Grammatical relations and grammatical categories in Malay; The Indonesian prefix "meN-" revisited

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Abstract

The lexical roots of Malay are flexible with regard to their grammatical categories, which presents a problem in providing grammatical evidence for their category determination. This paper attempts to propose the use of affixes as one way to deal with the issue. Data from Indonesian and Ambon (Malay) language are among others given for clarification. The grammatical evidence from Indonesian active *meN-*, together with other affixes, are revisited as they can contribute to our understanding of the matter.

Keywords

Grammatical categories, grammatical relations, Malay, Indonesian.

1. Introduction[1]

The universality of noun and verb categories in languages has been long advocated by most linguists. Yet there has still been no clear consensus as to what constitutes the major grammatical categories "noun" and "verb".[2] What kind of grammatical evidence can justify the instantiation of the two categories universally? In some languages, such as English, they can appear formally in the morphosyntax, but in others there seems to be no distinction between the two categories, as claimed by Kinkade (1983), for example. However, some

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[2]   Several terms have been used in the literature for this: parts of speech, syntactic categories and lexical categories (see also Payne 1997). My use of the term grammatical categories follows Payne's (1997: 32).

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linguists (among others, Croft 1997) have tried to disprove such a claim and have insisted that there has to be a distinction between them. Yet, the case is still problematic in Malay due to the flexibility of its lexical roots. This kind of flexibility has been noted for Ambon Language[3] (AL) in Van Minde (1997: 65); for Riau Indonesian (Gil 1994), and for Indonesian (Steinhauer 1986; Teeuw 1962, 1977). Teeuw and Steinhauer are especially concerned with the subtle distinction between intransitive verbs and adjectives in Indonesian. Interestingly, the latter category, namely adjectives, has been claimed as not even existing in AL in Van Minde (1997). Faced with such a categorial indeterminacy, Gil, beyond merely the issue of grammatical categorization, proposed that all words and constituents belong to the same syntactic category that he calls "S", roughly corresponding to the traditional category of sentence (Van Minde 1997: 66).

Through this introductory paper I want to propose for Malay in general that the notion of grammatical relations (such as the-commonly-known "subject", "object", etcetera) does play a central role in the determination of the category membership of lexical roots. Primarily of my concern here are the so-called major categories nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The interface between grammatical relations and grammatical categories has been well proven, especially among the functionalists (for example, Givón 1984). Hopper and Thompson (1984: 747) advocated a more challenging view from a discourse perspective that "linguistic forms are in principle to be considered as 'lacking categoriality' completely unless nounhood or verbhood is forced on them by their discourse functions". Although their view is still under debate, data from AL and Indonesian shows that grammatical categories of lexical roots appear on the surface when being instantiated in discourse (compare also Payne 1997). This means that in a clause, a root relates with other constituents. In an explanatory way Croft (1997: 62) refers to the type of interrelationship of constituents as "valency", namely the inherent relationality of a concept, that is, the existence of one entity requires the existence of another. According to Croft, valency constitutes one of the major semantic properties in the identification of semantic prototypes for major grammatical categories. Other properties are stativity, persistence, and gradability. This paper has much benefited his typological-functional findings about the nature of major grammatical categories. In the following I will try to show that the Indonesian prefix *meN-* can provide structural evidence for markedness in the determination of major grammatical categories in Indonesian, especially between intransitive verbs and adjectives. Some additional evidence will be presented through the morphosyntactic behavior of the prefix *peN-* as well, although, indeed, other affixes can contribute to our understanding of the matter.

Directly related to this issue of categorization is the intriguing syntactic behavior of *meN-* which in some cases occurs but in others does not (see for example Kaswanti Purwo 1986, 1988). Another yet relevant issue that will be presented is the relative pragmatic status of arguments in a clause

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[3]   Ambon language is my term for the so-called Ambonese Malay.

that control deletion of arguments. Such an "argument-drop" is common in Malay, and structurally it could lead us to such an extreme conclusion that only a single general category would exist, if the importance of dealing with discourse-pragmatic issue is completely ignored. The next section will start with a discussion of grammatical categories.

2. THE CATEGORICAL NON-DISTINCTIVE LEXICAL ROOTS IN AL AND INDONESIAN

A combination of a trade and creolized Malay, AL displays very little affixation, inherited from Malay (compare Collins 1980; Grimes 1991). It seems impossible to trace back from what Malay variety AL took its base, although this can be helpful in "reconstructing" its grammatical use. The best way available is to dig up the grammatical source from Indonesian, which still shows various grammatical means. In many cases, affixes in AL, even the productive ones, are not consistent at all in use and become "fossilized" with the roots (compare Collins 1980), such as the "fossilized" *maN-* (Indonesian *meN-*) in *manyanyi* 'to sing', 'singing', where the possible root *nyanyi* does not exist. The more striking examples are *pancuri* 'thief' (Indonesian root *curi* 'to steal') and *manyapu* 'to sweep' (Indonesian root *sapu* 'broom').[4] In fact, to be precise, such a form does not show any fossilization at all, instead the stem was borrowed intact, unanalyzed morpho-syntactically from Malay into AL.[5] This fact, and the somewhat limited size of the lexicon and its relatively highly isolating nature typologically may contribute extralinguistic factors to the nature of the "multiple" or "ambiguous" grammatical categories in the language.

Examples (1) and (2) show how AL has to "maximize" the lexicon at its disposal:

(1) a. *Be*   *su*   <u>*minong*</u>.   (VERBAL)
     1SG   TAM   drink
     'I've drunk.'

    b. *Pi*   *ambe*   <u>*minong*</u>   *sana!*   (NOMINAL)
     go   take   drink   there
     'Go take some drink there!'

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[4]   The word *sapu* is nowadays used as well. However it is a recent borrowing from Indonesian.

[5]   The "intact borrowing" is proven also in that there is no consistent semantic paradigm occurring in "pseudo"-affixation, for example *inga(t)* > *ingatang,* where *inga(t)* means 'to remember' and *ingatang* means 'be aware', 'remember', 'memory'. Thus, the adding of *–ang* is not derivational, as one would expect. (See also Van Minde 1997: 107-108).

c. *Ana   pung   <u>minong</u> paleng   capat,*
child   POSS   drink   very   fast
balong   ap-apa   lae   su   abis.
not.yet something again   already finish
'He drank very quick, nothing happens and it's   (NOMINAL)
just finished.' (Literally: 'His drinking was …')

(2) a. *Be   <u>anang</u>   ana   tu.*   (VERBAL)
1SG happy   child   that
'I love the child.'

b. *Ontua   <u>sanang</u>   paskali.*   (VERBAL)
1SG   happy   very
'He's very happy.'

c. *De   tunju   muka   <u>sanang</u>   paskali.*   (ADJECTIVAL)
3SG point   face   happy   very
'He is showing a very happy face.'

d. *Jang   ganggo   orang   pung   <u>sanang</u>!*   (NOMINAL)
don't disturb person   POSS   happy
'Don't bother other person's business (literally:
other person's happiness)!'

As can be seen above, no lexical and morphological change occurs on the stem in any of the syntactic functions. The distinction is only brought about by the morphosyntactic operation of the language (the word order and the syntax of NP (the use of determiners, possessive marker, word order, etcetera) and VP (the use of TAM markers, word order, etcetera))[6] To some extent, such a categorically "indeterminate" example can also be found in English words, for example *dance, hammer*. Indonesian also illustrates this kind of indeterminacy, as in (3). Examples (4), (5), and (6) show another issue in Indonesian where the respective distinction of, the adjective like *tinggi, senang* and intransitive verb *duduk* is null.

(3) a. *Dayung   patah.*
oar   broken
'The oar is broken.' or 'Broken oar.'

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    [6]   For the term morphosyntactic operation I refer to that of Payne (1997). For a detailed discussion on the morphosyntax of Ambonese NP and VP, consult Van Minde (1997).

b. *Mari   kita   dayung   perahu   ke   sana!*
come   1PL   row   prao   to   there
'Let's row the prao there!'

(4) *Dia   tinggi.*
3SG   tall
'He is tall.'

(5) *Dia   senang.*
3SG   happy
'He is happy.'

(6) *Dia   duduk   di   sana.*
3SG   sit   in   there
'He is sitting over there.'

None of the data from Malay above are unusual but just presenting further evidence of the non-distinctiveness of lexical roots in regard to their category membership. In order to account for Malay, I have adopted the functional-typological explanation made in, for example, Givón (1984), Croft (1997), and Payne (1997). Along the line of such a view, a "multiple" category membership of a form is admitted and as such the boundaries between the grammatical categories are not discrete (Payne 1997: 32). The distinction of the membership is instantiated in discourse, with accompanying morphosyntactic clues (see Hopper and Thompson 1984). Sometimes a pragmatic inference has to be the clue. Thus, somewhere on the sea, (7) could mean that the speaker is asking for an oar (noun), or he is telling the addressee to row (verb) the boat.

(7) *dayung*! *(Indonesian)*   or   *panggayo!* (AL)
oar/to row   oar/to row

Semantic and morphosyntactic factors for determining grammatical categories have been much discussed for AL in Van Minde (1997) and for Indonesian in (Kridalaksana 1986; Steinhauer 1986; Teeuw 1962, 1977); compare also for Riau Indonesian in Gil (1994). For categorization, the prototypical semantic contents of nouns and verbs (time-stable concepts), that have been proposed in Givón (1984), are useful, together with the morphosyntactic properties, namely distributional and structural properties, such as the morphosyntax of NP and VP (see Payne 1997: 33; also Schachter 1985). These tests work well for AL and Indonesian to a great extent, except for the distinction between intransitive verbs and adjectives, which is still problematic, as noticed by Van Minde, Steinhauer, and Teeuw. However, much of the discussion on the morphosyntax of NP and VP in the literature has been so far focused around the elements out of the lexical stem itself, such

as articles, determiners, TAM (tense-aspect-mood) markers and their syntactic functions in general, such as Subject, Predicate, and Object. Such a heavy focus on these "extra-lexical" issues cannot explain to us much about the category membership of intransitive verbs and adjectives of a form in Indonesian. My suggestion is that, apart from all such semantic and morphosyntactic characteristics, it is important to take into account the nature of valency, that is, especially agentivity of the subject encoded in the clause when a lexical root is entered into discourse, that is formally into a clause (see Payne 1997: 71). In the next section I will elaborate this matter.

3. The subject marker *meN-* and major grammatical categories in Indonesian

In what follows I will demonstrate that the notion of agentivity of subject can explain much about the boundaries between intransitive verbs and adjectives in Indonesian, and that the Indonesian prefix *meN-* can serve as a morphosyntactic test to disambiguate the two grammatical categories. For the notion of grammatical relations I will base this analysis on the framework of Payne (1997: 75) and Givón (1984) (see also Dixon 1979 and Comrie 1978). Within their work, the subject category consists of A and S, and the absolutive category consists of S and P. The A(gent) is the most agent-like argument of a transitive clause; S(ubject) is the only argument of an intransitive clause; and P(atient) is the least agent-like argument of a transitive clause. The isomorphism principle of this grouping lies as follows: the semantic similarity between A and S is agentivity, whereas that between S and P is change of state. A discourse-pragmatic similarity has also been proven for A and S, namely topicality, and for S and P, new information (see Payne 1997: 141-142). It is important to mention also that the absolutive category (that is, the patient-S or P) is distinguished between one that is "being at state" and one that is "undergoing a change of state" (see Givón 1984: 88). The recognition of A and S especially, as we will see below, is crucial for understanding both arguments in Indonesian since in the clause they show no difference in terms of word order and morphological marking. From now on in this paper the term subject (in lower case) will be used to refer to the category subject, otherwise the upper case S, P, or A will be mentioned if the set of the category is specifically intended.

In spite of some pragmatic variations (see Section 6 on pragmatic statuses), AL displays a basic order of AVP/SV (compare Van Minde 1997: 208), and so does Indonesian (compare Verhaar 1983; Kaswanti Purwo 1988). The V is the pivot and, especially in Indonesian, it is the primary point around which various morphosyntactic markers to cluster. Whereas A, S and P are not directly marked morphologically, except for their order in relation to V. Although there is no marking on NPs for A, S and P, I claim their existential difference in the clause. Analogous to the category membership of a lexical root which becomes instantiated only in discourse and may be recognized through semantic, morphosyntactic tests and/or pragmatic inference, so are A, S, and P.

Considering again examples (4), (5), and (6) in Indonesian above, if we

assume V (or Predicate) is the pivot (or core), then what makes the difference among them is the category subject; that is, it is S in (4) and (5) and A in (6). The capability of such lexical stems like *duduk* in (6) to take an S without any verbal morphosyntactic coding on themselves can easily lead us to label them as (intransitive) verbs. The same behaviour appears on the verbs of emotion such as *senang* in (5). In such types of intransitive verbs, the S is a patient that undergoes a change of state.[7] Other examples of such verbs are *marah* 'angry', *sakit* 'sick', *puas* 'satisfied', *sedih* 'sad', etcetera.

In contrast to (5) and (6), in clauses where the predicate is occupied by words like *tinggi*, the S is not agentive at all nor does it undergo a change of state. Such predicate adjectives only denote the qualities of the S. The S is in the state. Dixon (1977) (as well as Croft 1997: 40) has found a semantic regularity among languages having small adjective classes that items belonging to this category fall in the semantic classes of dimension ("big", "small"), age ("young", "old"), value ("good", "bad"), and colour ("white", "red"). In Indonesian, these are the very items that morphosyntactically behave in a different way with intransitive verbs. While intransitive verbs can by themselves signal the agentivity or a change of state of the S, adjectives cannot; they have to take the prefix *meN-*. Thus, compare (8a) and (8b):

(8) a.   *Orang   itu   besar.*   b.   *Orang   itu   mem-besar*
          person   that big   person   that *meN*-big
          'The person is big.'   'The person becomes bigger.'

Example (9) gives more examples of such an operation:

(9) *putih*   'white'   >   *memutih*
     baik   'good'   >   *membaik*
     tua   'old'   >   *menua*

Intransitive verbs that especially denote a change of state of S, for example those that describe "mental state", cannot take the prefix *meN-* in such a way. Thus, *dia menyedih* is not grammatical. More examples:

(10) *marah*   'angry'   >   **memarah*
      sedih   'sad'   >   **menyedih*
      sakit   'sick'   >   **menyakit*

Indonesian regularly displays this paradigm. Thus, the grammatical category of adjectives has to be claimed as existing in Indonesian, to support the view that has been held so far in Indonesian grammar (compare Keraf 1969; Kridalaksana 1986). Beside the semantic classes of adjectives above, Dixon also noticed the following among languages with larger adjective

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7   Other terms for this is "dative subject" or "experiencer".

classes: human propensity ("happy", "clever"), physical property ("hard", "hot"), and speed ("quick", "slow"). These classes are less "typical" adjectives (Croft 1997: 40), as their category can vary from language to language. By the definition adopted here, the class of human propensity (for example, *senang, marah*), then, is assumed as intransitive verbs in Indonesian. This result differs from that has been proposed so far in Indonesian grammar, for example, in Kridalaksana (1986) and Keraf (1969), who have assigned such words in the category adjectives.

It should be pointed out here that some adjectives have been metaphorically extended in their use and therefore can function verbally as well. Thus, compare (11) and (12):

(11) a.   *Cuaca*   *dingin.*   (property)
            weather   cold
            'The weather is cold.'

      b.   *Cuaca*   *mendingin.*
            weather   *meN*-cold
            'The weather becomes cold.'

(12) a.   *Orang*   *itu*   *dingin.*   (human propensity/experiential)
            person   that   cold
            'That person feels cold.' or 'That person is indifferent.'

      b.   **Orang*   *itu*   *mendingin.*

In some languages, the distinction between S and A in (11) and (12) is grammaticalized, as in the example (13) of Chickasaw, a language in the southeastern United States. In (13a), the subject is A, in (b), it is the patient-of-state-S, and in (c) it is the dative-S (the patient of change) (examples from Payne 1997: 148):

(13) a.   *Chokma-li.*   'I act good.'   (volitional)
            good-1SG.A

      b.   *Sa-chokma.*   'I am good.'   (non-volitional)
            1SG.P-good

      c.   *An-chokma.*   'I feel good.'   (experiential)
            1SG.DAT-good

Russian also displays the distinction, where the dative experiencer takes a dative case and the predicate takes the "neutral" impersonal ending (14a);

the patient-of-state-S takes a nominative case and the property word is in the adjectival form declined for nominative case cross-referring to the S (14b).

(14) a.   *Yemu*   *kholodn-o*
           3SG.M.DAT   cold-3SG.N.NOM
           'He feels cold.'   (experiental)

      b.   *On*   *kholodn-yi*
           3SG.M.NOM   cold-3SG.M.NOM   (property)
           'He is cold.'

    The position adhered to here to include all lexical roots denoting "human propensities" or "change-of-states", such as *sakit* 'sick', *lelah* 'tired', *senang* 'happy', etcetera, consequently, leads us to a controversy as this is against what has been believed so far in Indonesian grammar that those roots are adjectives (compare Keraf 1969; Kridalaksana 1986).[8] Keraf and Kridalaksana have been applied "gradability" criterion to such roots, that is, that they can be preceded by the word *sangat,* 'very', *lebih* 'more' (Kridalaksana 1986: 58).[9] However, many roots they have categorized as verbs can also exhibit this behavior, thus compare *lebih suka* 'to like more', *lebih cinta* 'to love more'. Such a controversy is not surprising as such roots overlaps with "true" adjectives and nouns in languages, as has been pointed out in Dixon (1977) and Croft (1997), they have been recognized to categorically behave in different ways from language to language. By the definition applied here, I have taken a position that such roots in Indonesian are more "verbhood" than "adjectivehood" (or "nounhood"). See Section 4 Point c below for further clarification.

3.1 MORE EVIDENCE FROM THE PREFIXATION WITH *PEN-*

Although Indonesian NPs are not marked for these, the possibility of the lexical stem taking *meN-*, as examples (11) and (12) show, suggests the distinction. The existential difference of A, S, and P can be further seen in the "subject nominalization" with the prefix *peN-*. Thus, consider the following derived forms of adjective (15d), intransitive verb (16b) and transitive verb (17b):

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[8]   This issue of categorizing such roots is indeed problematic in Indonesian grammar. Tomasowa (2000), for example, also categorizes such roots as verbs, but without providing any single criterion.

[9]   Kridalaksana (1986) also includes various derived words (for example with *ber-* and *meN-* prefixation) which I will categorize as verbal forms. I think, he is mixing up form and function: *ber-* and *meN-*-derived words are verbal formatively, but can function for "modification" as well. Note that adjectives are normally used for this function (see Croft 1997). However, this functional criterion alone is not sufficient for determining grammatical categories.

(15) a. *Dia   me-mutih-kan   tembok   dengan   cat.*   subject is A
    3sg   *meN*-white-APPL   wall   with   paint
    'He whitened the wall with paint.'

    b. *Dia   putih.*   subject is at state
    3sg   white
    'He (his skin) is white.'

    c. *Muka-nya   me-mutih.*   subject is at state
    face-3sg   *meN*-white
    'His face is whitening/becomes white.'

    d. *pemutih*   'whitener'   <u>instrument</u>/<u>causer-
    nominalization</u>
    NOT: Subject-nominalization

(16) a. *Dia   marah.*   subject is patient-S
    3sg   angry
    'He is angry.'

    b. *pemarah*   'a temperament person'   <u>patient-S-nominalization</u>

(17) a. *Dia   (mem-)bunuh   orang.*   subject is A
    3sg   *meN*-kill   person
    'He killed a person.'

    b. *pembunuh*   'a killer'   <u>A-nominalization</u>

(16) – (17) show that *peN*- only nominalizes subjects of verbs, and not those of adjectives, as in (15). Nominalization in (15d) is derived from (15a), which is transitive, rather than from (b) or (c). This suggests that with predicate adjectives, the subject is not "directly" related to the predicate. In *peN*-nominalization with adjective roots, the subject does not refer to the "actual" subject in the clause (as in 15b), whereas as with verb roots it does (compare 16 and 17).

4. The "optional" use of the prefix *meN*-

Interestingly, although stative or process verbs (see Section 4 Point c below), such as those of "mental state" or "states" *marah* 'angry', *sedih* 'sad' and verbs of motion and position like *jalan* 'walk', *duduk* 'sit', do not necessarily have to take the prefix *meN*-, most other types of verbs in Indonesian can "optionally" be prefixed with *meN*-, such as *dengar* 'hear' vs *mendengar*, *lihat* 'see' vs *melihat*.

This leads us to another question that if a "bare" lexical stem can by itself signal the existence of S or A in a clause, why in some cases does it "have" to be marked again with *meN-*? What, then, is the *meN-* exactly?

Most transitive and intransitive lexical roots can enter into discourse with or without *meN-* prefixed to them. Yet, this *meN-* prefixation is not at all without explanation, hence, it is NOT optional. A careful look at *meN-* prefixation as in (8) or (11) reveals that a gradation of agentivity of the S always occurs. The more agentivity the higher the consciousness, volitionality and controllability (see Givón 1984). Thus, consider the paradigm in each pair of examples in (18) – (23) below:

AGENTIVITY GRADATION OF SUBJECT

(18) a. *Orang   itu   besar.*   subject is at state
          person   that   big

      b. *Orang   itu   membesar.*   subject is undergoing a
                                            change of state

(19) a. *Cuaca   dingin.*   subject is at state
          weather   cold

      b. *Cuaca   mendingin.*   subject is undergoing a
                                            change of state

(20) a. *Orang itu   sakit.*   subject is undergoing a
          person that sick   change of state

      b. *Orang itu menyakit.*   ?

(21) a. *Orang   itu   lari*   subject is undergoing a
          person   that   run   process

      b. *Orang itu melari*   ?

(22) a. *Saya   dengar   (bahwa),*   subject is less agentive
          1SG   hear   (that)

          dia   sudah   pulang.
          3SG   already   come.home

          'I heard (for example, by accident) that he's coming home.'

      b. *Saya   mendengar   (bahwa),*   subject is more agentive
          1SG   menN-hear   (that)

          dia   sudah   pulang.
          3SG   already   come.home

          'I heard (for example, somebody told me) that he's coming home.'

(23) a.   *Saya   cinta   kamu.*   subject is agentive
           1SG   love   you
           'I love you.'

      b.   *Saya   mencinta-i   kamu.*   subject is more agentive
           1SG   menN-love-APPL   you
           'I (do) love you.'

      c.   **Saya mencinta kamu*

What the data in (18)–(23) show to us is as follows:

a. All verbs, both intransitive and transitive, are capable of being verbally instantiated in discourse in their "bare" form, without the help of *meN-*, while adjectives are not. This fact distinguishes intransitive verbs from adjectives in Indonesian. In other words, adjectives have to take *meN-* to increase their valency. This explains why *meN-* has to be prefixed to adjectives in (18) and (19), while it cannot be added to intransitive verbs in (20) and (21).

b. If the bare form of verbal stems is by itself sufficient to code the agentive status of subject as in (22a) and (23a), then it is just valid to question the occurrence of *meN-* in (22b) and (23b). To answer this, I propose here that there has to be a gradation of the agentivity of subject each time *meN-* is attached to the verbal stem. In this sense, *meN-* can be considered as a valence-increasing device. Thus compare the pairs in (21) and (22). Following this reasoning, then, the agentivity of subject of the non-*meN*-prefixed verbal stem such as *dengar* and *cinta* in (22a) and (23a) is "upgraded" when prefixed with *meN-* as in their counterparts (22b) and (23b) respectively. By definition, *meN-* cannot be called a verbalizer nor it is an "actor trigger", as has been labeled by some people (for example, Cumming 1991). It does not trigger any actor; instead it simply signals or encodes the agentive status of the subject, with a bare verbal root, the agent is already there even without the presence of *meN-*. It is not so correct to call it an "active" prefix (Cartier 1979) either, because (18b) and (19b) display no activity at all on the part of the subject. However, the term "active (marker)" is, thus far, probably the most exact label, in the sense that it refers to the whole event without necessary limited to the agent subject (A). But then, what do we mean by upgraded agentivity? As Hopper and Thompson (1980) have pointed out, there exists a hierarchy in transitivity, that is, the degree of agentivity varies along a continuum line. The use and non-use of *meN-* in Indonesian can signal this degree. Thus in (22a), the subject (or S) accidentally heard the news. The volitionality is less in this clause.[10] In other words, the event is beyond the control of the subject. In

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[10]   For a similar example, compare (22) with English 'to hear' and 'to listen to', 'to look (at)', and 'to see'.

contrast, the volitionality and controllability of the subject in (22b) is higher in the sense that the subject more actively listened to someone telling him the news. Similarly, (23a) may usually come up as a first candidate when somebody expresses his/her feeling to another person. However, if the speaker insists that he or she really loves the addressee, or if the addressee urges the speaker to say if he/she really does so, then the use of *meN-* as in (23b) may follow. (23a) merely informs about a fact, an overall situation, whereas (23b) involves a more "current" or relevant action of the subject. The higher agentivity of A in (23b) is reinforced by the occurrence of the applicative *–i*, which usually marks a highly transitivity in Indonesian; that is, it signals a direct transfer of the action from the agent to the object. Therefore, (23c) that is without *meN-*, is not acceptable. Notice also the words like *suka – menyukai (*compare **menyuka).

There is also some discourse-pragmatic reasoning for the appearance and disappearance of *meN-*. As pointed out above, pragmatically S/A and S/P are classified together due to their similarity in pragmatic roles, that is, topicality for A and S, and new information for S and P. Thus, not only the agentivity of subject can be upgraded semantically, but also pragmatically. Regarding the use of *meN-*, the subject can pragmatically be upgraded at least in the following two ways:

1. make the subject more topical or emphasize the topicality of the subject;
2. maintain the topicality of the subject (topic continuity).

The explanation for (23) has supported point 1: the higher the volitionality and controllability of the subject correlates with the status of the subject as the one being topicalized. This fact explains why imperatives in Indonesian appear without *meN-*, as in (24):

(24) a. *Kirim   kabar   kepada   saya!*
          send   news   to   1SG
          'Send a news to me!'

      b. **Mengirim kabar kepada saya!*

The answer to the unacceptability of (24b) is simple: in imperatives, the subject is pragmatically already identified and therefore is not topical, and thus, the *meN-* is not necessary. Also, imperatives are basically irrealis in the sense that the action has not yet been realized and so the agentive status of subject is low. However, other instances show that *meN-* can appear in imperatives, as in (25b):

(25) a. *Baca   buku!*
          read   book
          'Read a book!'

b.   *Membacalah!*
      meN-read-EMPH
      'Read, please!'

Kaswanti Purwo (1986) suggested that *meN*- as in (25b) occurs because the object (Patient) is generic. It may be true that the Patient is generic, or pragmatically identified, nevertheless, the occurrence of *meN*- must have its relevance more to the subject and not to the Patient. The disappearance of the Patient in (25b) suggests that it is "downplayed" from the discourse stage (see Payne 1997 for this term) and at the same time the subject is "switched on", signaled by the use of *meN*-. In other words, the agentive status of the identifiable subject is upgraded. Such a (25b) form is potentially uttered, for example, in a classroom where the students have not followed the instruction of (25a) and the teacher has to emphasize compliance to the action again.[11]

  Different from Kaswanti Purwo, Cartier (1979) proposed that imperatives with *meN*- (and *di*-passive) are more polite, while the ones without *meN*- are to give orders. While this is partly true, it draws us away from the core issue: with *meN*- the agent and the action are of importance to the speaker; with the *di*-passive it is the Patient; and without *meN*- it is the Patient, but with a less agentive subject. A direct correlation is as follows: in *di*-passive imperative, once the Patient is highlighted, the agent is much less (indirectly) focused from the discourse stage, which in turn can give a pragmatic effect, that is, making the imperative sound more polite. However, different from Cartier, I consider that the *meN*-imperative does not necessary sound more polite, rather it reinforces again the fulfillment of the action.

  Thus, we can see the balance that if we topicalize one argument, the other one is simultaneously downgraded. If the Patient is topicalized, then the Agent is downplayed, as in (26b):

(26) a.   *Kami   sudah   mem-baca   buku   itu.*
            2PL.EXCL. TAM   *meN*-read   book   that
            'We have read the/that book.'

      b.   *Buku   itu   sudah   kami   baca.*
            book   that   already   2PL.EXCL. read
            'The/that book we have read.'

      c.   **Buku itu sudah kami mem-baca*

      d.   **Kami   sudah   baca-nya*
            2PL.EXCL. already   read-3SG

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[11]   Interestingly, Adelaar (2002) explains that in Salako, a Malayic language spoken in the Sambas regency of West Kalimantan, *N*- is not prefixed to events that have not taken place or that have not yet completely taken place, such as future events, events expressing various extents of possibility, desirability, hypothetical ones, etcetera.

    e.   *Kami sudah mem-baca-nya.*
           'We have read it.'

Such a construction like (26b) has been a matter of dispute for decades and mostly the argumentation revolves around it being a passive or an "object fronting" (compare Chung 1976; Hopper 1983; Verhaar 1983; Kaswanti Purwo 1988). Chung considered (26b) an "object preposing" which is semantically more active than the *di*-passive. In spite of the different interpretations, such a construction as (26b) does show one thing: the Patient is topicalized. Consequently, the Agent is downgraded and the *meN-* is not necessary, and therefore (26c) is not grammatical, since both the Patient and the Agent cannot be topicalized or upgraded at the same level at the same time. Cognitively, only one of them can become the most marked of speaker's attention at one time.

    According to Verhaar (1983), the non-occurrence of *meN-* syntactically can give two interpretation: agentive and ergative. It is agentive if the subject is S/A, and ergative if S/P. Verhaar has given some syntactic and semantic explanations of why a particular non-*meN*-construction can be considered agentive or ergative. The fact that the construction without *meN-* can behave in an ergative way suggests that the subject of such a construction is lower in agentivity compared to its counterpart *meN*-construction.

    Similar to Verhaar's accusative-ergative distinction, other linguists have given various explanations for constructions as (26b). For Fokker (1951), it has an active meaning; for Kähler (1956), it could be active or passive, and for Teeuw (1971) it is a patient-focused.[12] Cartier (1979) called it "devoiced transitive verb construction". Based on Keenan's (1976) definition of "subject", Cartier found out that the agent of such a construction does possess the coding properties of subjects, but "having a low quantity of subject-like behaviour and control properties" like the agent of *di*-passive construction. This is supportive of my proposal that in non-*meN*-occurrence constructions like (26b) the agentivity status of the agent is lower compared to that in *meN*-occurrence constructions. Also, the ambiguity status given to such a (26b) as being accusative/ergative and active/passive does suggest that the subject is "hanging around" between those parameters. In other words, the agentivity of the subject is lower than that of the typical most agent-like, but higher than that of intransitive subject, including that of *di*-passive agent.

    Notice also (26d) and (e) where the agentive status of the subject has to be marked due to the existence of the pronominal patient –*nya* is clitized to the verb.

    Once the subject is signaled with the use of *meN-*, the subsequent verbs are also prefixed with *meN-*. Thus, consider (27):

    [12]   See Cartier (1979).

(27) | *Rakyat* | *Argentina* | *yang* | *lelah* | *dengan* | *impitan* | *krisis* |
| people | Argentina | LNK | tired | with | pressure | crisis |

| *ekonomi* | *sejak* | *empat* | *tahun* | *terakhir* | *semakin* | *marah* |
| economy | since | four | year | last | more | angry |

| *ketika* | *pemerintah* | *baru* | *Rodriguez Saá* | | *menetapkan* | *akan* |
| when | government | new | R | S | *meN*-fix | will |

| *mengeluarkan* | *mata* | *uang* | *baru.* |
| *meN*-issue | eye | money | new (*Kompas* 31 December 2001, p. 1) |

'The people of Argentina who have gotten tired of the pressure of the economic crisis for the last four years became more angry when the new government of Rodriguez Saa decided that they would issue a new currency.'

The use of *meN*- as in (27) is consistently found in discourse in order to maintain the continuity of the topicalized subject. Verhaar (1983) noticed that such a construction exhibits a typical "nominative-accusative" type and normally found in formal Indonesian. This is in contrast to the passive *di*-, which is typically found in informal Indonesian. Apart from this dichotomy of formal-informal, the high accusative use of the *meN*-construction noted by Verhaar proves a high agentivity of the subject signaled by the use of *meN*- in all subsequent verbs that follow. The use of *meN*- in this sense can be compared to the function of zero pronominal anaphora in English, in order to maintain the continuity of the subject (for example, 'He came in and [he] ate'; 'He came to [he] eat').

Considering the discussion above, the following main points can be listed regarding the "P-fronting" construction (26b) in relation to the so-called *meN*-active (as in (26a) and *di*-passive sentences in Indonesian:

CONSTRUCTION	TOPICALIZED	RETAINED
meN-active	agent	patient
P-fronting	patient	agent
di-passive	patient	(optional agent)

Thus, in the construction like (26b) the patient is topicalized but the agent is still retained, which seems to fit the definition of "inverse" voice given in Givón (1995: 77). It thus makes sense why some people conceive such example (26b) as sometimes active/accusative and sometimes passive/ergative.

a) Now, we need an explanation of why intransitive verbs such as *sakit* 'sick' in (20) and *lari* 'run' in (21) cannot take *meN*-. As noted above, the subject of intransitive verbs is the least agent-like. With *sakit* it is a patient or an experiencer, whereas with *lari*, although it looks "active", it is so low in transitivity that it could be considered as "being in the situation of the event" or "undergoing a process of the event." It is similar to the "middle

construction" in that, following Payne's words, "it is a semantically transitive situation in terms of a process undergone by the Patient, rather than as an action carried out by an Agent" (Payne 1997: 216). We may refer to such verbs of (20) and (21) as stative and process verbs, which are considered "non-prototypical ones (compare Croft 1997: 129). Semantically being in such a status in relation to intransitive verbs, it is impossible to "go directly two steps ahead" and promote the subject to become a really agent-like by the use of *meN-*. In order to do so, we need an "intermediate" operation. Thus, an applicative suffix such as *–kan* or *–i* is then appropriate to accomplish this purpose. Thus, from (20a) and (21a) we can derive (28) and (29) respectively:

(28) *sakit* > *sakiti*
      sick   to make sick/to hurt

(29) *lari*   > *larikan*
      run   to take away

The subject of (28) and (29) is now an agent (a causer). After this derivational process, *meN-* can then be prefixed to the stem to upgrade the agentive status of the subject.

As the verbs expresses the process undergone by the Patient, in such intransitive verbs we can find that they are capable of being prefixed with the middle prefix *ber-*, such as *berlari* '(in the process of) running', *bersakit-sakit* '(in the process of being) sick'. Most verbs of emotion and position behave in this way.

Cartier (1979) recognized such sentences explained above as "root-verb sentences" (for example, *Saya naik gunung*), which, according to her, is different from (26b) or cannot be contrast to its *meN-*counterpart construction. Thus, **Saya menaik gunung* does not exist. I think, a proper contrast that should be made is between *saya naiki gunung/gunung saya naiki* and *saya menaiki gunung.*

b) As has been pointed out in Hopper and Thompson (1980), the degree of transitivity depends on various semantic and pragmatic factors that are intertwined with each other. Therefore, it just logical to find some TAM (tense-aspect-mood) meanings which correlate with the occurrence and non-occurrence of *meN-*. Kaswanti Purwo (1986, 1988) has noticed some of the meanings. I assume that such TAM meanings are merely a direct consequence of a relatively agentive status of the subject, which is coded with the presence or absence of *meN-*. In fact, it has been proposed universal in languages to have a highly correlation between argument marking and TAM (DeLancey 1982, 1990). According to Kaswanti Purwo (1988), the *meN-*construction can in some contexts be translated in the past

tense in English and the non-*meN-* one with the present tense.[13] However, as he mentioned, this criterion does not hold for some other types of verbs. The marking of TAM in Indonesian can be through the use of some modals (for example. *sedang*, *akan*) or contextual. Thus, in *Saya sedih mendengar bahwa kak Linda sakit. Saya akan doakan kakak semoga cepat sembuh* ('I was sad when heard that (you) the sister Linda is sick. I will (be) pray(ing) that you will be recovered soon') there is no clear indication at all how many times the speaker will or will be praying. She is just making a deal about an action to do, that is, to pray, without any specification on the intensity of the action. She is just telling a fact that she would do (and not the doing the action itself—which would be expressed with the use of *meN-*). So, the aspectual meaning does not become a focus at all, in other words, the addressee is not expected to think about any aspectual intention. If the addressee is not, why we, the linguists, have to be? Do not we merely exaggerate things that are not there? Thus, TAM, while this criterion is supportive, does not by itself seem to play a central role in controlling the use of *meN-*.

c)   To summarize the points above, a hierarchical continuum of the agentive status of subject signaled by the presence and absence of *meN-* can be presented as follows:
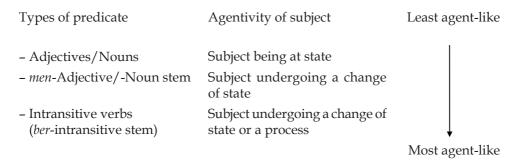
Types of predicate	Agentivity of subject	Least agent-like
– Adjectives/Nouns	Subject being at state	
– *men*-Adjective/-Noun stem	Subject undergoing a change of state	↓
– Intransitive verbs (*ber*-intransitive stem)	Subject undergoing a change of state or a process	
		Most agent-like

Table 1. The prefix *meN-* and agentivity of subject.

5. The nasal prefix in Malayic languages[14]

The so-called nasal prefix (*N-*) has been widely discussed in much of the literature on Western Indonesian languages. Especially in Malayic languages, its occurrence and non-occurrence in discourse has become an object of curiosity to linguists. Generally many linguists have agreed that the discussion should revolve around voice, TAM, and other discourse-pragmatic factors.

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[13]   Kaswanti Purwo's tense interpretation may still be questioned, for the time information appearing in his examples may be coded through a backgrounding clause or a time adverb (*Saya mendoakan supaya kamu menang,* **tetapi ternyata kamu kalah** 'I prayed that you would win, but you lost.' and *Saya doakan* **supaya kamu menang** *nanti* 'I pray that you will win.').

[14]   "Malayic" refers to Malay-related languages in general, which include varieties of Malay and some Dayak languages of Borneo (see Adelaar 1985 or 1992 for its published version).

While this is true the extant discussions so far, seem, however, to heavily focus on the interface between these factors without sufficiently exploring the category subject itself (compare Adelaar 2002; Kaswanti Purwo 1986). By definition, the *N-* prefix must code the closest argument on the left of its side (that is the subject), rather than the one on its right side, although other factors are related to it. Adelaar (2002: 20) gives an interesting example in (30) from Salako:

(30)   *Uma-e   aka   di-nga-rumput.*
       field-her   done   UO-N-weed
       'Her field was already weeded.'

UO is Adelaar's term for undergoer-oriented. He explained that *N-* is affixed to *undergoer-oriented verbs*, provided that they express an action that has taken place completely. It is not clear whether the root *rumput* is basically a noun and has to be verbalized with *N-*; however, the co-occurrence of *di-* and *N-* displays a case different from that in Indonesian. (Compare with the same root in Indonesian, which is a noun). If the *rumput* is basically a noun, then it should not be considered a UO (undergoer-oriented) verb. Other data show that transitive verbs like *bunuh* 'kill' takes *di-* without the *N-* in a future event and *di-nyubur* and *di-nunu* do take *N-* in a completed event.

The occurrence and non-occurrence of *N-* have also been recognized in Betawi Malay (Ikranagara 1980). Unfortunately, Ikranagara (1980: 80) has considered the *N-*prefixation as being optional, with no explanation provided; however, her data is suspicious in this regard, at least for imperatives.

The very same phenomenon has been left untouched as well in other Malayic languages of the Ibanic group of western Borneo (see, for example, Omar (1981) for Iban, and Pungak (1975) for Mualang),[15] whereas these languages can back up us with helpful explanation on the behaviour of the nasal prefix in general due to their relatively isolated position. My preliminary data of Ketungau and Mualang really show that the use of the prefix *N-* is not without condition. Consider (31) from Mualang, where the prefix *N-* must be used in active paradigm (see also Tjia 2007: 147):

(31)   a.   *Aday   N-bay   tep?*
            exist   ACT-bring   tape.recorder
            '(Do you) bring a tape recorder?'

       b.   *Tep   tay   da-bay'   (ia) ...*
            tape.recorder   REL   PASS-bring   (3SG)
            'The tape recorder that was brought by him ...'

---

[15]   Including in Ibanic group are, among others, Iban, Kantuk, Ketungau, Mualang, and Seberuang.

c.   *Tep*   *tay*   *ia/ku*   *bay'*   *(*N-bay')*
     tape.recorder   REL   3SG/1SG   bring   (*ACT-bring')
     The tape recorder that he/I brought ...'

In AL, *maN-*, corresponding to *meN-*, is so limited and unproductive in its use that it may be considered only remnant of *meN-*.[16] It is still possible to see the trace of *meN-* in the language. For instance, the scarce use of *maN-* as in (32) is still heard:

(32) a.   *Ada*   *masa*   *apa*   *tu?*
           PROG   cook   what   DISC
           'What are you cooking there?'

      b.   *Ada*   *ma-masa*   *apa*   *tu?*
           PROG   *maN*-cook   what   DISC
           'What is it that you are cooking?'

In (32a) the speaker is concerned with the event in general, whereas in (b) he is concerned more about the action of the addressee and its "object" of cooking at the moment of speaking. In other words, the agentive status of the agent in (b) is higher than that in (a). The agent and its action are more topical, due to the Patient being a "new information". Also, the "permissibility" of the early AL speakers to make use of 'bare' verbal stems without *meN-* could suggest that *meN-* is not necessary a verbalizer or an action trigger. Thus, it should not be viewed as merely optional; there has to be some function attached to *meN-*.

As being typical of creoles, AL is still in the process of undergoing the "loss and reconstitution paradigm". In this regard, then, some functions of *maN-/meN-* are being developed via the prefix *bar-*, corresponding to Indonesian *ber-*. For example, (33a) and (34a) in AL correspond to (33b) and (34b) in Indonesian, respectively:

(33) a.   *puti*   >   *baputi*   'white'   >   'become white'
      b.   *putih*   >   *memutih*

---

[16]   To my observation, the loss of nasal prefix in AL, and perhaps in other Malay varieties of eastern Indonesia, is reflected by its native speakers when conversing in "daily Indonesian" or Jakartan Malay, in which they are not aware of *N*-prefixing the root, or if they are, it is not consistent. The very same phenomenon has been reported as well for the Jakartan speech variety by Grijns (1981), that part of the Jakartan speakers do not use the *N*-prefix with the roots. He considers the uncertainty among the speakers to use or not use the *N-* is among others driven by some sociolinguistic choice. Sociolinguistically, I see the phenomenon of not using the *N-* arises due to the fact that many (or most) Jakartan speakers, as happening to the AL speakers as well, are not native speakers of Betawi Malay. However, the possibility of not prefixing the *N-* to the root itself is licensed by the grammatical behavior of the *N-*, as I am attempting to prove here.

(34) a.   *toki*   *meja*   >   *ba-toki*   *meja*
          knock   table   ba-knock   table
          'to knock table repeatedly/intensively.'

   b.   *ketuk*   *meja*   >   *mengetuk-ngetuk*   *meja*

Note that unlike its corresponding *ber-* in Indonesian, *bar-* in AL can take a Patient argument, therefore, the subject is higher in agentivity than its counterpart in Indonesian. All transitive verbs can take *bar-* in this manner. However, unlike *meN-* in Indonesian, *bar-* in AL cannot be applied to intransitive verbs-adjectives distinction. Some other grammatical strategy may be developed for that, or the two categories may have even been neutralized in AL, as appears in the fact that some adjective-like roots can function like nouns and some others like verbs, or even like both. In other words, compared to Indonesian, the boundaries between adjectives and (intransitive) verbs in AL are much fuzzier.

   To end this section, a solid investigation of *N*-prefixation in other Malayic languages can shed more light on the issue. Those of West Borneo are especially of much interest and importance due the more current accepted status of the area as the proto-homeland of Malayic languages (see Adelaar 1985; Collins 1995, 1998; and Nothofer 1996).

6. Pragmatic statuses in Malay: the nature of "argument-drop"

It has been noted in Payne (1997: 276) that the inter-influence of grammatical relations, semantic roles, and pragmatic statuses is so great that it is hard to ignore one when looking at the other. This claim is true if we consider the phenomenon of the word *dayung* in example (7) above. In order to interpret the utterance in (7), not only the information concerning the grammatical and semantic statuses of *dayung* are needed, but also its pragmatic status. On the contrary, one cannot make any pragmatic inference of (7) without accounting for the grammatical and semantic statuses of *dayung* and other arguments involved. Lacking this knowledge, *baso* in AL in (35) may be misinterpreted as an agentive subject:

(35) *Baso*   *balong*   *bayar.*
     meatball.soup   not.yet   pay
     'The meatball soup I/you/we haven't yet paid for.'

Such a non-appearance on the surface of arguments, such as the agent of (35), is typical among varieties of Malay. In Indonesian, it seems more productive in the spoken variety. AL, lacking greatly in its morphological means, relies heavily on this kind of pragmatic strategy. I will be using the term *argument-drop* to call such an argument deletion. I propose here that the deletion is

controlled pragmatically by the pragmatic status of the argument in question. Following Payne (1997: 261), pragmatic statuses "have to do with choices speakers make about how to efficiently adapt their utterances to the context, including the addressee's presumed "mental state." Labels for pragmatic statuses are many, but in order to account for AL, the following important concepts are more relevant: *topic, focus (new/given information)* and *identifiable*. Identifiable is the speaker's judgment about entities referred to by certain noun phrases (Payne 1997: 263). It may be signaled through morphological means (for example, particles) or situational context. Example (36) is used to exemplify my points:

(36)	a.	*Be*	*balong*	*bayar*	*baso.*	All arguments are new information.
		1SG	not.yet	pay	meatball.soup	
		'I haven't paid for the soup yet.'				

	b.	*Baso*	*be*	*balong*	*bayar.*	P-fronting: all arguments are new or important information; P is topic
		meatball.	1SG	not.yet	pay	
		'The soup I haven't paid for yet.'				

	c.	*Baso* [A]	*balong*	*bayar.*		P-fronting: P is topic; 0 = A, identifiable
		meatball.	not.yet	pay		
		'The soup (I) haven't paid for yet.'				

	d.	[A]	*Balong*	*bayar*	[P].	0 = A and P, identifiable
			not.yet	pay		
		'(I) haven't paid for (the soup) yet.'				

	e.	[A]	*Balong*	[V]	[P].	0 = A, V and P, identifiable
			not.yet			
		'(I) haven't yet (paid for) (the soup).'				

| | f. | *Baso* | [A] | *balong* | [V] | P is topic or contrastive focus (that is with other food eaten); 0 = A and P, identifiable |

In (36a) the whole clause is considered new information by the speaker, therefore, all needed arguments appear. The same thing holds for (b), with the exception that in (b) the patient is topicalized. The "gaps" in (c, d, and e) are due to the identifiable status and the "unimportance" of the arguments, this means that, although an argument is identifiable, it can be mentioned again due to its being a topic. The identifiability of an argument can be discourse-anaphoric, that is, already mentioned somewhere before in the text, or situational contextual, thus, (36c) may be uttered for the first time without

a necessary prerequisite occurrence of, for instance, (36a) or (b). For another example, consider part of a story in (37):

(37) a.   *Jadi   babi   makang,   la   babi   mati,   la   katong*
   so   pig   eat   then   pig   dead   then   1PL

   bawa   babi   di   nene   pung   ruma.
   bring   pig   at   granny POSS   house

   'So when the boar ate it, it died, and we brought it to granny's house.'

  b.   *Katong   kira   kata   nene   bai-bai.   Iiih!*
   1PL   think   CONJ   granny   RED.good   INTER

   Nene   pung   mata   macang   setang,
   granny   POSS   eye   like   devil   tooth

   'We thought she was kind. Phew! She had eyes like a devil,

   gigi   tajang-tajang, basar-basar sama   gigi   naniri   bagitu
   tooth   RED.sharp   RED.big   same   tooth   hush   like.that
   with big sharp teeth, teeth like husks.'

  c.   *Katong   kas   swara   antua,   antua   bilang*: "*sabar*"! *gitu.*
   1PL   give   sounds   3SG   3SG   say   patient   like.that
   'We greeted her, and she said: "Be patient!" just like that.'

  d.1. *Mar katong bilang deng   swara   palang-palang kata:*
   but   1PL   say   with   voice   softly   CONJ
   'But we said softly:

   2.   "*Nene,   masa   katong   pung   babi   dolo*?"
   granny   cook   1PL   POSS   pig   first
   "Granny, could you cook the boar for us?"

  e.   "*Bawa*   [P]   *sini.*"
   bring   here
   "Bring it overhere."'

  f.   *Jadi   waktu   nene   su   masa   *[P] *abis,*
   so   time   granny PERF   cook   finish
   nene   sem   panggel katong lei! ...
   granny no   call   1PL   also
   'And when she was finished cooking, she didn't even call us! …'

             (Cited from Van Minde 1997: 382-383)

Part of the story is talking about a boar, a granny and the cooking. Bit by bit the topic flow from one to another in the successive sentences. In (37a) it is about the boar; (b) and (c) are a background about the granny. In (d2) all arguments appear since the entire utterance is new for the granny. In (e) the boar is dropped for its being identifiable and not a topic nor a focus. In (f) while the granny and the action, being identifiable, are the topic, the boar, however, is dropped for being less important, although it is identifiable.

7. Conclusion and further work

While the existence of subject is in relation to other arguments, the use of *meN-* is more specifically relevant to subject than to other arguments. Following this reasoning, then, the subject has to be exhaustively accounted for in constructions related to the prefix. Other derivational means such as *ter-*, *ber-*, *per-* also suggests this fact. A comparison between these prefixes and *meN-* also can reveal to us more about the nature of *meN-* and grammatical categorization of lexical roots in Indonesia and Malay in general. The idea of relating affixes to grammatical categorization has not well been realized in Malay studies. Actually Adelaar (1985) and Liaw (1985) have addressed this idea. Unfortunately, it is rejected by Kridalaksana (1986). Somewhere Kridalaksana (1986: 42) considers the "very" importance of dealing with the concept of syntactic behaviour in determining "parts of speech"; this includes such syntactic functions as subject, predicate, etcetera, but, contradictory, elsewhere (Kridalaksana 1986: 28) he criticizes Liaw's using affixes as being the "weakest" criterion. As this paper has proven (consult also various literature cited here), there exists a grammatical correlation between affixes and syntactic functions. I suspect, such a problem arises due to the "over-emphasis"--that has long been accepted in many literature on Indonesian grammar--that the affixes mostly convey TAM meanings.

The functional position of prefixes leads me to a general "iconicity principle" applicable in Malay that the affix that is on the left side of the verb has much relevance in encoding the argument that is also left to the verb, and vice versa. Several "discontinuous affixes" (that is a combination of prefix-suffix, for example, *per-an*, *ber-an*), then, may encode both left and right arguments simultaneously. The degree of agentivity of subject, or transitivity as a whole, is neatly organized in Malay/Indonesian through the use of various affixes. In other words, Malay actually clearly marks arguments S, P, and A morphosyntactically within a scale of gradation. Thus, for example in constructions *ber-* + complement *(berkirim surat* [generic, nonreferential, indefinite])*, the agentivity of subject (S) is lower than that of *meN-* + Patient *(mengirim surat* [individuated, affected, possibly indefinite])*. This also means that the concept agentivity itself, like transitivity, is not discrete. A future work is still in need to map each affix with its functional domain.

More evidence, of course, from other Malayic languages can add to our understanding. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the present paper can provide another useful starting point for further research.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	agent
ACT	active marker
AL	Ambon Language
APPL	applicatives
AVP/SV	agent verb patient/subject verb
CONJ	conjunction
DAT	dative case
DISC	discourse particle
EMPH	emphatic marker
EXCL	exclusive
INTER	interjection
LNK	linker
N	neutral
M	masculin
NOM	nominative case
P	patient
PASS	passive marker
PERF	perfective marker
PL	plural
POSS	possessive marker
PROG	progressive marker
RED	reduplication
REL	relative marker
SG	singular
SGH	singular honorific
S	subject
TAM	Tense-Aspect-Mood
UO	undergoer-oriented
V	verb

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