

F3. Verbs in Indonesian.

Verbs in English change their forms according to tense and number. If we take the verb "to sit", for example, we see that it has the forms "sit", "sits", "sat", "seated", "sitting", etc. Verbs in Indonesian also make changes, but the types of changes they make and the meanings that those changes have are quite different from what we have in English. If you look over the Indonesian vocabulary throughout this book, you will notice that many words begin with *me-* (*mendapat, melihat*), *ber-* (*bertanya, bertemu*), and *di-* (*dijual, diambil*). These three prefixes are among those often used with Indonesian verbs. In this and the following lessons we will study these and other prefixes and suffixes. A thorough understanding of them and the ways in which they function is essential to speaking good Indonesian.

F3a. Classes of verbs.

Indonesian verbs fall into different classes. The classes are determined by which prefixes and suffixes particular verbs may take. In other words, not all verbs take all the possible prefixes and suffixes. In this chapter, we shall study *meN-*(active) verbs and their close relatives, *di-*(passive) verbs.

F3b. *MeN-* verbs.

One of the important classes of verbs preceded by *meN-* is the class of active verbs. These are verbs we have introduced that are able take *meN-*:

ajar	beri	jadi	makan
ambil	cari	jual	minum
antar	dapat	lihat	sewa
baca	dengar		

F3b₁. Meaning of the symbol *N-*.

The symbol *N-* of the prefix *meN-* has various values depending on the initial letter of the root to which *meN-* is added. The value of *N-* is shown below according to the first letter of the root.

If the root begins with (A) VOWEL OR THE LETTER ^(*h*)
Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: *meng* + root.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
ambil	mengambil
ejek	mengejek
ganggu	mengganggu
hafal	menghafal
isi	mengisi
obrol	mengobrol
undang	mengundang

If the root begins with the letter: B

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: *mem* + root.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
baca	membaca
beri	memberi

If the root begins with the letter: C, D, J

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: *men* + root.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
cari	mencari
dapat	mendapat
jual	menjual

If the root begins with the letter: K

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: dropping the k and using *meng*.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
kacau	mengacau
kuning	menguning

If the root begins with the letter(s): L, M, N, NG, NY, R, W

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: *me* + root.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
lihat	melihat
makan	memakan
nilai	menilai
nganga	menganga
nyanyi	menyanyi
rebus	merebus
wangi	mewangi

If the root begins with the letter: P

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: dropping the "p" and using *mem*.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
pakai	memakai
pikir	memikirkan

If the root begins with the letter: S

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: changing the "s" to a "y" and using *men*.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form	
sèwa	menyèwa	menyerut to iron
sisir	menyisir	menyerukan to call out

If the root begins with the letter: T

Then the *meN-* verb is formed by: dropping the "t" and using *men*.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
tawar	menawar
tunggu	menunggu

Menyerut
Menyerukan

If the root: HAS ONLY ONE SYLLABLE (REGARDLESS of the 1ST LETTER)
Then the *meN-* verb can be formed in the usual way or by: *menge* + root.

Examples: root	<i>meN-</i> form
pel - mop	mengepel - wipe
lap - cloth	mengelap or melap

F3b₂. The meaning of *meN-*verbs.

One of the most important uses of *meN-* is to form ACTIVE verbs. Consider for a second the English sentence,

I am carrying the book.

In the above sentence, "I" am performing the action of carrying. Thus the word "I" is the AGENT in the above sentence. The word "I" also happens to be the SUBJECT. An ACTIVE VERB is one whose subject and agent are the same. If we were to say,

The book is carried by me.

"I" would still be the agent, but "the book" has become the subject of the sentence. Thus, this second example is not active; the verb is called passive. The prefix *meN-* forms active verbs:

Jon mencari rumah. *John is looking for a house.*

Saya lagi membaca. *I am reading.*

Saya membawa buku Ibu. *I am carrying your books.*

Saya mengajar. *I teach.*

Pak Jon sedang mencari pensil. *John is looking for a pencil.*

Dia tidak membaca. *He doesn't read.*

lagi - present + CONTINUOUS

Notice that *meN-*verbs can appear with recipients (i.e., objects; "house", "book", and "pencil" in the above examples) or without (that is to say, they can be either transitive or intransitive).

Be forewarned that sentences with active verbs are not as common in Indonesian as they are in English. We will learn the rules governing when to use active verbs in Indonesian after we have studied how to form verbs in the passive.

F4. Passive verbs.

F4a. Forming the passive.

Passive verbs in Indonesian have the following forms (using *beli*, "buy", as our example):

FIRST PERSON

Agent	Sentence	
Saya	Bukunya saya beli.	<i>The book was bought by me.</i>
Aku	Bukunya kubeli.	
Kita	Bukunya kita beli.	<i>The book was bought by us.</i>
Kami	Bukunya kami beli.	

SECOND PERSON

Agent	Sentence	
Kau	Bukunya kaubeli.	<i>The book was bought by you.</i>
Kamu	Bukunya kamu beli.	

Kau is
same as *kamu*

Passive sentences for all other second person agents (Bapak, Ibu, Óm, Nyonya, Adik, Saudara, proper names, etc.) are formed in the same manner as *kamu*:

Bukunya Bapak beli.	<i>The book was bought by you.</i>
Bukunya Tante beli.	
Bukunya Nona beli.	
—etc.—	

Kubeli "it was bought by me" and *kaubeli* "it was bought by you" are always written as one word.

THIRD PERSON

Agent	Sentence	
Dia	Bukunya dibelinya. Bukunya dia beli.	<i>The book was bought by her.</i>
Merèka	Bukunya merèka beli. Bukunya dibeli (olèh) merèka.	<i>The book was bought by them.</i>
Ibu	Bukunya dibeli (olèh) Ibu.	<i>The book was bought by Mother.</i>

Di- prefix
ONLY used
with 3rd
person

dèh = *by*

Passive sentences for all other third person agents (Bapak, Ibu, Óm, Nyonya, Adik, Saudara, proper names, etc.) are formed in the same manner as *ibu*:

Bukunya dibeli (olèh) ibunya.	<i>The book was bought by his mother.</i>
Bukunya dibeli (olèh) Pak Hardjito.	<i>The book was bought by Pak Hardjito.</i>
—etc.—	

NO AGENT NAMED

Agent	Sentence	
--	Buku dibeli.	<i>The book was bought.</i>

Oleh "by" may be dropped (and is normally dropped) unless there is a word in between the verb and the word for the agent. If there is a word in between the verb and the word for the agent, *oleh* must be used. Thus in the following example *oleh* may not be dropped:

That book was bought by my teacher.

Buku itu dibeli juga oleh guru saya. ~~My teacher bought that book, too.~~

But in the following example the dropping of *oleh* is optional because there is no word between the verb and the word for the agent:

Buku itu dibeli guru saya or Buku itu dibeli oleh guru saya. *My teacher bought that book.*

Pay careful attention to the third person (*dia*) forms in the above chart. Note that one uses the prefix *di-* ONLY when talking about an action performed by a third person (an action performed by "he, she, it" or by someone or something the speaker is referring to). For the second person agent (an action performed by "you") or for the first person agent (an action performed by "me" or "we") the prefix *di-* is NOT used. In the following example the prefix *di-* is used because the agent is the third person:

Buku ini dicari Ali. *Ali was looking for this book.*

In the following two examples the prefix *di-* is not used because the agent is the first person ("I" or "we") in the first two examples and the second person ("you") in the third example:

Buku ini saya cari. *I was looking for this book.*
Buku ini kita cari. *We were looking for this book.*
Buku ini Bapak cari, ya? *You were looking for this book?*

Position determines
grammatical role.
Verb last?

Whenever the agent is not expressed, *di-* plus root is used:

Mējanya sudah diambil. *Somebody took the table (lit. The table has been taken by now).*
Barangkali ada yang dijual. *There probably are some for sale.*

As we noted before, in Indonesian it is common to avoid expressing second-person pronouns. The *di-* form without an agent can be used for this purpose—i.e., to mean "you [do] it":

Apa lagi yang harus dibeli? *What else do you have to buy (lit. has to be bought)?*

"He bought it" or "it was bought by him" can be expressed by either *dibelinya* or *dia beli*. There is no difference between the two forms, although the first is more common:

Buku ini yang *dibelinya* or Buku ini yang *dia beli*. *This is that book he bought.*

OBJECT + DET

AGENT + DET

When the agent is a noun, we can express the passive in one of two ways: *dibeli* [noun] or *dibeli oleh* [noun]. Notice also for the third person plural (*merèka*) there are three possible forms: *merèka beli*, *dibeli merèka* and *dibeli oleh merèka*. There is no difference among them.

F4b. Meaning of the passive.

A passive verb is one whose subject is the recipient of the action described. Let us look at the following examples from English:

- a(1) The book was bought.
- b(1) This magazine was read by me.
- c(1) The room on the left was rented by my teacher.

All of the above sentences are in the passive construction. Referring to the chart in Section F4a above, we can construct the Indonesian equivalents of these sentences as follows:

- a(2) *Bukunya dibeli.*
- b(2) *Majalah ini saya baca.*
- c(2) *Kamar yang di sebelah kiri disewa guru saya.*

➡ Do Exercise G4 for Section F4.

F5. Using the active and passive.

In English we normally make sentences active in construction. Passives are used relatively rarely. However, in Indonesian we are forced to decide whether we want to place our emphasis on the agent or the recipient of the action. For example, if we say in English:

- a(1) I read this book.

we are probably more concerned about the book than about the fact that it was *I* who read it. Similarly, we are more concerned with the book than with the actual action of reading it. Still, in English, we use a sentence with an active verb.

Not so with Indonesian. If we are interested in the book, then we **MUST** use the passive:

- a(2) *Buku ini saya baca.*

In Indonesian, we use an active only under two circumstances:

- (1) When we want to draw attention to the subject as agent (i.e., say "Subject is the one who did it"), or
- (2) When we want to focus attention on the action itself as opposed to the agent or recipient—talk about what someone did as opposed to what happened to something.

For example, we would use an active construction in a situation such as the following where the speaker wishes to point out that he was the one, and not someone else, who read the book:

a(3) Saya yang membaca buku ini.

Also we would use an active form in a sentence in which we were focusing attention on what was being done. For example, in reply to a question as to how one spent one's time, one might say:

a(4) Saya membaca buku ini.

However, most commonly our focus of attention would be upon the book itself. If, for example, somebody were to say to us, "You should read this book", we might answer, "I read this book last week." Here the focus of attention is on the word "book." In this case, Indonesian calls for the use of the passive:

Buku ini saya baca minggu yang lalu.

One of the most important obstacles to overcome in learning to speak good Indonesian is to get used to the frequency of use of the passive. As should be clear from the above discussion, passives are much more common in Indonesian than they are in English. Whenever we are more interested in the recipient of the action—i.e., what happened to someone or something—than we are in what someone was doing, we should use the passive.

F5a. Active imperatives.

The prefix *meN-* is usually not used with the imperative:

Baca buku itu! *Read that book.*

In the above sentence the object (*buku*) follows the verb, and the sentence refers to what the agent is going to do. Nevertheless, the prefix *meN-* is not added to *baca* because the sentence is imperative. The same rule applies in exhortations: *meN-* is not normally used in active exhortations:

Ayó, kita baca sama-sama. *Come on, let's read together.*

The rule that imperatives do not have a prefix *meN-* also applies to imperative sentences with a word for "please" like *tolong* or *silakan*, and "don't", *jangan*.

Silakan baca. *Please read.*

Tolong bawa buku itu. *Please bring that book.*

Jangan bawa buku itu. *Don't bring that book.*

Under the influence of Javanese, the prefix *meN-* is sometimes used in imperative sentences when there are modifiers like *tolong*, *silakan*, and *jangan*. But this is not considered to be the best type of Indonesian.

F5b. Dropping of *meN-*.

The prefix *meN-* that forms active verbs is often dropped without changing the meaning of the sentence except for a nuance.

Saya lagi menunggu (or tunggu) teman. *I am waiting for a friend.*

In this case the *meN-* of *menunggu* has been dropped. For forms that have a suffix *-kan* or *-i* (to be studied in later lessons), the prefix *meN-* is not usually droppable. Also certain roots cannot have the prefix *meN-* dropped: e.g., *mengajar* "teach." However, in general the active prefix *meN-* may be optionally dropped, especially in informal speech styles.

⇒ Do all G5 exercises for Section F5.

F6. Word order in active and passive sentences.

The normal word order for an active sentence in Indonesian (as in English) is agent-verb-recipient (or, if you prefer to think in these terms, subject-verb-object):

- a(1) Saya membawa buku itu. *I am carrying that book.*
- b(1) Mas Jon sudah menyewa kamar. *John has rented a room by now.*
- c(1) Om Jon sudah mendapat kamar? *You have a room already, John?*

The forms *saya*, *Mas Jon*, and *Om Jon* in the sentences above are the subject. As we learned in Chapter 2 Section C1, the subject may follow the predicate. Therefore, the word order with the subject last is also possible:

- a(2) Membawa buku itu saya.
- b(2) Sudah menyewa kamar Mas Jon.
- c(2) Sudah mendapat kamar Om Jon?

In passive sentences, the recipient is most often placed preceding the verb.

- d(1) Buku ini dibeli Ali. *Ali bought this book.*
- e(1) Pènsil saya sudah diambil Nina. *Nina has already taken my pencil.*
- f(1) Kamarnya disewanya tadi malam. *He rented the room last night.*
- g(1) Saya dicari isteri Om Jon. *John's wife was looking for me.*

Since the predicate may precede the subject, these sentences are also possible:

- d(2) Dibeli Ali buku ini.
- e(2) Sudah diambil Nina pènsil saya.
- f(2) Disewanya kamarnya tadi malam.
- g(2) Dicari isteri Om Jon saya.

F6a. Mechanical rules for the choice of a passive form.
There are two rules that mechanically force the choice of the passive.

- (1) If the recipient precedes the verb, the verb must be passive.

Normally speaking, the verb is never active if it is preceded by the recipient. In the following sentences, the recipient of the action (in bold) precedes the verb, and therefore the passive is obligatory.

Buku ini dibeli Ali. *Ali bought this book.*
Saya dicari Nyonya Tuti. *Mrs. Tuti was looking for me.*

- (2) If the verb is inside a *yang* phrase and there is also an agent inside the *yang* phrase, the verb must be passive.

In the following sentence the verb *cari* is inside a *yang* phrase and there is also an agent inside it. Therefore, the passive form is chosen.

Bukan rumah yang dicarinya. *It's not a house he's looking for. (In this example rule 1 also happens to apply.)*

Again in the following sentence the *yang* phrase contains an agent ("I") and a verb ("buy"). Therefore the passive is obligatory.

Yang saya beli hanya meja dan kursi-kursi. *I only bought the table and chairs.*

Another important rule that applies is that with passives the word for the agent and the verb itself are not separated. Auxiliary words generally precede the agent and verb, and are normally not placed between them. For example in the following sentences the agent (*Bapak*) and the verb (*beli*) are not separated.

Apa saja yang harus Bapak beli? *What all do you have to buy?*

Another example, in which *mau* does not separate *saya* and *jual*:

Ini buku yang mau saya jual. *This is the book that I want to sell.*

⇒ Do all G6 exercises for Section F6.

F7. Translation of English "it", as recipient of the action of the verb.
For an English sentence containing a verb followed by "it" ("see it", "buy it", and the like) there is usually no Indonesian word that translates "it." In contexts where such a sentence is used in English, the Indonesian focus of attention is most frequently on the recipient of the action of the verb. To express such focus of attention in Indonesian the passive is used. Thus where verb followed by "it" is used in English, Indonesian most frequently uses a passive. In this example, John and Mustafa have been talking about a mosquito net, and the focus of attention is on that:

Saya bawa besok ke rumahnya. *I'll bring it to your house tomorrow. (lit. (It) will be brought by me tomorrow to your house.)*

Assumed
"it"

1 O S V
2 O S V
3 Rumah dijual Esti (+ dl-)
 O V S

In this sentence the conversation is still about the mosquito net:

Ah, tidak usah diantar. Nanti malam saya ambil kalau saya lewat rumahmu. *Oh, it is not necessary to bring it. I'll come to get it this evening when I go by your house.*

On the other hand, if the focus of attention is more strongly directed to the action of the verb, the active form (containing prefix *meN-*) is used. In that case *-nya* is added to the active verb form to refer to the recipient "it." In the following example the focus of attention is on what we are going to my house for rather than on what will be gotten:

Sekarang saja pergi ke rumah saya, mengambilnya. *[We] might as well go to my house to get it now.*

The following two sentences illustrate the active verb with *-nya*:

Bolèh saya lihat majalah?—Ó, ma'af, Ibu sedang membacanya. *May I borrow [your] magazine?—Oh, excuse me. You're reading it now.*
Apa Saudara sudah dengar Prèsidèn mau melawat ke sini?—Sudah. Saya membacanya tadi di koran. *Have you heard the president is going to visit this place?—Yes. I read it before in the newspaper.*

Compare the following sentence where the passive is used when the focus of attention is on the thing read:

Bolèh saya bawa majalahnya ke rumah?—Silakan. Sudah saya baca. *May I take the magazine home?—Please do. I've already read [it].*

G5f. Pilihan kata yang cocok. (Choose the word that fits.) Do this exercise with your tutor.

1. Saya (membeli, dibeli) sebungkus rokok.
2. Bukan itu yang saya (beli, membeli, dibeli). *Saya beli yang itu (Active)*
3. Bukan itu yang (beli, membeli, dibeli) abang saya. *3rd person*
4. Di mana majalah yang baru saya (beli, membeli, dibeli) itu?
5. Bolèh saya baca buku yang sedang (baca, membaca, dibaca) adikmu itu?
6. Kapan Tuan mau (meyèwa, disèwa) rumah ini?
7. Perabot itu (dibelinya, beli, membeli) di toko itu.
8. Kursi itu bisa (menaruh, ditaruh, taruh) di sana saja.
9. Kamar itu bisa merèka (sèwa, menyèwa, disèwa) sekarang. *also: (disewa mereka)*
10. Bukan mèja itu yang (dibawa, bawa, membawa) kakaknya.
11. Di mana saja bolpoin itu (mencari, dicarinya)? *3rd person (=nya) looked for the pen?*
12. Kapan Ibu mau (menjual, dijualnya, dijual) itu di pasar?
13. Kursi itu sudah (mencari, dicari) ibunya ke mana-mana, tapi belum lagi dapat.
14. Sudah saya (cari, dicari) kelambu itu di pasar. *curtain*
15. Apa buku itu sudah (baca, dibaca) adikmu? *your young + sister*
16. Kalau kamu datang nanti, kamu harus (membawanya, dibawa), ya.
17. Majalah itu masih bisa (dibeli, membeli) di pasar sekarang?
18. Belum dapat buku yang kamu (dicari, mencari, cari) di pasar tadi?
19. Akan Bapak (taruh, ditaruh) di mana kursi ini?
20. Kalau begitu, kamar itu tidak bisa (disèwa, menyèwa, sèwa) temanmu bulan ini?
21. Ayó, mari kita pergi (menceritakan, diceritakan) kabar baik ini.
22. Bisa kamu (dijual, jual) perabot ini nanti?
23. Saya mau (pindah, dipindah) bèsok ke rumah yang baru itu.
24. Ibunya belum (dimakan, makan) hari ini.
25. Kabar itu (didengarnya, mendengar) tadi malam.

G6. Exercises on F6 (Word order in active and passive sentences).

16a. Terjemahkanlah kata yang di kurung. (Translate the words in parentheses.)

Do this exercise with your tutor.

1. Bukan itu hampir (*he took*) tadi.
2. Bukan kamar ini yang akan (*we rent*). Kita sewa
3. Bukan meja itu yang harus (*your big brother buy*). ~~Abangmu~~ ~~dijual~~ dibeliinya / "dibeli Abangmu"
4. Di mana (*he bought*) kelambu itu? ^{dibelinya}
5. Kapan perabot itu akan (*be sold*) di pasar?
6. Kué itu tadi (*my little brother ate*).
7. Apa anak itu sudah (*was taken*) ke dokter? ^{dibawa}
8. Di mana kursi dan meja tulis ini bisa (*be sold*). ^{dijual}
9. Buku apa saja yang bisa (*I read*) di sini? ^{saya baca}
10. Buku apa yang (*your little brother was reading*) itu tadi?
11. Apa cerita itu sudah (*he told*). ~~ceritanya~~ ~~ceritanya~~ ~~cerita~~ ~~ceritanya~~ ^{diceritakannya}
12. Ah, tidak bolèh (*they tell*) kabar itu. ^{diceritakan mereka or diceritakannya}
13. Meja ini mau (*I sell*) di pasar.
14. Di mana (*we can buy*) sebungkus rokok?
15. Apa Bapak (*already gave*) uang? ^{sudah beri}
16. Apa saja yang (*they sell*) di pasar? ^{dijualnya or dijual mereka}
17. Apa saja yang (*your mother sells*) di toko itu? ^{dijual ibunya}

G6b. Terjemahkanlah kata yang di kurung. (Translate the words in parentheses.)

Do this exercise with your tutor.

1. (*I ate*) lempér di pasar tadi.
2. (*She drank*) stéróp di toko itu kemarin.
3. Bukan barang itu yang (*she sells*) di pasar. ^{dijual dia // dijualnya}
4. Sudah berapa lama (*he's been reading*) buku itu?
5. (*Your older sister knows*) abang saya? ^{kakak perempuanmu}
6. (*I want to shop*) bèsok di toko itu. ^{saya mau berbelanja}
7. Apa bisa (*I give*) adikmu sebungkus rokok Amérika? ^{pack}
8. Mus, mengapa adiknya ndak (*he invited*).
9. (*You must bring*) kué mangkok bèsok kalau mau makan pagi di sini lagi.
10. (*We want to look for*) kamar bèsok.
11. (*Who is going to tell*) cerita itu bèsok? ^{Siapa bisa menceritakan}
12. Bolèh (*I sell*) meja tulis Bapak itu?
13. Barang itu tadi (*Mustafa put*) di situ.
14. Ke mana-mana (*we go*) hanya kué mangkok ^{bowl} saja yang (*we see*). ^{lihat}
15. (*Who teaches*) Bahasa Inggris di sini? ^{Siapa mengajar}
16. (*Who invited*) abangmu ke sini?
17. Ayó, mari (*we bring*) kakakmu ke pasar.
18. (*I met*) dia tadi di pasar.

~~Saya bertemu~~
Saya bertemu