Typological perspectives on the nasal prefix

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What is the nasal prefix?

The focal point of this talk is the nasal prefix which occurs on verbs in a variety of languages in Indonesia. Below is example in Standard Indonesian:

Standard Indonesian (Dardjowidjojo 1978, Sneddon 1996, among others)

Syntactically active sentences morphologically mark the verb with the nasal prefix meN-.

(1) Anak itu **mem**-baca buku. child that **MEN-**read book 'The child is reading a book'

What is the nasal prefix?

This nasal prefix has received a multitude of different analyses over the years, with little consensus on its exact function. The most common analysis is that it is an **actor voice morpheme** (Voskuil 2000; Son and Cole 2004; Nomoto and Shoho 2007; Sneddon et al 2013), as many have noted it is in complementary distribution with the passive prefix *di-*.

Standard Indonesian (Dardjowidjojo 1978, Sneddon 1996, among others)					
(2)	Buku itu book that 'The book is w	di- tulis oleh PV -write by ritten by Fera'	Fera. Fera		
(2')	*Buku itu book that 'The book is w	di-men- ulis PV-MEN- write ritten by Fera'	oleh by	Fera. Fera	

What is the nasal prefix?

However, there have been numerous other analyses proposed for the nasal prefix, including:

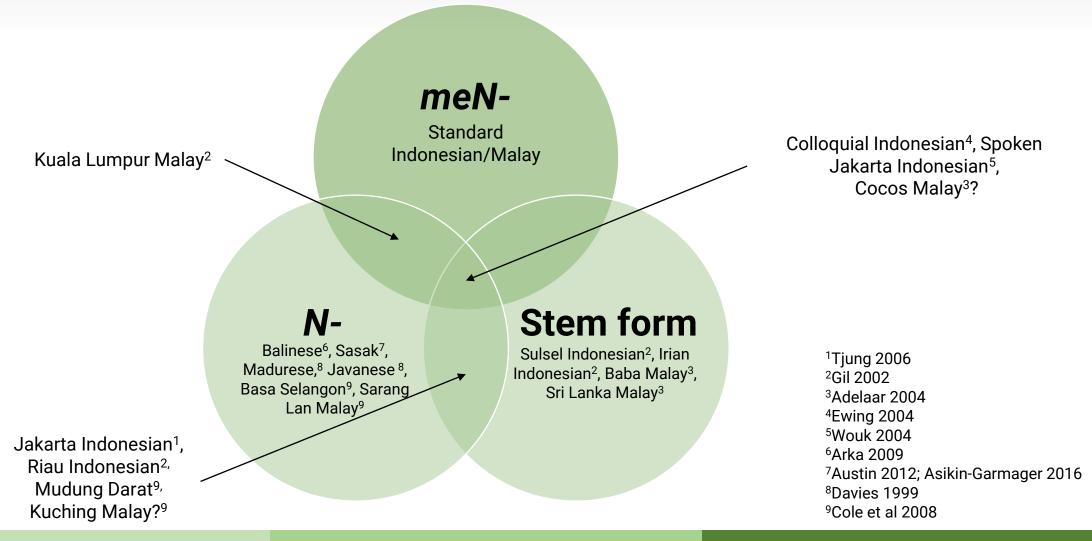
- ❖ a transitive marker (Chung 1976; Cole and Hermon 1998)
- ❖ an agentive marker (Wouk 1989; Gil 2002; Englebretson 2003)
- Case-marking the direct object (Guilfoyle et al 1992; Son and Cole 2004)
- ❖ an antipassive marker (Fortin 2006)
- ❖ having aspectual features (Soh and Nomoto 2009, 2010, 2015)

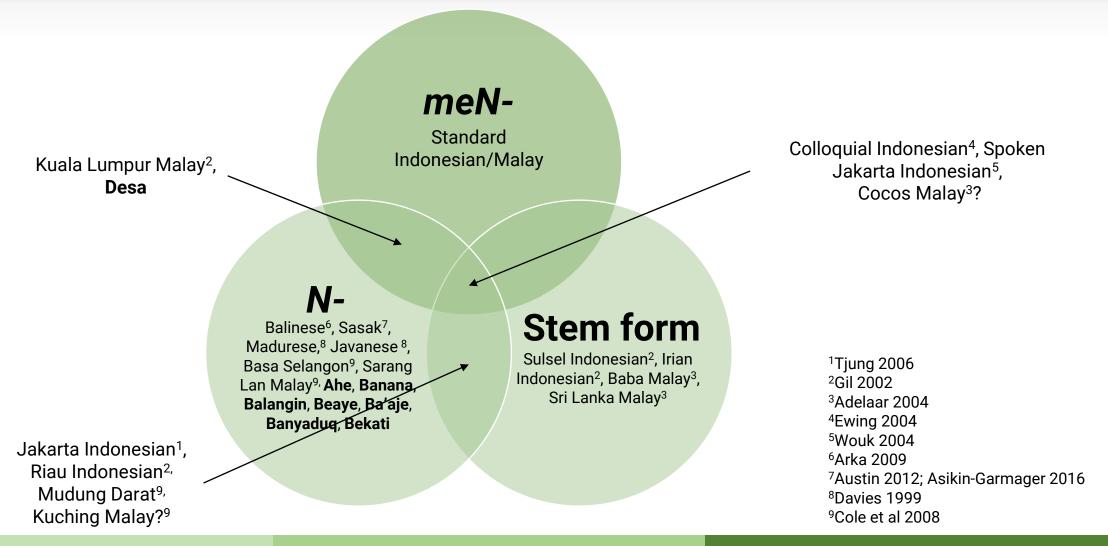
This talk:

I'd like to focus less on **what** the nasal prefix is, and more on **how it patterns** in the many languages of Indonesia. Much of the previous work has focused on its function in more widely-spoken languages (like Standard Indonesian and Malay); I'd like to advocate for a more typological approach, where analyses are built upon patterns among multiple languages, particularly those that are less studied.

I'm going to focus on how it patterns in **form and distribution** in **three** different sets of languages: a) varieties of Indonesian/Malay, b) closely related languages spoken in and around Java, and c) languages of West Kalimantan, Borneo.

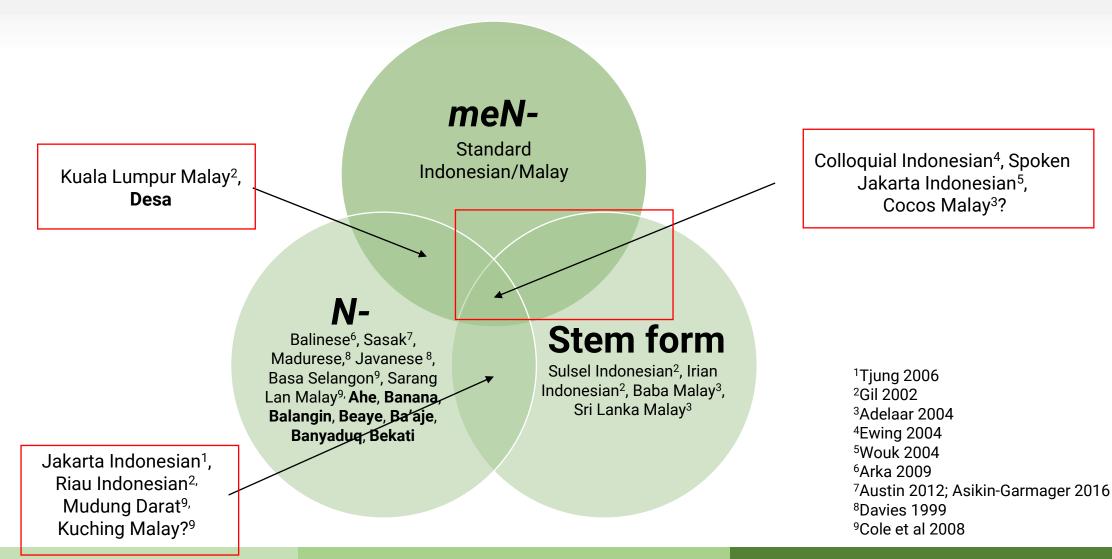
THE FORM OF THE PREFIX



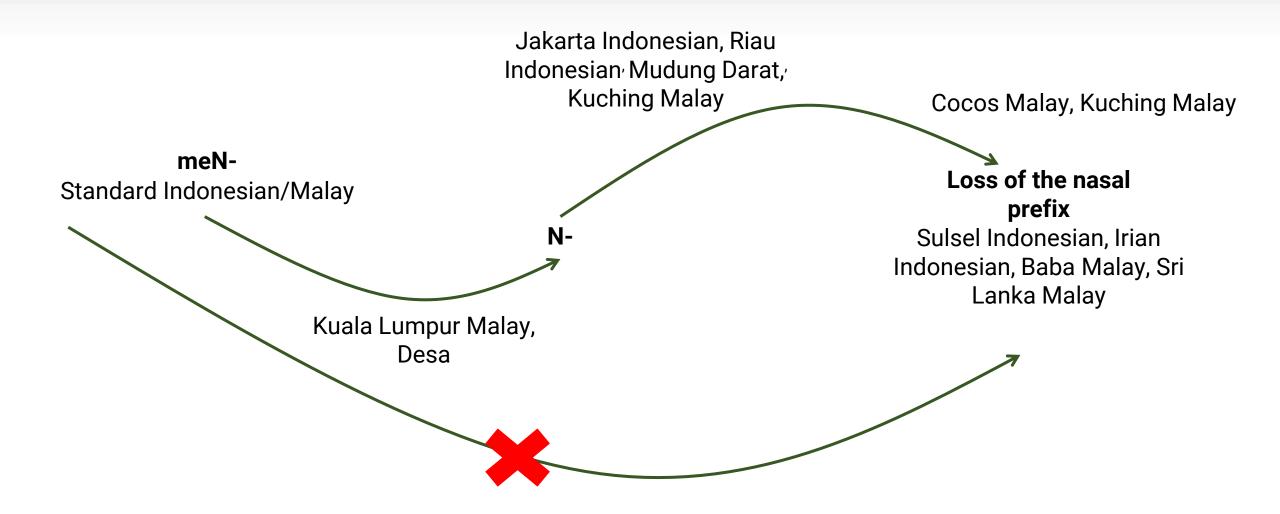


A summary of patterns and observations in the data:

- ❖It is more frequent for the nasal prefix to occur as N- than as meN-.
- ❖The usage of meN- exclusively is a feature of the standard variety and style.
- ❖ Several varieties of Indonesian/Malay have lost the nasal prefix entirely.
- Some languages/varieties have a nasal prefix that is used but not productively (Cocos Malay, Kuching Malay).
- ❖ Varieties of Indonesian/Malay vary the most in what it used, and whether or not it alternates.









Language	Other 'voice' affixes
Standard Indonesian/Malay	di-, ter-, ber-, -kan, -i, etc

N-

Balinese⁶, Sasak⁷, Madurese,⁸ Javanese ⁸, Basa Selangon⁹, Sarang Lan Malay⁹, **Ahe**, **Banana**, **Balangin**, **Beaye**, **Ba'aje**, **Ribun**, **Banyaduq**, **Bekati**

Language	Other 'voice' affixes
Balinese (Austin 2001; Arka 2009)	ka-, ma-, -ang, -in
Sasak (Austin 2001; Asikin- Garmager 2017)	te-, -ang, -in
Madurese (Davies 2005)	a-, e-, -agi, -e
Javanese (Vander Klok 2012)	di-, -i

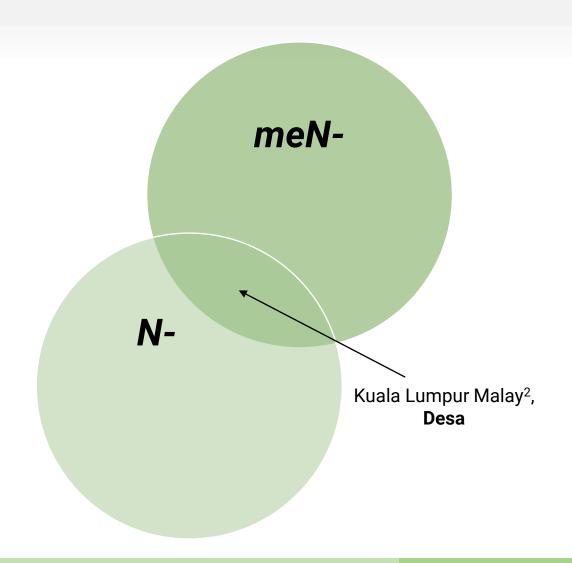
Language (Cole et al 2008)	Other 'voice' affixes
Basa Selangon	di-, *-kan
Sarang Lan Malay	di-, -i

N-

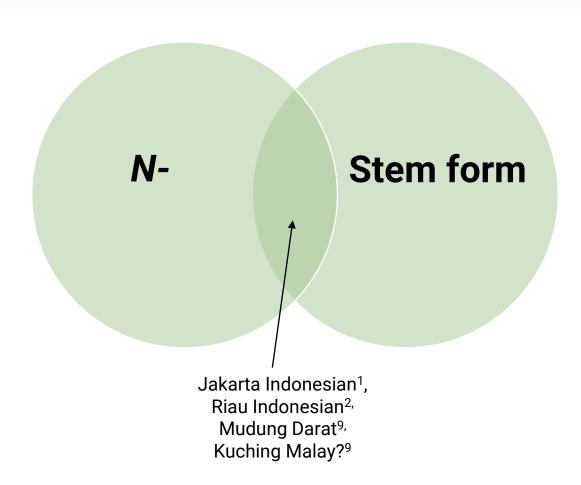
Balinese⁶, Sasak⁷, Madurese,⁸ Javanese ⁸, Basa Selangon⁹, Sarang Lan Malay^{9,} **Ahe, Banana**, **Balangin, Beaye, Ba'aje**, **Ribun, Banyaduq, Bekati**

Language	Other 'voice' affixes
Ahe	di-, ta-, ba-
Banana	di-, ta-, ba-
Balangin	di-, te-, ba-

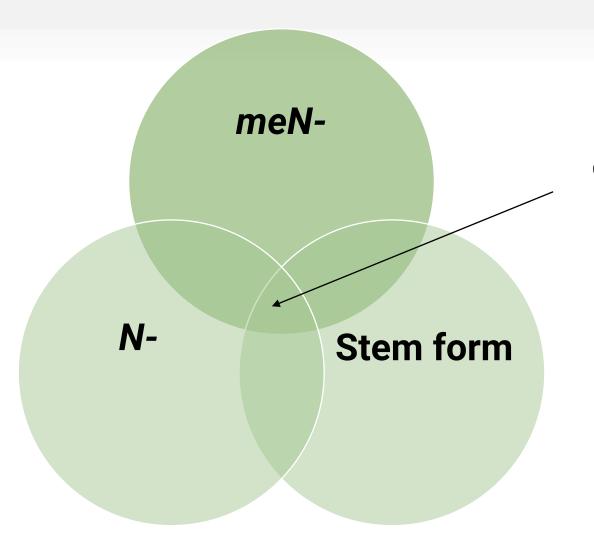
Language	Other 'voice' affixes	
Beaye	kunaq/kuniq, ta-	
Ba'aje	kanaq	
Banyaduq	katn, ta-	
Bekati	kan, te-	



Language	Other 'voice' affixes		
Kuala Lumpur Malay (Gil 2002)	*di-		
Desa	di-, ?-ken, be-, te-		



Language	Other 'voice' affixes
Jakarta Indonesian (Wouk 1989, 1999; Tjung 2006)	di-, -in (*-kan, *-i)
Riau Indonesian (Gil 2002)	di-, -kan
Mudung Darat (Cole et al 2008)	di-
Kuching Malay? (Cole et al 2008)	di-



Colloquial Indonesian⁴, Spoken Jakarta Indonesian⁵, Cocos Malay³?

Language	Other 'voice' affixes
Colloquial Indonesian (Ewing 2004)	di-, -kan, -i, -in
Spoken Jakarta Indonesian (Wouk 2004)	di-, -in
Cocos Malay? (Adelaar 2004)	di-, ber-, ter-, -kan

Language	Form of the prefix	Other affixes
SI / SM	meN-	di-, ter-, ber-, -kan, -i, etc
Balinese	N-	ka-, ma-, -ang, -in
Madurese	N-	a-, e-, -agi, -e
Sasak	N-	te-, -ang, -in
Javanese	N-	di-, -i
Ahe / B / B	N-	di-, ta-, ba-
LD languages	N-	UV, te-
Desa	meN- / N-	di-, ?-ken, be-, te-
Kuala Lumpur Malay	meN- / N-	*di-
Mudung Darat	N-/Ø	di-
Riau Indonesian	N-/Ø	di-, -kan
Jakarta Indonesian	(meN-) / N- / Ø	di-, -in (*-kan, *-i)
Colloquial Indonesian	meN- / N- / Ø	di-, -kan, -i, -in

A summary of patterns and observations in the data:

- ❖ Most varieties of Indonesian/Malay have lost at least some, if not several voice and valency morphemes (additionally noted by Gil 2002, Adelaar 2004, and others).
- ❖ Several varieties of Indonesian/Malay have lost the nasal prefix entirely (but have not lost other voice morphemes, like *di*-) (Gil 2002).
- ❖ Some varieties have combined multiple morphemes into one (JI -in instead of -kan and -i).
- ❖ Languages spoken in and around Java have significantly more voice and valency morphemes than languages spoken in West Kalimantan and more colloquial varieties of Indonesian/Malay.

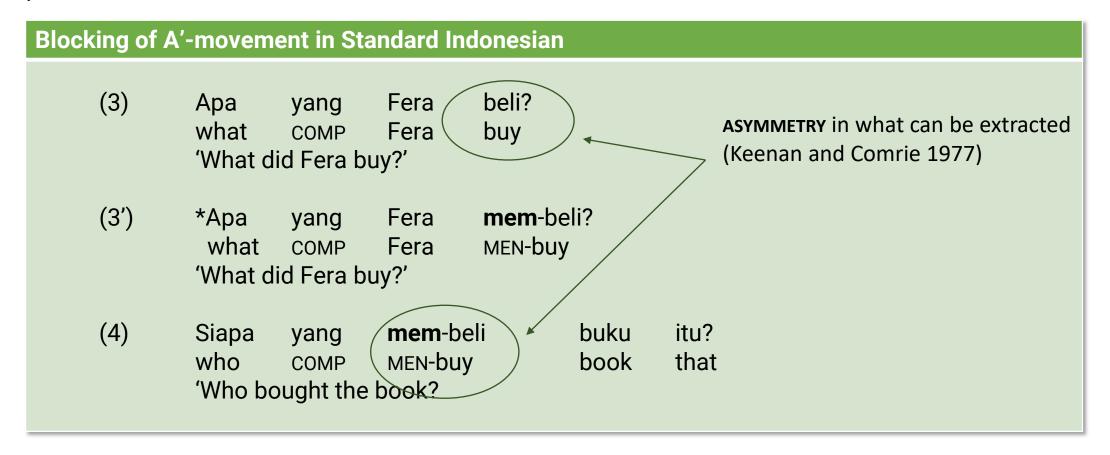
ITS DISTRIBUTION

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Most analyses of the nasal prefix have centered around one notable feature: its blocking effects. In formal theories, the nasal prefix is known to **block DP movement** over it.

Blocking of A'-movement in Standard Indonesian								
(3)	Apa what 'What d	yang COMP id Fera b	Fera Fera uy?'	beli? buy				
(3')	*Apa what 'What d	yang COMP id Fera b	Fera Fera uy?'	mem -be мем-buy				
(4)	Siapa who 'Who bo	yang COMP ought the	mem-be MEN-buy book?		buku book	itu? that		

Most analyses of the nasal prefix have centered around one notable feature: its blocking effects. In formal theories, the nasal prefix is known to **block DP movement** over it.

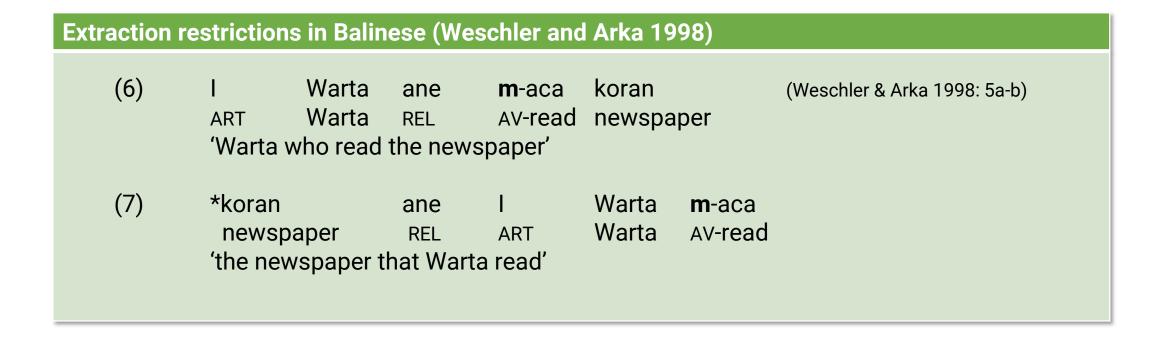


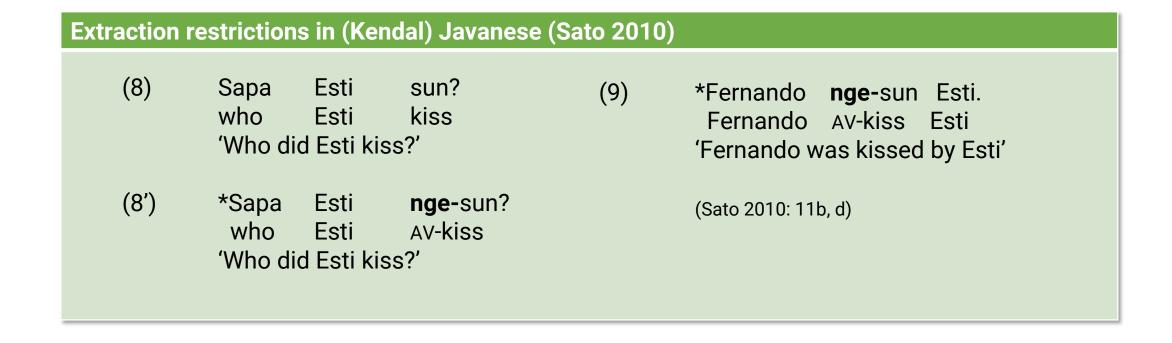
Additionally, meN- in Standard Indonesian **blocks A-movement** as well. This accounts for why neither type of undergoer voice (the di-passive or the object voice) can occur with a nasal prefixed verb.

Blocking of A-movement in Standard Indonesian (Cole and Hermon 1998; Nomoto 2008)

- (5) Buku itu dia baca. book that 3sg read 'S/he read the book'
- (5') *Buku itu dia **mem-**baca. book that 3sg AV-read 'S/he read the book'

Of the languages under discussion here, there are a few that mirror the distribution in extraction seen in Standard Indonesian. These are **Balinese**, (Kendal) Javanese, Madurese, Jakarta Indonesian, Sarang Lan Malay, Basa Selangon, and Mudung Darat.





Extraction r	estrictions in Madurese	(Davies 2010)	
(10)	buku se e-ba book REL OV-ro 'the book the students	ead RED-student	(Davies 2010: 132, 135)
(10')		mored m -aca student AV-read s read'	

Extraction restrictions in Jakarta Indonesian (Tjung 2006)							
(11)	Apa what 'What is	yang COMP s the child	anak child d reading'	itu that ?	baca? read	(Tjung 2006: 22a, 23a)	
(11')	*Apa what 'What i	yang COMP s the child	anak child d readingʻ	itu that ?	nge- baca? AV-read		

Extraction r	Extraction restrictions in Sarang Lan Malay (Cole et al 2008)							
(12)	Sapo who 'Who ha	neng COMP as my mo	la PFCT other pick	ma'ku mother-1 ted up?"	jompoti' sg pick.up-		(Cole et al 2008: 76a, 79c)	
(13)	*Sapo who 'Who di	neng COMP d John h	Joni John it in the n	_	di kalanga in market	n?		

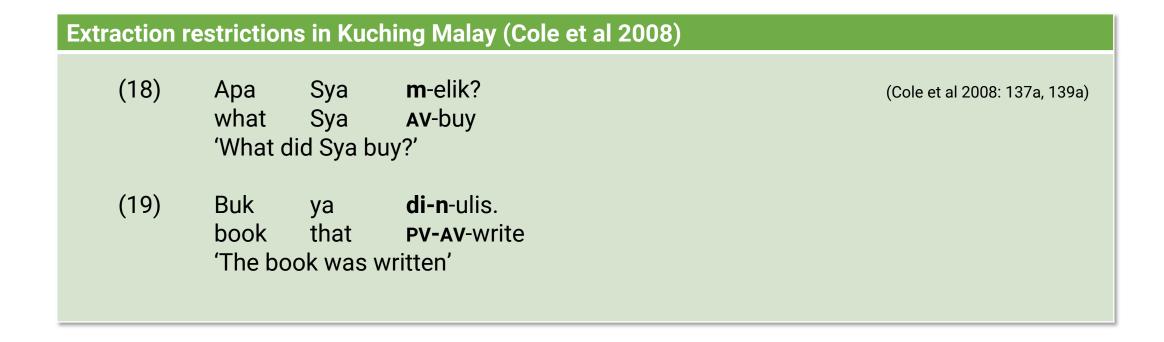
Extraction restrictions in Basa Selangon (Cole et al 2008)							
(14)	Purang nang Sitiy who COMP Siti 'Who did Siti pick up?'	jemput? pick.up?	(Cole et al 2008: 57, 60a)				
(14')	*Purang nang Sitiy who COMP Siti 'Who did Siti pick up?'	ny -emput? AV-pick.up?					

Extraction r	Extraction restrictions in Mudung Darat (Cole et al 2008)							
(15)	Apo what 'What c	nang COMP lid Siti bu	Siti Siti y in Jaka	bli buy arta?'	di in	Jakarta? Jakarta	(Cole et al 2008: 117b, 118b)	
(15')	*Apo what 'What c	nang COMP lid Siti bu	Siti Siti y in Jaka	m -li AV-buy arta?'	di in	Jakarta? Jakarta		

Of the languages under discussion here, there are a few that mirror the distribution in extraction seen in Standard Indonesian. These are Balinese, (Kendal) Javanese, Madurese, Jakarta Indonesian, Sarang Lan Malay, Basa Selangon, and Mudung Darat.

However, we additionally see some unexpected patterns in two of the languages: (Kutó-kuté) Sasak and Kuching Malay.

Extraction restrictions in (Kutó-kuté) Sasak (Asikin-Garmager 2017)							
(16)	Awan n-tulis surat-no. (Asikin-Garmager 2017: 6a-b) Awan AV-write letter-DEF 'Awan wrote the letter'						
(17)	Surat-no n -tulis isiq Awan. letter-DEF AV -write by Awan 'Awan wrote the letter'						



	A'-mo		
	Subject Extraction	Object Extraction	A-movement
Standard Indonesian	✓	X	X
Jakarta Indonesian	✓	X	X
Mudung Darat	✓	X	X
Basa Selangon	✓	X	X
Sarang Lan Malay	✓	X	X
Kuching Malay	✓	✓	✓
Balinese	✓	X	X
Javanese	✓	X	X
Madurese	✓	X	X
Sasak	✓	X(?)	✓

A'-movement **Subject Extraction Object Extraction A-movement** Standard Indonesian X Jakarta Indonesian Mudung Darat Basa Selangon Sarang Lan Malay **Kuching Malay** Balinese X Javanese Madurese X X(?) Sasak

N- has been grammaticalized

only present in one variety

Of the languages under discussion here, there are a few that mirror the distribution in extraction seen in Standard Indonesian. These are Balinese, (Kendal) Javanese, Madurese, Jakarta Indonesian, Sarang Lan Malay, Basa Selangon, and Mudung Darat.

However, we additionally see some unexpected patterns in two of the languages: (Kutó-kuté) Sasak and Kuching Malay.

To find more robust unexpected patterns, I now turn to Borneo. I'm going to begin with **Desa**, a Malayic language.

Desa alternates between meN- and N-, making it a largely unique case.

Nasal prefix alternation in Desa

Syntactically active sentences can take either meN- or N-.

- (20) Sidah **men**-anam bunga di taman. (meN- + tanam)
 - 3PL MEN-plant flower in field
 - 'They plant flowers in the field'
- (20') Sidah **n**-anam bunga di taman. (*N- + tanam*)
 - 3PL N-plant flower in field
 - 'They plant flowers in the field'

With meN-, Desa mirrors languages like Standard Indonesian: DP movement over the prefix is blocked.

Blocking effects o	f meN- iı	n Desa					
(21) Opai what 'What d	yang COMP id s/he b	inya 3sg uy?	boli? buy	(22) Kayu wood 'S/he is	inya 3sg bringin	bewaq. bring g wood'	
(21') *Opai what 'What o	yang COMP lid s/he k	inya 3sg ouy?	mem-oli? MEN-buy	(22') *Kayu wood 'S/he is	inya 3sg bringin	mem- ewaq. мем-bring g wood	

With N-, A-movement of a DP is still blocked. This restriction disappears with A'-movement, however.

Blocking effects of N- in Desa	a	
` , .	inya boli? (24) Kayu 3sg buy wood ? 'S/he is	inya bewaq. 3sg bring bringing wood'
, , , .	inya m -oli? (24') *Kayu 3sg n-buy wood ? 'S/he is	inya m- ewaq. 3sg N-bring s bringing wood

This has several potential implications:

- ❖It suggests that Desa has two nasal prefixes with two differing distributions. While it has been noted that some languages of Indonesia alternate between forms of the nasal prefix (Spoken Jakarta Indonesian, Colloquial Indonesian, Kuala Lumpur Malay), there has not been evidence that these are two distinct forms.
- ❖It could mean that meN- in Standard Indonesian was at one point compositional (me- + N-).
- ❖It highlights a distinction between A'-movement and A-movement.

Of the languages under discussion here, there are a few that mirror the distribution in extraction seen in Standard Indonesian. These are Balinese, (Kendal) Javanese, Madurese, Jakarta Indonesian, Sarang Lan Malay, Basa Selangon, and Mudung Darat.

However, we additionally see some unexpected patterns in two of the languages: (Kutó-kuté) Sasak and Kuching Malay.

To find more robust unexpected patterns, I now turn to Borneo. I'm going to begin with Desa, a Malayic language.

The last set of languages I will discuss are four **Land Dayak** languages of Borneo, which diverge even more.

The Land Dayak languages Beaye, Ba'aje, Banyaduq, and Bekati serve as the most divergent in the distribution of the nasal prefix. This is because *N*- occurs significantly more frequently in these four languages, in **both active and undergoer constructions**.

- ❖N- freely occurs with undergoer markers in all four languages.
- ❖The only construction that appears to actively reject the nasal prefix is the 'accidental' passive, which is marked by a variant of te-.

Furthermore, while these languages display an asymmetry in A'-movement extraction, it cannot be attributed to the nasal prefix blocking movement.

N- in Land Dayak active sentences						
(25) Belayuqu 3PL.I 'They picked mar	n -awoq AV-pick ny flowers'	uda many	bunga. flower	Beaye		
(26) Kitn n -akap 1sg.ı av-catch 'I catch two fish'				Bekati		
(27) Diri m -ura 1 _{PL.I} AV-plant 'We plant flowers		taman. field		Banyaduq		
(28) Kedn 1sg.ı 'I buy a shirt'	m -iri AV-buy	baju. shirt		Ba'aje		

N- in Land Dayak undergoer sentences							
(29) Dokter doctor 'The do	dah PFT ctor was	kuniq UV called'	n -aru. AV-call				Beaye
(30) Buah fruit 'I'll cut t	doh that the fruit'	atiq FUT	katn UV	kitn 1sg.i	ny -ataq. AV-cut		Bekati
(31) Ikan fish 'You se	kan UV e fish in t	mu 2sg.॥ he river'	n -ele AV-see	kaq in	sungi. river		Banyaduq
(32) Keranja basket 'My bas		kedn 1sg.i taken by y	kanaq UV 'ou'	n -ao AV-take		ko. 2sg.ı	Ba'aje

	A'-mo		
	Subject Extraction	Object Extraction	A-movement
Standard Indonesian	✓	X	X
Jakarta Indonesian	✓	X	X
Mudung Darat	✓	X	X
Basa Selangon	✓	X	X
Sarang Lan Malay	✓	X	X
Kuching Malay	✓	✓	✓
Balinese	✓	Х	X
Javanese	✓	X	X
Madurese	✓	X	X
Sasak	✓	X(?)	✓
Desa	✓	X	✓
Land Dayak languages	✓	Χ*	✓

To sum up:

- ❖The extraction pattern found in Standard Indonesian is reflected in several other related languages as well as in more colloquial varieties. However, we do see languages where it is not, and these languages can tell provide us with more information on the nasal prefix in general.
- ❖Looking at more languages, and languages that are not as closely related reveals even more divergence from the expected pattern, expanding upon the possible distribution of this prefix.
- ❖I argue that the Borneo data can be used to expand upon the formal analysis not just in languages of Borneo, but in Standard Indonesian and many of its related languages as well.

Insights from Desa

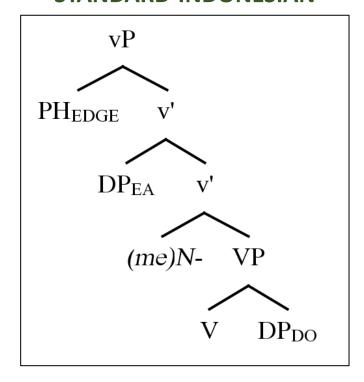
I am using the Desa data to propose a new account of the nasal prefix for both Desa and Standard Indonesian: I argue that the two separate prefixes in Desa represent **two separate functions in the syntax** that are bundled together in Standard Indonesian.

Crucially, I'm arguing that Desa has a **split-Voice projection** (Pylkkännen 2002; Harley 2017) while Standard Indonesian only has one verbal projection. The nasal prefix in Standard Indonesian has 'bundled' the functions that *me*- and *N*- have separately in Desa.

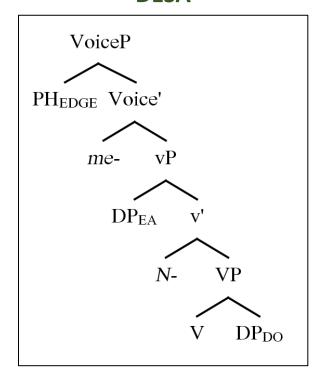
In Desa, I analyze me- as the voice morpheme, while N- introduces the external argument and assigns Accusative case. In Standard Indonesian, meN- has both of these functions on one head.

Insights from Desa

STANDARD INDONESIAN



DESA



Insights from Land Dayak languages

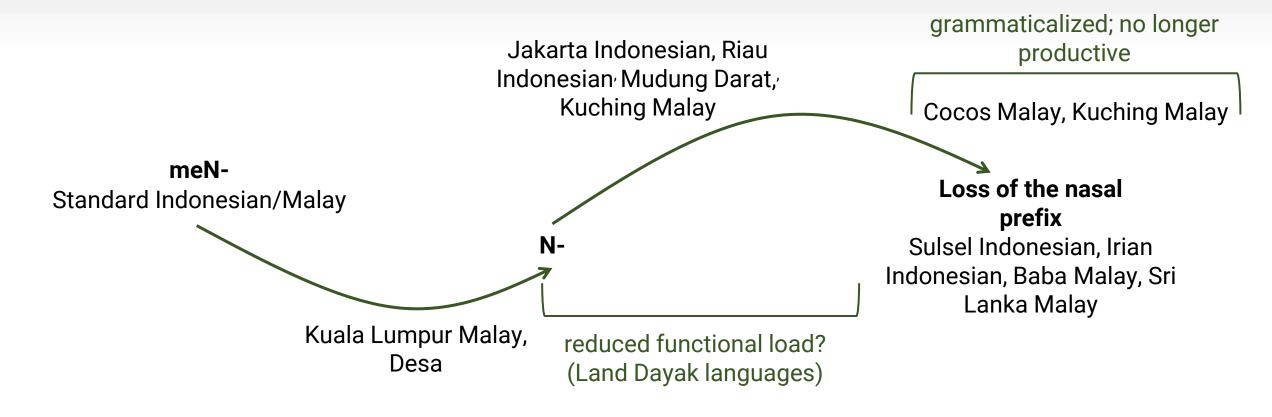
For the four Land Dayak languages I discussed here, I further argue that the nasal prefix present in these languages has a **reduced functional load**: it lacks the ability to assign Accusative case, but still introduces the external argument. This accounts for why it is able to occur in the undergoer voice when this is not possible in the other languages discussed.

Like Desa, in these languages this prefix is located in vP instead of VoiceP, which allows it to co-occur with undergoer voice markers like *kunaq*. This VoiceP projection is thus not present in active constructions.

CONCLUSION

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The form of the nasal prefix



Conclusion

Much of formal syntactic theory is based upon data and patterns that exist only in one language (and it is typically a more well-studied, widely-used language). For features like the nasal prefix that are prolific among related languages, this ignores a large portion of data.

Utilizing a larger set of languages instead allows for a more accurate analysis. This is particularly important in areas where many languages are understudied (like Indonesia).

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank:

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APPENDIX A: Ahe, Balangin, and Banana distribution facts

The syntactic distribution in Ahe, Balangin, and Banana is interesting as well. It has been noted that Kendayan-Salako languages allow the nasal prefix in the undergoer voice, like Land Dayak languages (Adelaar 2002, 2006).

N- in Kendayan-Salako undergoer constructions

- (A1) Padi di-**n**-aliq (gawe) nang laki na. *Banana*
 - rice PV-COMP-steal by person male that
 - 'The rice is stolen by a boy'
- (A2) Karusi koa dah kamuda koa **n**-ipaq. *Ahe*
 - chair that PST child that COMP-kick
 - 'The chair was kicked by the child'

APPENDIX A: Ahe, Balangin, and Banana distribution facts

Adelaar notes, and I discuss the same in Sommerlot (2020), that this nasal prefix clearly has aspectual features. It cannot co-occur with any sort of future marker / morpheme in any of the three languages.

N- marks completive as	pect				
(A3) *Awutn-ku friend-1sg.॥ 'My friend will be	di-m-ari PV-AV-giv given a b	e-FUT	buku. book		Ahe
(A4) *Makanan food 'Food will be sent	mau FUT t to Meliau	di-n-irim PV-NONCOMP-send u'	kaq to	Maliau. Meliau	Banana

APPENDIX A: Ahe, Balangin, and Banana distribution facts

I'm positing that this *N*- that occurs in these examples is **not** the nasal prefix under discussion here. Rather, Kendayan-Salako languages have a nasal prefix that occurs in syntactically active sentences like Standard Indonesian, but additionally has a nasal prefix that only occurs in the undergoer voice and has aspectual features.

I propose that this second nasal prefix, while homophonous, is historically derived not from PMP *mAN-(as argued for the voice morpheme) but rather is a shortened form of *ni*-, which a completive aspect marker found in undergoer voice in other languages of Borneo (like Begak, Goudswaard 2005).

This aspectual *N*- does not occur in the active voice. This accounts for why active sentences show no restriction with voice *N*-, unlike undergoer constructions.

APPENDIX B: More Desa distribution data

N- in extracti	on contex	ts in Des	a			
(B1)	Opai what 'What are	yang COMP they selling	sidah 3PL 1?'	ny -ual? N-sell		
(B2)	Opai what 'What is t	yang COMP he man holo	lelaki man ding?'	yen that	m -igang? n -hold	
(B3)	Buku book 'That boo	to, that k, my father	opaq-ku father-1sg bought'	m -oli. N-buy		
(B4)	Beiju shirt 'The shirt	yang COMP that s/he bo	inya 3sg ought is expe	tongah PROG ensive'	m- oli N-buy	mahal. expensive
(B5)	Tolong please 'Please ea	makan eat at the fruit tl	buah fruit nat I cut'	yang COMP	aku 1sg	n- ungkong. N-cut

APPENDIX C: Evidence for the function of N- in Desa

I argue that N- in Desa introduces the external argument and assigns Accusative case.

One piece of evidence for this comes from *N*-'s behavior with intransitives. *N*- does typically occur on unergatives, and when it does, it takes another prefix *be*- (likely suggesting that these are borrowings and not a productive application of the prefix). *N*- is ungrammatical on unaccusatives.

Unergatives	Unaccusatives
be-kejar 'run'	jetu 'fall' (*ny-etu)
be-jalan 'walk'	detang 'come' (*n-etang)
be-nyani 'sing'	tumbuh 'grow' (*n-umbuh)
be-nafas 'take a breath'	tidoq 'sleep' (*n-idoq)
be-diri 'stand'	roboh 'collapse' (*ny-oboh)

APPENDIX C: Evidence for the function of N- in Desa

There is one environment where N- can occur on an unaccusative, where it increases the valency.

```
N- with unaccusatives in Desa
   (C1) Inya
                  jetu.
                   fall
         3sg
         'S/he falls'
   (C2) Inya
                  ny-etu
                             pinang
                                       yen.
                   N-fall
         3sg
                                       that
                             cup
         'S/he drops the cup'
   (C3) Aku
                  tidoq.
         1sg
                   sleep
         'I sleep'
   (C4) Aku
                                       onaq bijaq
                             n-idoq
                   tauq
                                                           yen.
                             N-sleep
                                       child
         1sg
                                                           that
                   can
         'I can put the children to sleep'
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