

Information status in standard Indonesian

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This study will describe the strategy that standard Indonesian employs to code information status in NPs. The following points, which are observed across languages, also apply to standard Indonesian: A new entity is expressed by an unmarked form of a lexical NP, while a given entity tends to be marked by a pronominal suffix, free pronoun, lexical noun with a demonstrative, or demonstrative pronoun, or is not overtly expressed.

This study aims to elucidate the precise conditions in which each coding device is employed by observing its occurrences in the text of the newsletter “Kenshu-sei no Tomo [Technical intern trainees mate]” aimed at intern trainees working in Japan. The newsletter is available in five languages, including standard Indonesian and English, and includes articles of various topics and genres, such as an introduction to seasonal events in Japan, a recipe for traditional food, and folktales. An analysis of the text suggests the following two points on the marking of “givenness.”

(i) A referent that can be considered given by the previous context or general knowledge, which is often marked by the definite article in English, normally occurs in an unmarked form in standard Indonesian.

(ii) A referent that is already explicitly given in a previous part of the text is normally marked by a personal pronoun when it has the semantic relation of possessor to the other entity.

Example (1) is the beginning of a recipe for roast corn: (a) is the Indonesian text, and (b) is the corresponding English text.

In the first sentence of the recipe, an NP expressing “the corn,” one of the ingredients, occurs without any marking of givenness in Indonesian, though it is listed above the main text of the recipe as an ingredient; it is, however, marked by the definite article in the corresponding English text. The same referent, the corn, is explicitly marked in the same sentence as a possessor of the other referents, *kumis* ‘silk’ and *kulit* ‘husk,’ after it is explicitly introduced as the subject of the same clause.

(1) a. [Bahan (untuk 2 buah)] Jagung = 2 buah, gula = 2 sdt, kecap shoyu = 2 sdm

[Cara memasak] 1. Jagung-ø dibuang bagian kumis dan kulit-nya, lalu dibungkus dengan saran wrap, dan dimasak dengan oven range sekitar 3 menit, atau direbus di air garam selama 5 menit.

b. [Ingredients (for two)]

2 ears of corn, 2 tsp sugar, 2 tbsp soy sauce

[Preparation] 1. Remove **the** husk and silk from **the** corn. Either plastic-wrap **the** corn and microwave it for about 3 minutes, or boil it in salty water for about 5 minutes.
