

Unique Morphs in Indonesian

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Abstract—This article deals with the use of unique morphs in Indonesian in accordance with their distribution, phonological correspondences, and semantic relations with the co constituents in Indonesian compound and phrase structures. By collecting data intuitively, and completed with ones from Indonesian Big Dictionary, data analysis applying distributional qualitative and quantitative methods shows that Indonesian unique morphs which are mostly nouns and adjectives can exist with co constituents which are either unique or non unique, following or preceding them. Because of continuous intensive borrowing from regional and foreign languages, most of the unique morphs do not show phonological correspondence with their co existing constituents, and semantically tend to modify the meaning of those constituents. Meanwhile, the unique morphs which phonologically have various correspondences with their co constituents are relatively constant in number, and semantically function to intensify the meaning of those constituents.

Index Terms—Compound, phonological correspondence, phrase, and unique morph.

I. INTRODUCTION

In every language there are a few number of linguistic constituents which can occur only with one certain constituent. These constituents are commonly called unique constituents [1] or in this paper will be consistently named unique morph [2]. For instances, *luke* and *cran* consecutively be found only with *warm* and *berry* to construct English compound *luke warm* and *cran berry*. Most of unique morphs look like obligatory bound morphs, and only a few of them behave like free morphs, such as *kith* and *vimin* coordinative constructions *kith and kin* and *vim and vigour*. In Javanese *royo-royo*, *jinglang*, *tuntheng*, etc. can only occur in combination with *ijo* ‘green’, *padhang* ‘clear’, and *ireng* ‘black’ to form *ijo royo-royo* ‘very green’, *padhang jinglang* ‘very bright’, and *ireng tuntheng* ‘very black’ [3]. In Balinese there are unique morphs such as *ngablor*, *ngelek*, *ngalik*, etc. in compound constructions *jegeg ngablor* ‘very beautiful’, *pakeh ngelek* ‘very salty’, and *tegeh ngalik* ‘very high’. In Indonesian, several linguists [4]-[6] list some compounds consisting unique morphs, such as *simpang siur* ‘crisscrossing’, *gelap gulita* ‘very dark’, and *terang benderang* ‘very bright’ in which *siur*, *gulita*, and *benderang* can only coexist with *simpang* ‘bend, deviate’, *gelap* ‘dark’, *terang* ‘bright’ for intensifying the meaning of the preceding constituents that is almost identical to each other. Because of the limited

number considered by the linguists, and their restricted occurrence, unique morphs have never been studied seriously in any language. In fact, these linguistic constituents, especially in Indonesian have many problems to discuss.

II. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

There are several fundamental principles observed by the speakers of any language in articulating their linguistic utterances in order to ease their production and serve their audience’s best perception. Among these principles are the principle of maximum ease of articulation” and “the principle of maximum perceptual separation” [7]. By the first principle the speakers tend to produce the linguistic utterance as easily as possible. Some linguistic phenomena, such as assimilation, deletion, syncope, contraction, etc. are essentially results of this first principle. With regards to Indonesian unique morphs, their occurrence also follows this principle because most of Indonesian unique morphs show phonological correspondences with the other morph to which they coexist. This correspondence will surely make the compounds or phrases more easily expressed or perceived compared to those without correspondence. Any language, no matter how isolated its speakers are, can be developed without being influenced by other language [8], [9]. Consequently, the more intensive contact between Indonesian and some foreign and regional languages, the lower the percentage of sound correspondence compound and phrases because of the growing number of regional and foreign loan compounds and phrases whose constituent(s) are still unable to collocate with other lexical items in the donor language. Most of the borrowing unique morphs accidentally do not have phonological correspondence with their co constituents.

III. METHOD

This research starts with data collecting which is firstly done introspectively by exploiting my native capability to gather all unique morphs in Indonesian together with their co constituents. In other words all data constitute compounds or phrases consisting of one or two unique constituents. Afterwards, these data are completed by unique morphs collected from “Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia” (*Indonesian Big Dictionary*) [10]. The uniqueness of these Indonesian morphs are identified by observing their possibility to stand alone as free morphemes, and to combine with other morphemes besides the morpheme they used to coexist. Unique morphemes cannot stand alone as mono morphemic words, and are unable to combine with other morphemes out of their fixed co-

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constituents. The compounds consisting of unique morph have a significant difference from sound change reduplication. This last concept is resulted from morphemic reduplication in which the reduplicated constituent has slight or minimal difference, one consonant or one or two vowels, from the following or preceding co constituent. For example *bolak-balik* 'back and forth', *sayur mayur* 'all kinds of vegetable', *cerai berai* 'scattered', etc. Meanwhile, compounds with unique morph are derived from semantic reduplication. As such, the unique constituents can be totally different from the coexisting linguistic unit with which they occur, such as *basah kuyup* 'soaking wet', *berani candang* 'very brave', *handa itolan* 'friends', *induk semang* 'adoptive mother', etc., or the unique morphs only show phonological (sound or syllabic) correspondence with the co-constituents, such as *ong* in *gotong royong* 'share work', *rang* in *terang benderang* 'very bright', *ang* in *centang perenang* 'total disarray', etc. Additionally, in spite of forms, grammatical meanings are also becoming primary considerations to distinguish between these two concepts [11]. Reduplication in Indonesian is used to express plural meaning and repetitiveness, and unique morphs in Indonesia are grammatically never used to bear such meanings.

Further, the collected data together with their co constituents are grouped according to the distribution of the unique constituent, phonological correspondence patterns of the unique morphs with their co constituent, and the semantic relations that hold between them.

IV. DISTRIBUTION OF UNIQUE MORPHS IN CONSTITUENT STRUCTURES

After conducting a more serious research, it is found Indonesian has apparently at least 160 compounds consisting unique morphs that include various part of speeches or syntactic categories. There are compounds that belong to adjective (37.50%) such as *kering kerontang* 'very dry', *cantik jelita* 'very beautiful', *riuh rendah* 'noisy', etc.; noun (56.25%) such as *handai tolan* 'friends', *biang kerok* 'trouble maker', *amal jariah* 'deed', etc.; adverb (3.75) such as *tunggang langgang* and *lambat laun* 'gradually', *lintang pukang* 'crisscross'; and verb (2.50) such as *gotong royong* 'share work'. (*Ber*)*muram durja* 'look gloomy',

These compounds might be entirely (10.62%) or in part (89.28%) constructed by unique morphemes. For instances *akil balig* 'mature, grown up', *centang prenang* 'totally disarray', *handai tolan* 'friends', *hingar bingar* 'very noisy', and *atok moyang* 'ancestor', *porak poranda* 'disorder' are compounds whose constituents are entirely unique. Even though it may still be possible to find these constituents standing as free morphs in the donor languages (English, Arabic, Malay, etc.) from which the compounds are borrowed. However, in current Indonesian usage, they can only be found in such frozen compounds.

The other type of compound is one that only a single constituent is unique. Based on the unique morph distribution, this type can further be classified into unique initial (5.00%) and unique final (84.38%). Unique initial phrases or compounds place the unique morphs preceding the non unique or free constituents, such as *berma* 'red' in

berma logam 'metal red', *cikal* 'coconut seedling' in *cikal bakal* 'pioneer', *mara* 'danger' in *mara bahaya* 'perils', and *tempik* 'clap' in *tempik sorak* 'cheers', etc. Nevertheless, most of unique morphs in Indonesian occur following the co constituents, such as *bundas* 'skinned' in *babak bundas* 'bruised', *kuyup* 'soaked' in *basah kuyup* 'soaking wet', *kerok* 'trouble' in *biang kerok* 'culprit, trouble maker'.

V. PHONOLOGICAL CORRESPONDENCE OF UNIQUE MORPHS WITH THE CO CONSTITUENTS

With regard to the phonological correspondence, Indonesian unique morphs have peculiarities compared to unique morphs existing in Balinese and Javanese. Balinese unique morphs as exemplified above, commonly do not show phonological correspondence with their co constituents. Javanese unique morphs tend to have final syllabic correspondence with the co constituents [12]. Meanwhile, most of Indonesian phonological unique morphs correspondences which will be described below are much more various.

Before discussing the phonological correspondence of the unique morphs with their preceding or following co constituents, it considers important to describe the syllabic patterns of the compounds consisting of unique morphs. Indonesian compound can consist of two disyllabic morphs (76.87%) such as *a.syik ma.syuk* 'deeply in love', *in.dah per.mai* 'very beautiful', *se.du se.dan* 'sobbing', *ba.sah len.cun* 'very wet', etc. The second syllable can also be a tri syllabic morphs (15.00%) such as *te.rang ben.de.rang* 'very bright', *gun.dah gu.la.na*, *ke.ring ke.ron.tang* 'very dry', etc. The initial parts of the compound are commonly disyllabic morphs (99.37%), and hardly tri syllabic morphs. In the data collection, only one compound (0.33%) shows violating this rule, i.e. *be.ra.ni can.dang* 'too brave'. Here the full stop mark [.] is indicating syllabic boundary.

More than a half of unique morphs do not have sound correspondence with their co constituents (53%), such as *cantik jelita* 'very beautiful', *basah kuyup* 'soaking wet', *pucat pasi* 'very pale', *bintang kejora* 'venus', etc. A lot of unique morphs occur with ones that show phonological resemblances in constructing Indonesian compounds (47%). The phonological correspondence between the unique morphs and the co constituents can simply be classified at least into four types, i.e. initial syllabic correspondence, final syllabic correspondence, initial and final correspondence, and harmonious vowel correspondence. Vowel harmony correspondence is commonly applied to compounds that also show phonological correspondence of either initial and final.

Compounds with initial syllabic correspondence constitute compounds that consist of two morphs whose initial syllables phonologically correspond with each other. For examples *beng.kak beng.kil* 'soared', *ke.ring ke.ron.tang* 'very dry', *po.rak po.ra.nda* 'disarray', *se.du se.dan* 'sobbing', etc. All parts of these compounds have identical initial syllables (6.25%). The corresponding syllables or more precisely syllable like elements may not be totally identical, but only nearly identical (5.00%), such as *ge.gap gem.pi.ta* 'noisy', *gun.dah gu.lana* 'heartsick', *lam.bat la.un* 'gradually', *su.nyi se.nyap* 'very quiet'. *Ge*

and *gem*, *gun* and *gu*, and *suny* and *seny* are phonologically similar in these last four instances.

Most unique morphs of Indonesian compounds have phonological correspondence with the final parts of their co-constituents (35,75%) . The final parts can be syllable, part of syllable, or a single sound. *Te.rang ben.de.rang* 'very bright', *ci.kal ba.kal* 'pioneer, founder of the village', *hi.ngar bi.ngar* 'noisy' have identical final syllables, *rang*, *kal*, and *ngar*. The final corresponding parts can be nearly similar, such as *bi.bit bu.it* 'origin', *cen.tang pe.re.nang* 'disarray', *ka.cau ba.lau* 'disordered', *go.tong ro.yong* 'share work', etc. In this matter, *bit* and *it*, *tang* and *nang* , *cau* and *lau*, *tong* and *yong* are not identical syllables, but only nearly are. The different element of the corresponding final syllables can be the vowel, such as in *asyik masuk* 'deeply in love', i.e. between *syik* and *syuk*. The compound elements may also consist of morphs that have a single identical vowel or consonant final sound, such as *mu.da be.lia* 'very young, *tempik sorak* 'applause', *budi pekerti* 'behavior'; and *tua bangka* 'very old'. The corresponding sounds are [a and a], [ʔ And ʔ], [i and i], and [a and a].

Several compounds show having simultaneous initial and final correspondence, such as *sumpah serapah* [s---pah], *keluh kesah* [ke---h], *riuh rendah* [r---h] 'noisy', etc. Eventually, the initial part and the final one of the compounds may constitute morphs that have harmonious vowel structure, such as *gotong royong* 'share work' [ɔ and ɔ], *akil balig* 'grown up' [a and I], *centang prenang* 'disordered' [e and a], *hingar bingar* 'noisy' [i and a], *hiruk pikuk* [i and U], etc. If the final element consists of three syllables, the vowel of the third syllable would be identical with the penult, for examples *gundah gulana* [u-a and u-a-a] 'heartsick' , *mara bahaya* [a-a and a-a-a] 'danger', *porak poranda*[o-a and o-a-a]'disarray'.

VI. SEMANTIC RELATION BETWEEN THE UNIQUE MORPH AND ITS CO CONSTITUENT

Indonesian compounds either constructed partly or entirely by unique morph may have various inter element semantic relations. Most of unique morphs in such kinds of compound are functioned to intensify the meaning of its co constituents (29.37%). For instances the occurrence of *gulita* in *gelap gulita* 'very dark', *kuyup* in *basah kuyup* 'soaking wet', *laun* in *lambat laun* 'gradually', etc. are used to strengthen the meaning of the non unique morphs *gelap* 'dark', *basah* 'wet', and *lambat* 'slow'. This phenomenon does not only involve compounds belonging to adjectival category, but other categories as well, such as noun, i.e. *bibit buit* 'founder of the village', *cikal bakal* 'pioneer', *handai tolan* 'friends', etc.; adverb *tunggang langgang* 'head over heels, *lambat laun* 'gradually' , *dadak sontak* 'suddenly' etc.; and verb, i. e. *gotong royong*, *muram durja* 'gloomy face', *gopoh mamang* 'in hurry', etc.

The presence of a unique morph in compound structure can also function to modify the broadness scope of its co-constituent's meaning (40.62%), such as *banjir bandang* 'big flood', *bintang kejora* 'evening star, venus', *blus tunik* 'long blouse used to wear with long pant', *anak kuar* 'bastard'. In these last four examples, the unique

constituents *bandang*, *kejora*, *tunik*, and *kuar* respectively specify or restrict the broad meaning of the preceding co constituents *banjir* 'flood', *bintang* 'star', *blus* 'blouse', and *anak* 'child'. As result, the non unique morphs have more specific referent. In case the unique morphs occur preceding the co constituent, their meaning will be modified by the following elements, such as *berma* 'read' in *berma logam* 'metallic red', *cendera mata* 'souvenir'. The compounds or phrases of having head and modifier construction always increase in number because of foreign and regional lexical borrowings, while the construction of the first type relatively remains constant.

Finally, the semantic relations that hold between the unique and non unique constituent in Indonesian compounds can be additive (30.23%), such as *pekerti* 'character' which coexists with *budi* 'right thinking' in *budi pekerti* 'behavior', and *sanak* 'relative' that occurs with *saudara* 'brother' to form *sanak saudara* 'relative', *handai tolan* 'friends', etc. The other examples are *akil balig* 'mature', *cikal bakal* 'the village founder', *syak wasangka* 'prejudice', *fakir miskin* 'the poor', etc.

VII. CONCLUSION

Unique morphs which are estimated only a few exist in every language, in fact, are found quite a lot in Indonesian. Based on the syntactic category, most of unique morphs in Indonesian are noun and adjective. Only a small number of them are verb and adverb. Mostly Indonesian unique morphs coexist with other constituent which can be either unique or non unique to form compound or phrase constructions. The unique part of the construction can function as the head or attribute of the constructions, and the unique part might follows or precedes the non unique constituents.

Even though most of the unique compound and phrase constructions consist of linguistic constituents that do not have phonological correspondence, and the number increase steadily because of intensive regional and foreign borrowing process, a lot of unique constructions are formed by linguistics constituents which phonologically correspond each other in various respects.

With regards to the semantic relation, most of Indonesian unique morphs in phrase and compound constructions are functioned to modify the meaning of the co constituents. The others are to intensify and to add the meaning of morphs with which they coexist.

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