A Brief Semantic Analysis on the Form

and Function of Biak's article *'ma'*

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Abstract

Biak language, spoken by 50.000 to 70.000 native speakers, belongs to the West New Guinea subgroup of the Austronesian language family and is spoken in West Papua (formerly known as Irian Jaya), Indonesia, which is found in the northern part of the Geelvink Bay. The typology of this language is SVO and has an agglutinative pattern in which the nouns are simple. This article aims to discuss the semantic function of particle ma in Biak language and to describe its form. The technique used to analyze the data is descriptive approach namely describing the data based on what people actually say by applying the morphological paradigm to see potential morpheme by morpheme in order to determine form, function, and meaning. By doing so, this approach helps to classify which morpheme in the morphological process that the particle ma is inflected or not inflected to in the verbs or other word categories. The finding of this study shows that   there are eight semantic functions which are indicated by the particle   ma which has different meanings such as to show desire or volition, conjunction, reveal future condition, state reflexive pronoun, to derive verb into noun in morphological process of word formation, tense and mood, adverbial conjunction and phrasal verbs. Morphologically, there are two types of the morphemes in which the particle ma is attached to and is not attached namely as bound and free morphemes.

Keywords: Semantic function, particle ma, form, Biak language

Introduction

The Biak language belongs to the West New Guinea subgroup of the Austronesian language family and is spoken in West Papua (formerly known as *Irian Jaya*), Indonesia, in the northern part of the Geelvink Bay. It has around 50,000 to 70,000 Speakers (Lewis, 2009), that makes the language has the largest number of speakers in West Papua (Mofu, 2005). The speakers of Biak spread from the Papuan island up to Mollucan islands, particularly Ternate and Tobelo (Mampioper, 1976 & 1986).

Although Biak is the language that has the largest number of speakers in West Papua, there has not been much research done on the Biak language. Three recent works; Fautngil and Rumbrawer (2003), Mofu (2005 and 2008) and Van den Heuvel (2006) have provided descriptions of the Biak language.

The former documentations on Biak language have been done in the form of manuscripts such as Biak dictionary(Soeparno, 1976); Number in Biak (Hein Steinhauer, 1985); Biak phonology(Fautngil & Rumbrawer, 1989), Biak Morphology in 1991, Syntax of Biak in 1994 by Fautngil and Rumbrawer and they also described The Grammar of Biak in 2003.

Other studies on Biak also have been carried-out such as *Songger ve Rok* by Kapissa in 1975, *Wawosro rasras* (Muharam Syah, 1975), *Ungkapan Tradisional Bahasa Biak dan Bahasa Tehit Daerah Irian Jaya* (Depdikbud, 1963), *Kabar ro Wos Byak* (RRI Biak, 1980) and *Eksistensi Wor Biak dan upaya pelestariannya* (Kapissa, 1994).

From the previous reports on Biak language, there is no specific information provided in lines with Biak Semantic function of the article *'ma'* in particular in terms of linguistic aspect in general. Therefore, the aspect of semantic function encourages me to do the investigation of Biak in terms of linguistics point of view by focusing on this language.

'Particle' is a term used of small words (occasionally affixes) which do not easily fit into any clear word-class such as common noun, auxiliary, modal, article or preposition (Hurford, 2008)

In English, the little words which form the second part of such two-word verb as take out, hand in, give up and so forth often called 'particles as sometimes they are known as phrasal verbs as illustrated in the following sentences:

a. I give up. I can't solve this problem

b. She hands in the paper late, so the professor refuses her assignment.

From these two examples, it is seen that the verbs give up in (a) and hand in (b) consist of two words that form one verb which has specific meaning. On the other hand, from the word formation process of the morphology aspect, certain affixes such as-er can change the word classes from noun to verb, verb to adjective or vice versa and give comparative form to the adjectives as follows:

c. He teaches at Senior High School

d. He is a teacher

From these sentences (c) and (d), it is clear that the verb teaches as the root in (c)

can be added suffix–er that forms the noun teacher in (d).

To state comparative form of adjectives in English using affixation –er, the following illustrations are provided:

e. you speak loud

f. you speak louder

In (e) and (f) loud as an adjective does not change the meaning but when the suffix-er is given to the adjectival root the meaning has changed from speak loud as usual to speak more loud than unusual.

Comparing to English particles, the Biak particle ma indicates the same linguistic phenomena as in section 3. The Biak particles are sometimes used to address the time, two word verb, aspect, word formation in terms of derivational process, tense and aspect as in English.

Method

This is a descriptive research on the Biak Language. The data in corpus form of semantic functions which are indicated by the particle "ma" which has different meanings. The technique used to analyze the data is descriptive approach namely describing the data based on what people actually say by applying the morphological paradigm to see potential morpheme by morpheme in order to determine form, function, and meaning. By doing so, this approach helps to classify which morpheme in the morphological process that the particle ma is inflected or not inflected to in the verbs or other word categories.

Results

The function of article ma- in Biak

Literally, the lexical meaning of article *ma* reveals preposition 'and' or 'togetherness' as in (3). The use of article *ma* in Biak language presents different notions on the speakers and the hearers' intentions due to semantic aspects of the article as follows:

a. To show the goal, desire or volition of the speaker.

Mostly, Biak people use article ma to show goal, desire or will if they plan to go somewhere.

(1). *Ya-ra ma ya-kobes japan*

   I- go plan I- buy taro

   'I want to buy some taros'.

Example (1) shows how the speaker's desire or he/she is going to buy some taros.

However, the use of article ma can show permission of if the speakers want to leave

the hearer as in (2).

(2). *Ya-ra ma   nari*

      I-go   permit then

      'I am going'(to stress that speaker is asking for permission or   he/she is going to leave).

b..To indicate   conjunction 'and'

(3).*Karlos ma John su   bur epon*

Karlos and John   2PL   go   first

'Karlos and John went home earlier'

ma is applied as a conjunction in order to join two nouns while   in   sentence (4), it functions to join the two clauses.

(4). *John imbrif ma Mary kyanes*

      John laugh   and Mary cry

      'John laughs and Mary cries'

c. *ma* reveals 'future condition or wish'

Biak speaker often uses ma in asking something really happens in the future as his wish or estimation   as in (5).

(5). *Na   sko-ra   ma   ke?*

      Then   3PL-come   here indeed

      'Do they really come?'

The use of *ma* in (4) with the adverbial *ke* shows his wish will happen in the future or he wishes that the people might come.

d. To state reflexive pronoun

Ma in Biak daily conversation among societies is used to show reflexive pronoun in which the speakers stresses that he does something by himself or he is the only one as in (6).

(6). *Aya ma   yak fawi-ba*

1SG myself   1SG know-neg

'I myself really don't know'

The use of ma in (6) states that I myself don't really know something happens in responding to some questions such as who takes my bag? or the speaker accuses the hearer of stealing/taking his belongings as in (7)

(7) *Au   eyun   in   yeja?*
    2SG   take   fish   possessive
    Do you take my fish?

If the instance (7) is used to accuse someone of taking something then the response in (6) is applied in revealing that the accused person really does not take such belongings to defend himself.

e. To state derivational process from verb to noun in affixation process .

Ma in Biak language can happen in morphological word formation in terms of derivational process as in (8) in form of affixation in prefix and it also functions as a suffix as in (9).

(8). *Ma-mun bero sup   Perwomi ifnai   ya-bur   sup   yedi*
       Aff-kill   at   village Perwomi cause   1SG-go village possessive
       'The war in the Perwomi village caused me I left my village'

The use of   ma in (8) derives the verb *mun* 'kill' into   the noun *mamun* 'war'
The article ma can function to change the verb into the noun by joining it in the root as illustrated in (9) in which the people use such greeting to address the visitors.

(9). *Ra ra   - ma   bebye*
        Come redup   here   good
        'Welcome'

f.   To state the realis 'something really happened' in terms of the tense and mood (potential).

(10). *Ya- ra ma ro mandobdi*
        1SG-come on yesterday
        'I came yesterday'

ma in (10) states that speaker already came or already did something. This instance is applied if a speaker wishes to know the time that someone came by asking a question as in (11), then he applies to such question as a response   in (10)

(11) *Ras   sa   w-   ra   ma   ni?*
        day   when   2SG come   realis question
        'When did you come?

The same phenomenon is applied in the following example (12) in which article ma is used in negative expression.

(12). *Ya-frur   wa   ine   ma   jadi   ba*
          1SG-make   boat   canoe   realis   able negative

'I am not able to make this canoe'

The sentence (11) in using article ma expresses the aspect of ability as realis marker in such instance.

In addition, the article ma also reveals the mood to describe the speaker's attitude toward a certain situation in the speaker's belief in its reality to show his ability in potential situation as in (13).

(13).*Aya ma ya-pau   in   ro ras-ras*

   1SG mood 1SG-catch fish prep day.Redup

   'I am able to catch fish everyday'

g. To state adverbial conjunction

ma functions as an adverbial conjunction in Biak language as in (14) in progressive situation.

(14)*Ma, rosa wa- frur   inja wa-syakm ri?*

Then, what 2sG-make thing so   2SG-noisy

'Then, what are you doing you make so much noisy?'

ma in (14) is used as adverbial conjunction to question what a person is doing in the progressive circumstance and as an answer in (15) to the response in (14) is possibly applied as the time of speaking.

(15). *Ya-frur   ro   yoba*

    1SG-make thing negative

    'I am doing nothing'

h.. To state phrasal verb contains two word verbs as one verb 'come'. The verb *ra* ma contains two words *ra* 'go' as a root that brings the entire meaning and ma to show an adverbial place. Sometimes, such instance in (16) is applied in imperatives by asking someone to approach the speaker.

(16) *W- ra ma nari*

    2SG go here then

    'You come here'

The form of article ma

  The form of particle ma in Biak is categorized into two types such as bound morpheme and free morpheme in which the bound cannot show the meaning when it stands alone, therefore it should attach to the root as in (8) as a prefix and in (9) as a suffix to form the noun. In contrast, the particle *ma* can stand alone as a word when it shows location as in (17) or presents reflexive pronoun as in (18).

(17). *Ya-ra ma ya-kobes japan*

    I- go plan I- buy taro

'I want to buy some taros'.

(18). *Aya ma   yak fawi-ba*

   1SG myself   1SG know-neg

   'I myself really don't know'

Conclusion

From the discussion point of view, it is concluded that (1)   there are   eight semantic functions which are indicated by the particle   ma which has different meanings such as to show desire or volition, conjunction, reveal future condition, state reflexive pronoun, to derive verb into noun in morphological process of word formation, tense and mood, adverbial conjunction and phrasal verbs. (2) Morphologically, there are two types of the morphemes in which the particle ma is attached to and is not attached namely as bound and free morphemes.

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