

CONSTITUENT ORDER IN *di* CLAUSES IN MALAY NARRATIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that Malay¹ clauses characterised by the verbal prefix *di* (hereafter, *di* clauses) are a single construction, with P as “pivot”² (Foley & Van Valin 1984:153) or “trigger” (Wouk 1986:140), whether they are most naturally translated into English by an active or a passive (section 2). When P precedes the verb and the referent of A is a given major participant in the story, this indicates that P is a temporary local topic, whose domain typically does not extend beyond the sentence concerned. Under such circumstances, “action continuity” (Givón, ed. 1983:8) and “continuity of situation” (Levinsohn 1987:66) are not affected. In other words, the topicalisation of P neither interrupts the natural sequential order of the events being reported nor changes the overall spatiotemporal situation and cast of principal characters involved in those events (section 3). *di* clauses that imply such continuity and meet a further condition established in section 3 indeed “narrate sequenced events which pertain to the main line of discourse” (Hopper 1983:84). However, Hopper’s claim that *meN* clauses present background information can only be maintained for those independent *meN* clauses that are inherently transitive (section 4). (*meN* clauses are “active” clauses (Azhar Simin 1983:106) with A as pivot, in which the verb is prefixed with *meN*, the nasal being homorganic to, replacing, or being replaced by, the stem-initial consonant.³)

2. *di* CLAUSES ARE A SINGLE CONSTRUCTION

di clauses in Malay have traditionally been considered to be “passive” or *bangun kena buat* which, according to Azhar Simin (1983:47), “roughly means *to rise and be affected by an act*”. In particular, those *di* clauses in which P precedes the verb are instances of “object/patient topicalisation” (p.47), (hereafter ‘P-topicalisation’) and are naturally translated by the English passive. For example:

¹I use ‘Malay’ as a cover term for standard, written Malaysian represented by Baharin Ramly’s short story *Seorang Perempuan, Sungai dan Senjakala* ‘A woman, a river and dusk’ (Abdul Samad Said et al., eds 1980), for the less formal Malaysian represented by a fable about a hunter, a tiger and a monkey (examples (4), (8)), and for the Malay texts considered by Hopper (1979, 1982, 1983). Although there are considerable differences between these dialects, I consider the claims made in the paper to be applicable to all three.

²I follow the standard typological practice of using ‘A’ for Agent and ‘P’ for Patient to refer to the participants in a clause with two nuclear arguments. This avoids having to label P as the subject of a passive clause or the object of an active clause.

³Other verb prefixes include *ber* “middle/generic” (Hopper 1982:6) and *ter* “unintentional” (Wouk 1980:86).

- (1) (15.40)¹ "Makkkk!"
 "Mummy!"
- (16.41) *Panggilan itu di-iringi hentakan kaki.*
 call the DI-follow.on stamp foot
 THE CALL was followed by the stamp of feet.

However, *di* clauses in which P does not precede the verb do not behave like English passive constructions (Asmah Haji Omar et al. 1978:46). For example:

- (2) (106.285) *Di-capai-nya dayung, lalu di-angkat-nya*
 DI-snatch-3SG oar pass DI-lift-3SG
tinggi-tinggi, sebelum di-hempaskan-nya
 high-high before DI-throw.down-3SG
dengan kuat-kuat ke permukaan air.
 with strong-strong to surface water

Azhar Simin translates this "She reached for the paddle, then she lifted it up high, before she flung it with all her might to the surface of the water." (1983:316f.). (The passive equivalent – 'The oar was snatched up by her, then it was lifted up high by her...' – is unsatisfactory even when the references to A are omitted.)

Hopper regards such verb-initial-*di* clauses as "narrative ergatives" (1979:231f.) and argues (1983:71) that the passive and ergative constructions should be distinguished:

Fundamentally the passive is distinguished from the ergative in two ways: 1. The patient NP precedes the verb...2. The discourse role of the passive is a BACKGROUNDING one.

Hopper further shows that, when the two constructions are compared using the parameters listed in Hopper and Thompson (1980) to measure the degree of discourse transitivity of clauses, passives are significantly less transitive than ergatives. In particular, passive constructions in Malay tend not to predicate any action or motion (*kinesis*), be punctual or be endpoint-oriented. Quite often, in addition, no agent is specified (Hopper & Thompson 1980:78). For the purposes of this paper, I therefore treat the degree of discourse transitivity as a third potential feature to distinguish passive constructions from ergatives.

I now consider these three features in turn, and show that in fact none of them is sufficient to warrant separating passive *di* clauses from ergative ones.

Hopper himself disposes of the first distinguishing feature when he admits that P does precede the verb in some constructions he identifies as "ergative". He accepts that such clauses are "formally indistinguishable from a passive", but notes that "the patient is highly topical and anaphoric" (Hopper 1983:73). Example (3) below, which Azhar Simin (1983:321) considers to be an event clause (foreground), and which he translates into English with an active construction, illustrates what Hopper has in mind:

¹References are to Azhar Simin's numbering of the paragraphs (e.g. 15) and sentences (e.g. 40) of Baharin Ramly's short story. If a third number occurs (e.g. in 111.308.1), this refers to a clause. Free translations into English may be Azhar Simin's or my own. References to P are given in upper case in the free translations.

- (3) (111.308) ...she poured the kerosene on to the floor of the boat, from the stern to the bow, till the bottle was empty.
- (309) *Botol itu lalu di-himbau-nya ke tengah sungai.*
 bottle the pass *DI*-throw-3SG to middle river
 THE BOTTLE she then tossed to the middle of the river.
- (310) She drew out a match from the fold of cloth around her waist...

Hopper is therefore replacing his first distinguishing feature by one which states that, whereas P always precedes the verb in passive constructions, in ergative constructions in which P precedes the verb the patient must be highly topical and anaphoric. However, this condition is still not sufficient to distinguish passive *di* clauses from ergative ones, as (4) demonstrates. This example meets Hopper's conditions for ergative constructions in which P precedes the verb, since the hunter (P) is highly topical and anaphoric, having featured in the immediately preceding clause. Furthermore, A is a given third person participant referred to by the verb suffix *nya*, and the clause is most naturally translated by an English active. However, the presence of the auxiliary *hendak* 'want' indicates that in reality it is background information:

- (4) a. Suddenly the tiger came pouncing on the hunter.
- b. *Pemburu itu hendak di-bunuh-nya.*
 hunter the want *DI*-kill-3SG
 It was wanting to kill THE HUNTER.
- c. "Help; don't kill me!" said the hunter.

Actually, P does not have to be identical with any element of the last clause to precede the verb in Hopper's "ergative" constructions. Azhar Simin interprets both (5) and (6) as event clauses. Yet in (5) the relationship with an element of the last sentence is 'part-whole', while in (6) it is a possessed-possessor relationship:

- (5) (110.307) ...she hurriedly went to the stern to get the bottle of kerosene.
- (308.1) *Tudung botol di-rentap keluar,*
 cover bottle *DI*-pull out
 She jerked the BOTTLE CAP off,
- (308.2) then...she poured (*di-jirus-nya*) THE KEROSENE on to the floor, from the stern to the bow, till the bottle was empty.
- (6) (108.298) The boat did not move.
- (299) *Nafas-nya di-hela panjang.*
 breath-3SG *DI*-pull long
 She took a deep BREATH.

In fact, as befits topicalised elements, preverbal Ps in *di* clauses are always anaphoric, whether their referent is a nominal element (3) or a verbal element (1), whether they are in a part-whole relationship (5), in a possessed-possessor relationship (6) or even contrast with a corresponding element of the previous sentence ("contrastive coherence" – Werth 1984:87).

Hopper can therefore not distinguish "ergative" from "passive" *di* constructions on the basis either of the position of P vis-à-vis the verb or of the topical and anaphoric status of P. Neither can he

separate them on the basis of his second feature, that “passive” constructions are backgrounded whereas “ergative” constructions are foregrounded.

Sentence b of (4) illustrates Hopper's “ergative” construction being used to present background information. Example (7) shows that his “passive” can be used to present foreground information. In this example, P is again the central character of the story (the same woman who featured in examples (2), (3), (5) and (6)). This time, however, she is the ‘patient’, so Hopper's “passive” is the appropriate construction to use:

- (7) (67.201.1) She came to a stop,
 (201.2) *dan dengan mudah saja dia di-tangkap oleh*
 and with ease just 3SG DI-catch by
mereka yang ghairahkan puji-pujian.
 3PL who hope.for praises
 and SHE was easily apprehended by those who look for praise.
 (202) Wan, who had been working there for some time, approached her,
 condemning her...
 (206.1) *Dia kemudian-nya di-bawa ke muka pengadilan,*
 3SG then-3SG DI-bring to face justice
 SHE was then brought before the authorities,
 (206.2) *di-bicarakan tanpa pembelaan dari sesiapa.*
 DI-bring.to.court without legal.help from anyone
 being brought to court without legal help from anyone.
 (207) *Dia di-hukum.*
 3SG DI-judge
 SHE was convicted.

Hopper's “ergative” and “passive” *di* constructions can therefore not be distinguished on the basis of grounding.

As to the third distinguishing feature identified earlier, there is no doubt that *di* clauses with preverbal P will *on average* be significantly less transitive than those with postverbal P. This is because, to make a background comment about P as topic in the body of a narrative, Malay does topicalise the reference to P; cf. sentence d of the following passage taken from the same text as example (4):

- (8) a. Suddenly, a monkey came towards the hunter.
 b. The monkey was giving its baby a drink.
 c. The drink (was) in a bottle.
 d. *Botol berisi susu itu telah di-curi oleh kera*
 bottle containing milk the PAST DI-steal by monkey
dari sebuah rumah.
 from a house
 THE BOTTLE CONTAINING MILK had been stolen by the monkey from a house.
 e. “Hey, monkey, give me that milk...” said the hunter.

In contrast, as Cumming has observed (1986:103), the use of a *di* clause with postverbal P in narrative reflects continuity of action and situation (as defined in the introduction to this paper). However, individual P-topicalised clauses can be very high in transitivity (cf. (7) above). Conversely, individual *di* clauses with postverbal P can be quite low in transitivity:

- (9) (49.130-1) There are two ways to face trouble which is brought on (you) by someone else; first, a gentle way; second, a hard way.
- (132.1) If the first way is not successful,
- (132.2) *harus-lah di-gunakan cara kedua.*
 proper-EMP *DI*-use way second
 it is proper to use the SECOND WAY.

I therefore conclude that Hopper can find no grounds for distinguishing “ergative” and “passive” *di* constructions. Rather, all *di* clauses are examples of the same construction. In Foley and Van Valin's terms (1984:153), P is the pivot in all *di* clauses (cf. Thomas 1980:65). Topicalised Ps are then both (clause-internal) pivots, and topics in an anaphoric relationship to their context.

3. P-TOPICALISATION IN *di* CLAUSES

I now show that, in P-topicalised clauses, the domain over which P may continue as topic is affected by the information contained in the rest of the sentence, in particular the status of A. If A is a ‘given’ participant, that is one who has appeared in the recent context (for example a third person participant referred to by the verbal suffix *nya*), the effect of placing P before the verb is to mark it as a temporary “local” topic (Grimes 1975:103), which will not play a part in the ongoing story. Such a restriction does not apply to *di* clauses in which P follows the verb (discussed below). Nor does it apply to P-topicalised *di* clauses which are agentless (Bambang Kaswanti Purwo 1988) or in which A is new to the scene (that is, in which A is not a given participant). In such clauses, the topicalisation of P may well establish it as the topic for several sentences.

Continuity of action and situation (cf. Introduction) is typically maintained in connection with *di* clauses in which P follows the verb (Cumming 1986:103). I show that, in addition, it is typically maintained also in connection with P-topicalised *di* clauses in which P is a temporary ‘local’ topic, the only reservation being that the P-topicalised element does not feature in the ongoing story.¹

The claims made in this section concerning the position of P, the discourse status of A, and the implications for continuity of action and situation, are summarised in the following table:

P	A	Implications for continuity
preverb	none/new to scene	P = topic: domain not indicated
preverb	‘given’ participant	P = topic: domain very limited continuity maintained
postverb	(not significant)	continuity maintained

To facilitate the comparison between *di* clauses with P preceding and following the verb, I restrict my discussion to the 42 clauses in Baharin Ramly's story which meet the following conditions:

¹In *di* clauses which present explanations in a narrative, it is not necessary to require that a preverbal P not feature in the ongoing story. Rather, such a P is a temporary local topic because it is the topic only of the explanation; cf. example (8), for instance, in which “the bottle containing milk” is the topic only of the explanation (sentence d), even though it features in the ongoing narrative (e.g. sentence e).

1. the event narrated in the *di* clause meets Givón's (1983:8) "action continuity" condition: it is "in natural sequential order" with the last event presented and "there is small if any temporal gap" between the events described;
2. A (whether expressed by *nya* or only implied) is the central character of the story (the woman or a given participant).

In 13 of these 42 clauses, P precedes the verb. In the other 29 cases, P either follows the verb or is implicit, having been stated in the immediately previous clause (cf., for example, the second and third clauses of (2)).

On the 13 occasions in which P precedes the verb and may be considered to be the topic of the clause, the domain of the topic does not extend beyond the sentence concerned.¹ In 12 of the 13 examples, P is not mentioned again for at least 20 clauses (the arbitrary figure adopted by Givón (1983:13) before he discontinued scanning for a referent). More significantly, in no case is it even implied that P is involved in the ongoing story. This is illustrated in (10) – 111.308.1 and 309 contain preverbal Ps which have no further part to play in the story.

- (10) (110.307) ...she hurriedly went to the stern to get the bottle of kerosene.
- (111.308.1) *Tudung botol di-rentap keluar,*
cover bottle *DI*-pull out
She jerked the BOTTLE CAP off,
- (308.2) *kemudian...di-jirus-nya minyak tanah itu ke atas lantai*
then *DI*-pour-3SG oil earth the to top floor
then...she poured THE KEROSENE on to the floor (of the boat)
- (308.3) from the stern to the bow, till the bottle was empty.
- (309) *Botol itu lalu di-himbau-nya ke tengah sungai.*
bottle the pass *DI*-throw-3SG to middle river
THE BOTTLE she then tossed to the middle of the river.
- (310) *Di-keluarkan-nya mancis dari belitan kain*
DI-bring.out-3SG match from fold cloth
di pinggan-nya, lalu di-nyalakan.
at waist-3SG pass *DI*-light
She drew out a MATCH from the fold of cloth around her waist, then lit (IT).
- (311) *Di-campak-nya ke lantai perahu.*
DI-throw-3SG to floor boat
She threw (IT) to the floor of the boat.
- (312) Fire leapt up.

¹The maximum observed domain of a temporary local topic is a 'sentence complex'. A sentence complex consists of a pair of sentences which are closely associated together, such as a stimulus-response pair in which the second sentence, associated with the first by *pun* 'also', is the natural response to the first. In the non-literary text, the monkey gives some milk (preverbal P) to the hunter. In response to this stimulus, the hunter *pun* drinks that milk. The milk plays no part in the ongoing story, in which the hunter decides to kill the monkey. Compare the use of Timugon Murut *poyo* 'also' (Brewis & Levinsohn forthcoming, section 3); cf. also Rafferty (1987:372) on *pun* with "a switch reference function returning an NP to S position".

In both 308.1 and 309 above, the preverbal Ps (bottle cap, bottle), once disposed of, never feature again in the story, which concerns the stages involved in setting fire to the boat. (In contrast, in 308.2 and 310 the postverbal Ps (kerosene, match) are inherently involved in the outworking of the events. Fire is produced by the match igniting the kerosene.)

On one occasion, a further reference to P is found after 8 clauses. Until the object concerned (an oar) is next mentioned, however, it has no part to play in the ongoing drama. A free translation of the rest of the passage follows the sentence concerned:

- (11) (104.279.1) *Dayung di-cebak lagi.*
 oar *DI*-plunge again
 The OAR was plunged in again.

The boat shot away, and suddenly it rammed into a cluster of *nipah* palm.
 "Damn!" She hurried to the bow of the boat. She angrily kicked the *nipah* stalk which was leaning to the side. The boat moved back a little. She returned to the stern. She reached for the OAR...

When P follows the verb in *di* clauses, P by definition is not topicalised. Consequently, as befits the unmarked case, I make no claim about the domain of P. It is noteworthy, however, that, in 19 out of the 29 cases in which P follows the verb or is implicit, P features again within 5 clauses, for example in (10) 308.2 (kerosene), 310 and 311 (match).

The position of P, in *di* clauses in which A is a given participant who has appeared in the recent context, is therefore significant.

I return now to *di* clauses in which P precedes the verb. In the examples so far considered in this section, A has been a given participant. It is precisely the fact that A *is* a given participant that indicates that P as topic has a very local domain. In those clauses excluded from discussion in the first part of this section because A was a participant who was new to the scene or because the clause was agentless, P may be the topic over several sentences. In (7), for instance, P was the central character of the story, who continued in a non-active role for three paragraphs of the written text. The A referent in sentence 201.2 had not featured previously in the story.

I therefore conclude that, whereas any P preceding the verb in a *di* clause is the topic of that clause, subsequent reference in the clause to a given participant as A has the effect of indicating that the domain of that topic is very limited. Typically, in such situations, continuity of action and situation is maintained. Such continuity is also maintained in *di* clauses in which P follows the verb, that is in clauses in which no constituent has been topicalised. This explains why Hopper wishes to classify some P-topicalised *di* clauses with his other "narrative ergative" constructions.

4. *meN* AND *di* CLAUSES

I now show that Hopper's (1979:230-233) identification of *meN* with backgrounding and of *di* with foregrounding is too strong. The identification does not hold for juxtaposed and subordinate clauses (section 3.1). Nor does it hold for *meN* clauses which are inherently intransitive (Payne 1985), that is in which only one core argument may occur (section 3.2). Hopper's identification of *meN* and *di* with backgrounding and foregrounding respectively only holds for independent *meN* clauses that are inherently transitive (with two core arguments), and for independent *di* clauses that meet certain conditions (section 3.3).

4.1 *meN* AND *di* IN JUXTAPOSED AND SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

When a clause containing *meN* or *di* is juxtaposed or subordinated to an immediately preceding clause, the pivot of the second clause is supplied by the previous one, and is not restated in the second clause. The prefix selected for the second clause depends entirely on whether this pivot is A or P in the clause.

Hopper (1983:80) points out that “the distinction ‘main clause – subordinate clause’ is not easy to make in Malay”. For this reason I consider in this section only those clauses which, in Baharin Ramly’s written text, are attached to a previous clause in the same sentence, and in which no nuclear argument precedes the verb. Such clauses may be juxtaposed to the previous clause (typically translated into English by a participial or infinitival clause). Alternatively, they may be introduced by the relative *yang*, or by a conjunction such as *bagai* ‘sort, kind, as if’. I consider conjunctions like *dan* ‘and’, *hingga* ‘till’, *kemudian* ‘then’, *lalu* ‘pass, then’, *malah* ‘but’ and *sedang* ‘middle, while’ to be coordinative, as they permit a core argument to precede the verb.

Example (12) illustrates a *meN* clause in which the pivot, “its bow”, is supplied by the previous clause and is A in the juxtaposed clause.

- (12) (107.291) *Haluan-nya terbanam sedikit, mem-belah tebing.*
 bow-3SG become.immersed a.little *MEN*-split bank
 Its bow became immersed a little, [the bow:A] breaching the bank.

(See sentence 206.2 of (7) for a *di* clause in which the pivot, “she”, is supplied by the previous clause and is P in the juxtaposed clause.)

Examples (13) and (14) illustrate *meN* and *di* clauses introduced by the relative *yang*, in which the pivot is supplied by the previous clause. They are A and P respectively in the subordinated clause.

- (13) (76.223) *Di-lemparkan-nya pandangan-nya jauh-jauh...*
DI-throw-3SG observation-3SG far-far
ke asap yang meng-epul naik...
 to smoke which *MEN*-thick up
 She concentrated her gaze far away...on the smoke which was billowing up...
- (14) (49.130.3) *Ada dua cara meng-hadapi kesulitan yang*
 exist two way *MEN*-face trouble which
di-timpakan oleh orang lain.
DI-bring-down by person other
 There are two ways to face trouble which is brought on (you) by someone else.

4.2 *meN* IN INHERENTLY INTRANSITIVE CLAUSES

In modern standard Malaysian the foreground-background distinction is neutralised for intransitive clauses, because a choice between *di* and *meN* is not available to the author.¹ For this reason, it is

¹On one occasion Baharin Ramly uses *di* in a clause which appears to be intransitive:

not uncommon for inherently intransitive *meN* clauses to be used to narrate main-line events in natural sequential order. For example, the end of Baharin Ramly's story (example (15) below) describes the woman setting fire to the boat. The inherently transitive clauses in which she is A employ *di* (sentences 308-11). The following clauses, which are inherently intransitive, employ *meN* (sentences 312ff.), and no further independent *di* clause occurs in the story! I do not consider it reasonable to claim that the main events of the story terminate with sentence 311 and that the rest of the episode presents backgrounded information!¹

For brevity, I provide a free translation of the passage, with only the independent verbs in Malay.

- (15) (111.308) The cap she pulled (*di-rentap*) out, then with hands that were trembling she poured (*di-jirus-nya*) the kerosene onto the floor of the boat, from the stern to the bow, till the bottle was empty.
- (309) The bottle she then tossed (*di-himbau-nya*) to the middle of the river.
- (310) She drew out (*di-keluarkan-nya*) a match from the fold of cloth around her waist, then lit (*di-nyalakan*) it.
- (311) She threw (*di-campak-nya*) it to the floor of the boat.
- (312) Fire leapt up (*meny-ambar*).
- (313) With a shaking body she leapt (*me-lompat*) to the bank.
- (112.314-5) The fire spread (*mem-besar*), leaping up...
- (317) Smoke was billowing (*meng-epul-meng-epul*) like the smoke that came out from the (factory) chimney...

(Azhar Simin (1983:262f.) calls sentence 317 the "coda" of the story as it describes the final irony of the smoke from the burning fishing boat looking like the smoke from the factory which had destroyed the fish by its pollution.)

4.3 *meN* AND *di* IN INDEPENDENT, INHERENTLY TRANSITIVE CLAUSES

When a clause is both independent and inherently transitive, the author may choose between *di* and *meN*. In such circumstances, Hopper's (1979:230-233) identification of *di* with foregrounding and *meN* with backgrounding is valid, provided the *di* clauses fulfil two conditions:

1. the position of P and the discourse status of A imply continuity of action and situation (cf. the table at the beginning of section 2);

Imah tersentak. Di-toleh-nya ke dalam gubuk.
 (name) jerked-involuntarily DI-look.back-3SG to inside shack
 Imah jerked involuntarily. She turned (her head) to (look) into the shack. (16.42-43)

I have no explanation for this example, which would be ungrammatical in Indonesian.

¹Azhar Simin employs Grimes's (1975) system of classifying information into "events" and various types of "non-events". He classifies sentences 111.308-311, 313 as events, but sentences 312, 314, 315, 317 as background, which he claims is "information that elaborate and explain what is happening in the narrative" (Azhar Simin 1983:90). This distinction appears to be made on the grounds that the actor in the first group of sentences is animate, whereas the subject of the second group is inanimate (fire, smoke). However, the narrative largely concerns the interaction of a single animate participant with inanimate elements, and Grimes (1975:43) makes it clear that participants may be inanimate. I therefore do not follow Azhar Simin's treatment of the above sentences as background.

2. the *di* clause itself meets Givón's action continuity condition that the event it narrates be in natural sequential order with the last event presented. (This condition is required to exclude cases like sentence b of (4).)

In the basically narrative section of Baharin Ramly's story analysed by Azhar Simin, only six inherently transitive independent *meN* clauses are found, over against twenty-two independent *di* clauses. Furthermore, four of the six *meN* clauses occur as the first clauses of paragraphs in the written text and are readily interpreted as presenting the "introductory events in an episode" (Hopper 1983:79; cf. Azhar Simin 1983:113). Such events may be viewed as background with respect to the main events of the episode. Sentence 103.272 of (16) below provides an example.

The other two instances of inherently transitive independent *meN* clauses, both of which also occur in (16) (sentences 275, 277), may also be interpreted as background. The main events of the episode concern the woman rowing the boat, first slowly (preoccupied with the polluted state of the river, sentence 276), then quickly (sentence 278), culminating in the boat becoming snared (sentence 279.3). Sentences 272-75 appear to set the scene for these events, while sentence 277 describes the woman's repeated reaction to her observation in sentence 276:

- (16) (103.272) She paddled (*meng-ayuh*) the boat to the middle of the river.
 (273) The wind blew (*ber-hembus*).
 (274) Swallows flew about (*ber-terbangan*)...
 (275) On the horizon, the sun sent out (*meng-hantarkan*) its rays...
 (104.276) She rowed (*di-dayung-nya*) the boat slowly, while her eyes were absorbed, seeing the undulating, oily, rippling water.
 (277) With a heart that felt as if it were being sliced, she kept hurriedly running (*me-larikan*) her eyes to the bank of the river.
 (278) Quickly now she rowed (*di-dayung-nya*) the boat, while stopping from time to time to wipe off her sweat.
 (279.1) The oar was plunged (*di-cebak*) again.
 (279.2-3) The boat shot away (*me-luncur*), and suddenly it rammed (*ter-dorong*) into a cluster of *nipah* palm.

Unlike inherently transitive *meN* clauses, those *di* clauses that fulfil the conditions stated at the beginning of this section consistently present the foreground events that build on actions described using such prefixes as *meN* (cf. Azhar Simin 1983:127), for example sentences 104.276, 278 and 279.1 in (16).

I therefore conclude that Hopper's identification of *di* with foregrounding and *meN* with backgrounding in narrative is entirely valid, provided the domain in which the rule operates is limited to independent, inherently transitive clauses and, in the case of *di* clauses, to those which imply continuity of action and situation and which themselves meet Givón's action continuity condition.¹

¹A further difference between inherently transitive *di* and *meN* clauses, consistent with the high versus low discourse transitivity distinction which underlies the foreground-background one, is mentioned by Wouk. She points out (1986:140) that "patient trigger morphology" (i.e. the selection of P as pivot) "correlates with individuated patients, and actor trigger morphology...with less individuated patients".

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