Verb Subcategorization: *-kan* and *-i* suffixing verbs in Malay and Indonesian

The *-kan* and *-i* suffixes are often discussed together in literature because of their close relationship and ability to be used interchangeably. Their functions have been treated in detail by a number of scholars (Sneddon 1996, Voskuil 1996, Arka 1993, Cole and Son 2004). The general consensus appears to be that the behavior for most verbs are predictable, but a number of patterns exist. The first pattern, illustrated in (1a-b) shows a benefactive~iterative alternation, where the verb associated with *-kan* takes adds a benefactor argument encoded either directly after the verb or in an *untuk*-PP. The *-i* verb has an iterative reading.

(1a) *Ali*   *mem-baca-**kan***   *surat*   *itu*   *(untuk ibu-nya)*
      Ali   meN-read-**kan**   letter   that   (for   mother-3SG)
      'Ali reads the letter (for his mother)'

(1b) *Ali*   *mem-baca-**i***   *surat*   *itu*
      Ali   meN-read-**i**   letter   that
      'Ali reads the letter over and over again'

In the second pattern, both *-kan* and *-i* verb differ in their argument structure. The *-kan* verb takes three arguments (agent, theme and recipient/benefactive) but the last can only be encoded as an *untuk-* or *pada*-PP. The *-i* verb demotes the agent into a *dari*-PP and casts the benefactive as its subject.

(2a) *Ayah*   *me-waris-**kan***   *harta-nya*   *kepada*   *Ali*
      Dad   meN-bequeath-**kan**   fortune-3SG   to   Ali
      'Dad bequeaths his fortune to Ali'

(2b) Ali   *me-waris-**i***   harta   ayah-nya
      Ali   meN-inherit-**i** fortune   dad-3SG
      'Ali inherits his dad's fortune'

Other patterns exist, and the purpose of our paper is to describe them systematically for Malay and Indonesian. We have extracted a set of approximately 500 verbal roots compatible with the *-kan~-i* alternation from the stem inventory of the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI, 5th edition; Amalia 2016; David Moeljadi p.c.). Using our native speaker intuition we have evaluated this list for Singaporean Malay (Author 1) and Standard Indonesian (Author 2). The forms that were deemed to exist were annotated for valency and semantic roles of their core arguments, using a reduced list of 10 semantic roles defined in Scheinfux et al. (2016). The annotation allows us to make a systematic comparison between subclasses in Malay and Indonesian, expanding the verb taxonomy of Voskuil (1996).

References

Arka, W. (1993). Morpholexical aspects of the -kan causative in Indonesian (Masters Thesis). University of Sydney, Australia.

Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa 2016. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Edisi Kelima. Electronic Database. URL: http://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/

Cole, P., & Son, M. (2004). The argument structure of verbs with -kan in Indonesian. *Journal of Oceanic Linguistics, 44*(2), 339-364.

Sheinfux, L., Melnik, N., & Wintner, S. (2016). Representing argument structure. *Journal Of Linguistics*, 1-50. Cambridge University Press.

Sneddon, James N. 1996. Indonesian: a Comprehensive Grammar. London and New York: Routledge.

Voskuil, J. (1996). *Verb Taxonomy in Indonesian, Tagalog and Dutch*. Netherlands: HIL Dissertation.