

## PSEUDO-TRANSITIVE VERBS IN INDONESIAN\*

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The Indonesian verb can be divided into two main subclasses on the basis of morphology and syntax. It has been usual to give the names transitive and intransitive to these classes. In this paper, I would like to show that there exists a small third class which both morphologically and syntactically acts in a peculiar way, different from the two main classes already mentioned. In some ways, this third type acts like the transitives and in some ways like the intransitives. I will call these pseudo-transitives and attempt to demarcate them from the true transitives. We will also see that this special class is almost co-extensive with a subclass of the modal auxiliaries.

In most previous descriptions of the Indonesian verb, it has been noted, more or less explicitly, that transitives and intransitives differ from each other in the following ways. Morphologically, intransitives have only a single form; this may be affixless (for example: datang, come; pergi, go; masuk, enter), or it may contain some prefix, suffix, circumfix<sup>1</sup> or some combination of these (for example: bertjukur, shave; terdjadi, happen; menghilang, disappear; kehudjanaan, get caught in the rain). Some of these affixes produce only intransitive verbs; others produce both intransitives and transitives.

Transitive verbs, on the other hand, have three forms: a stem form; a form with the prefix meng-, the morphophonemics of which we need not go into here; and a set of forms with the personal affixes ku-, first person singular, kau-, second person singular, di-, "third person" (for example, beli, buy, the stem form without any affix; membeli, the meng- form; and the personal forms kubeli, kaubeli, dibeli). These may combine with other affixes, such as, belikan, buy for (someone), in which case, the suffix -kan is "benefactive"; thus, membelikan, kubelikan, kaubelikan, dibelikan.

Many intransitives are paired for syntactic purposes with transitives: for example, intransitive bekerdja, to work, paired with kerdjakan, mengerdjakan, kukerdjakan, kaukerdjakan, dikerdjakan, work (on something); masuk, enter (intransitive),

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1. A circumfix is an affix consisting of a simultaneous prefix and suffix.

and (transitive) *masuk*, *memasuki*, *kumasuki*, enter. The usual way of forming these transitives from intransitives is by the suffixes *-kan* or *-i* (-in in Djakarta colloquial), or, more rarely, by some other process.

Syntactically, the transitive/intransitive distinction works in outline as follows: the intransitives may be followed by no object, directly followed by an object, followed by particle plus object, or prepositional phrase, depending on the verb: *Dia masuk*, He entered; *Dia masuk sekolah*, He attended school; *Dia masuk kesekolah*, He went into the school; *Dia bertanam padi*, He plants rice (for a living); *Dia berdagang*, He's in business; *Dia berdagang kain*, He's in the cloth business.

The three forms of the transitive verb have been traditionally divided between active and passive. See the chart below:

<u>intransitive</u>	<u>transitive</u>	
single form	<u>active</u>	<u>passive</u>
	<i>meng-</i> or	<i>ku-</i>
	$\emptyset$ or	<i>kau-</i>
	<i>ng-</i>	<i>di-</i>
		$\emptyset$

In the so-called active, the verb has the *meng-* form in the more formal style. In some dialects, this is reduced to the nasal or to nothing in a more informal style. Both active and passive imperatives also exist. For the active, the verb is usually in the stem form, though the *meng-* form may also occur in a negative imperative. The so-called active tends to be used when the verbal action by itself with no object, or the action plus the object of this action, or the agent of the action, is the point of interest in the sentence, as for example, in answer to the question, "What is he doing?" or "What does he do?" Note that the object may be definite or indefinite.

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>Dia membaca.</i>          | He's reading.         |
| 2. <i>Dia membeli kain.</i>     | He buys cloth.        |
| 3. <i>Dia membeli kain itu.</i> | He bought that cloth. |
| 4. <i>Dia menanam padi.</i>     | He is planting rice.  |

The so-called passive in Indonesian is used where the goal of the action is already known and the action alone is the point of interest, or where one goal is being contrasted with another. In these cases, the goal must be specified. This corresponds to the fact that, in many dialects of Indonesian, the subject of the sentence must be definite, that is, known to the speaker and hearer. The agent, or actor, on the other hand, may be present or not present, definite or indefinite.

The agent determines the form of the verb. The forms already given for the passive will be called the inseparable forms; there may not appear anything between them and the stem of the verb. Note that the standard orthography, which I am using throughout, writes these as one word.

5.	Buku	itu	sudah	kubatja.	I've read that book.
6.	"	"	"	kaubatja.	You've...
7.	"	"	"	dibatja.	That book has been read.
8.	"	"	"	dibatjanja.	He, she's...
9.	"	"	"	dibatja orang itu.	That man's...
10.	"	"	"	dibatja mereka.	They've...

In some dialects, all other pronouns are also inseparable. In other dialects, however, the other agent pronouns or nouns are separable forms. They appear before the verb stem and can be separated from it by a small class of temporal particles and modals. The following examples comprise only a small sample of the possibilities. Separating the agent is considered less good usage by some speakers.

11.	Buku	itu	sudah	saja	batja.	I've read that book.	
12.	"	"	"	saja	sudah	batja.	
13.	"	"	"	sudah	saudara	batja.	You've...
14.	"	"	"	saudara	sudah	batja.	
15.	"	"	"	sudah	dia	batja.	He's...
16.	"	"	"	dia	sudah	batja.	

Note that the separable pronouns have the same form as the pronouns used as subjects of intransitive or active verbs.

The above description appears, more or less explicitly, in past work on Malay or Indonesian. I have omitted some detail and a number of more important areas, such as the behavior of those transitives which directly correspond to intransitives. A monograph could also be written on the question of discourse analysis--what triggers the selection of active or passive. Suffice it to say that in certain constructions, where the goal under discussion, or any form which is co-referential with it, is already known and precedes the verb, then the construction must be what I have been calling passive. It is plain that this system corresponds much more closely to the so-called focus systems in Philippine languages to which it is genetically related than to the active/passive forms in English.

In working with Indonesian, I have noticed that certain verbs seem to have the separable passive forms but not the inseparable passives, as opposed to the normal transitives discussed above which have both. I decided to test this further by collecting such forms and placing them in a frame in which the passive is obligatory. The stressed word is in italics in these sentences.

17. (Jang) *Ini jang* (sudah) saja... This is what I (have)...  
(separable)
18. (Jang) *Ini jang* (sudah) di...nja. This is what he (has)...  
(inseparable)

In the second frame, I have used the third person agent, but first person *ku-* and second person *kau-* also could have been used. In both frames only the passive form of a transitive verb should appear, e.g., *Ini jang* saja batja, beli, etc.

A small group of forms, however, occur in the first frame (separable) but not in the second (inseparable). An asterisk in front of an example indicates that the example does not occur.

19. (Jang) *ini jang* saja suka. This is the one I like.  
20. (Jang) *ini jang* dia suka. This is the one he likes.  
21. \*(Jang) *ini jang* kusuka. This is the one I like.  
22. \*(Jang) *ini jang* disukanja. This is the one he likes.

The separable forms are acceptable to many speakers, but the inseparable forms are not. For the inseparable forms, one must use the corresponding transitive, for this verb with the *-i* suffix:

23. (Jang) *ini jang* disukainja. This is the one he likes.

This transitive may also be used for the separable forms as well:

24. (Jang) *ini jang* saja sukai. This is the one I like.

and, in fact, it is the preferred form in the standard, literary language. As a result, many speakers will deny that they use this construction without the "transitivising" suffix; they claim that sentences (19) and (20) are also ungrammatical. Observation, however, shows constant use of the suffixless form here, and many speakers will admit that it is used.

It is also interesting to note what happens when a modal or temporal word is used with the separable form of the pseudo-transitive. Some speakers claim that this will render the sentence ungrammatical, and they insist on using the transitive derivative:

25. \*(Jang) *ini jang* akan saja perlu. This is the one I will need.  
26. (Jang) *ini jang* akan saja perlukan. " " " " " " "

Other speakers allow the use of such constructions provided that the word order is pronoun + modal + verb (or pronoun + temporal + verb)--the usual intransitive or active word order. But they would not allow the order modal + pronoun + verb (or temporal + pronoun + verb)--the usual passive word order.

27. (Jang) *ini jang* saja akan suka. This is the one I will like.  
 28. \*(Jang) *ini jang* akan saja suka.  
 29. (Jang) *ini jang* akan saja sukai.

For these speakers, sentence 29, with the transitive form of the verb, must be used for this word order.

Compare these with the order for a normal transitive verb:

30. (Jang) *ini jang* akan saja beli. This is the one I'll buy.  
 (preferred order)  
 31. (Jang) *ini jang* saja akan beli.

It is probably also the case that these pseudo-transitives can only be used when nominalized by a preceding *jang*, when the subject of the sentence, or when following the predicate. Thus sentences like (32) and (33) are doubtful.

32. \*Buku *itu* saja akan perlu.  
 33. ?Jang saja mau buku *itu*.

Sentences like (34) with the normal subject/predicate intonation are also doubtful.

34. ?Buku *itu* saja *mau*.

However, with the intonation:

35. ?Buku *itu* → saja *mau*.

i.e., topic + sentence "As for that book, I want (it)," they are acceptable to some speakers. None of these restrictions are true for normal transitive verbs.

The pseudo-transitive is also generally not acceptable as an imperative, as we would expect from stative verbs.

No passive imperatives occur for these verbs. Compare the transitive verb in (36) with the unacceptable pseudo-transitive (37).

36. Buku *ini* *djangan* saudara *beli*. Don't buy this book.  
 37. \*Buku *ini* *djangan* saudara *mau*. \*Don't want this book.

The pseudo-transitive construction with separable pronouns appears to be a nominalization. One of these has, in fact, become a fixed nominal in colloquial speech even without a preceding *jang*: *saja punja*, mine; *dia punja*, his (perhaps from *jang saja punja*, the one I have).

The verbs which fit into this category of pseudo-transitive are listed in the table below. On the left-hand side, I have indicated the base form and, on the right-hand side, the derived

transitive and then the English gloss. This list reflects the answers to a questionnaire given to Indonesians from various parts of Sumatra and Java. The following list is in descending order of acceptability in my sample.

mau	maui	want, be willing, be about to
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Note that this one has the added peculiarity of only having the passive transitive form, *dimau*, but the expected active, *\*memau*, does not actually occur, though it does appear in dictionaries.

suka	sukai	like
punja	punjai	own, possess
tahu	ketahui	know
ingin	{ingini inginkan	want, desire

Both *ingin* and *inginkan* occur with slightly different usages.

kepingin	kepingini	want, desire
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The last set, *kepingin* and *kepingini*, are often said to be from Javanese, but they were also acceptable to people from various parts of Sumatra.

perlu	perlukan	need
ada	--	have, be present
lupa	{lupai lupakan	forget

A few others may belong to this class, but I have not yet gotten enough information about them: *maklum*, know; *insjaf*, realize; and *maksud*, intend.

What other syntactic characteristics do these words have? With the exception of *punja*, have or possess, they are all verbs which are auxiliaries; they can be followed by another verb in both active and passive. They can also be followed directly by an object, though most also occur with a following particle plus object. Even *punja* occurs in the colloquial, verb + *punja* + verb, "(after) verbing and verbing"; for example, *tunggu punja tunggu*, (after) waiting and waiting.

In conclusion, these are intransitive, in particular a kind of stative which takes objects, but in a limited way also forms a nominalized passive-like construction, like transitives.