

Givenness of individuals and eventualities: Perspectives from Malay passives

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1 Introduction

The notion of givenness is usually discussed of individual-denoting referential noun phrases (e.g. Chafe 1976; Prince 1992; Gundel et al. 1993). However, the notion is also relevant to other constituent types such as verb phrases, and plays a role in information structure-related linguistic phenomena (Schwarzschild 1999; Riester 2008). In Nomoto and Kartini (2014), we analysed the fact that the agent of *di-* passives in Malay appears to be restricted to third person as a result of the influence of the givenness of the eventuality described by the passive verb phrase on that of the agent. Specifically, the low givenness of the former forces the latter to be also low, and hence first and second person agents are not suitable, as they are speech act participants and highly given. In this paper, I review our analysis of Malay passives, making a few modifications, and discuss issues concerning the givenness of eventualities (typically expressed by verb phrases) and its interaction with that of individuals (typically expressed by noun phrases).

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the notion of givenness and points out that one would have to acknowledge the relevance of givenness to non-individuals if *s/he* is to analyse the givenness of the whole range of nominal expressions. Section 3 describes different passive subtypes in Malay and how their agents are expressed. The section also introduces the person restriction on the agent in *di-* passives and the essence of Nomoto and Kartini's (2014) analysis of it. Sections 4–6 discuss issues concerning givenness that arise from our analysis: the status of the implicit agent (section 4), how givenness is encoded in *di-* passives (section 5) and the givenness of eventualities (section 6). Section 7 is the conclusion.

2 Givenness

The notion of givenness has to do with the speaker's assessment of the addressee's consciousness/attention state and knowledge with regard to a referent (e.g. Chafe 1976; Prince 1992; Gundel et al. 1993; Lambrecht 1994). Initially, the notion was conceived as a binary distinction between 'given' and 'new', where a given referent is already activated in the speaker's consciousness at the time of utterance whereas a new referent is not and newly activated by the relevant utterance. However, it is nowadays common to identify multiple statuses with different degrees of givenness.

One of the popular theories of givenness is the Givenness Hierarchy of Gundel et al. (1993), which has been adopted in studies of many languages including Austronesian languages such as Bantik (North Sulawesi, Indonesia; Utsumi 2014) and Kalanguya (Northern Phillipines;

Santiago 2014) (see Hedberg 2014 for a list of other languages). The Givenness Hierarchy and English examples that represent each status are given in (1).

(1) The Givenness Hierarchy

in focus	>	activated	>	familiar	>	uniquely identifiable	>	referential	>	type identi- fiable
<i>it</i>		<i>that</i> <i>this</i> <i>this NP</i> ¹		<i>that NP</i>		<i>the NP</i>		indefinite <i>this NP</i>		<i>a NP</i>

What distinguishes the Givenness Hierarchy in (1) from other similar theories of givenness is that the status categories forms a hierarchy in such a way that a status entails the statuses to its right. Thus, if a referent is ‘in focus’, it is also ‘activated’, ‘familiar’, ‘uniquely identifiable’, ‘referential’ and ‘type identifiable’. This feature elegantly captures the empirical fact that one form can be employed for multiple adjacent statuses. For example, ‘*the NP*’, categorized as ‘uniquely identifiable’, can be used to refer to referents of higher statuses as well. Furthermore, involving only a single dimension, the Givenness Hierarchy also enables an easy comparison between different statuses with respect to degrees of givenness. The latter advantage is crucial for the account of the person restriction on passive agents in Malay proposed by Nomoto and Kartini (2014).

Although studies of givenness usually centres around individual-denoting noun phrases, the notion is not exclusively for individuals, but it also applies to other semantic types. Thus, the Coding Protocol for Statuses on the Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel et al. 2006) takes into consideration eventualities and propositions when discussing the usage of the italicized nominals in (2) and (3).

(2) John fell off his bike. *This/it* happened yesterday.

(3) A: John fell off his bike.

B: *That’s* not true.

This/it in (2) refer to the event of John’s falling off his bike that is introduced into the discourse and the addressee’s consciousness by the first sentence. *That* in (3) refers to the proposition associated with that same event. While Gundel et al.’s concern lies in the italicized nominal expressions, an adequate description of them presumes that their non-individual antecedents have givenness statuses. For example, one should be able to say things like the event described by sentence S is ‘in focus’, ‘activated’, etc.

3 Passive agents in Malay

Malay has two types of passive(-like) constructions: *di-* (morphological) passives (4a) and bare passives (4b). They are so called based on their surface morphological characteristics. The verb bears the overt passive voice marker *di-* in the former whereas it bears no overt voice marker in the latter.² Besides this morphological difference, the two passives also differ in the status

¹The DP hypothesis is assumed here, whereby the traditional “noun phrases” are analysed as determiner phrases with a determiner head and an NP complement: [DP D NP].

²Bare passives are referred to by various names in the literature: ‘object-preposing construction’ (Chung 1976; Willett 1993), ‘Passive Type 2’ (Dardjowidjojo 1978; Sneddon et al. 2010), ‘pasif semu’ [pseudo-passive] (Asmah

of the agent. The agent in *di-* passives appears to be optional whereas that in bare passives is obligatory and immediately precedes the verb.

- (4) a. *Di-* passive
Dokumen itu sudah *di*-semak oleh mereka.
document that already PASS-check by them
'The document has already been checked by them.'
- b. Bare passive
Dokumen itu sudah *(mereka) semak.
document that already they check
'They have already checked the document.'

Di- passive agents are encoded in three ways, as shown in (5). In the '*pro* type' (5a), no overt agent occurs, though the presence of an agent is still entailed. In the '*oleh* type' (5b), the agent is introduced by the preposition *oleh* 'by'. Finally, in the 'DP type' (5c), the agent immediately follows the verb, with no preposition between them.

- (5) a. *Pro* type
Surat itu sudah di-poskan *pro*.
letter that already PASS-post
- b. *Oleh* type
Surat itu sudah di-poskan *oleh kerani*.
letter that already PASS-post by clerk
- c. DP type
Surat itu sudah di-poskan *kerani*.
letter that already PASS-post clerk
'The letter was already posted (by the clerk).'

Prescriptive grammars of Malay (and Indonesian) state that the agent in *di-* passives should be third person and prohibit first and second person agents. Researchers are not unanimous as to whether this statement is descriptively accurate. In order to resolve this empirical unclarity, Nomoto and Kartini (2014) examined various texts in Formal and Colloquial Malay, and showed that the restriction exists as a strong tendency rather than an absolute syntactic rule. No similar person restriction exists for the agent in bare passives.

- (6) Dokumen itu sudah saya/awak/mereka semak.
document that already I/you/they check
'I/You/They have already checked the document.'

Nomoto and Kartini attempt to account for these facts by making the following claims concerning the information structure of *di-* passives:

- (7) a. CLAIM 1: The eventuality described by a *di-* passive verb phrase is low in givenness.
b. CLAIM 2: CLAIM 1 forces the agent to be also low in givenness.
c. CLAIM 3: The low givenness of the relevant eventuality is encoded by the passive prefix *di-*.

2009), 'object(ive) voice' (Arka and Manning 1998; Cole, Hermon, and Yanti 2008), and so forth. See Nomoto (2006) for a summary of various existing terms.

Claims 1 and 2 explains why first and second person referents are rare in *di-* passives. This is because first and second person agents are speech act participants and highly given. Hence, they are not so suitable for a *di-* passive agent. The lack of a similar person restriction in bare passives follow from Claim 3, bare passives do not involve *di-*. Even though the restriction is directly relevant to the agent DP, one cannot just focus on the agent DP. This is because the restriction is not on the agent DP in general, but only on that in *di-* passives. One may wonder if the restriction is present only in *di-* passives but not in bare passives because the agent is suppressed in *di-* passives. However, such an argument does not go through, because an overt agent is obligatory in the DP type of *di-* passives. Moreover, Nomoto and Kartini analyse the *pro* and *oleh* types as containing a null unspecified pronoun *pro*, that is to say, the agent is not suppressed in all types of *di-* passives (see section 4 for details).

In what follows, I will discuss problems and implications of this analysis for the theory of information structure and the study of Malay grammar. Some of the problems are only apparent, but other remain unsolved. Furthermore, I will also modify some of the details of our previous analysis.

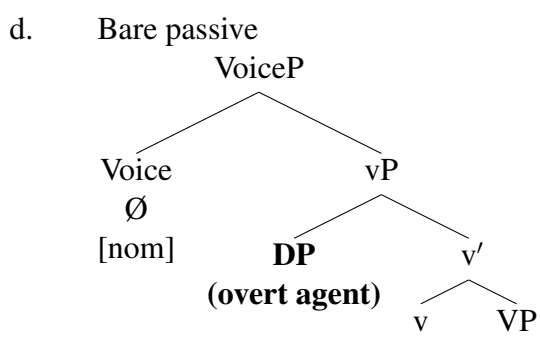
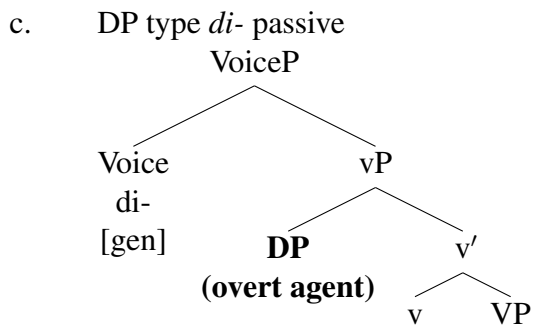
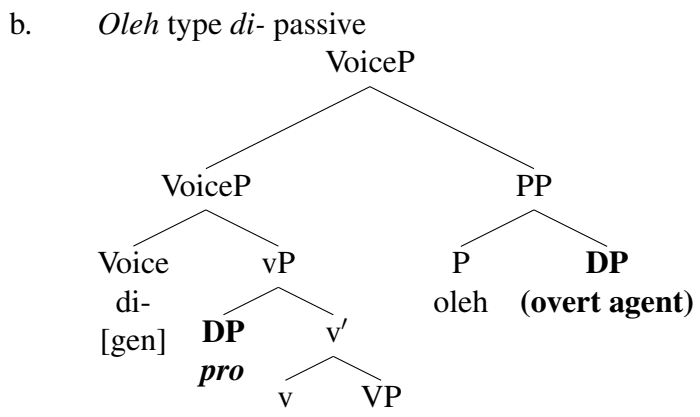
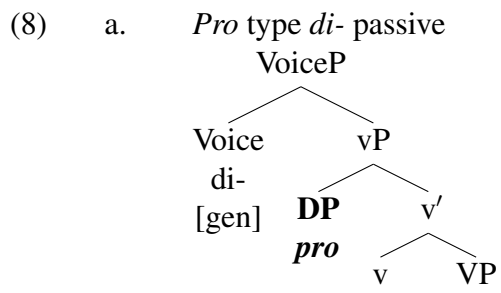
4 Implicit agent

The first problem is concerned with the implicit agent involved in the *pro* type. Of the three types of *di-* passives, the most frequently used is the *pro* type with an implicit agent. Nomoto and Kartini (2014) analyse an implicit agent as an unspecified null pronoun (*pro*) rather than being absent altogether from the structure.³ This ensures that the presence of an agent is entailed even though it is not explicitly expressed. The meaning of *pro* can be left unspecified, but it can also be specified either overtly by an *oleh* ‘by’ phrase or by the context outside of the passive clause. In other words, *pro* is involved in the *oleh* type as well as the *pro* type. By contrast, the DP type *di-* passive and bare passive must have an overt agent DP. (8) shows the structures of the four passive subtypes. In *di-* passives, the verb moves from V to v to Voice to supply the prefix *di-* with a verbal host to attach to.⁴ I assume that Voice licenses the agent DP introduced in Spec,vP through Case assignment. In Malay, abstract Case is thought to be reflected on the types of clitics: *di-* with [gen(itive)] licenses enclitics whereas \emptyset with [nom(inative)] licenses proclitics.⁵

³Alternatively, the agent argument can be existentially closed (cf. Legate 2010, 2012; Kartini and Nomoto 2012).

⁴I revised the structures proposed in Nomoto and Kartini (2014). In the latter paper, we posited the voice markers *di-* and \emptyset in v. The verb movement in *di-* passives lacks a clear motivation in this analysis, unlike the current one. Cole et al. (2008) also posit the voice-related prefixes *di-* and *meN-* in the Voice head distinct from v.

⁵Bare passives resemble the active voice in this respect. I regard bare passives as a subtype of the passive, based on the nature of v, namely it does not license the theme DP (by assigning Accusative case). Bare passives can also be regarded as a third kind of voice, the so-called ‘objective voice’, if both Voice and v are taken into account (cf. symmetrical voice hypothesis). This last position, however, should be adopted with care, as it could obscure the fact that one is conflating two independent factors. See also Table 1.



At first brush, the prevalence of the *pro* type appears to run counter to our information-based analysis of *di-* passive agents presented above. This is because it is generally agreed upon in the literature of information structure that the level of givenness inversely correlates with the amount of overt material, i.e. the more given a denotation is, the less phonetic material the linguistic expression associated with it contains. Gundel et al. (1993) thus identify “∅ (zero) NPs” as the form with the highest givenness status “in focus” in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. If what is represented as *pro* above were the same thing as their “∅ (zero) NPs,” *pro* should be more given than the overt first and second person pronouns. Under our information-based analysis, particularly Claim 2 above, one would expect the *pro* type *di-* passive to be at least as infrequent as *di-* passives with first and second person agents, quite contrary to actual fact.

In Nomoto and Kartini (2014), we argued that *pro* is not a kind of “ \emptyset (zero) NP” but instead an unspecified pronoun with no person or number specification, and that due to its unspecified nature, *pro* is low in givenness. If so, the prevalence of the *pro* type *di-* passive makes perfect sense. Indeed, the interpretation of *pro* is not always straightforward. In many cases, it seems most appropriate to analyse *pro* as “unspecified,” though its referent is obvious in some cases. Moreover, according to Nomoto (to appear), the same null unspecified pronoun *pro* is employed in the following anaphoric expressions: as a possessor argument of *diri* ‘(physical) self’ and with the intensifier *sendiri* ‘own, alone’, as shown in (9a) and (9b) respectively. Notice that *pro* occurs in the same position as enclitics do.⁶

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------|-------------------|----|---------------------------|-------------------|
| (9) | a. | diri <i>pro</i> | ‘oneself’ | b. | kereta <i>pro</i> sendiri | ‘one’s own car’ |
| | | diri-ku | ‘myself’ | | kereta-ku sendiri | ‘my own car’ |
| | | diri-mu | ‘yourself’ | | kereta-mu sendiri | ‘your own car’ |
| | | diri-nya | ‘himself/herself’ | | kereta-nya sendiri | ‘his/her own car’ |

While the unspecified nature of *pro* is sufficiently reasonable, considering it as distinct from \emptyset causes proliferation of covert forms.⁷ I thus argue that, insofar as Malay is concerned, *pro* and \emptyset capture different stages of the same entity: *pro*/ \emptyset is inherently low in givenness (before interpretation) but can be understood as referring to highly given referents through contextual restriction (after interpretation). The situation is comparable to the interpretation of pronouns. Suppose that John is talking with Mary about their mutual friend Ali. In this situation, *I* refers to John, *you* to Mary and *he* to Ali. However, these are by no means the lexical meanings of *I*, *you* and *he*. The observed meanings are the results of interpretation with respect to a particular context.

Classical Malay provides a case where an overt pronominal passive agent is restricted by an *oleh* ‘by’ phrase. *Di-* passives in Classical Malay have an additional subtype that is no longer present in Modern Malay. This type can be situated between the *oleh* type and the DP type, as the agent is expressed simultaneously by an *oleh* phrase as well as the third person enclitic *-nya*.⁸ An example from *Sejarah Melayu* is given in (10). A direct translation that faithfully reflects the compositional interpretation would be ‘... third person referents who are all of them ...’.

⁶While enclitics can occur in positions associated with Genitive and Accusative cases, *pro* can only occur in a Genitive position, but not in an Accusative position such as a preposition object position (e.g. **di-semak oleh pro* [PASS-check by]). Nomoto and Kartini claim that the agent in bare passive is obligatory because the agent position in bare passives is not a Genitive case position allowed for *pro*.

⁷I put aside instances of \emptyset that arise from ellipsis.

⁸This construction is reminiscent of Legate’s (2012) analysis of Acehnese passives, whereby verbal prefixes in *v* restrict the agent, as shown in (i). Note that in terms of their semantic function, the verbal prefixes in Acehnese are comparable to the enclitic *-nya* in Malay rather than the passive prefix *di-*; Acehnese does not have a morpheme corresponding to *di-* in Malay. This supports the current analysis where (Malay) *di-* occupies a head higher than *v*.

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--|------------------|
| (i) | a. | Aneuk miet nyan <i>di</i> -kap | (lé uleue nyan). |
| | | child small that 3FAM-biate | by snake that |
| | | ‘The child was bitten (by the snake).’ | |
| | b. | Aneuk miet nyan <i>lôn-l neu-l geu</i> -tingkue lé <i>lôn/ droeneuh/ gopnyan</i> . | |
| | | child small that 1SG- 2POL- 3POL-carry by me you | him/her |
| | | ‘The child is carried by me/you/him/her.’ | |
- (Legate 2012)

- (10) Maka *oleh* segala mereka itu akan Raja Suran *di-bawa-nya* kepada raja-nya.
 so by all them that of Raja Suran PASS-carry-3 to king-3
 ‘So, they all took Raja Suran to their king.’ (A. Samad 1979:15)

Pro in *di-* passives can be restricted in the same way. Through this restriction, it can refer to a highly given referent such as first and second person referents. In (11), the originally unspecified referent of *pro* is restricted by the context to a first person referent, i.e. the writer of the article in question or ‘the media’ including the writer. The person who met *beliau* ‘him’ cannot be the reader (second person) or a third party excluding the writer/reader (third person). Likewise, in (12), the originally unspecified referent of *pro* is restricted to first person referents, this time, overtly by the agentive phrase *oleh kita* ‘by us’.

- (11) Beliau *di-temui* *pro* selepas merasmikan Seminar Pengurusan Sukan Institusi
 he PASS-meet after officiate seminar management sport institution
 Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) 2010 di UiTM kampus Khazanah Alam Bandar Jengka di
 study high 2010 at UiTM campus Khazanah Alam Bandar Jengka at
 sini.
 here
 ‘He was met by *pro* after he had officiated the 2010 Higher Academic Institution Sports Management Seminar at UiTM, Khazanah Alam Bandar Jengka campus here.’ (*Utusan Malaysia*, 01/01/2011)

- (12) Usia tidak mengampunkan segala dosa yang *di-buat* *pro* *oleh* kita.
 age not forgive all sin REL PASS-do by us
 ‘Age does not forgive all the sins that were committed by us.’ (DBP Corpus)

Interestingly, Nomoto and Kartini (2014) report that first and second person agents are found least frequently in the DP type. This suggests that the givenness of the DP in Spec,vP (i.e. *pro* and an overt DP), which is not restricted by linguistic and non-linguistic context, is more important as a determinant of the well-formedness of *di-* passives than that of the final referent after contextual restriction. With the revised syntactic structures in (8), Nomoto and Kartini’s Claims 1–3 offer a possible explanation for that. If the ultimate source of the pressure against first and second person agents is *di-* in Voice, its effect applies to its c-command domain, i.e. vP. It is the agent DP in Spec,vP that is directly affected by the givenness constraint of *di-*. In the *pro* and *oleh* types, the agent comes to refer to a first and second person referent not because of *pro* in Spec,vP but because of the *oleh* phrase or context, which are added outside the scope of *di-*. By contrast, the DP type cannot have a first and second person referent unless the DP in Spec,vP itself is first or second person.

5 Formal encoding of givenness

Nomoto and Kartini’s third claim (the low givenness of the eventuality described by a *di-* passive phrase is encoded by the passive prefix *di-*) is a logical extension of the situation in the nominal domain to the verbal domain. The givenness properties of noun phrases are usually regarded as lexically specified. For example, determiners such as *this*, *that*, *the* and *a* in English encode as part of their meanings different degrees of givenness associated with the DP headed by them, as specified in the Givenness Hierarchy (1). Although I know no serious study that applies the Givenness Hierarchy to Malay, demonstratives such as *itu* ‘that’ and *ini* ‘this’ are thought to encode particular degrees of givenness in addition to their deictic meanings. As seen

in section 2, the notion of givenness is not limited to noun phrases/individuals but also relevant to verb phrases/eventualities. If so, there should be morphemes that encode givenness in verb phrases too. Moreover, a parallelism between the nominal and verbal domains suggests that such morphemes should encode givenness on top of other meanings or functions. Our claim is that *di-* is one such morpheme. Specifically, it encodes a low level of givenness, besides its syntactic function as a passive voice marker.

At this point, I should clarify the relation between voice categories such as active and passive, and voice markers that I assume (also see footnote 5). My definition of voice categories is based solely on whether and how an argument is licensed. The active-passive distinction (in my definition) is concerned with the licensing of an internal argument, which is introduced by a lexical verb (V), by the functional head *v*. In short, the active-passive distinction is a property of *v*. The active *v* licenses an internal argument by assigning accusative case to it whereas the passive *v* lacks this ability and cannot license it. The *v* head has another role of introducing an external argument. The external argument thus introduced needs to be licensed, and it is Voice that does this job. Crucially, in my definition, how an external argument is licensed is a different voice distinction than the active-passive distinction. However, Voice is not totally irrelevant to the active-passive distinction. This is because it has a selectional restriction on the type of vP (active or passive), though it does not determine the type. *Di-* selects a passive vP, that is, a vP headed by the passive *v*. It is in this sense that *di-* is a passive voice marker. Similarly, the prefix *meN-* in the *meN-* morphological active as in (13a) is an active voice marker in the sense that it selects an active vP. The null Voice head involved in the bare active (13b) and bare passive has no selectional restriction, that is, it is compatible with both an active and a passive vP. Table 1 summarizes voice categories and voice markers in Malay.⁹

- (13) a. *MeN-* active
 Mereka sudah meny-[s]emak dokumen itu.
 they already ACT-check document that
- b. Bare active
 Mereka sudah semak dokumen itu.
 they already check document that
 ‘They have already checked the document.’

Table 1: Voice markers and voice categories in Malay

Construction	Voice (marker)	vP selection	Case by Voice	Case by v	Voice category
<i>meN-</i> active	<i>meN-</i>	active	nominative	accusative	active
<i>di-</i> passive	<i>di-</i>	passive	genitive	none	passive
bare passive	∅	either	nominative	none	passive
bare active	∅	either	nominative	accusative	active

Returning to the issue of givenness, I formulate the givenness property of the passive prefix *di-* as a selectional restriction, as in (14).

⁹As noted in footnote 5, the recently most popular view in the literature considers the bare passive as a third type of voice ‘objective voice’ which is distinct from either the active or passive. Moreover, many researchers make little of the bare active. It is either simply ignored or seen as the *meN-* active whose *meN-* is omitted/deleted. In the present analysis, the bare active involves the unmarked voice marker and no such omission/deletion takes place.

- (14) The prefix *di-* in Voice selects for a vP describing an eventuality that is low in givenness.

[VoiceP *di-* [vP[low givenness]]]

An alternative formulation would let *di-* mark the givenness of the phrase it heads, i.e. VoiceP. Given that *di-* passives and bare passives share the same kind of vP (i.e. passive vP, cf. Table 1) and no person restriction exists on the agent in bare passives, the givenness of passive vPs can be either high or low. Thus, the formulation as a selectional restriction in (14) rejects a vP describing a highly given eventuality whereas the alternative formulation alters the givenness of such a vP to fit its requirement.

It is difficult to decide on which formulation is adequate based on empirical data. I opt for the formulation in terms of a selectional restriction, because it operates in other areas of Malay grammar (Nomoto 2013b). We have seen above that overt voice markers such as *meN-* and *di-* select for a vP of an appropriate type (see Table 1). Overt number marking by means of classifiers and reduplication restrict an otherwise unrestricted (i.e. number-neutral) noun denotation to singularities and pluralities respectively (Nomoto 2013a). Soh and Nomoto (2011, 2015) propose that the active prefix *meN-* selects for an eventuality with stages in the sense of Landman (1992, 2008) to capture the aspectual contrast between sentences with and without *meN-*, as in (15). This selectional restriction can be formulated in a parallel fashion to that of the passive marker *di-* above, as in (16).

- (15) a. Harga minyak turun selama/dalam tiga hari.
price oil fall for/in three day
'The oil price fell for/in three days.'
- b. Harga minyak men-[t]urun selama/*dalam tiga hari.
price oil ACT-fall for/in three day
'The oil price was falling for three days.' (Soh and Nomoto 2015:151–152)
- (16) The prefix *meN-* in Voice selects for a vP describing an eventuality with stages.
*[VoiceP *meN-* [vP[–stages]]]¹⁰

Soh and Nomoto's finding about *meN-*'s aspectual meaning indirectly supports Nomoto and Kartini's (2014) claim that *di-* encodes givenness. Since the active voice marker is more than a purely syntactic formative, it is not surprising if the passive marker also has a semantic/pragmatic function.

6 Givenness of eventualities

The discussion in the previous section assumes that Nomoto and Kartini's (2014) first claim that the eventuality described by a *di-* passive verb phrase is low in givenness is correct. Although this claim offers a way to capture the low givenness of the *di-* passive agent without stipulating it, it is not so easy to prove its correctness. There are two main reasons for this. First, the theory of givenness has developed through studies of noun phrases, which typically denote individuals rather than eventualities. Second, in Modern Malay, most passive clauses have a preverbal subject, unlike earlier stages of the language and some regional Malay varieties. Consequently, the informational status of the verb phrase gets obscured by that of the subject. It is known that the clause-initial noun phrase (i.e. subject) in Malay is highly topical, that is,

¹⁰Soh and Nomoto assume that *meN-* occupies v rather than Voice. Hence, their original formulation differs slightly from the one presented here.

it often sets the topic on which the rest of the clause make comments (Alsagoff 1992; Nomoto 2009).

6.1 Previous studies on the givenness of non-individuals

To my knowledge, it is Schwarzschild (1999) who first provided an explicit definition of the givenness for non-individuals. His basic idea is that while the givenness of individuals is based on coreference, that of non-individuals is determined by entailment. Consider the example in (17). Uppercase letters here and elsewhere indicate pitch accents.

- (17) NObody murdered JOHN although BOB WANTED to kill him.
(adapted from (22) in Riester 2008:79)

Given the first verb phrase *murdered John*, the event denoted by the second verb phrase *kill him* counts as given in some sense.¹¹ It is possible that the events described by the two verb phrases are the same one. That is to say, the killing in question is achieved by means of murder. But even if not, a murdering event necessarily involves a killing event. So, the event of killing John is not completely new. Importantly, in this second case, givenness is not based on coreference but a lexical relation, specifically *murder* is a hyponym of *kill*. As Baumann and Riester (2012) point out, hyponymy like this is verified by entailment, as shown in (18). Schwarzschild developed a procedure to make such verification possible, including existential type-shifting, which turns verb phrase meanings into propositions, as found in (18).

- (18) $\exists x.\text{murder}(x, j)$ (someone murdering John) entails $\exists x.\text{kill}(x, j)$ (someone killing John)

Baumann and Riester (2012) push this idea a step further and propose to differentiate two kinds of givenness, i.e. referential givenness and lexical givenness. These two kinds of givenness are respectively based on coreference and lexical relations such as identity, synonymy and hyponymy. The new notion of lexical givenness captures the fact that sometimes an expression is treated as given due to the presence of a related expression rather than a coreferential entity. For example, in (19), *a big German Shepherd* and *Anna's dog* are not coreferential. However, the word *dog*, which heads the latter noun phrase, cannot be accented, which means that it is treated as given. This is because *a big German Shepherd* is a hyponym of *dog*. Similarly, in (20), the two occurrence of *Italian* are not coreferential, with the first one denoting a language and the second one a nationality. However, the second occurrence of *Italian* cannot be accented, and hence is treated as given, because the language name *Italian* is closely related to *Italian* as nationality.

- (19) On my way home, a big German Shepherd barked at me. It reminded me of ANna's dog. (Baumann and Riester 2012:133)
- (20) (Why do you study Italian?) I'm MARried to an Italian. (Büring 2007)

While Schwarzschild distinguishes between individual-denoting (type *e*) and non-individual denoting (non-type *e*) expressions in his definition of a single notion of givenness, Baumann and Riester associate referential and lexical givenness with referential and non-referential expressions respectively. The border lines coincide in the case of nominal expressions, but not in non-nominal expressions. For instance, in Schwarzschild's definition, a referential event is given if it is entailed by its antecedent. In Baumann and Riester's theory, on the other hand, a

¹¹It is just "given" for Schwarzschild, as he assumes a binary givenness distinction between 'given' and 'new'.

referential event is considered (referentially) given if it has a coreferential antecedent. Unfortunately, Baumann and Riester focus on nominal expressions and do not discuss non-nominal expressions. Nevertheless, Baumann and Riester's theory has a conceptual advantage over Schwarzschild's. It is not obvious in Schwarzschild's theory why only individual-denoting referential expressions invoke coreference. See Appendix for further details on Baumann and Riester's referential and lexical givenness, and their relation to the Givenness Hierarchy of Gundel et al. (1993).

6.2 Challenges

While the criteria developed for individuals can be extended to eventualities, the actual (referential) givenness identification task is not straightforward. The difficulty is due to different natures of individuals and eventualities. First, while it is common that an individual is repeatedly referred to in discourse, an eventuality is usually not repeated. Hence, criteria for givenness statuses based on coreference are not helpful in many cases. In theory, an event is high in givenness if the same action involving the same participants has occurred in immediate discourse. Thus, among the four continuations to (21) in (22) (temporal locations put aside), the event described by sentence (22a) is higher in givenness than those described by the other three.

- (21) [The speaker and addressee are talking about their roommate John.]
John₁ was eating your bread this morning.
- (22) a. He₁ was eating your bread again. (same action, same agent, same theme)
b. He₁ was eating your eggs too. (same action, same agent, different theme)
c. Mary was eating your bread too. (same action, different agent, same theme)
d. Mary was watching TV. (different action, different agent, different theme)

In actual discourse, however, such a repetition situation is rare.

Second, eventualities typically involve more than one individual. The same action can be conducted by the same agent on a different theme, as in (22b); it can also be conducted on the same theme by a different agent, as in (22c). Is there a difference in givenness between these two cases? If so, which event is higher in givenness?

Relating to the second difference, assuming that the event argument of a verb is existentially closed at vP (or VoiceP), a sentence involves at least two levels of referential givenness for eventualities, corresponding to different syntactic phrases denoting eventualities: vP (or VoiceP) and TP.¹² Both vP and TP eventualities can serve as an antecedent for nominal expression indicating particular degrees of givenness such as (*do*) *it*, *this* and *that* (see (2) for an example of a TP eventuality referred to by *this/it*). Although (22a) and (22c) have different degrees of givenness at the TP level, they do not differ at the vP level, as shown in (23).

- (23) a. [_{TP} He₁ was [_{vP} eating your bread] (again)] (= (22a))
b. [_{TP} Mary was [_{vP} eating your bread] (too)] (= (22c))

Moreover, at the vP level, voice alternation affects givenness. Consider the passive counterpart of (23a).

- (24) [_{TP} Your bread was [_{vP} eaten by him₁] (again)]

¹²I assume that the lexical verb (V) and its projection VP are assigned lexical givenness, in line with Baumann and Riester's (2012) analysis of the lexical noun (N) and its projection NP.

While the sentence as a whole describes the same event as (23a), i.e. John’s eating the addressee’s bread, the events described at the vP level are different between (23a) and (24), i.e. someone’s eating the addressee’s bread and John’s eating something. The givenness statuses associated with (23a) and (24) should also differ accordingly.

6.3 “Foregrounding” in discourse as a low givenness indicator

Nomoto and Kartini (2014) do not address the issues pointed out above when they claim that *di-* passive verb phrases are low in givenness. Instead, they reinterpret Hopper’s (1983) notion of “foregrounding” as indicating low givenness.

Hopper studies discourse functions of three clause types in the Early Modern Malay text *Hikayat Abdullah*: ‘active’, ‘passive’ and ‘ergative’. Hopper’s active construction is the same as that in the present study. He argues that what is collectively referred to as the passive in the present study in fact consists of two distinct voices, though they share the same morphology (i.e. *di-* and proclitics) and are sometimes indistinguishable. The two constructions are distinguished by functional and formal criteria, of which he states the former is primary. In Hopper’s definition, the “passive” has the discourse function of backgrounding, and the theme noun phrase precedes the verb, as in (25). By contrast, the “ergative” foregrounds events, and the theme noun phrase follows the verb, as in (26). Clauses with a preverbal theme are not “passive” but “ergative” if (i) the theme is followed by the particle *pun* or *semua-nya* ‘all of them’, as in (26b), or (ii) it has a foregrounding function (e.g. part of an event sequence), as in the first clause of (26c).

(25) Hopper’s “passive”

- a. maka dua puncha kiri kanan itu di-matikan
 then two ends left right the PASS-knot
 ‘and the two ends to the right and left are knotted’ (Hopper 1983:71)

(26) Hopper’s “ergative”

- a. di-champakkan-nya puntong cherutu itu ka-dalam kapal
 PASS-throw.away-3 stub cheroot that into ship
 ‘and they threw away the stubs into the boat’
- b. Maka segala pengana itu pun di-bahagikan-lah ka-pada segala
 and all cakes the PUN PASS-distribute-PART to all
 budak-budak
 boy.PL
 ‘Then all the cakes were passed around to all the boys’
- c. maka duit itu di-ambil oleh ibu-bapa-nya, di-belikan-nya penganan
 then money the PASS-take by parents-his PASS-use.to.buy-3 cakes
 atau barang-barang makanan, di-makan-nya
 or things eating PASS-eat-3
 ‘Then his parents take the money and use it to buy cakes or other things to eat,
 and they eat them.’ (Hopper 1983:72–73)

He demonstrates the foregrounding and background difference between the two constructions by examining the Transitivity index of each of the 100 clauses (= 50 “ergative” + 50 “passive” clauses). Each clause is inspected as to whether it exhibits a positive (i.e. more Transitive) or negative value for the ten Transitivity parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The numbers of more Transitive clauses for 50 “ergative” and 50 “passive” clauses (adapted from Table 2 in Hopper 1983)

Parameter	“Ergative”	“Passive”	Difference
Kinesis	42	21	21
Punctuality	35	14	21
Aspect	44	24	20
Agent potency	44	24	20
Volitionality	44	30	14
Affected patient	32	20	12
Participants	45	34	11
Patient individuation	47	42	5
Polarity	49	45	4
Modality	45	41	4

From Table 2, it can be concluded that “ergative” clauses are more Transitive than “passive” clauses with respect to all Transitivity parameters, especially kinesis (action involving movement), punctuality (no discernible duration), aspect (telic) and agent potency (animate). Since high Transitivity reflects foregrounding in discourse in Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) Transitivity Theory, the high Transitivity of the “ergative” justifies Hopper’s definition of the construction as a foregrounding construction.

It must be noted here that Hopper treated all clauses with a preverbal theme as “passive” to guarantee the objectivity of the examination. Hence, Hopper’s “ergative” and “passive” data roughly correspond to verb-initial and theme-initial passives in the term of the present study. In short, verb-initial passives are more Transitive than theme-initial passives, and hence have a foregrounding function. I think that this statement about Early Modern Malay is also valid in Modern Malay, though it is not as evident as in Early Modern Malay due to the general scarcity of verb-initial passives. Although I do not find Hopper’s functional definitions and identification of voice categories very useful,¹³ his characterizations of verb-initial passives are worth quoting. He writes that a verb-initial passive clause “focuses purely on the event—the change—itsself” and “narrates sequenced events which pertain to the main line of the discourse” (Hopper 1983:84). Verb-initial passive clauses are used in the same way in Modern Malay, though they are limited to the literary genre and certain subordinate contexts.

Hopper states that the foregrounding function of verb-initial passive clauses is obliterated by the positioning of a noun phrase before the verb, which he analyses as “a device for arresting the flow of the discourse and holding up the action by momentarily focusing attention away from ACTIONS to PARTICIPANTS” (87). This quote indicates that by “foreground” Hopper means “require or draw attention of the addressee.” In terms of givenness, it is a denotation which is not already given enough in the address’s consciousness that requires his/her special attention. Hence, in verb-initial passive clauses, the verb is low in givenness.

If Nomoto and Kartini’s reasoning above is justified, the givenness of eventualities is correlates with (or possibly *is*) Transitivity, which is measured by factors such as telicity and affect- edness. The second last sentence of Hopper and Thompson’s Transitivity article is suggestive of this connection:

While we claim that the discourse distinction between foregrounding and back-

¹³See Kroeger (2014) for a critical review of functional definitions of voice categories in Malay/Indonesian.

grounding provides the key to understanding the grammatical and semantic facts we have been discussing, we also explicitly recognize that grounding itself reflects a deeper set of principles—relating to decisions which speakers make, on the basis of their assessment of their hearers’ situation, about how to present what they have to say. (Hopper and Thompson 1980:295)

It seems to me that the relevant “deeper set of principles” is in fact givenness. Givenness has to do with the speaker’s assessment of the addressee’s consciousness/attention state and knowledge with regard to a referent, which can be eventualities as well as individuals. Based on their assessment, speakers choose a form that encodes the most appropriate givenness status, e.g. *it* over *that* (English DPs), *di-* over \emptyset (Malay VoicePs).

7 Conclusion

This paper has reviewed and elaborated on Nomoto and Kartini’s (2014) analysis of the person restriction on the agent of *di-* passives in Malay. In doing so, I have made the following two main claims. First, the implicit agent *pro* involved in *di-* passives is not distinct from “ \emptyset NPs” in the Givenness Hierarchy: *pro*/ \emptyset is lexically low in givenness due to its unspecified nature and often interpreted as referring to a highly given referent, including speech act participants. Second, morphemes exist that encode givenness not only for noun phrases/individuals but also for verb phrases/eventualities. The paper has also discussed the issues concerning the givenness of eventualities. The discussion is still premature. Especially, more empirical work is necessary, to demonstrate the low givenness status of *di-* passive verb phrases in Modern Malay and the connection between givenness and Transitivity cross-linguistically.

Appendix. Referential and lexical givenness statuses, and the Givenness Hierarchy

Basically, Baumann and Reister’s (2012) referential givenness statuses (cf. Table 3) correspond to one of the coding criteria for the Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel et al. 2006), and hence match nicely with the Givenness Hierarchy, as shown in Figure 1 (Baumann and Riester 2012:143).¹⁴ This means that one can compare different statuses with respect to the degree of givenness: one status is more given than another.

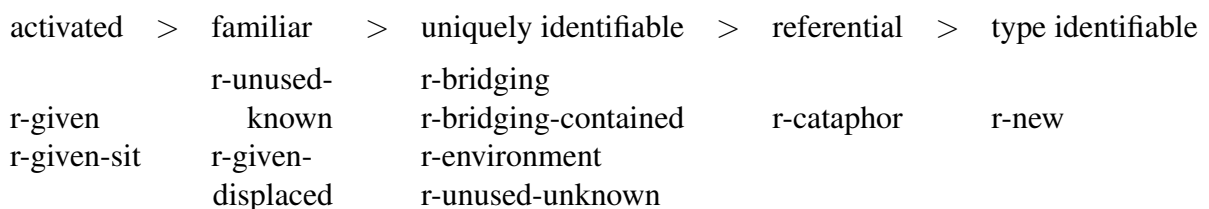


Figure 1: Referential givenness and the Givenness Hierarchy

¹⁴I omitted ‘r-generic’. Baumann and Riester align their ‘r-new’ with ‘referential’ in the Givenness Hierarchy. This is because they only discuss the middle four statuses available in the latter.

Table 3: Referential givenness (Baumann and Riester 2012:138)

r-given	anaphor corefers with antecedent in previous discourse
r-given-sit	referent is immediately present in text-external context (in particular discourse participants)
r-unused-known	discourse-new item which is generally known
r-given-displaced	coreferring antecedent does not occur in previous 5 intonation phrases or clauses
r-bridging	non-coreferring anaphor, dependent on previously introduced scenario
r-environment	refers to item in text-external context (conversational environment)
r-bridging-contained	bridging anaphor which is anchored to an embedded phrase
r-unused-unknown	discourse-new item which is identifiable from its linguistic description but not generally known
r-new	specific or existential indefinite introducing a new referent
r-cataphor	item whose referent is established later on in the text

Baumann and Reister’s lexical givenness statuses are summarized in Table 4.¹⁵ They discuss neither the relative degrees of givenness for these lexical givenness statuses nor their cognitive statuses, i.e. positions in the Givenness Hierarchy. However, it would be possible to rank these categories to each other, because I see parallelisms between the categories of referential and lexical givenness. To begin with, ‘l-given-same’ is obviously the lexical counterpart of ‘r-given’, and ‘l-new’ is that of ‘r-new’. The abstract relationship among referents underlying bridging inference involved in ‘r-bridging(-contained)’ is arguably identical to that holding between linguistic expressions (‘l-given-supr’, ‘l-accessible-sub’, ‘l-accessible-other’). Furthermore, ‘l-given-syn’ is comparable to ‘r-given-displaced’ in that both are pretty close to the highest givenness but do not quite reach it because they do not share the same phonetic form (sound) or attention span (time) with the antecedent. The preliminary ranking resulting from these parallelisms is: l-given-same > l-given-syn > l-given-supr, l-accessible-sub, l-accessible-other > l-new.

Table 4: Lexical givenness (Baumann and Riester 2012:144)

l-given-same	recurrence of same expression
l-given-syn	relation between expressions at the same hierarchical level (synonyms)
l-given-supr	expression is lexically superordinate to previous noun
l-accessible-sub	expression is lexically subordinate to previous noun
l-accessible-other	two related expressions, whose hierarchical lexical relation cannot be clearly determined
l-new	expression not related to another expression within last 5 intonation phrases or clauses

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¹⁵I substituted “expression” for “noun” in their article.

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