

Low adjunction and the structure of the Kerinci DP

Kerinci is a Malayic language (spoken in Jambi Province, Sumatra), which exhibits unusual morphological word-shape alternations. For example, in the Tanjung Pauh dialect of Kerinci (TP) the Malay root *sakit* ‘sick’ exhibits two forms differing in the phonological shape of their final syllable rime: *sakat* and *sakît*. These two forms developed historically as a result of a phrasal-level phonological alternation, and have since taken on distinct morphological properties. We adopt Steinhauer & Usman’s (1978) convention, according to which the historically phrase-final form is referred to as the A(bsolute) form (e.g. *sakat*) and the historically phrase-medial form is referred to as the O(blique) form (e.g. *sakît*).

Mckinnon, Cole and Hermon (2011) and Mckinnon (2011) present arguments that the O-form of verbs manifests agreement with a nominal complement. This paper explores whether the same analysis can explain the properties of the A-/O-alternation within the nominal domain.

In TP Kerinci nouns must appear in the O-form if they are modified by an attributive adjective or possessed by a DP:

(X) A/O-alternation on noun

[Noun Adjective]	uməoh̄	gdi
O	{A/O}	house.O big.A
		‘a big house’
[Noun Possessor]	uməoh̄	parhan
O	{A/O}	house.O Farhan
		Farhan’s house
[Noun]	umah	
A	house.A	
	‘a house’	

It is often assumed that adjectives and DP possessors occupy specifier positions in projections higher than NP. Adopting this structure, our analysis of the verbal domain falsely predicts that nouns and adjectives will appear in the A-form, since neither category is the complement of the noun. We, therefore, adopt an alternative proposal, based on the analysis of Larson (1988), which posits that modifiers occupy “low-adjunct” positions i.e. that they are the complement of the category they modify. This proposal accounts for the distribution of A-/O-forms. We explore whether it accounts for independent syntactic properties of Kerinci.

Larson, Richard K. (1988). On the Double Object Construction. *Linguistic Inquiry* 19.3, 565-599.

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