

Redundancy in Malay Morphology: School Grammar versus Corpus Grammar

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Abstract : The aim of this paper is to examine and identify the issue of linguistic redundancy in two competing grammars of Malay, namely the school grammar and the corpus grammar. The former is a normative grammar which is formally and prescriptively taught in the classroom, whereas the latter is a descriptive grammar that is informally acquired and mastered by the students as native speakers of the language outside the classroom. Corpus grammar is depicted based on its actual used in natural occurring texts, as attested in the corpus. It is observed that the grammar taught in schools is incompatible with the grammar used in the corpus. For instance, a noun phrase containing nominal reduplicated form which denotes plurality (i.e. murid-murid 'students' which is derived from murid 'student') and a modifier categorized as quantifiers (i.e. semua 'all', seluruh 'entire', and kebanyakan 'most') is not acceptable in the school grammar because the formation (i.e. semua murid-murid 'all the students' kebanyakan pelajar-pelajar 'most of the students') is claimed to be redundant, and redundancy is prohibited in the grammar. Redundancy is generally construed as the property of speech and language by which more information is provided than is precisely required for the message to be understood, so that, if some information is omitted, the remaining information will still be sufficient for the message to be comprehended. Thus, the correct construction to be used is strictly the reduplicated form (i.e. murid-murid 'students') or the quantifier plus the root (i.e. semua murid 'all the students') with the intention that the grammatical meaning of plural is not repeated. Nevertheless, the so-called redundant form (i.e. kebanyakan pelajar-pelajar 'most of the students') is frequently used in the corpus grammar. This study shows that there are a number of redundant forms occur in the morphology of the language, particularly in affixation, reduplication and combination of both. Apparently, the so-called redundancy has grammatical and socio-cultural functions in communication that is to give emphasis and to stress the importance of the information delivered by the speakers or writers.

Keywords : corpus grammar, morphology, redundancy, school grammar

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