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Research paper



Language Typology Trace Based on Motion Events: Javanese Spoken by English Learners

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the ways Javanese, one of Austronesian languages, speakers expressed motion events, either using manner-incorporating sentences, path-incorporating sentences, or equipollently framing manner and path in the same predication position. The investigated speakers were English learners. Furthermore, the study investigated whether language contact played a role in the language change. After analyzing data from Javanese speakers learning English, it was revealed that Javanese consultants used mostly manner verbs, behaving more like a satellite-framed language, no longer an equipollently-framed. Language contact played a role in the tendency alteration of Javanese speakers to produce manner verbs in the predicate position caused by their learning English, which is a satellite-framed language with major construction of manner-incorporating sentences. The result of the study on language typology of Javanese spoken by English learners could end up showing that language contact in the multilingual contexts might contribute to any language variation.

Keywords: *motion events, Austronesian languages, language typology, Javanese, English learners*

1. Introduction

Interaction of human across this beloved universe has been long researched to pattern its nature. People interact each other by means of language.

Since the language they speak differs from one another, the way of their interaction is uniquely characterized based on the features the language has, for instance to express certain idea. Further discussion of idea transferring during interaction relates to the way every language expresses motion events. The notion emerges that every language differs in expressing those motion events.

Motion events, according to Talmy (1985), are defined as events that comprise one object (called as 'Figure') moving or located with respect to another object. In this area of study, Talmy constitutes a famous linguist with his idea on motion event investigation. The study on motion events is to delineate how particular language talks about objects and motion through space. With regards to where the path (activity) is represented in motion event, Talmy (1991, 2000b) proposed that languages fall into two main types, namely verb-framed and satellite-framed. If the Path is represented in the main verb of a sentence, the language belongs to the category of verb-framed. In contrary, a satellite-framed language represents path in the satellite and/or preposition.

One of Austronesian languages, Javanese, is put into an investigation. Javanese is a member of Austronesian family of languages. The language family includes languages spoken in Indonesia, Malaysia, Madagascar, and the Pacific. Before further dealing with this language, it is wise to provide readers who may be unfamiliar with this language with some brief background information. Javanese, as can be seen from the name, is a language spoken in Java Island, Indonesia, South East Asia. It is a mother tongue language in this Island.

This study investigated the typological features of Javanese with respect to motion events. In specific, this study aimed at identifying the ways Javanese speakers expressed motion events. The speakers under investigation were those who were English learners. By methodically examining various ways of expressing motion events in actual language use in Javanese by English learners, it was expected that this study revealed the typological property of that language. Furthermore, the study investigated whether language contact played a role in the alteration of Javanese internal structure during the process of learning another foreign language, English, which is predicted to belong to different typology from that of Javanese.

2. Literature review

According to the pattern of lexicalization of the core schema of motion, known as Path, Talmy (1991, 2000b) categorizes language into binary typology, verb-framed and satellite-framed. Talmy proposes the following partial cross-linguistic typology. Verb-framed languages include Romance, Greek, Semitic, Turkic, Basque, Korean, and Japanese. Satellite-framed languages include Germanic, Slavic,

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Celtic, and Finno-Ugric. Verb-framed languages encode location or movement in the main verb of a clause/sentence. Study the following example:

(1) She enters the house (by) walking.
(Path) (Manner)

In sentence (1) above, the path (activity of the motion) is expressed by a finite verb 'enter', and the way to perform the activity is conveyed by a subordinate manner expression. This sort of construction is later referred as a path-incorporating sentence. In a different way, satellite-framed languages encode location or movement in an element associated with the verb, called as satellite. Talmy defines satellite as grammatical category of any constituent other than a nominal complement that is in a sister relation to the verb root. The sample sentence in a satellite-framed language is presented in sentence (2).

(2) She walks into the house.
(Manner) (Satellite/Path)

In sentence (2), the way the activity is performed is by means of a manner-verb 'walk'. A satellite 'into' is then attached to the manner verb to show the location of the activity. This sort of construction is later called as a manner-incorporating sentence.

Talmy's binary typology on languages presented above has been in debate among cross linguistics studies since it was first proposed. That typology is considered not applicable to deal with serializing languages. There is a phenomenon where a language expresses path and manner in serial verbs in a sentence. Pay closer look at the following Javanese sentence.

(3) guru-ne mlaku mlebu nang jero kelas
teacher-DEF walk enter LOC inside class
'The teacher walks into the class.'

What is catchy from sentence (3) is the occurrence of double verbs mlaku (walk) and mlebu (enter) in the same position, which is as a predicate of the sentence. Both manner verb and path verb are equally functioned as the main verbs. The further concern especially deals with the pattern of a serializing language, a language that lexicalizes both manner and path in serial verb construction (SVC). A series of two verbs belong to a single clause. Slobin (2004) then proposes classing this typical language in the third typology of equipollently-framed languages. It is considered to be the most appropriate typology to treat serial verbs. Slobin (2006) further suggests a revised typology from the one previously proposed by Talmy.

3. Methodology

The subjects of the study were Javanese speakers who were also English learners in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The focus was put mainly on motion event constructions in oral narrative texts. The narrative texts were to be told by the Javanese speakers on the Ngoko speech levels (used for informal daily conversation). In order to obtain data of actual use of Javanese in oral narrative texts, a picture story book was used: Frog, Where Are You? (Mayer, 1969). According to Slobin (1996), the events depicted in the book invite a rich array of motion descriptions. The book tells a story of a pet frog that escapes from a jar. A boy, the owner of the frog, looks for the frog together with his dog. The process of searching incorporates falling from a window, climbing and falling from a tree, being chased by a swarm of bees, being thrown off by a deer, and falling into river, before finally finding the lost frog.

The investigation of motion events was narrowed to two scenes of events in the Frog Story told by Javanese consultants learning English. The first scene is where the boy climbs a tree and falls and when a swarm of bees chases the dog (Figure 1). The second scene is when the boy and the dog fall into the water (Figure 2). The reason why these two particular scenes were chosen was that they have the richest descriptions of motion event.



Fig 1: The boy climbs the tree and falls and a swarm of bees chases the dog.

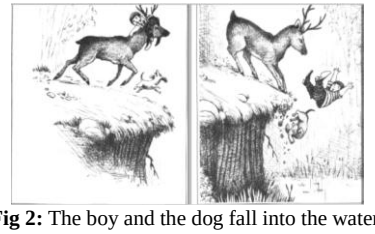


Fig 2: The boy and the dog fall into the water.

The data were collected by recording and transcribing the stories told by all Javanese speakers who were English learners under investigation. When retelling, they were looking at the picture story book to follow the sequences of the story. After glossing all Javanese data into English and providing a free English translation, the data were analyzed by investigating motion verb usages. Further, the analysis was presented in tokens (the frequency and percentage of different types of motion verbs) used in the story of the two scene series. Af-

terwards, the Javanese produced by English learners were clustered on the basis of the frequency of occurrences of motion verbs (as well as SVCs) to describe motion events.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Findings

The interlinear glossing on the transcribed data resulted in twenty sentences. The first ten sentences featured the descriptions of Figure 1. The other ten sentences portrayed the scene in Figure 2. With regards to the study findings, when Javanese consultants were to retell the story shown in Figure 1, they patterned their narrative descriptions of motion events mostly with manner verbs as the main verb in the sentence. To support the argument about the frequent occurrence of manner verbs to describe motion events, Table 1 is added below. In the following table, the distribution of constructions in the recorded data is shown.

Table 1: The distribution of verb constructions produced by Javanese speakers learning English for Figure 1

verb construction	Token	Percentage
M + P in SVCs	1	10%
M	8	80%
P	1	10%
M incorporated in temporal sequencing SVC	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Note: M stands for Manner; P stands for Path: and SVC stands for Serial Verb Construction.

The above details suggest that Javanese speakers learning English uttered their Javanese that behaved more like a satellite-framed language rather than an equipollently-framed language or a verb-framed language. The claim is elaborated under these scenarios.

When looking at Table 1, Javanese spoken by English learners could be categorized into the typology of a satellite-framed language. This claim was then based on the frequent occurrences of manner-incorporating sentences, accounting for eight out of ten sentences. In these data findings, Javanese speakers learning English produced highly frequent manner verbs to describe the scene depicted in Figure 1. Study the following sample utterances:

(4) Burung hantu mecungul tutuk njero wit-e.
owl pop up LOC inside tree.DEF
"The owl pops up out from the tree."
(5) Omah tawon-e jeblok.
house bee-DEF drop down
"The bees' hive drops down."

In sentences (4) and (5), the Javanese consultants incorporated manner verbs mecungul (pop up) and jeblok (drop down) to describe the incidents in Figure 1. Those manner-incorporating verbs were used as the main verb in those two sentences. The percentage of manner-incorporating sentences was high, accounting for 80%, as is shown in Table 1 above. With the high occurrence of manner verbs as the main verbs in sentences, Javanese speakers learning English dominantly behaved like English speakers, whose language falls within the category of satellite-framed language. In this regards, Javanese spoken by English learners was no longer categorized into an equipollently-framed language.

Another unique finding was the occurrence of path verb among ten sentences produced by Javanese speakers learning English. There was one Javanese consultant who described the scene in Figure 1 by means of a path-incorporating sentence. The sentence sounds:

(6) Tawon-e langsung metu kabeh, nguber-nguber kirik-e.
Bee.DEF directly exit all, chase dog-DEF
"All bees exit, chasing the dog."

The verb metu (exit) is a path verb as it does not express manner. The use of a path verb as the main verb in the expression of a motion event specified that this consultant behaved more like a speaker of a verb-framed language. However, one single occurrence of a path-incorporating sentence to express a motion event did not strongly support the idea that Javanese spoken by English learners fell within the typology of a verb-framed language.

Javanese is included within the root of Austronesian languages which allow Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs), and thus an equipollently-framed language. However, this finding also turned to be unique as only one out of ten sentences behaved truly like an equipollenty-framed feature. Pay closer look at the following sentence produced by one Javanese consultant:

(7) Akeh tawon sing semburat metu.
DET bee that swarm exit
"Many bees come out swarming."

With further look at sentence (7), that sentence contains two verbs: semburat (swarm) and metu (exit). The two verbs in series show the typical aspect of an equipollently-framed language. In an equipollently-framed language, both verbs in the construction are of equal status; they are main verbs.

Further investigation was directed towards the way Javanese speakers learning English described the events in Figure 2. Similar to the findings for the description of Figure 1, the data on the description of Figure 2 suggested that Javanese speakers learning English behaved more like a satellite-framed language rather than an equipollently-framed language or a verb-framed language. Pay closer attention to this sample sentence produced by Javanese consultants under investigation.

(8) Terus akhire mereka iku jungkir-walik neng danau.
then finally 3.PL DEM.DIST roll over LOC lake
"Finally they roll over into the lake."

Sentence (8) above is one out eight sentences that incorporate manner verbs in the predicate position functioning as the main verb. In sample sentence (8), the Javanese consultant utilized a manner verb jungkir-walik (roll over) to describe the falling incident in Figure 2. To better prove, the percentage of manner-incorporating sentences was high: 80%, as is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The distribution of verb constructions produced by Javanese speakers learning English for Figure 2

verb construction	token	Percentage
M + P in SVCs	1	10%
M	8	80%
P	0	0%
M incorporated in temporal sequencing SVC	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Note: M stands for Manner; P stands for Path: and SVC stands for Serial Verb Construction.

Amid the dominant data on manner-incorporating sentences produced by Javanese consultants, two consultants remained behaving like how Javanese is supposed to sound, allowing SVCs to occur. One Javanese consultant produced an utterance as below:

(9) Kirik-e mlaku nereng ae, dadine nyemplung pisan.
dog.DEF walk edge.the.way just soplunge also
"The dog walks unfocusedly, so it also plunges."

With closer attention to sentence (9), it is natural that Javanese speaker comes up with double verbs. In sentence (9) above, the first verb is mlaku (walk) and the second verb is nereng (edge the way) functioning as both main verbs in that single sentence. Those two verbs are of equal position (equipollent) and could be used either one with the same core meaning. In this way, the Javanese sentence uttered by one consultant behaved more like an equipollently-framed language.

The other highlight went to the other double-verb construction produced by one Javanese consultant. Study the following sentence:

(10) Asu-ne kepreset melok tibo nang njero-ne kali.
dog.DEF slip follow fall LOC inside-DEF river
"The dog slips away and then falls into the river."

Similar to that of in sentence (9), sentence (10) also has more than one verb in the predicate position. Although there appears to be SVC, it behaves differently from the feature of an equipollently-framed language. It is quite misleading. The construction in sentence (10) is SVC to express temporal sequencing. In Javanese, serial verb constructions are usually used to express sequences of events (… and then …). In English, the use of SVC to express temporal sequence is uncommon and requires a coordinating construction. However, the use of SVC to express temporal sequencing is possible in Javanese. This typical SVC to express temporal sequencing was not included as a proof that Javanese is an equipollenty-framed language but a satellite-framed one, as the sentence incorporates manner component kepreset (slip away) to express motion events. In conclusion, Javanese consultants learning English, when describing Figure 2, dominantly produced manner-incorporating constructions.

To sum up the findings of the narrative descriptions of the motion events portrayed in Figure 1 and 2 exposed above, Javanese speakers learning English tended to dominantly elaborate manner-incorporating sentences; accordingly, those Javanese consultants behaved like English speakers, whose language falls within the category of satellite-framed language. In other words, their Javanese behaved more like a satellite-framed language, and no longer an equipollently-framed one.

5. Discussion

The findings above showed how Javanese speakers learning English chose to describe motion events. They mainly used manner verbs in the main verb position. This phenomenon sought for further analysis and explanation. A possible explanation for the phenomenon mentioned above could be that language contact has played an important role. Language contact, according to Sankoff (2001), usually leads to bilingualism among the speakers. It is further noted that languages spoken by bilinguals influence one another in various ways. Matras (2009) adds the notion that in a situation with intense bilingualism, bilingual speakers tend to syncretise the mental planning operation during the interaction. In this case, Javanese speakers were exposed to English utterances as they were students majoring in English Department. Javanese and English are two different languages coming from different root and of different typologies. However, the data findings of this study revealed that the alteration on the structure of Javanese into English-sound construction was made clear in prediction – language contact.

There are actually two possible scenarios in a language contact situation: lexical borrowing and structural/grammatical interference. In fact, it remains a debate whether or not grammar or syntax can be borrowed. If it is the case, it may happen when there is a strong exposure to another language system. Appel and Muysken (2005) discuss whether a language can borrow rules of grammar from another language. The crucial determining factor lies on the degree and the type of language contact. In this case, Javanese speakers, who were the students of English Department, were exposed to English as they had been equipped with intensive English courses for four years (8 semesters) and prepared to be English teachers. It was then not surprising that their Javanese underwent changing.

The alteration of tendencies of Javanese speakers to produce manner verbs in the predicate position of a sentence was not only caused by their learning English, which is a satellite-framed language with major construction of manner-incorporating sentences, but by Bahasa Indonesia as well. It is noted that numerous words of Bahasa Indonesia are adopted from Javanese, and the reverse also holds true. Javanese is a mother-tongue language of the consultants under investigation; and they also use Bahasa Indonesia in their daily basis. Bahasa

Indonesia, similar to English, permits the elaboration of manner verb as the main verb within a sentence. With regards to this comparison, the production of manner-incorporating sentences by Javanese speakers learning English was an influence from Bahasa Indonesia as the national language in Indonesia and further strengthened by intensive exposure to a satellite-framed language – English – upon learning.

What becomes clear here is that languages might have all possible constructions for expressing motion events (manner, path, and equipollent). However, it also highlights that language speakers usually prefer one out of the three constructions. With the dominant preference, then language typology comes into existence. Besides, language contact in which language speakers are commonly exposed to contributes to language alteration and variation.

6. Conclusion

After collecting and analyzing data from Javanese speakers learning English, it was revealed that Javanese consultants under investigation used a similar way of describing two scenes from a story that includes motion events of some sort; they mainly used manner verbs in the main verb position. The dominant occurrence of manner verb in predicate position of a sentence exposed that Javanese spoken by English learners behaved more like a satellite-framed language, no longer an equipollently-framed language as proposed by theories. This study has come to the tentative conclusion that language contact might have played a role in the alteration of tendencies of Javanese speakers to produce manner verbs in the predicate position of a sentence that has been caused by their learning English, which is a satellite-framed language with major construction of manner-incorporating sentences. The result of the study on language typology of Javanese spoken by English learners could end up showing that language contact in the multilingual contexts might contribute to any language variation.

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