

# The Afixation in Karo Language

*Gunawan Sembiring<sup>1</sup>, Suci Mentari<sup>2</sup>, Sultan Salman Effendi<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Sumatera Utara – Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study aims to reveal the process of affixation and potential forms in the Karo language at the Pancur Batu Traditional Market. The theory used in this paper is the theory proposed by experts in the field of morphology. The approach used is a generative morphological theory [1][2]. The basic units of the lexicon are "morphemes," and according to the lexicalist, Aronoff argues that "words" are the basis of all derivations. The morphophonemic process analysis consists of four subcomponents: 1) morpheme list, 2) word formation rules, 3) filter, and 4) dictionary. The data found verb-forming affixations, noun-forming affixations, adjective-forming affixations, reduplication with affixes, and potential forms in the Karo language. This study focuses on collecting and presenting qualitative data on affixation processes closely related to morphology. Therefore, this research is also called descriptive-qualitative research. In the potential formation of the Karo language, there are three possible forms: phonological, lexical, and semantic.

**Keywords:** Afixation, Pancur Batu traditional market, Karo language

Received: 25 October 2022 | Revised: 11 November 2022 | Accepted: 17 December 2022

## 1 Introduction

The theory of generative morphology has an important position in language and study which is useful for forming a word formation morphologically to the classification of words based on affixation. This was marked by Chomsky's invitation in 1970 to pursue the field of morphology with his writing "remax on nominalization". The idea of this theory then provides a new choice for other lexicalists [1]. The interest in generative morphology was first expressed in generative grammar [3] [4].

Generative morphology is a sub-field of Transformational Generative Grammar (TGT) [5]. The standard TGT theory consists of three main components, namely: (1) syntax, (2) semantics, and (3) phonology [3]. The semantic component is central, then the semantic component and the phonological component interpret what the syntactic component produces. Within the syntactic part are two main subcomponents: (1) basic subcomponent and (2) transformation subcomponent. The basic sub-components will have deep structure grammar, which becomes the input to the semantic component. This inner

---

\*Corresponding author at: Universitas Sumatera Utara – Medan, Indonesia

E-mail address: [sucimentari95@gmail.com](mailto:sucimentari95@gmail.com)

structure can change (transform) to produce a surface structure, which becomes the input to the phonological component. Within the basic subcomponents, categories, and lexicons collect several words in the language [6].

As is the case with the Karo language. The Karo language, one of the regional languages always used by the people in the Pancur Batu traditional market, has its word-formation system, especially in affixation. Karo language tends not to be difficult, is not bound by time rules, and Karo language is richer in vocabulary, meaning that in Karo language, we can find various equivalent words for just one word, for example, in the equivalent word "you" for example *kam*, *ndu*, *engko*, and still many others. In today's modern era, many new Karo languages have sprung up, caused by a mix of cultures around the community, so several languages do not conform to the rules, and some people do not understand the meaning of the language [7].

This is the background for the author to choose this title because the writer is interested in exploring affixation considering the many uses of word affixation that the writer finds in the Karo language at the Pancur Batu Traditional Market. The use of the affixation of the Karo language in the Pancur Batu traditional market is part of a culture that is still alive, maintained, and upheld by the people who live there. In addition, potential forms of the Karo language are starting to emerge, so it is likely to shift the use of existing traditional languages [8].

## **2. Method**

This study collects and presents qualitative data on affixation processes closely related to morphology. Therefore, this research is also called descriptive-qualitative investigation [9]. This study's data are words with affixation phenomena in the Karo language. The research data was sourced from a Karo language dictionary book, and additional data was sourced from observations of the social interaction of the Karo community at the Pancur Batu traditional market in North Sumatra. In collecting data for this study, researchers used the listening and note-taking method to collect data in words containing affixation phenomena in the Karo language. After the data is collected, the final stage is analysis [10] [11]. Data excerpted (quoted) is transcribed using generative morphology theory. Then the data categorized as having an affixation phenomenon is classified according to the affixation phenomenon (prefix, infix, suffix, or confix) contained in the word and then analyzed according to the morphological process referring to the theory of generative morphology.

### 3. Result and Discussion

The principles and techniques of identifying morphemes which consist of three separate main subcomponents: (1) list of morphemes, dm, (2) word formation rules ), apk, and (3) filter, finally (4) dictionary is an integral part of generative morphology or as the last component of generative morphology. Morphological analysis was carried out in two levels: the level of the original structure, sa, and the level of the outer structure, SL. Based on this assumption, one needs first to explore the internal network or representation of the origin of a morphological construction, then look at what processes occur in the original form to be able to determine its derivative or external form. Based on the principle of this generative morphological model, the author tries to implement it with some initial data in the Karo language, where the author himself is a native speaker of the language. The steps for implementing generative morphological affixation analysis in the Karo language following Halle's theoretical model can be described as follows:

#### 4.1. Affix

Affixes are bound forms belonging to bound morphemes. Therefore, in their use (word formation), they are always attached to other forms or morphemes [12][13].

Affixation is the process of forming words from basic forms to complex forms.

##### 4.1.1 Verb forming affixes

There are seven constructions in reciprocal verbs (verbs that express actions carried out by two parties) in the Karo language, namely:

##### Prefix

/er-/ + basic word (N) → /er- /+ / said / 'acquaintance' → / speak / 'get to know.'

##### Confix

/er-.....-i/ + base word (N) → /er-.....-i/+ /bual/ 'bualan' → /erbuali/ 'boasting to each other'

/si-.....-ken/ + base word (V) → /si-.....-ken/+ /ngerana/ 'talk' → /siranaken/ 'talk about'

/si-.....-en/ + base word (V, N, A) → /si-.....-en/nehem/'look' → /sinehenen/ 'see each other'

/ni-.....-ken/+ root word (N) → /ni-.....-ken/+ /tjakap/ 'talk' → /nitjakapken/'talk about'

/en- .....-ken/ + base word (N) → /en- ....

/ si-.....-n/ + base word (V)- → / si-.....-n/ + /ngena/ 'love' → /singenan/ 'love each other'

#### 4.1.2 Noun forming affixes

Formation of nouns can be done by affixation process (prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and confixes). The basic words can consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives, or numerals.

##### Prefix

/per-/ 'entrepreneur' → /per/+ /gula/ → /pergula/ 'sugar entrepreneur'

/seŋ-/ 'one or se' → /seŋ-/+ /gulas/ 'review' → /seŋgulat/ 'seulas'

/pər-/ 'how to' → /pəŋ-/+ /kundul/ 'sit' → /pəŋkundul/ 'how to sit'

/pə-/ 'tool' → /pə-/+ /tukur/ 'buying' → /pənukur/ 'buying tool'

/pə-/ 'doer' → /pə-/+ /usih/ 'copy' → /pəŋusih/ 'imitator'

##### Infix

/-in-/ 'the..' → /-in-/+ /suan/ 'plant' → /sinuan/ 'planted'

##### Suffix

/-ən/ 'who drank' → /inəm/ 'drinking' + /-ən/ → /inəmən/ 'who drank'

/-ən/ 'place' → /pədəm/ 'bed' + /-ən/ → /pədəmən/ 'bed'

##### Confix

/pər- ..... -ən/ 'place' → /pər- ..... -ən/+ /juma/ 'field' → /pəŋjumən/ 'place of farming'

/pər- ..... -ən/ 'people' → /pər- ..... -ən/+ /nande/ 'ibu' → /pəŋnanden/ 'mothers'

/pər- ..... -ən/ 'one per' → /pər- ..... -ən/+ /ten/ 'ten' → /pəŋpuhən/ 'tenth'

/kə- ..... -ən/ 'place' → /kə- ..... -ən/+ /raja/ 'king' → /kəŋrajan/ 'king's place'

/kə- ..... -ən/ 'abstract object' → /kə- ..... -ən/+ /bujur/ 'honest' → /kəbujuran/ 'honesty'

/now- ..... -ən/ 'abstract object' → /now- ..... -ən/+ /baiak/ 'kaya' → /kinibaiakən/ 'wealth'

/pən- .... -ən/ 'place' → /pən- .... -ən/+ /tatap/ 'pandang' → /pənatapən/ 'a place to look at'

/pər- .... -ən/ 'place' → /pər- .... -ən/+ /tumpun/ 'gathering place' → /pəŋtumpun/ 'gathering place'

/pən- ..... -kən/ 'how to' → /pən ..... kən/+ /nəhən/ 'to see' → /pənənəhən/ 'how to see'

/pən- .... -i/ 'how to' → /pən- .... -i/+ /lulu/ 'searching' → /pənəlului/ 'how to search'

### 4.1.3 Reduplication with Affixes

Reduplication of affixed nouns can be formed with prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and confixes.

#### Prefix

/pər-/ 'entrepreneur' → /pər-/ + /rimo/ 'orange' → /pərimo-rimo/ 'orange farmer'

#### Suffix

/—ən/ 'plural' → /—ən/+ /inam/ 'drinking' → /inam-inamən/ 'drinking'

#### Infix

/—in—/ 'plural' → /-in- /+ /suan/ 'plant' → sinuan-sinuan/ 'plant-plants'

#### Confix

/pər...—an/ 'many' → /pər-....-an/ + /burih/ 'handwashing area' → pəburihan-pəburihan/ 'many handwashing areas'

/ka— an/ 'all' → /ka---an/ + /riah/ 'joyful' → /kariahan-kariahan/ 'all the joy'

### 4.1.4 Adjective Forming Affixes

#### Affixation Process

Formation of adjectives can be done by affixation process, namely with prefixes, suffixes, confixes, and joining affixes. The basic words include pre-categorial forms, adjectives, nouns, and verbs.

#### Prefix

/N-/ is an allomorph with /mə-/ 'in a state of' → /N-/ + /kijat/ 'lazy' → /makijat/ 'in a somewhat lazy state'

/mə—/ 'like' → /mə-/ + /nini/ 'grandmother' >→ /mənini/ 'like grandma'

/mə—/ 'likes' → /mə-/ + /jujut/ 'talkative' → /məjujut/ 'likes talkative'

/pər-/ 'has a character' → /pər-/ + /rampus/ 'angry' → /pərampus/ 'grumpy'

/pər- / 'often' → /pər-/+ /udan/ 'rain' → /pərudan/ 'often rains'

/pər— / 'likes to walk...' → /pər-/+ /gawah/ 'walks around' → /pərgawah/ 'likes to walk around'

/tər-/ 'to the bone' → /tər-/ + /tulan/ 'bone' → /tərtulan/ 'to the bone'

**Suffix**

/-ən/ 'more' → /-ən/ + / galaŋ/ 'bigger' → /galaŋən/ 'bigger'

/—ən/ 'suffering from' → /-ən/ + / kudil/ 'mange' → /kudilən/ 'mange'

/—sa/ 'too' → /-sa/ + /kartaŋ/ 'thin' → /kartaŋsa/ 'too thin'

**Confix**

/tər—...—ən/ 'more... more' → /tər-.....ən/+/pədas/ 'faster' → /tərpədasən/ 'even faster'

/si-.....-na/ 'the most' → /si-.....-na/ + /məgara/ 'red' → /siməgarana/ 'the most red'

/si— ən/ 'not the same' → /si-.....-ən/ gəndək/ 'short' → /sigəndəkən/ 'not the same as short'

/N— sə/ is an allomorph with /m— sa/ 'too' → /N- sə/+/tabu/ → /ntabusə/ 'too sweet'

/ər— na/ 'increase' → /ər-na/ + /jile/ 'beautiful' → /ərjilena/ 'become prettier'

**Affix Join**

/sila—na/ 'at least' → /sila-na/ + /mətəhat/ 'difficult' → /silam təhatna/ 'least difficult'

**Affix reduplication**

Repeating adjectives can be formed with prefixes, suffixes, and confixes.

**Prefix**

/N—/ is allomorphic with /mə—/ 'rather' → /n-/ + /gərsiŋ/ 'yellow' → /məgərsiŋ-gərsiŋ/ 'yellowish'

/tər-/ 'always calling' → /tər-/ + /bapa/ 'ayah' → /tərbapa-bapa/ 'always calling for daddy' (because of longing)

**Suffix**

/—ən/ 'feeling' → /-ən/ + /juah/ 'healthy' → /juah-juahən/ 'feeling well'

/-ən/ 'to suffer because of' → /-ən/ + / uga/ 'ulcers' → uga-ugaən/ 'ulcers'

**Phonological Idiosyncrasy**

Phonological idiosyncrasy is the process of forming a word due to the omission of a letter due to affixes, and one example is in the Karo language, the affixes N- and -PaN when combined with a base word with the initial phoneme b, then the affix N should change to /m/.

For example, the root word 'bawa' plus the affix should be 'Nbawa', but because 'bawa' starts with phoneme b, the 'Nbawa' changes to 'maba'. Then it turns out that there is a phonological idiosyncrasy where not all words follow this rule.

For example, the words 'material' and 'return'. When they are added with affixes, they don't change to 'm', 'material' becomes 'material', and 'back' becomes 'flipped.'

### **Lexical Idiosyncrasy**

A lexicon idiosyncrasy is a form of word formation process through word-formation that is included in linguistic phenomena, and this means a process of language formation that violates the rules in linguistic phenomena to form a new word in a language, in Karo language, for example:

Lexical Idiosyncrasy in Karo Language

/Per-/ entrepreneur

Example of a sugar factory = is a sugar entrepreneur.

potential form

Per + sugar cane = sugar cane (sugarcane entrepreneur)

Per + oil palm = oil palm (oil palm entrepreneurs)

/per-/ 'way'

Example: per + kundul = / per kundul / 'how to sit'

potential form

Per+guess = /guess/ 'how to calculate'

Per+ answer = /answer/ 'how to answer'

### **Semantic Idiosyncrasy**

Semantic idiosyncratic is the process of forming words through words that are in a language and will have a different meaning if the word is compared to Indonesian.

One example in the Karo language is:

Semantic Idiosyncrasy

Study	= learn from the teacher (Indonesian)
Study	= go to a shaman (Karo language)
Tithe	= one-tenth (Indonesian)
Tithe	= offering/alms (Karo language)
Waluh	= red gourd (in Indonesian)
Waluh	= nine (Karo language).

#### 4. Conclusion

The theory of generative morphology and its approach to word formation in this paper is a morphophonemic process. It can be concluded that in the generative morphology theory of Halle's model, the basic units of the lexicon are morphemes, and according to lexicalist Aronoff argues that words are the basis of all derivations. The morphophonemic process analysis consists of four subcomponents: 1) morpheme list, 2) word formation rules, 3) filter, and 4) dictionary.

In DM, all morphemes are identified into two main categories or classes: 1) base words and affixes, and 2) free base words or bound base words, such as root nouns, root verbs, and root adjectives. The second component of word formation rules how morphemes are arranged in certain clusters to form new words, such as the morphophonemic process, to produce acceptable and unacceptable words. In the Karo language, seven constructions were found in reciprocal verbs (which express actions carried out by two parties).

#### REFERENCES

- [1] M. Halle, "Prolegomena to a Theory of Word Formation," *Linguist. Inq.*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 3–16, 1973.
- [2] M. Aronoff, *Word Formation in Generative Grammar*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976.
- [3] S. Dardjowidjojo, *Morfologi Generatif: Teori dan Permasalahannya*. Jakarta: Lembaga Bahasa Atma Jaya, 1988.
- [4] N. Saputra, T. Lubis, and F. Setiawan, "Politeness Strategies for the Speech Acts of Indonesian Language Education Students in Pidie Regency," *Tradit. Mod. Humanit.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 33–40, 2021, doi: 10.32734/tmh.v1i1.7185.
- [5] N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1965.
- [6] Martina and T. Lubis, "Swear Word in West Kalimantan Community," *Tradit. Mod. Humanit.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 14–27, May 2022, doi: 10.32734/tmh.v2i2.10131.
- [7] E. Daulay and T. Lubis, "The Revitalization of Mandi Marpangir Tradition in Matondang Village, Padang Lawas Regency," *Tradit. Mod. Humanit.*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 43–49, Sep. 2022, doi: 10.32734/tmh.v2i3.10149.
- [8] K. E. Tarigan and T. Lubis, "Indexicality of Minyak Karo in North Sumatra: An Anthropological Perspective," *Tradit. Mod. Humanit.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 8–25, 2022.
- [9] T. Lubis and A. F. Abus, "Tutur Nandong dalam Masyarakat Simeulue," in *KOLITA 15 : Konferensi Linguistik Tahunan Atma Jaya Kelima Belas*, 2017, pp. 631–635. [Online]. Available: <https://osf.io/preprints/inarxiv/pm98a/>
- [10] S. Shaumiwaty *et al.*, "Teacher performance toward students' mathematical literacy in teaching linear program mathematical models," *J. Phys. Conf. Ser.*, vol. 1663, p. 012066, Oct. 2020, doi: 10.1088/1742-6596/1663/1/012066.
- [11] T. Lubis, R. Sibarani, S. Lubis, and I. Azhari, "Cultural Performance of Oral Tradition Nandong Simeulue as Human Resource for Ecotourism: A Linguistic Anthropology



- Study,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Natural Resources and Sustainable Development*, 2022, pp. 428–432. doi: 10.5220/0009904100002480.
- [12] S. Scalise, *Generative Morphology*. Dordrecht Holland/Cinnamminson USA: Foris Publication, 1984.
- [13] H. Sulistyowati, A. K. Mahatmaharti, and T. Lubis, “Noun Composition in Narrative Passage,” *Tradit. Mod. Humanit.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 1–7, May 2022, doi: 10.32734/tmh.v2i2.10129.