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Kena as the Third Type of Malay Passive

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1. Introduction

This paper argues that pragmatic considerations are involved in the selection of Malay passive types. The *kena* passive, which is the third Malay passive, occurs in limited frequency in specific contexts. These limited occurrences of the *kena* passive raise questions whether there are pragmatic specifications of this passive type which constrain its use.

Although the *kena* passive is recognized as a type of Malay passive (Nik Safiah Karim *et al* 1997:471), it has not received as much attention as the other two types of Malay passive. For example, Chung, (1975), Cartier (1979) and Hopper (1983) focused on the first and second types of passvie.

The first type of Malay passive, which appears in the OVS structure (O as 'recipient of action;' V as 'verb' and S as 'agent'), is similar syntactically to the *kena* passive. However, what actually differs between these two types of passive is the motivating factor behind this analysis.

The corpora comprise fifty instances of the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive collected from the Internet postings of news articles from *Berita Harian* 'Daily News' and *Utusan Malaysia* 'Malaysian Messanger' between May 2002 and April 2003. These instances were compared in terms of their frequency of occurrences as well as degree of Transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980; Hopper 1983) and pragmatic functions. In pragmatic functions, these two passive types were compared with respect to their underlying connotations and the formality of register in contexts. Through examining these linguistic aspects, similarities and differences between the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive can be drawn.

The analysis in this paper shows that the *kena* passive differs from the *di-* passive in terms of its lower frequency of occurrences, higher Transitivity, less formality in register, and higher co-occurrences with colloquial expressions.

2. Passive Constructions in Malay

In this section, the three types of Malay passive will be presented.

2.1 Type One: *di-* Passive

In Chung's definition (1975:59), the Malay passive construction possesses the conventional notions of 'direct object,' 'optional agent' and 'passive verb' and is called 'canonical passive.' This type of passive has the form of the third person agent. The word order is usually OVS. The passive verbs in this type of passive usually have a prefix *di-*, but some also have the suffix *–kan*. Hopper (1983:70) stated that verbs with the suffix *–kan* tends to be transitive verbs. Example of this type of passives is shown in (1):

(1) *Ular* ***dipukul*** *oleh* *Ali.*
snake PASS-hit by Ali
"The snake was hit by Ali."

The agent phrase introduced by *oleh* 'by' is similar to that of English 'by' but its presence is optional.

2.2 Type Two: First and Second Persons Agent(s)

Another type of passive has the form of the first and second pronoun agents. Chung (1975) called it 'object-preposing.' Example is given in (2).

(2) *Sebuah* *keluhan* *ku**lepaskan**,...*
one-CLASS sigh I-let go
"I let go a sigh."

In example (2), the word order is OSV and the agent is *ku-* 'I.' Due to its different syntactic structure from the first and third types of passive, this paper will not focus on this type of Malay passive.

2.3 Type Three: *kena*

Sentence (3) is an example of the *kena* passive (Nik Safiah Karim *et al.* 1997:471):

(3) *Dia* ***kena*** ***tipu*** *oleh* *pemuda* *itu.*

3sing KENA cheat by young man that
"He/She was cheated by the young man."

The verb *tipu* in (3) must appear in the base form and is preceded by *kena*. In this type, the suffix *–kan* and the word *kena* are in complementary distribution.

This paper focuses on the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive because they share the following similarities: (a) OVS structure; (b) patient-focus; (c) show no restrictions on first and second pronoun agents (unlike the second type of passive); and (d) the presence of the agent is optional. Due to the high level of similarity, the question is then asked: – if all the features (a) to (d) are present in both types of Malay, why should the Malay language needs two similar types of passive? The focus of this paper, therefore, is to find out the degree of similarities and dissimilarities between the two in terms of frequency, Transitivity and pragmatic usage.

3. Methodology and Results

The methodology and results in this section will be discussed from three aspects— Frequency, Transitivity and Pragmatics. The scope of pragmatics is further divided into connotation and register.

3.1 Frequency

Fifty occurrences of the *di-* passive and the *kena* passives respectively were collected from the Internet postings of news articles from the *Berita Harian* and *Utusan Malaysia* between May 2002 and April 2003. The selection of the news articles for the *di-* passive was done randomly. This is because the *di-* passive is more productive and therefore easier to accumulate the 50 instances of this type. The *kena* passive, however, is less productive. Hence, their 50 instances were collected through the search engine of the newspaper website with the term "*kena*." Each search result was then screened for the *kena* passive only. Articles that did not provide examples of any of these two types of passive were not included in the calculation of frequency.

The frequency of occurrences for each type of passive is presented as percentage of the 50 occurrences over the total word amount of the total news articles. The calculation of the word counts is at follow:

The total word number for all the articles was calculated (none of the articles were used twice for both the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive). Our word count included the titles, notes and e-mail addresses appearing at the end of the articles. However, words appearing below the pictures were excluded. Every occurrence of the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive was counted respectively until the fiftieth instance. When this last instance appeared in the middle of an article, the word amount for that article would be counted until the end of the sentence in which the last instance was found[1].
This word amount represents the total words that were processed in order to accumulate these 50 instances of passive constructions. The results are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Frequency of the *di-* Passive and the *kena* Passive in News Articles

	***di-* passive**	***kena* passive**
Frequency of Occurrences in Percentage (per word count)	**2.89%**	**0.20%**
Average Number of Words in which Passive Construction occurs	**34.66**	**508.08**

For the *di-* passive, 1,733 words were looked at in order to obtain the 50 instances. For the *kena* passive, a total of 25,404 words were looked at. From the 1,733 words, 50 instances of the *di-* passive are 2.89% of the total words. For the *kena* passive, 50 instances were found in 25,404 words or in 0.20% of the corpora. From Figure 1, too, it is shown that each *di-* passive was found in average every 34.66 words. A *kena* passive was found in average every 508.08 words. These figures show distinctive contrasts between the occurring frequencies of the passive types, and explain why the *kena* passive was seldom mentioned previously.

In this paper, I intend to find out whether the low occurrences of the *kena* passive have to do with its semantic transitivity in the discourse – whether

[1]This analysis chose not to calculate the total word number for the whole article (in which the last instance was found) because there might be other *di-* or *ken*a construction appearing after the last instance. The inclusion of the subsequent word amount might affect the frequency count.

there is discourse specifications of the *kena* verb that bring about the contrast in frequency with the *di-* passive. It is hypothesized that the limited existence of the *kena* passive in written texts is related to its semantic function in discourse, which distinguish it from the *di-* passive.

To summarize this section, the *kena* passive is found less frequently than the *di-* passive.

3.2 Transitivity

Before looking at the pragmatic aspect of the two passive types, the semantic transitivity of the *di-* and *kena* passive verbs in discourse was first examined.

Siewierska (1984:8) stated that passive verbs and transitivity are "so closely intertwined that it is impossible to speak about one without mentioning the other." Previous work such as Hopper (1983) looked at the first and the second types of passive from the discourse perspective, using the same Transitivity framework (Hopper and Thompson, 1980). The more parameters a construction fulfills, the more Transitive the construction is. In Hopper's (1983) analysis, the distinctive parameters that differentiate between the ergative and the passive are Kinesis, Punctuality and Aspect, all of which emphasize the different aspects of an event.

Following Hopper (1983), I examined these three parameters in order to compare the functions of the passive verbs *di-* and *kena*. The definitions of these three parameters are given in Table 2:

Table 2: Definitions of the Parameter Kinesis, Punctuality and Aspect

Parameters	Meanings
KINESIS	Clauses which signal an action of some kind, involving movement in either patient or agent, are more Transitive than those in which no action is signaled.
PUNCTUALITY	A clause whose predicate occurs without a perceptible transition between onset and conclusion is more Transitive than one whose predicate has discernible duration.
ASPECT	A clause containing a telic (point-oriented) predicate is more Transitive than a clause whose predicate is atelic.

In this analysis, I gave scores of either 0 or 1 based on the following criteria:

(a) KINESIS: A score of 1 was given if the passive verb reflects one that has an action. Perception verbs such as *difikirkan* 'PASS-think' and *diketahui* 'PASS-know' were not given scores in this paper. Metaphorical uses of passive such as dilihat 'PASS-see' (to mean 'was believed') were also not given a point.
(b) PUNCTUALITY: A score of 1 was given if the action can be carried out in a discernible duration. Verbs such as *dirancangkan* 'PASS-plan' and *ditubuhkan* 'PASS-establish' were not given points.
(c) ASPECT: A finished action was given a score of 1. Verbs such as *disokong* 'PASS-support' and *dilanda* 'PASS-face with' were not given points.

An example of the *di-* passive is shown in the following.

(4) *...air liurnya* ***diseka*** *keras.*
saliva-3sing PASS-wipe away hard
"His (her) saliva was wiped away in an ungentle way."

In the above example, the total scores of the three parameters are:

(a) KINESIS: 1 (action)
(b) PUNCTUALITY: 1 ('wipe away' occurs in a discernible duration.)
(c) ASPECT: 1 (The action is point-oriented.)

Therefore, the total scores for this example are 3. After gathering all the scores for the 50 instances for each passive type, an Independent *t-* Test was run (at the alpha level of .05) for the scores of Transitivity. The results are given in Table 3:

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Table 3: The Average Transitivity Indices for the 50 Instances of the *di-* and *kena* passive in Malay within the Parameters of Kinesis, Punctuality and Aspect

	***di-* passive**	***kena* passive**
Average of Transitivity	**1.26**	**2.12**

The Independent *t*- test shows that t (98) = -4.079, p< .05, which shows that *di-* passive fulfills less parameters than the *kena* passive. Therefore, it is seen that, among the three parameters, the *di-* passive fulfills an average of between 1 to 2 parameters and the *kena* passive fulfills 2 to 3 parameters. These indices show that the *kena* passive is more Transitive than the *di-* passive.

When the figures were looked at by parameter, the results in Table 4 were obtained. The total scores for each type of passive are 150 (50 for each parameter).

Table 4: The Scores and Percentage of each Parameter of Kinesis, Punctuality and Aspect for the 50 Instances of *di-* and *kena* Passive

Parameters	**Types of Passive**			
	di-	**Percentage in 50 instances**	***kena***	**Percentage in 50 instances**
a) KINESIS	16	32%	48	96%
b) PUNCTUALITY	12	24%	30	60%
c) ASPECT	35	70%	45	90%
Total	63		123	

The results in Table 4 show that the *kena* passive is higher in all three parameters. This is an indication that the *kena* passive is more Transitive than the *di-* passive.

In order to trace how these three parameters –(Kinesis (K), Punctuality (P) and Aspect (A)) are distributed in the 50 instances of the two passive types, the individual scores for each type are calculated as shown in Table 5

Table 5: The Scores and Percentage of the Combinations of Parameters for the 50 Instances of *di-* and *kena* Passive Respectively

	Types of Passive			
Combinations	***di-***	**Percentage**	***kena***	**Percentage**
a) K	4	8	4	8
b) P	0	0	0	0
c) A	21	42	1	2
d) KP	0	0	0	0
e) KA	**2**	**4**	**14**	**28**
f) PA	2	4	0	0
g) KPA	**10**	**20**	**24**	**48**
h) Ø	11	22	7	14
Total	50	100%	50	100%

The 96% of 'Kinesis' for the *kena* passive in Table 4 comprises all the combinations of A as in (c), (e), (f) and (g) in Table 5.

The results in Table 5 show that both highly-scored combinations of parameters in the *kena* passive (in black) contains K and A. On the other hand, the *di-* passive is higher in percentage for the A and Ø parameters (shaded). Since both passive types are high in Aspect (though the *kena* passive still displays higher scores by 20%, refer to Table 4), the parameter of Aspect is treated as a common feature in the passive constructions as a whole. That means most instances in both passive types denote finished or telic actions. Since A is treated as a common feature for both passive types, the distinctive parameter that distinguishes the *kena* passive from the *di-* passive is K. This indicates that most of the *kena* instances constitute verbs that are more movement-based and telic actions. Contrastingly, as shown in Table 4, the *di-* passive does not show significant difference between Kinesis and Punctuality. Therefore, it is concluded that the *kena* passive verb is different from the *di-* passive verb in terms of its reliance on movement. Additional evidence comes from Table 6 and 7 below. In Table 6, there are some examples of the *kena* passive, all of which are marked for Kinesis and Aspect. From Table 6, the actions demonstrated by the *kena* passive verbs are movement-based actions.

Table 6: Glosses of Verbs Used with *kena* Passive

kena Passives	Gloss	Recipients of Action	K/P/A	Index
kena pukul	'KENA hit'	(person)	KPA	3
kena tahan	'KENA retain'	(person)	KPA	3
kena tipu	'KENA cheat/trap'	(person)	KA	2

Contrastingly, the *di-* passive shown in Table 7 denotes more non-movement-based verbs which is low in Kinesis.

Table 7: Glosses of Verbs Used with *di-* Passive

di- Passives	Gloss	Recipients of Action	K/P/A	Index
dilumpuhkan	'PASS-collapse'	(attempts)	A	1
didapati	'PASS-obtain'/known	(truth)	A	1
dipecahkan	'PASS-break'	(phase of project)	A	1

In addition, in terms of the recipient types, 84% of the *kena* passive (42 out of 50) are human. This consistency is not shown in the *di-* passive with only a 10% (5 out of 50) of human recipients. The more abstract recipients such as 'phase of projects' and 'attempts' are not observed in the list of the *kena* passive. This could explain why the *kena* passive is more Transitive than the *di-* passive – i.e., the *kena* passive has more concrete recipients than the *di-* passive.

In summary of this section, the *kena* passive verb is found to denote more movement-based actions that are telic, with higher tendencies of human recipients. The *di-* passive, on the other hand, denotes more non-movement-based telic actions with lower tendencies for human recipients. This examination of the Transitivity level provides information on how the *kena* passive verb is distinguishable from the *di-* passive verb through examining the differing semantic transitivity of the passive verbs in discourse.

4. Pragmatics

In this section, the pragmatic functions of the two types of passive will be

examined from two aspects -- i.e., connotation and register.

4.1 Connotation

An examination of the list of the *kena* passive reveals a significant point about connotation. All of the occurrences of *kena* (except *KENA urut* 'was massaged;'[2]) have negative connotations. For example, in the example (5) below, there is a series of actions that are non-beneficial to the recipients:

(5) *…tidak mahu menanggung risiko seperti* ***kena*** *pijak*
NEG want take up burden risk such as KENA step on
kena *cakar belakang,* ***kena*** *siku,* ***kena*** *tepis,*
KENA scratch one's back KENA elbow KENA parry
kena *kuis dan* ***kena*** *cantas* (6 August 2003, *Forum*, UM)
KENA push and KENA cut throat or head
"…not wanting to take up the risks of being attacked and humiliated."

Other examples of actions that are non-beneficial to the recipients are *tipu* 'cheat,' *denda* 'punish' and *langgar* 'hit.'

Comparatively, the *di-* passive in (6) cannot be replaced with the *kena* passive because the meaning 'was believed' does not carry with it a negative connotation.

(6) *…perlawanan yang* ***dilihat*** *sebagai kesempatan terbaik…*
competition REL PASS-see as opportunity best
"…competition that <u>was believed</u> to be the best opportunity…"
(6 March 2003, *Sports*, UM)

The *di-* passive is not limited by the connotations of the actions. This means that the actions performed by the *di-* passive can be either positive or negative. This is also another aspect distinguishing these two types of Malay passive.

In summary, this section has showed that the occurrences of the *kena* passive depend on whether the context needs a passive verb which highlights the negative effect of the action to the recipient.

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[2] Due to the limited space, the lists of the *di-* and *kena* passive verbs are not attached in this paper.

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4.2 Register

In this section, the corpora instances of passive will be examined in terms of the formality in register. This paper argues that the *kena* passive carries with it an informal register based on two observations. First, the *kena* passive occurs in more informal sections of the newspapers; Second, the *kena* passive collocates with informal expressions in the texts they were found.

Table 8: Frequency of the *di-* Passive and the *kena* Passive in News Articles

		Types of Passive			
Types of Articles	**Number of Articles**	***di-***	***%***	***kena***	***%***
National News	**1**	**7**	**14%**	**-**	**-**
Sports	**0**	**2**	**4%**	**-**	**-**
Front Page	**1**	**6**	**12%**	**-**	**-**
Forum	**1**	**17**	**34%**	**-**	**-**
Economy	**2**	**18**	**36%**	**-**	**-**
Total	**5**	**50**	**100%**	**-**	**-**
National News	**4**	**-**	**-**	**4 (1 title)**	**8%**
Family	**4**	**-**	**-**	**10**	**20%**
Features	**4**	**-**	**-**	**8**	**16%**
Forum	**3**	**-**	**-**	**10**	**20%**
Religion	**4**	**-**	**-**	**8**	**16%**
Entertainment	**3**	**-**	**-**	**3**	**6%**
Military	**2**	**-**	**-**	**3**	**6%**
Front Page	**2**	**-**	**-**	**2**	**4%**
Special Report	**1**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**2%**
Health	**1**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**2%**
Total	**28**	**-**	**-**	**50**	**100%**

For example, Table 8 shows that the *kena* passive occurred more frequently in columns such as *Family* (20%), *Forum*[3] (16%), *Features* (20%) and *Religion* (16%). These columns contribute to the 72% of the 50

[3] The articles in the *Forum* show the direct quotations of the panels' words.

instances found. These columns usually adopt a more casual register compared to columns such as *Economy*. This explains why more contexts pertaining to personal experience are found with the *kena* passive. The informal register adopted by these newspaper columns results in the use of more colloquial expressions in the *kena* passive than the *di-* passive.

Unlike the *kena* passive, the *di-* passive in Table 8 displays no significant patterns of occurrences. This is because it was found both in more formal columns such as *Economy* (36%) and in less formal columns such as *Forum* (34%). Therefore, the occurring patterns of the *di-* passive are not as distinctive as the *kena* passive, which is predominantly found in less formal texts.

In order to look more into the differing level of formality between the two passive types, the expressions used in both lists were compared. Examples (7) and (8) display the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive respectively:

(7) *Dalam operasi itu, polis turut merampas 22,500 biji pil*
in operation that police continue seize CLASS pill
Emirin 5 bernilai lebih RM500,000 yang siap ***dipaket***
Emirin 5 with-value more REL finished PASS-package
dan disembunyikan *dalam stor di sebuah kondominium,*
and PASS-hide inside store LOC one-CLASS condominium
di sini.
LOC here (2 April 2003 *National News*, BH)
"In that operation, the police also seized 22,500 pills of Emrin 5 which costs more than RM500,000 that were already packaged and hid inside a condominium here.

(8) *Bila Ali tak ke rumah saya isterinya telefon kekawan*
when Ali NEG LOC house I wife-3sing phone friends
pejabat kata saya dah KENA cerai.
office say I already PASS-divoice
"When Ali did not come to my house, his wife called (her) friends at the office saying that I had been divorced." (6 April 2003 *Family*,UM)

Comparing (7) and (8), the sentence of (7) is longer. This differing length between the two passive types is consistent throughout the data, i.e., most of the *di-* passive occur in longer sentences than the *kena* passive.

In example (8), the verbs *telefon* 'phone' and *kata* 'say' are informal.

The formal use should include the affixes ***men****lefon* 'phone' and ***meng****ata****kan*** 'say.' Colloquial expressions are also seen in the use of *bila* 'when,' *tak* 'NEG' and *dah* 'already.'

The occurrences of colloquial expressions and the use of informal verb forms are recurring phenomena within the *kena* clauses. Such occurrences are not found in the fifty *di-* passive constructions.

In summary, this section looks at the differing pragmatic functions of the *di-* passive and the *kena* passive. The *kena* passive carries with it an informal register. This is seen from two aspects – (a) the informal newspaper columns in which the *kena* passive occurs and (b) the colloquial expressions appearing with the *kena* passive.

5. Conclusion and Future Work

Based on the discussion in this paper, a comparison of elements can be drawn. This is shown in Table 9 below:

Table 9: The Comparisons of the *di-* Passive and the *kena* Passive

	Types of Passive	
	di-	***kena***
a) Frequency	**More**	**Less**
b) Transitivity	**Less**	**More**
c) Pragmatics		
(i) Connotations	**Neutral**	**Negative**
(ii) Register	**More Formal**	**Less Formal**

From Table 9, the *di-* passive is seen to be more frequent, less Transitive, involving a more neutral connotation and more formal register. On the other hand, the *kena* passive is less frequent, more Transitive, has a more negative connotation and less formal register. Thus, despite the seemingly overt similarities in word order (OVS), the two passive differ significantly.

In addition to the differences found in Table 9, they also differ in other respects. The *di-* passive verb has a widely ranged recipient types but the *kena* passive often refers to human recipients. The verbs of the *di-* passive convey neutral information about the recipients but the verbs of the *kena* passive often convey non-beneficial information about the recipients. There are also more indications of colloquialism in the *kena* passive than the *di-* passive. Due to the informal register of the *kena* passive, the sentences of the *kena* passive are usually shorter than the *di-* passive.

Overall, this paper answers the question why the *kena* passive has limited occurrences compared to the di- passive. This is because the *kena* passive is constrained by pragmatic specifications related to the contexts of the texts. Due to these constraints, the selection of the *kena* passive (over the *di-* passive) is proposed to involve pragmatic considerations such as the formality of register in contexts and the requirements of the contexts for actions with negative implications to the recipients.

To further pursue the differences of the Malay passive, it is proposed to work on a fuller comparison of all the three types of passives. By doing so, the question whether the second type of passive also differs pragmatically from the other passive types can be investigated. In addition to this, the different senses of the term *kena* can also be looked at. By examining these different senses, it might be possible to trace the origin of the negative connotation in the *kena* passive. It should also possible to observe whether a sense of *kena* is a metaphorical extension of the other senses.

In sum, this study shed light on the semantic and pragmatic differences between two passive markers that were considered near synonyms. In this respect, it can be compared to Huang et al.'s (2000) study that looked at corpora-based analysis of near synonyms of Mandarin verbs. In both cases, corpora analyses were crucial to understanding the distribution patterns of the phenomena in question. It is hoped that these types of studies will lead to a better understanding of semantic and pragmatic functions encoded in the languages of the world.

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Internet Resources

Utusan Malaysia http://www.bharian.com.my/
Berita Harian http://www.utusan.com.my/

List of Abbreviations Used:

Ext	Existential	**K**	Kinesis
PASS	Passive	**P**	Punctuality
REL	Relative Linker	**A**	Aspect
NEG	Negation	**Ø**	None of the K, P or A Applied
LOC	Locative Marker	**S**	Agent
CLASS	Classifier	**V**	Verb
PART	Particle	**O**	Recipient of Action
3Sing	Third Person Singular Pronoun	**BH**	Berita Harian
		UM	Utusan Malaysia

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