The Analysis of 'ada/be' in the Malay Classical Text of Sulalatus Salatin

by

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A research project on the syntax of Sulalatus Salatin based on the Principles and Parameters approach is currently underway between Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka (DBP) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Its main aim is to analyze and describe the classical malay syntax of Sulalatus Salatin. The findings of this research will be published into a book. This paper presents an aspect of the syntax being researched. This paper will attempt to analyze the syntactic properties of 'ada/be' as found in the text. The status of 'ada' either as a verb or as an auxiliary has been the subject of contention among linguists purely because of its verbal characteristics and its auxiliary-like behaviour. Kader,Mashudi (1981) proposes three types of 'ada/be' namely that it is a copula, a possessive verb and a morpheme that expresses existence. Salleh, Ramli (1989) on the other hand, proposes only two types of 'ada/be' which is the copula and possessive 'has/have'. Salleh postulated copula 'ada/be' to be generated under the VP node at D-structure and then move to [C,CP] to account for its auxiliary-like behaviour as in the sentence 'Adakah Jamal seorang guru?'/Is Jamal a teacher?' Alias, Nasrun (1993) argues that 'ada/be' is an auxiliary which resembles the English auxiliary 'did'. Alias assumes that a VP consists of layers with some Vs selecting VP-complements. He argued that the construction of ada + V is grammatical in Malay contrary to Kader, Mashudi (1981). Some examples of 'ada/be' to be explored are : 'Adalah dalam sungai itu …', dalam buih itu ada seorang budak perempuan…', ada pada suatu hari baginda berfikir…,' 'Adapun akan Bendahara Pahang…', '…dia ada beranak seorang perempuan', '…adapun yang telah berlaku pada hukum …,'etc. This paper will enumerate the categories of 'ada/be' in the Malay classical text in order to come up with a unified account of 'ada/be' construction in Malay.