

Prepositional Incorporation in Toba Batakese Language

DOI: 10.22515/ljbs.v10i1.11386



JUNI AGUS SIMAREMARE
juni.simaremare@uhn.ac.id
Universitas HKBP Nommensen
Pematangsiantar, Indonesia
MULYADI
Universitas Sumatera Utara
Medan, Indonesia

submitted: 28/3/2025 revised: 18/4/2025 accepted: 10/5/2025 published: 10/5/2025 pages: 17-31

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the process of combining prepositions, the rules of combining prepositions, and the forms of prepositions in the Toba Batakese language. This study used a descriptive-qualitative method whose data are in the forms of texts. The techniques for data analysis include removal, replacement, insertion of reversals, and changes occurrence. The results of this study indicate that the combination of prepositions in Toba Batakese language can be seen from the movement of prepositions in verbs. The emergence of the suffixes *-i* and *-hon* in verbs has changed the argument structure of intransitive verbs into transitive verbs. Likewise, transitive verbs change into ditransitive verbs. The changes in the structure of the verb arguments consist of (1) Subj - V (intr) - Obl → Subj - V (tr) - Obj; (2) Subj - V (tr) - Obj - Obl → Subj - V (dtr) - Obj - Cho. The prepositional forms combined with Toba Batakese verbs can be divided into two types, namely (1) prepositional forms that change into the suffix *-i* and (2) prepositional forms that change into the suffix *-hon*. The prepositional forms that change into the suffix *-i* in the birth structure are *di* (in) and *tu* (to), while the prepositional forms that change into the suffix *-hon* are *tu* (to/for) and *sian* (from).

Key words: incorporation, preposition, Toba Batakese

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the growth of the Toba Batakese language in the use of incorporation forms has increased significantly (Ambarita, 2025). Although the use of incorporation in the Toba Batakese language has increased quite high, not many linguists are interested in studying it in depth. This is motivated by the assumption that the study of incorporation forms is only feasible in polysynthetic languages. In fact, this view is not entirely correct, as incorporation forms can be found in any language, albeit in a limited number. Studies that discuss incorporation in language are, among others, *Types of Incorporation of Verb Deletion in Balinese Language* (Winaya 2016), *Affixation Process in Incorporation of Verb Deletion in Balinese* (Winaya and Rajistha 2017), *Incorporation of Riau Malay Language Kampar Dialect* (Faizah AR 2008), and *Symptoms of Incorporation in Print Media Language* (Mulyono 2013). Aside from that, studies that specifically focus on prepositional incorporation are rarely found. One of them is research on Toba Batakese language studied by Simanjuntak and Mulyadi (2019) that discusses incorporation with verb omission in Toba Batak. The result of the research shows that changes in verb position can lead to verb omission. However, the details of how prepositions can be incorporated with other elements have not been widely discussed.

In addition, the discussion on incorporation seems to have received less attention from Indonesian linguists, even though this phenomenon is very interesting to examine. Parera (2007), for example, only alludes to this in passing, especially in relation to case grammar. It is in line with Jehane (1996) who discusses verb deletion incorporation. In her article, Jehane argues that verb deletion incorporation is one type of incorporation in Indonesian, alongside agent

incorporation, objective incorporation, and object incorporation, that produces compound words.

From Jehane's division of incorporation and from observing other writings, one thing that is striking is that none of the writings state that there is prepositional incorporation in the language of Toba Batak. This suggests that prepositional incorporation is not found in the Toba Batak language. With reference to the theory of Incorporation which states that prepositions can be incorporated into verbs, especially in languages that allow changes in argumentative structure due to the omission or incorporation of prepositional grammatical functions (Baker 1985). In addition, morphological incorporation can involve other word categories, including prepositions, which 'merge' with the predicate through affixation or derivation processes (Katamba 1993).

Consider the constructions 1 and 2 below. In these constructions, the preposition incorporation processes have occurred. In simple terms, it can be said that the prepositions *di* in 1a and *tu* in 2a as part of prepositional phrases have been incorporated with the verbs *manghunduli* (to occupy) in 1b and *manangkoki* (to climb) in 2b. This is not only marked by the presence of affix markers on the verbs, but also semantically the meaning of the two constructions does not change.

Example:

1. a. *Hundul Among di kursi.*
Sit Father on the chair.
(Sit Dad on the chair.)
b. *Among manghunduli kursi.*
Father sat chair.
(Father sat in the chair.)
2. a. *Nangkok sibutet tu dolok tua.*
Up sibutet to mountain old.
(Sibutet climbs to the old mountain.)
b. *Sibutet manangkoki dolok tua.*
Sibutet climb mountain old.
(Sibutet up the old mountain.)

What is interesting is that in a glance at the Toba Batak language data, it turns out that not all Toba Batak prepositions can be incorporated with verbs without experiencing changes in meaning. The structures 3a and 3b suggest that there are semantic constraints on the resulting construction so that even though the preposition is removed with the appearance of an affix marker on the verb, the meaning is no longer in accordance with the basic construction.

Example:

3. a. *Manungkar hepeng Ahu tu bank.*
Exchange money I to bank.
(I exchange money at the bank.)
b. *Manungkari hepeng bank Ahu.*
Swap money bank I am.
(I swap bank money.)

The forms above are very interesting to study more deeply. To the best of the author's knowledge, the study of prepositional incorporation in the Toba Batak language has not been done in depth. Therefore, the author ventured to study prepositional incorporation in Toba Batak language. Based on this description, the objectives of this study are: (1) to describe the process of preposition incorporation in Toba Batak language. (2) To describe the rules

of preposition incorporation in Toba Batakese language. (3) To describe the forms of prepositions that can incorporate verbs in the Toba Batakese language.

The branch of linguistics that studies the types of all languages in the world is called language typology (Shopen 1985). Language typology is the grouping of languages based on the boundaries of their structural characteristics (Blake and Mallinson 1987). Languages of the same or similar type can be classified into one class or type (Harahap 2022). Universally, there are four types of language used in the world, namely isolation, agglutination, flexion, and incorporation (Arkadiev 2020). One of the four types that is the subject of this study is the incorporation type. The term incorporation was originally used to refer to the morphological typology of language (Greenberg 1960). However, the term 'incorporation' evolved into a notion of syntactic structure that refers to the change of an argument to a verb so that it becomes part of the verb (Dayal 2015). A distinctive feature of incorporated languages is their heavy use of affixes, which are usually found in other languages in free form or in multiple words (Winaya 2016). When a word, especially a verb, has a relationship with its direct object or its adverbial qualifier, a construction can be referred to as incorporation (Farkas and Swart 2003).

Incorporation occurs when a semantically independent word is moved to a new position by syntactic rules and becomes part of the new word (Dayal 2015). To identify incorporated constructions, a paraphrasing technique using the same morpheme is required, so that an incorporated root word becomes an independent word (Mithun 1984). The process of word formation in a language is very common, as in the Toba Batakese language and other regional languages (Simpson 2015). A word can develop from a noun to a verb, or from a noun to a verb (Abdullah, Djou, and Masie 2020).

Incorporation is divided into three parts, namely: (1) noun incorporation, (2) verb incorporation, (3) and preposition incorporation (Katamba 1993). One of the three types of incorporation discussed in this study is prepositional incorporation. According to Katamba (1993), prepositional incorporation is a transference rule that takes a preposition from a prepositional phrase and places it into a verb. The characteristics of prepositional incorporation are: (1) marked by an affix marker; (2) semantically different; and (3) cannot be inserted by a preposition.

In syntactic construction, especially in the study of prepositional incorporation, the discussion of arguments is mandatory in determining sentence structure, revealing relationships between constituents, determining syntactic and semantic roles, identifying language patterns, and helping to analyze changes in sentence structure (Samu 2018). According to (Kasman 2021) each predicate has an argument structure. In syntactic constructions, arguments function as subjects, direct objects, and indirect objects (Iswara 2017). In addition to these three grammatical functions, there are also arguments whose presence is optional to provide additional information (for example: time, manner, tool, and place). In relational grammar this argument is called an oblique (Wiriani 2016)

Based on the number of arguments, there are three types of verbs involved: transitive, intransitive, and ditransitive. Intransitive verbs are verbs that involve one argument for example, sleep, sit, cry and others. Transitive verbs are verbs that require two arguments, for example, reading, eating, writing, etc. Transitive verbs are verbs that require three arguments, such as offer, give, and send (Haegeman 1994)

Furthermore, in explaining the process of prepositional incorporation, the Government and Binding Theory will be used, namely Move-Alpha. This rule states that the transfer of constituents can be done according to the way allowed

by the lexicon. These transpositions will leave traces in restricting other transpositions and affecting the semantic interpretation of the resulting sentences. The trace itself must be indexed by the element it relates to that was moved (Sadler and Spencer 2017)

As mentioned earlier, the same phenomenon also occurs in local languages (Nugroho 2017). One of the regional languages that is still used by its speakers and has many aspects that are very interesting to learn is the Toba Batakese language. The phenomenon is seen in the following examples, for example; *Among hundul di kursi* (Father sits on the chair). If this sentence is changed into another form, it becomes *Among manghunduli kursi* (Father sat on the chair). The meaning of *hundul di kursi* is 'to sit on a chair'. In this case, *manghunduli kursi* is 'to sit on a chair'. The sentences above are examples of a case of incorporation.

Because of the dominant role of affixes in the word formation process, the Toba Batakese language is typologically grouped into agglutinative languages (Sabardila and Haryanti, 2018). In the process of forming new words, the role of affixes is not only seen in fulfilling the demands of new meanings, but also appears and becomes an important part in fulfilling the demands of syntactic structure (Mulyono 2013). Without the presence of affixes, almost all lexical items, especially verbs, are not yet ready for use in syntactic structures (Irawati 2023). In order for words to be acceptable in the syntactic structure, affixes have a dominant role in the word formation process (Dermawansyah 2022).

In the existing literature, the phenomenon of prepositional incorporation in Toba Batakese has never been discussed comprehensively, both in terms of its structures and functions. To date, most linguistic studies on Toba Batakese only discuss phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects in general. Prepositions are often mentioned as part of the phrase structure, but no study has specifically analyzed the prepositional incorporation process of how prepositions meld or merge into verbal or nominal structures in sentence constructions.

In the study of linguistic typology, the phenomenon of incorporation has been widely discussed in languages such as Inuit, Iroquoian, and Polynesian. However, in the context of the Toba Batakese language, which is part of the Austronesian family, this phenomenon has not been specifically explored. This opens up space to fill the void of scientific knowledge in the field of regional language morphosyntax. Most of the previous studies still use classical structural approaches without using more recent theoretical frameworks such as Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG), Distributed Morphology (DM), or Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) which are actually very relevant for analyzing the incorporation phenomenon.

Based on this gap, this study offers a new approach by focusing on incorporation. This research is new and original as it is the first study to explicitly examine how prepositions in Toba Batakese can be incorporated into verbs or other syntactic structures, both morphologically and semantically. In addition, this study can enrich the analysis by using contemporary theoretical frameworks, such as LFG to look at the relationship between functional structure and constituent structure in incorporation, or RRG to analyze the semantic role of prepositions incorporated into predicates. This research could also make an important contribution to the mapping of incorporation typologies in Austronesian languages, by adding perspectives from the previously undocumented Toba Batakese language in this context.

Based on this description, the objectives of this study are: (1) to describe the process of preposition incorporation in Toba Batakese language; (2) to describe

the rules of preposition incorporation in the Toba Batak language; and (3) to describe the forms of prepositions that can incorporate verbs in the Toba Batak language.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive-qualitative method in which the researchers acted as the main instrument that directs the entire process of data collection and analysis. The data of this research are textual in the forms of morphemes, words, phrases, and clauses. The data were collected by using note-taking technique (Zakariah, Afriani, and Zakariah 2020) taken from books, newspapers, magazines, etc. as the sources (Zaim 2014). To generate the data and test their acceptability in constructions, the researchers used intuition techniques. The selected data were then classified into groups based on the similarities of the verb types.

After being classified, the data were then analyzed by using distribution method, which is a method that uses the determining tool from the language elements itself (Setiyadi 2006). The techniques applied at this stage were the reversing, disposing, changing, replacing, and inserting (Mahsun 2017). The process of analysis was purposed to know how prepositional incorporation occurs in the Toba Batak language. Therefore, the types of affixes and forms of incorporated prepositions could be identified. The structures of prepositional incorporation as the results of data analysis were then presented formally and informally by using brackets and tree diagrams.

FINDINGS

The Process of Incorporation

The theory used to examine the syntactic structure is the theory of generative transformation (Abbas 2014). One of the main approaches in linguistics to analyze the syntactic structure of language is the theory of generative transformations, coined by Noam Chomsky (Fahri Muhaimin Fabrori 2023). This theory seeks to explain how elements, including prepositions, are created and organized systematically in grammar (Mivtakh 2023). This theory is used in the context of prepositional incorporation to understand how prepositions are 'incorporated' or 'melted' into the syntactic structure of sentences (Hakim 2019).

This explanation usually involves analyzing the hierarchical structure of phrases as well as transformation rules that allow the change of form or removal of certain elements without losing their basic meanings. The syntactic structure consists of the inner structure and the outer structure (Fabrori 2023). Based on these two structures, intransitive verbs and transitive verbs are used to produce prepositional incorporation. In forming prepositional incorporations, these two verbs show different behaviors. Therefore, the two types of verbs are the determining factors for prepositional incorporation (Sembiring 2019).

Intransitive Verbs

Based on syntactic construction, an intransitive verb is a construction that requires the presence of one argument (Sawardi, Sumarlam, and Purnanto 2015). However, in the formation of prepositional incorporation in Toba Batak language, this verb requires the presence of another argument marked by a preposition in a grammatical relation called oblique. This is very important to know because the cause of preposition incorporation in a syntactic construction is due to the presence of an oblique argument (Mulyadi 2021).

Here is an example of how incorporation appears in a verb. The preposition switches to the verb as part of a prepositional phrase or as an oblique argument marker. The verb then transforms this preposition into the suffix *-i* in the birth structure to conform to the noun that is present together with the preposition. The implication is that the verb loses its oblique argument because the status of that argument has changed to an object argument. Thus, there is what is called

intrasensitivity because the verb in the construction requires the presence of two arguments.

4. a. *Among hundul di kursi.*
b. *Among manghunduli kursi.*

The clause *Among hundul di kursi* (Father sits in the chair) is a clause that represents an intransitive verb. In this construction, *among*, which is categorically a noun, is the subject argument whereas *in the chair*, which is a prepositional phrase, is the oblique argument. This verb argument structure is illustrated in Diagram 1.

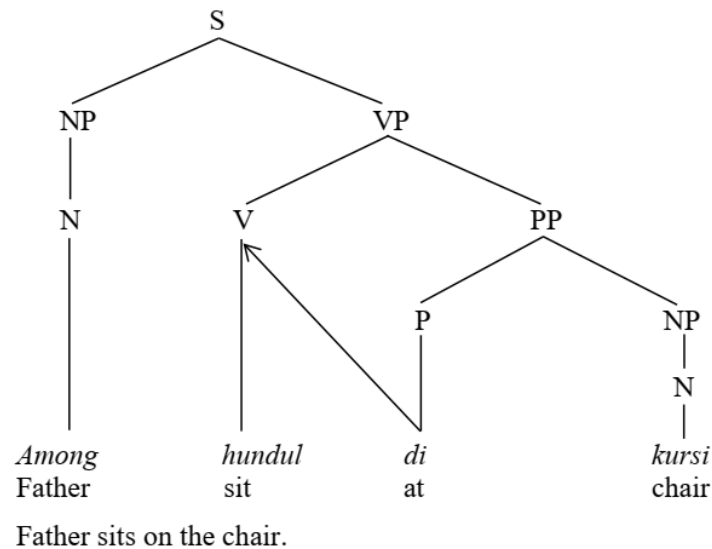


Diagram 1: The verb argument structure

Note

S : Sentence V : Verb NP : Noun Phrase PP : Prepositional Phrase
N : Noun P : Preposition VP : Verb Phrase

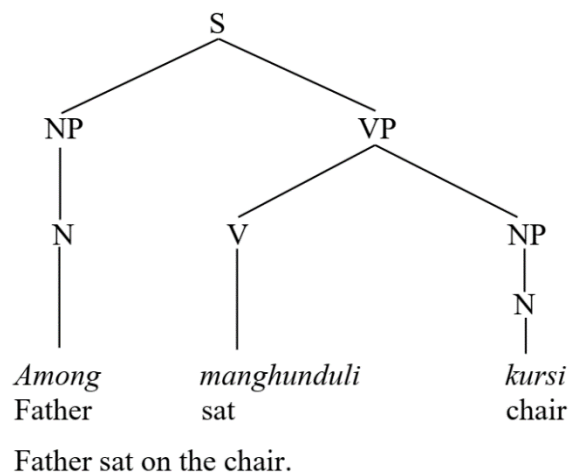


Diagram 2: The object argument structure

What first happens in the above construction is the displacement of the preposition *di-* on the verb *hundul*. Subsequently, the verb regulates this preposition displacement by replacing it with the suffix *-i* in the birth structure (the *maN-* prefix on the verb functions to maintain the diathesis as an indicative

sentence and has no effect on the formation of prepositional incorporation). The presence of the *-i* marker causes the verb's behavior to change. If in the inner structure, the verb is classified as intransitive, then in the outer structure it turns into a transitive verb, which requires the presence of a new argument, namely the object argument. To fill the void of the argument, the noun chair, which was originally part of the prepositional phrase, then shifts to the front to function as the object argument. The representation is shown in Diagram 2.

Transitive Verbs

In transitive verbs, there are two arguments that must be present in the syntactic structure. The first argument to the left of the verb is called the subject argument, while the second argument to the right of the verb is called the object argument. However, in the formation of prepositional incorporation, an oblique argument needs to be present to semantically complete the meaning of the sentence.

The occurrence of preposition incorporation in this verb is as follows. The move of the preposition to the verb gives rise to a new marker in the verb. However, there are two possible markers that appear in the birth structure, namely the suffix *-i* or the suffix *-hon*. The presence of these markers causes a change in the behavior of the verb. That is, it becomes counter-transitive because the verb now requires the presence of an argument. To fulfill this requirement, the oblique argument shifts to occupy the object argument while the object argument is relegated to a non-core or peripheral relation.

5. a. *Inong mangalompa sipanganon **tu** hami.*
- b. *Inong mangalomp**ahon** hami sipanganon.*

To explain how prepositional incorporation occurs in this verb, the sentence *Inong mangalompa sipanganon tu hami* (Mother cooks food for us) is taken as an example. What needs to be noted here is the argument that occupies the referential position because it is this argument that causes the prepositional incorporation process. The argument structure is illustrated in Diagram 3.

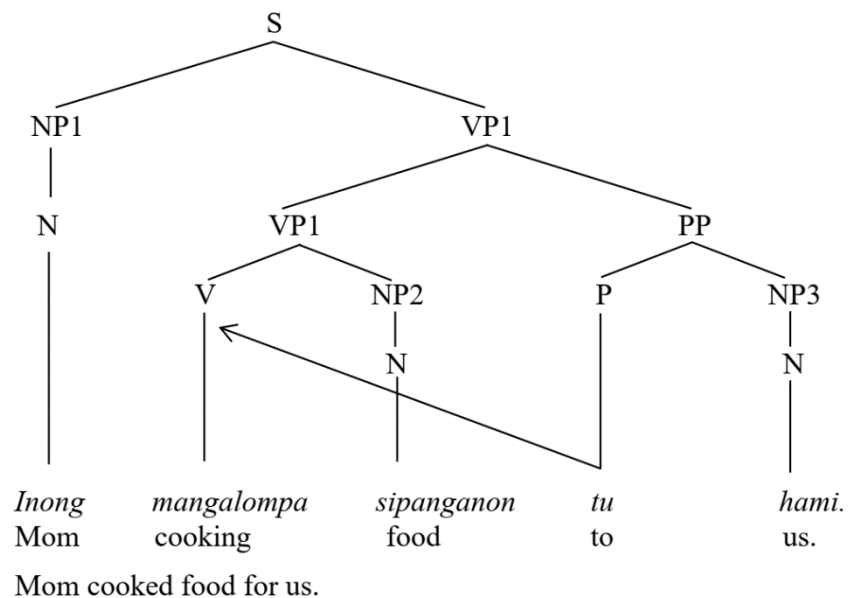


Diagram 3: The occurrence of prepositional incorporation

Based on the diagram above, it can be seen that preposition incorporation will occur when the preposition *to* is transferred to the verb *cook*. Furthermore, the verb regulates the status of NP3 to occupy the object function and this is done by changing the preposition into the suffix *-hon* in the birth structure. The

movement of NP3 to occupy the position of NP2 in turn affects the status of NP2. That is, the position of NP2 taken over by NP3 causes NP2 to stop behaving as a direct object. NP2 has lost its grammatical function because it shifts to a non-core relation. In grammatical relation theory, this status of NP2 is called *chomeur* or idle constituent. The change in verb argument structure can be seen in Diagram 4.

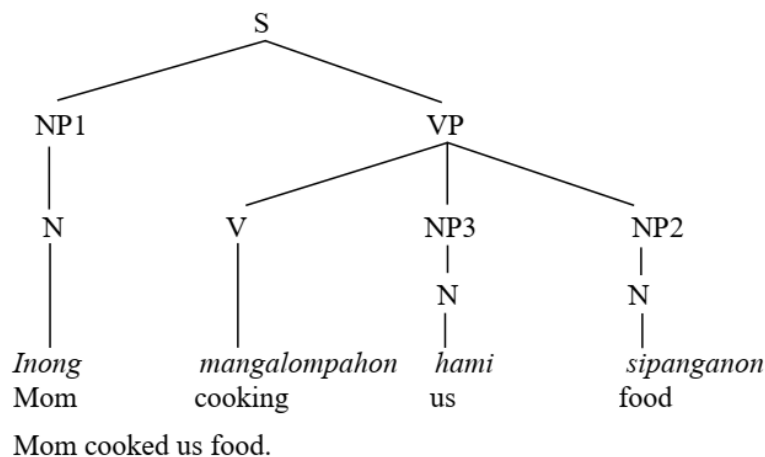


Diagram 4: The change in verb argument structure

Preposition Incorporation Rules

By relying on changes in the behavior of the incorporated verb and the type of affix that marks the verb, some prepositional incorporation rules can be formulated. The rules are as follows.

Subject-Verb-Oblique → *Subject-Verb-Object*

[N/NP]-[Vd]-[PP] → [N/NP]-[maN-V-i]-[N/NP]

Example:

6. a. *Uli topot **tu** pestai i.*
Uli come PREP party PRON
(Uli came to the party.)
b. *Namboru **i** turun **sian** tangga.*
Aunty PRON down PREP ladder.
(The aunt came down the stairs.)
7. a. *Uli manopoti pesta i.*
Uli go to party PRON
(Uli came to the party.)
b. *Namboru **i** manuruni tangga.*
The aunt PRON down ladder
(The aunt came down the stairs.)

[N/NP]-[maN-V]-[PP] → [N/NP]-[maN-V-hon]-[PP1]

Example:

8. a. *Mandao guru **i** **sian** mara.*
Keep away teacher PRON PREP harm
(Keeping the teacher away from harm.)
b. *Roni sohot **dohot** pariban **na***
Roni married CONJ uncle's daughter PRON
(Roni married her uncle's daughter.)
9. a. *Guru **i** mandaohon **mara**.*
Teacher PRON stay away from wretched

- b. *Roni mansohothon pariban na.*
 Romi marry uncle's daughter PRON
 (Romi married her uncle's daughter.)

[N/NP]-[maN-V]-[PP] → [N/NP]-[maN-V-i]-[PP]

Example:

10. a. *Tulang manopot tu pesta i.*
 Uncle come PREP party PRON
 (Uncle came to the party.)
 b. *Pandita nami marjamita taringot upa ni dosa.*
 Pastor PRON preaching about wages PRON sin.
 (Our pastor preaches on the wages of sin.)
 11. a. *Tulang manopoti pesta i.*
 Uncle go to party PRON
 (Uncle came to the party.)
 b. *Pandita nami manjamitahon upah ni dosa.*
 Pastor PRON preach wages PRON sin
 (Our pastor preaches the wages of sin.)

Subject-Verb-Object-Oblique → *Subject-Verb-Oblique- Chomeur/Unemployed*

[N/NP]-[maN-V]-[N/NP]-[PP] → [N/NP]-[maN-V-i]-[N/NP]-[N/PP]

Example:

12. a. *Simatua -ku manongos surat tu pahompu -na.*
 Mother-in-law PRON send mail PREP grandson PRON
 (My mother-in-law sent a letter to her grandson.)
 b. *Simatua -ku manongosi pahompu -na surat.*
 Mother-in-laws PRON sent to grandson PRON mail.
 (My mother-in-law sent her grandson a letter.)

[N/NP]-[maN-V]-[N/NP]-[PP] → [N/NP]-[maN-V-hon]-[N/NP]-[N/PP]

Example:

13. a. *Parboniaga i mandiori parkarejoan tu au.*
 Peddler PRON search work PREP PRON
 (The peddler is looking for a job with me.)
 b. *Parboniaga i mandiorihon au kareje.*
 Peddler PRON find PRON work
 (The merchant found me a job.)

Note: PREP : preposition; PRON : pronoun

It should be clear that by looking at the above rules, there is a difference in the type of affixes attached to the incorporated verb. In intransitive verbs, there are two affixes attached, namely the prefixes *maN-* and *mar-*, while in transitive verbs there is only the prefix *maN-*. The process will change the affixes to *maN-i* and *maN-hon* in the birth structure.

Some other findings that can be stated are: (1) the behavior of *mar-* affixes on intransitive verbs is the same as *maN-* affixes on transitive verbs, (2) affixes on prepositional incorporation are limited to *maN-i* and *maN-han*, (3) *maN-hon* affixes on intransitive verbs are not found much, as well as *maN-i* affixes on transitive verbs, and (4) affixes on prepositional incorporation are active construction markers. The affix structure can be illustrated in Diagram 5.

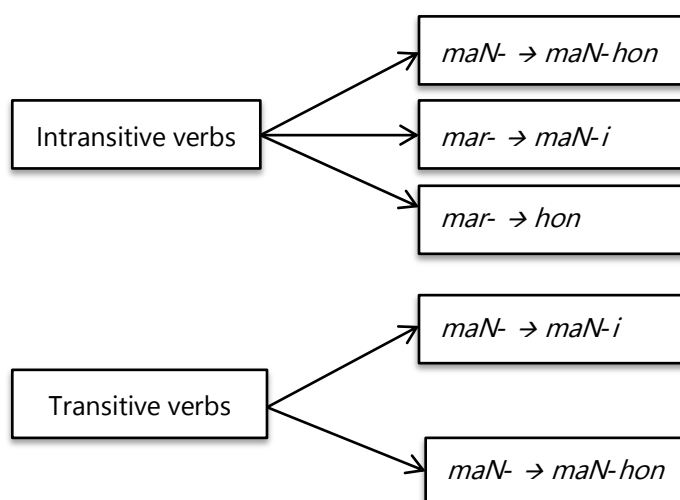


Diagram 5: Affix structures of prepositional incorporation

Incorporated Prepositional Form

Based on the realization of the preposition in the birth structure, the forms of prepositions that incorporate with Toba Batakese verbs can be grouped into two parts, namely: (1) prepositional forms that change into suffix *-i* and (2) prepositional forms that change into suffix *-hon*. However, it should be noted that the relationship between prepositions and affixes is not based on formative relations with the principle of 'one to one', but based on semantic relations. That is why two different prepositional forms can turn into the same affix in the outward structure due to semantic similarity. Look at 14a and 14b with the prepositions *tu-* and *di-* which then turn into the suffix *-i* in 14c.

14. a. *Godang parkerejo topot tu parrapotan i.*
 Many workers came PREP meeting PRON
 (Many workers came to the meeting.)
- b. *Godang parkerejo topot di parrapotan i.*
 Many workers came PREP meeting PRON
 (Many workers came at the meeting.)
- c. *Godang parkerejo manopoti parrapotan i.*
 Many workers go to meeting PRON
 (Many workers came to the meeting.)

Based on the analysis, it shows that sentence 14a with the preposition *tu-* and sentence 14b with the preposition *ke-* have been incorporated with the suffix *-i* on the verb *manopoti* 'to come to' in sentence 14c without changing the meaning. Furthermore, look at sentence 15a with the preposition *taringot-* and sentence 15b with the preposition *sian-* which then changes into the suffix *-hon* in 15c and 15d.

15. a. *Pandita nami marjamita taringot upa ni dosa.*
 pastor PRON preaches about wages PRON sin
 (Our pastor preaches on the wages of sin.)
- b. *Mandao guru i sian mara.*
 Keep away teacher PRON PREP celaka
 (Keeping the teacher away from harm)
- c. *Pandita nami manjamitahon upah ni dosa.*
 Pendeta PRON preach wages PRON sin
 (Our pastor preaches the wages of sin.)

- d. *Guru i mandao**hon** mara.*
 teacher PRON stay away harm
 (The teacher stays away from woe.)

Based on the results of the analysis, it shows that sentence 15a on the preposition *taringot*- has been incorporated with the suffix *-hon* on the verb *manjamitahon* in sentence 15c while in sentence 15b on the preposition *sian*- has been incorporated with *-hon* on the verb *mandao**hon* in sentence 15d without changing the meaning.

Based on the results of data analysis in sentences 14a, 14b, and 14c as well as sentences 15a, 15b, and 15c, it shows that the prepositional forms that change into suffix *-i* in the birth structure are *di* (in) and *tu* (to) while those that change into suffix *-hon* are *tu* (to), *sian* (from), and *taringot* (about). The changes can be seen in Diagram 6.

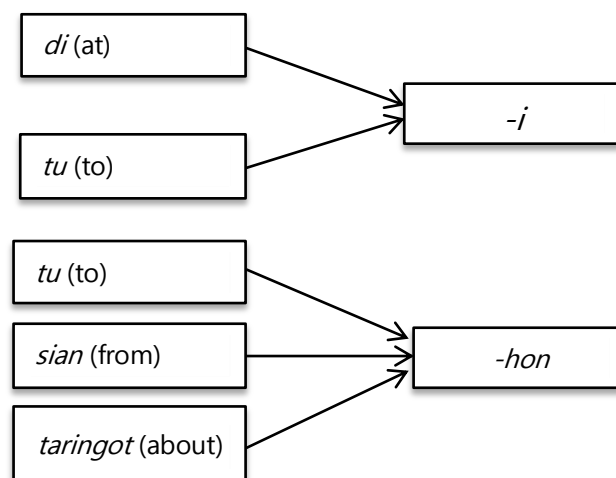


Diagram 6: Prepositional change into suffix *-i* and *-hon*

Based on the description of the data analysis above, it can be shown that the variety of prepositions that can incorporate and connect changes in the form of prepositions with affixes on verbs, such as the prepositions *di*, *tu*, *sian*, and *taringot* which can change into suffixes *-i* or *-hon*. This is rarely found in previous studies which tend to discuss specific prepositions only. In addition, the role of oblique arguments is key in the preposition incorporation process, which results in a change in the grammatical function of the argument to an object argument or non-core constituent (*chômeur*). In addition, the findings of this study explain that the relationship between prepositions and affixes is not based on one-to-one formation but based on semantic similarity is a new insight that has not been widely discussed in the literature. In the description of affixes, the *-i* affix is more often found on intransitive verbs, while the *-hon* affix appears more on transitive verbs, and this relationship with active constructions is a new contribution

DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study reveal unique aspects in the morphosyntactic system of the Toba Batakese language, especially related to preposition incorporation. Preposition incorporation in the Toba Batakese language reveals that prepositions such as *di*, *tu*, *sian*, and *taringot* can change into the suffix *-i* or *-hon* in verbs. This finding shows unique morphological flexibility, where prepositions not only function as independent prepositions but can also merge into an integral part of verbs through affixation. In addition, the role of oblique arguments as a key in this incorporation process results in changes in the grammatical function

of arguments into objects or non-core constituents (*chômeur*). This study also highlights that the relationship between prepositions and affixes is not always one-to-one, but rather based on semantic similarities. The distribution of the affix *-i* which is more frequent in intransitive verbs and the affix *-hon* in transitive verbs, as well as its relationship to active constructions, adds to the understanding of the complexity of the morphological system of the Toba Batak language.

This study offers new insights that have not been widely discussed in previous literature. Here is a comparison with several related studies: Research by Mulyadi (1997) discusses the incorporation of prepositions such as *di, dari, pada, dengan, akan, atas, dalam, tentang, mengenai, and untuk* in Indonesian. However, this study does not specifically discuss the change in the form of prepositions into suffixes such as *-i* or *-hon* in the Toba Batak language. Kurniasih (2017) examines the use of prepositions in Indonesian, including their forms, meanings, and usage rules. Although this study provides insight into prepositions, there is no focus on the incorporation of prepositions into suffixes in the Toba Batak language. Amini et al. (2023) examines the form of affixes and morphophonemic processes in the Angkola Batak language. This study found various forms of affixes, including prefixes, suffixes, and confixes, as well as morphophonemic processes such as emergence, fusion, deletion, and phoneme changes. However, this study did not specifically highlight the incorporation of prepositions into suffixes in verbs in the Toba Batak language.

Leu (2019) examined the errors in the use of affixes and prepositions in the theses of postgraduate students of Indonesian language education. This study found that there were still many uses of prepositions that deviated from the applicable language rules. However, this study did not discuss the incorporation of prepositions into suffixes in the Toba Batak language. Banjaranhor (2017) conducted a contrastive analysis of derivational affixes in English and the Toba Batak language. This study found that the Toba Batak language has prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and confixes. However, there is no specific discussion regarding the incorporation of prepositions into suffixes such as *-i* or *-hon*. From the comparison above, it can be concluded that this study provides a new contribution to understanding the morphological flexibility of the Toba Batak language, especially in terms of the incorporation of prepositions into suffixes based on semantic similarities. Understanding the mechanism of preposition incorporation in the Toba Batak language is important for revealing the dynamics of morphosyntax and the relationship between form and function in the language. This research also contributes to language typology, particularly in understanding how Austronesian languages handle prepositional incorporation and grammatical function change.

Extrapolation of these findings can confirm that morphological flexibility and semantic relationships between prepositions and affixes are not unique phenomena to Toba Batak, but may also exist in other languages. This can challenge the proposition that the relationship between prepositions and affixes is always fixed and inflexible. Thus, this study opens up opportunities for cross-linguistic comparative studies that can enrich our understanding of variation and universality in language structure.

These findings challenge the traditional view that the relationship between prepositions and affixes is fixed and inflexible. By showing that semantic similarity can be the basis for preposition incorporation and its form change into suffixes, this study offers a new perspective on how languages can utilize morphological flexibility to achieve communicative efficiency. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to understanding the complexity of Toba Batak

morphosyntax and paves the way for further studies on preposition incorporation in other languages.

This research has several limitations that need to be observed. First, the data sources used are still limited to written texts in Toba Batak language, so they do not fully represent the forms of prepositional incorporation that appear in oral discourse or daily conversation. Second, the analysis only focuses on the four main prepositional forms, namely *di*, *tu*, *sian*, and *taringot*, whereas in everyday use there may be other forms that show similar potential for incorporation. Third, this study has not used an elicitation approach or in-depth interviews with native speakers to test the linguistic intuition as well as the productivity of such incorporation in a variety of contexts.

Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct a broader exploration of oral data, both through observation and interviews with native speakers. In addition, further studies can also expand the scope of preposition types analyzed and apply a quantitative approach to measure the frequency and pattern of incorporation productivity in the context of contemporary Toba Batak language. Comparative research between Batak varieties (such as Karo, Mandailing, or Simalungun) is also important to see if similar phenomena occur within a typologically broader framework.

CONCLUSIONS

The occurrence of preposition incorporation in Toba Batak language can be seen from intransitive and transitive verbs. The movement of prepositions in intransitive verbs has shifted the oblique argument to occupy the object function. However, in transitive verbs, the movement of prepositions causes more complex things. There is a place-shifting between the two arguments to the right of the verb. The oblique argument is advanced to the object relation, but as a result the original object argument loses its grammatical function because it has to shift to the peripheral relation.

The implication of the appearance of *-i* and *-hon* markers due to prepositional incorporation has changed the argument structure of verbs. An intransitive verb will turn into a transitive verb with the presence of the suffix *-hon*. Similarly, a transitive verb turns into a ditransitive verb. The changes in verb argument structure are shown below.

1. Subject - Verb (intransitive) - Object → Subject - Verb (transitive) - Object
2. Subject - Verb (transitive) - Object - Oblique → Subject - Verb (transitive) - Object - Chomeur

The affixes attached to verbs in forming prepositional incorporations are limited to the prefixes *maN-* and *mar-*, in the birth structure the two affixes change to *maN-i* and *maN-hon*. The forms of incorporated prepositions are *di*, *tu*, *sian*, and *taringot*. Only the prepositions *tu-* and *di-* can be transformed into the affix *-i* while the prepositions *sian-* and *taringot-* can be transformed into *-hon* in the birth structure.

Taking these limitations into account, it is hoped that future research can expand the scope and approach of the study, thus building a more thorough understanding of prepositions and argument structures in Toba Batak. This research is only a first step, but it is hoped that it can open space for scientific dialog and further exploration in regional linguistics.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, Asriani. 2014. *Perilaku Morfosintaksis Verba Bahasa Makassar*. Makassar: Program Pascasarjana Universitas Hasanuddin.
- Abdullah, Ainun, Dakia N Djou, and Sitti Rachmi Masie. 2020. "Afiks Infleksi dan Derivasi dalam Bahasa Gorontalo". *Jurnal Ideas: Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Budaya* 6 (4): 397–414.

- Ambarita, Esron, Himpun Panggabean, and Dona Enjel Loina Pasaribu. 2025. "Excessive Adjectives Using the Multiple Affixations ma-hu in Toba Batak. *Journal of Applied Linguistics (JoAL)* 4 (2), 109–122. DOI: 10.52622/joal.v4i2.334.
- Arkadiev, Peter. 2019. "Morphology In Typology: Historical Retrospect, State of the Art, and Prospects". In Rochelle Lieber et al. (eds) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Morphology*. DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.626.
- Baker, Mark C. 1985. *Incorporation: A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing* (PhD Dissertation. MIT
- Blake, Barry J and Graham Mallinson. 1987. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Amsterdam: North-Holland..
- Dayal, Veneeta. 2015. "Incorporation: Morpho-Syntactic vs. Semantic Considerations". *Syntax and Semantics* 40: 47–87. DOI: 10.1163/9789004291089_003.
- Dermawansyah, Muhammad. 2022. *Perilaku Morfosintaksis Verba dalam Bahasa Kulisusu* (Thesis). Makassar: Universitas Hasanuddin.
- Fabrori, Fahri Muhaimin. 2023. "Teori Generatif Transformatif Noam Chomsky: Analisis Dalam Hadis Nabi Tentang Niat". *Al-Bayan: Journal of Hadith Studies* 2 (1): 1–11.
- Faizah AR, Hasnah. 2008. "Inkorporasi Bahasa Melayu Riau Dialek Kampar". *Jurnal Bahas* 1(1): 16–26.
- Farkas, Donka F and Henriette de Swart. 2003. *The Semantics of Incorporation: From Argument Structure to Discourse Transparency*. Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. 1960. "A Quantitative Approach To the Morphological Typology of Language". *International Journal of American Linguistics* 26 (3): 178–194.
- Haegeman, Liliane. 1994. *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hakim, Mohammad Andi. 2019. "Membanding Teori Transformasi Generatif dan Systemic Functional Grammar: Telaah Kritis-Dialogis Antar Madzab Linguistik". *IJAS: Indonesian Journal of Arabic Studies* 1 (1): 64-75. DOI: 10.24235/ijas.v1i1.4872.
- Harahap, Evi Marlina. 2022. "Tipologi Sintaksis dalam Bahasa Batak Mandailing". *Jurnal Hata Poda* 1 (1): 14–21.
- Irawati. 2023. *Adjektiva Bahasa Melayu Dialek Sambas Kecamatan Sebawi Kabupaten Sambas*. Pontianak: IKIP PGRI Pontianak.
- Iswara, Agus Ari. 2017. "Fungsi Sintaksis dan Peran Semantik Argumen Frasa Verba Bahasa Bali". *Retorika: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa* 1 (2): 388. DOI: 10.22225/jr.1.2.43.388-402.
- Jehane, Hendrikus. 1996. "Inkorporasi dengan Pelesapan Verba dalam Bahasa Indonesia". *Linguistika* (Edisi Keempat) Maret: 61–69.
- Kasman. 2021. "Peran Semantik Predikat Pada Verba Bervalensi Satu, Dua, Dan Tiga Dalam Bahasa Samawa Dialek Sumbawa Besar". *Aksara* 32 (2): 287–298. <https://doi.org/10.29255/aksara.v32i2.445.287-298>.
- Katamba, Francis. 1993. *Morphology*. New York: Macmillan.
- Katamba, Francis. 1993. "Morphological Mapping of Grammatical Functions". In *Morphology: Modern Linguistics Series*. London: Palgrave. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-349-22851-5_11.
- Mahsun. 2017. *Metode Penelitian Bahasa. Tahapan, Strategi, Metode, dan Tekniknya*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Markhamah, Atiqa Sabardila, and Dwi Haryanti. (2018). *Teori Linguistik: Beberapa Aliran Linguistik*. Muhammadiyah University Press.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1984. "The Evolution of Noun Incorporation". *Language* 60 (4): 847–894. DOI: 10.2307/413800.
- Mivtakh, Balkis Aminallah Nurul. 2023. "Teori Tata Bahasa Generatif Transformatif Chomsky serta Aplikasinya dalam Gramatikal Bahasa Arab". *Allais: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature Studies* 2 (1): 67–79. DOI: 10.22515/allais.v2i1.6460.
- Mulyadi. 1997. "Inkorporasi Preposisi dalam Bahasa Indonesia". *Linguistika* (Edisi Keenam) March: 8–24.
- Mulyono. 2013. Gejala Inkorporasi pada Bahasa Media Cetak. In *Proceedings International Seminar: Language Maintenance and Shift III*. 336–340. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/84727686.pdf>
- Nugroho, Mardi. 2017. "Pembentukan Kata dalam Bahasa Talondo". *Sirok Bastra* 5 (2): 123–130. DOI: 10.37671/sb.v5i2.102.
- Parera, Jos Daniel. 2007. *Morfologi Bahasa*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Sadler, Louisa and Andrew Spencer. 2017. "Morphology and Argument Structure". In Andrew Spencer and Arnold M Zwicky (eds.) *The Handbook of Morphology*: 206–236. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. DOI: 10.1002/9781405166348.ch10.

- Samu, Albertina Yosefina. 2018. "Fungsi Sintaktis dan Peran Semantis Argumen Inti Bahasa Manggarai Dialek Manggarai Tengah". *Linguistik Indonesia* 36 (2): 186–204. DOI: 10.26499/li.v36i2.83.
- Sawardi, FX, Sumarlam, and Dwi Purnanto. 2015. "Pergeseran Argumen dan Morfologi Verba Bahasa Jawa". *Proceedings International Seminar Prasasti III: Current Research in Linguistics*. 288–292. DOI: 10.20961/pras.v0i0.1514.
- Isnainy, Sura and Mulyadi. 2019. "Verba Transitif dan Objek Dapat Lesap dalam Bahasa Karo". *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya* 9 (1): 46–60. DOI: 10.26714/lensa.9.1.2019.46-60.
- Setiyadi, Ag Bambang. 2006. *Metode Penelitian untuk Pengajaran Bahasa Asing: Pendekatan Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Shopen, Timothy. 1985. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (Vol. 3). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Simanjuntak, Faido and Mulyadi. 2019. "Incorporation with verb deletion in Toba Batakese Language". *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 4(6): 1968–1971. DOI: 10.22161/ijels.46.53.
- Simpin, I Wayan. 2015. "Dinamika Pembentukan Kata Bahasa Indonesia". *Retorika: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa* 1(2): 319–330. DOI: 10.22225/jr.1.2.37.319-330.
- Winaya, Made Detrichyeni and I Gusti Ngurah Adi Rajistha. 2017. "Proses Afiksasi Pada Inkorporasi Pelesapan Verba dalam Bahasa Bali". *Kulturistik: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Budaya* 1 (1): 1–11. DOI:10.22225/kulturistik.1.1.212.
- Wiriani, Ni Made. 2016. "Relasi Gramatikal Oblik Dalam Klausa Bahasa Jepang". *Jurnal Kotoba* 3 (1): 1–14.
- Zaim, M. 2014. *Metode Penelitian Bahasa: Pendekatan Struktural*. Padang: FBS UNP Press.
- Zakariah, M Askari, Vivi Afriani and KH M Zakariah. 2020. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Action Research, Research and Development (R n D)*. Kolaka: Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Al Mawaddah Warrahmah.

ARTICLE CITATION IN *THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE 16*

In-text Citation

Simaremare and Mulyadi (2025, 24)
..... (Simaremare and Mulyadi 2025, 24)

Reference List Entry

Simaremare, Juni Agus and Mulyadi. 2025. "Prepositional Incorporation in Toba Batakese Language". *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 10 (1): 17-31. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v10i1.11386>.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Copyright ©2025 *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*