

## THE PATTERNS OF ADJECTIVE PHRASE IN BAHASA MENTAWAI: AN ANALYSIS OF X-BAR

**Kartika Eva Rahmawati, Agus Subiyanto**

Universitas Diponegoro Semarang, Universitas Diponegoro Semarang

Email: kartikaevarahmawati@students.undip.ac.id, agussubiyanto@lecturer.undip.ac.id

### **Abstract**

*In order to figure the structure of adjective phrase, X-Bar theory is used to present the detailed formulation. Therefore, this theory is applied in this study to investigate the patterns of the formation of adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai and the kind of adjective categories (attributive or predicative) that appear based on the patterns. Then, this study also has a purpose to present the forms of the adjective phrase in Bahasa Mentawai using the X-Bar theory. The data is taken from a book that contains many sentences in Bahasa Mentawai. Then, the descriptive-qualitative method was chosen to present the analysis in detail. The results present the patterns in X-Bar pattern to make Adj and PP is  $FA (AF) \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A' + FP (PF)$ , to make Adj and NP is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A + FN (NP)$ , to make Adj and AP is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A' + A$ , and to make Adj and Adv P is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow Adv' + A$ . Last, the type of adjective categories that occur in Bahasa Mentawai is predicative where the adjective has a function to explain something before it appears.*

**Keywords:** adjective phrase; x-bar theory; *bahasa mentawai*

### **Introduction**

Morphology is a discipline of linguistics that investigates how words in a language are formed. A syntactic approach can be used to investigate the patterns of language creation in morphology. We may see how a sentence in a language is constructed by studying syntax. A phrase, according to (Chaer, 2007), is a grammatical unit consisting of a group of words that can complete one of the syntactical functions in a sentence. Each language, including Bahasa Mentawai, which is spoken in Mentawai, West Sumatra, Indonesia, has its own construction. Furthermore, (Verhaar, 1996) distinguishes between two sorts of phrases based on the distribution and function of the words they contain, namely the exocentric phrase and the endocentric phrase. An exocentric phrase explains why a phrase's syntactic behavior differs from that of one of its constituent parts. The syntactic behavior of the exocentric phrase is identical to that of one of its elements. One of them is the adjective phrase.

Adjective phrases are endocentric phrases with adjectives and modifiers such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, or verbs as constituent constituents. The adjective phrase is one of the phrases that will be studied in this research. If a word can function as an

attribute, the syntax that marks it as an adjective is used. The term "attribute" refers to the ability of an adjective to provide information about the nature or status of things that are referred to as a noun. An adjective, on the other hand, serves as a predictor. Adjectives can serve as predicates in sentences when used in conjunction with denial particles such as the usage of not, when used in conjunction with the words more... than or at most to indicate the level of comparison, and when used in conjunction with extremely and other reinforcing words.

The construction of adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai is made up of core and non-core parts. The adjective is the core element of the adjective phrase, whereas the modifier is the non-core element. While the non-core element clarifies what the core elements have mentioned, in Bahasa Mentawai, the adjective phrase can be made up of non-core elements that come after the core elements. A word */mabesi?/*, is translated in Bahasa Indonesia as "*sukar-sukar mudah*". The core elements that are enclosed in non-core elements, such as "*bulat maklu baga*," which is translated in Bahasa Indonesia as "*sangat besar perut*," or "extremely stingy" in English, might then flank this sentence. A theory known as the X-Bar theory can be utilized as a basis to evaluate how an adjective phrase is generated in order to reveal the pattern of an adjective phrase.

This research focuses on two specific subjects. The first is to investigate how the pattern of adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai works, as well as how the adjective categorizes (attributive or predicative) depending on the patterns. The second is to use the X-Bar theory to present the pattern of an adjective phrase in Bahasa Mentawai. The purposes of this study are to identify the pattern of adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai and find the adjective categorizes (attributive or predicative) that often appear based on the patterns, and present the patterns of adjectives in Bahasa Mentawai using the X-Bar theory.

There has been some research on applying the X-Bar theory to analyze sentences or phrases in sentences. Here are five previous studies that have already been completed by other researchers. First, (Zahra & Mulyadi, 2019) conducted the first study, which looked at several sentences in bahasa Mandailing (one of the regional languages used in Indonesia). The X-Bar hypothesis is used in this study's analysis patterns. The findings of this study show that incomplete forms of interrogative sentences have the specifier and complement grammatical functions. The total type question, on the other hand, serves as a compliment.

The next research was conducted by (Mulyadi, 2010). He analyzed prepositional phrases in Indonesian using the X-Bar theory. The results showed that the structure of the preposition phrases in Indonesian was formed by complement, information, and specifiers. The rules of formation in Indonesian are  $FP = P', Spes; P' = P', Komp$ , etc. Then, (Perangin-angin, 2010), who examined the structure of noun phrases in Karo using X-Bar theory. The results of his research show that noun phrases are formed by complement, description, and specifier. The rules of formation in Indonesian are  $FP = P', Spes; P' = P', Komp$ , etc.

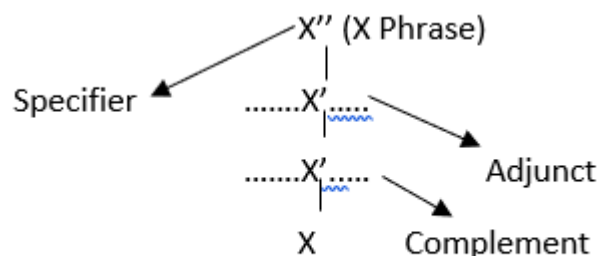
The fourth study comes from (Herliana, 2018) who wrote a study with the title '*Struktur Frase Nominal Bahasa Mandarin Berdasarkan Teori X-Bar*'. The purpose of the writing is to describe the nominal phrase structure in Mandarin by using the X-Bar theory. The results of his research show that Mandarin has a nominal structure and its formation is N + N, Adj + N, Pronoun + N, and Adjunct + N + N. Then, a nominal rule using the X-Bar theory is found and written in Bahasa Indonesia: FN → N', N' → N, N, etc. The last study, conducted by (Aristia, 2017), analyzes using the X-Bar approach for adjective phrases in Japanese. The results showed that the Japanese language has an adjective structure and its formation is adjective + noun, pronoun + adjective, noun + adjective, and adverb + adjective.

Although multiple studies have been completed, this research is still being carried out to investigate how the X-bar hypothesis affects the construction of adjective phrases. This research has a novelty in terms of the research subject. The literature analysis shows that the X-Bar can assist in clearly assessing the structure of sentences. According to the previous studies above, there are several studies on noun phrases, verbs, and prepositions, but there are few studies on the creation of adjective phrase patterns (as for studying the language of other countries, such as Japan, whose author is Indonesian). As a result, the research reported in this paper focuses on the adjective phrase, specifically the pattern of its creation in the Mentawai regional languages of Indonesia, utilizing the X-Bar theory analysis.

In this study, the application of X-bar theory may be used to examine the syntactic principles of adjective phrases. Based on (Haegeman, 1992), the X-bar is used to explain the structure of sentences. He mentioned that Chomsky was the first to advise that those sentences with the same structure should be analyzed explicitly. The assumption behind the X-bar hypothesis is that the fundamental structure of diverse sentences in a language all have the same pattern. According to the X-bar hypothesis, every phrase has a core text. All sentences are characterized as endocentric in classical linguistic terms (Haegeman, 1992); (Culicover, 1997). This is the last custom node that has taken over the world. The lexical projection of the word category might alternatively be considered the core. The qualities of the core are as follows.

First, the core addresses the categorical features. For example, the core of a noun phrase is a noun, the core of a verb phrase is a verb, the core of the prepositional phrase is a preposition, and the core of the adjective phrase is an adjective. For example, the word "*beautiful*" is the core of the phrase "*very beautiful*". The phrase "*very beautiful*" is called an adjective phrase. Second, the core is placed one level lower in the X-bar position than the constituents that constitute the core. Thus, the preposition X-bar's location data as the core of the adjective phrase is printed one level lower than the phrase. This category has an empty bar, or it can be said, without a bar. Furthermore, X-bar theory recognizes two levels of projection. Both projections are represented at the syntactic level. If a lexical category is formed of complement, description, and specifier, complement combined with X will form X-bar projections; information combined with X-bars will form a higher X-bar projection; and the specifier which combines with the

higher X-bar will form a maximum projection of the phrase X. So, the bar category is the X projection, and the phrase with the highest bar is the higher projection of the X category. In this case, the symbol X is a substitute for the related category, whether N, V A, or P, while the dots (...) on the left and right are fillers, information, or specifiers. The position relation of the phrase structure is illustrated below.



**Picture 1**  
**The X-Bar Schema**

Through the scheme above, each category does not need to be represented separately because it includes the generalization of existing rules. This strategy significantly reduces the phrase's structure. It's vital to note that the above scheme's implementation is contingent on the language's constituent structure. In English, for example, adjectives come before the complement. The complement in the X-Bar system is given on the right side with this arrangement.

### Research Method

The data for this study came from a book called *Struktur Frasa Dalam Bahasa Mentawai*, written by (Adam & Alwis, 1986) and published by the Indonesian Department of Education and Culture's Language Development and Language Development Center. The material in this book was chosen by the author because it is presented in the form of several sentences containing various noun phrases, adjectives, verbs, and prepositional phrases. The object of investigation is the adjective phrase. Secondary data is the term for the information collected in this scenario. Secondary data (researchers' second hand in terms of obtaining data) is characterized as information gleaned by researchers from a variety of existing sources, such as the books mentioned earlier.

A literature review was conducted to gather information for this investigation (Moh, 2013). This was accomplished by looking for books that had data sources. In terms of data collection, the writer employed the note-taking method by (Sudaryanto, 2015). He claimed that some writing tools may be used to take notes. Thus, the writer used pen and paper to collect data in the form of adjective phrases, as described in *Struktur Frasa Dalam Bahasa Mentawai* (1990). Purposive sampling, as described by (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018), was also utilized in this investigation to choose acceptable data. Meanwhile, (Sugiyono, 2010) added that this technique enables the

writer to select data based on the certain criteria. Thus, the writer chose some sentences in the book which is represent data such as sentences or words containing adjective phrases.

The writer utilized a descriptive-qualitative technique to present and analyze the facts using the X-Bar theory, the writer will offer the facts in the form of adjective phrases, followed by an analysis. Linguistic research is frequently incorporated in qualitative descriptive studies (Perangin-angin, 2010). The goal of this research methodology is to draw broad conclusions based on phenomena discovered via data analysis.

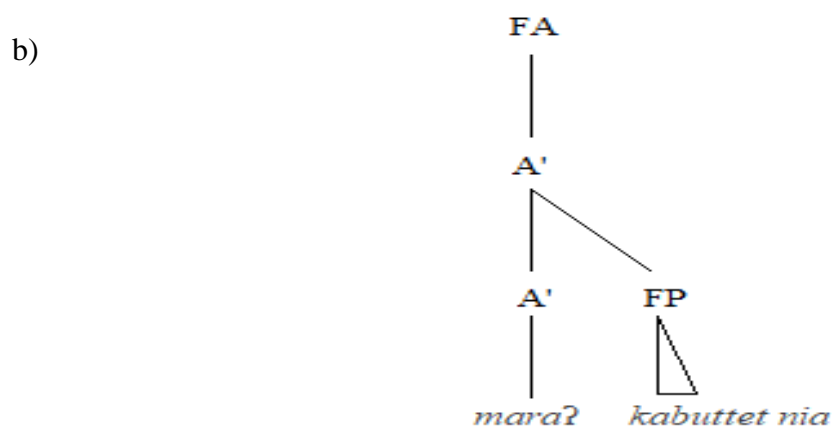
## Result and Discussion

### 1. An adjective phrase which is created by combining an adjective and a prepositional phrase (Adj + PP)

In Bahasa Mentawai, the adjective phrase is seen to be coupled with the prepositional phrase. Adjectives in Bahasa Mentawai are followed by prepositional phrases preceded by components /ka-/ or "di-" (in Bahasa Indonesia), which might have different meanings. The following sentences is presented below.

- a) sakelo nedda **mara? kabuttet nia**  
pepaya itu **masak dibatang dia**  
'Pepaya itu **matang dibatangnya.**'

The adjective phrase in example (a) is *kabuttetia* or "*dibatangnya*," which is an adjunct from the adjective "*mara*" or "*matang*". If we remove the word "kabuttet" from sentence (a), it will still be grammatically acceptable. In the X-Bar, adjunct prepositional phrase theory, with the lexical core A, "will form the constituent A." At the level above that, "A" will form the maximum projection of the adjective phrase. The structure of the phrases that will appear is as follows.



Picture 2  
The X-Bar schema of Adj + PP

The prepositional phrases that will appear in the adjective phrase are the captions or adjuncts. This adjective phrase includes the type of predicative in the adjective. The reason is that this adjective exists to explain the “*sakelo nedda*” or 'papaya' which is a determinant phrase that appears before the adjective and it is followed by additional information on the “*kabutet nia*” or ‘*dibatangnya*’.

## 2. An adjective phrase which is created by combining an adjective and noun phrase (Adj+NP)

It's also feasible to use the adjective phrase with a noun. The adjectives that are already in use serve to describe the condition of the nouns that come after them. This sort of adjective phrase is sometimes followed by the pronoun “*Nia*”, which in Bahasa Mentawai means “*he*” or “*she*” and is usually inserted at the end to clarify the topic. However, it is not needed to be included. The following are some examples of adjective phrases that include both adjectives and nouns.

c) *Si Ani mabesi? boga nia*

Si Ani **sakit perut dia**

‘Si Ani **sakit perutnya**’

d) *Caŋkeku maigi buluk nia*

Cengkeh saya **rimbun daun dia**

‘Cengkeh saya **rimbun daunnya**’

In instances (c) and (d), the adjective phrase consists of the adjective's lexical nucleus followed by the noun's complement. As a result, the words “*boga*” and “*leaf*” are required, and if the noun is missing, the statement is grammatically incorrect. As in the following sample sentence.

e) \**Si Ani mabesi? nia*

Si Ani **sakit dia**

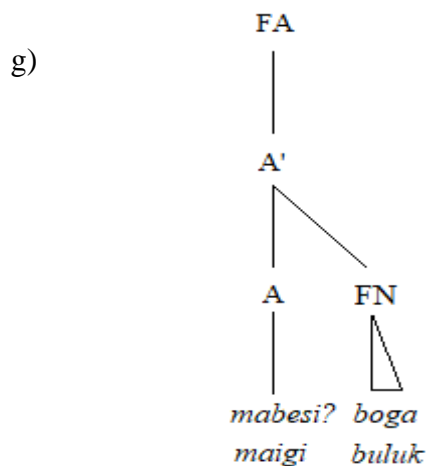
‘Si Ani **sakit dia**’

f) \**Caŋkeku maigi nia*

Cengkeh saya **rimbun dia**

‘Cengkeh saya **rimbun dia**’

As a result, the noun and lexical complement of the core of the adjectives will create the constituent A' in the X-Bar theory. The element A will generate a maximum projection of the adjective phrase at one level higher. The following is the structure of the adjective phrase.



**Picture 3**  
**The X-Bar schema of Adj + NP**

The noun phrase that will occur in the Mentawai adjective phrase is either a necessary complement or a required complement. The reason is the adjectives “*mabesi?*” or “*sick*” and “*maigi*” or “*lush*” appear to explain the next nouns, “*boga*” or “*belly*” and “*buluk*” or “*leaf*” this adjective phrase is an example of an attributive adjective. The presence of the final pronoun “he” in Bahasa Mentawai is uncertain since it might be embedded or not.

### 3. An adjective phrase which is created by combining an adjective and adjective phrase (Adj+AP)

Adjective phrases cannot only form between adjectives with prepositional phrases and noun phrases, but adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai are also found to form between adjectives and other adjectives. For example, in the phrase (h), the adjective phrase in the front will explain the state of the adjective that ended. Then the phrases (i) and (j) contain two adjectives that are put together and have the opposite meaning of the existing adjectives.

h) *Tubu nia makope? pusu?*  
Warna dia **pekat hitam**  
‘warnanya **hitam pekat**’

i) *Sabeu sigoyso? buy?ta? mey mugalay*  
‘**Besar kecil** harus pergi belajar’  
‘**Remaja dan anak-anak** harus pergi belajar.’

j) *Tubu nia maleppet maoloy*  
Badan dia **dingin panas**  
‘badanya **panas dingin**’

The adjective phrase in example (h) consists of an adjective lexical nucleus and is followed by an adjunctive adjective. Thus, if the adjective “*makope?*” or “*pekat*” is omitted in that sentence, the grammatical arrangement of the phrase (h) can be accepted. This is slightly different from the case in phrases (i) and (j) which consist of the lexical core of the adjectives and are followed by other adjectives that also function as adjuncts, but if the adjunct is not used, the initial meaning will not be conveyed. Therefore, the phrases (i) and (j), if the adjective words like “*sigoyso?*” or “*small*” and “*maoloy*” or “*hot*” are not included, the meaning that will appear will be different from what is expected, but the sentence is still grammatically acceptable. It can be presented as follows.

k) *Tubu nia pusu?*

Warna dia hitam  
‘warnanya hitam’

l) *Sabeu buy?ta? mey mugalay*

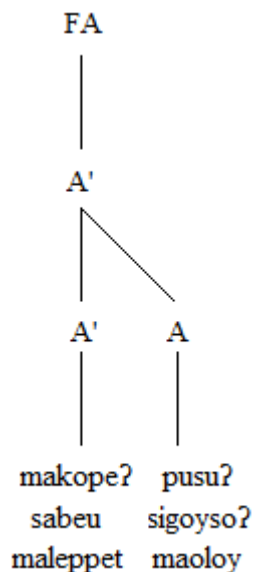
‘**Besar** harus pergi belajar’  
‘Remajanya harus pergi belajar’

m) *Tubu nia maleppet*

Badan dia **dingin**  
‘Badannya dingin’

Then, in the x-bar theory, the adjective adjunct and lexical nuclei of the adjective will form the constituent A' and in one step above, the constituent A' will form a maximum projection of the adjective phrase. The structure of the adjective phrase that will emerge is as follows.

n)



**Picture 4**  
**The X-Bar schema of Adj + AP**



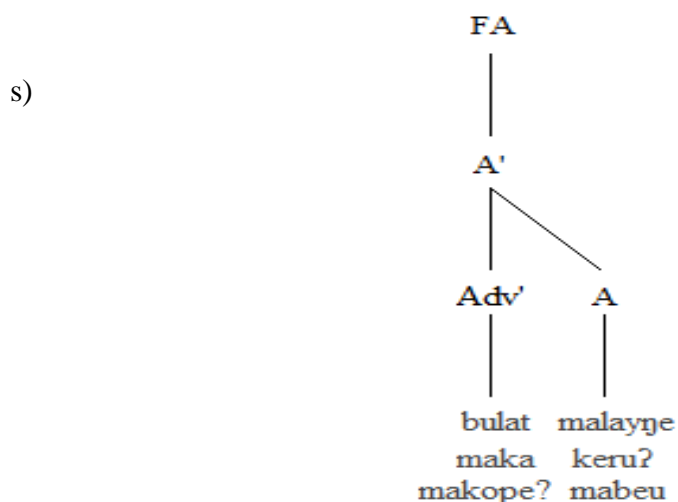
The adjective (A') in the picture 4 that appears in the adjective phrase in Bahasa Mentawai is adjunct, or a complement which is not required. These adjective phrases are a kind of predicative adjective because the adjective phrases of "makope?" "pusu?" "hitam pekat" and "maloy" "panas dingin" appear to exist to explain the previous noun, like his or her body "nia" or "color".

#### 4. An adjective phrase which is created by combining an adjective and adverbial phrase (Adj+Adv P)

Adjective phrases in Bahasa Mentawai have a pattern in the formation of adjective phrases between adjectives and adverbs or adverbs. In this study, adverbs commonly used in the formation of adjective phrases are "bulat", "sangat", "maka", "agak", "makope?" or "sungguh" atau "sekali". Adverbs are used to modify existing adjectives to better describe nouns or pronouns. Examples of these are the following.

- o) Siti togat sibuan, **bulat malaiŋe**  
Siti anak Buana, **sangat cantik.**  
'Siti, anak pak Buana, **sangat cantik.**'
- p) Sioko? nedda bulat **malaiŋe nia**  
Gadis itu sangat **cantik dia**  
'Gadis itu sangat cantik.'
- q) Selat sikakap **maka keru?**  
Selat sikakap **agak dalam**  
'Setat Sikakap **agak dalam**
- r) lalep nedda **makope? mabeu**  
rumah itu **sungguh besar**  
'Rumah itu **besar sekali.**'

The adjective phrases in examples (o), (p), (q) and (r) comprise the adjective lexical nucleus and are followed by adverb adjunct. Thus, if the adverb "bulat" or "sangat", "maka" or "agak", and "makope?" or "sungguh" atau "sekali" are not used in the example sentence above, the sentence is still grammatically acceptable. However, eliminating or not including the existing adverb, it will change the overall meaning of the sentence. The schema can be presented below.



Picture 5

### The X-Bar schema of Adj + Adv P

The adverb (Adv') in the diagram (s) that appears in the Mentawai adjective phrase is adjunct, or it is a complement, which is not required. Adjective phrases like this include a predicative type of adjective. The reason that the adjective “*bulat malayŋe*” or “*very beautiful*”, “*maka keru?*” or “*rather deep*”, and “*makope? mabeu*” or “*really big*” appears to exist to explain the previous noun.

### Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded into two parts. First, in Bahasa Mentawai, the adjective can be followed by prepositional, noun, adjective, and adverbial phrase. The pattern in X-Bar to make Adj and PP is  $FA (AF) \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A' + FP (PF)$ , to make Adj and NP is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A + FN (NP)$ , to make Adj and AP is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow A' + A$ , and to make Adj and Adv P is  $FA \rightarrow A' \rightarrow Adv' + A$ . Second, the type of adjective that occurs in this data is predicative where the adjective has a function to explain something before it appears.

The writer makes some recommendations for future researchers who will do similar studies. First, there's the issue of the study's breadth. The writer believes that the study's scope will expand to include further research on phrases. To make the term that will be the topic of the following study more difficult, it might be highlighted in many types. The target language is the subject of the second. The author recommends that the next researcher, particularly in Indonesia, acquire the native language. It can broaden our understanding of how a sentence is created in a given language.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam, Syofyan, & Alwis, Rostam. (1986). *Struktur Frase Bahasa Mentawai*. [Google Scholar](#)
- Aristia, Puti Novianti. (2017). Frasa Adjektiva Bahasa Jepang: Analisis X-BAR. *LINGUA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 14(2), 295–308. [Google Scholar](#)
- Ary, Donald, Jacobs, Lucy Cheser, Irvine, Christine K. Sorensen, & Walker, David. (2018). *Introduction to research in education*. Cengage Learning. [Google Scholar](#)
- Chaer, Abdul. (2007). *Linguistik Umum: Rineka Cipta*. Jakarta. [Google Scholar](#)
- Culicover, Peter W. (1997). *Principles and parameters: An introduction to syntactic theory*. Oxford University Press. [Google Scholar](#)
- Haegeman, Liliane. (1992). *Introduction to the Theory of Government and Binding*. Oxford: Blackwell. [Google Scholar](#)
- Herliana, Monika. (2018). STRUKTUR NOMINAL BAHASA MANDARIN BERDASARKAN TEORI X-BAR. *Jurnal Cakrawala Mandarin*, 2(1), 46–57. [Google Scholar](#)
- Moh, Nazir. (2013). *Metode Penelitian. cetakan kedelapan Ghalia Indonesia*. Bogor. [Google Scholar](#)
- Mulyadi, Mulyadi Mulyadi. (2010). Frase Preposisi Bahasa Indonesia: Analisis X Bar. *Kajian Sastra*, 34(1), 1–12. [Google Scholar](#)
- Perangin-angin, E. (2010). Struktur nomina bahasa karo: Analisis teori x bar. *Jurnal*

*Akademia*. [Google Scholar](#)

Sudaryanto, Sudaryanto. (2015). Metode dan aneka teknik analisis bahasa. *Yogyakarta: APPTI*. [Google Scholar](#)

Sugiyono, Sugiyono. (2010). Metode penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif dan R&D. *Alfabeta Bandung*. [Google Scholar](#)

Verhaar, John W. M. (1996). *Asas-asas linguistik umum*. [Google Scholar](#)

Zahra, Soraya Tsamara, & Mulyadi, Mulyadi. (2019). KALIMAT TANYA DALAM BAHASA MANDAILING: TEORI X-BAR. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 12(2), 235–242. [Google Scholar](#)

---

**Copyright holder:**

Kartika Eva Rahmawati, Agus Subiyanto (2021)

**First publication right:**

Syntax Literate: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia

**This article is licensed under:**

