

# Semantic Verb Types and Predicate Construction in Karo Language

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## Abstract

*This study was aimed to analyze the semantic verb types and predicates construction in Karo language. The data was obtained from native speakers of the Karo language with open interview techniques. Data were analyzed by the descriptive analyzes. The result of data analysis was the classification of semantic type in Karo language were Primary A: Motion, Primary A: Rest, Primary B: Speaking, Secondary A: Trying, Secondary C: Help and the predicate constructions founded in several forms, they were: First, arguments predicate STATE functioned with BECOME and BE and CAUSE. Second, EVENT functioned with MOVE, BE and BECOME.*

*Keywords. Karo Language, Semantic Verb Types, Complex Predicate*

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## 1. Introduction

Identification of sentences based on basic sentence patterns is an analysis of sentences based on language forms. Sentence structure can be seen clearly in written sentences because usually written language is more complex than spoken language. A number of sentences as a form of written language produced by humans can be traced to their basic sentence patterns. A basic sentence pattern is a sentence structure construction that contains a number of rules or rules according to the grammar of a language. Human creativity in language, thinking and reasoning can be seen from the variety of structural constructions created. The concept of the core sentence proposed by Chomsky (1965) can also be said as one the basic sentence in Indonesian.

Language has a category of clause-linkage markers which expresses the important aspects of the semantics of verbs and it relates into a single event or action of cognitive representation (Levin & Rappaport, 2005). An alternative approach to capture semantic relations was by postulating a decompositional structure for verb meaning and it is defined as primitive predicate. The set of primitive predicates should be finite in size and they are argument-taking functions, with their open argument positions representing the verb arguments in which contains the change of state or activity (Maienborn et al, 2019; Riemer, 2015).

The predicate decomposition approach is to entail relations among sentences and it is elaborated in the work of generative semanticists (Lakoff, 1968; McCawley, 1971). These predicate decompositions consist of predicates representing the notions of cause and change. For example, the fact that transitive/intransitive pairs such as “*She cooled the soup*” and “*The soup cooled*” shares the entailment “*The soup was cool*” and that the same selectional restrictions hold for the object of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb are accounted by positing a shared component of meaning, that is “*BE Cool*” (Levin & Hovav, 2005).

Speakers have intuitions about meanings that are reflected in their ability to identify the semantic class of a verb in a sentence and to characterize the arguments of the verb according to the semantic roles they bear. Thus, the goal in verb lexical semantic research is to account for these kinds of common relationships in a systematic way, revealing what it is about the meaning of changes of state, as well as to reveal the meaning of a verb related to its status as an argument-taking lexical item (Katamba, 2004). Predicate decomposition is related into complex predicates at the level of argument-structure by the work of Jackendoff's (1976, 1983) in Lexical Conceptual Structures (Amberber et al, 2010). Complex predicates are considered relational jointly contributing semantic participants and affecting the argument structure of a single clause; these representations are often referred to as "event structures" (Everaert & Riemsdijk, 2006; Grimshaw & Vikner, 1993).

The recent researches proves that can be expressed the grammatical marker and denote transitive events involving at least two participants, as they have the ability to agree with two arguments (Oomen, 2018). The evidence that linguistic choices influence the way people think about the temporal dimensions of events can be seen from formal semantics which indicates that the properties of objects and events are mirrored in count/mass syntax and verbal aspect and it enhances of the effects of syntactic choices on subtle aspects of event construal (Wittenberg & Levy, 2017). Empirical data shows that the complex predicate formation does not have the same properties of monoclausality and argument composition that the standard construction displays. It happens when the permissive verb selects for a VP-complement instead of a V-complement. Thus, lexicalist framework is needed in order to convey the notion of boundedness in predicates (Poornima, 2012). In addition, another research proves that there are two major proposals for resolving the syntax-semantics mismatch characterizing complex predicates. The 'verb-raising' approach resolves the mismatch via syntactic movement and the 'argument-sharing' approach does so by positing merged argument structures for complex-predicates (Kubota, 2014).

In this study, the writers are interested to analyze the semantic verb types and construction that fill each predicate that builds a sentence in Karo language based on Dixon (2005) and Amberber et al (2010). We propose that stative predicates were to describe the state or situation was analyzed in a BE predicate and the logical structures of all activity was analyzed by a MOVE predicate. Other category of events, such as BECOME produces the change of possessives locatives and CAUSE as the second argument takes the activity of configuration MOVE. By the addition of a Path expression (motion predicates), an activity verb can be understood in the same way as an accomplishment verb.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 The Classification of Verb in Semantic

The verb meanings can be classified into four basic classes, that are states, activities, achievements, and accomplishments. All languages refer to grammatical means to states, activities were indicated by ongoing processes and past events, achievements can be predicate only for single moments at time, and accomplishments focus on the duration leading up to the end point of the event (Valejos, 2016; Durst-Andersen, 2011). Chahine (2013) proves that nouns derives from event verbs (accomplishments and achievements) tend to have an event or a result heading, whereas nouns derives from activity and state verbs tend to denote the results.

Hasan, et al (1996) shows that the classification of English primary verb, they are primary A and primary B. The classification of primary A was motion, rest, affect, giving, own, corporeal, competition, weather, social contract, using, and obeying. The classification of primary B was attention, thinking, deciding, speaking, liking, annoying, acting, happening, comparing, and relating. In addition, Arkadiev, et al (2015) states that the first step in the semantic classification of verbal LCs is to analyze their event structure, followed by their grouping in accordance with the semantic type of the underlying verb: stative, actional,

inchoative, or causative. These verb classes are traditionally considered as primary (or basic) and as such constitute the first stage in any classification of verbs. Meanwhile, Sabir (2016) classifies that verbs in English into three major types: full or lexical verbs, primary verbs, and modal auxiliary verbs.

## 2.2 Similarity of Verb Meaning

Azamat (2008) defines verb as predicating of things in several basic ways: affirmation (or denial) of a thing's existence (or being), the fact to be a substance, being in a state or condition, being in a change, or being in the relation of the certain kind (part-whole, order, resemblance, or designation). Warglien, et al (2012) explains similarities of verb meanings, by building on the distances between the underlying vectors. The fact that the meaning of *walk* is more similar to that of *jog* than that of *jump* can be explained by the fact that the force patterns representing *walking* are more similar to those for *jogging* than those for *jumping*.

A sentence expresses a construal representing a particular focus on an event. Following this idea, the most focused role is designated subject and the secondary focus is designated object (Gardenfors, 2019). Givon (2001) calls these primary and secondary topics. He writes that topicality "is fundamentally a cognitive dimension, having to do with the focus on one or two important event-or-state participants during the processing of multi-participant clauses".

Dixon (2005:96) stated that verbal concepts naturally divide into two sorts:

- 1 PRIMARY—those directly referring to some activity or state, i.e. verbs which can make up a sentence by themselves with appropriate NPs Willing the various semantic roles. These are lexical verbs in every language, such as:
  - a. PRIMARY-A verbs must have NPs (not complement clauses) in subject and object slots. The semantic types with this property are: motion (run, return), rest (sit, stay), affect (hit, punch), giving (give, lend), corporeal (eat, taste), weather (rain, snow), competition (beat, win), social contract (appoint, govern), using, (employ, operate) , and obeying (obey, process).
  - b. PRIMARY-B verbs may have NPs Willing subject and object slots but they also allow—as an alternative—a complement clause to Will one of these slots, e.g. I understand my father and My father surprised me. That he refused to sign surprised me. The form is: annoying (please, satisfy), attention (see, hear), thinking (know, learn), deciding (choose, resolve), speaking (shout, state), liking (like, love), acting (act, behave), happening (happen, take place), comparing (resemble, compare), and relating (depend on, relate to).
- 2 SECONDARY—those providing semantic modification of some other verb, with which they are in syntactic or morphological construction, such as:
  - a. SECONDARY-A verbs have the same subject as the verbs they modify, and the same object too, if the verb is transitive, such as: modals (will, can, should), semi-modals (be going to, be able to), beginning (begin, start), trying (try, attempt), hurrying (hurry, hasten), and daring (dare, venture).
  - b. SECONDARY-B verbs introduce an extra role, the Principal or the Timer (which is subject of the main verb) , which is predicate head within the complement clause, such as: wanting (want, wish), and postponing (postpone, delay)
  - c. SECONDARY-C verbs must introduce a further role over and above the roles of the complement clause verb. This is subject of the main verb; it is the Causer or Helper role, and is generally human. The types are making (make, force) and helping (aid, assist)
  - d. SECONDARY-D verbs may optionally add a role (introduced by preposition to) to the roles required by the verbs they modify, such as: seem (appear, happen), matter (count).

## 2.3 Complex-Predicate

Complex predicates can be defined as predicates which are multi-headed, they are composed of more than one grammatical element. It consists of a light verb, an article, and deverbal noun through grammaticalisation

and lexicalisation (Nash & Samvelian, 2016). Amberber, et al (2010:96) explains that the term complex predicate is used to designate a construction that involves two or more predication elements (such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives) which predicate as a single element, i.e. their arguments map onto a monoclausal syntactic structure. The three of the principal approaches which they call 'localist', 'causal' and 'aspectual'. The localist approach claims explicitly that all verbs can be represented in terms of predicates of location or motion. The thematic tier consists of 'conceptual functions', predicates with very general meanings and their arguments. The arguments of the conceptual functions correspond to the arguments (overt or implicit) of a clause. Conceptual functions can themselves be the arguments of other conceptual functions. The major conceptual functions relevant to event structure are BE, BECOME, CAUSE and MOVE with the following rules:

1. The major Predicate functions – CAUSE, BECOME, MOVE, BE – may appear only once in the LCS of the overall complex predicate.
2. The major Predicate functions must appear in the following sequential order:  
CAUSE (BECOME > BE > MOVE)

In addition, Jackendoff's (1976, 1983, 1990) localist hypothesis claims that all verbs are construable as verbs of motion and location (Levin & Rappaport, 2005, p. 80). As a consequence, Jackendoff (1990) proposed the three principles approaches in complex predicates, which they call 'localist', 'causal', and 'aspectual.' The localist approach claims explicitly that all verbs can be represented in terms of predicates of location or motion (Croft, 1991, 1993). The causal approach captures a striking generalization about the realization of arguments as obliques. The semantic roles of such arguments fall into two groups according to the position of the argument in the causal chain with respect to the endpoint of the chain profiled by the verb— the argument realized as direct object. Antecedent roles are associated with arguments preceding the argument realized as direct object in the causal chain, while subsequent roles are associated with arguments following the argument realized as direct object (Lappin & Fox, 2015). For aspectual approach, such verbs are analyzed into two sub-events, an activity and a result state, which are connected by a clausal approach (Haiden, 2008).

### 3. Research Methods

This type of research was descriptive qualitative where the discussion of the results of this study was in descriptive form. Descriptive research was to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon through the use of surveys, interviews, or observations (Ary, et al, 2010). The data used in this study were the language used directly by native speakers of the Karo tribe. The research method used was descriptive qualitative method because the data studied was in the form of sentences. Related sentence structures in complex predicate morph-syntactic, complex predicate categories and syntactic roles were described in such a way and were categorized based on the form of their structural patterns. In data analyzing, the data were analyzed by Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS) approach developed by Dixon (2005) and Amberber et al (2010) and the results presented by descriptive analysis.

### 4. Results and Discussions

Semantic verb types and predicate construction explanations in Karo language:

*Sentence (1):*

*Ate ipengadi, la terpengadi.*

They wanted it to be stopped, but it could not be stopped.

In the sentence above, there were two types of verbs, Verb 1 (*ipengadi*) and Verb 2 (*terpengadi*). The two verbs in this sentence were intransitive and had the infinitive *i-* and *ter-*. Verb 1 (*ipengadi*) had two arguments for the predicate position. First, the predicate argument form STATE contained BECOME function and STATE predicate argument form contained BE function. Verb 1 (*ipengadi*) had a semantic motion model type and was in the position of the primary verb type A, prefix *i-* was referred to an event or action. In the Verb 2 (*terpengadi*) had two arguments for the predicate position. First, the predicate argument EVENT contained the MOVE function and the predicate Argument STATE contained the CAUSE function. Verb 2 had a semantic rest type model and was in the position of the primary verb type A as Motion, The prefix in the verb (*terpengadi*) in the level of conceptual construction was referred to a state or capacity. Both of these verbs were basically as intransitive forms.

*ipengadi*: stopped

Classification: Primary A: Motion

[State BECOME ([thing][place], [state BE ([thing], [place])])]

*terpengadi*: stopped

Classification: Primary A: Rest

[event MOVE ([thing][place], [state CAUSE [thing], [place]])]

Sentence (2):

Cuba *turikenndu*, entah *tersampati* kami karn.

Do tell us, whether we might be able to help you.

In the second sentence, there were two verbs, namely verb 1 (*turikenndu*) and verb 2 (*tersampati*), the two verbs in this sentence were passives verb. In the verbs *turikenndu* and *tersampati* contained a prefix *ter-* which functioned as a passive action. The form of the predicate argument in verb 1 was STATE and functioned as BECOME, semantically in type Primary B with the model of Speaking. In Verb 2, the form of the conceptual predicate argument was EVENT and functioned as BE and semantically in the Secondary A type with the Trying model.

Verb 1 (*turikenndu*)

Classification: Primary B: Speaking

[State BECOME ([thing][place])]

Verb 2 (*tersampati*)

Classification: Secondary A: Trying

[event Be ([thing], [event BECOME ([thing], [place])])]

Sentence (3):

Piga-piga kali *ilompati* arimo Simbelang Pinggel,

Several times the tiger pounced upon Simbelang Pinggel

tapi arah kebeluhenna *emdikkar terelakkenca*.

but due to his skill in self-defence he was able to avoid it.

In the third sentence, it contained three verbs; verb1 (*ilompati*), Verb2 (*emdikkar*) and Verb3 (*terelakkenca*). Verb 1 (*ilompati*) contained the prefix *i-* which pointed to an EVENT or ACTION. The form of the predicate argument in Verb 1 was EVENT and contained the MOVE function, semantically, type

Primary B and was modeled Happening. In Verb 2 (*emdikar*) contained the prefix *em-* which referred to an EVENT or ACTION. The form of the predicate argument in Verb 2 was EVENT and contained the MOVE function, semantically in type Primary A and modeled competition. In Verb 3 (*terelakkenca*), it contained the suffix *enca-* which was referred to an EVENT or ACTION. The form of the predicate argument in Verb 3 was EVENT and contained the MOVE function, semantically in type Primary A and modeled competition.

*Sentence (4)*

Ise *nampatisa* engko *merdang* nderbih?  
 Who helped you to sow yesterday?

In the fourth sentence, there were two verbs, namely Verb 1 (*nampatisa*) and verb 2 (*merdang*). The two verbs in this sentence were Active Transitive verbs. The verb Verb 1 (*nampatisa*) contained the suffix *-sa* which was referred to the three predicate arguments, namely; The predicate argument of EVENT and contained BE function, the predicate argument EVENT functioned as BECOME, and the predicate argument STATE functioned as CAUSE. Semantically Verb 1 was the type of Secondary C with the Help model. In Verb2 (*merdang*), the argument conceptual predicate form contained the first two types, EVENT with contained the MOVE function. Second, the predicate argument form EVENT functioned as BECOME. Semantically, types of verbs were in the Secondary C with the Making model.

Verb 1 (*nampatisa*)

Classification: Secondary C: Help

[Event BE ([thing], [event BECOME [thing], [state CAUSE ([thing], [place])]])]

Verb 2 (*merdang*)

Classification: Secondary C: Making

[Event MOVE ([thing] [place], [event BECOME [thing], [place]])]

*Sentence (5):*

Asakai sienggo *irungtung* *itamai* kusumpit.  
 As much as was pounded was put into sacks

In the fifth sentence, there were two verbs, namely Verb 1 (*irungtung*) and verb 2 (*itamai*). Verb 1 (*irungtung*) had three predicate arguments. First, the form of predicate argument STATE and functioned as BE. Second, predicate arguments of STATE which functioned as BECOME. Third, predicate argument with STATE and functioned as CAUSE. Semantically, types of verbs in type Primary B and modeled as Liking. In Verb 2 (*itamai*), the argument conceptual predicate form contained two types of arguments predicate. The first, EVENT with functioned as BECOME. Second, the predicate argument form EVENT with functioned as CAUSE. Semantically, types of verbs in the Primary A with the Making model.

Verb 1 (*irungtung*)

Classification: Primary B: Liking

[State BE ([thing], [state BECOME [thing], [state CAUSE ([thing])]])]

Verb 2 (*itamai*)

Classification: Primary A: Giving

[event BECOME ([thing], [event CAUSE [thing]])]



## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of complex predicate in Karo language, Complex predicates had various syntactic structures and served many semantic purposes. It showed that there was a complex interaction between verb linking with the prefix and suffix, when the prefix or suffix attached in head of verb the arguments of predicate could have more than one in semantically. The complex predicates were numerous in Karo language. Besides their large number, they were also rich in type. In consequence, complex predicates posed a problem to the analysis of Karo language, both syntactically and semantically which were multi-headed; they were composed of more than one grammatical element (either morphemes or words), each of which contributed part of the information ordinarily associated with a head. This study proposed an analysis that was based on and balanced in syntax and semantics. In Karo language, one of the sources of the difficulties in the study of complex predicates was the mismatch between the number of affix that merge in base word and the relation of words in sentence. The analyzes of sentences above also presented some sentence together with their LCS (Lexical Conceptual Structure) to illustrate that the semantic structure of sentences had to be more complex. The future work of this research can be extended into polysemy or multiple sense of verbs since complex predicate consists of an inflecting verb from a closed class (generic verb) and non-inflecting element from an open class that jointly to determine the semantic interpretation. The future research of complex predicate can be in the form of syntactic argument to reveal the verb-noun construction classification to build the semantic representation of the sentence into which the core predicate enters.

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