

Referential strategies in some Malay varieties

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This presentation will provide an overview of the referential strategies employed in some Malay varieties, with special focus on the two questions below;

1. How identifiability is marked on lexical NPs
2. How ‘active’ referents are expressed in transitive clauses.

Most of the Malay varieties employ demonstratives to indicate that the referent is situationally or textually identifiable. The distinction of the short and full form of the demonstratives is observed in Eastern varieties with so-called semantic bleaching. The distinction between the short form and full form exhibits functional difference in some varieties, while it does not in others; Adelaar (2005: 212-217) pointed out that, in some Eastern varieties, the short form underwent so-called ‘semantic bleaching’. In addition to the demonstratives, some varieties employ the third person possessive form to indicate the referent is identifiable by association to the situation in which the discourse is made, as the third person possessive enclitic *-nya* in colloquial Indonesian does (Englebretson 2003, Ewing 2005, and Sneddon et al. 2010).

An experiment was conducted in several Malay speaking areas using a short video as stimuli. The results show considerable variation among Malay varieties in the way the active A argument (A, hereafter) and P argument (P, hereafter) are coded. The outline of the variation is as follows.

	Verb form	A	P
Standard Indonesian	meN-	the pronoun <i>dia</i> or zero	the enclitic pronoun <i>-nya</i> or lexical NP
Colloquial Indonesian	di-	zero	zero
Barunei Malay	di-	<i>-nya</i>	zero
Eastern varieties	unmarked	the pronoun <i>dia</i>	lexical NP

Table 1 “Most frequent coding of active A and P arguments in Malay varieties”

Sentence (1)-(4) are one of the typical examples of coding of the active A argument and P argument in each varieties.

(1) Standard Indonesian

Dalam video dengan judul pisang, [seorang anak perempuan]_A mengambil pisang_P dari atas meja. Dan \varnothing membuka [kulit pisang]_P. Lalu \varnothing memakan [pisang tersebut]_P.

(2) Colloquial Indonesian spoken in Jakarta

Ani cabut pisang, trus \varnothing_P di-kupas \varnothing_A , trus \varnothing_P di-makan \varnothing_A .

(3) Barunei Malay

di...walau atu ia takidum-kidum taliat pisang, ada pisang diadapannya, \varnothing_P di-ambil-nya_A, \varnothing_P di-patah \varnothing_A ... \varnothing_P di-patah-nya_A, \varnothing_P di-kupas-nya_A. inda ia_A lagi matahi pisang_P, tarus \varnothing_A tah (<-sedang) suap \varnothing_P ka mulut.

(4) Kupang Malay

ini anak. dia_A ambil [pisang satu]_P. abis itu dia_A kupas [dia pun kulit]_P. dia_A kupas [dia pun kulit]_P. baru dia_A makan [tu pisang pun isi]_P

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