

Phonological structure of Indonesian abbreviations “singkatan”

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In this paper, I explore the phonological structure of Indonesian abbreviations, particularly those often referred to as “singkatan”.

Abbreviations, which include both acronyms and shortened forms, are ubiquitous in Bahasa Indonesia, so much so that whole dictionaries of abbreviations exist. These are a highly productive part of the language, with new expressions constantly being coined, e.g. *telkomsel* < *telekomunikasi seluler* ‘cellular telecommunications’. Acronyms include those where the initials of each word of an expression are put together and pronounced as a word, e.g. *SIM* [sm] < *surat izin mengemudi* ‘driver’s license’ and those where the initials of each word in an expression are pronounced as a series of letters, so-called “initialisms”, e.g. *DKI* [de-ka-i] < *daerah khusus ibu kota* ‘capitol city special area’. Shortened forms, or *singkatan*, involve parts (usually syllables) of a series of words in an expression, being put together into a word, e.g. *cerpen* < *cerita pendek* ‘short story’. There are also mixed forms, e.g. *Penal* < *penerangan Angkotan Laut*, ‘Naval Information Office’. It is *singkatan* and mixed forms that are our primary focus. *Singkatan* are analyzed by Stevens (1994) as a type of truncation, which brings them in line with other cross-linguistic patterns of productive morphology.

There are two aspects of the phonological structure that are relevant for understanding how *singkatan* are formed: 1. The pattern of truncation used to identify the syllable(s) or sound(s) from each word in the base that are used in the abbreviation: I consider factors—both phonological and otherwise—which account for which part of the word is used. 2. The resulting word form of these shortenings: In this regard, I consider the degree to which the resulting “words” respect canonical word patterns, in terms of syllable structure, canonical word shape, stress placement, and distribution of vowels. In longer forms, I also consider whether they function as long monomorphemic words or compounds.

Data for this investigation come from Parsidi (1992) *Kamus Akronim Inisialisme dan Singkatan* (1992) and Stevens (2004) *A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary*, which includes extensive abbreviations.