Nominal predicate constructions in Indonesian

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This study deals with nominal predicate constructions in standard Indonesian. The approach taken is a corpus-based approach. Payne (2008: 114) mentions that predicate nominals typically express the notions of proper inclusion as in *He is a teacher* and equation as in *He is my father*. Indonesian has at least two ways to express these notions. The common way is to place the two noun phrases side by side with nothing between or *NP NP juxtaposition* as in (1).

(1) *Dia* gur**u**.

3SG teacher

'She is a teacher.' (Sneddon et al. 2010: 242)

The other way is with a copula intervening the two noun phrases as in English *to be*. Many Indonesian grammarians agree that *adalah* and *ialah* are copulas. However, the difference between the two copulas is still unclear. Sneddon et al. (2010: 246) and Mintz (2002: 22-23) state that the two forms are interchangeable except that *ialah* only occurs after third person subjects.

Some grammarians seem to agree that *merupakan* can be considered as a copula or expressing the concept of *to be* (Alwi et al. 2014: 359, Mintz 2002: 425), while others such as Sneddon et al. (2010: 247) do not. In addition, some grammarians include *menjadi* as copulative or functioning as a copula (Macdonald 1976: 94, 132) or expressing the concept of *to be* (Mintz 2002: 423-425), while some while such as Sneddon et al. (2010: 247) regard it as a full verb and not a copula. In my observation, there exists some differences between *NP NP juxtaposition*, *NP adalah NP*, *NP ialah NP*, *NP merupakan NP*, and *NP menjadi NP* constructions in terms of syntax and relational meanings.

(2) *Ikan yang Ø/adalah/*ialah/merupakan/menjadi hidangan istimewa restoran itu enak.

fish REL (COP) dish special restaurant that delicious

'Fish, which is the special dish of that restaurant, is delicious.' (based on example 6 in Mintz 2002: 60)

A parallel English-Indonesian text data from Nanyang Technological University Multilingual Corpus (NTU-MC) (Tan and Bond 2012)\(^1\) which contains 2,197 Indonesian sentences is employed to show how different factors act as cues to the use of juxtaposition construction and copula constructions to express predicate nominals in Indonesian.

**Abbreviations:** 3SG = third person singular, COP = Copula, REL = Relativizer

**References**


\(^1\)http://compling.hss.ntu.edu.sg/ntumc/