

THE SEMANTIC TYPOLOGY OF ‘BERAT’ AND ‘KERAS’ IN THE INDONESIAN COLLOCATIONS

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Abstract

This paper tries to address the semantic typology of two Indonesian words berat and keras as words that function to intensify another word preceding. The thing to be analyzed is the semantic dimensions of Indonesian collocations involving the two words mentioned. It is necessary to understand the semantic nature of the two words, for there are some Indonesian collocations involving the two words which are syntactically and naturally acceptable in the standard Indonesian, yet they are hard to interpret semantically. Implying that the two words are components with which a communication process involving the two can run smoothly, the entailment is to what extent the two words mean significantly to make the real intentions of Indonesian speakers get communicated well. From the data analyzed in this paper, it is found that there are two semantic typologies for the words berat and keras. Those two are positive, and negative. Those words have negative meaning when they collocate with something naturally unwanted. The word berat has positive meaning when it collocates with nominal deverbal involving reasoning processes. The word berat has negative meaning when it collocates with nominative agentive mostly involving physical dimensions. The word keras has positive meaning when it collocates with nominative agentive involving cognitive dimensions.

Keywords: berat-keras, collocation, semantic typologies, nominative agentive, nominal deverbal.

BACKGROUND

In the Indonesian language, the words ‘berat’ and ‘keras’ that are postnominally structured belong to words with which words being embedded get semantic intensifications. As the semantic intensifying linguistic units, these words can potentially create collocations. When the words ‘berat’ and ‘keras’ collocate with the same words and naturally the collocations are natively accepted by Indonesian native speakers, logically there are two collocations. The acceptability of collocations in a language system does not merely need syntactic justifications but it also needs semantic justifications.

The semantic dimensions of collocations become necessary conditions to understand as the entailment of the acceptability of the collocation from the syntactic point of view. Therefore it makes a collocated word less meaningful when the collocation is naturally accepted in a language, but its semantic dimension is less

understood. Collocation is a language phenomenon which syntactically enables words to occur together repeatedly, and semantically its meaning is traceable from its immediate constituents (Saeed, 2000: 60). For examples: *tingkat keberhasilan, jenjang pendidikan, derajat kesehatan, kepadatan penduduk, pekerja berat, pekerja keras, sound settlement, resounding success, crying shame*, are collocations in the Indonesian and the English language.

Generally collocations refer to a set of lexical items that can logically cohabitate referring to the language system, and no new meanings can be derived from them. In line with this notion Cruse (1995: 40) pointed out that the term collocation refers to sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur, but which are nonetheless fully transparent in the sense that each lexical constituent is also semantic constituent.

The mastery of collocations enables a native speaker to communicate something naturally and easily understood, to enrich ways of expressing his/her ideas, and to make

his/her brain easier to remember and use language in chunks or blocks rather than as single words (<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/collocations.htm>). It clearly demonstrates that collocation can make the way of someone to communicate both writtenly and spokenly more elegant. It can also be an indicator of the degree of maturity of a language speaker in which he/she communicates. The more mature the understanding of a language speaker to the language, the higher the degree of correctness of the language speaker to collocate words correctly.

Halliday (in Saeed, 2000: 60) compared the collocation patterns of two adjectives *strong* and *powerful*, which might seem to have similar meanings. English native speakers can say both *strong arguments* and *powerful arguments*. It means that the two adjective can collocate to the same words correctly. But it does not mean that such phenomena can apply to other words. In English *strong tea* is a correct collocation, but *powerful tea* is not, a *powerful car* is natively accepted, but not a *strong car*. Analogically speaking it also happens in the Indonesian language. In the Indonesian language it exists *sakit keras* and *sakit berat* hence the two are collocations. These, of course, have different semantic dimensions. Indonesians also collocate *alat-alat berat*, but not *alat-alat keras*.

All examples stated above have been the convention of the native speakers of the language speakers that they are naturally accepted collocations in the language system. *Powerful, strong, berat, and keras* belong to adjective with which nominal categories can have their modifications. Dardjowidjojo (2010: 105) found something anomalous from the usual patterns of collocations. In the Indonesian language nowadays there is a tendency of the growing of unusual patterns of collocations. For example the adverb *banget* is used to modify nominal categories, such as *kopi banget, aku banget, cowok banget, etc.* Referring to the standard Indonesian grammar, of course, it is something violating, or at least it is still less accepted by Indonesian speakers in the formal style.

Semantically collocations can make concepts existing in the mind of a language

speaker realized without which the objective condition of something is less facilitated linguistically. The uncoverability of the objective thing linguistically indicates that the thing has higher degree of intelligibility for the native speaker whose language maturity is also good. This assumption shows that collocation is a matter of epistemology not a matter of ontology of something.

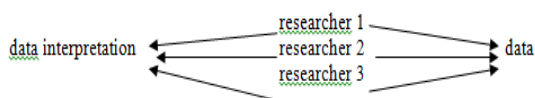
Empirically speaking it is something hard, although for the Indonesian native speakers, to determine (1) the degree of acceptability of the Indonesian words '*berat*' and '*keras*' syntactically; and (2) the degree of meaningfulness of the collocations involving the two words. It is linguistically something interesting to research for the sake of clarity and intelligibility, especially from the point of view of semantics. This notion gets its truth when Indonesian native speakers employ the two words collocatively, yet they do not clearly and distinctly differentiate the meaning of the two, so they apply something that does not represent what their intentions are. It is something ideal when Indonesian native speakers can employ words correctly to represent what they want to intend to. Hence they say or write something that really corresponds to their intentions. It is something possible to attain when the speakers understand the meanings of words they communicate with which their intentions can really be actualized.

This paper tries to uncover the semantically-related things to the two Indonesian words (*berat* and *keras*). It focuses on the post-nominal position of the two Indonesian words.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is intended to describe and explain the semantic typology of the two Indonesian words *berat* and *keras* which can potentially and actually collocate to the same word, yet they bring about different meaning. Words that are naturally acceptable by Indonesian native speakers to collocate with *berat* and *keras* are analyzed semantically. It needs well understanding on the meaning of the words constructing the collocations. The linguistic intuition of the writer and some other people as the native speakers of the Indonesian language are employed to verify

the acceptability of the collocations. It means that it employs researcher triangulation to obtain and verify data (Sutopo, 2006: 98). The researcher triangulation in this paper covers the data collecting and the data analyzing technique. Schematically the researcher triangulation can be stated as below:



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As words having tendencies to occur together repeatedly, collocations will have justifying reasons of their acceptability in a language system when semantically the collocations do not produce anomalous meanings. For examples:

- (1) *Dia menderit sakit keras.*
- (2) *Dia menderit sakit berat.*

In the examples (1) and (2) the words *keras* and *berat* are natively and naturally accepted in the standard Indonesian language. It is due to the fact that they yield natural senses. Indeed that example (1) is semantically different from example (2), yet the two meet the requirements of acceptability in the Indonesian language. In the example (1) the word *keras* refers to the quality or the degree of sickness/illness suffered by the subject of the sentence. It is likely that the kind of the illness does not belong to the very serious disease, yet he/she is in a very critical situation. So the sufferer cannot do anything. He/she is completely dependent to other persons although to do something very simple. It entails that the life of the one can be in an endangered condition.

On the other hand the example (2) the word *berat* refers to the kind of illness suffered by someone. For example: *coronary heart, cancer, kidney, etc.* It empirically happens that the one who suffers such an illness is not in a very critical condition. He/she can still do what his/her daily job is, yet the person is actually suffering a very serious disease from which he/she can be in the condition of example (1) if his/he illness is not well treated and medicated.

From the explanation of the examples (1) and (2) it is then concludeable that both the words *berat* and *keras* can naturally be collocated correctly in the Indonesian language. Though so is it, it brings about different semantic dimensions. If *berat* collocates with *sakit* the sense refers to the kinds of sickness being suffered by someone. It does not automatically refer to the critical condition of the sufferer in which the kind of illness exists. It is likely that the one who suffers such an illness looks so fit.

On the other hand if *keras* collocates with *sakit*, its meaning refers to the degree of sickness being suffered by someone. Of course it is not something discretely separable between one to another. To some extent each of which is interinfluencing. The interim conclusion that we got from these examples is that when the word *berat* and *keras* collocate acceptably to something naturally unwanted, their semantic typologies are negative.

In the Indonesian language the word *minuman* can collocate with the words *keras* and *ringan*. It can be realized in the following sentences:

- (3) *Dia minum minuman keras.*
- (4) *Dia minum minuman ringan.*

The word *keras* in the example (3) means a kind of drink that can potentially cause the drinker gets a drunk. Meanwhile the word *ringan* in the example (4) means on the contrary to the meaning of the example (3). If we try to refer to the person who drinks or the drinker, it seems that the word referring to the one who drinks (*peminum*) cannot collocate with the word *keras*, as exemplified in the following sentence:

- (5) ? *Dia seorang peminum keras.*

Indonesian native speakers tend to say

- (6) *Dia seorang peminum berat.*

In this paper the writer assumes that the expressions of *minuman keras*, *minuman ringan*, and *peminum berat* are collocations and not others, for those meet the rules of meaning components of the practical definition of collocations being applied in this paper. In the example of *peminum berat*, the degree of acceptability in terms of syntactic coherence is marked with the selectivity of the word to collocate with other words to yield the conventional meaning.

Peminum berat (a hard drinker) is a term to refer to someone whose habit to drink hard drink is hardly possible to stop. He/she has been chained heavily.

The expression of *peminum keras* is natively and naturally unacceptable in the Indonesian language. In general the word *keras* cannot collocate with *peminum*, but it collocates with *minuman*, hence it produces a collocation of *minuman keras*. Therefore from the examples of *peminum berat*, *minuma keras*, and *minuman ringan* we can have new sentences consisting with the acceptable collocations. The sentences are

(7) *Dia adalah seorang peminum berat minuman keras.*

(8) *Dia adalah seorang peminum berat minuman ringan.*

Another semantic dimension of the word *berat* and *keras* in the Indonesian collocation can be exemplified in the following sentences:

(9) *Tulisan-tulisan yang dia publikasikan termasuk tulisan-tulisan berat.*

(10) *Tulisan-tulisan yang dia publikasikan termasuk tulisan-tulisan keras.*

The word *berat* in the example (9) means a kind of reading materials from which the degree to understand is hard. It takes serious efforts to understand what the intentions of the writing are. And even it takes smart persons to grab the message of the writing. Hence *berat* in *tulisan berat* tends to refer to the kinds of writing materials to write and the way to write the reading materials. Meanwhile the word *keras* in the example of (10) means a kind of writing or reading materials which can potentially stimulate someone to do something reactively. Even it can provoke someone to do something out of control. It means that this word tends to refer to the way or the strategy to write.

The elaboration of the examples (9) and (10) demonstrate that when the word *berat* collocates with *tulisan* the sense tends to be positive. *Tulisan berat* indicates that it takes serious efforts to think and to write to make the great and serious ideas of the writer understandable by others, therefore it must be something serious, something cordial, not something peripheral.

On the other hand the word *keras* in *tulisan keras* tends to have negative sense. It does not refer to the degree of significance of material to write, but it tends to refer to the way being applied by the writer to write.

Let's now try to analyze other sentences involving the words *berat* and *keras* to find out the semantic typologies.

(11) *Mereka adalah para pekerja berat.*

(12) *Mereka adalah para pekerja keras.*

The word *berat* in the example (11) refers to kinds of job being performed by someone. Mostly it takes physical dimension to do the job. It does not rely on the power of brain to execute the job. Hence sociologically it tends to have negative sense. It is negative in the sense that naturally people do not want to have such a kind of job so they strive to have better education to improve their lives. Therefore it clearly points out that the power of brain tends to have positive meaning rather than the physical power to execute kinds of job. Such a kind of job is usually named blue collar. These data, as if, strengthen a very well-known proverb that says knowledge is power.

The word *keras* in the example (12) refer to the way someone performs their job. Someone who does their job in such a way indicates that they are serious workers. It can be applied for both someone who relies on to the physical dimensions to do the job and someone who makes use their brain to complete their job. Therefore the word *keras* in *pekerja keras* has positive meaning.

The conclusions that we can get from the examples (11) and (12) are (a) the word *keras* tends to have positive meaning when it collocates with nominative agentive, and (b) on the other hand the word *berat* tends to have negative sense when it collocates with nominative agentive.

From the data presented above it clearly demonstrates that collocative distribution of words, normally, is determined by the semantic acceptability rather than syntactic acceptability in a language system. When expressions consisting of two or more words co-occurring together from which their meanings are traceable from their immediate constituents, such linguistic phenomena belong to collocation.

The traceability of meanings of collocations becomes the defining characteristics of collocation in comparison with idiom (Saeed, 2000: 60). It obviously shows that lexical meanings of immediate constituents play very significant roles to understand the meaning of the linguistic phenomena. On the contrary when the lexical meaning of the immediate constituents plays no significant role to create meaning, this belongs to idiom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Having discussed some data related to the topic of this paper, it needs to draw the interim conclusions. In addition to the acceptability from the point of view of syntactic dimensions, collocation needs also justifications from the point of view of semantic dimension. It strengthens a notion in language that language consists of symbol, thought, and referent (Ogden, Richard, 1972: 11). The word *berat* and *keras* in the Indonesian language function to intensify the words stand previously. The two words can, to some extent, collocate with the same word, yet they bring about different meaning.

From the data analyzed, it is inductively inferable that there are two semantic typologies that we can get. The first is positive, and the second one is negative. Both *berat* and *keras* has positive sense when they collocate with something naturally unwanted (see examples (1), and (2)). The word *berat* has positive meaning when it collocates with nominal deverbal involving reasoning process (as in *tulisan berat*). The word *berat* has negative meaning when it collocates with nominative agentive mostly employing physical dimensions to execute something (as in *pekerja berat*). The word

keras has positive meaning when it collocates with nominative agentive (as in *pekerja keras*).

The writer fully realized that it is a very beginning research to such a topic. It cannot comprehensively cover all semantic typologies inherently embedding to the two Indonesian words. It is also hard to find both words *berat* and *keras* to acceptably collocate to the same word post-nominally structured. Therefore for the sake of uncovering all things to know to the topic, further research is needed. Indeed such a topic has a significant degree in terms of its novelty to research, for a semantic justification is a necessary condition to justify the degree of acceptability of collocation in a language (in this case in the Indonesian language).

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