



WORD FORMATION OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT. This study explores the processes of word formation in the Malay language, focusing on affixation, compounding, reduplication, and borrowing. Malay, as an Austronesian language, exhibits a rich morphology that allows for the creation of new words to meet the evolving needs of its speakers. By analyzing examples from contemporary usage, this article provides insights into the structural and functional aspects of Malay word formation.

Keywords: words, language, borrowing, affixation, structure, aspect, morphology, word formation, new words, functional.

INTRODUCTION. Word formation is a crucial aspect of any language's development, allowing speakers to express new ideas, concepts, and objects. In the Malay language, various processes - such as affixation, compounding, reduplication, and borrowing - play a central role in lexical expansion. As Malay continues to adapt in a globalized context, understanding these processes is essential for linguists, language learners, and educators.

Word formation is an aspect of morphology in any language, including Malay. Understanding how words are formed helps linguists and language learners grasp the structure and evolution of the language [5].

The objective of this study is to examine the primary methods of word formation in the Malay language and provide illustrative examples for each. By doing so, this article highlights the dynamic and flexible nature of Malay morphology.

METHODS. The study employed qualitative linguistic analysis, focusing on textual materials, dictionaries, and examples from contemporary Malay media. Data were collected from newspapers, advertisements, and online platforms to identify and classify words formed through affixation, compounding, reduplication, and borrowing [2]. Each word formation process was analyzed based on its morphological structure and function within the language.

RESULTS. The Malay language utilizes several word formation processes, which can be categorized as follows:

1. Affixation

Affixation is one of the most productive processes in Malay word formation [1]. It involves the addition of prefixes, suffixes, or circumfixes to root words. **Examples:**

- Prefixation:

- berlari (to run) = ber- (prefix) + lari (root word, "run")
- terbuka (opened) = ter- (prefix) + buka (root word, "open")

- Suffixation:

- pelajar (student) = pelajar (root word, "study") + -ar (suffix)
- kebaikan (goodness) = baik (root word, "good") + -an (suffix)

- Circumfixation:

- kemungkinan (possibility) = ke- (prefix) + mungkin (root word, "possible") + -an (suffix)

2. Compounding

Compounding in Malay combines two or more root words to create new meanings [3]. The resulting compound words often reflect the literal or metaphorical combination of meanings. **Examples:**

- rumah sakit (hospital) = rumah (house) + sakit (sick)
- matahari (sun) = mata (eye) + hari (day)
- kaki tangan (subordinates) = kaki (leg) + tangan (hand)

3. Reduplication

Reduplication is common in Malay and serves various functions, such as pluralization, intensification, or forming diminutives. **Examples:**

- Pluralization:
 - buku-buku (books) = buku (book) + reduplication
- Intensification:
 - besar-besar (very big) = besar (big) + reduplication
- Diminutive:
 - sayur-sayuran (vegetables) = sayur (vegetable) + partial reduplication (-an)

4. Borrowing

Malay has borrowed extensively from languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic, English, and Chinese, reflecting historical and cultural interactions [4]. **Examples:**

- Sanskrit:
 - raja (king)
 - agama (religion)
- Arabic:
 - kitab (book)
 - masjid (mosque)
- English:
 - telefon (telephone)
 - komputer (computer)
- Chinese:
 - tauhu (tofu)
 - mee (noodles)

DISCUSSION. The findings illustrate that Malay's word formation processes are diverse and adaptive. Affixation remains the most productive mechanism, allowing for nuanced expression through prefixes, suffixes, and circumfixes. Compounding and reduplication, on the other hand, demonstrate the language's creativity in forming new terms [6]. Borrowing highlights Malay's historical and cultural interactions, enriching its lexicon with foreign influences.

The flexibility of Malay word formation ensures that the language continues to evolve and meet the linguistic needs of its speakers. For example, the adoption of English words like “komputer” and “telefon” reflects globalization, while traditional processes like reduplication maintain the language's unique Austronesian character.

The word formation processes in Malay demonstrate both similarities and differences when compared to English. For instance, both languages utilize borrowing and compounding, but the rules governing these processes can vary significantly [4]. In Malay, many compound words are written as separate words, unlike in English where they are often combined into a single word. Additionally, the prevalence of reduplication in Malay is a distinctive feature that is less common in English.

CONCLUSION. Malay's word formation processes demonstrate a balance between tradition and innovation. By employing affixation, compounding, reduplication, and borrowing, Malay speakers have developed a rich and versatile vocabulary. This study provides a foundation for further research into the sociolinguistic factors influencing Malay word formation and its implications for language teaching and learning. Understanding the various word formation processes in the Malay language is essential for linguists and language learners alike. These processes not only enrich the language but also reflect its historical and cultural influences. Future research could further explore the implications of these processes on language teaching and learning.

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