

# Linguistic Assimilation as the Toba Batak's Natural Resources

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**Abstract:** This paper describes the linguistic assimilation as the Toba Batak's Natural Resources by Toba Batak people that live in Sitoluama Village and Hinalang Bagasan Village, Toba Samosir district, North Sumatra, Indonesia. It aims at (1) finding linguistic assimilation as the Toba Batak's natural resources phonemically and phonetically and (2) contributing to the development of the theory of language assimilation. This research is conducted by qualitative design from the viewpoints of phonology and generative morphology approach.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Each language has a set of rules in its words or sounds. Words or sounds used in a language will show the specificity of the language of the area, such as Toba Batak language that has the same meaning of vocabulary with the vocabulary in the language of Indonesia, but the way its use or its structure in a sentence will be different, although the meaning and the purpose is the same. Toba Batak is the local language used by Batak tribe in their daily life as a means of communication, especially in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Toba Batak is one of the Austronesian languages and also is part of other Batak, such as Karo Batak, Simalungun Batak, Pakpak-Dairi Batak, and Angkola-Mandailing Batak (Sibarani, 1997). Nowadays, Toba Batak language is getting faded because it is rarely used by Toba Batak people as language for everyday communication (Sibarani, 2017).

The difference in the ways of life as well as the structure of vocabulary or sound in a sentence it could just happen to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and assimilation that is strongly related to Toba Batak language. Assimilation is the process in which sounds become identical or more alike under the influence of a third sound or that of one upon the other. It may occur at the beginning, in the middle,

or at the ends of words (Sibarani, 1997, 2017) (Alfozan, 1989).

Toba Batak language has its own special characteristics in terms of assimilation because when it is used in communication, not all the sound is spoken as written to the process of assimilation. The characteristics can be seen that the process of assimilation can happen inter-syllable, inter-morpheme, and inter-word in Toba Batak language.

Table 1: Toba Batak language

Formation	Written	Spoken
<i>som-ba</i>	< <i>somba</i> >	[ <i>sobba</i> ]
{ <i>maN-</i> } + / <i>jaha</i> /	< <i>manjaha</i> >	[ <i>majjaha</i> ]
/ <i>hudon</i> / + / <i>tano</i> /	< <i>hudon tano</i> >	[ <i>hudot tano</i> ]

First, the characteristics of Toba Batak language can be seen above that the assimilation process can occur in the form of inter-syllable, namely syllable /*m*/ which is adjacent to syllable /*b*/ in the word *somba* 'worship'. In the written form, the word does not undergo an assimilation process, but in the spoken form, the word undergoes an assimilation process into [*sobba*].

Second, the characteristics of Toba Batak language can be seen that the assimilation process can occur in the form of inter-morpheme, which is between the prefix {*maN-*} which is adjacent to the word *jaha* 'read'. In the written form, the inter-

morpheme form does not undergo an assimilation process, but in the spoken form, the inter-morpheme form undergoes an assimilation process into [majjaha].

Third, the characteristics of BBT can be seen that the assimilation process can occur in the form of inter-word, that is between the word /hudon/ 'pot' and the word /tano/ 'clay'. In the spoken form, phoneme /n/ in word /hudon/ undergoes an assimilation process. The phoneme /n/ changes to phoneme /t/ so that it forms the pronunciation of [hudot tano].

Toba Batak language is also can be affected because of the mutual cooperation in Toba Batak society that is based on the concept of 'cohesiveness, synchrony, and togetherness' in acting, behaving or working (Sibarani, 2017).

The role of Toba Batak language is still seen as a communication tool in cultural life as natural resources. Research in Toba Batak language was also carried out to show the ethnic identity of Toba Batak language as natural resources and preservation of regional languages in North Sumatra.

## 2 CONCEPT HEADINGS

There are several linguistic concepts that play a role in the assimilation process. First, the most important is sound change. Assimilation is a process of changing sound from one sound to another. So, in assimilation, the role of phonological theory becomes important in solving a problem of sound change. Second, the assimilation process can also occur in the form of inter-morpheme.

Thus, morphological theory becomes important in solving problems that occur between morphemes. Third, the assimilation process can also occur between words in the scope of the phrase. So, syntactic theory is needed in solving problems that occur between data. The theories used in this study refer to phonological theory, generative morphology theory, and syntactic theory.

### 2.1 Phonology

Sound in a language can affect the language itself. Based on the location of the sound, there is assimilation which is one of the processes of sound change in phonology. It is divided in 5 kinds of assimilation in phonology (Keraf, 1984), namely:

- Regressive assimilation: the sound change because of the influence of the following sound which the second phoneme influences the first

phoneme or one phoneme influences another phoneme backward

- Progressive assimilation: the sound changes because of the influence of the preceding sound which the first phoneme influences the second phoneme or one phoneme influences another phoneme forward
- Reciprocal assimilation: the process of mutual influence of the sounds upon each other
- Total assimilation: the process by which two phonemes that are equated become similar
- Partial assimilation: the process by which both phonemes are partially equated.

### 2.2 Generative Morphology

The native speakers of the language have the ability called intuition to know not only the words in the language, but what the words in the language that is set up (Halle, 1973) (Dardjowijoyo, 1988) (Sibarani, 2015). Therefore, generative morphology consists of 4 components (Halle, 1973), namely:

- Lists of morpheme: in the list of morphemes, all morphemes of both free morpheme and bound morpheme are identified by finding repeating parts with a fixed meaning and finding contrast in a framework.
- Word formation rules: the process of how the morphemes of a language are arranged in clusters to form the true words in that language.
- Filter: a mechanism that handles idiosyncrasy contained in a language.
- Dictionary: words that have gone through the filter form a dictionary of the language in question, which is the final component of this morphological model.

The theory of generative morphology expressed by Halle needs to be adjusted in order to elucidate the process of assimilation in a Toba Batak. It was adapted to the Dardjowidjojo opinion that diagrams filed by Scalise, was still not perfect. Therefore, Dardjowidjojo remodel the diagram of generative morphology into more specifically than Halle's.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This research is descriptive research that combines interactive qualitative method (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2014). It is consisting of data collection methods, divided into 3 techniques, namely:

- In-depth, open-ended interview: done to people who are still fluent in using Toba Batak language in everyday life.
- Direct and participatory observations: applied primarily in obtaining data to answer the question in relation to the Toba Batak language assimilation process, namely the spoken form.
- Written documents: carried out to obtain information, especially to answer the question about Toba Batak language in written form.

Data analysis methods consisting of 3 data analysis activities, namely:

- Data condensation: process of selecting data, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.
- Data display: process of selecting data, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.
- Conclusion drawing/verification.
- The data used in this study were obtained over the 2 sources, such as sources of written and oral data. The written data source is scriptures, dictionary, and songbook. Oral sources of data in this research were obtained from native speakers in Sitoluama Village that is located in Toba Samosir District and Hinalang Bagasan Village that is located in Balige District, North Sumatera, Indonesia.

## 4 RESULTS

The results of this research indicate that:

- The process of assimilation in the form of writing the Toba Batak language occurs in the form of inter-morpheme that produces 5 changes, such as base word between prefixes, base word between suffixes, base word between confixes, and base word between enclitics.
- The process of assimilation in the form of pronunciation of the Toba Batak language occurs in inter-syllable, inter-morpheme, and inter-word forms grouped into types of assimilation, namely progressive assimilation, regressive assimilation, and reciprocal assimilation.

## 5 DISCUSSIONS

In Toba Batak language, not all phonemes or sounds are written and pronounced the same as those written in the writing. This causes assimilation, which is a change in sound or mutual influence between two adjacent sounds that can take the form of words, between elements, and between words. So that it changes the writing and speech which results in the same or almost the same sound.

### 5.1 Written Form in Linguistic Assimilation as Toba Batak's Natural Resources

The process of assimilation in the written spoken only occurs in changes in forms inter-morphemes. In inter-morpheme change, it is divided into 4 parts, namely words with prefixes, words with suffixes, words with confixes, and words with enclitic.

The assimilation process in the written form can occur between basic words and prefixes. Prefixes that are often used are maN- (nasal) prefixes that have allomorphs {man-, mam-, mang-}, prefix {paN-} which has {pan-, pam-, pang-} allomorphs, {saN-} prefixes that have allomorph {san-, sam-}, suffix {-hon-}, confix {maN-hon-} and enclitic like {-ta-}, {-na-}, {-hi-} and {-hu-}. Prefix {maN-}, {paN-}, and {saN-} show a formal resemblance to the allomorph. The selection of the prefix {maN-}, {paN-}, and {saN-} as the representative of the morphs is due to the level of ability {maN-}, {paN-}, and {saN-} to distribute with basic morphemes which begin with any vowels and consonants or the extent of distribution with morph that is in Toba Batak language. For example, the prefix {maN-} will change to one of the allomorphs, which is morph {man-} if the prefix is attached to the base word beginning with phoneme /d/ and phoneme /j/. Some examples such as the morpheme {maN-} + /dok/ become <mandok> 'say'. In the {maN-} + /jarum/ become <manjarum> 'sewing'. The prefix {maN-} will change to one of the allomorphs that is morph {mam-} if it is attached to the base word that starts with phoneme /b/. For example like in {maN-} + /bahen/ becomes <mambahen> 'to make'.

The assimilation process in the spoken form can occur between basic words and suffixes. The suffix that is often used is the {-hon-}. The suffix {-hon-} is attached to the base term ending in phoneme /t/, phoneme /p/, phoneme /s/, phoneme /r/, phoneme /ŋ/, and phoneme /l/. For examples like the

morpheme /silan/ + {-hon} become <silangkong> 'cross over'.

The assimilation process in the written form can occur between the basic words and the confix. The frequently used conflict is confix {maN + hon} which has allomorph {man- + -hon} and {mang- + -hon}. Conflict {maN- + -hon} will turn into one of the allomorphs, namely morph {man-hon} if the confix is attached to the base word beginning with phoneme /d/. For example like the morpheme {maN} + /dapot/ + {-hon} become <mandapothon> 'to get' and in the morpheme {maN} + /durus/ + {-hon} become <mandurushon> 'to shed'.

The assimilation process in the writing form can occur between the basic words and the enclitic. The commonly used enclosures are {-ta}, {-hu}, and {-hi}. For example such as morpheme /hudon/ 'pot' + {-ta} become <hudonta> 'our pot'. In morpheme /ama/ 'father' + {-ta} becomes <amanta> 'our father'. This result in the addition of phonemes /n/ in the word /ama/ before the enclitic {-ta} so that it becomes <amanta> is morphophonemic assimilation of the {-ta} enclitic.

## 5.2 Spoken Form in Linguistic Assimilation as Toba Batak's Natural Resources

The assimilation process in the spoken form occurs in 3 types, namely progressive assimilation, regressive assimilation, and reciprocal assimilation. In progressive assimilation, there are 5 forms of linguistic assimilation process.

In regressive assimilation, there are 17 forms of linguistic assimilation process. In reciprocal assimilation, there are 4 forms of linguistic assimilation process. For example: in regressive assimilation, there is a form between penultimate (last but one) phoneme /k/ and ultimate (last) phoneme /h/. Examples of sound changes produced:

- *peak* + {-hon} → [peakkon] 'to put'

Based on the data found, the consonant /h/ phoneme undergoes a sound change in the ultimate position because of the influence of the consonant phoneme /k/ on the penultimate position resulting in a sound [kk]. The noiseless shifting consonant sound [h] in the {-hon} suffix changes to a noise consonant noiseless [k] because the effect of the consonant noise is unvoiced [k] on the base /peak/ and /tumpak/ which precedes the consonant sound. The phonological process is as follows:

Basic: \* [[peak] v + [-hon] suf #] v

Assimilation: / h / → / k / consonant is changed in suffix ultimate position

Result: [peakkon] 'to put'

In progressive assimilation, there is a form between penultimate (last but one) phoneme /m/ and ultimate (last) phoneme /p/. Examples of sound changes produced:

- *tim-pul* → [tippul] 'smoke'

Based on the data found, the consonant /m/ phoneme experiences sound changes in the penultimate position because of the influence of the consonant phoneme /p/ on the ultimate position so that it produces sound [pp]. Bilabial nasal consonants sound [m] on syllable /tim/ and /sam/ change into bilabial consonant sounds noiseless [p] because of the bilabial consonant sound effect of noiseless [p] on syllable /pul/ and /pur/ which precedes the sound of the consonant. The phonological process is as follows:

Basic: \* [[tim-pul] n #] n

Assimilation: /m/ → /p/ consonant is changed in syllable penultimate position

Result: [tippul] 'smoke'

In reciprocal assimilation, there is a form between penultimate (last but one) phoneme /m/ and ultimate (last) phoneme /h/. Examples of sound changes produced:

Examples of sound changes produced:

- *uhum* + {-hu} → [uhuppu] 'my law'

Based on the data found, the consonant /m/ phoneme experiences sound changes in the penultimate position because of the influence of the consonant phoneme /h/ on the ultimate position so as to produce sound [pp]. The sound of the bilabial nasal consonant sounds [m] in the word /uhum/ and /tiham/ changes to the sound of the bilabial consonant of the noiseless obstacle [p] because of the noiseless pharyngeal consonant sound effect [h] in {-hu} and {-hon} suffix which precedes the sound of the consonant. The phonological process is as follows:

Basic: \* [[uhum] n + [-hu] suf #] n

Assimilation: /m/ → /p/ consonant is changed on the base word of penultimate position

Assimilation: /h/ → /p/ consonant is changed in the enclitic position

Result: [uhuppu] 'my law'

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Assimilation is the process in which sounds become identical or more alike under the influence of a third sound or that of one upon the other. It may occur at

the beginning, in the middle, or at the ends of words. When a sound adopts features of another sound, the process of articulation becomes much easier. Assimilation involves ease of articulation pressures and it is an important means of making pronunciation easier, especially in Toba Batak.

The process of writing and pronunciation in Toba Batak is very influential for the people that long-applying and studying the Toba Batak because it is still inappropriate to pronounce the words spoken by other people, especially for young generation. This is an important thing that young generation today are no longer considered that Toba Batak was the mother tongue for those in everyday life, so that is still a lot of error in writing when that language was dictated, either Toba Batak or other local languages.

The role of Toba Batak still seems in the cultural life, as well as in the life of religious, social, and economical for the people of Toba Batak. This research is done in earnest against Toba Batak and the form of pronunciation and writing on the process of assimilation as natural resources so that the young generation to the Toba Batak especially, can be a successor to the nation that can preserve the culture that was already awake from past until now so as not to disappear consumed by the times.

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