

Abstract for the workshop on tense, aspect, mood and evidentiality in Indonesian languages

**The Analysis of the Semantic Function of the Prefix N- in Basilectal Jakarta Indonesian**

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This is a preliminary study to examine whether the nasal prefix N- (henceforth, N-) in Basilectal Jakarta Indonesian (henceforth, bJI) is actually a progressive marker instead of active voice morphology. In various studies, N-, together with the null affix, is generally assumed as active voice morphology in bJI, as represented in (1) (Tjung, 2006; Cole et al., 2006; Hidajat, 2010).

(1) a. **Active transitive with N-verb:**

*Oh, Tante Yanti nyuci mangkoknya?*

EXCL aunt yanti N-wash bowl-DET

‘Oh, I am washing the bowls?’

(EXPYAN; 23;7)

b. **Active transitive with bare verb:**

*Michael cuci piring.*

Michael  $\phi$ -wash plate

‘You (Michael) wash the plates.’

(RINMIC; 18;0)

The assumption that N- in bJI has a semantic function is in line with the claim that the prefix *meN-* in Malay is a progressive viewpoint aspectual marker (Soh and Nomoto, 2009). The distribution of N- in bJI is briefly reviewed below.

Although N- is an active voice marker, it is not very productive. N- generally appears with eventive transitive verbs, as exemplified in (2).

(2) *Ni ulernya lagi ngejar ayam...*

this snake-DET PROGRESS N-chase chicken

‘This snake is chasing the chicken.’

(EXPOKK; 25;5)

However, N- generally cannot be affixed to stative transitive verbs, except to a few, such as *sangka* ‘suspect’ (becomes *nyangka*) and *kira* ‘reckon’ (becomes *ngira*), as shown in (3).

(3) ... *dia ngira aku mahasiswa luar negeri...*

3sg N-reckon 1sg student out country

‘...he thought that I was a foreign student...’

(Habiiballah, 2005: 63)

N- can appear more freely with stative transitive verbs if they are also affixed by the suffix –IN, which can be an object marker, as shown in (4)

(4) ... *Opi gak \*ngenal/ngenalin suara Tante, ya?*

Opi NEG N-recognize/N-recognize-IN sound aunt yes

‘You didn’t recognize my voice, didn’t you?’

(EXPERN: 26:1)

N- can also be affixed to intransitive verbs. However, the distribution of intransitive verbs with N- is limited as well as erratic. N- can be affixed to some unergative verbs, such as *lompat* ‘jump’ (becomes ‘*ngelompat*’) and *umpet* ‘hide’ (becomes ‘*ngumpet*’), and some unaccusative verbs, such as *tempel* ‘attach’ (becomes ‘*nempel*’) and *sangkut* ‘hook’ (becomes *nyangkut*) and *leleh* ‘melt’ (becomes *ngeleleh*). N- appears more freely with intransitive verbs which have been transitivized as the result of being affixed by the suffix –IN, which can also bring forth causative interpretation, as exemplified in (5).

(5) N- + *terbang* ‘fly’ + -IN → *nerbangin* ‘to make something fly’

... *sampe-sampe dia nerbangin pesawat kertas...*

RED-arrive 3sg N-fly-IN airplane paper

‘...so that he flied a paper airplane...’

(Yunadi, 2007:24)

N- can also be affixed to nouns. Nouns which are affixed by N- become unergative verbs, as shown in (6). Only a limited number of nouns can appear with N-, some of them are *kopi* ‘coffee’, *teh* ‘tea’, and *rujak* (name of a kind of dish).

(6) *Tante ngopi.*

aunt N-coffee

‘I’m drinking coffee.’

(JNBRIS; 37:7)

Based on the fact that N- is restricted to appear with stative verbs, one may argue that N-verbs in bJI are non-stative verbs. But, there is a twist to this argument. In general, N-verbs are restricted to imperatives:

(8) *Kejar/\*ngejar kak Icanya!*

chase/N-chase TRU.older.sibling Ica-DET

‘Chase Ica!’

(EXPDAL; 28:4)

As pointed out by Dowty (1979), only non-statives can occur as imperatives. The fact that N-verbs cannot be used in imperatives contradicts the argument that N-verbs are non-stative verbs.

To summarize, this is a preliminary study to determine whether N- in bJI actually functions as a progressive marker or not. This assumption is supported by the fact that N- almost never appears with stative verbs. However, it is contradicted by the fact that N-verbs are restricted to imperatives.

## References

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