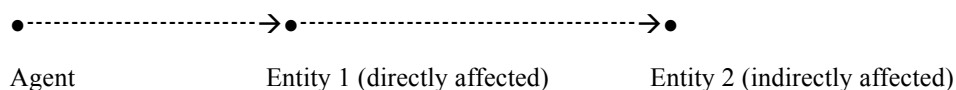# The Semantic Function of the Suffix –*kan* with "Three-place" Bases

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To explain the various uses (causative, benefactive, and instrumental) of the suffix –*kan*, Cole and Son (2004) postulate the syntactic function to indicate the syntactic licensing of an argument in the argument structure that is not licensed syntactically by the base verb as the core function of this suffix. Although this is one of the primary functions of the suffix -*kan*, we also need to set a semantic function that works only with bases denoting "three-place" situations such as type (A) "giving X to Y" (e.g., *beri* "give," *kirim* "send," *bayar* "pay"), or type (B) "applying X to Y" or "manipulating X and affecting Y" (e.g., *lempar* "throw," *kena* "put on," *hambur* "scatter"). These two types can be generalized as situations that have two candidates for the referent of undergoer NP, that is, two entities that are affected in the causal chain that Croft (1991) proposes.

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Agent   Entity 1 (directly affected)   Entity 2 (indirectly affected)

When the base denotes this type of situation, –*kan* can be attached to it regularly, and perform the function of indicating that the undergoer NP expresses entity 1, that is, the entity that is directly affected (theme, instrument). (The suffix –*i* has a parallel function, indicating that the undergoer NP expresses entity 2, that is, the entity indirectly affected.)

(1) *Ayah mengirim-kan uang* (entity 1) *kepada   saya* (entity 2)

   father AV+send-kan money   to   1SG   "Father sent me money."

(2) *Ayah   mengirim-i saya* (entity 2) *uang* (entity 1).

   father AV+send-I   1SG   money   "As above"

The distribution of –*kan* only can be explained by the combination of this semantic function and the syntactic function suggested by Cole and Son (2004), and when the two functions overlap, an ambiguity arises. In example (3), -*kan* performs the syntactic function licensing the beneficiary NP, that is, the unmarked choice made irrespective of the semantics of the base, while in example (4) it performs a semantic function that works selectively, depending on the semantics of the base, indicating the semantic role (entity 1, instrument) of undergoer NP.

(3) *Dia menulis-kan ayah surat.* "He wrote a letter for his father."

(4) *Dia menulis-kan pensil buntul.* "He wrote with a blunt pencil."

Croft, William. 1991. Syntactic Categories and Grammatical Relations. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Cole, Peter, and Son, Min-Jeong. 2004. The Argument Structure of Verbs with the Suffix –*kan* in Indonesian. Oceanic Linguistics, volume 43. No.2. pp. 339-363.