Utterance-final particles in Klang Valley Malay

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines a group of small morphemes analysed as "utterance-final particles" in the Malay variety of the Klang Valley, West Malaysia. It provides a preliminary investigation into their usage and diachronic evolution, connecting fieldwork-based findings with extant research on other Malay varieties. There is no univocal definition of utterance-final particles – known by other scholars as "discourse particles" or "pragmatic particles" – nor broad agreement on the term's conceptual validity. Most previous research on Malay varieties approaches these units as unbound morphemes with no grammatical and little obvious lexical meaning, relegating their functionality to the realm of pragmatics. This study calls attention to data from Klang Valley Malay to demonstrate that particles cannot easily be divided into "grammatical" and "pragmatic" categories. Most utterance-final particles discussed here are etymologically derived from verbs, adverbs, interjections and other word classes and can at best be classified as "part-time" pragmatic particles. They display varying levels of grammaticality and pragmaticality depending on their intonation and syntactic position.

KEYWORDS

Utterance-final particles; Klang Valley Malay; grammaticalization; colloquial Malay; pragmaticalization.

INTRODUCTION

From the outset, it should be clarified that no scholarly consensus exists on what "utterance-final particles" are, nor what "Klang Valley Malay" might be. I therefore stress that both labels are used for the sake of convenience. Utterance-final particles (henceforth UFPs) – also known as "pragmatic particles" or "discourse particles" – are remarkably heterogenous and

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language-specific linguistic items, as we are reassured by almost all overview articles on this hypothetical word class. According to one early definition, they are "short words, often monosyllabic, that add a frame of reference (temporal, attitudinal, et cetera) to a phrase or clause" (Zorc 1977: 157). A more recent publication asserts that "they are simply non-inflecting parts of speech" (Bayer and Struckmayer 2017: 1). Yet these and other definitions are by no means univocally accepted, as is discussed in more detail in the first section of this paper.

My usage of the shorthand "Klang Valley Malay" (henceforth KVM) reflects little more than the fact that I have collected the data for this article in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding suburbs. To my knowledge, there is little evidence to consider the Malay of the Klang Valley as significantly distinct from the varieties of the southern Malay Peninsula more broadly, and so I do not claim that the evidence discussed here represents a distinct regional dialect. Nevertheless, I hold it likely that data from Singapore, Riau, the north of Malaysia, or other geographically contiguous regions would have yielded a partly different analysis. For this reason I have opted not to use a "broader" term, such as West Malaysian Malay. More sociolinguistic and typological context of the type of Malay examined here is provided in the second section.

UFPs have been studied in the following Malay varieties: West Malaysian Malay (Koh 1990: 77-86; Goddard 1994, 2001), Sabah Malay (Hoogervorst 2011: 68-73), Manado Malay (Stoel 2005), Jakartan Indonesian (Ikranagara 1975; Sneddon 2006), and Indonesian (Wouk 1998, 1999, 2001; Sari 2008, 2011). UFPs in the English of Malaysia and Singapore have been examined by Platt and Mian (1989), Gupta (1992, 2006), and Li et al. (2016). As is the case cross-linguistically, most UFPs highlighted in these studies are monosyllabic unbound morphemes that exhibit distinct intonational patterns. Their polysemy is relatively well-understood and different functions have been identified for different syntactic positions and/or intonational patterns. Most studies have focused on the pragmatic aspects of these particles, yet – as will be demonstrated in this article – they must also be analysed as partly grammatical in nature. Some UFPs display near equivalents in English or other languages, yet they nevertheless require a description that takes into account both their propositional and discourse functions. Rather than focusing on one particle in particular, this study aims to offer a necessarily incomplete outline of UFPs in KVM, suggesting some directions for future research. It discusses both UFPs generally classified as such in the broader literature on Malay varieties (third section) and "non-canonical" UFPs displaying a range of different functions depending on their intonation and syntactic position (fourth section). Particularly in the utterance-final position, it is shown that the latter exhibit pragmatic functions akin to those found in "established" UFPs.

I am profoundly indebted to Don van Minde for directing my attention to Malay UFPs as early as 2007, when he organized an MA course on this topic at Leiden University, and for commenting on my paper soon afterwards. The present article is a thorough revision, taking into consideration more

recent publications on UFPs. I owe another debt of gratitude to David Gil, for his comments during the Thirteenth International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (6-7 June 2009, Senggigi) and especially for his valuable discussions more recently. I collected most data during fieldwork in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding suburbs in April 2007 and February 2008. In the absence of digitalized, annotated and publicly accessible recordings, I cannot claim to present anything but a preliminary overview of UFPs in this variety of Malay. The topic is nevertheless hoped to spark further interest and scholarship within the field of Malay linguistics and beyond.

1. Pragmatic particles and their problems

In view of the innumerable pages, monographs, and edited volumes spent on the definition and characteristics of utterance-final particles, pragmatic particles, discourse particles, and other near-synonyms, a relatively brief summary best serves the purposes of this article. Textbook examples of such words in English include *actually*, *you know*, *so*, *well*, and *okay*. In most discursive contexts, these units bear little obvious lexical meaning. Their function is chiefly pragmatic; they convey a speaker's attitude or emotion towards what is being said, or express a degree of intimacy or shared knowledge between speech participants. As such, the particles govern interpersonal understanding and intersubjective meaning. On a syntactical level, they are said to be non-compulsory to their "host clause". At the same time, they cannot occur in isolation. In other words, these particles are often claimed – not without controversy – to lay outside the information structure of the utterance to which they are attached, and can be omitted without affecting its grammaticality or propositional content ("truth-value").

Such particles frequently occur in informal communication. They often undergo phonological attrition (Lehmann 1985; Traugott 1988; Van Bogaert and Colleman 2013). It is not without difficulties to represent them accurately in writing, as their intonation is crucial to understand their pragmatic features of usage. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of such particles in informal online communication attests to the fact that native speakers face little difficulty in correctly interpreting their meaning in context (Li et al. 2016). Linguists, on the other hand, have a harder job in doing so; "In many grammars these aspects do not receive much attention, because in the study of discourse particles and focus marking, informants' intuitions and judgements are not very useful. In addition to an intimate knowledge of the language and a substantial corpus of spontaneous dialogues, advanced phonetic research is required as well" (Van Minde 2008: 555). Unsurprisingly, their correct use is intuitive and therefore a source of difficulty for second-language learners, as these particles rarely exhibit one-to-one correspondences in other languages.

There is little scholarly agreement on the precise typological features of these particles and the extent to which they form a distinct word class.[1]

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[1]   For a broader discussion, see Östman (1981), Schiffrin (1987, 2003), Fraser (1990), Abraham (1991), Foolen (1996), Jucker and Ziv (1998), Blakemore (2002), Fischer (2006), Aijmer and

Even the terminology – with competing and (semi-)overlapping terms such as discourse particles, pragmatic particles, discourse markers, modal particles, final particles, attitudinal particles, illocutionary particles, utterance particles, sentence-final particles, discourse connectives, pragmatic markers, interactional particles, interactive particles, lexical particles, and many others – illustrates how incongruous the wider literature on this topic has become. The most common Malay term is *kata penegas* ('emphatic words'). In the context of Malay varieties, the term UFP "works" because they are indeed utterance-final unbound morphemes, although – as will be shown in this article – a number of UFPs display semantically related homophones in other syntactic positions.[2] That is to say, at least in the context of KVM, there is often no clear-cut distinction between UFPs and other word classes such as demonstratives and interjections.

2. The Malay examined in this study

The Malay data analysed in this article have been collected in natural speech in Kuala Lumpur and its adjoining cities in the Klang Valley, West Malaysia. There is nevertheless little *a priori* evidence to support that KVM constitutes a separate Malay dialect. In fact, some of the examples presented here might also be considered grammatical in geographically contiguous varieties. Aside from regional differences, which in West Malaysia appear to be chiefly phonological and lexical (Asmah 2008), stylistic variety must also be taken into account. In the Malay imaginary, the three main sociolinguistic styles are, in the order of prestige: formal language (*bahasa baku*), colloquial language (*bahasa basahan*), and "Bazaar Malay" or foreigner talk (*bahasa pasar*). This article is chiefly concerned with the second category. Unlike *bahasa pasar*, which is associated with Chinese and Indian speakers (Aye 2005), *bahasa basahan* is regarded as the in-group vernacular of ethnic Malays (Koh 1990).

Previous scholars have asserted that Malaysia's authorities as well as the Malay speech community itself tend to discourage outsiders from speaking or studying colloquial Malay, instead typically resorting to the more stuffy formal language if not a form of foreigner talk (Coope 1953: 118-119; Goddard 1994: 146). Until relatively recent times, written representations of colloquial Malay were chiefly confined to popular magazines and comics produced by non-conformist Malay authors (Koh 1990: 12). This situation has gradually changed, especially in today's digital age; examples of colloquial Malay can easily be found on Youtube and various social media platforms. Recent fieldwork-based studies on this variety include Shoho (2006, 2013), Nomoto (2006a, 2006b), Soh (2011, 2015), and Nomoto and Wahab (2012). I assume more scholarship on this topic has been produced at Malaysian universities

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Simon-Vandenbergen (2006), Maschler and Schiffrin (2015), Degand and Evers-Vermeul (2015), Crible (2017), Fedriani and Sansò (2017), Bayer and Struckmayer (2017).

[2]   It should also be recalled that grammaticalization by definition leads to decategorialization (Diewald 2011). For example, phrasal idioms can overlap with UFPs, as with African-American Vernacular English *aight* (< *all right!*) and *knowmsayin* (< *do you know what I'm saying?*).

in the form of theses, yet such works have not been made broadly accessible. Compared to formal Malay, the colloquial varieties of Malay exhibit extensive use of UFPs, infrequent use of derivational morphology, and widespread borrowing from and code-mixing with English (Koh 1990: 35-8).

Given the fact that Kuala Lumpur is situated in the wider Selangor area, it has been inferred that the city's Malay variety was initially identical to the Selangor dialect. After decades of migration from across Malaysia and beyond, however, its Malay became less monodialectical (Asmah 1992: 29). The oft-assumed existence of a distinct Selangor Malay is itself problematic, as it is unclear how it differs from neighbouring varieties (Collins 1989: 239); more comparative research is needed on the (tentative) Malay dialects of Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Perak, Pahang, Singapore, and Riau. Most southern Peninsular varieties have in common their realization of the historical and orthographic <u> in word-final closed syllables as /o/, the <i> in word-final closed syllables as /e/, the <r> as /ɣ/ in the syllable onset and as zero /∅/ in the coda, and the word-final <a> as /ɤ/ (except when the latter results from word-final r-elision). On a subdialectal level, some additional phonological features have been described by Asmah (2008). I have furthermore noticed that some speakers in Kuala Lumpur and its suburbs occasionally realize the word-final /t/ as a glottal stop /ʔ/ and the word-final /s/ as a glottal fricative /h/.[3] The latter features possibly reflect dialect features from other areas of Malaysia, as KVM has become relatively heterogenous due to migration to the metropole. Notwithstanding this phonological heterogeneity, I have chosen to represent this study's data in a relatively orthographic way, following the way this is often – but not always – done by native speakers.

Another typological feature of colloquial (West Malaysian) Malay of direct relevance to this study is the optional shortening of a number of frequently used words, typically by only retaining their final syllable. This process can affect a broad range of lexical items, yielding several monosyllabic UFPs and other unbound morphemes.[4] According to Hussein (1973: 75), this reflects Thai influence, as it occurs most frequently in northern dialects. Of the particles discussed in this paper, ten have undergone evident phonological attrition: *dah* (< *sudah*), *gak* (< *jugak*), *ja* (< *sahaja*), *jap* (< *sekejap*), *kan* (< *bukan*), *kot* (< *takut*), *lak* (< *pulak*), *ni* (< *ini*), *tah* (< *entah*), and *tu* (< *itu*). As will be argued below, the monosyllabization of these particles is connected with their "pragmaticalization" (Diewald 2011; Degand and Evers-Vermeul 2015), that is, their acquisition and increase of pragmatic functions besides their grammatical functions.

3. Canonical Malay UFPs

This section highlights six KVM particles conventionally categorized as

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[3]   The same has been documented in the Malay variety of Jugra, Selangor (Collins and Hassan 1988).
[4]   Lists of frequently monosyllabized words can be found in Koh (1990: 43-45) and Hoogervorst (2015: 29).

UFPs (or pragmatic particles, discourse particles, and so forth), presented in alphabetical order. As most UFPs are polysemous, their usage is illustrated in multiple contexts, including declarative, interrogative, and imperative statements.

1. *ah*

The particle *ah* is an emotive marker expressing the speaker's irritation or discomfort about the content of the utterance it follows.[5] In KVM, its pragmatic nuances range from disapproval (1) to impatience (2) or disbelief (3) towards the utterance's propositional value.

> 1) *Be-budak   sekarang   takda   adab   ah.*
>   RPD-kid   now   have.not   courtesy   PART
>   'Kids these days lack any courtesy!'

> 2) *Aku   send   minggu   depan   ah!*
>   1s   send   week   next   PART
>   'I'll send it next week already!'

> 3) *Takkan   ah   dia   suka   kat   kau.*
>   won't   PART   3s   like   PREP   2s
>   'There's just no way she likes you.'

The same implication of discomfort is seen in imperative constructions (4-5) and rhetorical questions (6).

> 4) *Jangan   ah   balik   Johor!*
>   don't   PART   go.back   Johor
>   'Don't go back to Johor!'

> 5) *Tolong   ah   jangan   nak   poyo   sangat.*
>   please   PART   don't   FUT   arrogant   very
>   'Please, don't be so arrogant.'

> 6) *Kau   sapa   ah   nak   sound   aku?*
>   2s   who   PART   FUT   talk   1s
>   'Who are you to talk to me?'

The particle can also turn declarative statements into questions, indicating that the speaker expects an affirmative response. This usage furthermore expresses mild impatience (7-8).

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[5]   This particle has also been described in West Malaysian Malay (Koh 1990: 75) and Jakartan Malay (Ikranagara 1975: 97-98).

7) *Boleh   ah   buat lagi?*
   can   PART do   again
   'Can you do it again?'

8) *Kau   itu   pun   tak   tau   ah?*
   2s   DEM even not   know PART
   'Don't you even know that?'

The UFP *ah* appears to go back to the homophonous interjection, which likewise expresses the speaker's discomfort or annoyance (9-10).

9) *Ah,   lelaki tu   sama   ja.*
   PART men   PART same   PART
   'Ugh, men are all the same.'

10) *Ah,   korang ni   ada-ada   ja   lah!*
    PART 2p   PART RDP-have PART PART
    'Ugh, there's always something with you
    guys.'

2. *ek*

The particle *ek* is used to attract the listener's attention. In declarative sentences, it expresses unpleasant surprise or annoyance at the propositional content of the utterance it follows (11-12).

11) *Dia   dah   gemuk ek!*
    3s   PART   fat   PART
    'She's got fat!'

12) *Sikit   pun   takleh   ek.*
    a.bit   PART cannot   PART
    'We can't even have a little.'

It functions as a solidarity marker in imperative constructions, conveying the speaker's hope that the listener will take the request or demand seriously (13-14).

13) *Jangan puan   marah   ek.*
    Don't   Ms.   angry   PART
    'Don't be angry, Ms.'

14) *Plis   tolong   ek   abang   polis.*
    please   help   PART   older.brother   police
    'Please help us, officer'

In questions, *ek* encourages the listener to promptly answer what is being asked (15-16).

15) *Nombor   henpon   kau   berapa   ek?*
    number   handphone   2s   how.much   PART
    'What's your mobile number?'

16) *Cuti   dah   dekat,   apa   plen   korang   ek?*
    holidays PART   close   what   plan   2p   PART
    'The holidays are coming, what are your plans?'

It can also be used in rhetorical questions, in which case the particle carries assertive nuances (17-19)

17) *Apa   masalah   kau   ek?*
    what   problem   2s   PART
    'What's your problem?'

18) *Watpa   minta   maaf   ek?*
    for.what   ask   forgiveness   PART
    'Why would I apologize?'

19) *Camtu   ek   korang   layan   te-tamu?*
    like.that PART   2p   serve   RDP-guest
    'Is that how you people treat your guests?'

3. *lah*

One of the best known and most versatile particles in colloquial Malay varieties – as well as Malaysian and Singaporean English – is *lah*, characterized by a broad range of meanings and relatively frequent usage.[6] In general, *lah* – also written as *la* – places the focus on the word or phrase it follows. A range of pragmatic effects can result from this semantic core. *Lah* typically marks the speaker's emotional investment with the aim to inform the listener about something important or prevent a misunderstanding. It is often described as a solidarity marker that expresses sympathy, asserts agreement, and reduces social distance. However, an in-depth look at the often contradictory

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[6]   This UFP is related to -*lah* in classical Malay (Cumming 1991: 84-154) and at least superficially similar to *la* in Hokkien (Lin 2014: 83-122).

nuances *lah* reveals that it can equally well mark disapproval and emphasize the speaker's irritation, depending in part on the intonation (Goddard 1994).

The KVM data support the importance of context and suprasegmental features to interpret the function of *lah*. In examples (20-22), it conveys friendliness, light-heartedness or contentment. The propositions it modifies in these examples are of an assertive, affirmative or reassuring nature. In such cases, *lah* is lengthened and pronounced in a high-falling pitch.

20) *Best   lah   tempat ni.*
    good   PART place   DEM
    'This place is fantastic.'

21) *Ya   ja   lah!*
    yes PART PART
    'Of course!'

22) *Gambar ini   paling   cun   lah.*
    picture DEM   most   beautiful PART
    'This picture is the most beautiful one.'

In examples (23-25), conversely, *lah* expresses irritation, impatience, or disapproval. It is not lengthened, contains a falling pitch, and it is followed by a short pause.

23) *Dah,   cepat lah   pegi jumpa doktor!*
    PART   fast   PART go   meet   doctor
    'Go and see a doctor fast!'

24) *Cukup   lah,   aku   tak   nak   tengok   muka   awak,   faham?*
    enough   PART 1s   not   want   see   face   2s   understand
    'Enough, I don't want to see your face, understood?'

25) *Sebab   tu   lah,   aku   malas   nak   kuar.*
    because   DEM   PART   1s   lazy   FUT   go.out
    'That's exactly why I'm reluctant to go out.'

In examples (26-27), *lah* is used for the purpose of "friendly insults" or jibes.[7]

26) *Kau   ni   terer   lah!*
    2s   DEM   daring PART
    'You are absolutely amazing!'

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7   See Goddard (1994: 147-148) for a more in-depth discussion.

27) *Haha,   kau   poyo   lah   ek!*
    PART   2s   terrible PART   PART
    'Haha, you're so terrible!'

In imperative constructions, *lah* can likewise be used in seemingly contradictory ways; either to soften or to harden what is being said. In the former capacity, it often occurs in pleas, polite request or friendly encouragements (28-30). It is optionally lengthened and typically pronounced in a soft voice.

28) *Jangan   lah   marah, aku   main-main   ja.*
    don't   PART   angry 1s   RDP-play   PART
    'Please don't be angry, I was just joking around.'

29) *Tolong   lah,   aku   tak   reti   camna   nak   eksplen.*
    help   PART   1s   not   know   how   FUT   explain
    'Could you help me, I don't know how to explain it.'

30) *Korang   duduk lah   kat   sini   dulu.*
    2p   sit   PART   PREP   here   first
    'Why don't you take a seat over here first.'

In other contexts, however, *lah* emphasizes irritation or disapproval towards the imperative statement it follows (31-33). In this case it is often pronounced in a loud voice.

31) *Kalau   you   tak   suka,   keluar   lah,   watpa   tunggu   lagi?*
    if   2s   not   like   go.out   PART   for.what wait   more
    'If you don't like it, go away, what are you waiting for?'

32) *Belah   lah   you!*
    shatter PART   2s
    'Drop dead!'

33) *Wateber   lah,   aku   tak   kisah   lah.*
    whatever   PART   1s   not   story   PART
    'Whatever, I don't care.'

In interrogative statements, *lah* is optional and emphasizes the question word (34-36).

34) *Sapa   lah   tak   nak   aiskrim   kan?*
    who   PART   not   want   ice.cream   PART
    'Who wouldn't want ice cream, right?'

35) *Apsal   lah   pelik   sangat   perangai   dia   ni.*
    why   PART   strange very   behaviour   3s   DEM
    'Why is his behaviour so strange?'

36) *Sampai   bila   lah   nak   jadi   macam   ni?*
    until   when   PART   FUT   become   like   DEM
    'How long will things be like this?'

Lah can also occur as an independent intonational unit. In this case it functions as an interjection drawing the listener's attention to the utterance it precedes (37-38).

37) *Lah,   kau   nak   gak   ka?*
    PART   2s   want   PART   PART
    'So, you also want some?'

38) *Lah,   aku   cuma   nak   amik   gambar   aja.*
    PART   1s   only   want   take   picture   PART
    'Hey, I only wanted to take a picture.'

4. *ka*

The particle *ka* /kɤ/ – also written as *ke* or *ker* – turns declarative utterances into questions aimed to solicit a yes-or-no response (39-40).[8] It can also form negative yes-or-no questions (41-42).

39) *Saya   nampak   hodoh   ka   bila   pakai   spek?*
    1s   look   ugly   PART   when   wear   glasses
    'Do I look ugly with glasses on?'

40) *Gemuk   ka   aku?*
    fat   PART   1s
    'Am I fat?'

41) *Belum   tidur   ka?   Ingat   kat   aku   ka?*
    not.yet   sleep PART   think PREP   1s   PART
    'Aren't you sleeping yet? Thinking about me?'

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8   In classical Malay (and standard Malay), *-kah* is an optional question suffix (Cumming 1991: 51-53).

42) *Takda   orang   lain   ka?*
    not.have   people   other   PART
    'Is there no one else?'

Ka can also indicate that multiple possibilities are equally acceptable to the speaker (43-45).[9] In this construction, it can often be rendered into English as *or*.

43) *Cantik   ka   tak   ka   pakai   tudung   ka   tak*
    pretty   PART   not   PART   wear   veil   PART   not

    ka   sama   ja.
    PART   same   PART
    '[Whether she's] pretty or not, wearing a veil or not, it's all the same.'

44) *Aku   suka   menda   masam,   tom yam   ka,*
    1s   like   thing   sour   tom.yam   PART

    mempelam   ka.
    mango   PART
    'I like sour food, like tom yam or mangos.'

45) *Aku   tak   tau   maklumat   ni   betul   ka   tak.*
    1s   not   know   information   DEM   correct PART   not
    'I don't know whether this information is true or not.'

The particle *ka* cannot occur in imperative constructions, nor as an interjection.

5. kan

The addressee-related particle *kan* appears to be etymologically derived from *bukan* 'not'. It is extensively used in Malay and serves to establish common ground and build solidarity between speakers,[10] somewhat like *y'know* in English. As a marker of shared knowledge, it can be placed before (46-47) or after (48-49) the utterance it modifies.

46) *Kan   kita   pegi   tengok   sama-sama   taim   tu.*
    PART   3p.inc   go   see   together   time   DEM
    'After all, we had seen it together back then.'

47) *Kan   aku   dah   cakap   be-ratus-ratus   kali.*
    PART   1s   PART   say   QNT-RDP-hunderd   time
    'I've already said it hundreds of times.'

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[9]   See also *kek* in Jakartan Indonesian, which functions similarly (Sneddon 2006: 122).
[10]   This particle has been relatively well described across Malay varieties (Koh 1990: 83-84; Van Minde 1997: 97; Wouk 1998; Stoel 2005: 79-80; Sneddon 2006: 121-122; Sari 2008: 135-138).

48) *Sikit   ja   kan.*
    a.bit   PART   PART
    'It's only a bit [as you know].'

49) *Nak   tidur   dulu   lah   tu   kan.*
    want   sleep   first   PART   PART   PART
    'I'd like to have a rest first [as you can imagine].'

In utterance-final position, *kan* furthermore serves to request agreement or verification from the listener (50-52). As such it often functions as a question tag, which generally has a rising intonation and can be lengthened. This usage chiefly serves to reduce the distance between the speakers and is not always aimed to solicit a direct answer. Some speakers associate it with feminine speech.[11]

50) *Takpa   lah,   nak   buat   camna   kan.*
    nothing PART   FUT   do   how   PART
    'No problem, nothing we can do about it.'

51) *Tak   kisah   la   tu   kan?*
    no   story   PART   PART   PART
    'It's no big deal, right?'

52) *Ya   kan   aja   lah.*
    yes   PART   PART   PART
    'Well, okay then.'

In certain contexts, *kan* is also used to express insensitive comments. Here, it implies common knowledge between the speakers yet does not function as a solidarity marker (53-54).

53) *Nak   sangat   kan   ganggu   aku!*
    want   very   PART   disturb   1s
    'You really like to disturb me, don't you!?'

54) *Kau   jantan   kan …*
    2s   man   PART
    'You're supposed to be a man …'

The particle can occur as a separate intonational unit ('isn't it?'), but not in imperative constructions.

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[11]   This is different from Indonesian, in which the UFP kan does not exhibit clearly gendered patterns of usage (Wouk 1999).

6. ya

The affirmative particle *ya* /jɤ/ 'yes' – also written as *ye*, *yer* or *yek* – can be used as a question tag. As such, it can make a declarative statement into a question or soften an imperative, requesting in both cases the approval or affirmation of the listener.[12] As a question tag modifying a declarative statement, *ya* chiefly serves to confirm the speaker's suspicion (55-57).

55) *Mak　　dah　　keluar　ya?*
　　mother　PART　go.out　PART
　　'Mom has already gone out, hasn't she?'

56) *Korang　nak　　tau　　sangat　ya?*
　　2p　　　want　know　very　　PART
　　'You guys really want to know, don't you?'

57) *Model　lain　　dah　　takda　　　ya?*
　　model　other　PART　have.not　PART
　　'You're out of other models, aren't you?'

Ya is also used as a solidarity marker to form polite questions out of declarative statements. As such, it serves to reduce the distance between speakers and solicit an affirmative response (58-60).

58) *Aku　tidur　dulu　ya.*
　　1s　　sleep　first　PART
　　'I'll have some rest now, okay?'

59) *Saya　datang　nak　amik　gambar　ya.*
　　1s　　come　FUT　take　picture　PART
　　'I came to take a picture, okay?'

60) *Kita　duduk　kat　　sini　　ya.*
　　1p　　sit　　PREP　here　　PART
　　'We'll sit here, okay?'

The particle can also be used as a low-confidence marker, conveying that the speaker requests the listener's clarification of an insufficiently understood proposition (61-62). In this construction, *ya* follows the question word.

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[12] The same has been described for West Malaysian Malay (Koh 1992: 81-83), Jakartan Indonesian (Sneddon 2006: 128-129) and Indonesian in general (Wouk 2001; Sari 2011).

61) *Apsal   ya   ramai   sangat hari   ni …*
    Why   PART   crowded very   day   DEM
    'Why are there so many people today …'

62) *Macam mana ya   cara   nak   tambah tinggi?*
    like   what PART   way   FUT   add   tall
    'What should I do to get taller?'

In imperative constructions, *ya* softens a directive or request into a pseudo-question (63-65).

63) *Kirim   salam   kat   adik   ya.*
    send   regards PREP   younger.sibling PART
    'Will you say hi to your younger brother?'

64) *Lain   kali   jangan buat   lagi   ya.*
    other   time   don't   do   again PART
    'You won't do it anymore, okay?'

65) *Korang   kena   turun   kat   sini   ya.*
    2p   get   alight PREP   here   PART
    'This is where you guys should get off.'

Phrase-initially, *ya* can only be used in its propositional function (66-67).

66) *Ya   ja   lah!*
    yes PART   PART
    'Of course!'

67) *O   ya   ka,   baru   tau.*
    PART yes PART just.now know
    'Really? I never knew.'

4. Utterance-final pragmaticality

This section contains an overview of 17 additional particles used in KVM. As will be shown, their pragmaticality and grammaticality depend on their syntactic position. As will be demonstrated, these particles tend to have relatively more propositional functions in utterance-initial position and more discourse functions in utterance-final position.

1. *dah*

The particle *dah* is etymologically derived from *sudah* 'already, finished'. In colloquial Malay, its semantic properties are determined by its syntactic position. *Dah* forms a perfect tense phrase in pre-verbal position (*dah*+V = 'have+V.PF'), whereas it occupies a syntactic position above the tense phrase post-verbally and sentence-finally (Soh 2011). In the latter case, *dah* is typically translated into English as *already*. As observed by Soh (2011), pre-verbal *dah* can optionally be followed by another *dah*, while this is not possible for post-verbal *dah*. The following KVM examples corroborate these findings (68-69).

68) *Aku   dah   makan   dah   kat   rumah   tadi.*
    1s   PART   eat   PART   PREP   house   just.now
    'I've eaten at home just now.'

69) *You   siap   dah   homwok?*
    2s   finished   PART   homework
    'Have you already finished homework?'

Dah can also occur as an interjection, implying that the speaker has had enough of something (70-71).

70) *Dah   lah   tu!*
    PART   PART   PART
    'Knock it off!'

71) *Dah,   takyah   cita   banyak!*
    PART   no.need   tell   much
    'Enough, no need to talk much!'

Sentence-finally, *dah* conveys a range of pragmatic functions. It often follows utterances or directives that the speaker assumes the listener may find unpleasant. Hence, it also has undergone desemantization ("bleaching") from 'already' to the more abstract meaning of 'accept it already!'. In declarative statements it urges the listener to believe something (72-73), and in imperative statements to do or refrain from doing something (74-75).[13] In the latter context, it resembles the pragmatic use of *already* in English ('Stop it already!').

72) *I   takda   masa   dah   nak   pegi   pawagam*
    1s   have.not   time   PART   FUT   go   cinema
    'I have no time to go to the cinema.'

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[13]   In this regard it resembles *deh* in Jakartan Indonesian (Sneddon 2006: 118).

73) *Kalau   dia   tak   nak,   takyah   paksa   dah.*
    if   3s   not   want   no.need   force   PART
    'If he doesn't want it, you don't need to force him.'

74) *Sebat   ja   dah   mamat   tu!*
    Hit   PART   PART   guy   DEM
    'Just hit that guy already!'

75) *Jangan   nak   jadi   pompuan   dah.*
    don't   want   become   woman   PART
    'Stop trying to be a woman.'

2. *gak*

The additive particle *gak* – as well as its full form *jugak* – indicates similarity with something discussed previously. It follows the proposition it is associated with and can usually be translated into English as *also*, *too*, or *as well* (76-77).

76) *Kau   nak   pegi   gak   ka?*
    2s   want   go   PART   PART
    'Do you want to go as well?'

77) *Aku   ingin   gak   belanja   ngan   korang.*
    1s   wish   PART   shopping   with   2p
    'I would like to go shopping with you guys too.'

Gak also expresses that the adverbial phrase it follows possesses more of a certain quality than initially expected (78-79).

78) *Cun   gak   lah   dia   tu.*
    pretty   PART   PART   3s   PART
    'She's actually quite pretty.'

79) *Boleh   tahan   gak   dia   main   bola.*
    can   stand   PART   3s   play   ball
    'His soccer skills are not too bad.'

3. *ja*

The particle *ja* – also written as *je* and *jer* – is etymologically derived from *sahaja* and displays the intermediate forms *saja* and *aja*. It contains a semantic component of 'nothing else' and is typically translated into English as *just* or *only*. *Ja* and its equivalents *saja* and *aja* typically mitigate the proposition

they follow (80-81).[14]

80) *Cakap   macam   wat   tak   tau   ja!*
    talk   like   do   not   know PART
    'Just talk about it as if you don't know anything.'

81) *Aku   lambat   sikit   ja   sampai.*
    1s   late   a.little PART arrive
    'I'll arrive a tiny bit late.'

In other contexts, however, *ja* functions as an emphatic marker expressing irritation (82-83).[15] In such cases it is typically pronounced in a relatively loud voice and high-falling pitch.

82) *Sakit   kepala   ja   nak   pikir.*
    hurt   head   PART FUT   think
    'I just get a headache thinking about it.'

83) *Jangan   duk   komplen   makan   tak   best   ja.*
    don't   PROG complain   eat   not   good   PART
    'Stop complaining that the food isn't good enough.'

Ja can also occur in a partly reduplicated construction (Koh 1990: 214), following its full form *sahaja*. In this case, *ja* emphasizes the semantic component of 'nothing else' (84).

84) *Kalau   nak   buang   sampah   dalam   bilik   sahaja   ja.*
    if   want throw   rubbish inside room   PART   PART
    'If you want to throw away rubbish, do so in your room only.'

4. *jap*

The particle *jap*, as well as its fuller forms *kejap* and *sekejap* 'one moment', conveys that the phrase it modifies is assumed to be of short duration. It is typically used pre-verbally (85-86).

85) *Aircond   jap   ada   jap   takda.*
    AC   PART have PART have.not
    'The AC is turning on and off.'

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[14] More examples can be seen in Koh (1990: 212-215).
[15] Note that English *just* also exhibits this function (Aijmer 2000: 171-172).

86) *Jap lagi aku nak apdet dah.*
   PART more 1s   FUT update PART
   'I will update it in a bit.'

In post-verbal position, *jap* has a mitigating effect; the speaker expresses that a possible inconvenience experienced by the listener will soon be over (87).

87) *Tolong aku ni masak jap.*
   help 1s PART cook PART
   'Will you help me a sec with the cooking?'

5. *jom*

The exhortative particle *jom* urges the listener to do something with the speaker.[16] It can be placed before the utterance it modifies (88), after it (89), or simultaneously before and after (90).

88) *Jom kongsi pengalaman.*
   PART share experience
   'Let share our experiences.'

89) *Bro, duduk sini jom!*
   bro sit here PART
   'Let's sit here, bro!'

90) *Jom pegi KLCC jom.*
   PART go KLCC PART
   'Let's go to KLCC.'

Utterance-initially, *jom* is optionally reduplicated (91).

91) *Jom-jom, kita masuk keja awal sikit!*
   RDP-PART 1p enter work early a.bit
   'Let's go, we'll start working a bit early!'

6. *kot*

The UFP *kot*, also written as *kut*, marks a low degree of confidence in what is being said.[17] The particle is derived through grammaticalization from the adjective *takut* 'afraid' and has undergone semantic bleaching to 'one might fear that …' As an UFP, it expresses uncertainty, doubt, or the fear of negative

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[16]   As such, it is semantically similar to *yuk* in Jakartan Indonesian (Sneddon 2006: 130), *ayo* in Indonesian, and *ayuh* in formal Malay.
[17]   See Koh (1990: 78) for more examples.

consequences of the proposition it precedes (92-93) or follows (94-95).

92) *Kot   kitorang kena   denda.*
    PART 1p.inc   get   fine
    'We might get fined.'

93) *Kot   jumpa jodoh   kat   sana.*
    PART meet   match PREP   there
    'Perhaps you'll meet Mr. Right over there.'

94) *Takda   kot   yang   nak   beli.*
    have.not   PART REL   FUT   buy
    'What if nobody buys it ...'

95) *Mahal   sangat lah   tu   kot.*
    Expensive very   PART PART PART
    'That could be very expensive.'

For longer utterances, the particle is often reduplicated and placed utterance-initially (96-97).

96) *Kot-kot   boleh bantu   korang   dapat keja   tu.*
    RDP-PART   can   help   2p   get   work   DEM
    'She might be able to help you guys finding jobs.'

97) *Mana lah   tau   kot-kot   ada   orang   lain*
    which   PART   know RDP-PART have   person   other

    nak   cari.
    FUT   search
    'Who knows other people might search for it.'

Kot is rarely used in interrogative constructions, with the exception of rhetorical questions (98-99).

98) *Tak   reti   main bola   kot?*
    not   know play   ball   PART
    'Don't you know how to play football?'

99) *Takkan   pondan   kot?*
    won't   gay   PART
    'You're not gay, are you?'

The particle *kot* cannot occur in imperative constructions or as an interjection.

7. lak

The additive particle *lak*, as well as its full form *pulak*, indicates similarity with something discussed previously. Unlike *(ju)gak* mentioned above, the usage of *(pu)lak* can convey that the relation between the two events is perceived to be unexpected or infelicitous by the speaker (100-101).

100) *Dah   langgar   lari   pulak   tu.*
     PART   collide   run   PART   PART
     'He crashed his car but still drove away.'

101) *Sekarang   ni   dah   musim   durian,   takkan*
     now   DEM   PART   season   durian   won't

     tak   makan   lak!
     not   eat   PART
     'It's durian season; no way you won't be eating them too!'

Reflecting the same semantic core, *lak* can also be used pragmatically to express unexpected surprise (102-103).

102) *Lupa   lak   mana   dia.*
     forget   PART   where   3s
     'I totally forgot where she was.'

103) *Awak   lak   wat   apa   kat   sini?*
     2s   PART   do   what   PREP   here
     'What exactly are you doing here?'

8. meh

The particle *meh* has an exhortative function, like *jom* discussed previously. It conveys that the listener is expected to physically move towards the speaker, corresponding to *mari* in formal Malay and Indonesian. Like *jom*, *meh* can occur pre-verbally (104), post-verbally (105), or both simultaneously (106).

104) *Meh   akak   tolong.*
     PART   older.sister   help
     'Please come help me, sis.'

105) *Jumpa   kat   Shah Alam   meh.*
     Meet   PREP   Shah.Alam   come
     'Come meet us at Shah Alam.'

106) *Meh   sambung   keja   meh.*
      PART   continue   work   PART
      'Let's go back to work.'

9. *nah*

The particle *nah* facilitates turn-taking and can also be used to retain the listener's attention. It typically precedes the utterance it modifies (107-108).[18]

107) *Nah,   ni   gambar   aku   pakai   baju   kurung.*
      All right,   this   picture   1s   wear   dress   enclosed.
      'All right, this is a picture of me wearing a traditional Malay dress.'

108) *Nah   kau,   dah   kawin   dan   ada   anak …*
      PART   2s   PART   marry   and   have   kid
      'Look at you, all married and with children …'

Nah can also occur sentence-finally, expressing that speaker has nothing further to say and the listener is expected to do something (109-110).

109) *You   nak   keluar,   nah!*
      2s   want   go.outside   there
      'If you want to go outside, please do!'

110) *Boleh   lah   promot   kat   keng-kawan   nah.*
      can   PART   promote   PREP   RDP-friend   PART
      'You're welcome to promote it among your friends.'

10. *nak*

The frequently used particle *nak* appears to be etymologically derived from the verb *hendak* 'want'. Next to this literal meaning, it also functions as a temporal verbal auxiliary denoting imminent future (Koh 1990: 209). Sentence-finally, however, *nak* turns declarative statements into questions, inquiring whether the listener wants to do something together with the speaker (111-112).

111) *Kita   gi   jen-jalan   nak?*
      1p   go   RDP-walk   PART
      'We're going for a walk, shall we?'

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18   *Nah* can be used more specifically to express that the listener is about to receive something from the speaker (Koh 1990: 85). As in English, this could also be in the context of a fight (*take this!*).

112) *Esok   ja   kita   kuar   nak?*
     Tomorrow PART 1p.inc go.out want
     'We'll just go out tomorrow, shall we?'

11. *ni*

The main function of *ni*, as well as its full form *ini*, is a demonstrative pronoun marking proximity to the speaker. It typically refers to objects that are proximate in terms of location ('here') or time ('now'). As such, its range of functions is much broader than English *this*, with which it is typically translated. In reduplicated form, *ni* and its distal counterpart *tu* are frequently used in vivid demonstrations.[19] As an UFP, *ni* tends to be used in combination with first person pronouns, typically to convey irritation, disagreement, defiance, and related emotions (Shoho 2006).[20] The following KVM examples illustrate this usage (113-115).

113) *Camna   boleh jadi   camni   ni?*
     how   can   become like.this PART
     'How could it turn out like this?'

114) *Makan   se-biji   mana   cukup   ni!*
     eat   one-piece which   enough   PART
     'Eating only one won't be enough!'

115) *Kau   ni   apsal   muka   macam nak   cari   gaduh!*
     2s   PART why   face   like   want   search fight
     'Why does your face look like you're up for a fight!?'

Phrase-initially, *ni* is always used referentially (116-117).

116) *Ni   mamat yang masalah   tak   sudah-sudah.*
     DEM   guy   REL   problem   not   RDP-finished
     'This is the guy who keeps getting into trouble.'

117) *Ni   ja   lah   cerita-ku.*
     DEM   PART PART story-1s
     'This is all I have to say.'

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[19] See Gil (2005: 47-50) on Riau Malay and Van Engelenhoven (2008: 104) on Southwest Maluku Malay.
[20] A similar argument is made by Koh (1990: 188-191).

12. *pun*

The particle *pun* – also written as *pon* – is extremely common, versatile, and often poorly explained in Malay grammars.[21] In KVM, *pun* primarily functions as an additive particle, exhibiting in some contexts an inclusive meaning – that is, "an unordered set of contextually relevant values" (König 1991: 60) – and in others a scalar one. These constructions tend to be translated into English with conjunctive adverbs; *also* or *either* for inclusive interpretations (118) and *even* for scalar ones (119).

118) *I   pun   tak   pernah tengok filem   Bud Spencer   tu.*
     1s   PART   not   ever   see   movie   Bud Spencer   DEM
     'I've never seen that Bud Spencer movie either.'

119) *Menda   senang   pun   takleh   buat!*
     thing   easy   PART   cannot   do
     'Even the easy stuff you can't do!'

Utterance-finally, *pun* can also indicate that the phrase it modifies is surprising or contrary to the speaker's or listener's expectations (120-122).[22]

120) *Beli   tudung   mahal   takda   pun   orang   cakap   cantik.*
     buy   veil   expensive   have.not   PART   person say   pretty
     'I bought an expensive veil but nobody said it was pretty.'

121) *Aku   mana   reti   pun   main   bola?*
     1s   which   know   PART   play   ball
     'How could I have known how to play football?'

122) *Diorang   tau   pun   dari   gosip.*
     3p   know   PART   from   gossip
     'They know it only through gossip.'

This "counterintuitive" usage of *pun* also serves to assert that the speaker is correct and should be believed by the listener, who may hold a different conviction (123-125).[23]

123) *Tu   ja   lah   pun   yang   kita   ada.*
     DEM   PART   PART   PART   REL   1p   have
     'That's really all we have.'

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[21]   This particle is extensively used in classical Malay (Cumming 1991: 84-154) as well as colloquial Malay, in which it exhibits a wide variety of syntactic functions by itself or in combination with several other particles (Goddard 2001; Chambert-Loir forthcoming).
[22]   See Goddard (2001: 41-43) for more discussion and examples of this usage.
[23]   In this regard, it resembles the colloquial Indonesian UFP *kok* (Sneddon 2006: 122-123).

124) *Dia   tak   cakap   pun   kau   salah.*
     3s   not   say   PART 2s   wrong
     'She never said you're wrong.'

125) *Aku   tak   nak   pun   pegi   sekolah!*
     1s   not   want PART go   school
     'But I don't want to go to school!'

The particle *pun* cannot form imperative constructions or interjections.

13. *punya*

The possessive marker *punya* 'have' – from classical Malay *empu-nya* '(is) the owner' – can be used pragmatically as an UFP, indicating that the utterance it follows is absolutely obvious in the eyes of the speaker. This usage of *punya* also implies that the listener should have known the proposition it follows (126-128).[24] *Punya* is sometimes pronounced as /pia/ or /mia/ in KVM, but is rarely spelled as such.

126) *Kalau   tak   paksa,   mesti   tak   datang   punya.*
     if   not   force   definitely not   come   PART
     'He'll definitely never show up if you don't force him.'

127) *Ini   budak   macam   takda   lesen   punya …*
     DEM   kid   like   have.not   license   PART
     'That guy obviously doesn't have a driver's license …'

128) *Memang   akak   akan   ikut   punya.*
     indeed   older.sister will   join   PART
     'Of course my older sister will join us.'

When modifying an adverbial phrase, *punya* occurs utterance-initially and functions as an intensifier of the adjective it modifies (129).[25]

129) *Tengok   lah   punya   gemuk   tak   muat   gambar.*
     look   PART   PART   fat   not   fit   picture
     'Look how fat they are, they don't even fit in the same picture.'

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[24]   This is discussed in detail by Koh (1990: 78-79), Yap (2007), and Soh (2015).
[25]   This usage is not restricted to KVM. It has also been described for Ambon Malay (Van Minde 1997: 197), Manado Malay (Stoel 2005: 45-46), West Malaysian Malay (Yap 2007), Sabah Malay (Hoogervorst 2011: 68), and Papua Malay (Kluge 2014: 412), among others.

In other contexts, *punya* functions as a possessive marker placed between the possessor and the possessed item (130). The latter can be omitted if clear from the context (131).

130) *You   punya awek   takda   ka?*
     2s   POS   girlfriend   have.not PART
     'Your girlfriend wasn't there?'

131) *Nah,   aku   punya kat   mana?*
     PART 1s   POS   PREP where
     'So, where is mine?'

Along similar lines, *punya* can modify adverbial phrases in the head-initial position (132). If clear from the context, the head noun can be omitted (133).

132) *Apa   punya kawan lah   kau   ni!*
     what   POS   friend PART 2s   PART
     'What kind of friend are you supposed to be!'

133) *Mana   nak   dapat yang sedap punya kat   sini?*
     where FUT get   REL tasty POS   PREP here
     'Where can I get the tastiest ones over here?'

Related to the above usage, *punya* can also link relative clauses to noun phrases (Koh 1990: 191-198; Yap 2007). This function might reflect influence from conventionalized foreigner talk (*bahasa pasar*). It has been described in more detail by Pakir (1986: 137-162), Aye (2005: 253-266), and Yap (2007), who demonstrate that such usage of the possessive marker ultimately goes back to Hokkien.

14. tah

The UFP *tah*, like *kot* discussed above, marks a low degree of confidence in what is being said. Etymologically, it appears to be related to standard Malay *entah* 'who knows; I don't know' and the (infrequently used) interrogative particle *-tah*. This usage is illustrated in examples (134-135).

134) *Tah   lah,   tu   ja   kot?*
     PART PART DEM PART PART
     'Dunno, maybe only that one?'

135) *Tah   ada   ka   tak   orang   ingat   hari jadi aku.*
     PART have PART not   person   remember birthday 1s
     'I'm not sure if there's anybody who has remembered my birthday.'

Tah can also be used in the context of a rhetorical question, in which case it follows the interrogative segment (136-138).

136) *Camna   tah   boleh lupa   nak   beli   nasi?*
how   PART can   forget FUT   buy   rice
'How could I forget to buy rice?'

137) *Apsal   tah   tetiba   ja   aku   te-rasa   rindu*
why   PART suddenly PART 1s   STAT-feel   longing

kat   dia?
PREP 3s
'Why did I suddenly feel a sense of longing for him?'

138) *Ada   bapa   orang   tah   kat   sini*
have   how.many   person   PART PREP here

aku   pun   tak   tau   lah.
1s   PART   not   know PART
'I have no idea how many people live here.'

In declarative statements, *tah* conveys the speaker's uncertainty about the proposition it modifies. In this case the particle precedes the interrogative phrase (139-140). Another *tah* may optionally follow it (141-142).

139) *Aku   ni   tah   sejak   bila   suka   makan*
1s   DEM PART since   when   like   eat

cencaluk.
fermented.shrimps
'I've liked eating fermented shrimps for some time now.'

140) *Tah   napa   tetiba   aku   nak   komen.*
PART why   suddenly 1s   want   comment
'For some reason I suddenly felt like commenting.'

141) *Budak   tu   dah   pegi tah   kat   mana   tah.*
kid   DEM PART go   PART PREP where   PART
'That kid has gone to some place.'

142) *Dia   nak   kawin   tah   ngan   siapa   tah.*
3s   FUT   marry   PART with   who   PART
'She's going to marry some person.'

In doubled form, *tah* can be placed before an utterance to indicate that its propositional value is possible but not certain to the speaker (143-144).

143) *Tah-tah   ada   yang   masuk spital   ni.*
RDP-PART   have   REL   enter   hospital   PART
'Some people may have ended up in the hospital.'

144) *Eh,   tah-tah   mamat   tu   lagi   kuat   dari   kau!*
PART RDP-PART guy   DEM more strong   from 2s
'Hey, that guy might just be stronger than you!'

15. tak

Tak is a commonly used negative particle in KVM, typically translated into English as *no* or *not* (145-146).

145) *Tak,   aku   tak   nak!*
not   1s   not   want
'No! I don't want to!'

146) *Tak   lah   kot.*
not   PART   PART
'It doesn't seem so.'

It can also function as a question tag, transforming declarative statements into interrogative ones. The questions so formed are meant to be either affirmed or denied, with *tak* following the element being questioned (147-149). The particle *tak* does not occur in negative questions, in which case *ka* must be used. It can also not be used in imperative constructions.

147) *Amacam,   nampak   real   tak?*
like.what   look   real   PART
'How is it, does it look real?'

148) *Cun   tak   awek   ni?*
pretty   PART girl   DEM
'Is this girl pretty or not?'

149) *Senang   tak   nak   masuk   UKM?*
easy   PART FUT   enter   UKM
'Is it easy to enter the National University of Malaysia?'

The post-verbal use of *tak* in questions often reduces the distance between the speakers and adds a dimension of politeness (150-152).

150) *Agaknya ada tak orang nak komen?*
    likely   have   PART person FUT comment
    'Is it likely that someone will comment?'

151) *Boleh tak kau bagi detil sikit pasal menda ni?*
    can   PART 2s   give   detail   a.bit   about   thing   DEM
    'Could you give a bit of detail about the issue?'

152) *Masih ingat tak masa kecik-kecik dulu?*
    still   remember PART time   RDP-little first
    'Do you still remember the time when you were little?'

16. *tau*

In its original sense, *tau* means 'to know'. It can also be used as an emotive particle, indicating that the speaker believes the listener should already know what is being said. The particle conveys a sense of irritation that this turns out not to be the case; 'how could you not know this?'. In this usage, *tau* follows the utterance it modifies (153-155).

153) *Jangan se-kali-kali lewat tau!*
    don't   one-RDP-time pass.by PART
    'Don't ever show yourself here!'

154) *Keja kat sini memang best lah tau.*
    work PREP here   indeed   good   PART PART
    'It's definitely great to work here!'

155) *Susah nak dapat kawan macam ini tau.*
    hard   FUT find   friend   like   DEM PART
    'How hard it is to find a friend like this …'

Tau retains its propositional character in all other types of phrases (156-158), where it functions as a verb.

156) *Tak cuba tak tau kan.*
    not   try   not   know PART
    'You don't know until you try, right?'

157) *Kita   harap   lah   yang   belum   tau*
     1p   hope   PART   REL   not.yet   know

     tu   dah   tau.
     DEM   PART   know
     'We hope that those who didn't know it will know by now.'

158) *Korang   tau   tu   ek!*
     2p   know   DEM   PART
     'You knew that, guys!'

17. *tu*

In its function as a demonstrative, *tu* – as well as its full form *itu* – marks distance between the speaker and the referred object in terms of location ('there') or time ('then'). Like *ni* discussed previously, *tu* can be used non-referentially to convey the speaker's irritation and other negative emotions towards the utterance it follows. As such, the UFP *tu* is less versatile and can occur in fewer contexts than *ni*, as it modifies objects that are distant to the speaker.[26] Consider the following examples (159-161).

159) *Camna   tu   nak   atasi?*
     how   PART   FUT   handle
     'How should we handle it?'

160) *Dia   tu   tak   pernah   pun   datang   rumah   aku!*
     3s   PART   not   ever   PART   come   house   1s
     'He's never even come to my house!'

161) *Tengok   lah   tu   diorang   buat   apa!*
     look   PART   PART   3p   do   what
     'Look what they have done!'

Utterance-initially, *tu* can only function as a demonstrative (162-163).

162) *Tu   lah   kan,   kita   dah   kena   tipu.*
     DEM   PART   PART   1p   PART   get   trick
     'There you have it, we just got scammed.'

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[26]   This is shown in more detail in Shoho (2006). A similar argument is made by Koh (1990: 188-191).

163) *Tu   takleh   nak   makan!*
     DEM   cannot   FUT   eat
     'That's something you shouldn't eat!'

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Previous studies on Malay and Malaysian/Singaporean English varieties have treated UFPs, also known under many other names, as a discrete word class. This article has tried to demonstrate on the basis of evidence from Klang Valley Malay that most UFPs – with the exception of *ka* and *kot* – exhibit semantically related homophones belonging to other word classes, thus effectively representing a "continuum of pragmaticality".[27] To understand the broad range of meanings expressed by these particles, it is therefore crucial to take into account their diachronic evolution and associated processes of semantic bleaching. Almost every particle in KVM has become monosyllabic (or has a monosyllabic equivalent) and polysemous, displaying semantic meanings alongside abstract pragmatic meanings. As such, they cannot be understood as belonging to a closed word class. The UFPs outlined in this study display ongoing processes of grammaticalization towards particlehood and pragmaticalization towards discourse functions.[28] These overlapping properties are provisionally outlined in Table 1.

Several factors need to be taken into account systematically to determine whether – in KVM as well as other languages – a linguistic unit functions as an UFP in a given context. These include the particle's intonation and syllabicity, its syntactic position, the degree of non-pragmatic information it adds to the proposition, and the degree of referentiality in the case of *ni* and *tu*. A corpus-based approach constitutes a logical next step to develop these insights beyond what this study has been able to cover. Doing so would provide better opportunities to solicit the feedback of native speakers. A corpus of spontaneous language would also ideally contain quantifiable data to detect common patterns of co-occurrence and link frequency of usage to gender, age, and possibly education and ethnicity. As regards the latter, this study has not included UFPs solely in use among Chinese speakers of Malay – such as *mah*, *meh*, *lor*, and *liao* – but their occurrence is not to be neglected in future research.

[27]   Term taken from Crible (2017: 101). Also see Fischer (2006: 3) on the need to examine homophones and other features to arrive at a fuller understanding of UFPs more generally.
[28]   See Van Bogaert and Colleman (2013) on the former and Diewald (2011) and Degand and Evers-Vermeul (2015) on the latter.

	syllabicity		possible syntactic position					possible construction (in utterance-final position)					possible pragmatic usage (in utterance-final position)						possible propositional usage		
	monosyllabic	disyllabic	pre-verbal	post-verbal	pre- and post-verbal	reduplicated	separate unit	declarative	open question	Y/N-question	imperative	exhortative	reduce distance	mark focus	express irritation	express uncertainty	express surprise	assume familiarity	adverbial	verbal	demonstrative
ah	X			X			X	X	X		X				X						
dah	X		X	X	X		X	X			X								X		
ek	X			X				X	X		X		X								
gak	X	(X)		X				X									X		X		
ja	X			X		(X)		X							X						
jap	X		X	X			X	X					X								
jom	X		X	X	X	X	X					X	X								
ka	X			X						X											
kan	X		X	X			X				X		X				X				
kot	X		X	X		X		X								X					
lah	X			X			X	X			X		X	X	X						
lak	X	(X)		X				X							X		X		X		
meh	X		X	X	X		X					X	X							(X)	
nah	X		X	X			X					X									
nak	X		X	X			X				X										
ni	X			X			X	X	X						X						X
pun	X			X				X									X		X		
punya	(X)	X	X	X			X	X										X		X	
tah	X		X	X		X	X	X								X					
tak	X		X	X			X			X			X								
tau	X			X			X	X							X		X			X	
tu	X			X			X	X	X						X						X
ya	X			X			X			X	X		X								

Table 1. Utterance-final particles and their characteristics in Klang Valley Malay.

GLOSSING CONVENTIONS

Affix boundaries are indicated by a hyphen (-). Multiword glosses are separated by periods (like.this). The following glossing conventions are used:

1	first-person
2	second-person
3	third-person
DEM	demonstrative
FUT	future marker
inc	plural inclusive
p	plural
PART	particle
PF	perfect
POS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PROG	progressive
QNT	quantifier
RDP	reduplication
REL	relative marker
s	singular
STAT	stative
V	verb

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