

THE USE OF DEICTICS TO IDENTIFY PARTICIPANTS IN BAHASA INDONESIA

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0. INTRODUCTION

In any discourse one major consideration is how participants are brought onto the stage of the discourse and subsequently tracked through the text.¹ Distinct patterns and strategies exist in every language to accomplish this process. Bahasa Indonesia has a textual use of deictic words, *ini* 'this', and *itu* 'that', among its repertoire of tracking devices. The purpose of this paper is to show how such deictic words function in Bahasa Indonesia to help identify participants in narrative discourse. Further, it is shown that no analysis of deictics in Bahasa Indonesia can be considered complete if it fails to take into account certain aspects of the total discourse in which deictics occur.

1. THE BASIC PATTERN

In Bahasa Indonesia there is a rather standard pattern of introduction and subsequent tracking of participants in narrative discourse. Simply put this is as follows:

- 1) A participant is introduced by a formula: *se-orang* 'one-person', + NOUN PHRASE, often further described in clauses introduced by *yang*.²
- 2) The next reference is usually by NOUN PHRASE + *ini*.
- 3) Further reference is by NOUN PHRASE + *itu*.
- 4) Subsequent reference is by means of pronouns, NOUN PHRASE + *itu*, affixing of *-nya* to the participant, use of *tadi* or *tersebut*.³

This basic pattern can be seen illustrated in a short story by Mohammed Kassin, 'Cara Chicago', one of several in his collection of stories entitled *Teman Duduk*. In 'Cara Chicago' the main participant,

a woman, who is never given a name, is introduced and further identified as follows:

- (3) Se-buah auto tiba dimuka station dan se-orang
one (numeral class. for car car arrive in front of station and one-person (num.class. for person)

perempuan yang berbadan kecil molek berdandan bagus dan
female who has body small pretty dressed well and

bepershiasan cukup, keluar dari auto itu, diiringkan oleh
wearing jewelry enough got out from car that accompanied by

se-orang anak perempuan umur kira-kira delapan tahun.
one-person child female age about eight years

'An automobile arrived in front of the station and a woman who was small of build and pretty, well dressed and wearing a full set of jewelry, got out of the car accompanied by a girl aged about eight.'

- (4) Melihat perempuan yang baru datang ini, kedua laki-laki itu
seeing woman who just came this both men that

bergamit-gamitan dan waktu perempuan itu pergi kemuka
nudged each other and when woman that go in front of

loket akan membeli karcis, se-orang diantaranya
ticket window in order to buy ticket one-person in-among-them

datang menghampiri dia.
came approached her

'Seeing the woman who had just come, the two men nudged each other, and when the woman went to the ticket window to buy a ticket, one of them approached her.'

In sentence (3) the woman is rather fully introduced, beginning with the formula *se-orang perempuan* 'one-person female' followed by a rather long descriptive clause introduced by *yang*. In (4) she is identified as *perempuan yang baru datang ini* 'woman who just come this', at the beginning of the sentence and by the end of the sentence she is marked as a well established participant as *perempuan itu* 'woman that', and finally *dia* 'her'. That she is well established is shown by the shorter reference, a single noun rather than a fuller phrase, plus being marked by *itu* 'that', and further in the pronominal reference.

Thus we see this basic pattern of participant introduction and identification, a three step pattern of establishing participant identity. We see the rather set formula of introduction. Subsequent reference is then by means of marking the noun phrase identifying the participant with deictics, by *ini* first, and in later references by *itu*.

This is similar to the pattern in English in which there is as a rule a two step process of establishing a participant. In English a

participant is introduced using an indefinite article, but thereafter the definite article may be used. For example, consider the beginning of this fairy tale: *'Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess who lived in a large gloomy castle all alone. One day the princess was out in her garden and a strange looking dwarf approached her ...'* In two steps the princess is established in the story. In Bahasa Indonesia we see a three step process of participant introduction and establishment in the discourse involving the use of deictics.

A further interesting characteristic of this textual use of deictics is that it is logically analogous to their spatial use. In the spatial use of deictics objects close to the speaker are referred to as *'this'*, while objects farther away are referred to as *'that'*. Similarly, in the textual use, *ini 'this'*, occurs on the reference to a participant closest to its introduction (when the hearer first had contact with the participant). *Itu 'that'*, on the other hand, marks references farther away from the original introduction, maintaining the same close-far away distinction as in the spatial use of deictics.

2. SOME VARIATIONS IN THE BASIC PATTERN

While the basic pattern of participant identification described above seems fairly widespread throughout narrative discourse, a survey of a number of narratives soon reveals some seeming contradictions to the pattern. We will examine some of these and show that with an adequate discourse perspective these seeming discrepancies can be rather nicely explained, and further add weight to the growing evidence that a discourse perspective is not a luxury but rather a necessity for linguistic investigation.

Three basic notions of discourse help give a fuller and more complete understanding of the function of deictics in Bahasa Indonesia. These are: 1) a distinction between Major and Minor participants, 2) re-setting of participant identification at a new paragraph, and 3) a distinction between kinds of information in discourse.⁴

We quickly note in observing the use of deictics in Bahasa Indonesia that the pattern described above applies only to major participants (not necessarily people only, for sometimes animals or even inanimate objects play major roles). Minor participants may be introduced in the same fashion with the formula *se-orang ...*, but are subsequently tracked by usually affixing the particle *-nya* rather than one of the deictic words, *ini* or *itu*. For example in the story 'Pengalaman di Jakarta' a servant who plays a relatively minor role in the whole story

is introduced as *se-orang pelayan hotel* 'one-person servant hotel', but is subsequently tracked by marking him as *pelayannya* 'servant-definite', or when fully established with a pronoun, *dia* 'he'. Thus a different pattern for identifying minor participants exists than that for major participants.

Now consider the following span of identifications of a major participant in the same story, 'Pengalaman di Jakarta':

- (29) *pedagang itu*
merchant that
- (30) *ia*
he
- (31) *dia*
he
- (38) *bingungnya,*⁵ *ia*
shock his he
- (39) *badannya*⁵
body his
- (40) *kulitnya*⁵
skin his
- (41) *pedagang itu*
merchant that

We may ask why in (41) the reference to the merchant shifts to the fuller noun phrase with *itu* where up to that point pronouns or even more oblique references in the form of third person possessive markers, *-nya*, sufficed. There are no new participants introduced who might be confused with the merchant if pronouns were used. Why then in (41) is there a shift to a full noun phrase, *pedagang itu* 'merchant that', instead of continuing on with a pronoun for reference? The answer lies in the fact that (41) is a paragraph break, the beginning of a new paragraph. This is marked by a time indicator, *akhirnya* 'finally', and a change in location from the shower stall where sentences (29-40) take place to outside the stall. Here as at other paragraph boundaries the reference to a participant is reset more fully, usually by a noun phrase plus the deictic *itu*.

Further refinements in the basic pattern of deictics in participant identification involve a distinction in kinds of information in a discourse. These types of information include setting, background material (additional information given that is not crucial to the advancement of the main event sequence, but which is helpful in explaining the situation so the hearer gets the right information),