

# Nominal Characteristics in Pakpak Language

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at describing the nominal characteristics in Pakpak language. The structural morphology theory was employed with specific attention is driven to morphological processes of nominal natures which can be seen from semantic, syntactic as well as morphological natures. The distributional method was used. The results concluded that the nominal characteristics of Pakpak language can be observed from the natures of nominal semantics, nominal syntactics, and nominal morphology. The semantic nature is related to the meanings of nouns and the syntactic nature is related to nominal functions in sentences and to noun phrase markers. The morphological nature of nouns is also related to affixing morphemes of noun class markers, such as penjukjuk 'trapping instrument', penuan 'a person who grows plants', and pengerana 'speaker'. The affix /pe-/ here becomes the nominal markers from the verbal class, for instance jukjuk 'to trap', suan 'to plant' and from the nominal class, such as rana 'word'.

**Keywords:** nominal characteristics, semantic, syntactic, and morphological natures.

## INTRODUCTION

The affixation process as one of the morphological processes often results in morphophonemic processes in Pakpak language (PL), for example, the verb *mengelabang* is derived and formed from the noun *labang* and the prefix /menge-/. The noun *pemekpek* is derived and formed from the verb *pekpek* and the prefix /pem-).

Although the morphophonemic processes in PL has been identified so far, but, the nominal morphological system, especially its characteristics in word formation, has not been studied in detail. Information on nominal characteristics is systematically urgent to record since this language is much influenced and/or affected by several aspects, for instance, formal education, administration, government, religion, and the advancement of mass communication system, especially radio and

television, and other social elements; all of the aspects are communicated in Bahasa Indonesia. Later or sooner the PL has less function in its society and its actual description of grammar may face some difficulties. The nouns *perlombaan* 'competition', *pertahanan* 'defense', *koperasi* 'cooperative', and *generasi* 'generation' are commonly used by PL's native speakers and such uses will gradually affect the PL's noun system.

Solin (1988: 112) stated PL's native speakers are bilinguals who can speak the PL and the Toba language; in some cases, they can also speak the Karo language. He argued that the two external languages are widely used by PL's speakers, especially by those who are Christians (Christianity is the majority religion in Pakpak regency). PL's native speakers are reluctant to speak the PL when they meet outside their native land, for

example when they stay in Medan, and they choose to use Toba or Karo language when they interact with the native speakers of these two languages.

Since it is rarely used by its native speakers, the PL is threatened to distinct; therefore, the paper would be able to help the PL from disappearing from its native territory and to stimulate PL's speakers to love their own language. PL's native speakers are expected to realize that their mother tongue is rich of special grammar system which is not found in other ethnic languages in Indonesia and their knowledge is effective in increasing the their efforts to love (and be proud of) their language. The paper would make them believe that their language remains to exist and they should foster to use it in daily communication and to create efforts to preserve their language. Distinction to the PL is waiting for the days to count and this condition is really bad for local people, local as well as Indonesian governments since Indonesia is well known for its richness in ethnic language and becomes one of the countries in the world which has hundreds of ethnic languages.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The difference in lexical identity mainly regards to meaning, because, even though the class is the same, like the words *makanan* 'food' and *pemakan* 'eater' in which the two are nominals, but their meanings are not the same. Likewise, the words *pelajar* 'student' and *guru* 'teacher' which are also nouns, their meanings are not the same, or the words *belajar* 'to study' and *mengajar* 'to teach' which are verbal classes have different meanings. If there two words have the same roots as well as the same word class, but they are different in meanings, the two words differ lexically. For example, the English words *friend* 'teman' and *friendship* 'pertemanan' belong to the same class and roots (Verhaar, 1987).

Nida (1976) stated that morphology is "the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words". A similar definition was also given by Varshney

(1993), an Indian linguist who stated that "morphology is the science and study of the small grammatical units of language and their formation into words, including inflection, derivation and composition". Varshney gave an additional explanation that the formation process is inseparable from the three processes, especially the inflectional and derivational processes. We accept the two linguists' definitions in such a way that morphology examines how words are formed, from what roots are the words formed, what are their grammatical forms, what functions do the affixes have in the word formation, and after word formation, what class of words is formed.

The morphological features of nominals in PL appear in affix morphemes functioning as the noun class markers; consider the words *penjukjuk* 'trapping net', *penuan* 'a person who plants', and *pengerana* 'a speaker' in which all the words are added with the affix /pe-/ which functions as the noun marker and are derived from verbal class (*jukjuk* (v) 'to trap with a net', *suan* (v) 'to plant') and from nominal class (*rana* 'word'). Nouns may refer to humans, animals, objects, concepts or definitions and become one of class words. Because of their diverse functions in words, the nouns are difficult to identify quickly. This is different from the noun class which generally only occupies the predicate function in a sentence (Alwi, 1998: 213).

The repetitive noun formation in this study is also called *kata ulang* 'word repetition' in Bahasa Indonesia (BI), which is principally recurring nominal forms by repetition. The compound nouns are formed from nouns consisting of two components, each of which is a simple word or a simple free base and from compound nouns undergoing affixation process as shown in the examples: *rambah mbeilen* 'thick forest/jungle', *roroh-rorohen* 'vegetables'. The above views are expected that they can explain the characteristics of nouns in PL. Data were analyzed using morphological

analysis procedures as proposed by Nida (1970) and Verhaar (1987: 108-109).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Nominal Characteristics in PL

Like nouns in BI, there are three characteristics of nouns in PL, that can be seen from: 1) the nature of nominal semantics, 2) the nature of nominal syntax, and 3) the nature of nominal morphology.

#### 1. The Nature of Nominal Semantics

Nouns may differ from other words from the semantic nature. Nominal semantics refers to the meaning a noun has. From the semantic view, nouns include roots and complex forms that are addressed to humans, animals, plants, objects, and concepts or definitions. Thus, in PL the nature of nominal semantics can be seen in the following a set of data in Example 1.

##### Example 1

<i>dedahen</i>	'younger brother/sister'	<i>dukut</i>	'grass'
<i>daberru</i>	'female'	<i>manuk-manuk</i>	'bird'
<i>daholi</i>	'male'	<i>wari</i>	'day'
<i>bulung</i>	'leaf'	<i>nipe</i>	'snake'

There are several features of basic nominal semantics that can be classified into: 1) nouns referring to names of places or geography, such as: Medan, Dairi, Sidikalang, Salak, Silencang, etc., 2) nouns referring to the names of people including greetings of kinship, such as: Nurlince, *Bapak Tengah* (Tonga) 'middle uncle', *Puhun* 'uncle', and 3) nouns referring to the names of days, such as: *Senin* 'Monday', *Selasa* 'Tuesday', or *Rabu* 'Wednesday'.

#### 2. The Nature of Nominal Semantics

Like semantic natures, the nouns in PL can also be observed through their syntactic features, such as a) nominal functions in sentence, and b) markers in nominal phrase.

##### A. Nominal functions in sentence

Nouns in PL can be observed through their syntactic features. In a sentence, a noun is assigned to fill or occupy the subject position. As it is known, a sentence consists of certain syntactic functions, namely the subject, predicate, object and complement. These syntactic

functions are empty places that can be filled by certain word classes. Nouns in PL can also be observed by their functions to fill the subject, object, or complementary functions (see Example 2).

##### Example 2

<i>Kalaki manjaha</i>	'They read'
<i>Meridi bapa</i>	'Father is bathing'
<i>Berkat ia</i>	'He/She leaves'
<i>Inang menuan rorohen</i>	'Mother plants vegetables'
<i>Beltekna mbelen</i>	'His/Her stomach is bloated'
<i>Mengeloteh sabah Bapa</i>	'Father plows paddy field'

From the Example 1 above all subject positions are filled by noun classes.

##### B. Noun phrase markers

The word *oda* 'not' is always combined with nouns to indicate the negation (see the Example 3) and it functions as the noun phrase marker.

##### Example 3

<i>oda bapa</i>	'not a father'
<i>oda tambar</i>	'not medicine'
<i>oda kalak</i>	'not them'
<i>oda jelma</i>	'not human being'
<i>oda penangko</i>	'not a thief'

At the phrase level, nouns can be followed by adjectives, for example, the adjective *ketek* 'small' which can appear after their nouns: *jelma ketek* 'small human being', *kempu ketek* 'small grandchild', *pinakan ketek* 'small animal'. The adjective *gomok* 'fat' can also be combined with nouns, as shown in the examples: *dedahen gomok* 'fat younger brother/sister', *jelma gomok* 'fat human being', *kempu gomok* 'fat grandchild', and *pinakan gomok* 'fat animal'.

#### 3. The Nature of Nominal Morphology

Nouns can be observed by their morphological processes like word formation which combine basic words with various affixes. In PL there are certain affixes (see Example 4) which can be attached to their basic words to form noun classes (or derivative words) as shown in Example 5.

##### Example 4

Prefix	Infix	Suffix	Confix
pe-	-in-	-en	ke-en
per-			pe-en
			per-en

**Example 5**

/pe-/	+	aleng	→	pengaleng	'one who picks'
/pe-/	+	dedah	→	pendedah	'the keeper'
/pe-/	+	deddoh	→	pendeddoh	'foot stepper'
/per-/	+	juma	→	perjuma	'field worker'
/-in-/	+	tangko	→	tinangko	'the stolen'
/-en/	+	kundul	→	kundulen	'seat'
/ke-en/	+	bincar	→	kebincaren	'rising spot'
/pe-en/	+	suan	→	penuanen	'planting'
/per-en/	+	kuta	→	perkutaan	'village compound'

All the affixes in Example 4 may function to create derivative words in which their roots can be nouns or adjectives. From the data above it can be seen that the noun-forming affix in the Pakpak language can be attached to the basic words in the form of nouns or adjectives.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The nominal characteristics in PL can be observed from the features of nominal semantics, of nominal syntax, and of nominal morphology. The semantic nature is related to the meaning the noun has. The syntactic nature refers to noun function in a sentence and as the noun phrase markers. The morphological nature is correlated to affix morphemes functioning as noun class markers, such as *penjukjuk* 'trapping instrument', *penuan* 'a person who grows plants', and *pengerana* 'speaker'. The affix /pe-/ here becomes the nominal markers from the verbal class, for instance *jukjuk* 'to trap', *suan* 'to plant' and from the nominal class, such as *rana* 'word'.

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