

A compositional analysis of Malay anaphoric expressions

Previous studies (e.g. Cole and Hermon 2005) treat the Malay anaphoric expressions ‘*diri* + pronoun’ and ‘*diri* + pronoun + *sendiri*’ as single lexical items. This paper demonstrates that it is not only possible but empirically more desirable to analyze them compositionally. A compositional analysis enables a systematic description of a wider range of anaphoric expressions in Malay, including those which have received little attention in the literature.

I claim that *diri* is an NP that takes a possessor argument and that ‘*diri* DP’ denotes the DP’s physical self, which is virtually identical to the DP itself because one’s body, constituting his/her physical self, is the entire whole inalienably possessed by him/her. *Diri* meaning ‘physical self’ is evidenced by expressions like *diri dan jiwa/batin* ‘body and soul’, where *diri* is contrasted with the mental self of an individual.

I also claim that Malay has a null unspecified possessive pronoun (*pro*). This pronoun is comparable to *one’s* in English, and is a part of the pronoun paradigm (A). Where anaphoric expressions are concerned, *pro* occurs in two contexts. First, it occurs as a possessor argument of *diri* (B). Second, it combines with the intensifier *sendiri* ‘alone, own’ (C). Headed by possessive pronouns, the forms in (C) may occur as the possessor argument of *diri*, as in (D).

	Non-focussed	Focussed (<i>sendiri</i>)
Non-emphatic	(A) <i>pro/saya/awak/-nya</i> ‘one’s/my/your/his’	(C) { <i>pro/saya/awak/-nya</i> } <i>sendiri</i> ‘{one’s/my/your/his} own’
Emphatic (<i>diri</i>)	(B) <i>diri</i> { <i>pro/saya/awak/-nya</i> } ‘{one’s/my/your/his} physical self’	(D) <i>diri</i> { <i>pro/saya/awak/-nya</i> } <i>sendiri</i> ‘{one’s/my/your/his} own physical self’

***Diri*.** When *diri* appears to occur by itself, the meaning is generic as in (1a), and not one of simple reflexivity as in (1b). This generic meaning is due to the null unspecified pronoun *pro* accompanying *diri*. A VP containing *diri* describes an event that is inherently self-directed. *Memukul diri* ‘to hit oneself’ thus describes a self-hitting action conducted for specific purposes (e.g. religious rituals), but not incidental self-hitting. This meaning is thought to arise as a result of *diri* semantically incorporating into the verb, similar to the Malagasy reflexive *tena* ‘body’ discussed by Paul (2004).

- (1) a. Siti tidak lalai menjaga kecantikan/maruah *diri*.
‘Siti does not fail to take care of her beauty/dignity.’
b. *Siti mengambil gambar *diri*.
For: ‘Siti took a picture of herself.’

***Diri* + DP.** In my analysis, this pattern is an emphatic form of the possessor DP (‘DP X-self’), whether the DP is a pronoun (e.g. *dirinya*) or not (e.g. *diri lelaki itu*). Previous analyses miss the commonality between the two cases, as they disregard the latter and treat the former non-compositionally. The well-known fact that ‘*diri* + pronoun’ behaves like a possessive pronoun with respect to binding comes as no surprise, because it *is* a kind of possessive pronoun.

(*Diri* +) DP + *sendiri*. Forms containing the intensifier *sendiri* ‘alone, own’, i.e. ‘DP + *sendiri*’ (2a) and ‘*diri* + DP + *sendiri*’ (2b), are bound locally. This is not a property of these forms as a whole but one of *sendiri* alone, which requires a local antecedent (Alsagoff 1992).

- (2) a. Ali_i kata Siti_j mengambil gambar {*sendiri*_{*i/j/*k}/-nya *sendiri*_{*i/j/*k}}.
‘Ali said Siti took a picture of herself.’ [*sendiri* = *pro sendiri*]
b. Ali_i kata Siti_j mengambil gambar {*diri sendiri*_{*i/j/*k}/ *diri*-nya *sendiri*_{*i/j/*k}}.
‘Ali said Siti took a picture of herself.’ [*diri sendiri* = *diri pro sendiri*]

References

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