

On modality and finiteness in Indonesian: complexities of =nya nominalisation

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Abstract

This paper discusses structural and semantic complexities of =*nya* nominalisation in Indonesian. While having no grammatical tense, Indonesian shows a finiteness constraint. For example, certain control verbs such as *ingin* take truncated complements where finite auxiliaries *akan/sudah/sedang* are not allowed (1c). It will be demonstrated that =*nya* nominalisation is one of the constructional resources used to imply past temporal axis. For example, (2b) implies modality with past reference. In addition, =*nya* nominalisation is unacceptable with future auxiliary, as seen in (3b). There is evidence that the structure involved in =*nya* nominalisation is an equational-identificational clause, e.g. as seen from the negation tests with *adalah* and *tidak/bukan*, as shown in (4)-(5). In terms of the information structure, the =*nya* unit is analysed as bearing FOCUS. It will be argued that nominalising the predicate is one way out to satisfy the structural categorical constraint of having the predicate in the DF (discourse function) position, typically for nominal arguments. The analysis will be cast in LFG (Bresnan 2001; Dalrymple 2001; Falk 2001). The paper will also report a computational implementation of the analysis within the Indonesian ParGram (Parallel Grammar) project.

(1) a. *Ia akan/sudah/sedang makan* (finite clause)

3s FUT/PERF/PROG eat

‘s/he will eat/has eaten/is eating.’

b. *Ia ingin [makan]* (the clause in square brackets = non-finite)

3s want eat

‘s/he wanted to eat.’

c. **saya ingin [akan/sudah/sedang makan]*

- (2) a. *Mereka harus datang.*
 3p must come
 ‘they should come.’
- b. *(Se)harus=nya mereka datang.*
 (SE)must=NYA 3p come
 ‘they should have come’
- (3) a. ‘*Siapa itu?*’, *dia akan (ber)tanya.*
 who that 3 FUT BER-ask
 ‘who is that?’, he will ask.
- b. ‘*Siapa itu?*’ **akan tanyanya.*
- c. ‘*Siapa itu?*’, *tanya=nya.*
 who that ask=NYA
- (4) a. *Tidur adalah mau=nya*
 sleep be wish=NYA
 ‘To sleep is his/her wish.’
- b. *dia mau tidur*
 3s want sleep
 ‘s/he wanted to sleep.’
- c. * *dia adalah mau tidur.*
- d.* *dia mau adalah tidur.*
- cf. e. *dia adalah murid*
 3s be student
 ‘s/he is a student.’
- (5) a. *tidur bukan/*tidak maunya.*
 sleep NEG NEG wish=NYA
 ‘To sleep is not his/her wish.’

cf. b. *dia bukan/*tidak murid*
3s NEG NEG student
'S/he is not a student.'

References

- Bresnan, Joan. 2001. *Lexical functional syntax*. London: Blackwell.
- Dalrymple, Mary. 2001. *Lexical Functional Grammar, Syntax and semantics*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Falk, Yehuda N. 2001. *Lexical-Functional Grammar*. Stanford: CSLI.