars and lexicons differ. Nevertheless, as Foley (2000) noted, their grammars show some similarities.

The grammar of Ma Manda was described by Pennington (2016), and the examples shown here are drawn from his study. Transitive and intransitive sentences in Ma Manda are shown in (8) and (9).

- (8) filaang-ka      **ku-ya-k**.  
fly-SS      go-PRS-3SG  
“It is flying away.” Pennington (2016: 142),  
SS: same subject suffix
- (9) [tamek ban]      sako-ka  
**kagang mo-go-k**.  
bed a      hold.3SG-SS      village  
go.down-RP-3SG  
“He grabbed a bed and went outside.”  
Pennington (2016: 143)

Ma Manda has a rich tense system, with present, near past, remote past, and future tenses (cf. Nose 2020). As seen in (8) and (9), Ma

<sup>1)</sup> My data show that some habitual tense forms lack the element “-l-” and that “-gina” or “-gina on” forms are used for the habitual past tense. My observation differs from the habitual forms observed by Roberts (1987). These differences are likely dialectal differences or may result in morphological changes in Amele.

Manda is pro-drop (can omit the subject pronoun), and its basic word orders are SV and SOV. The remote past has the verbal infix “-go-” and the near past has the verbal infix “-a-,” as shown in (10) and (11).

- (10) Remote past: Pennington (2016: 368)  
 kep            bûsenang    **at-ku-gû ba-go-t.**  
 yesterday    jungle            be-go-DUR  
 come-RP-1SG  
 “Yesterday having gone around in the bush, I came (back).”
- (11) Near past: Pennington (2016: 369)  
 taamengsla [membû tem]  
**laat-a-k.**  
 morning    head hair    scrape-NP-3SG  
 “(This) morning he shaved his head.”

Roberts (1987) did not find that Amele has have a fully grammaticalized aspect; by contrast, according to Pennington, Ma Manda has a rich system of aspect categories: progressive, durative, prospective, perfect, terminative, completive, and habitual. In particular, the habitual aspect is expressed by a verbal suffix “-nang,” and this habitual suffix follows verb inflections:

[verb stem-tense-subject marking + habitual aspect suffix] (Pennington 2016: 408). The habitual aspect indicates that the action is performed regularly, customarily, or habitually and the suffix “-nan” is derived from the locative case enclitic.

Example habitual sentences are given in (12) and (13); significantly, the habitual aspect co-occurs in the remote past, not in the near past.

- (12) kodûp            **na-waa-got-nang.**  
 betel.nut            eat-PFV.HAB-RP-1SG-HAB

“I used to chew betel nut.” HAB: habitual aspect

- (13) Fuku seka    **nawaagu-ngang.**  
 take cook    eat-remote past- 3pl-habitual  
 “Taking them, they used to cook and eat them.”

Moreover, the habitual can co-occur with both present and future tenses, indicating that the habitual meaning implies repeated action in the present tense (and in the future tense).

- (14) kodûp            **nait-nang.**  
 Betel nut    eat-IPFV.HAB-1SG-HAB  
 “I will be chewing betel nut.”

### 3.3. Hungarian

Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric language whose grammar was characterized by Rounds (2009). Its basic word orders are SV and SOV. Hungarian has rich case marking and a complex verb morphology including verbal prefixes and person, tense, and number agreements. Its tense system includes the present and the past, and the verbal prefix realizes aspectual meanings.

- (15) Be-teszi    a tollat  
 Into(prefix)-put-3sg.present    the pen a  
 táská-ba.  
 the bag-into  
 “He puts the pen into the bag.” Rounds (2009)

In (15), a verbal prefix is shown that has an aspect meaning and a complex verb agreement. Hungarian has more than 10 cases, and in (15), “-ba” in “táskaá-ba” is a locative case, meaning “into.”

The verb “szokik” (used to, get accustomed to) has the habitual meaning in Hungarian as szokik + verb-infinitive. The verb “szokik” is derived from the noun “szokás” (custom, habits). Rounds (2009) reported that “szokik” indicates the past and present habits and can be used in the present tense. Examples of its use are shown in (16) and (17).

- (16) 6-kor            **szok-tam**  
       at 6            habitual verb  
       fölkel-ni.  
       to get up (infinitive)  
       “I generally get up at six o’clock. (got up)”
- (17) Hétvégén ki        **szok-tunk**  
       at weekend out(prefix)        habitual verb  
       men-ni        a telekre.  
       to go (infinitive) the field-to  
       “We usually go to our field at the weekend. (went to)”
- (18) Reggel        kávézeni  
       morning        to drink-coffee (infinitive)  
       **szok-tam,**                este  
       habitual verb                evening  
       inkább        teázom.  
       rather        drink-tea  
       “In the morning I usually drink coffee, in the evening I drink tea.”

The “szokik” construction is not a fully grammaticalized form: this lexical verb is used to indicate the habitual meaning. This is an idiomatic usage.

### 3.4. English

Finally, English has two habitual lexical forms: “used to” and “would” (Tagliamonte and Lawrence 2000). They refer to past cus-

toms and habits, and their use can be found in the following (19a) and (19b).

- (19) Habitual in English:
- Used to + verb: partly grammaticalized idiom, still lexical, used in contrast to the present “now” (still lexical “used to”)
 

Example: “I used to go out drinking every night. (not now).”
  - Auxiliary: would + verb
 

Would: recalling the past (auxiliary would)

Example: My boyfriend and I would ride a bicycle together. (Implication: we ride a bicycle, now too.)

Lexical “used to” is considered to be an idiomatic usage of the habitual, and it is not fully grammaticalized. Some English linguists consider the “used to” form to be an auxiliary verb. However, within the isolating nature of English grammar, the used to form is not integrated into verb morphology. The auxiliary “would” usage is based on the irrealis meaning and evolved through a quite different route of semantic change from that of the “used to” usage. Both idiomatic habitual forms are used in English.

### 3.5. Overall summary

This study has classified habitual expressions into two categories: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical forms of the habitual are found in Amele and Ma Manda, both New Guinea languages. In Amele, the habitual is found as a past of habit, and the grammatical form of the habitual is incorporated into the verb morphology. Ma Manda, like Amele, has a



Table 2. Summary of functions of grammatical habitual and lexical habitual

	Type of habitual	Incorporated into verb morphology	Implication for the present “now”	Functional remarks
<b>Amele</b>	grammatical tense, verb infix	Yes, verb-habitual tense-person-number	No	Habitual tense derives from “usually”
<b>Ma Manda</b>	grammatical aspect, verb infix	Yes, verb-tense-person-number) + habitual aspect	Yes	Habitual aspect derives from locative meaning
<b>Hungarian</b>	lexical verb “szokik”	No (szokik + verb)	Yes (present tense of custom)	custom (past and present)
<b>English</b>	1: lexical “used to” 2: Auxiliary “would”	No (used to + verb, would + verb)	Yes (used to)	past habit and recalling, irrealis meaning

grammatical habitual, but it is an aspect of the habitual phase; in Ma Manda, the habitual is added as a suffix at the end of the verb structure and can co-occur with the present and future tenses. Hungarian and English both feature lexical habituals. In Hungarian habitual, the expression of a habit is an idiomatic expression using the habitual verb “szokik” + another verb (infinitive); “szokik” is given in the present tense and has a present meaning. In English, “used to” and the auxiliary verb “would” indicate past habits. These are idiomatic expressions that are not fully grammaticalized.

These results are summarized in Table 2 below.

## IV Discussion

This section discusses differences between the grammatical and lexical usage of habitual expressions for the four sample languages studied here. Two points must be discussed.

The first is to clarify the functional differences between grammatical and lexical expressions of the habitual. Such expressions vary across

languages, from grammatical forms to lexical expressions and even to the exclusive use of temporal adverbs. The relationship between the meanings and forms of these different expressions were examined and contrasted. A contrastive study was taken to allow the question why one language has a particular grammatical feature and another does not to be raised. Drawing contrasts among multiple languages makes it possible to identify differences among grammar and functions and to notice new points.

We believe that grammatical forms are grammaticalized as their meanings and functions are necessary, meaningful, and frequent (cf. Aikhenvald 2015, Bybee et al. 1994). In other words, languages that feature habitual grammatical forms are grammaticalized because habit is considered essential by its speakers (Bybee et al. 1994, Elliott 2000).

Second, I discuss the functional effects of habitual grammatical forms (tense forms in Amele and aspectual forms in Ma Manda) observed in the Trans-New Guinea languages Amele and Ma Manda in particular. In these



languages, grammatical forms indicating the habitual are incorporated into verb morphology. In this regard, we discuss the functional burden and its effects.

Grammatical expressions of the habitual are observed in the New Guinea languages Amele and Ma Manda, which, although members of the same language family, have quite different grammars and lexicons. As in Amele (20), habitual expressions are incorporated into the verbal inflection to form a past tense of habit. In Amele, the habitual expression is part of the verbal inflection, as in (20), forming the habitual past tense. In Ma Manda, on the other hand, the habitual suffix “-nang” is added at the end of the verbal inflection, as in example (21), and this habitual suffix is interpreted as expressing a habitual aspect.

(20) Amele: Habitual past tense

Ija (I) rais **ji-gina-on** (eat-habitual past-1sg).

“I used to eat rice.”

(21) Ma Manda: Habitual aspect

kodup (betel nut) **na-waagot-nang** (eat-perfective/1sg-habitual).

“I used to chew betel nut.”

The effect of having such a grammatical form for the habitual is that the meaning of the habit is grammaticalized, making it easy to use. However, this also complicates the grammar and places a functional burden on verb morphology.

The resulting complexity of tense and aspect categories may burden grammar acquisition. Grammatical forms for the habitual are also observed in Trans-New Guinea languages other

than Amele and Ma Manda—the reasons for this need to be considered.<sup>2)</sup>

According to Chafe (1973) and Dahl (1983), the relationship between deep and shallow memory parallels the relationship between distant and near past. For example, Amele and Ma Manda have remoteness distinctions of the past tenses and their past tenses can be interpreted by using Chafe and Dahl’s considerations. Drawing on this conclusion, we propose that the habitual past (tense and aspect) is a grammaticalized version of the memory of repeated actions. In other words, the habitual past may be incorporated as tense and aspect into the distant past and the near past.

Habitual lexical expressions are also examined in the present study, with examples from English and Hungarian. The following examples (22) and (23) indicate the contrast whereby English uses partially grammaticalized habitual expressions, while Hungarian uses strictly lexical verbs. These habitual lexical phrases, unlike grammatical forms, are easy to learn, and because they are not grammatical, they are not burdened by verb morphology or function. On the other hand, due to their lack of a fixed grammatical function, their meaning is ambiguous and is realized in a roundabout way. Japanese, Chinese, German, and other languages also use a habitual lexical expression or use temporal adverbs to express a habitual meaning.

(22) English: Partly grammaticalized idiom

a. I **used to** dance here.

b. I **would** drink beer.

(23) Hungarian: Lexical verb “szokik”

2) Foley (1991: 246) described the grammar the Trans-New Guinea language, Yimas, where the habitual is incorporated into the verbal morphology using the suffix “-kia.” In other words, Yimas shares with Amele and Ma Manda the grammatical form of the habitual, which is incorporated into the verbal inflection as a suffix. Therefore, it is highly likely that the use of the habit suffix is a

grammatical tendency of the Trans-New Guinea languages.

En angolul **szok-t-am** (used to-past-1sg) tanulni. “I used to study English.”

This idiomatic form of habit has the effect of requiring no grammatical complexity and does not impose a significant burden on verb morphology. However, it may be that if these idiomatic forms come into frequent use, they would be grammaticalized in their habitual tense or aspectual form.

## V Conclusion

This study conducted a contrastive linguistic investigation using a sample of two languages with grammatical habitual forms and two languages with lexical forms. The Trans-New Guinea languages Amele and Ma Manda were selected as featuring grammatical forms of the habitual.

The investigation identified that habitual actions can be realized lexically or grammatically, and the choice is functionally motivated in each language. Trans-New Guinea languages, such as Amele and Ma Manda, prefer habitual grammatical actions, which have the effect of explicitly recalling an action repeated in the past. Trans-New Guinea languages are primarily “colloquial” and require special grammatical habituality due to the frequent references to past events in everyday speech. The use of grammar to recall past habits may reflect the worldview of a language regarding its past tense and aspect. On the other hand, Amele and Ma Manda feature a morphological trade-off. By contrast, English and Hungarian have a lexical usage to express the habitual. The two languages do not show a strong need for habitual

grammar and thus do not need to grammaticalize habitual expressions.

Bybee et al. (1994) treated tense-aspect categories in terms of grammaticalization, and it is believed that the more grammatically habitual a language is, the more it can be incorporated into tense-aspect categories (see Elliott 2000). He concludes that Amele’s habitual past tense and Ma Manda’s habitual aspect form are both used in these spoken-dominant languages, and their speakers frequently refer to past events and have special grammatical means of recalling past habitual situations.

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## A Contrastive Study

Masahiko Nose

This study attempts to clarify the usages of the habitual past forms cross-linguistically. Remarkably, this study contrasts the languages with grammatical habitual and those without it. The sample languages are genealogically and typologically different, including two Trans-New Guinea languages, Amele and Ma Manda, spoken in Papua New Guinea. Amele and Ma Manda have habitual grammatical past, as in (1).

(1) Grammatical habitual:

- a. Amele: Ija (I) ho-I-ig (come-habitual past-1sg). “I used to come.”
- b. Ma Manda: kodup (betel nut) na-waagot-nang (eat-perfective/1sg-habitual). “I used to chew betel nut.” (Pennington, 2015: 408)

In (1a), Amele has the habitual element “I” inside the verbal inflections, and the verbal form indicates habitual past meaning. Ma Manda has the habitual suffix “-nang” in the verb and the suffix indicates habitual aspect, as in (1b).

On the other hand, the habitual past can be realized lexically in other sample languages, such as English and Hungarian, as in (2).

(2) Lexical habitual:

- a. English: I **used to** dance here.
- b. Hungarian: En angolul **szok-t-am** (used to-past-1sg) tanulni. “I used to study English.”

The habitual past tense describes an event that has occurred continuously in past time, and this study discusses how grammar recognizes the habitual event. In (2a-b), English and Hungarian use lexical verbs (*used to/szokni*) as habitual. By contrasting the sample languages, this study analyzes the semantic mechanism of the habitual past actions (cf. Carlson 2012).

The habitual meaning can be lexical in Hungarian or less grammaticalized in English, and their habitual meaning is still included in verb forms of both languages. Therefore, the lexical habitual. In contrast, Amele and Ma Manda have more grammaticalized forms (infix or suffix), and their habitual forms are independent of their verb meanings. Bybee et al. (1994) deal with tense/aspect categories in terms of grammaticalization, and it is considered that the languages with grammatical habitual are more incorporated into tense/aspect categories (cf. Elliott 2000). Thus, the effect of habitual grammatical means that habitual action can be interpreted in the past tense or aspectuality.

Finally, this study claims that habitual actions can be realized lexically or grammatically, and each language’s choice is functionally motivated. Notably, the Trans-New Guinea languages, such as Amele and Ma Manda, prefer habitual grammatical forms, and the languages have effects of taking in the repeated past actions in their grammar at the cost of more complicated verb morphology.