

The Indonesian verbal suffix –nya : nominalization or subordination? / Philippe Grangé

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Abstrak

The suffix ‘nya’ is one of the most frequent and polysemic suffixes in Indonesian. It can provide definite determination and topicalization. The ‘Verbnya’, which often appears in a topicalized subject Noun Phrase (NP), is generally labelled as a deverbal noun. Nevertheless, many syntactic constraints set it apart from Indonesian deverbal nouns. ‘Verbnya’ must be complemented by a NP, which can easily be reconstructed as a former subject: a sentence is topicalized and thus becomes a noun clause, generally the subject of the main clause Verb Phrase (VP). I argue that ‘Verbnya’ is a subordinate noun clause, almost always conveying causality. This causal noun clause, an innovation in formal written Indonesian (especially in the media), seems to fill a ‘gap’: the impossibility of beginning a sentence with a subordinating morpheme (‘that’, ‘because’).