Transposing active sentences

Active sentence

This is an active sentence, because the subject is at the head of the clause [...]:

[Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia].
Subject Verb Object

The Subject-Verb-Object structure is abbreviated as SVO. A clause is the section of the sentence that contains the subject, predicate (main verb) and object. In the example above, *mendeklarasikan* is the predicate.

We can add information to the clause by adding adjuncts (...).

Let's add a 'time' adjunct to our clause:

(Pada tanggal 17 Agustus 1945) [Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia].
Time adjunct Clause

Let's add another adjunct, this time a 'place' adjunct.

(Pada tanggal 17 Agustus 1945) [Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia] (di Jakarta).

Time adjunct Clause Place adjunct

You may have noticed that a clause is a complete sentence by itself but adjuncts aren't!

Passive sentence

There are 2 types of passive structures, let's call them Passive 1 (P1) and Passive 2 (P2):

P1: OVS - for 3rd person

P2: OSV - for 1st & 2nd person

Examples

P1: Kemerdekaan Indonesia dideklarasikan oleh Sukarno

O V S

P2: Kemerdekaan Indonesia saya deklarasikan

) S \

My magic grammar rule:

Passive 1: O di-V S

Passive 2: O S baseVerb.

In the P2 syntax, if the active *me*-verb has a -kan or -i suffix, then this suffix also inflects in the base verb.

For example

Active: Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia.

P2: Kemerdekaan Indonesia saya deklarasikan.

Nominative sentence

Before we discuss nominative sentences, we need to change our terminology for this next discussion. Instead of talking about subjects and objects, we will talk about *noun phrases* (NP) as *arguments*.

A noun phrase can be:

i. a noun;

e.g. 'kucing'

ii. a noun with an adjective;

e.g. 'kucing lucu'

iii. or a noun with an adjective phrase;

e.g. 'kucing yang lucu itu'.

Arguments are the noun phrases that pertain to the predicate of a clause. In the active sentence example below, the subject NP1 and object NP2 are arguments of the predicate *membaca*.

Mickey Mouse membaca buku.

NP1 predicate NP2

We are using the argument-NP terminology because in a nominative sentence, there is no subject doing something to an object.

A nominative sentence is a subject focused sentence. The two arguments are different noun phrases and different descriptions of the same constant (NP1 = NP2). The copula *adalah* functions like an '=' sign:

Mickey Mouse adalah temanku.

$$NP1 = NP2$$

Let's go back to our sentence;

Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia.

We have learnt how to turn this active sentence into a passive sentence. We can also do something interesting and turn it into a nominative sentence. But obviously we can't just change the predicate with the copula *adalah*;

Sukarno **adalah** kemerdekaan Indonesia.

This would mean that 'Sukarno **is** the Indonesian independence'. So what gives? Well, the trick is to change the predicate base word into an agentive *pe*- noun. The base word of the predicate *mendeklarasikan* is *deklarasi*. In Indonesian, an agentive *pe*- noun turns a base word into a 'doer':

beli - buy pembeli - buyer

jual - sell penjual - seller

deklarasi - declare pendeklarasi - declarator

My magic grammar rule:

To transpose an active sentence into a nominative sentence, convert the **predicate base word** into an **agentive pe- noun** and phrase it together with the object to form the NP1-argument.

Pe-X + object = NP1 NP1 adalah NP2

Our original subject in the active sentence becomes the NP2.

Putting it all together;

Active: Sukarno mendeklarasikan kemerdekaan Indonesia.

S V O

Nominative: Pendeklarasi kemerdekaan Indonesia adalah Sukarno.

NP1 = NP2

Adding the time and place adjuncts:

Pendeklarasi kemerdekaan Indonesia adalah Sukarno pada tanggal 17 Agustus 1945 di Jakarta.

NP1 = NP2 Time adjunct Place adjunct

The yang me-x phrase as alternative to agentive Pe- noun.

Sometimes the agentive *pe*- noun can be awkward in everyday speech. The following sentence sounds stilted in both the Indonesian and English:

Pembeli buah-buahan itu adalah Ibu Merta.

The buyer of those fruit is Ibu Merta.

To get around this, we can use the *yang + me-x* phrase instead of the *Pe-x* noun.

Yang membeli buah-buahan itu adalah Ibu Merta.

The one who bought those fruit is Ibu Merta.

Modal verbs and **tense adverbs** will also block the use of the *Pe-x* noun in the nominative. This is when *yang+VP* (in this case VP is modal/tense auxiliary+verb) is very useful:

When composing, you will need to decide whether to use the *pe-x* noun, the *yang me-x* or the *yang+VP* phrase. Everyday mundane sentences will probably sound awkward using the *pe-x* noun. If it sounds strange in English then it would probably be strange in the Indonesian too - then use the *yang me- / yang+VP* phrase instead.

Abstract noun passive sentence

In an abstract noun passive sentence we use the Passive 1 / Passive 2 (P1/P2) syntax. To transpose an active sentence into an abstract noun passive sentence we need to convert the predicate base word into a *pe-X-an* abstract noun:

deklarasi -> pendeklarasian

Like with the nominative case, this is phrased with the original object to form the new object NP1-argument:

Pendeklarasian kemerdekaan Indonesia Object (NP1)

Great! But our original predicate *mendeklarasikan* has been converted into a noun and we don't really want to reuse it in its passive form because it would sound repetitive;

Pendeklarasian kemerdekaan Indonesia dideklarasikan oleh Sukarno.

Object di-Verb prep Subject

Luckily, for P2, there is a passive di-verb which works well in all cases! Dilakukan.

P2 Pendeklarasian kemerdekaan Indonesia dilakukan oleh Sukarno.
Object di-Verb prep Subject

P1 Pendeklarasian kemerdekaan Indonesia saya lakukan.

Object Subject baseVerb

There are many different verbs that would be more eloquent for different contexts. You will learn these in your further studies as you encounter them in context. For now, we will use the safety net of *(di)lakukan*.

My magic grammar rule:

Similar to the nominative syntax, to transpose an active sentence into an abstract noun passive sentence, convert the **predicate base word** into an **abstract** *pe-X-an* **noun** and phrase it together with the original object to form the NP1-argument, and the subject in the active sentence becomes the NP2.

Pe-X-an + object = NP1

NP1 dilakukan oleh NP2

Adding the time and place adjuncts:

Pendeklarasian kemerdekaan Indonesia dilakukan oleh Sukarno pada tanggal 17 Agustus 1945 di Jakarta.

O (NP1) di-V prep S (NP2) Time adjunct Place adjunct

Well done! Now you have learnt how to turn **active** sentences into **passive**, **nominative** and **abstract noun passive** sentences. This is a great tool to have because it gives you the ability to write utilising a variety of syntax patterns to make your composition more rich and interesting.

Things to remember:

predicate = main verb

arguments = noun phrases (subjects & objects)

A clause is the main part of the sentence which contains the predicate and arguments.

Time and place adjuncts can be placed before or after the main clause. You must decide where the information is best placed in the sentence depending on what sounds more natural and which noun phrases they are describing, these might be different in Indonesian than in English, but don't worry, you'll get the hang of it!

Let's return to the main lesson and practise our new skills!