INFIXING REDUPLICATIVES IN MALAY

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INTRODUCTION

In standard treatments of Malay morphology, stem-\textit{meN-stem} reduplication is generally glossed as ‘reciprocal’ (Moeliono, 1988:120 and Verhaar, 1984:34). For example, the word \textit{kirim} means ‘to send’, and \textit{kirim-mengirim} means ‘to send to each other’. Another example of a verb that is reciprocal is \textit{sahut-menyahut}, where \textit{sahut} means ‘to reply’ or ‘to answer’, and \textit{sahut-menyahut} means ‘to answer each other’.

This study will investigate the non-reciprocal uses of \textit{stem-meN-stem} reduplicatives. For example, the word \textit{sambar-menyambar} is semantically non-reciprocal. \textit{Sambar} means ‘to snatch up’ or ‘to strike’, and \textit{sambar-menyambar} means ‘to repeatedly strike’, and this reduplicated verb is used with reference to lightning. Another example of a non-reciprocal reduplicative is \textit{sinar-menyinvar}, where \textit{sinar} means ‘to shine’ or ‘to sparkle’, and \textit{sinar-menyinvar} means ‘to continually shine’.

Most non-reciprocal \textit{stem-meN-stem} reduplicatives are iterative in meaning, for example, \textit{pulas-memulas}. \textit{Pulas} means ‘to twist’, and \textit{pulas-memulas} means ‘to repeatedly twist’. Moreover, it turns out that most reciprocal reduplicatives also have an iterative element, e.g., \textit{pukul-memukul}, where \textit{pukul} means ‘to hit’ and \textit{pukul-memukul} means ‘to repeatedly hit each other’.

This paper will show that \textit{stem-meN-stem} reduplicatives can occur with other words classes besides verbs such as nouns, adverbs and prepositions. Examples of these are \textit{surat-menyurat} ‘to send letters to each other’, \textit{terus-menerus} ‘immediately’, and \textit{atas-mengatas} ‘to top one another’, of which the stem is a noun, an adverb and a preposition, respectively.

The hypothesis here is that monotransitive (two-argument) \textit{stem-meN-stem} reduplicatives which are reciprocal semantically will have a singular human subject and object, or a plural human subject with no object. As for ditransitive (three-
argument) *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives that are reciprocal, there can be a singular human subject with a non-human object and a human indirect object (in a prepositional phrase), or a plural human subject with a non-human object. Non-reciprocal *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives can have singular or plural, human or non-human subjects, but they will have a non-human object. The outline below should provide a clearer picture of the combinations mentioned.

**Reciprocal:** sg. human subj. + sg. human obj. \((\text{monotransitive})\)
pl. human subj. + 0 obj.

sg. human subj. + non-human + human \((\text{ditransitive})\)
    indirect obj.
pl. human subj. + non-human obj.

**Non-Reciprocal:** sg. / pl. human/non-human subj. + (non-human obj.)

This study also proposes that the construction of these *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives is independent of the prefix *meN*-construction in Malay syntax as there exist *stem-meN-stem* words which do not normally take the *meN*-prefix. An example is *tahu-menahu*, 'be cognizant of', where *menahu* does not occur independently as a verb in a sentence.

**METHODOLOGY**

Every *stem-meN-stem* structure was gathered from the *Malay-English Dictionary* by A. E. Coope, (1993) and from native speakers of Malay. These structures were again checked for legitimacy in *Kamus Dewan* by T. Iskandar, (1993).

To test the reciprocity of the words, the 'Kami Test' was employed, in which sentences using the exclusive pronoun *kami* 'we' are constructed. *Kami* or any plural noun phrase would be used as the subject of a sentence, with no object. For example:

(1)  *Kami*  *bantah-membantah*.
    We  object-meN-object.
We objected each other's (opinions).
If a sentence like the one above could be generated, then the *stem-meN-stem* would be semantically reciprocal. In other words, if a *stem-meN-stem* sentence can have a singular human subject and object, or a plural human subject with no object, then it will have a reciprocal meaning. Some examples are:

(2)  
\[ \text{Saya kejar-mengejar adik saya.} \]  
I chase-meN-chase younger sibling my.  
My younger sibling and I chased each other.

(3)  
\[ \text{Kami kejar-mengejar.} \]  
We chase-meN-chase.  
We chased each other.

Example (2) above has a singular human subject and object, and example (3) has a plural human subject with no object. Therefore, from this test, we can state that *kejar-mengejar* is a reciprocal reduplicative.

On the other hand, non-reciprocal reduplicatives can have singular subjects with no object or with non-human objects. As a further evidence, these reduplicatives fail the 'Kami Test'; they cannot have the plural inclusive pronoun *kami* as a subject and still have the reciprocal meaning.

(4)  
\[ \text{Dia pacu-memacu kuda-nya.} \]  
He/She spur on-meN-spur on horse - his/her.  
He/She spurrs on his/her horse.

\[ \text{*Kami pacu-memacu.} \]

Example (4) has a singular human subject and a non-human object which is the horse. *Pacu-memacu* fails the 'Kami Test'; therefore, it is a non-reciprocal reduplicative.
RECIPIRALS

The following are two examples of monotransitive \( \text{stem-meN-stem} \) reduplicatives, or two-argument verbs, that are semantically reciprocal. Observe that example (5) has a singular human subject and object. Example (6) takes a plural human subject and no object.

(5) \( \text{sindir-menyindir} \) ‘to make a sarcastic remark’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ahmad tengah sindir-menyindir} & \quad \text{Ali.} \\
\text{Ahmad PROG make sarcastic remarks-meN-make sarcastic remarks} & \quad \text{Ali.}
\end{align*}
\]
Ahmad is making sarcastic remarks at Ali.

(6) \( \text{pukul memukul} \) ‘to hit’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mereka pukul-memukul dengan hebat - nya.} & \quad \text{INTENSIFIER}
\end{align*}
\]
They hit-meN-hit with zest INTENSIFIER
They were (repeatedly) hitting each other intensely.

The next two examples are \( \text{stem-meN-stem} \) reduplicatives which are ditransitive, i.e., three-argument verbs. These reduplicatives are reciprocal and can occur in sentences under the following conditions:

(a) a singular human subject with a non-human object and a human indirect object in a prepositional phrase.

(7) \( \text{kirim-mengirim} \) ‘to send’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Saya kirim-mengirim surat dengan - nya.} & \quad \text{INTENSIFIER}
\end{align*}
\]
I send-meN-send letter with him/her.
He/She and I send letters to each other.