Verb Structure in Indonesian

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I. Introduction

One of the major problems in studying Indonesian as a foreign language is mastering the verb structure. This is due to the complexity of its affixation. A good and well-formed verb will ensure a good, formal, and acceptable sentence; on the contrary, a lack of affixe where it should be, will give a non-grammatical sentence.

Indonesian verbs have two structures: simple and derived verbs.

II. Simple Verbs

example:

(1). Dia akan <u>datang</u> pukul 10.00.
'She/he will <u>come</u> at 10.00'
others : <u>ada</u> (be/be present, there is/ are), <u>mandi</u> (take bath) <u>pergi</u> (go), <u>tidur</u> (sleep), etc.

note : addition of affixes will evoke changes of meaning and sintactical possibilities

(2). Jono <u>bangun</u> terlambat
Jono <u>woke up</u> late'
----> Jono <u>membangunkan</u> (wake s.o. up) adiknya pukul 05.00

(3). Slamet <u>datang</u> dengan Pardi
Slamet <u>came</u> with Pardi'
---->Slamet <u>mendatangkan</u> (had s. o. brought in) dokter.
---->Slamet <u>mendatangi</u> (visit) Pardi.
(see further annex 2!)

III. Derived Verbs

A. *Intransitive*

1. BER-, means:
1.1 *'mempunyai' (to have)*:

(4) Tari <u>bercita-cita</u> menjadi dokter.
'Tari <u>has ideal</u> to become a doctor'
others: <u>beratap</u> (roof), <u>beristeri</u> (wife), <u>berkeinginan</u> (desire), etc.

1.2 *'menggunakan' (to use)*:

(5) Tini <u>bersepeda</u> ke sekolah
'Tini <u>uses a bicycle</u> to go to school'
'Tini goes to school by bicycle'
others : <u>bersepatu</u> (shoes), <u>berperahu</u> (boat).
exception: *<u>berbis</u> (bus), *<u>berandong</u>, *<u>berbecak</u>.

1.3 *'menghasilkan' (to produce)*:

(6) Ayam saya <u>bertelur</u> banyak.
'My hen <u>produced</u> many eggs'
others : <u>berbunyi</u> (sound), <u>berkeringat</u> (sweat).

1.4 *'himpunan' (collection)*:

(7) Mereka pergi <u>berdua</u> , <u>bertiga, berempat</u>.
'They went <u>the two, three, four</u>'

1.5 *reflexive*:

(8) Kami <u>berlindung</u> di bawah pohon.
'We <u>took shelter</u> under a tree'

1.6 *'melakukan pekerjaan' (to do s.t.)*:

(9) Anak-anak <u>bermain</u> bola.
'The children <u>are playing</u> ball'

Notes:

a. Some verbs might have a double interpretation:
(10) Wanita itu <u>beranak</u> lima .
'The woman <u>has 5 children</u>'
Wanita itu <u>beranak</u> di rumah sakit.
'The woman <u>bore a child</u> in the hospital'

b. Assimilation of "<u>r</u>" in <u>ber</u>-:

- ajar --> Ia <u>belajar</u> (learn) bahasa Indonesia
- when the first syllable of the root has also "<u>r</u>", ex. : pergi ---> bepergian, not *berpergian

terbang --> beterbangan, not *berterbangan,

but lari --> berlarian, not *belarian
(see further ber-/-an!)

c. Some ber- have its own meaning:
(11) Ayah bekerja sampai larut.
'Papa worked late'
Others:
bersekolah (go to school), berdiri (stand),
bertemu (meet), berbelanja (to shop), ber-
bicara (speak, talk), berkumpul (gather
together), bertanya (ask), etc.

2. BER-/-AN (limited number), means:

2.1 *(root) in various ways:*
(12) Daun-daun berjatuhan/berguguran.
'The leaves are falling down'
Others:
beterbangan (fly), berdatangan, berlarian
(run), bepergian (go), etc.

2.2 *reciprocally:*
(13) Mereka berjauhan (be far from e.o.).
'They are far from each other'
Others:
berdekatan (near), bersamaan (at the
same time), bersebelahan (side by side),
berseberangan (opposite), bermesraan
(intimate with), bermusuhan (be ene-
mies), etc.

note:

sometimes accompanied by a reciprocal
marker saling (each other)

Mereka saling bermusuhan

'They are enemies each other'
(14) contrast of:

ME-	BER-/-AN
lamemeluk(embrace) anaknya	--> Mereka berpelukan(embrace e.o.)
menghadap (face)	--> berhadapan
membalas (answer, reply)	--> berbalasan
memukul (hit)	--> berpukulan

3. BER- *AND* -AN
refers to: semi-transitivity (needs a
complement).
(15) contrast:

BER-	BER-/-KAN
	(have)
Orang itu bersenjata (be armed)	--> Orang itu bersenjatakan pistol (be armed with s.t.)
beristeri	--> beristerikan [orang Jawa]
beribu (mother)	--> beribukan [wanita Sunda]

berdasar (basis)   --> berdasarkan [Pancasila]

4. TER- (limited number) means:

4.1 *become in the state of <root>*

(16) duduk ---> Petinju itu terduduk di sudut.
'The boxer fell to a seated
position in the corner'
jatuh (fall) ---> terjatuh
tidur (sleep) ---> tertidur

4.2 other meanings (base: perfective)

4.2.1 *'paling' (superlative)*:
(17) Ia adalah mahasiswa terbaik .
'She is the best student'

4.2.2 *perfective*:
(18) Mainan itu terbuat dari plastik.
'The toy is made of plastic'

4.2.3 *continuative*:
(19) Tubuhnya terapung .
'His body is floating'

4.2.4 *intense*:
(20) Mereka tergesa-gesa (in a hurry).
'They in a hurry'

5. KE-/-AN

means: affected by something unpleasant <root>

(21) *malam* ---> *Gadis itu kemalaman.*
'The girl was overtaken by night'
others:
siang (noon) ---> kesiangan
dingin (cold) ---> kedinginan
panas (hot) ---> kepanasan
lapar (hungry) ---> kelaparan
haus (thirsty) ---> kehausan
tidur (sleep) ---> ketiduran

note:

compare ke-/-an as verb and as noun,
(22) Ia kelaparan (V) pada siang hari
'He is really hungry at midday'
Kelaparan (N) melanda negeri itu
'Hunger is attacking the country'

6. ME(N)-, means:

6.1 *'melakukan' (do s.t.)*:
(23) Mereka menari dan menyanyi .
'They are dancing and singing.

6.2 *'menjadi, menjadi seperti' (be
come/become like)*:
(24) Pohon-pohon menghijau (turn green).
'The trees are turning green'

others:

batu (stone) —> membatu
akar (root) —> mengakar
kecil (small) —> mengecil
buruk (bad) —> memburuk

6.3 'berfungsi sebagai' (function as):
(25) Wanita itu menjanda .
'The woman is widowed'

6.4 'minum, makan, membuat' (drink, eat, make s.t.):
(26) Ayah mengopi (root: kopi) di teras.
'Papa is drinking coffee at the terrace'
others:

bakso (meatballs) —> membakso
sambal (spicy sauce) —> menyambal sauce

6.5 'menuju ke' (go in the direction of):
(27) Pesawat itu terlambat mengudara (air).
'The aeroplane took off late'
others:

darat (land) —> mendarat
tepi (side) —> menepi
rakyat (people) —> merakyat

6.6 'mencari, mengumpulkan' (look for, assemble):
(28) Kerbau (water buffalo) itu merumput (grass)
sampai sore
rotan (rattan) - --> merotan

6.7 'mengeluarkan bunyi' (to sound):
(29) Kucing mengeong , tikus mencicit
'Cats mew and mice squeak'

note:

me(N)- in single syllabic roots become menge-:

(30) tik —> mengetik (type a paper) —> ?mentik
bom —> mengebom (bomb) —> ?membom
cek —> mebgecek (check out) —> ?mencek
pel —> mengepel (mop) —> ?mempel
rem —> megerem (put on the brakes) —> ?merem

B. *Transitive*

1. ME(N)-, means:
'melakukan tindakan' (do s.t.):
(31) Polisi mengejar (root: kejar) pencuri itu.
'The policeman is running after the thief'
others:

ajar —> mengajar (teach)
bakar —> membakar (burn)
bentur —> membentur (collide/crash)
celup —> mencelup (dip)

ejek —> mengejek (mock)
gubris —> menggubris (heed)
hela —> menghela (pull)
idap —> mengidap (ail)
jaga —> menjaga (watch over)
kelola —> mengelola (manage)
kenang—> mengenang (reminisce about)
pukul —> memukul (hit)
parkir —> memarkir (park)
sangkal —> menyangkal (deny)
tinju —> meninju (punch)

note:
for tinggal —>

<root> : Ia tinggal (stay) di desa.
me(N)- : Ibu sudah meninggal (passed away)
me-/-kan : Ibu meninggalkan (leave) saya.

2. MEMPER-, means:

2.1 'melakukan' (do s.t.)
(32) Kami memperjuangkan kemerdekaan.
'We are struggling for peace'.
but *menjuangkan.
mempermasalahkan *or* memasalahkan
(question s.t.)
memperisteri(take s.o. as wife), *but*
*mengisteri
*menyuami (husband)

2.2 'membuat menjadi lebih' (make s.t. more <root>):
(33) indah —> Dekorasi itu memperindah
(beautiful) rumah

cantik —> mempercantik (pretty)
sulit —> mempersulit (difficult)

note:

a. Deletion of "more" meaning needs use of me-/-kan:
(34) sulit —> menyulitkan (make s.t. difficult)
lelah —> melelahkan (tired)

b. Contrast of me-/-kan and memper-/-kan:
(35)

tunjuk —> menunjukkan (point out)	—>	mempertunjuk-kan (show)
tanya —> menanyakan (ask)	—>	mempertanya-kan (question about)
dengar—> mendengarkan (listen to)	—>	memperdengar-kan (let s.t. be heard or listened to)
lihat —> melihat (see)	—>	memperlihat kan (show, display)

tahan —> menahan (hold back) —> mempertahan-
kan (defend).

(see further annex 3!)

3. ME(N)-/-KAN, means:

3.1 *become more (in characteristic)*:

(36) panas (hot)   —-> memanaskan (to heat)

lebar (wide)   —-> melebarkan (to widen
s.t.)

panjang(long) —> memanjangkan (to
lengthen)

Ibu memanaskan kopi.
'Mama is heating the coffe'

note:

a. Contrast of me(N)-/-kan and memper-,
ex.:

melebarkan : to widen s.t. which is not wide(yet).

memperlebar : to widen s.t. already wide

b. Contrast of me(N)- and me(N)-/-kan,
ex.:

mengering (intr) : to dry out (of s.t. wet).

mengeringkan(tr) : to dry s.t. out/to drain.

3.2 *to bring to...*:

(37) masuk (in)   —-> memasukkan (to enter)

keluar (out) —-> mengeluarkan (to put
outside)

tempat (place) —-> menempatkan (put s.t.
in a certain place)

Ayah mengeluarkan mobil dari garasi.
'Papa put the car outside the garage'
'Papa took the car from the garage'

3.3 *to make s.t. become <root>*:

(38) senang (happy) —-> menyenangkan (to
please)

bahaya (danger)—-> membahayakan (to en-
danger)

gelisah (nervous)—> menggelisahkan (to up-
set)

heran (surprised)—> mengherankan (to sur-
prise)

lelah (tired)   —-> melelahkan (to tire s.o.)

pusing (dizzy) —-> memusingkan (to make
dizzy)

note:

There are two meanings of this me(N)-/-kan:

a. transitively = to do something (as 3.3):
(39) Tariannya mengagumkan penonton

'Her dance amazed the audience'

b. intransitively (= quasi-adjective):
(40) Tariannya benar-benar mengagumkan
'Her dance is really amazing'

3.4 *benefactive (to do for s.o. else)*, Se-
mantical & structural contrast of:
me(N)-   and   me(N)-/-kan

(41) Ia membeli buku   —> Ia membelikan adiknya buku
S   V   O   S   V   indO dirO

(She bought a book) (She bought her brother a
book)(= Ia membeli buku
untuk (for) adiknya)

membaca   —-> membacakan (read)

menulis   —-> menuliskan (write)

membawa   —-> membawakan (bring)

3.5 *'menyuruh seseorang melakukan'*
(ask s.o. to do <root>), Semantical con-
trast of:
me(N)-   and   me(N)-/-kan
(42)

Ibu menjahit baju   —> Ibu menjahitkan baju
(Mom sewed the clothing)   (Mom had the clothing
sewn)

periksa—> memeriksa (examine)   —> memeriksakan

bengkel —> membengkelkan (repair(a car))—>mem bengkel

tik   —> mengetik (type(a letter)) —> mengetikkan

4. ME(N)-/-I, means:

4.1 *to do s.t.*:

(43) dekat (near) —-> Anak itu mendekati meja
'The boy is approaching the table'

jauh (far)   —-> menjauhi (keep away from)

note:

a. Contrast of me(N)-/-i and me(N)-/-kan:

(locative)	(causative)
dekat —> mendekati	—> Ibu mendekatkan (bring s.t. close) gelas pada adik
jauh —> menjauhi	—> menjauhkan (keep s.t. away)
jatuh —> menjatuhi (fall on s.t.)	—> menjatuhkan (drop s.t.)
datang —>mendatangi (come closer)	—>mendatangkan (bring s.t. in)
masuk —> memasuki (enter)	—> memasukkan (enter s.t. in)

b. me(N)-/-i = <root> + preposition
(44) Presiden menghadiri (attend) pesta itu
—> Presiden hadir pada (be present at) pesta itu

Ia menyadari (realize) kesalahannya (fault)
—> Ia sadar akan (be aware of) kesalahannya

Adik sangat menyayangi (love) mainanya (toy)
—> Adik sangat sayang pada mainannya

c. Contrast of:

(root)	intr.	tr.	bi-tr.
dekat --->	Kapal itu mendekat	---> S mendekati pantai	---> S mendekatkan /s.t. to s.o./
	(The ship is approaching)	(approach s.t.)	(bring s.t. close)
jauh --->	Mobil itu menjauh	---> S menjauhi kami	---> S menjauhkan /s.t. from s.o./

@	me(N)-	me(N)-/-i	me(N)-/-kan
Dia dekat sini (He's near here)	Dia mendekat kepada kami (He come close to us)	Dia mendekati kami (He is approaching us)	Dia mendekatkan kursi itu (He bought the chair closer)
Ayah jauh dari kami (Papa's far from us)	Kapal itu menjauh (S drew farther away)	Kapal itu menjauhi pantai (S went far from the beach)	Kami menjauhkan meja darinya (S removed V from him)
Mereka datang kemarin (They came yesterday)	-	Ia mendatangi rumah saya (He came to my house)	Mereka mendatangkan dokter (They had the doctor come)
Rumah saya kecil (My house is small)	Sepatu saya mengecil (My shoes became small)	-	Ia mengecilkan suara (She lowered the voice)
Pohon itu besar (The tree is big)	Perutnya membesar (His stomach became big)	-	Ia membesarkan rumahnya (He enlarged his house)
Jangan masuk! (Don't enter!)	-	Presiden memasuki ruangan (S is entering the room)	Ia memasukkan mobilnya (He brought the car in)
Gajinya naik (His salary raised)	-	Ia menaiki gunung itu (S climbed on the mountain)	Ia menaikkan tasnya (He lift his bag)
Dia duduk (He's sitting)	-	Anak itu menduduki meja (S sat on the table)	Ayah mendudukkan adik (Papa seated my sister)
- singkir	Orang itu menyingkir (S is stepping aside)	Ia menyingkiri saya (S stayed away from me)	Ia menyingkirkan bukunya (She removed her book)
- hindar	Dia selalu menghindar	Mereka menghindari bahaya	Ia menghindarkan saya dari api

4.2. repetitive:

(45) pukul ---> Ia memukuli (hit again and again) meja

angkat ---> Anak-anak mengangkati (lift up) kursi

C. PASSIVE

1. DI-

Contrast of :

active and	passive:
beli ---> Ia membeli buku	Buku itu sudah dibeli orang (S have been bought by s.o.)
cinta ---> Ia mencintai ayahnya	Ia dicintai [oleh] semua orang (S is loved by everyone)
ajar ---> Ia mempelajari tatabahasa	Tatabahasa dipelajarinya (Grammar is being studied by him)
ingat ---> Ia memperingatkan anaknya	Ia diperingatkan oleh ayahnya
(He warned his son)	(He was warned by his father)

2. KE-/-AN

(basic structure: di-/-i),

meaning: be (root) unpleasantly

jatuh (fall) ---> dijatuhi ---> Kepalanya kejatuhan mangga
(S was hit by a falling manggoe)

habis (finished) ---> dihabisi ---> Ia kehabisan uang
(He ran out of money)

masuk (enter) ---> dimasuki ---> Rumahnya kemasukan pencuri
(A thief got into his house)

hujan (rain) ---> dihujani ---> Ia kehujanan
(He got caught in rain)

copet (pickpocket) ---> dicopeti ---> Ia kecopetan dompetnya
(His wallet was stolen)

3. TER-

3.1 (passive) 'tidak sengaja' (uninten-
tional); compare:

(46) Bukunya ditinggal (left intentionally) di meja
Bukunya tertinggal (left unintentionally) di meja.

3.2 (passive) 'dapat di' (potential):

(47) Tulisan itu (writing) terbaca (can be read).

3.3 spontaneous:

(48) Ibu terkejut (surprised) mende-
ngar berita itu.

3.4 'keadaan' (situation/state):
contrast:

(49) Pintu itu ditutup (was opened by)
orang

Pintu itu tertutup (is the state of closed)

ANNEX 1

Abbreviations

e.o.	: each other
etc.	: et cetera
s.o.	: someone
s.t.	: something

OF (SOME) SIMPLE VERBS

bangkit	: get up (from seated posistion)	lari	: run	pingsan	: unconscious
bangun	: wake up	lenyap	: dissapeared	pulang	: return home
benci	: hate	ewat	: via, through, by way of	punya	: have
cinta	: love			putus	: broken off
diam	: be silent	lulus	: pass (a test)	rugi	: suffer a financial loss
duduk	: sit	lunas	: paid		
gagal	: fail	lupa	: forget	sadar	: conscious
gugur	: fall (of leaves) (prematurely)	luput	: not on target	sakit	: ill, sick
		makan	: eat	sampai	: arrive
habis	: finished	mandi	: take a bath	sayang	: love
hadir	: be present	masuk	: enter	selesai	: finished
hidup	: live	mati	: die	singgah	: stop by/in
hilang	: be lost	mau	: will, wish, want	surut	: withdraw
ikut	: follow, go along	minta	: ask, beg	tahu	: know
ingat	: remember	minum	: drink	tampak	: appear, be visible
ingin	: wish, desire	mohon	: request, ask	tampil	: step forward
jadi	: become, get	mulai	: begin	terbang	: fly
jatuh	: fall	muncul	: appear	terjun	: jump down
karam	: founder	mundur	: go back	tiba	: arrive
keluar	: go out	naik	: climb, go up	turun	: go down, descend
kembali	: return	patah	: broken	yakin	: sure
kenal	: know	percaya	: believe	etc.	
lahir	: be born	pergi	: go	etc.	
		pindah	: move	etc.	

VERBAL AFFIXATION

ROOT	BER-	ME(N)	ME(N)-I	ME(N)-KAN	MEMPER-(-I	MEMPER-KAN
ajar	belajar (study)	mengajar (teach)	mengajari (teach, train)	mengajarkan (teach s.t.)	mempelajari	-
dagang	berdagang (trade)	-				memperdagangkan (trade in s.t.)
baik	-	membaik (improve)			memperbaiki (improve, repair)	
banyak		membanyak (increase)			memperbanyak (multiply)	
beli		membeli (buy)	-	membelikan (buy for)	-	
buruk		memburuk (worsen)		-	memperburuk (aggravate)	
cepat		mencepat (become fast)	-	-	mempercepat (accelerate)	
dagang	berdagang (trade)	-	-	-	-	memperdagangkan (trade in s.t.)
ingat	-	mengingat (remember)	-	mengingatkan (remind)	memperingati (commemorate)	memperingatkan (warn)

ROOT	BER-	ME(N)-	ME(N)-I	ME(N)-KAN	MEMPER-(-I)	MEMPER-KAN
isteri	beristeri (have a wife)	-	-	-	memperisteri (take s.o. a wife)	-
jelas	-	menjelas (become clear)	-	menjelaskan (explain)	memperjelas (clarify)	
juang	berjuang (struggle)	-	-	-	-	memperjuangkan (struggle for)
taruh	bertaruh (bet)	-	-	-	-	mempertaruhkan (pawn)