

Excessive Adjectives with the Multiple Affixations *pa-hu* in Toba Batak

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Abstract

The objectives of this study was to investigate phonological conditioning of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* in Toba Batak. The method of this study is descriptive qualitative approach to describe Toba Batak phenomena deeply. While multiple affixations have been widely examined in Indonesian language and in other regional languages, its manifestations in Toba Batak remain largely unexplored. Therefore, this study fills this gap. The findings reveal four distinct categories of phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* in Toba Batak with the following requirements: (1) if the root adjective ends in sound [k], [ŋ], or [ŋ], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* appear as [pa-ku]; (2) if the root adjective ends in sound [m] or [p], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* appear as [pa-pu]; (3) if the root adjective ends in sound [s], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* appear as [pa-su]; and (4) if the root adjective ends in sound [t], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* appear as [pa-tu]. The implications highlight the need to protect regional languages like Toba Batak in the face of globalisation and reach applicable domains like cultural revitalisation. Thus, this study advocates for more research on under-represented languages by bridging the gap between theoretical linguistics and real-world conservation initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

An intriguing linguistic phenomenon is the process of multiple affixations, exemplified by the English word "denationalize." In English, complex words can be formed by adding various affixes to the root "national" leading to terms like "denationalization", "antidenationalization", and "preantidenationalization" though constructions like "*denationalisate" are not permissible. In contrast, many regional languages in Indonesia, such as Toba Batak, remain under-researched in terms of multiple affixations.

The authors aim to address this gap by examining multiple affixations in Toba Batak, a language that is endangered due to a decrease in its speaker population. Factors contributing to the language's precarious status include a shift towards Bahasa Indonesia as the national language, reduced intergenerational transmission, and a lack of linguistic resources (Lubis & Bowo, 2022; Rajagukguk et al., 2022).

Toba Batak is native to Samosir Island in Sumatra and the surrounding regions to the east, south, and southwest of Lake Toba (Crystal, 1993; Percival, 1981). It remains a vital means of daily social interaction in villages across various regencies, including Samosir, Toba Samosir, Humbang Hasundutan, and North Tapanuli. According to Sinaga (2002), understanding Toba Batak involves embracing the essence and heritage of the Batak people.

The first comprehensive study of Toba Batak was conducted by Tuuk (1864) in "Tobasche Spraakunst" ("Grammar of Toba Batak"). Despite the language's cultural importance, there is a scarcity of research focused on multiple affixations in Toba Batak. Voorhoeve's study (1955) on Batak languages tends to group the reconstructions of proto-Batak languages as South Batak (Toba Batak and Angkola Batak), North Batak (Karo, Alas, Dairi), and East Batak (Simalungun).

Most existing studies have concentrated on cultural aspects such as folklore and rituals (Ginting et al., 2023; Nadeak, 2023; Rezeki, 2024; Siahaan & Barus, 2022; Sidabutar & Mulyadi, 2023; Sinamo et al., 2021; Sitorus & Lubis, 2023; Simaremare et al., 2023; Tampubolon et al., 2024). Some research has also explored contrastive analyses between Toba Batak and English (Armando et al., 2023; Siahaan et al., 2024; Sianipar et al., 2022; Sidabutar, 2020).

Ambarita is recognized as a prominent scholar in the morphological systems of Toba Batak, with numerous publications (2025a, 2015b, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2023e, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, , 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2019, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e, 2018f, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2016, 2003, 1998). This research plays a crucial role in addressing the lack of studies on Toba Batak, particularly concerning the process of multiple affixations *pa-hu* in this endangered language, which is vital for its preservation for future generations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Adjectives

Adjectives are distinct from nouns and verbs in that they do not have plural or tense markers. In Toba Batak, adjectives serve to modify nouns or pronouns (Nababan, 1981: 35; Houghton, 1984: 18). These adjectives can be created through various affixations, including the prefix [um-], the infix [-um-], the suffix [-an], and multiple affixations such as [mars-i], [ha-assa], [pa-hu], and [sa...full adjective reduplication...-na] (Ambarita, 2018: 81). Notably, multiple affixations do not change the word class of the root adjective, indicating that this process is inflectional (Ambarita, 2016: 18). Nababan (1981) categorizes adjective degree in Toba Batak into two types: the comparative (*um-* or *-an*) and the excessive (*pa-hu*), such as *ringgas* "diligent" → *pa-ringgas-hu* "too diligent" or *maraek* "wet" → *pa-maraek-hu* "too wet", etc. The symbol → "becoming" is used in the next parts for clarity and ease of exposition in this study.

2. Affixations

Affixes are bound morphemes that gain meaning only when they are attached to a free morpheme (Katamba, 1993: 44). The process of multiple affixations entails the addition of bound morphemes to free morphemes, resulting in the creation of new words. This process typically involves phonological, semantic, and syntactic considerations, allowing affixes to be added at the beginning, middle, or end of root words (Parera, 1988: 18). Multiple affixations serve as a productive method of word formation in many languages (Nodjoomi, 2017: 164).

3. Multiple affixations

Multiple affixations involve the attachment of two or more affixes to the root of a word, forming complex words. The formation of complex words occurs through multiple rounds of affixation, with each round building upon the previous one (Katamba, 1993: 52). In Indonesian, for instance, words like "memperbaiki" (to fix) and "memberikan" (to give) are created through the processes of multiple affixations, i.e. *mem-per-i* and *mem-kan*, respectively. Likewise, words can also

undergo multiple affixations to express specific grammatical and lexical meanings (Alonso, 2011: 272-274).

4. Assimilation as a Morphological Process

The term "morphology" was first introduced by Trubetzkoy (1890-1938), a key figure in the Prague Linguistic School. It is a shortened form of "morphophonology" which pertains to the study of the phonological structure of morphemes (Suhardi, 2005: 206). Traditionally, morphophonemics deals with the changes that occur in morphemes during various morphological processes, such as affixation, reduplication, or compounding (Chaer, 2007: 195-196). When sounds change at the boundaries between morphemes, it is essential to consider both roots and derived words in these sound changes (Ino, 2009). Morphophonemics specifically examines the structures and morphemes, as well as the potential combinations that arise in a language due to phonemic variation (Malmikjer, 1995: 320). This branch of linguistics investigates phenomena that involve both phonological and morphological aspects (Katamba, 1993: 34).

Sound changes that occur during multiple affixations can include nasal sound changes, vowel alterations, and the addition or deletion of phonemes due to the influence of different phonemes (Chomsky and Halle, 1968: 184-85). Schane (1992: 50) notes that when morphemes combine to form a word, their segmental morphemes may undergo changes. The morphological process is a means of creating new words by combining morphemes through methods such as affixation, reduplication, compounding, acronyms, or conversion (Samsuri, 1982: 190).

Assimilation, a specific type of sound change, occurs when sounds adjust based on their phonetic environment within a word. Crowley (1992: 38) identifies several types of sound changes, including assimilation, dissimilation, and others such as lenition, fortition, and metathesis. Assimilation can manifest in various forms: by place of articulation (e.g., the morpheme [in-] changes to [im-] before a bilabial stop, as in "possible"), by manner of articulation (e.g., [in-] changes to [il-] before a lateral consonant, as in "legal"), and by sound (e.g., the plural suffix [z] changes to [s] when added to a word ending in a voiceless consonant).

5. Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

Inflectional affixes play a significant role in word formation and are highly productive (Anderson, 1982: 585). In inflected languages, each inflected word carries morphosyntactic features that influence sentence structure (Stump, 2001: 1). For instance, in English, the word "wrote" in the sentence "She wrote a letter" demonstrates inflection that indicates subject-verb agreement, tense, and aspect. The suffix "-s" signifies third person singular, "-s" in "books" denotes plural, and "-ed" in "helped" indicates past tense. In these cases, the syntactic category (verb, noun) remains unchanged despite the presence of affixes. Inflection refers to morphological constructions where the affix does not alter the syntactic category of the root word (Samsuri, 1982: 198).

In contrast, derivational affixes create new words by attaching to root words, often resulting in changes to both meaning and syntactic category (Kridalaksana, 1993: 40). For example, the suffix "-ness" transforms an adjective into a noun, which not only alters the syntactic category but also modifies the meaning of the word (Lieber, 2004: 158). Derivation involves the formation of new words from a root word by changing its syntactic category (Samsuri, 1982: 198; Anderson, 1982: 585; Bauer, 1983, 2008).

6. Grammatical and Lexical Meanings

Grammatical meaning pertains to the meaning that emerges from the relationships between linguistic elements within larger units, such as phrases or clauses (Kridalaksana, 1993: 132). This meaning reflects the new significance of a word that results from the addition of an affix to the root word, a process known as grammaticalization. For instance, the suffix "-er" in the word "bigger" indicates a comparative adjective. In addition to grammatical meaning, words that receive affixes also gain lexical meaning. Lexical meaning refers to the intrinsic meaning of a word as a symbol

representing something, an event, or a concept, independent of its context (Kridalaksana, 1993: 133). For example, the lexical meaning of "bigger" denotes "something that is larger in size, number, strength, or capacity compared to something else."

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach that incorporates quantitative elements to conduct a detailed analysis of the use of multiple affixations in Toba Batak. Data collection was carried out using documentary techniques, which involve reviewing records or documents to extract relevant information (Ary, 1979: 304). Following Sudaryanto's (1986) perspective, which posits that the true nature of a language is best understood within real-world contexts, this study examines Toba Batak in its natural environment (Djajasudarma, 1993). Here, language patterns are analyzed without experimental intervention (Seliger, 1989).

The primary data source for this study consists of verbal data on various multiple affixations in Toba Batak. In accordance with Muhadjir's (1989) view, the researchers ensure that the data are authentic and unaltered. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants, allowing for the collection of verbal or oral data directly from Toba Batak speakers in their natural settings. Additionally, secondary data were gathered from the researchers' own intuition and knowledge as native speakers of Toba Batak.

FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis and discussion, there are four alternating forms of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* attached to root adjectives with the following requirements:

1. If the final sounds of the root adjectives are [k], [n], or [ŋ], the alternating form of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is [pa-ku].
2. If the final sounds of the root adjectives are [m] or [p], the alternating form of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is [pa-pu].
3. If the final sound of the root adjectives is [s], the alternating form of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is [pa-su].
4. If the final sound of the root adjectives is [t], the alternating form of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is [pa-tu].

1. The Alternating Form [pa-ku]

The multiple affixations "pa-hu" take the alternating form [pa-ku] when the final sounds of the root adjectives are [k], [n], or [ŋ]. This phonological variation occurs as a result of assimilation, where the final sound of the root adjective influences the form of the affixation. The following sections will provide a detailed explanation of how this process works for each of these final sounds, illustrating the conditions under which [pa-ku] is used and the implications for the meaning and grammatical function of the resulting complex words.

1.1 The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [k]

When the final sound of a root adjective is [k], the affix combination "pa-hu" undergoes a phonetic change and is pronounced as [pa-ku]. In this case, the [h] sound in the affix "pa-hu" changes to [k]. This occurs because the sound [k] shares a similar place of articulation with [h]. For example, "pa-ngaknguk-hu" is pronounced as [pa-ŋʌʔŋuk-ku], "pa-paltak-hu" is pronounced as [pa-paltak-ku], and "pa-rintik-hu" is pronounced as [pa-rittik-ku]. This change from [h] to [k] after attaching the affix "pa-hu" to root adjectives is referred to as progressive assimilation, rather than regressive assimilation.

In these instances, the sounds [h] and [k] are considered morphophonemic alternations or allomorphs, which are predictable based on their phonological environment. Assimilation is a phonological process in which one sound changes into another due to the combination of morphemes,

making a sound more similar to a neighboring sound. Assimilation is just one type of morphophonemic alternation. It is common for sounds to shift due to the influence of their environment, and phonological rules within a language can cause individual sounds to take on different forms in different word contexts. Additional data are presented below.

ngaknguk	[ŋʌʔŋuk]	"inarticulate"	+ pa-hu →	pangakngukhu	[paŋʌʔŋukku]	"too inarticulate"
paltak	[paltak]	"clear"	+ pa-hu →	papaltakhu	[papaltakku]	"too clear"

The word "inarticulate" which reflects the meaning of the root adjective "ngaknguk" [ŋʌʔŋuk], is fully retained to express the lexical meaning of the intensive adjective "pa-gaknguk-hu" [pa-ʌʔŋukku], which means "too inarticulate." Similarly, the word "clear" represents the meaning of the root adjective "paltak" [paltak] and is fully maintained in the exaggerated form "pa-paltak-hu" [pa-paltakku], which means "too clear." The root adjective "rintik" [rittik], which means "crazy" also retains the same lexical meaning in the intensification form "pa-rintik-hu" [pa-rittikku], which translates to "too crazy." These examples illustrate how the multiple affixations "pa-hu" modifies the root adjectives to convey a heightened degree of the original quality, effectively transforming them into intensifying forms that emphasize excessiveness in meaning.

1.2 The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [n]

If the root adjective ends with the sound [n], the combination of the affix *pa-hu* is phonetically realized as [pa-ku]. In this case, the final [n] of the root word and the [h] of the affix *pa-hu* undergo assimilation, producing the sound [k-k]. The change from [n-h] to [k-k] can be observed in examples such as: *pa-pojan-hu* → [pa-pojakku], *pa-rambon-hu* → [pa-rabbokku] *pa-samon-hu* → [pa-samokku]

This change is caused by assimilation in the way of articulation, where the way the consonants are produced changes. This morphophonemic change occurs as a result of the phonological influence of the surrounding sounds.

pojan	[pojan]	"dark"	+ pa-hu →	papojanhu	[papojakku]	"too dark"
rambon	[rabbon]	"blurry"	+ pa-hu →	parambonhu	[parabbokku]	"too blurry"
samon	[samon]	"foggy"	+ pa-hu →	pasamonhu	[pasamokku]	"too foggy"

The word "dark" which reflects the meaning of the root adjective "pojan" [pojan], is fully retained to express the lexical meaning of the intensive adjective "pa-pojan-hu" [pa-pojakku], which means "too dark." Similarly, the word "blurry" conveys the meaning of the root adjective "rambon" [rabbon], and it continues to carry that meaning in its exaggerated form "pa-rambon-hu" [pa-rabbokku], which means "too blurry." The root adjective "samon" [samon], which means "foggy" also retains its meaning in the intensive form "pa-samon-hu" [pa-samokku], translating to "too foggy." These examples further illustrate how the affixation of "pa-hu" modifies the root adjectives to create intensifying forms that emphasize an excessive degree of the original quality, effectively enhancing the descriptive power of the adjectives in Toba Batak.

1.3 The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [ŋ]

When the root adjective ends with the sound [ŋ], the combination of the affix "pa-hu" undergoes a morphophonemic change and is pronounced as [pa-ku]. In this case, the sound [h] in the affix "pa-hu" is realized as [k]. For example, we observe the shift from [ŋ-h] to [k-k] in the following examples: "pa-lapang-hu" → [pa-lapakku], "pa-murhing-hu" → [pa-murhikku], and "pa-neang-hu" → [pa-neakku].

This transformation is the result of assimilation in the manner of articulation, where the way consonants are produced is modified. Specifically, the final [ŋ] of the root adjective assimilates to the [h] of the affix, causing both sounds to change to [k]. This phonological change reflects the influence of the surrounding sounds, triggering a morphophonemic shift that enhances the phonetic coherence of the resulting forms.

lapang	[lapaŋ]	"wide"	+ pa-hu → palapanghu	[palapakku]	"too wide"
murhing	[murhiŋ]	"sullen"	+ pa-hu → pamurhinghu	[pamurhikku]	"too sullen"
neang	[neaŋ]	"light"	+ pa-hu → paneanghu	[paneakku]	"too light"

The root adjective "lapang" [lapaŋ], meaning "wide" becomes "pa-lapang-hu" [pa-lapak-ku], meaning "too wide" when the affix "pa-hu" is added. Similarly, "murhing" [murhiŋ], meaning "sullen" changes to "pa-murhing-hu" [pa-murhik-ku], meaning "too sullen." The root adjective "neang" [neaŋ], meaning "light" transforms into "pa-neang-hu" [pa-neak-ku], meaning "too light."

These examples illustrate how the addition of the affix "pa-hu" modifies the root adjectives to create intensifying forms that emphasize an excessive degree of the original quality. The morphophonemic changes that occur, such as the transformation of [ŋ] to [k], demonstrate the phonological processes at work in the Toba Batak language, enhancing the expressive capacity of the adjectives.

2. The Alternating Form [pa-pu]

In Toba Batak, when root adjectives end in [m] or [p], the multiple affixations "pa-hu" leads to an alternating form where the final sounds undergo specific phonological changes. For instance, the final [m] or [p] may be altered to accommodate the affix, resulting in forms like "pa-pu" to maintain phonetic harmony and ease of pronunciation. This reflects the language's morphological rules and phonotactic constraints.

2.1 The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [m]

When the final sound of the root adjectives is [m], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is pronounced as [pa-pu] in its phonetic form. For example, the sound [m] changes to [p] when *pa-hu* is attached to root adjectives ending in [m], resulting in examples like *pa-pidom-hu* → [pa-pidop-pu], *pa-ridom-hu* → [pa-ridop-pu], and *pa-sabam-hu* → [pa-sabap-pu]. This change is due to the assimilation of the manner of articulation, where the [m] sound of the root adjective assimilates with the [h] sound of the affix:

pidom	[pidom]	"unlucky"	+ pa-hu → papidomhu	[papidoppu]	"too unlucky"
ridom	[ridom]	"stupid"	+ pa-hu → paridomhu	[paridoppu]	"too stupid"
					"too trustful"

For example, the root adjective *pidom* [pidom], meaning "unlucky", becomes *pa-pidom-hu* [pa-pidop-pu], meaning "too unlucky". Similarly, the adjective *ridom* [ridom], meaning "stupid", changes to *pa-ridom-hu* [pa-ridop-pu], meaning "too stupid". The root adjective *sabam* [sabam], meaning "trustful", transforms into *pa-sabam-hu* [pa-sabap-pu], meaning "too trustful".

2.2 The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [p]

Some root adjectives that end with the sound [p] include *pa-hisap-hu* → [pa-hisap-pu], *pa-serep-hu* → [pa-serep-pu], and *pa-tahop-hu* → [pa-tahop-pu]. In these examples, the sound [h] in the multiple affixations *pa-hu* changes to [p]. As a result, the affix *pa-hu* is pronounced as [pa-pu] in its phonetic form. This sound change, from [h] to [p], that occurs when attaching *pa-hu* to root adjectives, is known as regressive assimilation. In these cases, the sounds [p] and [h] are considered morphophonemic alternations or allomorphs, as shown below.

hisap	[hisap]	"greedy"	+ pa-hu →	pahisaphu	[pahisappu]	"too greedy"
serep	[serep]	"modest"	+ pa-hu →	paserephu	[pasereppu]	"too modest"
tahop	[tahop]	"sudden"	+ pa-hu →	patahophu	[patahoppu]	"too sudden"

The root adjective *hisap* [hisap], meaning "greedy", becomes *pa-hisap-hu* [pa-hisap-pu], meaning "too greedy", when the affix *pa-hu* is added. Similarly, the adjective *serep* [serep], meaning "modest", transforms into *pa-serep-hu* [pa-serep-pu], meaning "too modest". The root adjective *tahop* [tahop], meaning "sudden", changes to *pa-tahop-hu* [pa-tahop-pu], meaning "too sudden".

3. The Alternating Form [pa-su]

When the final sound of the root adjective is [s], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is pronounced as [pa-su]. In this case, the [h] in *pa-hu* undergoes assimilation and changes to [s]. For example, the sound changes from [h] to [s] in words such as *pa-lenes-hu* → [pa-lenes-su], *pa-rimas-hu* → [pa-rimas-su], and *pa-sabas-hu* → [pa-sabas-su], because [h] and [s] are both fricative sounds. This process is called regressive assimilation.

lenes	[lenes]	"flat"	+ pa-hu →	paleneshu	[palenessu]	"too flat"
rimas	[rimas]	"angry"	+ pa-hu →	parimashu	[parimassu]	"too angry"
sabas	[sabas]	"happy"	+ pa-hu →	pasabashu	[pasabassu]	"too happy"

For instance, the root adjective *lenes* [lenes], meaning "flat", becomes *pa-lenes-hu* [pa-lenes-su], meaning "too flat". Similarly, the adjective *rimas* [rimas], meaning "angry", changes to *pa-rimas-hu* [pa-rimas-su], meaning "too angry". The root adjective *sabas* [sabas], meaning "happy", changes to *pa-sabas-hu* [pa-sabas-su], meaning "too happy".

4. The Root Adjectives End with the Sound [t]

When the final sound of the root adjectives is [t], the multiple affixations *pa-hu* is pronounced as [pa-tu]. The examples provided below illustrate that the sound [h] in *pa-hu* changes to [t] when attached to root adjectives ending in [t]. This sound change is the result of the assimilation process.

lamot	[lamot]	"delicate"	+ pa-hu →	palamothu	[palamottu]	"too delicate"
manat	[manat]	"slow"	+ pa-hu →	pamanathu	[pamanattu]	"too slow"
						"too diligent"

For instance, the root adjective *lamot* [lamot], meaning "delicate", becomes *pa-lamot-hu* [pa-lamot-tu], meaning "too delicate", when the affix *pa-hu* is added. Similarly, the word *manat* [manat], meaning "slow", transforms into *pa-manat-hu* [pa-manat-tu], meaning "too slow". The root adjective *nunut* [nunut], meaning "diligent", also changes to *pa-nunut-hu* [pa-nunut-tu], which means "too diligent".

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, four alternating forms of the multiple affixations "pa-hu" were identified as a result of assimilation: [pa-ku], [pa-pu], [pa-su], and [pa-tu]. This observation is consistent with the views of Nida (1949: 21), Inkelas (2011: 68), and Ramelan (1988: 161), who describe assimilation as the process in which one phoneme is replaced by another when two morphemes are combined, generally referring to how phonemes become more similar to adjacent sounds.

In Toba Batak, the multiple affixations "pa-hu" attached to root adjectives are classified as an inflectional process. These affixations do not change the syntactic category or the core meaning of the root adjectives. Instead, the original meanings are fully preserved and transferred into the new, complex forms. Functioning as a marker of excessiveness, "pa-hu" adds grammatical emphasis to the root adjectives without altering their part of speech. Consequently, while "pa-hu" introduces a new form of the adjective, it does so through inflection rather than derivation, and therefore does not carry a distinct grammatical function.

Additionally, in certain areas within *Tano Batak* ('Batak Land'), a variant of the *pa-hu* affix appears in the form of *ma-hu*, as illustrated in the examples below:

root adjectives	gloss	<i>pa-hu</i>	gloss	<i>ma-hu</i>	gloss
etek	small	[pa-etek-ku]	too small	[ma-etek-ku]	too small
hohom	calm	[pa-hohop-pu]	too calm	[ma-hohop-pu]	too calm
banggas	powerful	[pa-banggas-su]	too powerful	[ma-banggas-su]	too powerful
hansit	sick	[pa-hassit-tu]	too sick	[ma-hassit-tu]	too sick

The grammatical function of the plural affix "pa-hu" in complex words is to indicate an excessive adjective. This affix conveys a higher or more intense degree of quality compared to what is expressed by the root adjective alone. The lexical meaning of these complex forms derives from the root adjectives to which "pa-hu" is attached. Through this process, "pa-hu" generates alternative adjective forms that serve various linguistic functions in Toba Batak.

As noted in the findings, when two sounds occur in close proximity in Toba Batak, they can influence each other's pronunciation. This phenomenon aligns with Bauer's observation (2008: 14), which states that similar phonological variation occurs in English. For instance, the negative prefix "in-" changes to "im-" in the word "impossible" while it remains unchanged in words such as "incongruous", "insufficient", "indecent", and "inaudible." This shift in form depends on the initial sound of the root morpheme that follows it, illustrating how morphological elements can be affected by their phonological environment.

- (1) [in-] → [im-] in *impossible*
- (2) [in-] retains [in-] in *incongruous, insufficient, indecent, and inaudible*

The morpheme [in-] has alternative forms such as [im-] and [in-], which occur in different but predictable phonological environments. This variation arises because the alveolar nasal [n] in [in-] changes to a bilabial nasal [m] when it precedes a morpheme beginning with a bilabial stop, such as [p] in "possible." Similarly, it remains as [n] before a morpheme beginning with a velar stop, such as [k], as seen in words like "incongruous", "insufficient", "indecent", and "inaudible."

These examples clearly illustrate how the phoneme [n] shifts to become more similar to the following sound, changing to [m] before [p] and remaining [n] before [k]. This phenomenon is a result of assimilation, where the phoneme adapts to the characteristics of neighboring phonemes, thereby facilitating smoother pronunciation and enhancing the overall phonological coherence of the word.

- (3) [m] is similar to [p] in that both are bilabial
- (4) [n] is similar to [k] in that both are velar

It is indeed quite common for both phonemes and morphemes to undergo changes due to the influence of their surrounding sounds. In the previously mentioned examples, the morpheme [in-]

transforms into [im-] or remains [in-] depending on the phoneme that follows it. These variations, "im-" and "in-" are referred to as morphophonemic alternations or allomorphs of the same morpheme. Such alternations occur in predictable phonological environments, where the form of the morpheme adapts to facilitate smoother pronunciation. Among these forms, [in-] is typically regarded as the root or underlying form of the morpheme, serving as the base from which the allomorphs derive.

CONCLUSION

This study offers a new perspective on the alternating forms of the multiple affixations *pa-hu* in Toba Batak. One of its main findings is the identification of four allomorphs of the affix *pa-hu*, namely [pa-ku], [pa-pu], [pa-su], and [pa-tu]. In some cases, *pa-hu* also appears as a variant of the affix *ma-hu*.

From a grammatical perspective, these multiple affixations do not alter the syntactic category of the root adjective to which they are attached. As a result, no new grammatical function is observed. However, their use conveys meanings related to intensity or excess. The lexical meaning of the resulting complex words is derived from the meaning of the original root adjective.

This study underscores the importance of documenting the implicit rules governing the use of "pa-hu" in Toba Batak, with the aim of formalizing them into grammatical rules, particularly given the limited availability of written sources in the language. While the findings are promising, this study also advocates for further research on regional languages using similar methods or frameworks. Such efforts will not only aid in preserving the linguistic heritage of regional languages but also contribute valuable insights to the broader field of universal grammar.

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