

Nominal predicate constructions in Indonesian

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This study deals with nominal predicate constructions in standard Indonesian. The approach taken is a corpus-based approach. Payne (2008: 114) mentions that predicate nominals typically express the notions of proper inclusion as in *He is a teacher* and equation as in *He is my father*. Indonesian has at least two ways to express these notions. The common way is to place the two noun phrases side by side with nothing between or *NP NP juxtaposition* as in (1).

- (1) *Dia guru.*
3SG teacher
'She is a teacher.' (Sneddon et al. 2010: 242)

The other way is with a copula intervening the two noun phrases as in English 'to be'. Many Indonesian grammarians agree that *adalah* and *ialah* are copulas. However, the difference between the two copulas is still unclear. Sneddon et al. (2010: 246) and Mintz (2002: 22-23) state that the two forms are interchangeable except that *ialah* only occurs after third person subjects.

Some grammarians seem to agree that *merupakan* can be considered as a copula or expressing the concept of 'to be' (Alwi et al. 2014: 359, Mintz 2002: 425), while others such as Sneddon et al. (2010: 247) do not. In addition, some grammarians include *menjadi* as copulative or functioning as a copula (Macdonald 1976: 94, 132) or expressing the concept of 'to be' (Mintz 2002: 423-425), while some such as Sneddon et al. (2010: 247) regard it as a full verb and not a copula. In my observation, there exists some differences between *NP NP juxtaposition*, *NP adalah NP*, *NP ialah NP*, *NP merupakan NP*, and *NP menjadi NP* constructions in terms of syntax and relational meanings.

- (2) *Ikan yang *Ø/adalah/*ialah/merupakan/menjadi hidangan istimewa restoran itu enak.*
fish REL (COP) dish special restaurant that delicious
'Fish, which is the special dish of that restaurant, is delicious.' (based on example 6 in Mintz 2002: 60)

A parallel English-Indonesian text data from Nanyang Technological University Multilingual Corpus (NTU-MC) (Tan and Bond 2012)¹ which contains 2,197 Indonesian sentences is employed to show how different factors act as cues to the use of juxtaposition construction and copula constructions to express predicate nominals in Indonesian.

Abbreviations: 3SG = third person singular, COP = Copula, REL = Relativizer

References

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¹<http://compling.hss.ntu.edu.sg/ntumc/>