

# On the optionality of grammatical markers: A case study of voice marking in Malay/Indonesian

Hiroki NOMOTO

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

The prefix *meN-* is usually considered to be an active voice marker. It has also been described as an optional element, as it does not appear to have any obvious semantic effect. This paper argues that *meN-* is not an active voice marker, nor is it optional. The first claim is based on the following facts: (i) *meN-* has aspectual effects and (ii) unlike the absence of the passive marker *di-*, the absence of *meN-* is not subject to any well-defined licensing condition. As for the second claim, two kinds of optionality are distinguished: genuine and ostensible optionality. *meN-* is only ostensibly optional, i.e. the aspectual meaning conveyed by *meN-* is a proper subset of the meaning conveyed by the form without *meN-*; in order to refer exclusively to the relevant subset, *meN-* is obligatory. Ostensible optionality is also observed in two other markers in Malay/Indonesian that have been described as being optional, i.e. classifiers and plural marking by means of reduplication.

## 1. Introduction

Many researchers, including myself, have assumed that Malay/Indonesian in its standard varieties has four basic voices, namely morphological active (1a), morphological passive (1b), bare active (2a) and bare passive (2b).

### (1) Morphological voices

a. *Dia sudah mem-baca buku itu.*  
3SG already MEN-read book that

‘S/he has already read the book.’

b. *Buku itu sudah di-baca-nya.*  
book that already DI-read-3SG

‘The book has already been read by him/her.’

### (2) Bare voices

a. *Dia sudah baca buku itu.*  
3SG already read book that

‘I have already read the book.’

b. *Buku itu sudah dia baca.*  
book that already 3SG read

‘I have already read the book.’

Morphological voices are so called because voice is marked on the verb by the prefixes *meN-* and *di-*. On the other hand, there is no overt voice morphology in bare voice sentences. Instead, voice is signalled by word order: in bare active sentences, the agent precedes auxiliaries/adverbs/negation (2a) whereas in bare passive sentences, the order is the reverse and nothing can intervene between the agent and the verb (2b). There is a

strong tendency that the morphological passive is used for third person agents while the bare passive is used for first and second person agents.

Researchers commonly regard the morphological voices as ‘genuine,’ ‘canonical’ or ‘primary’ and the bare voices as something ‘pseudo’ or ‘secondary,’ as reflected in some of the various names given to the two types of voices:

(3) a. Other names of morphological voices

‘*aktif jati* [genuine active]’ (Asmah 2009) (morphological actives); ‘*pasif jati* [genuine passives]’ (Asmah 2009), ‘canonical passive’ (Chung 1976; Guilfoyle et al. 1992), ‘passive type 1’ (Dardjowidjojo 1978) (morphological passives)

b. Other names of bare voices

‘*aktif semu* [pseudo-active]’ (Asmah 2009) (bare actives); ‘*pasif semu* [pseudo-passive]’ (Asmah 2009), ‘passive type 2’ (Dardjowidjojo 1978) (bare passives)

This view is obviously biased towards the formal varieties of the language. In informal speech, the bare active is by far the most preferred choice of voice. This phenomenon is usually described as omission of *meN-* in the informal varieties. I have suggested that it should be seen the other way round, that is to say, *meN-* is added in the formal varieties (Nomoto 2006). However, the description basically depends on one’s perspective on formal and informal varieties of Malay/Indonesian. A more substantial issue about the phenomenon in question is: why is it that something so central to the verb’s syntax and semantics (alongside tense and aspect) as voice marking, can be optional in Malay/Indonesian (or in any language, for that matter)? The present study attempts to answer this question.

Based on recent research (Soh and Nomoto 2009, 2011, to appear; Nomoto and Kartini 2011, 2012) I claim that *meN-* may in fact not be an active voice marker and the active voice is indicated covertly just like that of English and Japanese. Furthermore, *meN-* is optional because its function is not to mark a grammatical category but to select from available interpretations one that is compatible with it.

## 2. The Single Active Hypothesis

Assuming a base structure conforming to the predicate-internal subject hypothesis as in (4) (cf. Guilfoyle et al. 1992) and the common view that *meN-* is an active voice marker, the differences among the four voices can be summarized as in (5).

(4) [<sub>VP</sub> Agent v [<sub>VP</sub> V Theme ]]

(5)

	v	Agent		Theme
		overt expression	movement to Spec,TP	movement to Spec,TP
Morphological active	<i>meN-</i>	obligatory	obligatory	no
Bare active	∅ <sub>ACT</sub>	obligatory	obligatory	no
Morphological passive	<i>di-</i>	non-obligatory	no	non-obligatory (?)
Bare passive	∅ <sub>PASS</sub>	obligatory	no	non-obligatory (?)

The difference between the two types of passives is clearly syntactic, with only the bare passive requiring an obligatory agent. The agent DP of a bare passive sentence remains in the base-generated position, i.e. Spec,vP. Thus, nothing intervenes between the agent and the verb, which is in *v* after a V-to-*v* movement, and negation/auxiliary/adverb precedes the agent. (6) shows a schematic structure of a bare passive clause (at the relevant point of derivation), accompanied by the corresponding lexical items in the bare passive sentence in (2b).

- (6) Neg/Aux/Adv [<sub>vP</sub> Agent  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}}$ -V [<sub>vP</sub>  $\nabla$  Theme]]
- |              |            |              |                  |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| <i>sudah</i> | <i>dia</i> | <i> baca</i> | <i> buku itu</i> |
| already      | 3SG        | read         | book that        |

The agent may be realized as a proclitic too. This is most clearly observed with the first and second singular pronouns *aku* ‘I’ and *engkau* ‘you’, whose clitic forms are distinct from the free forms, i.e. *ku-* and *kau-* respectively. By contrast, the agent DP of a morphological passive sentence may be implicit as in (7a). When it is expressed overtly, it is expressed as an adjunct *oleh* ‘by’ PP as in (7b) or as an enclitic as in (7c).

- (7) a. *Buku itu sudah di-baca.*  
 book that already DI-read  
 ‘The book has already been read.’
- b. *Buku itu sudah di-baca oleh dia.*  
 book that already DI-read by 3SG  
 ‘The book has already been read by him/her.’
- c. *Buku itu sudah di-baca-nya.*  
 book that already DI-read-3SG  
 ‘The book has already been read by him/her.’

In both morphological and bare passives, the theme DP usually moves to Spec,TP, occurring preverbally. However, occasionally we also find passive sentences whose theme DP occurs postverbally as in (8).

- (8) a. *Sudah di-baca-nya buku itu.*  
 already DI-read-3SG book that  
 ‘The book has already been read by him/her.’
- b. *Sudah dia baca buku itu.*  
 already 3SG read book that  
 ‘The book has already been read by him/her.’

The contexts in which the theme occurs postverbally seem to overlap with those in which the single argument of a class of unaccusative verbs (called ‘pivot verbs’ in Shoho (1998); e.g. *ada* ‘to be’, *berlaku* ‘to happen’) occurs postverbally, e.g. within adverbial clauses, especially conditionals (Nomoto 2009). On the surface, the theme appears to be in its base-generated position. Such a structure is not unlikely if what triggers movement to Spec,TP is discourse-related rather than Case-related (cf. Miyagawa 2009). Nomoto (2009) claims that the single argument of pivot verbs stays in its base-generated postverbal position when it is not high in topicality. The same may be the case with the theme of passives. However, it may be also the case that the movement of the theme to Spec,TP occurs, but some further movement operations change the word order. This line of analysis has been proposed by Tjung (2006).

According to his analysis, a structure like (8a) is derived by the following three steps: (i) the theme DP moves to Spec,TP, (ii) the theme DP further moves to Spec,TopP and (iii) the remnant TP moves to Spec,FocP. It is because of this second possibility why I put a question mark after ‘non-obligatory’ for the movement of the theme to Spec,TP in the table in (5).

Unlike passives, there is no syntactic difference between the two types of actives; the only difference is phonological, i.e. whether or not there is an overt active voice marker. There does not seem to be any condition that licenses the absence of *meN-*. Thus, the prefix *meN-* looks indeed optional as far as syntax is concerned. However, it seems unnatural to me that a voice marker is optional, given that voice is very basic to the verb and determines the verb’s argument projection patterns. It is expected that an overt active voice marker is either always present (like Tagalog) or always absent (like English). If so, Malay/Indonesian *meN-* is an aberration.

It may turn out that my assumption that voice must be consistently marked/unmarked in a language (except for cases in which the absence of a marker is licensed by well-defined conditions) is problematic. But let us assume that such a generalization actually holds and see what consequences will follow. What one can do now is to call into question the popular view that *meN-* is an active voice marker. In this paper, I would like to distance myself from this popular assumption and pursue the possibility that *meN-* is not an active voice marker, or a *pure* active voice marker, to take a more modest stance. If *meN-* does not mark the active voice, then there remains only one active voice marker in Malay/Indonesian, namely  $\emptyset_{ACT}$ . I call this hypothesis the Single Active Hypothesis.

(9) The Single Active Hypothesis

The prefix *meN-* is not an active voice marker. Malay/Indonesian has only one active voice marker, namely  $\emptyset_{ACT}$ .

If this hypothesis turns out to be correct, the question that immediately comes to mind is: what is *meN-* if it is not an active voice marker?

### 3. Evidence for the Single Active Hypothesis

In this section, I present two sets of empirical facts that support the Single Active Hypothesis. Both are based on previous work that I co-authored, and both have appeared elsewhere, but never in the same paper. The first set (section 3.1) is concerned with the aspectual effects of *meN-*, which indicate that the function of *meN-* is aspectual. The second set (section 3.2) discusses the absence of the morphological passive marker *di-*. The pattern of the non-occurrence of *di-* indicates that the absence of an overt voice marker is subject to licensing and cannot be unconditioned, thus ruling out the characterization of *meN-* as an active voice marker, which presupposes free alternation between *meN-* and  $\emptyset_{ACT}$ .

#### 3.1. Aspectual effects of *meN-*

Soh and Nomoto (2009, 2011, to appear) point out two aspectual effects of *meN-*. Both effects are concerned with lexical aspect (situation types, Aktionsart) rather than viewpoint aspect. First, situations described by sentences with *meN-* are always eventive. Stative verbs do not take the prefix *meN-*.

- (10) a. *Mereka suka masakan laut.*  
 3PL like cuisine sea  
 ‘They like seafood.’
- b. \**Mereka meny-[s]juka masakan laut.*  
 3PL MEN-like cuisine sea
- (11) a. *Ali hormat ayah-nya.*  
 Ali respect father-3SG  
 ‘Ali respects his father.’
- b. \**Ali meng-hormat ayah-nya.*  
 Ali MEN-respect father-3SG

There are two types of apparent counterexamples to the generalization, i.e. stative verb suffixed by *-i* (12) and mental state verbs (13). Sentences with these two types of verbs are compatible with *meN-* although they appear to describe states.

- (12) a. *Mereka meny-[s]juka-i masakan laut.* cf. (10b)  
 3PL MEN-like-I cuisine sea  
 ‘They like seafood.’
- b. *Ali meng-hormat-i ayah-nya.* cf. (11b)  
 Ali MEN-respect-I father-3SG  
 ‘Ali respects his father.’
- (13) *Mereka meng-anggap dia orang yang tidak boleh di-harap.*  
 3PL MEN-consider 3SG person REL not can PASS-hope  
 ‘They considered him/her to be a person who cannot be depended on.’

(Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat, p. 56)

Soh and Nomoto (2009) show that these apparent counterexamples are in fact not stative but eventive by applying four stativity tests involving the use of (i) the imperative, (ii) *perlahan-lahan* ‘slowly’, (iii) the verbs *memujuk* ‘to persuade’ and *memaksa* ‘to force’, and (iv) pseudo-cleft constructions.

The second aspectual effect of *meN-* is concerned with telicity. Degree achievement sentences, which describe changes in values on a scale (Rothstein 2008: 193), may refer to either telic or atelic situations, as evidenced by the compatibility with both *selama* ‘for’ and *dalam* ‘in’ phrases in (14a). However, when *meN-* is present, the sentence can only refer to an atelic situation as shown in (14b).

- (14) a. *Harga minyak turun selama/dalam tiga hari.*  
 price oil fall for/in three day  
 ‘The price of oil fell for/in three days.’
- b. *Harga minyak men-[t]urun selama/\*dalam tiga hari.*<sup>1</sup>  
 price oil MEN-fall for/in three day  
 ‘The price of oil was falling for/\*in three days.’

<sup>1</sup> This sentence clearly disproves the claims that *meN-* is a transitive marker and that it is an agent/actor marker. The sentence is intransitive and has no agent/actor argument, but it still contains the prefix *meN-*.

These aspectual effects do not follow naturally from *meN-*'s being an active voice marker. Hence, *meN-* is not a genuine voice marker. As for the function of *meN-*, Soh and Nomoto (2011, to appear) argue that the prefix selects a situation with stages in the sense of Landman (1992, 2008) (see section 4.2 for details). So, its nature is more semantic than syntactic. In this connection, I agree with Benjamin's (1993) statement about the prefix *meN-*: 'Malay speakers, especially at the colloquial level, do in fact treat these affixes primarily as having meanings, to which any grammatical 'functions' are secondary'. It must be noted, however, that *meN-* conveying aspectual meanings does not mean that it is syntactically inert. Soh and Nomoto (2011) show that all intransitive verbs with *meN-* are unergative, entailing a necessary connection with the external argument position. As discussed in section 5, the prefix is known to block DP movement. See Soh (this volume) for a discussion of the relation between the aspectual effects and the syntactic properties exhibited by *meN-*.

### 3.2. The optionality of the morphological passive marker *di-*: Covert voice alternation in *ter-* and *kena* sentences

Nomoto and Kartini (2012) claim that *kena* and *ter-*, which have been thought to mark the passive voice, are actually not passive markers. They claim that the passive syntax, i.e. the alignment of the theme DP as the subject and the theme as an adjunct with the preposition *oleh* 'by', is not due to these morphemes but to the phonologically null passive morpheme. Thus, sentences (15a) and (16a) are analysed to have the structures shown in (15b) and (16b), where the voice-related functional head *v* is occupied by  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$ .

- (15) a. *Pencuri itu kena tangkap (oleh) polis.*  
 thief that KENA catch by police

'The thief got arrested by the police.'

- b. *pencuri itu kena* [<sub>VP</sub>  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  [<sub>VP</sub> *tangkap*]] (*oleh*) *polis*

- (16) a. *Lelaki itu ter-tangkap (oleh) polis.*  
 man that TER-catch by police

'The man was mistakenly arrested by the police.'

- b. *lelaki itu ter-* [<sub>VP</sub>  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  [<sub>VP</sub> *tangkap*]] (*oleh*) *polis*

A passive sentence normally has a corresponding active sentence.<sup>2</sup> Accidental *ter-* sentences like (16a) are known to have corresponding active sentences in the literature on Malay (Za'ba 2000: 213; Abdullah 1974: 107; Nik Safiah et al. 1993: 165–166). The active counterpart of (16a) is (17a). Nomoto and Kartini (2012) analyse its structure as shown in (17b).

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Passive' is essentially a syntactic notion. 'Passive meanings' refer to those meanings which are typically associated with passive sentences. Thus, a sentence with 'passive meanings' is not necessarily passive; it can be an intransitive sentence with no transitive counterpart sharing the same argument structure. Note, however, that there are cases in which the active counterpart is absent for reasons independent of voice. Nomoto and Kartini (2011) argue that such is the case with passive sentences involving *kena* in Indonesian, which lack active counterparts (in contrast to *kena* sentences in Malaysian Malay).

- (17) a. *Polis ter-tangkap lelaki itu.*  
 police TER-catch man that  
 ‘The police arrested the man by mistake.’  
 b. *polis ter-* [<sub>VP</sub> Ø<sub>ACT</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> *tangkap lelaki itu*]]

Active accidental *ter-* sentences are rather uncommon and often judged ungrammatical in Indonesian. However, they do exist. An example taken from the Internet is given in (18). Notice that the underlined clause has active syntax with the canonical SVO word order.

- (18) *Di Amerika, separuh dari kasus anak ter-telan koin*  
 at America half from case child TER-swallow coin  
*harus di-tangani di ruang UGD, kata James S. Reily, M.D., ....*<sup>3</sup>  
 must PASS-handle at emergency room say James S. Reily, M.D.  
 ‘In the U.S., half of the cases where children have accidentally swallowed a coin have to be handled at emergency rooms, said James S. Reily, M.D., ....’

The *ter-* morpheme in *active* accidental *ter-* sentences like (17a) and (18) cannot be a passive marker. One could maintain that *ter-* in passive sentences like (16a) is a passive marker by claiming that it is distinct from the homophonous morpheme occurring in active *ter-* sentences. However, such a claim is not desirable because the meaning of *ter-* is invariable whether it occurs in an active sentence or a passive sentence. Therefore, the passive syntax of passive *ter-* sentences does not stem from *ter-*, but from a phonologically null passive marker, Ø<sub>PASS2</sub>. Since the active voice is also indicated by a null voice marker, i.e. Ø<sub>ACT</sub>, accidental *ter-* sentences involves ‘covert voice alternation’.<sup>4</sup> (19) schematically shows the covert voice alternation involved in accidental *ter-* sentences.

- (19) a. DP<sub>ext</sub> *ter-* [<sub>VP</sub> Ø<sub>ACT</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP<sub>int</sub> ] ] (active)  
 b. DP<sub>int</sub> *ter-* [<sub>VP</sub> Ø<sub>PASS2</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V ] (*oleh*) DP<sub>ext</sub> ] (passive)

The prefix *ter-* is posited above the voice head because its meaning is modal. One might argue that the order should be ‘voice – *ter-*’ because it is the order when *ter-* co-occur with the overt voice markers, i.e. *meN-* and *di-*, according to the standard view:

- (20) a. *Pihak akhbar telah **men-ter-balik-kan** kenyataan itu.*  
 side newspaper PERF ACT-TER-reverse-CAUS statement that  
 ‘The newspaper reversed the statement.’  
 b. *Kenyataan itu telah **di-ter-balik-kan** oleh pihak akhbar.*  
 statement that PERF PASS-TER-reverse-CAUS by side newspaper  
 ‘The statement was reversed by the newspaper.’

<sup>3</sup> ‘Benda Berbahaya di Mulut Si Kecil’ *Tempo*  
 (<http://www.tempo.co.id/kliniknet/artikel/2003/26052003-2.htm>, accessed 8/5/2011)

<sup>4</sup> Besides Malay/Indonesian, the phenomenon of covert voice alternation is also found in Manggarai (Arka and Kosmas 2005), Acehnese (Legate 2012), (possibly) Riau Indonesian (Gil 2002) and also in a number of African languages, most prominently in the West-African Mande languages (e.g. Bambara, Jalonke) and the neighbouring Gur languages (e.g. Supyire, Ditammari), as well as in some creoles formed under the substratal influence from these languages (Cobbinah and Lüpke 2012).

However, *ter-* in the above examples is not the accidental *ter-*. As a matter of fact, the accidental *ter-* does not appear to co-occur with *meN-* and *di-*. Also, the number of *ter-* forms that actually co-occur with *meN-* and *di-* is quite limited (e.g. *ter-balik(-kan)* ‘(to) reverse’ and *ter-tawa(-kan)* ‘to laugh (at)’). Thus, I would consider them as fossilized forms.

Unlike passive sentences with *ter-*, nothing has been said in the literature as to active sentences corresponding to *kena* passives. Nomoto and Kartini (2012) argue that the active sentences corresponding to *kena* passives are sentences in which *kena* means ‘have to’ (debitive) as in (21a). According to our analysis, (21a) is the active counterpart of (15a). This type of *kena* sentences are available only in Malay, but not in Indonesian.<sup>5</sup> Based on facts concerning fronting possibilities and the potentially ambiguous assignment of its external  $\theta$ -role, we conclude that *kena* is a verb that belongs to the same class as *mahu* ‘to want’ and *cuba* ‘to try’, i.e. verbs that take a reduced clause (vP) as their complements. The structure of (21a) is thus as shown in (21b).

- (21) a. *Polis kena tangkap pencuri itu.*  
 police KENA catch thief that  
 ‘The police (have) got to arrest the thief.’

b. *polis* [<sub>VP</sub> *kena* [<sub>VP</sub>  $\emptyset_{ACT}$  [<sub>VP</sub> *tangkap pencuri itu*]]]

This use of *kena* has been considered unrelated to *kena* passive sentences (Chung 2005). However, we relate the two uses of *kena* because they both involve a common modal meaning, i.e. ‘regardless of the subject/speaker’s own will’ or ‘pressed by external circumstances’. In the active, the circumstances force the subject to do something, hence s/he ‘has to’ to it. In the passive, the circumstances force the subject to undergo some action, usually—but not necessarily—putting him into an adverse situation. Malay is not the only language that employs the same morpheme for expressing obligation and adversative passives.<sup>6</sup> Some other languages do so too. For example, in many varieties of English, the morpheme *get* expresses both obligation (e.g. *have got to*) and adversative passive voice. The examples below are from Standard Singapore English.

- (22) a. *The police (have) got to arrest the thief.*  
 b. *The thief got arrested by the police.*

Both meanings are also expressed in Thai *thiuk*, Vietnamese *bị* (Prasithratsint 2004), Hokkien *tioq* (Bodman 1955) and Khmer *trəw* (Hiromi Ueda, p.c.).

The claim that *kena* is not a voice marker is supported by the fact that the (alleged) active and passive markers *meN-* and *di-* can co-occur with *kena*:

- (23) a. *Polis kena men-[t]angkap pencuri itu.*  
 police KENA MEN-catch thief that  
 ‘The police (have) got to arrest the thief.’

<sup>5</sup> See Nomoto and Kartini (2011) for a discussion of why this is so.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term ‘adversative passive’, following the convention in the literature. As a reviewer points out, *get* passives in English do not have to convey adversity (e.g. *He got showered with praise*). Nomoto and Kartini (2012) suggest that the same is the case in Malay.

- b. *Pencuri itu kena di-tangkap (oleh) polis.*  
 thief that KENA DI-catch by police  
 ‘The thief got arrested by the police.’

Since there is no overt voice marker in either active or passive *kena* sentences, the covert voice alternation observed in *ter-* sentences is also involved in *kena* sentences. The covert voice alternation between active and passive *kena* sentences can be diagrammed as in (24).

- (24) a.  $DP_{ext} \textit{kena} [_{VP} \emptyset_{ACT} [_{VP} V DP_{int} ]]$  (active)  
 b.  $DP_{int} \textit{kena} [_{VP} \emptyset_{PASS2} [_{VP} V ]]$  (*oleh*)  $DP_{ext}$  ] (passive)

So far I have represented the null voice morphemes as  $\emptyset_{ACT}$  and  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$ . This reflects my understanding of what they are. First,  $\emptyset_{ACT}$  is the same null morpheme as the one that occurs in bare active sentences, because there seems to be no difference between the argument realization pattern between active *kena* sentences and bare active sentences without *kena*. A bare active sentence and the relevant part of its structure are given in (25).

- (25) a. *Saya sudah baca buku itu.*  
 1SG already read book that  
 ‘I have already read the book.’

- b. *saya sudah* [ $_{VP} \emptyset_{ACT}$  [ $_{VP}$  *baca buku itu*]]

$\emptyset_{PASS2}$ , on the other hand, is thought to be a phonologically null allomorph of the prefix *di-* of the morphological passive, but not the same null morpheme as involved in the bare passive, which I represented as  $\emptyset_{PASS}$  in section 1.<sup>7</sup> The argument realization pattern ascribed to  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$  is that of morphological passives rather than bare passives. Specifically, the verb’s external argument is realized either as an adjunct PP headed by the preposition *oleh* ‘by’ or as a DP directly following the verb in both morphological passive and *kena/ter-* passive sentences. If  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$  were the null morpheme involved in the bare passive, the agent should have been obligatory and should always precede the verb. Compare the position of the external argument and the (non-)occurrence of *oleh* (indicated in ***bold***) in a morphological passive sentence (26), a passive *kena* sentence (27) and a passive *ter-* sentence (28) on one hand, and those in a bare passive sentence (29) on the other.

- (26) a. *Buku itu sudah di-baca (oleh mereka).*  
 book that already DI-read by 3PL  
 ‘The book has already been read by them.’  
 b. *Buku itu sudah di-baca (oleh) mereka.*  
 book that already DI-read by 3PL  
 ‘The book has already been read by them.’  
 c. *buku itu sudah* [ $_{VP}$  ***di-*** [ $_{VP}$  *baca*] *oleh mereka*]]

<sup>7</sup> Nomoto and Kartini (2012) make a weaker claim that  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$  resembles *di-*. This is because passive clauses containing  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$  do not give rise to the funny control phenomenon. Whether such a weaker claim is preferable depends on how one analyses the funny control construction. I thus identify  $\emptyset_{PASS2}$  as a phonologically null allomorph of *di-* in this paper.

- (27) a. *Lelaki itu pernah ter-tangkap (oleh polis).*  
 man that have TER-catch by police  
 ‘The man has been mistakenly arrested by the police.’
- b. *Lelaki itu pernah ter-tangkap (oleh) polis.*  
 man that have TER-catch by police  
 ‘The man has been mistakenly arrested by the police.’
- c. *lelaki itu pernah* [FP *ter-* [VP  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  [VP *tangkap*] *oleh polis*]]
- (28) a. *Lelaki itu pernah kena tangkap (oleh polis).*  
 man that have KENA catch by police  
 ‘The man has been arrested by the police.’
- b. *Lelaki itu pernah kena tangkap (oleh) polis.*  
 man that have KENA catch by police  
 ‘The man has been mistakenly arrested by the police.’
- c. *lelaki itu pernah* [VP *kena* [VP  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  [VP *tangkap*] *oleh polis*]]
- (29) a. *Buku itu sudah \*(saya) baca.*  
 book that already 1SG read  
 ‘I have already read the book.’
- b. *Buku itu sudah (\*oleh) saya baca.*  
 book that already by 1SG read  
 ‘I have already read the book.’
- c. *buku itu sudah* [VP *saya* [V'  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}}$  [VP *baca*]]]

The identification of the null passive marker  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  as an allomorph of the morphological voice marker *di-* amounts to saying that not just *meN-* but *di-* is also optional in some contexts. As a consequence, one may be inclined to doubt the status of *di-* as a passive marker. However, it is important to note that the nature of optionality is quite different between the two cases. While *meN-* and  $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$  alternate rather freely with no obvious syntactic effect (though there are semantic effects as pointed out in section 3.1 above), the occurrence of  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  is highly constrained. Specifically, assuming the structures in (19b) and (24b), it must be lexically-governed by *ter-* or *kena*.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in accidental *ter-* sentences, only  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  but not *di-* is well-formed. In other words, the distributions of  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  and *di-* are complementary. A true optionality is only observed with passive *kena* sentences, where both  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  and *di-* are acceptable. But even in this case, most speakers prefer  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  to *di-* and some only accept the former. The alternation patterns between the two allomorphs are summarized in (30).

<sup>8</sup> This lexically conditioned aspect of  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS}2}$  facilitates its acquisition by children. What they have to learn is a rule to the effect that ‘(features associated with) *di-* need not be pronounced when it occurs in certain positions in *kena* and *ter-* sentences’.

(30)

	$\emptyset_{\text{PASS2}}$	<i>di-</i>
<i>ter-</i> [ <sub>VP</sub> ___]	✓	*
<i>kena</i> [ <sub>VP</sub> ___]	✓	✓/*
Elsewhere	*	✓

The alternation between  $\emptyset_{\text{PASS2}}$  and *di-* (and probably any alternation between an overt and a covert element) suggests the following point with regard to the optionality of voice morphology: occurrence of the covert allomorph of an overt voice marker or ‘omission’ of the latter is subject to a well-defined licensing condition. There is no such well-defined licensing condition that regulates the alternation between *meN-* and  $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$ . This implies that the alternation is merely apparent and there is in fact no alternation between *meN-* and  $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$ , that is to say, the active morphology is not optional. This is exactly what the Single Active Hypothesis says: the active voice is invariantly coded by  $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$ . It is  $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$  that is responsible for the active syntax in sentences with *meN-*. As we have seen in section 3.2, the prefix *meN-* contributes aspectual meanings to the sentence.

The last claim that proponents of the old idea that *meN-* is an active voice marker could make would be that the prefix encodes both voice and aspect. While such a description may be adequate for other languages, it does not seem to be so for Malay/Indonesian.<sup>9</sup> We have already seen that although *ter-* and *kena* are often described as passive voice markers, upon close inspection, they are actually not voice markers, but modality markers and, in the case of *ter-*, aspect markers. The description of the language would become messier if they encoded voice: there would be two homophonous morphemes that only differ with respect to voice for both *ter-* and *kena* (e.g. *ter-1* and *kena1* are active whereas *ter-2* and *kena2* are passive). Thus, these two morphemes imply that in general, the language expresses voice separately from modality and aspect.

To summarize, the Single Active Hypothesis has been supported by the fact that the prefix *meN-*, which has been thought of as an active voice marker, has aspectual effects (section 3.1) and by the generalization based on the distribution of an overt and a covert passive marker that an unconstrained alternation between an overt and a covert voice marker should not be allowed (section 3.2). Under the analysis of the present paper, the active voice marker ( $\emptyset_{\text{ACT}}$ ) is obligatory; the only place where the optionality of voice marking is observed is in passive *kena* sentences. As noted above, some speakers do not accept the alternation between the overt passive marker *di-* and its covert allomorph. For these speakers, voice marking is never optional.

#### 4. Making sense of the optional marking of grammatical meanings

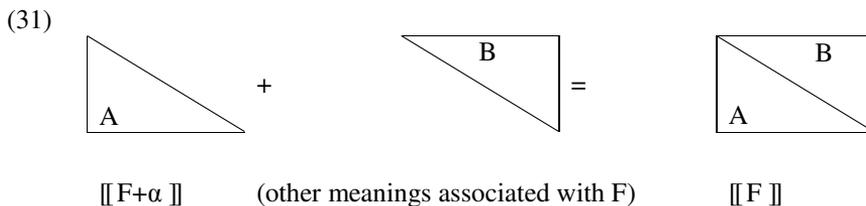
So far, we have succeeded in making the active voice marking of Malay/Indonesian consistent, that is, it is never marked overtly. However, note that the problem concerning optionality has not been solved at all; the problem has simply been relocated to somewhere a little farther from the verb. In standard average European languages, a grammatical marker in a sentence (e.g. a definite article, a plural marker, argument-predicate agreement, etc.) cannot be omitted without risking the

<sup>9</sup> Although this is my current understanding of what *meN-* is and is not, I will continue to say ‘*meN-* is an active voice marker’ or ‘*meN-* is a voice marker that also conveys the aspectual meaning such that a situation develops bit by bit’ when simpler statements benefit the audience.

grammaticality of the sentence as a whole. However, the ‘omission’ of *meN-* does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence. Besides the prefix *meN-*, other optional elements in Malay/Indonesian are classifiers, which are obligatory in languages such as Japanese and Mandarin. Statements that such and such is optional are easy to make and we tend to accept them without further ado.<sup>10</sup> But it is worthwhile to think about why/how a particular linguistic element is allowed to be optional (and, more generally, why optionality exists in natural languages).

#### 4.1 Two kinds of optionality

I propose that the optionality of *meN-* in Malay/Indonesian can be understood in the same way as that of classifiers and plural marking by means of reduplication. Specifically, they all have a role of picking out the relevant subset of meaning from the meaning conveyed by the form without them. In other words, the latter unmarked form conveys the meaning conveyed by the form with overt morphemes such as *meN-*, classifiers and reduplication, in addition to some other meanings. That is, the meaning that can be conveyed by adding an overt morpheme  $\alpha$  to a form  $F$  is also conveyed without the use of  $\alpha$ .  $\alpha$  helps to disambiguate possible interpretations. This situation can be diagrammed as in (31).



Notice that meaning  $A$  is conveyed whether  $\alpha$  is present or not.  $\alpha$  in this case is usually described as being optional. However, such a description is not very precise. This is because  $\alpha$  is not semantically vacuous.  $[[F]]$  and  $[[F+\alpha]]$  are not equivalent. A proper way to describe the situation in (31) is: ‘ $\alpha$  is optional to refer to  $A$ , but obligatory to refer *exclusively* to  $A$ ’. It is thus necessary to distinguish between two kinds of ‘optionality,’ i.e. genuine and ostensible optionality:

(32) a. Genuine optionality

A morpheme  $\alpha$  attaching to a form  $F$  is genuinely optional iff there is no semantic difference between  $F$  and  $F-\alpha$  (i.e.  $[[F]]$  and  $[[F+\alpha]]$  are equivalent).

b. Ostensible optionality

A morpheme  $\alpha$  attaching to a form  $F$  is only ostensibly optional iff the denotation of  $F$  properly contains that of  $F-\alpha$  but the reverse does not hold (i.e.  $[[F+\alpha]]$  is a proper subset of  $[[F]]$ ). In this case,  $\alpha$  is obligatory to denote  $[[F+\alpha]]$  exclusively.

<sup>10</sup> The high prevalence of such statements in the descriptions of languages in East and Southeast Asia has led many researchers to believe that these languages are fundamentally different from languages elsewhere in the world, which often resulted in de-Eurocentrism and exoticism in the West, and anti-Eurocentrism and distinctivism in the East. The present paper is an attempt to critically examine whether such a view is justified (and if so, to what extent) through a close inspection of concrete linguistic facts.

It is common that what has been regarded as genuinely optional before turns out to be only ostensibly optional in subsequent research.<sup>11</sup> In what follows, I will show that this is the case with *meN-*, classifiers and pluralization by means of reduplication in Malay/Indonesian.

#### 4.2 *MeN-*

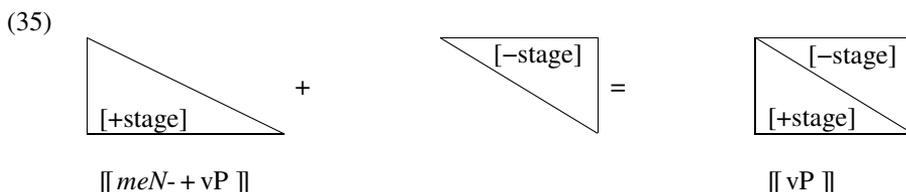
In section 3.1, we saw two kinds of aspectual effects of *meN-*. First, sentences containing *meN-* are not stative but eventive. Hence, stative verbs do not take *meN-*. Second, while a degree achievement sentence without *meN-* may describe either a telic or an atelic situation, one with *meN-* can only describe an atelic one. The relevant examples illustrating these points are repeated below:

- (33) a. *Mereka suka masakan laut.*  
 3PL like cuisine sea  
 ‘They like seafood.’
- b. \**Mereka meny-[s]uka masakan laut.*  
 3PL MEN-like cuisine sea
- (34) a. *Harga minyak turun selama/dalam tiga hari.*  
 price oil fall for/in three day  
 ‘The price of oil fell for/in three days.’
- b. *Harga minyak men-[t]urun selama/?dalam tiga hari.*  
 price oil MEN-fall for/in three day  
 ‘The price of oil was falling for/?in three days.’

Soh and Nomoto (2011, to appear) propose to analyse both kinds of aspectual effects as resulting from *meN-*'s requirement that the situation to be described be one with stages in the sense of Landman (1992, 2008). A situation with stages consists of a sum of multiple temporally overlapping atomic events. Situation types correlate with the stage property: while atelic events, i.e. activities, have stages ([+stage]), states and telic events, i.e. achievements and accomplishments, lack stages ([-stage]). Stative verbs such as *suka* ‘to like’ are inherently [-stage], and hence are incompatible with *meN-*, which selects [+stage] events, as shown in (33b).<sup>12</sup> Degree achievement verbs are special in that they are ambiguous between [+stage] (atelic) and [-stage] (telic), as can be seen in (34a) with *turun* ‘to fall’ without *meN-*. Since *meN-* selects [+stage] events, only an atelic reading is felicitous in (34b) with *men-[t]urun*. Assuming the Single Active Hypothesis, i.e. the prefix *meN-* is not a voice head (v) but is located somewhere higher than v, the effect of *meN-* on telicity can be diagrammed as in (35).

<sup>11</sup> I conjecture that by carefully discerning genuine optionality from ostensible one, the amount of (genuine) optionality that particular languages allow will be more or less the same across languages.

<sup>12</sup> As seen in section 3.1, *meN-* can attach to *suka* if the latter is suffixed by *-i* as in *meny-[s]uka-i* (cf. (12a)). This suggests that the suffix *-i* changes a situation without stage to one with stages. Indeed, the suffix is known to indicate iteration and thoroughness, though this use is not fully productive (Asmah 2009: 155–156; Sneddon et al. 2010: 98–100).



Notice that the meaning conveyed by the form with *meN-* is a proper subset of that conveyed by the form without *meN-*. The optionality of *meN-* is thus only ostensible, and *meN-* is in fact obligatory to exclusively refer to [+stage] events.

#### 4.3 Classifiers and plural marking

The optionality of classifiers and plural marking by means of reduplication provides further instances of ostensible optionality in Malay/Indonesian. Like *meN-*, classifiers have been described as being optional in Malay/Indonesian. Numerals can combine with nouns either directly or with the intermediary of classifiers as in (36).

- (36) *tiga (buah) majalah*  
 three CLF magazine  
 ‘three magazines’

No semantic difference between ‘Num NP’ (English type) and ‘Num CL NP’ (Japanese type) has been pointed out in the literature. If this were indeed the case, classifiers would be a truly optional element in Malay/Indonesian. However, there is a difference in interpretation between expressions with and without a classifier. While the ‘Num NP’ form without a classifier can refer to either subkinds of a kind (subkind reading) or instantiations of a kind (object reading), it is extremely difficult or impossible for the ‘Num CL NP’ form with a classifier to refer to subkinds of a kind (Nomoto 2013). (37) and (38) show that both ‘Num NP’ and ‘Num CL NP’ are used for an object reading (i.e. ‘three copies of magazines’) whereas only ‘Num N’ is felicitous for a subkind reading (i.e. ‘three titles of magazines’).

- (37) *Masih tinggal {tiga majalah/ tiga buah majalah} dan semua*  
 still left three magazine three CLF magazine and all  
*majalah itu majalah Mastika.*  
 magazine that magazine Mastika

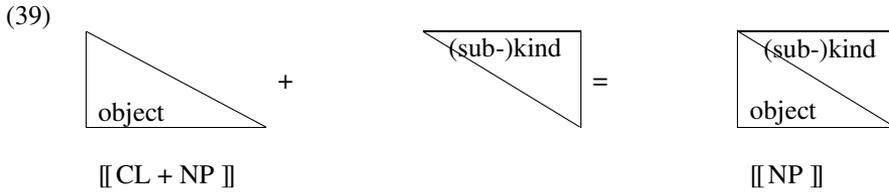
‘We still have three (copies of) magazines and all of them are *Mastika*.’

- (38) *Masih tinggal {tiga majalah/ #tiga buah majalah}, iaitu*  
 still left three magazine three CLF magazine namely  
*majalah Mastika, Majalah PC dan Nona.*<sup>13</sup>  
 magazine Mastika magazine PC and Nona

‘We still have three (titles of) magazines, namely *Mastika*, *Majalah PC* and *Nona*.’

<sup>13</sup> *Tiga buah majalah* is acceptable on an object reading, where we have a copy of each of the three magazines: *Mastika* 1, *Majalah PC* 1, *Nona* 1. Also, this sentence sounds less natural when it is compared to a sentence with the noun *jenis* ‘kind’ (i.e. *Masih tinggal tiga jenis majalah, iaitu ...*) because the latter sentence is more specific and does not involve the kind of ambiguity that the sentence without *jenis* has. What is important here is not the naturalness but the ability of the ‘Num NP’ pattern to refer to subkinds.

The contrast above shows that classifiers play the role of restricting the possible interpretation to the object reading. Classifiers are optional to obtain an object reading, but obligatory to obtain an object reading *alone*. This type of description fits the interpretation pattern shown in (31) above:



Classifiers may appear truly optional at first. However, the optionality turns out to be only ostensible when two ways of interpreting NPs, i.e. object and kind readings, are taken into consideration.

Nomoto (2013) argues that crosslinguistically classifiers are a kind of singular number morphology. They are a ‘sophisticated’ kind of singular marker in the sense that they impose an additional restriction on the relevant singularities in terms of shape, animacy, etc.<sup>14</sup> The evidence comes from languages in which classifiers can be used without numerals. The ‘CL NP’ constituent in these languages denotes singularities. In Mandarin, the ‘Dem CL NP’ pattern only refers to a singular entity, as in (40a). (40b) shows that the ‘CL NP’ pattern is grammatical in an object position and receives an indefinite singular interpretation.

- (40) Mandarin (Yang 1998: 271)
- a. *Nei ben shu hen gui.*  
 that CLF book very expensive  
 ‘That book is expensive.’/\*‘Those books are expensive.’
  - b. *Yuehan mai-le ben shu.*  
 John buy-ASP CLF book  
 ‘John bought a book/\*books.’

Examples like these are often analysed as a result of omitting the numeral *yi* ‘one’. Whether such an analysis is correct, the absence of ‘one’ makes sense if the ‘CL NP’ constituent, to which the numeral ‘one’ is potentially attached, denotes singularities. The Hmong examples in (41) show more directly that ‘CL NP’ denotes singularities. The bare classifier construction ‘CL NP’ in (41a) necessarily refers to a singular entity. However, when the bare classifier construction is substituted by bare NPs without a classifier, as in (41b), the referent is no longer restricted to a singular key.

- (41) Hmong
- a. *Tus yuam sij nyob qhov twg?*  
 CLF key stay where  
 ‘Where is the key?’

---

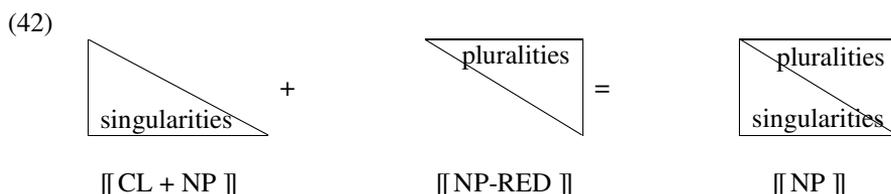
<sup>14</sup> Nomoto (2013) ascribes the contrast between expressions with and without classifiers such as (37) and (38) to this additional restriction, i.e. the classification function. Kang (1994) and McCready (2009) claim that this restriction is not an asserted meaning and does not affect the truth condition.

- b. *Yuam sij nyob qhov twg?*  
key stay where

‘Where is/are the key(s)?’

I believe that ‘CL NP’ denotes singularities in Malay/Indonesian too. That is, ‘CL NP’ means ‘1 NP’. At first blush, it seems very unlikely that expressions with a classifier denote singularities. *Tiga buah majalah* [three CLF magazine] means ‘three magazines’, but not ‘one magazine’. But this is simply because the expression contains a numeral greater than one. When a numeral is present in the structure, the singular reference of the ‘CL NP’ portion is obscured because the entire nominal including the numeral refers to pluralities. The plural reference of the entire nominal ‘Num CL NP’ follows naturally from one of the ways in which the meaning of complex numerals is compositionally calculated.<sup>15</sup> The meaning of *dua puluh* ‘20’ is obtained by multiplying *puluh* ‘10’ by *dua* ‘2’. Likewise, the meaning of ‘Num CL NP’ is obtained by multiplying ‘CL NP’ = ‘1 NP’ by the number expressed by the numeral, say *n*, hence ‘*n* × 1 NP’ = ‘*n* NP’.

Now, (39) reduces to (42). This is a favourable step because the ‘optionality’ of plural number morphology is also accounted for.



Plural entities are referred to by either bare NPs or reduplicated nouns in Malay/Indonesian. For example, both the bare NP *buku* and its reduplicated form *buku-buku* can be used to refer to more than one book. Given this fact, plural marking by reduplication in Malay/Indonesia has been described as optional.<sup>16,17</sup> However, it is

<sup>15</sup> Another way is by addition: *dua puluh satu* ‘21’ = *dua puluh* ‘20’ + *satu* ‘1’.

<sup>16</sup> Some authors state that reduplication indicates variety rather than plurality (e.g. Mintz 2002). I do not regard variety as encoded by reduplication itself but as an implicature due to the availability of a non-reduplicated alternative to express the intended meaning. As Sneddon et al. (2010: 21) point out, reduplicated nouns can be used felicitously when variety is not implied.

<sup>17</sup> Dalrymple and Mofu (2012) claim that reduplication in Indonesian does not have exactly the same semantics as plural formation in English. They state that ‘reduplicated forms indicate that a relatively large number of individuals is involved.’ However, examples like (i) show that the number need not be large because the reduplicated form *buku-buku* (as well as the non-reduplicated form *buku*) denotes just two books.

- (i) Terdapat **dua buku** tidak dapat disiapkan oleh Al-Farabi di zamannya. **Buku-buku** itu ialah ‘Kunci Ilmu’ ... yang disiapkan oleh anak muridnya yang bernama Muhammad Al Khawarizmi pada tahun 976M dan ‘Fihrist Al-Ulum’ ... yang diselesaikan oleh Ibnu Al-Nadim pada tahun 988M.

‘There are **two books** that Al-Farabi could not complete in his time. Those **books** are ‘The Key of Sciences,’ ... which was completed by his disciple Muhammad Al-Khawarizmi in 976 AD and ‘Fihrist Al-Ulum,’ ... which was completed by Ibnu Al-Nadim in 988 AD.’

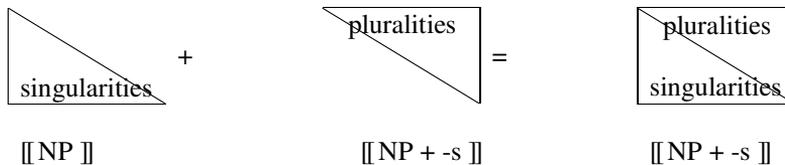
(Mardzelah binti Makhsin, *Sains Pemikiran & Etika*, p. 104)

not genuinely optional, but only ostensibly optional. Reduplication, i.e. the plural number marking, is obligatory in order to refer exclusively to pluralities.

In sum, it has been shown that that describing the prefix *meN-*, classifiers and reduplication as ‘optional’ is not adequate. Their optionality is only ostensible. Ostensive optionality arises when the relation between the forms with and without the marker in question is as depicted in (31), where the marked form is a proper subset of the unmarked form. In fact, what (31) shows is just a normal mode of semantic composition, namely Predicate Modification. Suppose, for example, F is a common noun (e.g. *cats*) and  $\alpha$  is an adjective that modifies it (e.g. *black/small*). The meaning of  $F+\alpha$  (*black/small cats*) is something that is F (*cats*) and  $\alpha$  (*black/small* (compared to the standard cat size)).

Is the difference between languages like Malay/Indonesian, in which grammatical markers are by and large ‘optional,’ and languages like English, in which they are generally obligatory, one concerning the mode of semantic composition? Specifically, are grammatical markers composed by Predicate Modification in the former and by Function Application in the latter? This is doubtful, given that ways of semantic composition is usually thought to be largely common across languages. It is more plausible to think that the locus of the crosslinguistic difference is morphology rather than semantics. Specifically, the difference is in the meaning associated with the unmarked form. In the interpretation pattern depicted in (31), the unmarked form is associated with the whole and grammatical markers are required in order to refer exclusively to a subset of it. In languages like English, the unmarked form is associated with the subset of the whole that are considered to be atomic. Let us take number marking for example. The interpretation pattern of nominals in English can be diagrammed as in (43).

(43)



The so-called ‘plural’ nouns in English with the suffix *-s* can actually entail the general number, which is associated with number-neutral properties, with the plural meaning obtained pragmatically (e.g. McCawley 1968; Krifka 1989; Sauerland 2003; Zweig 2009). A question like *Do you have cats?* can be answered by *Yes, one* but not by *No, only one*.

It is important to recognize the category of the general in discussing crosslinguistic variations in number marking. If the general number is not recognized, the suffix *-s* in English looks as if it encoded the operation of pluralization:

---

I agree with them that reduplicated forms in Malay/Indonesian are different from pluralized NPs in English. However, the difference does not lie in the largeness of the referents, but in what is denoted: reduplicated forms in Malay/Indonesian denote pluralities alone whereas pluralized NPs in English denote singularities as well as pluralities, i.e. number-neutral entities. I will discuss this point shortly.



*satu* ‘one’, i.e. *se-*, only attaches to classifiers, meaning that omission is impossible. Shiohara (2011, 2012) notes that reduplicated nouns in Indonesian tend to occur when the referent is present visually.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that *meN-* is not an active voice marker but in fact is an obligatory marker of aspectual meaning, indicating that the situation described by the verb phrase has stages ([+stage]). *MeN-* appears to be optional because the meaning it conveys is a proper subset of the meaning conveyed by the form without it. I dubbed this type of optionality as ‘ostensible optionality’ as opposed to ‘genuine optionality’. I showed that this interpretation pattern can also be applied to other grammatical marking in Malay/Indonesian, including number marking. Ostensible optionality occurs when an overt morpheme marks a proper subset of the meaning conveyed by the unmarked form.

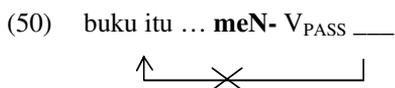
A new question arises if this paper’s claim that *meN-* is unrelated to voice is correct. Why does *meN-* not occur in passives? Sentences (47a) and (47b) below, where *meN-* occurs in a position above the passive vP, are ungrammatical.

- (47) a. \**Buku itu sudah men-di-baca-nya.* (*meN-* + morphological passive)  
 book that already MEN-PASS-read-3SG  
 For: ‘The book was already read by him/her.’
- b. \**Buku itu sudah men-saya Ø<sub>PASS</sub> baca.* (*meN-* + bare passive)  
 book that already MEN-1SG read  
 For: ‘I have already read the book.’

Answering this question is not difficult. Passive sentences are normally analysed as involving movement of the theme DP to Spec,TP. In (47), *buku itu* ‘the book’ moves from the postverbal position to the beginning of the sentence. However, this movement is blocked by *meN-*. It is generally known that DP movement (both A- and A’-) across *meN-* is forbidden in Malay/Indonesian (Saddy 1991; Soh 1998; Cole and Hermon 1998). DP movement is allowed if the sentence does not have the prefix *meN-*, as illustrated by (48a) and (49a). The contrast between (48b), where the object is extracted, and (49b), where the subject is extracted, shows that DP movement is illicit only when the movement path crosses *meN-*.

- (48) a. [<sub>CP</sub> *apa*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> *Ali beli* *t*<sub>i</sub>]]?  
 what Ali buy  
 ‘What did Ali buy?’
- b. \*[[<sub>CP</sub> *apa*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> *Ali mem-beli* *t*<sub>i</sub>]]]?  
 what Ali MEN-buy
- (49) a. [<sub>CP</sub> *siapa*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> *beli buku itu*]]?  
 who buy book that  
 ‘Who bought the book?’
- b. [<sub>CP</sub> *siapa*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> *mem-beli buku itu*]]?  
 who MEN-buy book that  
 ‘Who bought the book?’

The DP movement involved in (47) crosses *meN-*, as schematically shown in (50).



Concerning the issue of why *meN-* blocks DP movement, recent studies have proposed analyses capitalizing on the notion of phases/Multiple Spell-out (e.g. Aldridge 2008; Cole et al. 2008; Nomoto 2008, 2011; Sato 2012). Although the analyses differ in details, they share the intuition that the extraction possibilities are to be related to the presence or absence of object shift, which is reflected in the voice morphology. They also have in common the treatment of *meN-* as an active voice marker that occupies either *v* or Voice. The present study offers a new perspective in tackling this longstanding problem: The prefix is located not in *v* but somewhere higher than *v*, i.e. Spec,vP (cf. Fortin 2008) or a higher projection such as AspP.

### Abbreviations

AspP	Aspect phrase	Spec	Specifier
CL	Classifier	t	Trace
CP	Complementizer phrase	TP	Tense phrase
DP	Determiner phrase	V	Verb
NP	Noun phrase	v	Little verb
PASS	Passive	vP	Little verb phrase
RED	Reduplication		

### References

2005. *Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Abdullah Hassan. 1974. *The Morphology of Malay*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Aldridge, Edith. 2008. Phase-based account of extraction in Indonesian. *Lingua* 118: 1440–1469.
- Arka, I Wayan, and Jeladu Kosmas. 2005. Passive without passive morphology? Evidence from Manggarai. In *The Many Faces of Austronesian Voice Systems: Some New Empirical Studies*, ed. I Wayan Arka and Malcolm Ross, 87–117. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Asmah Hj. Omar. 2009. *Nahu Melayu Mutakhir (Edisi Kelima)*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey. 1993. Grammar and polity: The cultural and political background to Standard Malay. In *The Role of Theory in Language Description*, ed. William A. Foley, 341–392. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bodman, Nicholas C. 1955. *Spoken Amoy Hokkien*. Kuala Lumpur: Charles Grenier and Company.
- Chung, Sandra. 1976. On the subject of two passives in Indonesian. In *Subject and Topic*, ed. Charles N. Li, 57–99. New York: Academic Press.

- Chung, Siaw Fong. 2005. *Kena* as a third type of the Malay passive. *Oceanic Linguistics* 44: 194–214.
- Cobbinah, Alexander, and Friederike Lüpke. 2012. Not cut to fit – zero coded passives in African languages. In *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of African Linguistics, Cologne 2009*, ed. Matthias Brenzinger and Anna-Maria Fehn, 153–165. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.
- Cole, Peter, and Gabriella Hermon. 1998. The typology of wh-movement: Wh-questions in Malay. *Syntax* 1:221–258.
- Cole, Peter, Gabriella Hermon, and Yanti. 2008. Voice in Malay/Indonesian. *Lingua* 118: 1500–1553.
- Dalrymple, Mary, and Suriel Mofu. 2012. Plural semantics, reduplication, and numeral modification in Indonesian. *Journal of Semantics* 29: 229–260.
- Dardjowidjojo, Soenjono. 1978. *Sentence Patterns of Indonesian*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Fortin, Catherine R. 2008. Reconciling *meng-* and NP movement in Indonesian. Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society.
- Gil, David. 2002. The prefixes *di-* and *N-* in Malay/Indonesian dialects. In *The History and Typology of Western Austronesian Voice Systems*, ed. Fay Wouk and Malcolm Ross, 241–283. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Guilfoyle, Eithene, Henrietta Hung, and Lisa Travis. 1992. Spec of IP and Spec of VP: Two subjects in Austronesian languages. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 10:375–414.
- Kang, Beom-Mo. 1994. Plurality and other semantic aspects of common nouns in Korean. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 3: 1–24.
- Krifka, Manfred. 1989. Nominal reference, temporal constitution and quantification in event semantics. In *Semantics and Contextual Expressions*, ed. Renate Bartsch, Johan van Benthem, and Peter van Emde Boas, 75–115. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Landman, Fred. 1992. The progressive. *Natural Language Semantics* 1:1–32.
- Landman, Fred. 2008. 1066: On the differences between the tense-perspective-aspect systems of English and Dutch. In *Theoretical and Crosslinguistic Approaches to the Semantics of Aspect*, ed. Susan Rothstein, 107–166. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Legate, Julie A. 2012. Subjects in Acehnese and the nature of the passive. *Language* 88:495–525.
- McCawley, James. 1968. Review of *Current Trends in Linguistics 3*. *Language* 44:556–593.
- McCready, Eric. 2009. Conventional implicature and classifiers. *Journal of Cognitive Science* 10: 195–208.
- Mintz, Malcolm W. 2002. *An Indonesian & Malay Grammar for Students*. Perth: Indonesian/Malay Texts and Resources.

- Miyagawa, Shigeru. 2009. *Why Agree? Why Move?: Unifying Agreement-Based and Discourse Configurational Languages*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Nik Safiah Karim, Farid M. Onn, Hashim Haji Musa, and Abdul Hamid Mahmood. 1993. *Tatabahasa Dewan Edisi Baharu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2006. Voice in Colloquial Malay relatives. In *Gengojouhougaku Kenkyuuhoukoku 12*, ed. Yoichiro Tsuruga, Nobuyuki Miyake, and Yuji Kawaguchi, 97–116. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2008. A unified analysis of funny control. Paper presented at the 12th International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL).
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2009. On indefinite subjects of pivot verbs in Malay. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 14: 221–254.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2011. Analisis seragam bagi kawalan lucu. In *Isamu Shoho: Tinta Kenangan 'Kumpulan Esei Bahasa dan Linguistik'*, ed. Hiroki Nomoto, Zaharani Ahmad, and Anwar Ridhwan, 44–91. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2013. *Number in Classifier Languages*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Minnesota.
- Nomoto, Hiroki, and Kartini Abd. Wahab. 2011. Konstruksi *kena* dalam bahasa Indonesia: Perbandingan dengan bahasa Melayu. *Linguistik Indonesia* 29: 111–131.
- Nomoto, Hiroki, and Kartini Abd. Wahab. 2012. *Kena* passives in Malay, funny control, and covert voice alternation. *Oceanic Linguistics* 51: 360–386.
- Prasithratsint, Amara. 2004. The adversative passive markers as a prominent areal feature of Southeast Asian languages. In *Papers from the Eleventh Annual Meeting of Southeast Asian Linguistics Society 2001*, ed. Somsonge Buruphat, 583–598. Tempe, AZ: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University.
- Rothstein, Susan. 2008. Two puzzles for a theory of lexical aspect: Semelfactives and degree achievements. In *Event Structures in Linguistic Form and Interpretation*, ed. Johannes Dölling, Tatjana Heyde-Zybatow, and Martin Schäfer, 175–198. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Saddy, Douglas. 1991. WH scope mechanism in bahasa Indonesia. In: Lisa L. S. Cheng and Hamida Demirdash (eds), *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 15: More Papers on Wh-Movement*, 183–218. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Sato, Yosuke. 2012. Successive cyclicity at the syntax-morphology interface: Evidence from Standard Indonesian and Kendal Javanese. *Studia Linguistica* 66: 32–57.
- Sauerland, Uli. 2003. A new semantics for number. In *Proceedings from Semantics and Linguistic Theory XIII*, ed. Rob Young and Yuping Zhou, 258–275. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

- Shiohara, Asako. 2011. Reduplication and indication of plurality in Indonesian. Paper presented at the 15th International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL).
- Shiohara, Asako. 2012. Indication of plurality in Indonesian as observed in Indonesian school textbooks. Paper presented at the 16th International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL).
- Shoho, Isamu. 1998. *Mareeshiago Kyoutei*. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Sneddon, James Neil, Alexander Adelaar, Dwi N. Djenar, and Michael C. Ewing. 2010. *Indonesian: A Comprehensive Grammar (Second Edition)*. London: Routledge.
- Soh, Hooi Ling. 1998. Certain restrictions on A-bar movement in Malay. In *Proceedings of the Third and Fourth Meetings of Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association 1996–1999*, ed. Matthew Pearson, 295–308. Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Soh, Hooi Ling, and Hiroki Nomoto. 2009. Progressive aspect, the verbal prefix *meN-*, and the stative sentences in Malay. *Oceanic Linguistics* 48:148–171.
- Soh, Hooi Ling, and Hiroki Nomoto. 2011. The Malay verbal prefix *meN-* and the unergative/unaccusative distinction. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 20: 77–106.
- Soh, Hooi Ling, and Hiroki Nomoto. To appear. Degree achievements, telicity and the verbal prefix *meN-* in Malay. *Journal of Linguistics*.
- Tjung, Yassir. 2006. On the inverted *di-*passive in Indonesian. *ATMA nan JAYA* 21: 40–64.
- Yang, Rong. 1998. Chinese bare nouns as kind-denoting terms. *RuLing Papers* 1: 247–288.
- Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba). 2000. *Pelita Bahasa Melayu, Penggal I–III, Edisi Baharu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Zweig, Eytan. 2009. Number-neutral bare plurals and the multiplicity implicature. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 32:353–407.