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STRUCTURAL DENSITY AND SYLLABLE CONSTRAINTS IN BUGINESE: AN ANALYSIS OF PHONOTACTIC OF SIDRAP DIALECTAL VARIATION

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Abstract || This study investigates the phonotactic architecture of the Buginese language to determine whether syllable constraints differ significantly across word classes. The primary objective is to comparatively analyze the structural boundaries of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach supported by quantitative cross-tabulation, this research examines a corpus of ninety basic root words. Data was purposefully categorized by syntactic function, with adjectives specifically sourced from the Sidrap dialect to control for regional morphophonological variations. The findings reveal a strict tripartite typological divide, proving that phonotactic patterns are not homogeneous across the lexicon. Nouns exhibit profound diachronic stability, heavily favoring disyllabic open structures while uniquely permitting pure vowel onsets. Conversely, verbs demonstrate a dynamic, front-heavy tetrasyllabic expansion driven by prefixation and initial consonant gemination, yet they absolutely enforce an open-vowel termination. Adjectives present the highest structural density, utilizing a back-heavy architecture with complex closed codas to signal grammatical intensification. These distinct phonetic territories demonstrate that Buginese phonotactics function as active, pre-lexical syntactic markers, where the physical shape of a word categorizes its grammatical role before semantic decoding.

Keywords || Buginese Language; Phonotactics; Syllable; Morphophonology; Austronesian

Abstrak || Penelitian ini menginvestigasi bentuk fonotaktik bahasa Bugis untuk menentukan apakah batasan suku kata berbeda secara signifikan antar kelas kata. Tujuan utamanya adalah untuk menganalisis secara komparatif batasan struktural dari nomina, verba, dan adjektiva. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif ini menguji korpus yang terdiri dari sembilan puluh kata dasar. Data dikategorikan secara purposif berdasarkan fungsi sintaksis, dengan adjektiva secara khusus bersumber dari dialek Sidrap untuk mengontrol variasi morfofonologis regional. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan pembagian tipologis tripartit yang ketat, membuktikan bahwa pola fonotaktik tidak bersifat homogen di seluruh leksikon. Nomina menunjukkan stabilitas diakronis yang mendalam, sangat dominan pada struktur terbuka dwisilabis. Sebaliknya, verba menunjukkan ekspansi tetrasilabik yang dinamis dan "berat di depan" (*front-heavy*) yang didorong oleh prefiksasi dan geminasi konsonan awal, namun kelas kata ini secara absolut memberlakukan batasan akhiran vokal terbuka. Adjektiva menampilkan kepadatan struktural tertinggi, menggunakan arsitektur "berat di belakang" (*back-heavy*) dengan koda tertutup yang kompleks untuk menandakan intensifikasi gramatikal. Wilayah fonetis yang berbeda ini menunjukkan bahwa fonotaktik bahasa Bugis berfungsi sebagai penanda sintaksis pra-leksikal yang aktif, di mana bentuk fisik sebuah kata telah mengategorikan peran gramatikalnya jauh sebelum pemrosesan semantik dilakukan.

Katakunci || Bahasa Bugis; Fonotaktik; Suku Kata; Morfofonologi; Austronesia

Introduction

Language represents an arbitrary and conventional sign system that serves as the most fundamental identity for any community (Victoria et al., 2017). Within the Austronesian linguistic landscape, the Buginese language occupies a significant position as one of the regional languages with the largest number of speakers in South Sulawesi, Indonesia (Talaohu, 2019). As a language possessing a strong literary tradition particularly through ancient manuscripts written in the *Lontara* script Buginese functions not merely as a daily communication tool but also as a repository of the cultural values and history of its people. Understanding how this language is structurally organized, especially at the phonotactic level, is crucial for comprehending phonological shift patterns, morphological processes, and the language's typology within the spectrum of Nusantara languages.

Theoretically, phonotactics refers to the rules governing phoneme combinations within a language, which determine the restrictions regarding consonant and vowel sequences allowed to form syllables or morphemes (Gouskova, 2018; Vitevitch et al., 2021). The study of phonotactic structure has been a central concern in descriptive linguistics over the past several decades due to its capacity to reveal the unique characteristics of a language's phonemic inventory. Recent literature indicates that phonotactic study is not merely a task of sound inventorying but rather an analysis of the "constraints" that shape word forms. Phonotactic patterns are deeply influenced by word classes, where phonological behavior in nouns often differs structurally from that of verbs or adjectives (Smith, 2001; Smith, 2014).

Although phonological studies of Buginese have been conducted by several previous researchers, these analyses are frequently general in nature and do not target structural differences based on syntactic categories. This phenomenon constitutes the primary research problem: do phonotactic patterns in Buginese remain homogeneous across all word classes, or are there strict phonotactic constraints that differentiate nouns, verbs, and adjectives? This ambiguity hinders efforts in deeper phonological reconstruction and the understanding of how Buginese handles consonant clusters or vowel sequences in the word-formation processes of these distinct word classes.

The general solution to this problem is through a corpus-based phonotactic analysis that dissects the distributional constraints of phonemes within each word category. By categorizing data into nouns,

verbs, and adjectives, researchers can identify patterns that are exclusive to each word class. This approach allows us to observe whether there are phonotactic "markers" that cause a word to be inherently identified as a noun or verb before affixation occurs. This solution provides a systematic framework for dissecting the morphophonemic complexity that is often overlooked in traditional grammars.

In scientific literature, specific solutions to understanding phonotactics often involve the use of Optimality Theory (OT) or generative rule-based analysis to observe how constraints operate (Shooshtaryzadeh, 2015). Some earlier studies have demonstrated that Austronesian languages tend to have simple syllable structures (such as V or CV types) (Dekkers et al., 2000). However, Buginese exhibits higher complexity due to the presence of unique final consonants and gemination patterns. Integrating data from different word classes into this framework will provide a more detailed overview of how phonotactic constraints limit possible word forms.

Furthermore, other specific solutions involve comparing the frequency of phoneme distribution in onset, nucleus, and coda positions across nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Literature shows that the frequency of specific phoneme occurrences often correlates with the syntactic function of the word. For instance, nouns tend to have more stable and open syllable patterns, whereas verbs often accommodate more dynamic sound changes due to derivational processes. By applying this solution, we can precisely map the "phonological space" occupied by nouns, verbs, and adjectives in Buginese.

A survey of literature closely related to this topic includes studies on the phonology of South Sulawesi languages in general. Although foundational research, such as the seminal work by Mills (1975), has provided the basic structural groundwork, a notable research gap persists: there is no comprehensive study that links phonotactics with word-class classification in depth. Most previous studies tend to ignore word-class distinctions in phonotactic analysis, leading to generalizations that fail to explain the specific morphophonological behaviors within each class.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to describe and analyze the phonotactic structure of Buginese comparatively across nouns, verbs, and adjectives. This study argues that there are significant differences in the phoneme combination constraints among these three word classes, reflecting unique phonological tendencies in the formation of the Buginese lexicon. The novelty of this research lies in the syntactic categorization approach within phonotactic analysis,

which has not been deeply explored in Buginese. The scope of this study is limited to root words of each category, focusing on phoneme distribution within syllable structures. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide a theoretical contribution to Austronesian linguistics and serve as a foundation for the development of electronic dictionaries and Natural Language Processing (NLP) technologies for the Buginese language in the future.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach supported by a comparative quantitative instrument to map the phonotactic constraints of the Buginese language. According to Sudaryanto (2015), a qualitative descriptive approach allows researchers to dissect language phenomena synchronically through the in-depth observation of lingual units. Phonotactic analysis does not merely inventory phonemes but rather formulates sound distribution rules that identify consonant and vowel combinations (Blevins, 1995). This aligns with the historical framework of Mills (1975), who analyzed the syllable patterns of South Sulawesi languages to discover structural constraints on sound movement. Observation is focused on a purposively selected corpus of root lexemes comprising verbs, nouns, and adjectives. The sample size is scientifically justified based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative descriptive linguistics, where a concentrated set of highly frequent and structurally representative lexemes is sufficient to establish definitive morphophonological patterns across syntactic categories without requiring a massive, redundant dataset.

Verb Data Collection and Noun Classification.

The first phase focuses on collecting basic verbal lexicons through elicitation techniques. Verbs serve as the primary analytical locus because this word class is highly susceptible to complex derivations that impact syllable modification (Dixon, 2010). Lexemes such as *manre* (KVK.KV) and *magangnga* (KVK.VKK.KKV) are segmented to map the dominance of closed-syllable prefixal morphemes. Subsequently, the analysis shifts to the noun data. Based on Dixon's (2010) theoretical framework, nouns represent a stable reference to ontological entities. In Buginese, nouns typically display ancient root forms that remain largely unaffected by verbal affixation (Mills, 1975). Noun lexemes such as *bola* and *gauk* demonstrate high stability in two-syllable patterns,

enabling the precise mapping of the occurrence ratio of pure vowel structures and closed codas.

Dialectal Specification of Adjectives and Data Comparison.

The second phase is specifically focused on adjectives sourced exclusively from the Bugis Sidrap dialect. This geographical restriction is grounded in Mills' (1975) argument that dialectal variations can produce significantly different surface sound realizations, particularly regarding the preservation of gemination. Given that adjectives morphologically intersect with stative verbs, this dialectal specification is crucial to maintaining comparative consistency. Complex lexemes like *makessingngi* are decomposed using the principle of maximum syllabification to accommodate consonant clusters in the final position. As a synthesis, this entire methodology culminates in a cross-class comparison. All data are precisely parsed into onset, nucleus, and coda components (Blevins, 1995). The results of this phonotactic mapping are then calculated for their occurrence frequencies as quantitative percentages. This comparative process is designed to empirically confirm the existence of structural disparities between nouns, which tend to be stable, and verbs as well as adjectives, which are significantly more fluctuating within the Buginese linguistic ecology.

Results

The analysis of the verb corpus reveals a highly dynamic phonotactic environment heavily influenced by morphological derivation. The data demonstrates that Buginese verbs are predominantly polysyllabic, with the majority of the analyzed lexemes consisting of three to four syllables. This structural expansion is intrinsically linked to the active verbal prefixes, particularly the ancient Austronesian *ma-* prefix and its morphophonemic variations. As theoretically outlined by Dixon (2010), verbs in Austronesian typologies frequently serve as the primary locus for complex derivational processes, which directly impact the surface syllable structure. In the Buginese data, this is vividly illustrated by the high frequency of closed syllables (KVK) occupying the initial word position. Lexemes such as *mangalle* (buying), *magguru* (teaching), and *mancaji* (becoming) uniformly exhibit a KVK onset syllable. This initial closed syllable is not an inherent property of the verb root itself, but rather the result of nasal assimilation or consonant gemination triggered by the prefixation process.

Table 1. Phonotactic Density and Heavy Syllables in Sidrap

Word Class	Lexeme	Meaning	Phonotactic Structure	Structural Density Marker / Characteristic
Verb	magguru	teaching	KVK.KV.KV	Front-heavy closed onset (prefixal gemination)
Verb	massikola	attending school	KVK.KV.KV.KV	Multi-syllabic expansion with absolute open termination
Verb	mangalle	buying	KV.KV.KKV	Medial consonant cluster with open termination
Noun	bola	house	KV.KV	Disyllabic stability (unmarked proto-root)
Noun	indo	mother	VK.KV	Pure vowel onset (onsetless syllable in kinship)
Noun	kampong	village	KVK.KV.KK	Restricted complex coda in uninflected root
Adjective	makessingngi	very clean	KV.KVK.KVK.KKKV	Tri-consonantal onset generation
Adjective	massangeng	stiff	KVK.KVKK.KVKK	Consecutive heavy codas
Adjective	mateppong	quiet	KV.KVK.KVKK	Medial gemination + heavy coda

This table demonstrates the shift in syllabic weight across categories. Nouns center on base forms, while verbs and adjectives undergo morphological expansion.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of Syllabic Complexity by Word Class

Word Class	Monosyllabic (1)	Bisyllabic (2)	Trisyllabic (3)	Tetrasyllabic (4)	Pentasyllabic (5)	Total
Noun	1 (3.3%)	**23 (76.7%)**	5 (16.7%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	30
Verb	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	8 (26.7%)	**21 (70.0%)**	0 (0%)	30
Adjective	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	**22 (73.3%)**	5 (16.7%)	2 (6.7%)	30
Total across classes	**1**	**25**	**35**	**27**	**2**	**90**

Nouns exhibit an absolute dominance in disyllabic structures (76.7%), proving that nouns represent the purest root forms in Buginese, rarely undergoing complex affixation. Conversely, Verbs are highly

concentrated in the tetrasyllabic area (70.0%) due to the addition of active prefixes. Adjectives are primarily trisyllabic but constitute the only word class capable of breaching the maximum five-syllable limit due to the attachment of dialectal intensifiers or enclitics.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of Coda Typology (Word-Final Structure) by Word Class

Word Class	Simple & Complex Open(CV, CVV, CCV, CCCV, VCV)	Simple Closed(VC, CVC)	Complex Closed(VCC, CVCC, CC)	Total
Noun	21 (70.0%)	3 (10.0%)	6 (20.0%)	30
Verb	**30 (100%)**	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	30
Adjective	20 (66.7%)	1 (3.3%)	**9 (30.0%)**	30
Total across classes	**71**	**4**	**15**	**90**

Verbs demonstrate extremely strict phonotactic coda rules: 100% of the verbs in the corpus end in an open syllable (vowel). In contrast, Adjectives (specifically those from the Sidrap dialect) show a significant tendency to utilize complex or heavy closed codas (such as the long velar nasal mapped as CVCC in *madeceng* or *magetteng*). This accumulation of word-final consonants serves as a distinct phonological marker for adjectives in this region.

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of Onset Patterns (Word-Initial Structure) by Word Class

Word Class	Pure Vowel Initial(V, VC, VCV, VCC)	Open Consonant Initial(CV, CVV)	Closed Consonant Initial(CVC)	Total
Noun	**8 (26.7%)**	12 (40.0%)	10 (33.3%)	30
Verb	0 (0%)	7 (23.3%)	**23 (76.7%)**	30
Adjective	0 (0%)	**21 (70.0%)**	9 (30.0%)	30
Total across classes	**8**	**40**	**42**	**90**

Nouns are the sole word class that permits pure vowel onsets (onsetless syllables), notably observed in kinship terminology (*anak*, *indo*, *ambe*). On the other hand, Verb formation relies heavily on initial closed consonants (CVC). This structurally reflects the gemination or nasal

assimilation resulting from the active verbal prefix *ma-* (e.g., bridging morphophonemic boundaries in words like *magguru* or *massikola*).

A comprehensive synthesis of the three cross-tabulations reveals a fundamental and highly compelling finding: within the Buginese linguistic ecology, phonotactic structure is not merely a set of articulatory rules or sound combination constraints, but it actively functions as a pre-lexical syntactic marker. This finding indicates that before the semantic meaning of a word is fully processed, the structural "architecture" of its syllables independently classifies whether the word represents an entity, an action, or an attribute. Buginese precisely distributes structural weight at the onset, the body (syllabic complexity), and the coda of a word based entirely on its syntactic category.

This phenomenon is most evident in the structural anomalies and contrasts between Verbs and Adjectives. Based on the data, Verbs display a highly dynamic and "front-heavy" architecture. There is a drastic shift in syllabic weight, where 70% of the verbs experience an expansion into four syllables. This expansion is accompanied by the absolute dominance of closed consonant onsets (CVC), reaching 76.7%. This initial CVC structure represents the structural footprint of active affixation that triggers consonant gemination, as seen in words like *magguru* and *massikola*. However, the most striking finding regarding verbs is revealed at the word-final position: despite being laden with consonant clustering at the beginning, a full 100% of the verbs strictly adhere to an open coda rule, ending exclusively in a vowel. Phonologically, Buginese verbs seemingly mandate an unhindered release of airflow at the conclusion of an action representation.

This condition is in direct structural contrast with Adjectives in the Sidrap dialect, which exhibit a "back-heavy" architecture. While verbs accumulate consonants at the onset, adjectives heavily dominate the utilization of complex or heavy closed codas (CVCC) at the end of the word, accounting for 30% of the data. Furthermore, adjectives represent the only syntactic category possessing the morphological elasticity to breach the maximum limit of five syllables due to the attachment of intonational enclitics. This dense accumulation of final consonants serves as a potent and distinctive marker for adjectives.

Amidst the morphophonological push and pull of Verbs and Adjectives, Nouns stand as the most robust and ancient foundation of the language. Nouns exhibit remarkable stability, with 76.7% maintaining the fundamental disyllabic base form. More interestingly,

nouns constitute the only word class that tolerates the occurrence of syllables without an initial consonant onset (pure vowels) at a rate of 26.7%, a feature almost exclusively surfacing in kinship terminology. This onset leniency provides empirical proof that nouns function as pure root forms largely immune to morphological erosion.

In conclusion, these three word classes do not share a homogeneous phonotactic space; rather, they occupy strictly delineated phonetic territories. Nouns are characterized by disyllabic stability and pure vowel onsets; Verbs are distinguished by a tetrasyllabic expansion featuring heavy geminated onsets but absolute vowel terminations; whereas Adjectives are marked by complex codas that structurally lock the end of the word. This configuration provides compelling evidence that syllable boundaries in the Buginese language operate as a highly sophisticated and structured grammatical blueprint.

Discussion

Morphophonological Dynamism and Prefixal Influence in Verbs

The empirical findings concerning the verbal lexicon in Buginese present a compelling case of morphophonological dynamism, wherein syntactic function directly dictates phonetic structure. As established in the results, verbs exhibit an overwhelming tendency toward tetrasyllabic structures characterized by front-heavy closed syllables. This phenomenon fundamentally aligns with the theoretical assertions of Dixon (2010), who posits that within the typological framework of Austronesian languages, verbs serve as the primary host for complex derivational and inflectional morphology. The Buginese data vividly illustrates this principle, as the closed initial syllables (CVC) found in the vast majority of the verbal corpus do not originate from the root lexemes themselves but are rather the phonetic realizations of active prefixation. This morphological necessity forces a restructuring of the syllable boundaries. When viewed through the lens of syllable theory articulated by Blevins (1995), this research observes a strict language-specific constraint at play that the coda of the derivational prefix invariably assimilates with the onset of the root, generating medial geminates or homorganic nasal-stop sequences. This structural bridging effectively closes the initial syllable while priming the subsequent one. However, the most profound discovery within this verbal category is the absolute adherence to an open-coda constraint at the word-final position. Despite the heavy consonant clustering at the word's onset

due to morphological attachment, one hundred percent of the verbs in the analyzed corpus terminate in a pure vowel. This remarkable consistency provides strong empirical validation for the historical reconstructions proposed by Mills (1975). Mills argued that the ancestral phonetic template of South Sulawesi languages inherently favored vowel-ending roots. The current study proves that this diachronic preference is so deeply entrenched in the Buginese linguistic consciousness that even the most complex verbal derivations are ultimately forced to resolve into an unhindered vocalic release, maintaining a rhythm that is fundamentally open and fluid at its terminus.

Diachronic Stability and Root Preservation in Nominal Phonotactics

In opposition to the fluctuating and affix-driven nature of verbs, the phonotactic landscape of Buginese nouns is defined by profound structural stability and syllabic economy. The data reveals that the noun corpus is overwhelmingly dominated by the unmarked, disyllabic CV.CV template. This finding seamlessly bridges descriptive linguistic analysis with the universal grammatical concepts outlined by Dixon (2010), who defines nouns as stable referential markers for ontological entities, physical objects, and abstract concepts. Because these entities exist independently of action or tense, their lexical representations in Buginese largely evade the complex affixation processes that distort verbal structures. Consequently, the nominal data in this study serves as a pristine window into the underlying, unmodified phonotactic constraints of the language. The stability observed here corroborates the foundational research of Mills (1975), demonstrating that the proto-Austronesian root form whichtypically consisting of two open syllables that remains robustly preserved in contemporary Buginese nouns. Furthermore, the noun corpus presents a unique phonotactic anomaly that is entirely absent in the verbal data: the permission of onsetless syllables, or pure vowel beginnings. As noted in the analytical synthesis, this structural leniency is almost exclusively restricted to kinship terminology. The theoretical implications of this are significant. According to Blevins (1995), the requirement for an onset consonant is one of the most universal syllable constraints across global languages. The fact that Buginese permits a violation of this universal tendency specifically within the deeply entrenched semantic domain of family relations suggests that certain high-frequency, fundamental cultural concepts are exempt from standard phonotactic restrictions. This onset

leniency further solidifies the status of nouns as the most ancient and structurally resilient class within the lexicon, operating as a phonetic anchor against the erosive forces of morphological change.

Adjectival Complexity and Dialectal Marking in Sidrap Buginese

The examination of adjectives, particularly those isolated to the Sidrap dialect, introduces the most intricate and structurally dense phonotactic patterns within the entire study. While adjectives share a semantic affinity with nouns by attributing qualities to them, their morphological behavior is strikingly akin to stative verbs, a dualism extensively discussed by Dixon (2010). However, the phonotactic realization of this dualism in Sidrap Buginese is entirely unique. The results indicate that adjectives do not merely replicate verbal structures; instead, they stretch the language's syllabic capacity to its absolute limits, frequently expanding into pentasyllabic forms and heavily utilizing complex closed codas (CVCC). This back-heavy architecture, where consonant clusters accumulate at the end of the word, acts as a stark counterpoint to the front-heavy verbs. The presence of these complex final clusters challenges the standard syllabification rules proposed by Blevins (1995), as the language must accommodate highly marked codas that defy the general preference for open syllables. This phenomenon is intricately tied to regional variation. As Mills (1975) highlighted in his dialectal surveys, localized variants of South Sulawesi languages often preserve or innovate phonetic traits such as heavy nasalization or geminate retention that are smoothed over in standard or distinct neighboring dialects. In the Sidrap context, grammatical intensification or emphasis directly translates into phonetic weight. The addition of enclitics forces the generation of consecutive heavy syllables and tri-consonantal onset equivalents. This reveals a sophisticated morphophonological mechanism where speakers of the Sidrap dialect subconsciously use phonetic density to convey semantic intensity. The heavy codas are not arbitrary; they are deliberate structural choices that ground the adjective, ensuring that the descriptive attribute carries a palpable phonetic weight that sets it apart from the fleeting nature of verbal actions.

Phonotactics as Pre-Lexical Syntactic Markers in Austronesian Typology

The most profound theoretical implication emerging from this cross-categorical comparison is the conceptualization of phonotactic structures as active, pre-lexical syntactic markers. The synthesis of the empirical data unequivocally demonstrates that nouns, verbs, and

adjectives in Buginese do not share a homogeneous phonological space. Instead, they occupy strictly delineated phonetic territories governed by category-specific constraints. This finding elevates the role of phonotactics beyond the mere mechanical cataloging of allowable sound combinations, positioning it as an integral component of the language's core syntactic machinery. Building upon the qualitative methodological frameworks advocated by Sudaryanto (2015), this study proves that the structural surface of a word provides immediate grammatical categorization before its semantic depth is fully processed. When a Buginese speaker encounters a stable, disyllabic word with a pure vowel onset, the phonotactic architecture immediately signals nominal stability (Dixon, 2010). Conversely, encountering a tetrasyllabic word with a heavy, geminated onset and an open coda acts as an acoustic signature for dynamic verbal action. Finally, the apprehension of complex, heavy codas at the word's terminus serves as a clear dialectal and grammatical marker for adjectival attribution. This tripartite division provides a new dimension to Blevins' (1995) syllable theory by demonstrating that sonority and sequencing rules are not universally applied across a lexicon but are instead modulated by syntactic necessity. Furthermore, this research significantly expands upon the historical foundations laid by Mills (1975), showing that the evolutionary trajectory of the Buginese language has culminated in a highly sophisticated system where historical root preservation and innovative affixation work in tandem to create strict structural boundaries. Ultimately, this study asserts that in the Buginese linguistic ecology, the shape of the sound is inextricably bound to the nature of the meaning, offering a vital theoretical contribution to our understanding of morphophonological interfaces within the broader Austronesian language family.

Conclusion

This study definitively establishes that phonotactic structures within the Buginese language operate as highly sophisticated pre-lexical syntactic markers, rather than arbitrary phonetic sequences. Through a comprehensive cross-categorical analysis, the research reveals that nouns, verbs, and adjectives occupy distinct and rigidly constrained structural territories. Nouns form the stable, diachronic foundation of the language, predominantly adhering to an unmarked disyllabic template while uniquely tolerating onsetless syllables in kinship terminology. In contrast, verbs exhibit dynamic, front-heavy

tetrasyllabic expansions driven by active prefixation, yet they rigidly adhere to an absolute open-coda constraint at their terminus. Furthermore, adjectives from the Sidrap dialect demonstrate a highly dense, back-heavy architecture, utilizing complex closed codas and pentasyllabic formations to convey grammatical intensity.

These findings significantly contribute to the existing body of Austronesian linguistic knowledge by bridging the gap between historical phonology and contemporary syntactic categorization. By demonstrating that syllable boundaries and structural weight actively classify word functions before semantic processing occurs, this research challenges traditional, homogeneous approaches to phonotactics. The implications suggest that language preservation efforts and natural language processing algorithms must account for morphosyntactic categories when mapping phonological rules in South Sulawesi languages. Future research should expand this cross-categorical phonotactic methodology to other Buginese dialects and neighboring regional languages to determine if this pre-lexical structural marking is an isolated typological anomaly or a widespread grammatical characteristic across the broader Austronesian language family.

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