

## Indonesian Verbal Prefixes: Mapping Forms and Functions

### Junior Scholar Category

This paper presents a descriptive finding on the Indonesian verbal prefixes. The aim of the paper is to prove the hypothesis that Indonesian verbal prefixes are voice markers that manifest differently depending on the kind of verb that they are attached to. The general assumption is the prefix *Me-* is an active voice marker on a transitive verb, *Ber-* is an active voice marker on an intransitive verb, *Di-* is a passive voice marker of an agentive passive, and *Ter-* is a passive voice marker of an accidental passive.

The experiment was done by looking at the compatibility between Indonesian verbal prefixes (*Me-*, *Ber-*, *Di-*, *Ter-*,) with different sets of words (transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, nouns, and adjectives) and use them in different voice constructions (bare active, *me-* active, *ber-* active, bare passive, *di-* passive, and *ter-* passive). Furthermore, some of the words are also accompanied by reduplication and applicative *-kan*, *-i*, and *-an* to make the word grammatical (*\*Me-ngerja/Me-ngerja-kan*). The word class involved in the experiment is not limited to verbs because other words from different classes can be a verb when it is attached with the prefix (*Tangis -> Me-nangis*) or with the applicative (*Tinggi -> Tinggi-kan*). The samples of the tables are provided below (figure1 and figure2)

The results of the experiment prove the hypothesis to be not entirely true. While it is the case that the verbal prefixes mentioned above function as voice markers to their corresponding verbs in some occasion, it is not always the case with other verbs. There are intransitive verbs that take *Me-* instead of *Ber-*, there are transitive verbs that take *Ber-* instead of *Me-*, and there are verbs that can take both or neither. Although the result does not conform to the hypothesis, there are patterns that can be drawn between the verbal prefixes and the words that can take them. There's a much more convoluted mapping of forms and functions regarding Indonesian verbal prefixes and the type of words that can take them. This mapping possibly involves rules, features, and restrictions beyond the syntactical ones.

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Figures:

Figure1:

Voice morphemes with Intransitive verbs				
No.	Stem	Bare active	Me-	Ber-
1	Lari ( <i>run</i> )	Lari	*Melari	Berlari
			Melarikan ____ ( <i>Take something somewhere in a rushed manner</i> )	Berlarian ( <i>running around</i> )
		Aku lari pagi ini ( <i>I run this morning</i> )	Dia melarikan kucing itu ke rumah sakit ( <i>She takes the cat to the hospital</i> )	Aku berlari ke sana ( <i>I'm running [to] there</i> ) Orang-orang berlarian keluar gedung ( <i>People are running away from the building</i> )
2	Tumbuh ( <i>grow</i> )	Tumbuh	*Menumbuh	*Bertumbuh
			Menumbuhkan ____ ( <i>grow something</i> )	Bertumbuhan ( <i>growing, plural subject</i> )
		Dia tumbuh dengan cepat ( <i>He grows quickly</i> )	Kadal itu menumbuhkan ekornya kembali ( <i>The lizard grows its tail back</i> )	Tanaman-tanaman itu bertumbuhan setelah hujan ( <i>The plants are growing after the rain</i> )

Figure2:

Bare passive	Di-	Ter-
Baca	Dibaca	Terbaca
		Baliho itu terbaca dari sini ( <i>That banner is readable from here</i> ) [2]
Koran kakek baca pagi ini ( <i>The newspaper grandpa read it this morning</i> )	Koran itu dibaca kakek ( <i>The newspaper is read by grandpa</i> )	Koran itu terbaca ( <i>The newspaper is read</i> ) [1]
Makan	Dimakan	Termakan
Sebuah bambu panda makan tadi pagi ( <i>A bamboo was eaten by a panda this morning</i> )	Sebuah bambu dimakan seekor panda tadi pagi ( <i>A bamboo was eaten by a panda this morning</i> )	Jarum yang hilang termakan oleh sapi tetangga ( <i>The lost needle is eaten by the neighbor's cow</i> ) [1]
Kirim	Dikirim	Terkirim
Surat ini belum pak pos kirim ( <i>This letter has not been sent yet by the postman</i> )	Surat ini sudah dikirim minggu lalu ( <i>This letter has been sent last week</i> )	Surat ini terkirim ke Angola ( <i>This letter was sent to Angola</i> ) [2]