

FORMAL (WRITTEN) INDONESIAN IS 'HOT' AND INFORMAL (SPOKEN) INDONESIAN IS 'COOL'?

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At the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in 1982, borrowing the idea from McLuhan (1964), John R. Ross suggested that languages may be classified, at least informally, into the 'hot' type or the 'cool' type on the basis of the explicitness with which they express certain anaphoric elements. 'Hot' type languages, on the one hand, are those which supply the interlocutors with all the required linguistic information. For instance, with respect to sentence comprehension, the interlocutors can rely on what is overtly seen and heard in sentences. 'Cool' type languages, on the other hand, are those which require that the interlocutors put some effort into getting the information. That is, with respect to sentence comprehension, the interlocutors have to rely on contexts to recover what is not overtly seen and heard in sentences. Using this dichotomy, English may thus be said to belong to the 'hot' type because pronouns cannot generally be omitted from grammatical sentences, as we can see from the following example (from Huang 1984):

- (1) Speaker A: Did John see Bill yesterday?
Speaker B: a. Yes, **he** saw **him**.
b. *Yes, *e* saw **him**.
c. *Yes, **he** saw *e*.
d. *Yes, *e* saw *e*.
e. *Yes, I guess *e* saw *e*.
f. *Yes, John said *e* saw *e*.

Indonesian, however, can be said to belong to the 'cool' type because pronouns may be omitted from grammatical sentences. For example, all the sentences that are starred up in (1) are grammatical in Indonesian if uttered in appropriate contexts.

- (2) Speaker A: Apa John ketemu Amir kemarin?
Speaker B: a. Iya, **ia** ketemu **dia**.
b. Iya, *e* ketemu **dia**.
c. Iya, **ia** ketemu *e*.
d. Iya, *e* ketemu *e*.
e. Iya, aku rasa *e* ketemu *e*.
f. Iya, John bilang *e* ketemu *e*.

In this paper, I would like to show that the omission of pronouns holds only for informal (spoken) Indonesian, but it is not a common feature found in formal (written Indonesian). In other words, I would like to claim that informal (spoken) Indonesian belongs to the 'cool' type, but formal (written) Indonesian belongs to the 'hot' type.

References

- McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding the Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw-Hill: New York.
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