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 stem-\textit{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-menyinjar}, where \textit{sinar} means 'to shine' or 'to sparkle', and \textit{sinar-menyinjar} means 'to continually shine'.

Most non-reciprocal stem-\textit{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 stem-\textit{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) stem-\textit{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. (monotransitive)
pl. human subj. + 0 obj.

sg. human subj. + non-human + human 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) *Saya kejar-mengejar adik saya.*
I chase-meN-chase younger sibling my.
My younger sibling and I chased each other.

(3) *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) *Dia pacu-memacu kuda - nya.*
He/She spur on-meN-spur on horse - his/her.
He/She spurrs on his/her horse.

*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 *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) *sindir-menyindir* ‘to make a sarcastic remark’

Ahmad *tengah sindir-menyindir* Ali.
Ahmad PROG make sarcastic remarks-meN-make sarcastic remarks Ali.
Ahmad is making sarcastic remarks at Ali.

(6) *pukul memukul* ‘to hit’

*Mereka pukul-memukul dengan hebat - nya.*
They hit-meN-hit with zest INTENSIFIER
They were (repeatedly) hitting each other intensely.

The next two examples are *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) *kirim-mengirim* ‘to send’

*Saya kirim-mengirim surat dengan - nya.*
I send-meN-send letter with him/her.
He/She and I send letters to each other.
(b) a plural human subject with a non-human object.

(8) *serah-menyerah* ‘to give/present’

*Kedua-dua pihak serah-menyerah hantaran.*
Both party resent-meN-present gifts.
Both parties present the wedding gifts to each other.

We should note at this point that the reduplicatives in examples (5) through (8) are also iterative in meaning, in that the action is repeated several times. An interesting aspect that differentiates monotransitive and ditransitive reciprocal reduplicatives is that monotransitive reduplicatives have counterparts in the *meN-stem-stem* structure, but the ditransitive reduplicatives do not. For example, *pukul-memukul* also has the *memukul-mukul* form, but *kirim-mengirim* does not have the *mengirim-ngirim* counterpart.

Coming back to the ‘Kami Test’ that was used to decide whether a verb was reciprocal or not, we can see below that examples (5) and (6) can have the plural pronoun *kami* as a subject with no object, and examples (7) and (8) can have *kami* as a subject as well but with a non-human object, being that they are ditransitive verbs.

(5a) *Kami sudah lama kirim-mengirim surat.*
We have long send-meN-send letter.
We have been sending letters (to each other) for a long time.

(6a) *Kami pukul-memukul dengan hebat -nya.*
We hit-meN-hit with zest *INTENSIFIER*
We were intensely hitting each other.

(7a) *Kami kirim-mengirim surat.*
We send-meN-send letter.
We send letters to each other.
(8a) *Kami serah-menyerah hantaran.*  
We present-meN-present gifts.  
We presented gifts to each other.

Because these verbs are able to take the pronoun *kami* as a subject with no object as seen in examples (5a) through (8a), we can declare that they are semantically reciprocal.

**NON-RECIROCALS**

The following are examples of non-reciprocal reduplicatives.

(9) *karang-mengarang* ‘to do literary work’

*Ayah karang-mengarang di tengah malam.*  
Father write-meN-write at POINT OF TIME night.  
Father writes at night.

(10) *kira-mengira* ‘to count’

*Mereka tengah kira-mengira duit.*  
They PROG count-meN-count money  
They are counting money.

Example (9) above has a singular human subject and no object. Example (10) has a plural human subject and a non-human object. As these verbs are non-reciprocal reduplicatives, they do not need an object or may have a non-human object. However, they are similar to reciprocal reduplicatives as they are semantically iterative. In fact, one could even have a non-human as the subject of a non-reciprocal reduplicative.

(11) *sinar-menyinar* ‘to shine’

*Cincin itu sinar-menyinar.*  
Ring that shine-meN-shine.  
That ring shines.
Example (11) above has the singular non-human subject 'ring' and it is continuously shining, which makes the sentence semantically iterative.

If we compare non-reciprocal stem-meN-stem reduplicatives with reciprocal ones in the 'Kami Test', we can see that non-reciprocal reduplicatives cannot have kami as the subject with no object and still have the 'reciprocal' meaning. The sentence would simply mean that the subject is the plural 'we' and that there is no reciprocity between two parties.

(12) *Kami karang-mengarang.
    *We write-meN-write
    *We write.

(13) *Kami kira-mengira.
    *We count-meN-count
    *We count.

Furthermore, non-reciprocal reduplicatives cannot take a human object as seen in example (14) below:

(14) *Pekedai itu kira-mengira saya.
    *Shopkeeper that count-meN-count me.
    *That shopkeeper counts me.

WORD CLASS

If we look at the word class of the stem-meN-stem reduplicatives that we have covered so far, we see the root form is usually a verb. However, this study found other word classes with which these reduplicatives can occur, for example, nouns, adverbs and prepositions.

(15) surat-menyurat 'to send letters to each other.'

    surat - letter

    NOUN ----> VERB
(16) *terus-menerus* 'continuously, without any breaks'

*terus* - straight

ADJECTIVE ---> ADVERB

(17) *atas-mengatas* 'to top one another'

*atas* - above

PREPOSITION ---> VERB

Regardless of the original word class of the stem, all reciprocal and non-reciprocal *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives are verbs, and only a few are adverbs.

**CONCLUSION**

As we have seen in this investigation, *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives fall into two different groups: reciprocals and non-reciprocals. Deciding on the semantics of the reduplicatives included the application of the 'Kami Test'. However, there is a group in which certain reduplicatives may be both semantically reciprocal or non-reciprocal. For example, the verb *tipu-menipu* meaning 'to lie' can have the following constructions:

(18) *Dia suka tipu-menipu.*

He/She like lie-meN-lie.

He/She likes to lie.

(19) *Kami tipu-menipu.*

We lie-meN-lie.

We lied to each other.

Examples (18) and (19) are both iterative, but (18) is non-reciprocal and (19) is reciprocal. Therefore, certain reduplicatives have the flexibility of being semantically reciprocal or non-reciprocal depending on how the sentence is constructed. However, members of this type of reduplicatives are not many.

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* where *tahu* means ‘to know’ and *tahu-menahu* means ‘to be cognizant of’. However, we would not find *menahu* occurring independently in a sentence. Another example is *punggung-memunggung* where *punggung* means ‘buttocks’ and *punggung-memunggung* means ‘back to back’. Similarly, we would not use *memunggung* independently in a sentence. Therefore, the derivational process of these reduplicatives is probably not based on *meN*-prefixation.

As a final note, the research that led to this paper also uncovered a group of words that are very similar to the *stem-meN-stem* reduplicatives. These include words like *adik-beradik* ‘siblings’, *arai-jemarai* ‘hanging loosely’, and *tali-temali* ‘rigging’. These words also have the *stem-syllable-stem* form. They are idiosyncratic in meaning; for example, *adik-beradik* and *tali-temali* means group of diverse members that share a certain similarity, and *arai-jemarai* is used with expressives. Nevertheless, these words could certainly belong to the same category of reduplicatives being discussed in this paper.

References

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1 This particular investigation will only deal with reduplicatives of the *stem-meN-stem* nature. I acknowledge the existence of other types of reduplicatives such as the *ber-stem-stem* type or the *stem-syllable-stem* type, but these reduplicatives will perhaps be discussed in another investigation.