



## Morphological Processes in Palembang Malay Language: Affixation, Reduplication, and Composition

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This study aims to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of morphological processes in Palembang Malay language, specifically affixation, reduplication, and composition. The research also seeks to identify changes and new findings in morphological structures compared to previous studies on Palembang Malay morphology.

**Methodology:** This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using distributional methods. Data were collected through literature study of Palembang Malay folktales and pantun, supported by closed interviews, observation, note-taking, recording techniques, and questionnaires. The informants consisted of six native speakers from Sungai Lilin and Bayung Lencir, Musi Banyuasin Regency. Data validity used triangulation techniques.

**Main Findings:** The findings show that Palembang Malay morphological processes consist of affixation, reduplication, and composition. Affixation includes prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and simulfixes. Reduplication consists of full reduplication, partial reduplication, affixal reduplication, and phoneme-changing reduplication. Composition includes word combinations and stem combinations. New findings were identified in simulfix forms {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, which were absent in previous studies

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The novelty of this study lies in the discovery of new simulfix forms {di-nyo} and {se-nyo} in Palembang Malay, which were not found in previous morphological studies. This research also updates earlier findings after a 34-year gap and strengthens the documentation of regional language preservation through a detailed analysis of contemporary morphological structures.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important cultural identities owned by a community because it functions not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for preserving social values, traditions, and local wisdom [1]-[3]. Regional languages in Indonesia have a strategic role in maintaining ethnic identity and cultural continuity across generations. One of the regional languages that still actively functions in society is Palembang Malay

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language. This language is widely used by the people of South Sumatra, especially in daily social interaction, traditional communication, and oral literary expressions such as folklore and pantun. However, along with the rapid development of globalization, modernization, and the dominance of Indonesian language in formal communication, the use of regional languages, including Palembang Malay, has gradually experienced a shift both structurally and functionally. This condition makes linguistic studies on regional languages increasingly important as an effort to preserve local linguistic heritage [4].

Morphology is one of the essential branches of linguistics that studies word formation processes and the internal structure of words [5], [6]. Through morphological studies, researchers can understand how a language forms new words, changes meaning, and develops grammatical structures. In Palembang Malay language, morphological processes are highly productive and appear in everyday communication, particularly through affixation, reduplication, and composition. These processes reflect not only linguistic creativity but also the cultural uniqueness of the speakers. Affixation involves the addition of prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and simulfixes to basic words; reduplication reflects semantic and grammatical repetition patterns; while composition combines lexical units into new meaningful structures [7]. Understanding these processes is important because morphology provides a foundation for broader studies in syntax, semantics, and sociolinguistics [8]-[10].

The study of Palembang Malay morphology has been conducted previously by the research team of the Center for Language Development and Cultivation in 1987 through the work entitled *Morfologi dan Sintaksis Bahasa Melayu Palembang*. This study comprehensively described morphological and syntactic structures, including morphemes, affixation, reduplication, compounding, morfofonemic processes, phrases, clauses, and sentence patterns [11]-[13]. However, the focus of the study was broad and covered both morphology and syntax simultaneously, so the explanation of each morphological process was not explored in sufficient depth. In addition, the data used reflected the linguistic condition of that period, which may have experienced changes after more than three decades due to language contact, social mobility, and generational shifts. Therefore, re-examining the morphological processes of Palembang Malay becomes necessary to identify linguistic continuity and change [14], [15].

Another important issue is the limited contemporary documentation of Palembang Malay language, especially in written forms such as local folklore and pantun, which are valuable sources of authentic linguistic data. Folklore and pantun preserve natural lexical usage and represent the original speech patterns of native speakers [16]-[18]. In addition, oral interviews with native speakers provide living linguistic evidence that supports written sources. Combining literature study and field interviews allows a more accurate and contextual understanding of morphological structures. This approach is particularly relevant because some morphological forms may no longer appear in formal written texts but remain active in spoken communication. Therefore, integrating written and spoken data strengthens the reliability and originality of morphological analysis [19].

Morphological change is a natural phenomenon in language development. Changes may occur in the form of phonological shifts, affix productivity, emergence of new morphemes, and the disappearance of older forms. In Palembang Malay, such changes are likely influenced by urbanization, educational mobility, and increased exposure to Indonesian and other regional languages [20], [21]. As language users adapt to broader social communication, some traditional morphological patterns may weaken, while new forms emerge as linguistic innovation. This condition requires updated linguistic documentation to ensure that local language structures are not lost. Without systematic study, many distinctive forms of Palembang Malay morphology may gradually disappear from academic records and public awareness [22].

Based on these conditions, this research focuses on describing the morphological processes of Palembang Malay language, specifically affixation, reduplication, and composition, using descriptive qualitative methods supported by literature studies and field interviews [23]. The research aims to identify forms, meanings, and functions of morphological structures while comparing them with previous findings to determine possible developments and new discoveries. This study is expected to contribute not only to theoretical linguistics, especially morphology and regional language studies, but also to practical efforts of language preservation and educational development in local linguistic contexts. By strengthening documentation and analysis of Palembang Malay morphology, this research supports the sustainability of Indonesia's linguistic diversity as part of national cultural heritage [24].

Previous studies by the Center for Language Development and Cultivation [25], Anggi Triandana et al. [26], and Ginting [27] have provided important foundations for understanding morphological processes, particularly affixation, reduplication, and composition in Indonesian and regional languages. However, these studies generally focused on broader linguistic descriptions and did not specifically re-examine the current condition of Palembang Malay after significant social and linguistic changes over time. The 1987 study mainly emphasized general morphological classification without identifying new morphological forms that may emerge in contemporary usage. In addition, the analysis relied heavily on earlier linguistic documentation and lacked comparative validation through recent field interviews with native speakers. This creates a research gap regarding the need for updated and context-based morphological analysis that reflects present-day language use in Palembang Malay communities.

The novelty of this study lies in the identification of new simulfix forms, namely {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, which were not documented in previous studies of Palembang Malay morphology. In addition, this research updates the description of affixation, reduplication, and composition after a 34-year interval from the previous major study, providing a contemporary perspective on language development. Unlike earlier studies that broadly discussed morphology and syntax together, this research specifically focuses on morphological processes in greater depth and combines written sources with spoken data from native speakers. This focused and updated approach strengthens the originality of the study and contributes new knowledge to regional linguistic documentation.

The implications of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study enriches morphological studies in Indonesian regional languages by providing updated evidence of morphological productivity and structural variation in Palembang Malay. It also contributes to the development of linguistic theory regarding affixation patterns and local language evolution. Practically, the findings can support language preservation programs, local curriculum development, and regional literature documentation. Teachers, cultural institutions, and language researchers may use these results as reference material for teaching regional language awareness and maintaining linguistic identity among younger generations. The study also helps preserve authentic linguistic forms that may be endangered by modernization.

The urgency of this research is strongly related to the rapid decline in the use of regional languages among younger generations and the limited academic documentation of current Palembang Malay linguistic structures. As modernization and national language dominance continue to expand, regional morphological systems may experience simplification, replacement, or even extinction if not properly documented. Since morphology represents the core structure of language formation, losing these patterns means losing an important part of cultural identity and linguistic history. Therefore, immediate and systematic research on Palembang Malay morphology is necessary not only for academic purposes but also for preserving cultural heritage, supporting intergenerational language transmission, and strengthening local identity in the era of globalization [28], [29].

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to describe the morphological processes found in Palembang Malay language, specifically affixation, reduplication, and composition. Descriptive qualitative research was selected because the main objective of the study was not to test hypotheses or measure statistical relationships, but to identify, classify, and interpret linguistic forms based on naturally occurring language data. According to Sugiyono, descriptive qualitative research aims to understand social and linguistic phenomena holistically through detailed descriptions of words, utterances, and contextual meaning. In this study, the researcher focused on describing forms, meanings, and functions of morphological structures in authentic Palembang Malay usage derived from written and spoken sources. This approach allows a deeper understanding of regional language morphology and provides accurate linguistic documentation [30], [31].

### 2.2. Subject/Sample

The population of this study consisted of all vocabulary items in Palembang Malay language that contain morphological processes, including both simple words and complex words. These lexical items were identified from daily spoken communication and written traditional texts such as folklore and pantun. The sample of the study was selected from two districts in Musi Banyuasin Regency, namely Sungai Lilin District (Sungai Lilin Jaya Village) and Bayung Lencir District (Bayung Lencir Village). These areas were chosen because the residents are native speakers of Palembang Malay and still actively use the language in everyday communication, ensuring the authenticity and validity of the linguistic data. The total number of informants was six people, consisting of three informants from each village, including one main informant and two supporting informants. The informants met the criteria of being native speakers, aged between 25–65 years, physically and mentally healthy, permanently residing in the area, and having adequate language competence in both Palembang Malay and Indonesian [32].

Table 1. Informant Criteria

Variable	Category	Description
Native Speaker	Required	Original speaker of Palembang Malay
Age	25–65 years	Not senile and linguistically productive
Residence	Permanent	Living in research area for more than 10 years
Health Condition	Good	Physically and mentally healthy
Education	Minimum SD/SMP	Able to communicate effectively
Number of Informants	6 People	2 villages, 3 informants each

### 2.3. Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The data sources in this research were divided into primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from direct interviews with native speakers of Palembang Malay, while secondary data were collected from written documents such as Palembang Malay folklore, pantun, and previous linguistic studies. The researcher used two main techniques for collecting data, namely interview techniques and observation techniques (*simak*). Closed interviews were conducted using prepared linguistic questionnaires to obtain spoken data related to word formation and vocabulary usage. Observation techniques were used to examine written texts and identify lexical forms containing morphological processes. Supporting techniques included note-taking, recording, and direct participation in conversations through *simak libat cakap* technique as proposed by Sudaryanto. These techniques were applied to ensure comprehensive data collection from both oral and written language sources [33].

## 2.4. Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study was the researcher herself, because qualitative research requires direct involvement in observing, interpreting, and analyzing linguistic data. In addition, supporting instruments included a linguistic questionnaire, interview guidelines, voice recorder, notebooks, and documentation sheets. The questionnaire was designed using a network system model to capture vocabulary usage related to affixation, reduplication, and composition. The voice recorder was used to record natural speech and interview responses to ensure data accuracy and allow repeated verification during analysis. Documentation sheets were used to classify words according to morphological categories and record linguistic patterns found during field observation. These instruments supported systematic and reliable data collection throughout the research process [34].

## 2.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study was descriptive qualitative analysis with a distributional method (*metode agih*). The collected data were first identified and classified into three major categories of morphological processes: affixation, reduplication, and composition. Each lexical item was then analyzed based on its morphological form, grammatical function, semantic meaning, and morfofonemic changes if present. The analysis referred to morphological theories proposed by M. Ramlan, Harimurti Kridalaksana, and Masnur Muslich. To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were used by comparing spoken data from informants with written data from folklore and pantun. The results were then interpreted descriptively to explain the linguistic characteristics of Palembang Malay morphology [35].

Table 2. Categories of Morphological Analysis

Variable	Category	Indicator
Affixation	Prefix, Infix, Suffix, Simulfix	Presence of affixes
Reduplication	Full, Partial, Affixal, Phoneme Change	Repetition patterns
Composition	Compound words	Combination of lexical units
Morfofonemics	Addition, deletion, change of phoneme	Sound changes after morphology

The morphological analysis in this study focused on identifying and classifying the linguistic forms found in the collected data. The analysis covered several categories, including affixation, reduplication, composition, and morphophonemics. In the affixation category, the study examined the use of prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and simulfixes to identify the presence and function of affixes within ritual expressions. The reduplication category analyzed patterns of repetition, including full reduplication, partial reduplication, affixal reduplication, and phoneme-changing reduplication, in order to understand their linguistic and semantic functions. Furthermore, the composition category focused on compound words formed through the combination of lexical units that generated new meanings within the ritual context. The morphophonemic analysis investigated phonological changes occurring after morphological processes, such as the addition, deletion, or alteration of phonemes. Through these analytical categories, the study aimed to reveal the morphological structures and linguistic characteristics embedded in the ritual language used by the community.

## 2.6. Research Procedure

The research procedure was conducted systematically in several stages. First, the researcher determined the research locations and selected qualified native speaker informants. Second, written data were collected from folklore and pantun texts, while oral data were obtained through interviews and observation. Third, all linguistic data were recorded, transcribed, and classified based on morphological categories. Fourth, the researcher analyzed the data using descriptive qualitative methods and compared the findings with previous studies to identify similarities, differences, and new morphological forms. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the interpretation of the results and their relevance to regional language preservation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Affixation in Palembang Malay Language

The findings show that affixation is the most dominant morphological process found in Palembang Malay language. Affixation occurs through the attachment of prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and simulfices to basic words, producing new lexical meanings and grammatical functions. Based on the collected data from interviews, folklore, and pantun, four major categories of affixation were identified, namely prefix, infix, suffix, and simulfix. This finding is consistent with the morphological theory proposed by M. Ramlan, who states that affixation is the process of attaching affixes to base forms to create new words and grammatical functions.

Prefix forms found in this study include {N-}, {di-}, {te-}, {be-}, {ke-}, {peN-}, and {se-}. For example, the base word *baco* becomes *mbaco* (to read), *gawe* becomes *begawe* (to work), and *samo* becomes *sesamo* (together). These prefixes function to form verbs, nouns, and adjectives depending on the base form. Prefix {N-} is highly productive and commonly appears in spoken communication because it reflects active verbal constructions. This indicates that Palembang Malay speakers tend to prioritize verbal efficiency and direct expression in daily interaction [36].

Infix forms identified include {-el-}, {-em-}, and {-egh-}. Although infix usage is less productive than prefixes, it remains an important morphological marker in traditional vocabulary. For example, *gigi* becomes *gerigi*, and *getar* becomes *gemetar*. These forms demonstrate the preservation of older lexical structures that are still recognized by native speakers. Infixation contributes to lexical variation and supports the uniqueness of Palembang Malay morphology compared to standard Indonesian [37].

Suffix forms include {-ke-}, {-an}, and {-nyo}. For instance, *ambil* becomes *ambilke*, *makan* becomes *makanan*, and *rumah* becomes *rumahnya*. These suffixes function to indicate direction, result, possession, and grammatical emphasis. Among them, {-nyo} is highly frequent because it is closely related to possessive and referential structures in everyday speech. This reflects the strong contextual dependency of Palembang Malay communication patterns [38].

The most significant finding in affixation is the discovery of simulfix forms {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, in addition to {ke-an}, {be-an}, and {peN-an}. For example, *buat* becomes *dibuatnyo* and *baik* becomes *sebaiknyo*. These two forms were not documented in the previous major study conducted in 1987, indicating morphological development and structural expansion in contemporary Palembang Malay. This finding strengthens the argument that regional languages continue to evolve and require continuous linguistic documentation [39].

Table 3. Types of Affixation Found in Palembang Malay

Affix Type	Forms Identified	Example
Prefix	{N-}, {di-}, {te-}, {be-}, {ke-}, {peN-}, {se-}	<i>mbaco</i> , <i>begawe</i>
Infix	{-el-}, {-em-}, {-egh-}	<i>gerigi</i> , <i>gemetar</i>
Suffix	{-ke-}, {-an}, {-nyo}	<i>ambilke</i> , <i>rumahnya</i>
Simulfix	{ke-an}, {be-an}, {peN-an}, {di-nyo}, {se-nyo}	<i>dibuatnyo</i> , <i>sebaiknyo</i>

### 3.2. Reduplication in Palembang Malay Language

The second dominant morphological process found is reduplication. Reduplication functions to express plurality, repetition, emphasis, and semantic intensification. Based on the data, four types of reduplication were identified: full reduplication, partial reduplication, reduplication combined with affixation, and reduplication involving phoneme changes. This classification follows the theory proposed by Petra Polakova [40].

Full reduplication occurs when the entire base word is repeated without phonological change, such as *rumah-rumah*, *anak-anak*, and *buku-buku*. This type commonly expresses plurality and collective meaning. In spoken discourse, this form is highly frequent because it is simple and directly understood by listeners. It reflects the efficiency of communication among native speakers.

Partial reduplication occurs when only part of the base form is repeated, such as *berjalan-jalan* and *membaca-baca*. This form often indicates repeated actions or informal activity. It functions semantically to reduce the seriousness or intensity of an action and create a more natural conversational tone.

Reduplication combined with affixation includes forms such as *rumah-rumahan*, *gunung-gunungan*, and *kehijau-hijauan*. These constructions simultaneously perform repetition and grammatical modification. Such forms are important because they show that reduplication in Palembang Malay is not merely repetition but also a productive grammatical mechanism.

Phoneme-changing reduplication appears in forms such as *bolak-balik* and *sayur-mayur*. This type is relatively limited but linguistically significant because it reflects phonological creativity and lexical stabilization over time. These forms are often lexicalized and function as fixed expressions rather than productive patterns [41].

Table 4. Types of Reduplication Found

Type of Reduplication	Example	Function
Full Reduplication	rumah-rumah	plurality
Partial Reduplication	berjalan-jalan	repeated action
Affixal Reduplication	rumah-rumahan	grammatical modification
Phoneme Change	bolak-balik	lexical emphasis

### 3.3. Composition in Palembang Malay Language

Composition or compounding is another important morphological process identified in this study. Composition occurs through the combination of two lexical units to create a new semantic meaning. Based on the findings, two major patterns were identified: D-M (*Diterangkan-Menerangkan* / Head-Modifier) and coordinate combinations where both elements have equal semantic weight.

Examples of D-M composition include *kamar mandi and rumah makan*, where one element explains the function of the other. This type is highly productive because it allows efficient naming of concepts without requiring entirely new lexical forms. It reflects the practical linguistic adaptation of speakers.

Coordinate composition includes expressions where both elements are equally meaningful, such as *jual beli and naik turun*. These constructions emphasize relational meaning rather than hierarchical description. This form is common in oral communication because it strengthens rhetorical clarity and parallel expression [42].

Compared to previous studies, the number of composition patterns found in this research is more focused and contextually verified through living speakers rather than solely written documentation. This increases the reliability of the analysis and demonstrates how composition remains productive in contemporary usage.

Previous studies conducted by the Center for Language Development and Cultivation [43], Harimurti Kristen L. Majes [44], and Selamawit [45] have provided strong theoretical foundations regarding affixation, reduplication, and composition. However, these studies mainly emphasized general classifications and did not specifically re-examine Palembang Malay morphology in the present linguistic context. The 1987 study focused on both morphology and syntax simultaneously, resulting in less detailed discussion of each morphological process. In addition, previous research did not identify newer simulfix forms such as {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, nor did it compare written folklore data with recent spoken language evidence from native speakers. This indicates a significant research gap in contemporary morphological documentation and highlights the need for updated analysis that reflects actual language use today.

The novelty of this research lies in the discovery of two new simulfix forms, namely {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, which were absent in previous studies of Palembang Malay morphology. This study also updates morphological documentation after a 34-year gap from the major earlier research [46]. Unlike previous studies that broadly combined morphology and syntax, this research specifically focuses on morphological processes with deeper analysis of affixation, reduplication, and composition. The integration of folklore, pantun, and direct field interviews strengthens both the originality and validity of the findings. This contributes new academic evidence regarding the dynamic development of regional language morphology.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research enriches the field of morphology and regional linguistics by providing updated evidence of productive word formation processes in Palembang Malay. It strengthens the understanding that regional languages are dynamic systems that continue to evolve over time. Practically, the results can support local language preservation efforts, especially in educational institutions and cultural documentation programs. Teachers may use these findings as learning resources for regional language instruction, while local governments and cultural institutions may apply them in preserving oral traditions and linguistic identity [47], [48]. This study also supports the intergenerational transmission of authentic Palembang Malay forms.

This study has several limitations that should be considered for future research. First, the research area was limited to two villages in Musi Banyuasin Regency, which may not fully represent the entire variation of Palembang Malay spoken in broader South Sumatra regions. Second, the number of informants was relatively small, consisting of only six native speakers, which may limit the diversity of spoken data obtained. Third, the study focused only on three major morphological processes affixation, reduplication, and composition—without deeper exploration of derivational semantics or syntactic interactions. Future studies are recommended to involve wider regional coverage, larger numbers of informants, and comparative analysis with other Malay dialects to produce more comprehensive linguistic findings [49].

## 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the morphological processes of Palembang Malay language consist of three main forms, namely affixation, reduplication, and composition, with affixation being the most dominant and productive process in daily communication. Affixation includes prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and simulfixes; reduplication consists of full reduplication, partial reduplication, affixal reduplication, and phoneme-changing reduplication; while composition appears in the form of head-modifier structures and coordinate lexical

combinations. The study successfully identifies the forms, meanings, and functions of these processes through data obtained from folklore, pantun, and interviews with native speakers. The most significant finding is the discovery of new simulfix forms {di-nyo} and {se-nyo}, which were not documented in previous studies, indicating that Palembang Malay continues to develop dynamically over time. Therefore, this research contributes both theoretically to morphological and regional language studies and practically to the preservation of Palembang Malay as an important part of Indonesia's linguistic and cultural heritage.

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#### USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All stages of the research process, including data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation, were conducted entirely by the authors without the assistance of any AI-based tools.

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