

Indication of Plurality in Indonesian as Observed in Indonesian School Textbooks

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It is widely known that Indonesian does not have the grammatical category of number, but plurality of entities may be optionally marked by reduplication of a noun base. Sneddon et al. (2010: 20-21) suggests that a noun is not usually reduplicated unless it is unclear from context whether one or more than one is referred to and then only if this is important to what the speaker wishes to convey. But Shiohara (2011), based on the elicited data, argues that when the referent of the NP is demonstrated visually or linguistically, plural marking nearly obligatorily occurs, even though the number of the entity is clear from the context.

In this study the author will make attempts to verify the proposal above based on the written data. Observation of data taken from Indonesian textbooks for elementary school students appears to support the proposal. (1) and (2) are typical examples of plural marking for visually or linguistically demonstrated entities.

(1) *Tuliskan **nama-nama benda** yang ada di kelasmu!*

“Write out **the names of things** which are found in your class room.”

(2) *Jawablah **pertanyaan-pertanyaan** di bawa ini.*

1. *Siapa yang melakukan percakapan di telepon?*

2. *Apa tujuan Oki menelepon Nayla?....*

“Answer to **these questions** given below. 1. Who are talking on the telephone, 2. What is the purpose for Oki to call Nayla?...”

A few exceptional cases are also discussed.

References

- Sneddon, James Neil, Alexander Adelaar, Dwi N. Djenaar, and Michael C. Ewing. 2010. *Indonesian: A Comprehensive Grammar*. Australia/ New York: Routledge.
- Shiohara, Asako. 2011. Noun Reduplication and Indication of Plurality in Indonesian. Paper read at ISMIL 15, 24-26 June 2011, Malang, East Java, Indonesia.