

Determiner Phrase in Sasaknese

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative generative syntactic study aims to discuss the forms of nominal structures and their basic patterns of a Sasak story written in 1992 published in the book “Dewi Rengganis” by applying the X-bar theory to discuss the constituent structure of nominal constructions and answering the question of whether nominal structures should be analyzed as determiner phrases or noun phrases. The result of the study shows in this language the determiners like *ni* ‘this’, and *no* ‘that’ and possessives like the suffix *-na* are the head that takes the noun phrase as its complement where the typical order consists of a demonstrative or articles precedes a noun, or demonstrative after the noun.

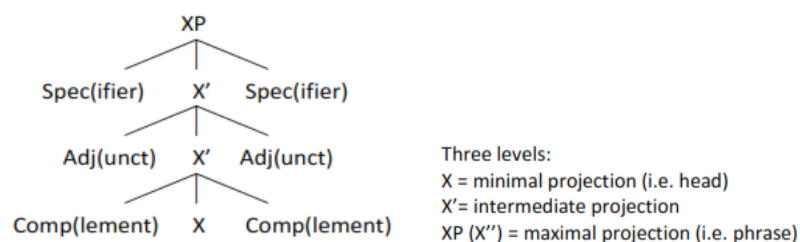
I. Introduction

Language has a crucial role in all aspects of human activities [1]. Language is a fundamental aspect of human communication, and each language has its own unique features that distinguish it from others. Sasak is a Western-Malayo-Polynesian language. It is spoken on Lombok island, West Nusa Tenggara province in eastern Indonesia [2]. Sasaknese, a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken primarily in Lombok, Indonesia, is no exception. *Base Sasak* ‘Sasak language’ is closely related to languages on both its neighboring islands: Samawa, spoken in the western part of Sumbawa Island, and Balinese spoken in Bali Island, to the east and west of Lombok respectively [3]. Austin stated that the Sasak language is spoken on the island of Lombok (immediately east of Bali) by around 2.5 million speakers [4]. As a member of the Sasak language family, it exhibits distinct syntactic structures, particularly in the formation of noun phrases and their components. One such component that has not been thoroughly explored in Sasaknese grammar is the determiner phrase (DP).

The present investigation applies the X-bar theory of phrase structure and syntactic function. This theory, which explores how language is generated, was first introduced by Noam Chomsky in 1970 and later expanded by Jackendoff in 1977. It focuses on the core structure of syntactic elements. According to Haegeman (1994, p. 95), X-bar theory is “the aspect of grammar that governs phrase structure.” Haegeman also highlights that this theory emphasizes the commonalities found in phrase structures. According to the X-bar model, each sentence contains a lexical head. For example, a complementizer heads a complementizer phrase (CP), a verb leads a verb phrase (VP), a preposition leads a prepositional phrase (PP), an adverb leads an adverb phrase (ADVP), an adjective leads an adjective phrase (ADJP), and so on. Cook (1996, p. 14) points out that the main aim of X-bar syntax is to express [5].

The principle of X-bar theory is that every phrase structure is endocentric or has a head. This principle applies not only to lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs but also to functional categories like complementizers, finite auxiliaries, and determiners (see Bresnan et al., 2016; Dalrymple, 2001; Falk, 2001). With this principle, a determiner (D) is projected to a determiner phrase (DP), or DP has D as the head and an NP as its complement [9].

There are three levels of projection in the X-bar theory, which are a minimal projection (X), an intermediate projection (X’ or X-bar), and a maximal projection (X’’ or X phrase). These levels of projection are placed can be seen in the following tree diagram [9].



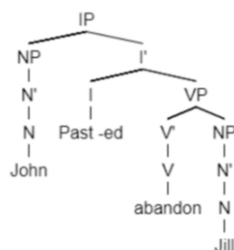
The tree diagram above shows that Specifier, Adjunct, and Complement are placed at different levels as shown from the category or the projection of the mother node and the sister node. Complement should come before or after the minimal projection or the head under the X' node, Adjunct should be placed before or after the X' node under the X' node, and Specifier is placed before or after the X' node under the XP node or the maximal projection (see Dalrymple, 2001:50-60; Falk, 2001) as cited in [10].

The structure tree of determiner phrase above shows the X-Bar structure of determiner phrase which consists of a head, adjunct and complement. X-Bar structure can be applied universally. The basic concept of each component has patent role and function. The difference of its application in English and Indonesian locates at the position of the adjunct [11].

In X-bar theory, a head is recognized in every phrase. In every phrase, X (N, V, A, PP) is the head of XP (NP, VP, AP, PP). All XPs contain a head element. The head is a lexical category and the phrasal component is called a "projection". Since these projections may occur in layers, the topmost layers are known as maximal projections of a phrase. NP is the maximal projection of N, while VP is the maximal projection of V. There are also intermediate projections that must be accounted for in the structure of phrases. These intermediate projections are called X-bar projections. This theory basically establishes a more elaborate system of functional relationships among various structural categories [12].

In X-bar theory, the head of a phrase is projected in two ways – the maximal projection (XP), and the intermediate projection. In addition to a head and its projections, X-bar theory recognizes another element within a phrase known as "Specifier" (Spec) in terms of its function. A similar element is known as the Complement (C). Both the specifier and the complement occur at the second level along with X-bar categories (they occur as "sisters" of X; sisters in the sense that they occur side by side and are of the same syntactic status) [12].

The sentence (S) node of the syntactic tree in earlier theory (Chomsky, 1957) is replaced by inflectional phrase (IP). Haegeman (1994) proposes that tense is a category dominated by INFL which is the replacement for Auxiliary in the earlier theory. INFL is represented by the I node in the tree diagram as in as the following tree indicates as cited in [13]:



Determiner phrases are phrases with determiner as the head. The head relates to the position of a word. The head is determiner because the position of the proposition is occupied by the determiner. In determiner phrases, nouns can be complements and adjective can be adjunct. Determiner phrases with noun phrase as a complement rise an argument about the position of the head of the phrase. Although nouns are semantically more prominent elements in the structure of phrase, it cannot be denied that we cannot use semantic properties to infer syntactic properties. Determiners in English include articles, demonstrative, possessive, numerical, classifiers, and others. Meanwhile the complement and adjunct can be projected with nouns or adjectives. Determiners have two functional head choices, which is having noun phrases as complement, or not having complement [11].

The term determiner is used to describe the grammatical element that comes at the beginning of a noun phrase. A determiner is an obligatory element of a noun phrase, the only other obligatory member of which is the noun itself [14]. Determiners in English as stated by [14], see the following table:

<i>Determiners in English</i>		
Predeterminers	Central Determiners	Postdeterminers
quantifiers (e.g., <i>all</i>)	articles (<i>a, the, Ø</i>)	cardinal numerals (e.g., <i>two</i>)
multipliers (e.g., <i>both, twice, double</i>)	demonstratives (e.g., <i>this</i>)	ordinal numerals (e.g., <i>first</i>)
fractions (e.g., <i>half, one-third</i>)	possessives (e.g., <i>my, John's</i>)	general ordinals (e.g., <i>next</i>)
intensifiers (e.g., <i>what, such</i>)	assertive/nonassertive (e.g., <i>some</i>)	quantifiers (e.g., <i>many, few, several, little</i>)
	negative (i.e., <i>no</i>)	
	universal (e.g., <i>each</i>)	
	nonassertive dual (i.e., <i>either</i>)	
	negative dual (i.e., <i>neither</i>)	
	<i>wh</i> -determiners (e.g., <i>which</i>)	

To support this study, some information is needed from many different sources. Numerous studies of Sasak language have already been conducted and presented in various forms such as thesis and journals. In order to group languages in the world, there are many syntactical tests which should be applied [15]. The Sasak language (Base Sasak) is primarily spoken on the island of Lombok in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia, immediately east of Bali [16]. Sasak is a local language spoken by Sasak tribe and it is mostly used as vernacular among family and rural communication [17]. Sasak ethnic group is the native ethnic group who live in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara [18].

Sasak language has the uniqueness compare with other languages. The uniqueness from the vocabulary and variety of dialects. For instance, between English and Sasak language, it is proven that from vocabulary are different, the word “lolo” is for tree, the word “mangan” is for eat and etc. Not only that aspect that made Sasak language have the uniqueness [19]. In spoken language, Sasak is characterized by a high degree of dialectal variation in all domains of structure (including phonology, morphology, and syntax), and even villages only a few kilometers apart often differ considerably. Traditionally, reference is usually made to one of five ethnolinguistic classifications, which include Ngenó-ngené and Nggetó-nggeté (Eastern Lombok), Menó-mené and Meriaq-meriku (Central and Southern Lombok), and Kutó-kuté (Northern Lombok) [20]. Sasak speakers recognise five ethno-linguistically named varieties (based on shibboleth words for ‘like that-like this’ [21].

Nothofer (1999) and Mahyuni (2006) note that among those of terminologies, the majority of Halus lexicon in Sasak High level are found to correlate closely with the Javanese lexicon. Sasak is one of the few Western Indonesian languages in which we find an elaborate language level system as cited in [22]. Alhakimi, et al. also studies Sasak language in their research entitled Educational Values of Taboo Expressions in the Sasak Speech Community with the results of this study show that there are 57 taboos believed by the community [23].

There are also some previous studies discussing X-bar theory which are done by [24] entitled “English Passive Voice: An X-Bar Theory Analysis”. In her study, by using X-bar diagram, the D-structure of the sentence can be seen and then moved into certain position which makes the S-structure of passive form. Nirman et al., also in their study entitle “Exploring X- Bar Syntax as Applied to English Syntactic Structures” found out that the X-bar theory can be applied to sentences in any context of language use and that it not just an abstract theory that is irrelevant or only relevant in the field of linguistics. The study buttresses the fact that meaning is based on the grammaticality of structures and uses rules in analysis and not on the abstract areas of language (like context) which functionalists claim meaning encompasses [12]. Arafiq, et al., also studied about the syntactic properties and distributions of Personal Pronouns in Sambori Language [25]. This research and their research are similar which is focused on syntax.

Moreover, some previous studies analyzing determiner phrase which are conducted by [9] in her article entitle “Determiner Phrases in Nineteenth-Century Malay”. In his study, the X-bar theory is applied to discuss the constituent structure of nominal constructions. His study used the data of an Indonesian short story written in 1873 published in the book “Nona Koelit Koetjing”. Another study on determiner was conducted by [26] entitled “The Use Of Determiners In Sentences: A Case Study At The First Semester Students In Faculty Of Culture, Management, And Business Article”. The result showed that the mean score of the students’ ability was 70%. It meant that students’ ability can be categorized at good level. This result indicated the most students in Faculty of Culture, Management, and Business, Language Education, Mandalika University of Education in the academic year 2022/2023.

A lot of research has been done in this area but there is no study about determiner phrase in Sasaknese yet. The study of the determiner phrase is crucial as it helps to understand how languages organize and express definiteness, specificity, quantity, and other features of reference. While much research on determiners has focused on languages like English or Indonesian, less attention has been

given to how Sasaknese handles these grammatical elements. The determiner phrase in Sasaknese plays a significant role in how speakers structure noun phrases, and this paper seeks to explore its structure, usage, and variations.

As an indigenous language, for many important reasons, Sasak language should be preserved. However, living in modern society brings some challenges for the new generations to know their language especially for those living in the city. Most of parents do not teach their children Sasak Language. Instead, they teach them Bahasa Indonesia as their mother tongue. In fact, there are so many children who are not able to speak their own vernacular. Time by time, Sasak native speakers leave their own language, Sasak Language might decline someday. In the future, this language probably be a death language due to limitation of speakers [27].

This research aims to fill the gap in the study of Sasaknese grammar by analyzing the syntactic properties of the determiner phrase. Specifically, it will investigate how determiners function in relation to nouns, how they interact with other elements within the noun phrase, and how they contribute to the broader syntactic structure of Sasaknese. By examining both theoretical and practical aspects of determiner phrases, this study will provide valuable insights into the grammar of Sasaknese, as well as contribute to the understanding of determiner phrases in lesser-studied languages.

Sasaknese is part of the Malayo-Polynesian language family, and its unique syntactic characteristics can provide important insights into the broader typology of this family. Not conducting this research would create a gap in comparative linguistics. The language, like many other minority languages, is at risk of gradual erosion due to language shift, globalization, and lack of comprehensive linguistic documentation. If the syntax and determiner phrasal structures of Sasaknese are not adequately studied, valuable knowledge about how the language functions will be lost, making it harder to pass on this understanding to future generations.

Understanding phrase structure is crucial for language revitalization and preservation efforts. Without research into Sasak's syntax, efforts to develop educational resources or language revitalization programs could be hindered. Language preservation requires a deep understanding of the grammatical structure, as it informs curriculum design, language teaching materials, and other resources aimed at sustaining the language. In the absence of such research, there may be a misrepresentation or oversimplification of the language's grammatical rules, potentially harming efforts to maintain the language among younger generations.

Globally, many languages, particularly those with fewer speakers like Sasak, remain under-documented, which can limit the overall understanding of human linguistic diversity. If Sasak's phrase structure is not studied, the field of linguistics loses out on understanding a unique example of an Austronesian language. This contributes to the broader problem of linguistic inequality, where the study and documentation of certain languages are neglected, depriving humanity of the richness of its linguistic heritage. Languages are constantly evolving, especially when they come into contact with others. Sasak, like many regional languages, has likely experienced influence from surrounding languages like Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian. A lack of research on Sasak's determiner phrase structure would prevent an in-depth analysis of these language contact effects and how they influence phrase construction.

II. Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the structure and usage of determiner phrases in Sasaknese, a language spoken in Lombok, Indonesia. The research aims to identify and analyze the syntactic and semantic properties of determiners in Sasaknese noun phrases.

This study used the data from the book Dewi Rengganis [28] This book contains stories of Dewi Rengganis in Aksara Sasak and its translation. There is but poor documentation of the sort stories and legend of Lombok using the alphabet known as Aksara Sasak, also called *hanacaraka* an Indic-based script virtually identical to that used for Balinese. The Dewi Rengganis book refers to a connection between Sasaknese as Lombok language and its history. This book is chosen because most likely used Aksara Sasak as well as being transliterated in parallel into a Latin-based script.

To get the data, I used the observation method with a note-taking technique. In this case, I noted down all nominal constructions found in the data to see the forms of Determiner Phrase and nominal constructions and their constituents. The data were then classified based on their similarity in order to find the general pattern. In addition, as a native speaker of Sasaknese, I also used a reflexive-

introspective method [29] to check the grammatical acceptability of the data. The data were analyzed using distributional method that the determining tool is the language itself.

III. Results and Discussion

Forms of Nominal Constructions in Sasaknese

Sasak society consists of three levels, namely “Raden” (prominent noble), “Menak” (ordinary noble) and “Jajar Karang” (commoner). Based on this stratification, each level applies different form of language in their daily communication. “Raden” (prominent noble) and “Menak” (ordinary noble) apply refined language, while Jajar Karang “commoner” apply common language (Mahyuni, 2006) as cited in [30]. This research used the data from the book Dewi Rengganis (Ali et al., 1992). This book used “Raden” (prominent noble) and “Menak” (ordinary noble).

Nominal constructions in Sasaknese have the following characteristics. First, a demonstrative *sino* or *no* which means ‘that’ commonly occurs in the initial position followed by a noun, as in (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7). Second, a demonstrative *sino* or *no* which means ‘that’ also precedes a noun, as in (8), and (9).

- (1) ***Dedara sino aran denda Rengganis.***
girl that name princess Rengganis
‘That beautiful girl is Princess Rengganis.’
- (2) ***Jayangrana no bemanik***
Jayangrana that say
‘The Jayangrana has said that.’
- (3) ***Raden Nuna no***
Raden nuna that
‘That is Raden Nuna.’
- (4) ***Dendara no bemanik adeng***
girl that say gentle
‘The Princess is saying delicately’
- (5) ***anak kaji no tebait***
child 1SG that PASS-take
‘my beautiful child was rushed to get married.’
- (6) ***sukur angen kaji no Gusti.***
thank feeling 1SG that God
‘That’s better for me now.’
- (7) ***Wong Menak laiq Mekah. ia sino keranang kaji periatin.***
people noble visitMekah, PART that cause 1SG concern
‘The noble people went to Mecca, that was the source of my sorrow.’
- (8) ***Sino puteri tekasup, aran putri Kelanswara***
that princess name-PASS, name princess Kelanswara
‘That is Princess Kelanswara.’
- (9) ***No keranaq dewa kasoran***
that cause-POSS master fail

‘That’s what caused him to lose.’

The word “I” in Sasaknese is differently uttered by each level. *Raden* uses word “kaji”, *Menak* uses word “tiang” and *Jajarkarang* uses “aku”. In particular situation, the use of demonstrative “Nike/Niki/Ene/Ino” to point an object for example, signifies power difference. “Nike/Niki” is used among noble community, while “Eno/Ino” is used among non-noble community or commoners [30].

Sasaknese also has the characteristics of nominal constructions as a demonstrative *ni* which means ‘this’ commonly precedes a noun, as in (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16), and (17). Moreover, a noun is also followed by a demonstrative *ni*, *eni*, *nika* or *niki* which means ‘this’, as in (18), (19), (20), (21), (22), (23), and (24).

(10) *Ni Rengganis nimbil adeng*
this Rengganis answer slow
‘The Princess is answering slowly.’

(11) *Ni Rengganis matur manis*
this Rengganis say sweet
‘The Princess is answering sweetly.’

(12) *ni kakaq leman Medayun*
this brother from Medayun
‘This is brother from Medayun.’

(13) *ni aku aran Raden Umarmaya.*
this 1SG name Raden Umarmaya
‘This is me, Raden Umarmaya’

(14) *ni kaji aran Rengganis, ngepen anak siq aran Datu Pandita*
this 1SG name Rengganis, own child by name king Pandita
‘My name is Rengganis, daughter of King Pandita.’

(15) *Amaq Jusi banjuranna beketoan, ni kamu Jayengpati.*
father bajusi then-POSS ask, this you Jayengpati
‘Jusi then asked, is your name jayengpati?’

(16) *kakaq Marmaya ni bijan peng kaji ia siq jauq Raden Bagus Marmaya*
brother marmaya, this child ART 1SG ART by bring Raden Bagus Marmaya
‘Umarmaya, is this my daughter-in-law?’

(17) *Silaq ni mirah gedengang*
please this darling listen
‘Please listen to this my dear.’

(18) *kaji ni tau kesangsang*
1SG this know lost
‘I’m lost getting here.’

(19) *Kaji sini ia anakna siq Wong Menak*
I this PART child-POSS by nobleman
Hamba ini putri Wong Menak

'I'm a daughter of the nobleman'.

- (20) *ndenna ia ni Wong Menak. aku ni leman Kuari.*
NEG=POSS ART this people noble, 1SG this from Kuari
'I'm not a noble man, I come from Kuari.'
- (21) *Ia ita anakna siq datu Pendita*
PART this child-POSS by king Pendita
'This is the daughter of the King Pendita.'
- (22) *Raden Irman nika dateng, midang laiq bencingah*
Raden Irman this come, date come pavilion
'Raden Irman came to see you (to dating), he is now sitting in the pavilion.'
- (23) *Sadoran panyungkan niki.*
kind illness this
'This kind of disease.'
- (24) *ni taoq kaji ngiring, tebareng pada manjak*
this place 1SG accompany, together-PASS all sit
'Let's sit here together please.'

Furthermore, nominal constructions in Sasaknese also has a noun with the definite or possessive suffix *-na*, as in (25), (26), (27), (28), and (29), a noun followed by a quantifier, as in (30), (31), and (32), and an article precedes a noun, as in (33), (34), (35) and (36).

- (25) *Pan siqna rege bijana*
PART by-POSS carry baby-POSS
'She is holding his baby.'
- (26) *Bijana mengaprabukan*
baby-POSS grow up
'The baby is growing up heathy.'
- (27) *Alisna maraq tetulis*
eyebrows-POSS like PASS-paint
'Her eyebrows looked like they were painted on'
- (28) *Kelampana maraq wayang*
walk-POSS like statue
'She walked gracefully.'
- (29) *Biniqna leman Kelanjah*
wife-POSS from Kelanjah
'Accompanied by his wife from Kelanjah.'
- (30) *Sepegawean dengan nina*
every task people woman
'All the women's household chores'
- (31) *pawongan putri no muni*
maid princess that say

‘That maids are answering.’

(32) *pawongan no budal gelis*
maid that go fast
‘That maids immediately left’

(33) *Lan bija meneng ndeq nangis*
ART baby silent NEG cry
‘The baby is calm, she isn’t crying.’

(34) *Siq toaq bejorik tarik*
ART old prink oneself up most
‘The elder people are dressing up again.’

(35) *Si aran Jayengraha*
ART name Jayengraha
‘The city of Jayengraha.’

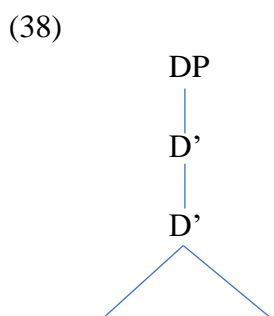
(36) *Bekanti ta lan datu jim, sangkaq La dende Rengganis mula maraqna jim pacu*
Friend PART ART princess genie, ART princess Rengganis true result genie real
‘Blessed with her friendship with the princess of genie, the Princess Rengganis was also able to disappear like a genie.’

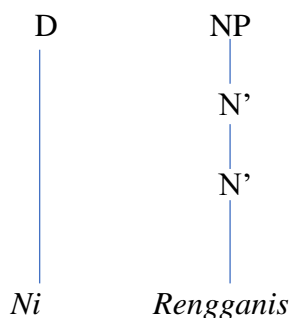
Nominal Structures as Determiner Phrases

The concept of X-bar is central to modern generativist theory. One of the primary tasks of syntactic theory is to explain how sentences are built from words. This explanation is generally conceived of in terms of assigning syntactic structures to sentences. Generative grammar is concerned with hierarchical structuring of phrases and sentences. A hierarchical analysis looks at phrases and sentences in terms of constituents. These constituents usually correspond to syntactic structures and are reflected in tree diagrams [12].

Nominal structures can be treated as NPs or DPs depending on the characteristics of the data [9]. As for Sasaknese, the nominal structures should be treated as DPs, and not as NPs for the following reasons. First, D can stand alone to fill the slot for a nominal construction, as in (37) and showed in phrase structure tree (38). In this construction, the determiner *ni* ‘this is a nominal head, which has the grammatical relation as the subject. This shows that D should be treated as a different category, and not as the head of an NP. Note that in the X-bar theory, only the N category that can be projected to an NP.

(37) *Ni Rengganis pecatna ali-ali*
this Rengganis open-POSS ring
‘The Princess Rengganis took her ring off.’





The second reason for adopting a DP analysis is that D can show definiteness to the nominal constructions that have got the definite markers such as the possessive or definite suffix *-na*, as in (39) and (40), repeated in (41) and (42) below. In this construction, the *-na* suffix can co-occur with D, showing that D and the *-na* suffix should have be treated as different categories.

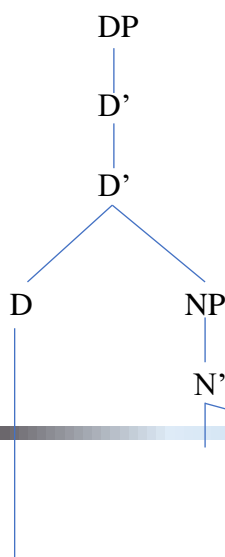
(39) *No kranagna leger ibuk*
 that cause-POSS nervous mother
 ‘That’s why she was shaking.’

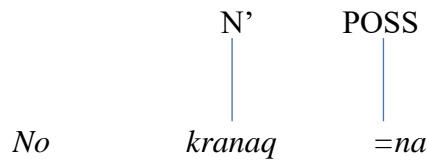
(40) *Kerisna no leman mamiq*
 Keris-POSS that from father
 ‘The dagger was given by father’

Furthermore, we’re going to look a bit more in-depth at the structure of these Sasaknese noun phrase. And in particular, where it is that we’re going to put these elements, these determiners, that frequently occur at the left edge of the noun phrase. Therefore, elements like *lan* ‘the’ or *si* ‘a’ or *ni* ‘this’ or *niki* ‘these’ or *sino* ‘those’ or *no* ‘that’. Rather than having determiner projecting a determiner phrase which is the specifier of the noun phrase, instead, to suppose that the determiner is the head that takes the noun phrase as its complement. The effect of that would be, if we’re sticking with x-bar theory, would be to say that the structures which up until now we’ve been calling noun phrases are in act determiner phrases. They’re projections of the determiner. That determiner takes the noun phrases as its complement. We have a functional category taking a projection of a lexical category as its complement in both cases. This analysis would give us an explanation for the complementary distribution for determiners like *ni* ‘this’ and *no* ‘that’ and possessives like the *-na* suffix.

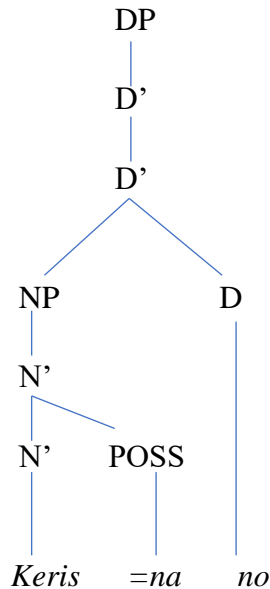
Based on the reasons above, nominal constructions in Sasaknese should be analyzed as DPs, and therefore, the nominal constructions *no kranagna=na* ‘its causing’ and *keris=na no* ‘his dagger’ can be described as in the following phrase structure trees.

(41)





(42)



IV. Conclusion

Sasaknese has nominal structures where the typical order consists of a demonstrative or articles precedes a noun, or demonstrative after the noun. In this language, nominal constructions should be analyzed as determiner phrases as a demonstrative behaves differently from any other elements of nominal constructions. The idea that what we've been calling noun phrases up till now are really determiner phrases, that is that the determiner takes a noun phrase as its complement, and projects a determiner phrase. In this case a DP has a determiner as the head and an NP as its complement.

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