

TITLE: Exploring western Indonesian applicative constructions through the lexicon  
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ABSTRACT:

In western Indonesian languages, morphemes which have an applicative function are extremely polyfunctional. When these forms behave as applicatives, a variety of semantic roles for the introduced non-Actor argument are found, including beneficiary, instrumental, goal, and location. In non-applicative functions, these morphemes also serve to create causative constructions, indicate aspectual and semantic changes to a verb, and derive verbs from bases of other categories. (Because of the polyfunctional nature of these morphemes, they will be henceforth referred to as A-morphemes or AM.) As such, we observe that across a number of languages AM have many of the same functions across the lexicon. However, not every function is available as a resultant meaning when an AM is added to a given root. For example, the addition of an AM to a transitive verb meaning ‘fetch’ is likely to result in a benefactive meaning, as in the Standard Indonesian example in (1) below, where the Applied Phrase has the semantic role of beneficiary, and an instrumental reading is not possible. The same affix with another root, shown in (2) with the root meaning ‘hit’, results in only an instrumental meaning.

- (1) (a) Pelayan meng-ambil se-gelas air.  
waiter AV-take one-glass water.  
‘The waiter fetched a glass of water.’
- (b) Pelayan meng-ambil-kan tamu se-gelas air.  
waiter AV-take-APPL guest one-glass water.  
‘The waiter fetched the guest a glass of water.’  
(Sneddon et. al. 2010:85, glosses added)
- (2) (a) Dia mem-(p)ukul anjing dengan tongkat.  
3s AV-hit dog with stick  
‘He hit the dog with a stick.’
- (b) Dia mem-(p)ukul-kan tongkat pada anjing.  
3s AV-hit-APPL stick on dog  
‘He used the stick to beat the dog with.’  
(Sneddon et. al. 2010:83, glosses added)

Given these facts, some studies have looked at properties of roots to explain the distribution of functions of an AM. For example, Vamarasi’s (1999) analysis of Indonesian *-kan* holds that its causative function is found with unergative roots, while a non-causative meaning results when it is added to unaccusative verbs. Kroeger (2007), however, demonstrates that the unaccusative/unergative distinction does not predict the variable function of *-kan* well, and instead suggests that lexical semantics determine whether a root is compatible with the causative

function. However, to date there have been no in-depth description of components of lexical semantics that are relevant to the behavior of Indonesian *-kan*, let alone other AM in Indonesian and those in related languages. Furthermore, the restrictions on particular meanings appear to be extremely similar across Indonesian languages, but there has been no systematic study that compares these lexical restrictions on roots.

In this study, we investigate the extent to which components of lexical semantics consistently explain the distribution of functions of western Indonesian AM in combination with roots. Using a sample of six western Indonesian languages (Besemah, Indonesian, Sasak, Javanese, Balantak, Sundanese) that contain at least one AM, we compare patterns in function of these across roots that express a set of common meanings. These meanings are selected to represent classes of words with shared semantic components including transfer of possession, e.g. ‘buy’, ‘sell’, application of force, e.g. ‘hit’, locomotion, e.g. ‘walk’, directed motion, e.g. ‘throw’, and sensory perception, e.g. ‘see’, ‘hear’, among others. The meanings of words formed by addition of all available AMs in each of the languages are coded for function and resultant patterns, both those common and variable across the sample are presented.

Works cited:

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