

Comparative Forms of Adjectives by Suffix –an in Toba Batak

Esron Ambarita, Pahotan Sinaga
esronambarita@gmail.com

Lecturers of Faculty of Letters Universitas Methodist Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study is to investigate word formations of comparative forms of adjectives by suffix [-an] in Toba Batak. Comparative forms of adjectives by suffix [-an] in Toba Batak are constructed without considering the number of syllables of the base forms of adjectives as those in English. Besides, the attachments of suffix [-an] to adjectives in Toba Batak to construct comparative forms do not require any phonological rules as those when attaching prefix [um-] to construct comparative form in Toba Batak. The stress of the words modified with suffix [-an] is in suffix [-an] itself. The meaning of suffix [-an] denotes comparative forms. It signifies more meaning than what is indicated in the base forms of the adjectives to which suffix [-an] is attached. In short, word formation of comparative form by suffix [-an] in Toba Batak can be done to all adjective bases in very simple way inflectionally.

Keywords: comparative forms, adjectives, suffix, morphological processes, inflectional

1. Introduction

Language is a tool of communication. There are around 6.912 languages in the world (*Ethnologue: Language of the World*, 2005). From the huge number, there are around 742 regional languages in Indonesian archipelago, which place Indonesia as the second country that possesses the most languages after Papua New Guinean. All of the regional languages in Indonesia are protected by constitutions because they are considered as the richness of Indonesian culture.

The regional languages have functions not only as identities of regional cultures but also as communication tools among the ethnic members. Besides, they have a role as an introductory language in elementary schools in particular areas in the archipelago. Furthermore, regional languages function as stimulus towards the development of Indonesian language as a national language in Indonesia because there are a lot of borrowing words in Indonesian language adopted from vernaculars. Vice versa, Indonesian language also has contributions to regional languages because there are abundant of words derive from Indonesian language adopted by regional language. In other words the interrelationship between these languages complete one and other.

One of the regional languages in Indonesia is Toba Batak. It belongs to Austronesian. The original homeland of the speakers of Toba Batak is located around Lake Toba. In the heart of the Batak territory lies Samosir island and on the northwest bank of Lake Toba, stands Mount Pusuk Buhit which the Toba Batak believe marks the point of origin of all the Batak people. The speakers of Toba Batak are mostly settle in North Sumatra exactly in *Tano Batak* 'Batak Land', they are, Samosir Regency, Toba Samosir Regency, Humbang Hasundutan Regency, and North Tapanuli Regency. Nowadays, Toba Batak speakers have spread to various places in Indonesia even to other countries. According to *Summer Institute of Linguistics* (2001) there are 5.150.000 Toba Batak speakers.

Toba Batak as a regional language becomes the topic under discussion in this study. The central issue in this study is comparative forms by suffix [-an]. Comparative forms in Toba Batak is formed by modifying adjectives. Adjectives have neither plural markers as nouns nor

tenses as verbs even if they function as attributive or predicative (Nababan, 1981: 35). In other words, adjective is a word that modifies a pronoun or noun following it (Houghton, 1984: 18). To modify means to change; an adjective modifies a pronoun or noun by describing or limiting or making it more specifically.

Adjectives also provide the means for creating a mood or a lasting impression of a person, a place, or a thing such as *white*, *black*, *frigid*, etc. Adjectives, however, can also refer to emotional states and abstract qualities. *Innocent*, *angry*, *confusing* are some examples of such adjectives in English. Ambarita (2017: 132) found that adjectives in Toba Batak can be reduplicated in various forms, they are, full reduplication, partial reduplication using prefix, partial reduplication using infix, partial reduplication using suffix, and partial reduplication using affix combinations. According to Quirk *et al* (1985: 402) there are four criteria for adjectives to be considered, namely:

1. They can freely occur in attributive function, that is, they can premodify a noun, especially between the determiner and the head of a noun phrase. For instance, a *pretty* lady, a *round* table, etc.
2. They can freely occur in predicative function, that is, they can function as a subject complement and object complement. For example, *The painting is very expensive*.
3. They can be premodified by the intensifier adverbs like *extremely*, *very*, and *so*. For example, *The fruit is very sour*.
4. They can take comparative and superlative forms. The comparison can be formulated by means of the inflections (*-er* and *-est*) or by the addition of the premodifier *more* and *most*. For example: (a) They are *happier* now.

(b) It is the *most* expensive mobile phone I know.

Houghton (1984: 134) states to make comparison in English correctly, there are some rules to be considered as in the followings:

1. Add the suffix *-er* to form the comparative and the suffix *-est* to form the superlative of modifiers with one or two syllables. In some cases, to form the comparative form correctly, you must change a final *y* to *i*. Example: - big → bigger → biggest
- happy → happier → happiest
2. Use *more* to show the comparative forms and *most* to show the superlative forms with three-syllable words.
Example: - comfortable → more comfortable → most comfortable
- suitable → more suitable → most suitable
3. Use *less* and *least* to form the comparative and superlative forms of comparison showing less.
Example: - humorous → less humorous → least humorous
- hopeful → less hopeful → least hopeful
4. Avoid double comparisons. Use either the word *more* and *most* or else the appropriate suffix. Do not combine the two
Incorrect comparison: Sarah is *more cleverer* than Alice. Correct comparison : Sarah is *cleverer* than Alice.
5. Avoid incomplete comparisons by clearly indicating the things being compared.
Example: Incomplete : Louise is *dilligent* than George.
Complete : Louise is *more dilligent* than George.
6. Use the word *as...as* to complete a compound comparison.
Example: (a). John is *as old as* Andy.
(b). Suzie is *as tall as* Diana.
7. Avoid making comparisons that are illogical because of missing or faulty elements or because no comparison can be made Illogical: Alfred is doing exercise that is as difficult as Andrew. (Alfred can exercise; He cannot do Andrew).
Logical: Alfred is doing exercise that is as difficult as Andrew's..
(Alfred's exercise is as difficult as Andrew's exercise).

In Toba Batak, adjectives can be preceded by the words *mansai* [massal] ‘very’ *tung* [tuŋ] ‘very’, and *lam* [lʌm] ‘get like as indicated by the adjectives’ (Sitorus, 1986: 94). According to Ambarita (2018: 81) there are seven affixes that can be attached to adjectives in Toba Batak, *i.e.* prefix [um-], infix [-um-], suffix [-an], four affix combinations, they are, [mars-i-i], [ha-assa], [ma-hu], and [sa-full adjective reduplicationna]. The results of attaching affixes to adjectives in Toba Batak are inflectional because the presence of the affixes do not change the word class of the base (Ambarita, 2016: 18). In some cases, the attachments of affixes to adjectives in Toba Batak result in morphological and phonological processes. According to Nida (1949: 102) the analysis of any language, phonological and distributional data are relevant in establishing the limits of morphological unit.

2. Methodology

This is a field research, the data taken and recoded the data from the native speaker of Bataknese

3. Data Analysis

Comparative forms of adjectives in Toba Batak can be formulated by attaching suffix [-an] to base forms of adjectives. The number of adjectives in Toba Batak which can be attached by suffix [-an] is found in unlimited number. Suffix [-an] is attached directly to the final position of the base forms of adjectives without paying attention to the syllable numbers as those in English. Besides, the attachment of suffix [-an] to the base forms of adjectives does not consider the initial phonemes of the adjectives as those when attaching prefix [um] in Toba Batak. The stress of the modified adjectives with suffix [-an] is put in the suffix [an] itself.

The results show that suffix [-an] can be attached to all base forms of adjectives to form comparative form. The discussions of the research findings below will be started by elaborating data of which the initial phonemes of the base adjectives are vowels and will be continued to consonants in order to make the discussions more systematically.

1. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is Phoneme [a]

In Toba Batak, adjectives preceded by phoneme [a] can be constructed to form comparative form by attaching suffix [-an]. The base adjective *asom* [asom] ‘sour’, for instance, if attached by suffix [-an] will be *asoman* [asoman] ‘sourer’. Other example is *etek* [etek] ‘small’ + [-an] *etekan* [etekan] ‘smaller’. Other examples are presented as follows:

Table 1: Comparative Forms of Adjectives with the Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is Phoneme [a]

No	Positive Form	Gloss	Comparative Forms by Suffix [-an]	Pronunciation	Gloss
1	Ias	clean	iasan	[iasan]	cleaner
2	Ila	shy	ilaan	[ilaan]	shier
3	Elam	Good	Elaman	[elaman]	Better
4	Elat	Eveny	Elatan	[elatan]	Envier
5	Lap	Beautiful	Iapan	[iapan]	More beautiful
6	Imbaru	New	Imbaru	[imbaruan]	Newer
7	Ojak	Nature	Ojakan	[ojakan]	More mature
8	Otik	Few	Otikan	[otikan]	Fewer

9	Uli	Beautiful	ulian	[ulian]	More beautiful
10	Ungil	Stubborn	Ungilan	[ungilian]	More stubborn

Based on the data above, it can be stated that to form comparative forms of adjectives preceded by vowel sounds is done by attaching suffix [-an] as a bound morpheme at the end of the base forms of adjectives. Example of sentences can be seen in the following part:

Argaan do hahipason sian hamoraon.
 [argaan do hahipason sian hamoraon].
 Health is more valuable than wealth.

Speaking of morpheme, the word *argaan* [argaan] 'more important' consists of two morphemes, namely, *arga* [arga] 'valuable' as a free morpheme and suffix [-an] as a bound morpheme. Suffix [-an] functions as inflectional morpheme because it does not change the word class of adjective *arga* 'important' to which it is attached. According to the sentence above, there are two things compared, namely, *hahipason* [hahipason] 'health' and *hamoraon* [hamoraon] 'wealth'. Based on the sentence both *hahipason* and *hamoraon* are valuable. However, *hahipason* and *hamoraon* do not have the same value in Toba Batak culture. The sentence can be cut into two sentences, without losing its basic meaning, namely:

Arga do hahipason [arga do hahipason]. 'Health is valuable'.
 Arga do hamoraon [arga do hamoraon]. 'Wealth is valuable'.

One important thing to be considered in this case is that by the word *arga* [arga] 'valuable' both in *arga do hahipason* [arga do hahipason] 'health is valuable' and in *arga do hamoraon* [arga do hamoraon] 'wealth is valuable', one may not relate the value of *hahipason* and *hamoraon* with money. Speaking of morpheme within the word *argaan* [argaan] 'more valuable', the word *argaan* derives from *arga* [arga] 'valuable' as a free morpheme and suffix [-an] as a bound morpheme.

Suffix [-an] does not undergo any morphological change as occurred when attaching prefix [um-] to base form of adjective *arga* → *ummarga*. In other words, prefix [um-] becomes [umm-]. The writer has discussed it in other article entitled *Comparative Forms of Adjectives by Prefix um- in Toba Batak* (2019)

<http://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/littera/article/view/335>

Other example of sentence denoting comparative forms of adjective can be found in famous proverb of Toba Batak as follows:

Ojak do jolma si boan tigor, alai ojakan do si boan dame.
 [ojak do jolma si boan tigor, alai ojakan do si boan dame].
 People who state truth are mature, but those who state peace are more mature.

The sentence above, actually, can be cut into two parts where each part has positive forms of *ojak* as the base form of adjective as in the following:

Ojak do jolma si boan tigor.
 [ojak do jolma si boan tigor] People who state truth are mature.
 Ojak do jolma si boan dame.
 [ojak do jolma si boan dame] People who state peace are mature.

Based on the sentence above, it can be seen that person both in sentence 1 and in sentence 2 are *ojak* 'mature'. In other words, the two sentences above are really the basic premises of the modified sentence previously where the base form of adjective *ojak* 'mature' is changed to *ojakan* 'more mature'. It occurs because person in sentence 1 is compared with person in sentence 2. The result of the comparison is that person in sentence 2 is more mature than that in sentence 1.

2. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Bilabial Plosive Voiced Consonant [b]

Besides being preceded by vowels, adjectives in Toba Batak are also preceded by a bilabial plosive voiced consonant [b]. Such adjectives can be constructed to form comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] to the base adjectives without considering the number of syllables as those in English. The adjective *bagas* [bagas] 'deep', for instance, can be attached by suffix [-an] to form comparative form. Thus, *bagas* [bagas] 'deep' + [-an] *bagasan* [bagasan] 'deeper'. The stress of the word is in suffix [-an]. Other examples are in the following part.

Table 2: Comparative Forms of Adjectives with Initial Phoneme is Bilabial Plosive Voiced Consonant [b]

No	Positive Forms	Gloss	Comparative Forms by Suffix [-an]	Pronunciation	Gloss
1	balga	big	balgaan	[balgaan]	bigger
2	bidang	wide	bidangan	[bidangan]	wider
3	birong	black	birongan	[bironan]	blacker
4	bongak	proud	bongakan	[bonjakan]	prouder

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the attachment of suffix [-an] to base adjectives does not result in phonological change to the two combination. Compared with the attachment of prefix [um-] to base adjectives to construct comparative form of which the initial phoneme is bilabial plosive voiced consonant [b], prefix [um-] becomes [ub-] as in *umbagas* pronounced as [ubbagas] 'deeper'. In other words, prefix [um-] is no longer pronounced as [um-], but it is pronounced as [ub-] as the result of affixation process. The phonological change occurs due to the phonemes following it as allomorph.

3. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Velar Plosive Voiced Consonant [g]

The adjectives of which the initial phoneme is a velar plosive voiced consonant [g] can also be combined with suffix [-an] to form comparative forms. The base form of the adjective *gogo* [gogo] 'strong', for instance, can be combined with suffix [-an] to form comparative forms. The morphological process is *gogo* [gogo] 'strong' + [-an] *gogoan* [gogoan] 'stronger'. The following is a sentence which includes adjective with suffix [-an]. *Gogoan do hamatean sian hangoluan di hasiangan on.*

[*Gogoan do hamatean sian hangoluan di hasiangan on*] 'Death is stronger than life in this universe'.

In the sentence above there are two things compared, they are, *hamatean* [hamatean] 'death' and *hangoluan* [hangoluan] 'life'. It is said that *gogoan do hamatean sian hangoluan di hasiangan on* because it is easy to die but it is difficult to survive to live.

4. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Palato Alveolar Affricate Voiced Consonant [j]

Adjectives of this criteria can also be combined with suffix [-an] in Toba Batak. The base form of adjective *jebu* [jebu] 'passionate', for instance, if attached with suffix [-an] will be: *jebu* [jebu] 'passionate' + [-an] *jebuan* [jebuan] 'more passionate'. Other example is suffix [-an] + *jempek* [jeppek] 'small' *jēmpekan* [jeppekan] 'smaller'.

5. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Bilabial Nasal Voiced Consonant [m]

The base forms of the adjective initiated by a bilabial nasal voiced consonant [m] can be integrated with suffix [-an] to form comparative forms. For instance, *manat* [manat] 'careful' + [-an] □ *manatan* [manatan] 'more careful'. The word *mura* [mura] 'cheap' + [-an] □ *muraan* [muraan] 'cheaper' as other example.

Other example is *mahalan* [mahalan] 'more expensive'. Speaking of morpheme within the word *mahalan*, the word *mahalan* derives from free morpheme *mahal* [mahal] 'expensive' and bound morpheme [-an]. The same construction also occurs to other adjectives of which initiated by the same initial phoneme [m] as listed below.

Table 3: Comparative Forms of Adjectives with Initial Phonemes is Bilabial Nasal Voiced Consonant [m].

No	Positive Forms	Gloss	Comparative Forms by Suffix [-an]	Pronunciation	Gloss
1	mahal	expensive	mahalan	[mahalan]	more expensive
2	metmet	small	metmetan	[meʔmetan]	smaller
3	momos	strict	momosan	[momosan]	stricter
4	male	hungry	malean	[malean]	hungrier

6. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is an Alveolar Nasal Voiced Consonant [n]

One example of adjective preceded by an alveolar nasal voiced consonant [n] in Toba Batak is *nipis* [nipis] 'thin'. The construction of this word to form comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] will be: *nipis* [nipis] 'thin' + [-an] *nipisan* [nipisan] 'thinner'. The other example is *nunut* [nunut] 'diligent' + [-an] *nunutan* [nunutan] 'more diligent'. There is not any phonological change occurs in the combination of base adjective *nipis* and *nunut* with suffix [-an]. The procedures of these word formations are similar to formations when attaching infix [-um-] to base adjectives as discussed by the writer in *Comparative Forms of Adjectives by Infix -um- in Toba Batak* (2021)

<https://ejournal.uhn.ac.id/index.php/explora/article/view/200>

As comparison, it differs a lot from the combination of prefix [um-] and base adjective to construct comparative form of which the initial phoneme of the base forms of the adjectives is an alveolar nasal voiced consonant [n]. In this construction, prefix [um-] becomes [un-] as the writer has discussed in previous article. The bilabial nasal voiced consonant [m] of prefix [um-] is no longer [m], but it changes to an alveolar nasal voiced consonant [n] as the cause of the integration between prefix [um-] and the base forms *nipis* [nipis] *unnipis* [unnipis] 'lighter' and *nunut* [nunut] 'diligent' *unnunut* [unnunut] 'more diligent'.

7. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Bilabial Plosive Voiceless Consonant [p]

Adjectives of this kind can be constructed to form comparative forms by attaching suffix [an]. The word *padot* [padot] 'diligent', as an example, if modified to be comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] will be: *padot* [padot] 'diligent' + [-an] □ *padotan* [padotan] 'more diligent'. Other example is *pistar* [pistar] 'clever' + [-an] *pistarān* [pistaran] 'cleverer', *poso* [poso] + [-an] *poso* [posoan] 'younger'.

8. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is an Alveolar Rolled Voiced Consonant [r]

In Toba Batak, the adjectives preceded by an alveolar rolled voiced consonant [r] can be combined with suffix [-an] to form comparative forms. The word *roa* [roa] 'ugly', for

□

instance, if attached by suffix [-an] will become: *roa* [roa] 'ugly' + [-an] *roaan* [roaan] 'uglier'. Other example is *ringgas* [ringgas] 'dilligent' + [-an] *ringgasan* [ringgasan] 'more dilligent'.

9. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is an Alveolar Fricative Voiceless Consonant [s]

One example of the base form of adjective preceded by an alveolar fricative voiceless consonant [s] is *sompit* [soppit] 'narrow' + [-an] *sompitan* [soppitan] 'narrower'. The other example is *sangap* [saŋap] 'respectful' + [-an] *ṣangapan* [saŋapan] 'more respectful'.

10. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is an Alveolar Plosive Voiceless Consonant [t]

Adjectives in Toba Batak preceded by an alveolar plosive voiceless consonant [t] can be formed to be comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] to the base forms of the adjectives. The base form *tibu* [tibu] 'early', for instance, if attached with suffix [-an] will be: *tibu* [tibu] 'early' + [-an] *tibuan* [tibuan] 'earlier'. Other example is *timbo* [tibbo] 'tall' + [-an] *timboan* [tibboan] 'taller'.

Findings and Discussions

Writers found : comparative forms of adjectives using some suffixes

1. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is Phoneme [a] *asom* [asom] 'sour', for instance, if attached by suffix [-an] will be *asom* [asom] 'sour' + [-an] *asoman* [asoman] 'sourer'. Other example is *etek* [etek] 'small' + [-an] *etekan* [etekan] 'smaller'.

2. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Bilabial Plosive Voiced Consonant [b]

The adjective *bagas* [bagas] 'deep', for instance, can be attached by suffix [-an] to form comparative form. Thus, *bagas* [bagas] 'deep' + [-an] *bāgasan* [bagasan] 'deeper'. The stress of the word is in suffix [-an]. Other examples are in the following part.

3. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Velar Plosive Voiced Consonant [g]

The morphological process is *gogo* [gogo] 'strong' + [-an] *gōgoan* [gogoan] 'stronger'. The following is a sentence which includes adjective with suffix [-an]. *Gogoan do hamatean sian hangoluan di hasiangan on*.

[*Gogoan do hamatean sian haŋoluan di hasiaŋan on*] 'Death is stronger than life in this universe'.

4. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Palato Alveolar

Affricate Voiced Consonant [j] if attached with suffix [-an] will be: *jebu* [jebu] 'passionate' + [-an] *jebuan* [jebuan] 'more passionate'. Other example is suffix [-an] + *jempek* [jeppek] 'small' *ṣempekan* [jeppekan] 'smaller'.

5. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is a Bilabial Nasal Voiced Consonant [m]

For instance, *manat* [manat] 'careful' + [-an] *manatan* [manatan] 'more careful'. The word *mura* [mura] 'cheap' + [-an] *mūraan* [muraan] 'cheaper'.

6. The Initial Phoneme of the Base Forms of the Adjectives is an Alveolar Nasal

Voiced Consonant [n] comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] will be: *nipis* [nipis] 'thin' + [-an] *nipisān* [nipisan] 'thinner'. The other example is *nunut* [nunut] 'dilligent' + [-an] *nunutān* [nunutan] 'more dilligent'. There is not any phonological change occurs in the

combination of base adjective *nipis* and *nunut* with suffix [-an]. The procedures of these word formations are similar to formations when attaching infix [-um-]

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In Toba Batak, the adjectives preceded by an alveolar rolled voiced consonant [r] can be combined with suffix [-an] to form comparative forms. The word *roa* [roa] 'ugly', for instance, if attached by suffix [-an] will become: *roa* [roa] 'ugly' + [-an] *roān* [roān] 'uglier'. Other example is *ringgas* [ringgas] 'diligent' + [-an] *ringgasan* [ringgasan] 'more diligent'.

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One example of the base form of adjective preceded by an alveolar fricative voiceless consonant [s] is *sompit* [soppit] 'narrow' + [-an] □ *sompitan* [soppitan] 'narrower'. The other example is *sangap* [saŋap] 'respectful' + [-an] □ *sangapan* [saŋapan] 'more respectful'.

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Adjectives in Toba Batak preceded by an alveolar plosive voiceless consonant [t] can be formed to be comparative forms by attaching suffix [-an] to the base forms of the adjectives. The base form *tibu* [tibu] 'early', for instance, if attached with suffix [-an] will be: *tibu* [tibu] 'early' + [-an] □ *tibuan* [tibuan] 'earlier'. Other example is *timbo* [tibbo] 'tall' + [-an] □ *timboan* [tibboan] 'taller'.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions above, it can be concluded that comparative forms of adjectives by suffix [-an] in Toba Batak is constructed the same way as constructing comparative forms by infix [-um-], namely, the attachment of suffix [-an] can be done without considering the number of syllables of the base forms of adjectives as those in English. Besides, the attachments of suffix [-an] to adjectives in Toba Batak to construct comparative forms do not require any phonological rules as those when attaching prefix [-um-] to construct comparative forms. The stress of the words modified with suffix [-an] is in suffix [-an] itself. In short, the attachment of suffix [-an] to all adjective bases in Toba Batak can be done inflectionally in very simple ways.

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