

## Conference Paper

# Semantic Meaning of Prefixes in Karo Language

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**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to discuss about the Semantic Analysis of Prefixes in Karo Language which will provide more information about prefixes and also to show the changes of meaning of words which are already influenced by them. The method of doing reseach is by taking some references or text-books in the library, and this types of research is called qualitative research. It is found that the prefixes in Karo language are fourteen types, such as: n\_, er\_, per\_, ter\_, i\_, me\_, pe\_, si\_, ci\_, ki\_, ke\_, pen\_, kini\_, se\_. By adding the prefixes to the bases, the meanings of the words may change or may not change. For example: galang “big” becomes pegalang “to make bigger size”, deher “near” becomes ndeher “near”, etc. The conclusion is that the formation of word can be done by attaching a prefix to certain base (a noun, an adjective, a verb and an adverb or a numeral). On the other hand, the addition of a prefix to the base may only result in another form of a certain class of word or the change of a word meaning.

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## 1. Introduction

Language is very important in human life, without language, human cannot interact one and another. In language, there are many dialect, one of them is karo language in which it is one of the dialects in Batak Language. Karo language belongs to Melanesian language family. All of languages come from different language family which, consequently, have some differences or similarities either in words formation or in meaning.

Prefix is the elements of language which are attached to the initial position of word and may or may not change the meaning. This can be exemplified in Karo Language such as: prefix /N\_, /er\_, /per\_,;ter\_, /me\_, /i\_, /pe\_, /si\_, /ci\_, /ki\_, /ke\_, /pen\_, /kini\_, and /se\_.

As a comparision, the prefixes can be exemplified in English such as:

In English:

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1. **illegal** : adjective and prefix /il\_/ followed by adjective word
2. **untouchable**: verb in present tense preceded by the subject third person singular.
3. **disagreement**: verb followed by suffix /\_ment/
4. **Irrational**: adjective preceded by prefix /un\_/
5. **decetralization**: adjective followed by suffix /\_ty/.
6. **Enlargement**: verb followed by suffix /\_ment/

Those examples consist of prefixes and suffixes which are attached to the stem or base of words.

In Karo Language:

Forms /N\_/, /er\_/, /per\_/ and /ter\_/

Karo has more than sixty different morphemes which are realized as affixes. But the prefixes consist of 14 forms as they are stated above. Any how, a particular form of prefix may have different morphs, it depends on the stem-initial consonant to which it is prefixed.

For example, the prefix N-, it may consist of some different forms of prefix N\_ in Karo Language. See the following table.

Prefix: er\_

This prefix has two allomorphs: (r\_) when attached to a stem beginning with a vowel, and (er\_) elsewhere:

For example:

Impal (n) → rimpal “relative relation between a boy and mother’s brother’s daughter”.

Ate (v) → rate “eage”, “feeling”, “wish”.

Ende (n) → rende “sing”

Dalan (n) → erdalan “walk”

Sagu (n) → ersagu “to have sago palm”

Prefix: per\_ and ter\_

These prefixes are reduced to /pe\_/ and /te\_/ respectively when attached to a stem which begins with /r/. Otherwise, they remain intact.

For example:

Mela → permela “shameful”

Idah → teridah “visible”.

Berkat → perberkat “leaving for”.

TABLE 1

| Stem initial phoneme | N <sup>1</sup> _ | N <sup>2</sup> _ | N <sup>3</sup> _ /N <sup>5</sup> _ | N <sup>4</sup> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|                      | (trans.verb)     | (intrans.verb)   | (adjective)                        | (measure noun) |
| P                    | m_ (p)           | m_ (p)           | m_ (p)                             | mp_            |
| t                    | n_ (t)           | n_ (t)           | nt_                                | nt_            |
| d                    | nd_              | nd_              | nd_                                | nd_            |
| c                    | nc_              | n_ (c)           | -                                  | nc_            |
| j                    | nj_              | -                | nj_                                | -              |
| s                    | n_ (s)           | n_ (s)           | -                                  | -              |
| k                    | ngk_             | ngk_             | ng_ (k)ngk_                        |                |
|                      | ngk_ (k)         |                  |                                    |                |
| g                    | ngg_             | ngg_             | ngg_                               | ngg_           |
| l                    | nge_             | ngg_             | -                                  | -              |
| r                    | nge_             | nge_             | -                                  | -              |
| h                    | -                | nge_             | -                                  | -              |
| m                    | nge_             | -                | -                                  | -              |
| n                    | nge_             | -                | -                                  | -              |
| ng                   | -                | -                | -                                  | -              |
| w                    | -                | -                | -                                  | -              |
| y                    | -                | -                | -                                  | -              |
| vowel                | ng_              | ng_              | m_                                 | -              |

Key: 1. m\_ (p): before stem\_ initial /p/, N\_ becomes m\_ and /p/ is elided  
 2. mp\_: before stem\_ initial /p/, N\_ becomes m\_ and /p/ is retained  
 3. -: no recorded instances of N\_ occurring before that phoneme.

Dareh → terdareh “bled”

Ridi → peridi “bathing”

Ranaken → teranaken “celebrate (the party)”

Those prefixes can be classified into:

1. Transitive verb inflection: N\_, i\_, and ter\_.
2. Predicative marker: me\_, N\_, and ter\_ \_en.
3. Deriving transitive verbs: pe\_, pe\_ \_ken, per\_, per\_ \_ken, and per\_ \_i
4. Deriving Intransitive verbs: er\_, er\_ \_ken, N\_, per\_, me\_, si\_ \_na, ke\_ \_en, ci\_, ki\_ and si\_ \_en.
5. Deriving nouns: peN\_, per\_, peN\_ \_en, per\_ \_en, ke\_ \_en, and kini\_ \_en.
6. Deriving Miscellaneous forms: N\_, se\_ and pe\_ \_ken.

The words Mela → permela “shameful”, Idah → teridah “visible”, Berkat → perberkat “leaving for”, Dareh → terdareh “bled”, Ridi → peridi “bathing” and Ranaken → teranaken “celebrate (the party)” change the meaning and their function after getting the prefix.

## 2. Literature Review

A prefix is added to the front of a word to change its meaning. Both prefixes and suffixes (added to the back) are called affixes (<http://en.m.wikipedia.org>)

Semantics is the study of meaning in human languages (Allan, 2001: 1). Meaning is the core of language, without meaning, the sounds produced by the organs of speech of humanbeings cannot be said as language.

Karo language is different from other languages particularly the form of prefixes. Using affixes (prefix, infix, and suffix) do not have meaning if they are not attached or joined with the stem or base of words. Anyhow, the affixes which are attached to the words can influence the meaning of the stem or lexical form.

That is why, this research is intended to describe about the use of prefixes in Karo Language, so that the language learners particularly karonese people can use the language concerned correctly.

On the other hand, this research can show the change of meaning of words when the prefix is used to the lexical items which are already influenced by the prefix, and to provide some information of semantic aspects of words.

It is known that the minimal unit which can be analyzed in Semantics is word. So the prefix is not word. The prefix meaning can be analyzed when they have been used or combined with the base of word.

## 3. Research Method

In making research, methodology is needed in scientific work. It will enable the researcher to do the research, how and what method will be used. The method used is that qualitative or library research.

### 3.1. Technique of collecting data

The technique of collecting data was done by conducting observation through textbooks that is called library research. Nasution (in Sugiyono 2009: 226) said observation

or dialogue is a method in which the researcher directly goes to the informant. Taking data. On the other hand, the researcher goes to the library by taking some data from the text-books.

### 3.2. Technique of analyzing data

Sugiyono (2009: 246) said that the analyzing data in qualitative research can be done at the time of collecting data directly or after collecting data in a certain period. There are two ways of technique of analyzing data: (1) the data are noted from the informant. (2) the data are interpreted to get the meaning which were written in the text-books.

## 4. Discussion and Findings

### 4.1. Discussion

Prefix is one of the affixes that can be found in most of languages, including Karo Language. Affixation is one of the the most productive ways to form new words in English (Liu and Shen, 2012: 1). Prefixes are usually studied in morphology or word formation rules. As it is defined by Hu Zhuanglin, affix is “a collective term for the type of morpheme that can be used only when added to another morpheme (the root or stem)” (Hu, 2001: 62).

In Karo language, there are fourteen types of prefixes, such as: /N\_/ , /er\_/ , /per\_/ ,; ter\_/ , /me\_/ , /i\_/ , /pe\_/ , /si\_/ , /ci\_/ , /ki\_/ , /ke\_/ , /pen\_/ , /kini\_/ , and /se\_/ . These prefixes can be analyzed from the side of Semantics after those prefixes are joined or attached to the lexical item or base of words. Without being joined, of course, they do not have any meaning, as the prefixes found in English.

#### 4.1.1. Transitive verb inflection

1. Prefix [N\_] as Transitive verb inflection.

For example:

(a) *Tutup* → *nutup* “to close”.

(b) *Pekpek* → *mekpek* “to hit”

(c) *Tukur* → *nukur* “to buy”

(d) *Tangko* → *nangko* “to steal”

(e) *Cinepi* → *ncinepi* “to perch on”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- *Nutup: Temanku nutup labah* “My friend closed the door”
- *Mekpek: ise mekpek nipe ena* “who hit the snake?”
- *Nukur: engko nukur nakan* “You bought the rice”
- *Ise nangko senku?* Who stole my money?”
- *Piduk ncinepi takalku* “bird perch on my head”

2. Prefix [i\_] as Transitive verb inflection.

For example:

(a) *Tutup* → *itutupi* “to cover”

(b) *Erdangken* → *ierdangken* “

(c) *Togan* → *itogan* “contradicted”

- *Itutupi: ula itutupi labah ena* “don’t close the door”
- *Erdangken: juma ierdangken bapa* “the field was sworn by father”be lemari “
- *itogan: labanci itogani* “cannot be contradicted”

3. Prefix [ter\_] as Transitive verb Inflection

For example:

(a) *Pengadi* → *terpengadi* “can be stopped”

(b) *Pake* → *terpake* “can be used”

(c) *Pedem* → *terpedem* “to fall asleep”

Examples in the form of sentences:

- *Terpengadi: ia banci terpengadi* “he can be stopped”
- *Terpake: senndu enggo terpake aku* “Your money was used by me”
- *Terpedem: ia enggo terpedem* “He has fallen asleep”

#### 4.1.2. Predicative marker

1. Prefix [me\_]

For example:

(a) *paras* → *meparas* “elegant”

(b) *tultul* → *metultul* “blunt”

(c) *date* → *medate* “soft”

Examples in the form of sentence

\**ndeharandu teridah meparas* “Your wife looks elegant”

\**pisaunta enggo metultul* “our knife is already blunt”.

\**buah galuh enggo medate* “banana fruit has been soft”.

## 2. Prefix [N\_]

For examples:

(a) *Deher* → *ndeher* “near”

(b) *Jerlang* → *njerlang* “shiny”

(c) *Telap* → *ntelap* “sharp”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- *Rumahta enggo ndeher* “our house is already near”

- *Matawari sehkal njerlangna* “the sun is very sharp”

- *Pisau ena ntelap* “the knife is sharp”

## 3. Prefix [ter\_ \_en]. Prefix [ter\_] can be followed by suffix [\_en]

For examples:

(a) *Mbergeh* → *bergehen* → *terbergehen* “even colder”

(b) *Ndauh* → *dauhen* → *terdauhen* “further still”

(c) *Mejile* → *jilen* → *terjilen*

Examples in the form of sentence:

- *Berastagi terbergehen asaken Kabanjahe* “Berastagi is even colder than Kabanjahe”.

- *Terdauhen bahan inganna* “Please make his place/ or residence father”.

- *Rondongndu harus terjilen* “Your girl friend must be most beautiful”.

### 4.1.3. Deriving transitive verbs

#### 1. Prefix [pe\_]

(a) *Galang* → *pegalang* “to expand”

(b) *Kitik* → *pekitik* “to reduce”

(c) *Sikap* → *pesikap* “to make ready”

Examples in the form of sentence:

\* *kerja e banci pegalang* “this party can be expanded”.

\* *kerja e banci pekitik* “this party can be reduced”

\* *mari pesikap kerja e* “lets make ready this party”.

## 2. Prefix [pe\_ \_ken]

(a) *mbiring* → *pebiring* → *pebiringken* “to make blacker”

(b) *ganjang* → *peganjang* → *peganjangken* “to put up high”

(c) *uli* → *pehuli* → *pehuliken* “to make good/ repair”

Examples in the form of sentence:

\* *Banci pebiringken rupana* “you may make its colour blacker”

\* *peganjangken kundulenta kari* “put up high our seat”.

\* *dahinta pehuliken inganta kundul* “our task is to make good/ repair our seat”.

## 3. Prefix [per\_ \_]

(a) *sada* → *persada* “to make into one, mix together”

(b) *teman* → *perteman* “to be friend”

(c) *roti* → *peroti* “one who makes bread”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- *Mari sipersada arihta* “lets make our compromise into one”

- *la perteman kalakna* “he is easily making friend”

- *la tukang roti* “he is the bread maker”

## 4. Prefix [per\_ \_ken]

(a) *ernipi* → *pernipiken* “to dream about”.

(b) *erkuan* → *perkuanken* “speak to”

(c) *rengko* → *perengkoken* “to use the word ‘engko’ rather than ‘kam’ to some one”.

Note: In Karo Language, to use pronoun **you** means **engko** is the impolite one, as **kam** is the polite one.

Examples of words in the form of sentence:

- *Aku ernipiken kam erbinai* “I dreamt you last night”



- *Perkuanken ia aminna gia ia sinik* “you speak to him though he is silent”
- *Ula perengkoken adi kam ngerana man orang tua* “Do not speak by using engko to parents”.

#### 5. Prefix [per\_ \_i]

- juma* → *perjuma* “farming the dry field”
- sabah* → *persabahi* “farming the wet field or rice field”
- dua* → *perduai* “to group into pairs”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- *Perjumaindu juma sini kebereken man bandu* “Please utilize the dry field that I gave you”
- *Persabahindu sabah i tepi dalam* “Please utilize the rice field which is there by the side of rice field.
- *Kupindo man bandu gelah iperduaindu kerehenndu* “I request you so that you come in pairs.

### 4.1.4. Deriving intransitive verbs

#### 1. Suffix [er\_ \_]

- Jabu* → *erjabu* “be married”
- Pemeteh* → *erpemeteh* “to have knowledge”
- Pengarapen* → *erpengarapen* “to have knowledge”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- \**Kam harus erjabu bulan sireh* “You must be married next month”
- \**la erpemeteh ibas ngasuhi manuk* “He has knowledge about chicken farming”.
- \**Aku erpengarapen kerehenndu* “I expect on your coming”

#### 2. Suffix [er\_ \_ken]

- Nakan* → *ernakanken* “to have something for staple”
- Uis* → *eruisken* “to wear a snack for clothing”
- Tarum* → *ertarumken* “to have roof”

Examples in the form of sentence:

- \**geluh kami ernakanken gadung* “Our lives have potato for food”

\**Aku eruisken uis cap madras* “I wear a snack for clothing”

\**Rumahku ertarumken seng* “My house has iron roof”.

### 3. Suffix [N\_]

This suffix has some allomorphic variation such as: /m\_/, /n\_/, /ng\_/, /nge\_/ when it occurs before a particular consonant sound, except before consonant /j/, /w/ and /y/.

(a) Pedem → medem “to sleep”

(b) Taktak → naktak “to fall”

(c) Kawil → ngkawil “to fish”

(d) Like → ngelike “to shout”

The words in the form of sentence:

\**medem kam anakku* “You sleep my child”

\**Ndabuh bahanndu i dalan* “You make it fall on the street”.

\**Aku engkawil i kolam* “I fish in the fool”

\**Ula kena ersora mbelin* “You do not shout loudly”

### 4. Suffix [me\_]

(a) teruh → meteruh “low”

(b) erga → meherga “expensive”

(c) duit → meduit “avaricious, loving money”

|

Words in the form of sentence:

\**tamakenndu piso ena i teruh* “put the knife low”

\**Kai sini berekenndu meherga kuakap* “What you gave me is considered expensive for me”

\**la meduit kal* “He is loving money very much”.

## 1. DERIVING NOUNS

Prefix [peN\_]

(a) Make pemake “wearing something or way of wearing”

(b) Ngisap Pengisap “soker”

Words in the form of sentence:

- Kam pemake narkoba kepeken “You are actually wearing drugs”
- Pemakendu baju ena lacocok “The way of wearing the shirt does not fit”.

Prefix [per\_]

- (a) Erjuma → perjuma “farmer”
- (b) Ermakan → permakan “shepherd”

Words in the form of sentence:

- Sanga anak perana, ia perjuma “At time of his child, he was a farmer”
- Ia permakan “He is shepherded”.

## 2. DERIVING MISCELLANEOUS FORMS

Prefix [N\_]

- (a) Dapur → ndapuren “stool of bamboo”
- (b) Kibul → ngkibul “classifier for round objects”
- (c) Beka → mbeka “devide into half”

Words in the forms of sentence:

\*kutabah buluh sada ndapuren “to cut the bamboo into half”

\*Ngkibul bahan taneh ena “make the soil round”.

\* Bekandu buluh ena “You devide that bamboo into half one and another”

## 5. Findings

All prefixes in Karo language which are attached to the stem or base of words can be illustrated as: All the base of words to which the prefixes are attached, their meanings and fuctions become different.

1. The word classes mostly change into another after getting the prefixes, except in predicative marker, they are adjective form and remains adjective. For example: deher → ndeher, telap → ntelap.
2. Prefixes can be classified on the basis of transitive verb inflection, predicative marker, deriving transitive verbs, deriving intransitive verbs, deriving nouns and deriving miscellaneous forms.

## 6. Conclusion

In making research, the process of semantic meaning based on prefixes which are attached to the base of words in Karo Language, can be concluded that the meaning and function of words become mostly different and some of them are not different such as in predicative marker, the words after getting prefix remain adjective. In transitive verb inflection, the words remain verb and verbs change into adjective. In Karo Language, there are fourteen prefixes such as: /N\_, /er\_, /per\_,;ter\_, /me\_, /i\_, /pe\_, /si\_, /ci\_, /ki\_, /ke\_, /pen\_, /kini\_, and /se\_.

Prefixes in karo language can be categorized into transitive verb inflection, predicative marker, deriving transitive verbs, deriving intransitive verbs, deriving nouns and deriving miscellaneous forms.

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