

Reduplication in Malay/Indonesian – a Diachronic Perspective

This paper compares the use of full reduplication in Classical Malay texts with the modern use (both modern Malay and modern Indonesian). We compare a sample of Classical Malay texts included in the *Malay Concordance Project* with the modern usage, using the SEAlang Library corpora for Malay and Indonesian and native speaker's intuitions. Nur Hairiana (2012), a preliminary study, found that verbal reduplication in Classical Malay texts is almost identical to the modern use. On the other hand, nominal reduplication in Classical Malay texts (dating from 1350s-1630s) is mainly used to indicate diversity, suggesting that the use of nominal reduplication to mark nominal plurality may be a more recent development, as suggested in Gonda (1949:179) and backed in Simatupang (1983).

The function of reduplication in Malay has attracted much attention since Gonda's (1949) survey. Rubino (2011) and Himmelmann (2011) state that reduplication is a very common process in Austronesian languages, often coming in several types (full, partial). In Malay/Indonesian, only full reduplication is productive, while in its closest Western-Malayo Polynesian relatives such as Minangkabau, Lampung, Madurese, Javanese, Madurese, or Balinese, both full and partial reduplication are productive (Rubino 2011).

Indonesian reference grammars such as Macdonald (1976: 31-36) and Sneddon et al. (2010: 18-26) state that reduplication of verbs indicates variety, multiple occurrence, or randomness; reduplication of a noun denotes simple plurality, and sometimes also variety. The conditions, under which a noun has to undergo reduplication, include its referential properties and context (i.e. the absence of other clues about number).

There is an ongoing discussion about the referential properties of nouns in Indonesian: the distribution of reduplicated forms and their combinatory properties with classifiers and quantifiers poses some challenges for the theories of the semantics of numeral classifiers and plurality (Chung 2000; Dalrymple and Mofu 2012). While this discussion is still unresolved, Chung (2000:168) rejects the possibility of recent development of singular-plural contrast in Indonesian by examining the mid 19th century *Hikayat Abdullah* and showing that reduplication is frequently used to record plural reference (contra Gonda 1949 and Simatupang 1983).

In our paper, we will examine whether Chung's (2000) rejection of diachronic change can stand a closer scrutiny. We will examine ten Classical Malay texts (5 of known origin, 5 of unknown origin) covering the period of 1350s to 1780s and relate our findings to previous work on grammaticalization of reduplication in Indonesian (Lander 2003).

References

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Malay and Indonesian Corpora

- MCP: Malay Concordance Project, Australian National University.
(url: <http://mcp.anu.edu.au/Q/mcp.html>)
- SLIC: SEALang Library [Indonesian Text Corpus](http://sealang.net/indonesia/corpus.htm).
(url: <http://sealang.net/indonesia/corpus.htm>)
- SLMC: SEALang Library Malay Text Corpus,
(url: <http://sealang.net/malay/corpus.htm>)

Classical Malay texts sampled

<i>period</i>	<i>origin</i>	<i>text</i>	<i>words</i>
1356 (1612 revised)	Johor	Sejarah Melayu	94,069
1350-1400	unknown	Hikayat Pandawa Lima	85,722
before 1600	unknown	Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain	118,322
1600s	Aceh	Syair Hamzah Fansuri Hikayat Aceh	37,933
before 1633	unknown	Hikayat Seri Rama	96,123
1650s	unknown	Hikayat Ibrahim ibn Adham	26,095
1700	Bima	Cerita Asal Bangsa Jin	10,385
1700s	unknown	Hikayat Hang Tuah	172,332
1730	Kelantan	Hikayat Patani	21,335
1780s	Perak	Misa Melayu	34,489