



Grammatical Structure and Semantic Role Alignment of Verbal Arguments in South Nias

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 27 Dec 2025	This study aims to investigate the grammatical form of verbs, the function of verbs and the role of arguments for verbs in South Nias Language. This research was conducted in Telukdalam District, South Nias Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The main data is utterance or oral spoken which is then transcribed into written data. The results of the analysis show that there are two forms of grammatical verbs in South Nias Language, namely basic verb (free morphem) and derivative verb. The basic form of South Nias language verbs consists of the root form and the bound root form. The productivity of transitive and intransitive verb formation is influenced by morphological processes such as prefixes, suffixes, reduplication processes. Several types of prefixes were found to function as markers such as the prefix {a-} which is attached to the basic form, and semantically forms a passive meaning. The prefixes {fa-}, {fe-}, {f-}, and {fo-} form causative verbs. In addition, the prefixes {te-} and {to} form a resultative verb. Likewise, several types of suffixes form causative verbs such as suffix {-i}, {-ö}, {-fi}, {-ni}, {-si}, {-khi}, {-mi}, {-gö}, {-i'ö}, {-content} and {-ini}. Then, the function of verb of South Nias Language can become the core of the imperative clause. In addition, according to the transitivity nature of South Nias Language verbs it can form intransitive clauses which generally have one argument, namely S which acts as an AGENT (actor) such as the words <i>me'e</i> 'cry', <i>mosindro</i> 'stand', <i>miwo</i> 'crow', <i>döröfö</i> 'sleepy'.
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1. Introduction

Nias language is one of the regional languages used by the people of Indonesia, precisely on Nias Island which is located in the western part of Sumatra Island. The Nias language is known as Li Niha. Li 'voice or language' and Niha 'human'. So, Li

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Niha can be defined as a human voice or language. Nias language belongs to the Malay, Polynesian and Austronesian languages (Adelaar & Himmelmann, 2004; Blust, 2013). Nias language, as a means of daily communication and is actively used by the people of Nias until now, is a unique language with several characteristics that are different from other regional languages in the archipelago.

The uniqueness of the Nias language can be identified by analysing every syllable that is always present and ends with a vowel sound, for example “a” [ʔa] ‘eat’, “be” [ʔbe] ‘given’, “ara” [ara] ‘long time’. In other words, all words in the Nias language have open syllables. This phonotactic pattern reflects a strong preference for open syllable structures, a typological feature commonly found in many Austronesian languages (Brown, 2001; Hyman, 2008). This uniqueness makes the Nias language known as a vocal language in Indonesia. Then, Nias language has a vowel sound /ø/ (pronounced ‘ə’). Thus, in Nias language there are six vowel sounds, namely /a/i/u/e/o/ and /ø/. The presence of a relatively rich vowel inventory, including the central vowel /ø/, indicates a complex vocalic system that contributes to phonemic distinctions and articulatory variation in the language (Yoder, 2010; Gordon, 2016). In addition, in Nias Language there is a phoneme /w̃/ which is pronounced /β/, for example “mbãwa”. This phoneme is very similar to the regular /w/ phoneme, for example “bawa” (Brown 2001); (Gulo, 2014). Both words have the same form. However, this is distinctly different, especially the phoneme /w̃/ in the example has a circumplex sign, while the usual /w/ phoneme does not have a circumplex sign. Such phonemic contrasts demonstrate the functional load of subtle phonetic distinctions in Nias, where minor articulatory differences can signal significant lexical contrasts (Hyman, 2008). The two phonemes are clearly different when used by Nias people in daily conversation.

At the phonological level, it can be said that Nias language has many sound features such as the apostrophe /' / which reads glottal /ʔ/, for example in the words “ana'a” [anaʔa] ‘gold’, “i'a” [iʔa] ‘fish’ and “ãwua'ö” [aβuaʔə] ‘harden’. The use of glottal stops as contrastive phonemes further highlights the phonological complexity of Nias, particularly in marking syllable boundaries and lexical distinctions (Brown, 2001; Yoder, 2010). Not only that, in BN there are phonemes /mb/ sounding /β/, for example the word ambö [amβə] ‘less’ and “ndr” sounding /ɽ/, for example the word ndrũ'u [ɽũʔu] ‘grass’. The two types of sounds /mb/ and /ndr/ of double consonants are bilabial sounds and regular affricate phonemes, but also stop prenasalized, stop with a vibrating release, and stop with a fricative release (Yoder, 2010; Brown, 2001; Gulo, 2014). Prenasalized consonants such as /mb/ and /ndr/ represent complex segments that combine nasal and stop features, a phenomenon widely discussed in phonological typology as characteristic of many languages with rich consonantal inventories (Hyman, 2008; Gordon, 2016). Overall, these phonological features demonstrate that Nias exhibits a typologically marked sound system, contributing to its distinctiveness within the Austronesian language family (Hyman, 2008; Gordon, 2016).

Likewise, at the morphological level, the Nias language is one of the regional languages that has many affixes. The prefix {ma-} in “tunu” [tunu] ‘burn’ changes to “manunu” [manunu] ‘to burn’ which is categorized as a transitive verb. Likewise, the prefix {man-} in “sifa” became “manifa” [manifa] ‘kick’, while the prefix {fa-} in “gai” [gai] ‘fishhook’ which is categorized as a noun forms a new word to become “fagai” [fagai] ‘fishing’ which is a verb category. These affixation processes illustrate the role of morphological derivation in forming verbs and altering lexical categories, reflecting systematic patterns of word formation commonly discussed in morphological theory (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Spencer, 1991).

Nias language also has a uniqueness in sentence construction. It has a VOS pattern and SVO pattern. A sentence that has a VOS pattern sentence beginning with the verb “molokhoi” ‘to dry’; a transitive verb followed by the object “nukha” ‘cloth’ and followed by the subject “ia” ‘she/he’ and the adverb of place “ba newali nomo” in the yard. Meanwhile, a sentence with an SVO pattern; sentence that begin with the subject “ya’ira” ‘they’, then followed by the verb “obö” ‘cut’ and followed by the object “tölanohi” ‘coconut tree’ and the adverb of time “menewi” ‘yesterday’ (Brown, 2001; Gulo, 2014; Nazara, 2019). The VOS structure is a sentence that begins with the use of a verb such as clause, while the SVO structure is a structure that begins with the use of a subject such as a clause (Comrie, 1989; Dryer, 2013; Dixon, 2012).

While these studies highlight the phonological, morphological, and syntactic uniqueness of the Nias language, they remain largely descriptive and do not address how grammatical structures interact with semantic roles at the clause level. In particular, the analysis of verbal arguments, such as how subjects and objects function semantically as agents, patients, or experiencers, has not been thoroughly explored. Understanding this relationship is essential for explaining how meaning is constructed and interpreted in Nias sentences, especially given its flexible word order patterns of VOS and SVO. Therefore, a more in-depth investigation into the grammatical structure and semantic role alignment of verbal arguments is necessary. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the grammatical form of verbs, the function of verbs and the role of arguments for verbs in South Nias Language.

2. Literature review

This section discusses previous studies that are related to the current research. The findings from these earlier studies serve as the theoretical foundation for the present study. Mahsun (1995) states that previous research forms the basis for knowledge sharing and the development of science. Therefore, several studies on syntactic typology such as morphology, semantics, morphosyntax, and language structure, both in the Nias language and in other languages have been conducted. These include research by Halawa et al. (1983) on the structure of the Nias language; Brown (2001) on the grammar of South Nias; Crysmann (2009) on “Deriving Superficial Ergativity in Nias”; Yoder (2010) on phonological features in Nias; and Kasni (2012) on clause combining strategies in the Waijewa dialect of the Sumba language. Other studies include Gulo

(2014), which describes the uniqueness of the Nias language; Marulafau (2018) on verbal characteristics in Nias; Polili et al. (2018) on the genetic relationship of the Nias language; Zagötö (2018) on language variation in Nias; Ndruru (2019) on the analysis of semantic roles of arguments in Nias; and Nazara (2019) on syntactic representation in Nias. All of these previous studies are elaborated below.

Research on the Nias language has previously been conducted by Halawa et al. (1983) focusing on its structure. This study describes the phonology, morphology, and sentence forms of the Nias language. However, the presentation of data in this study needs improvement, particularly in the syllable writing system, which still contains inaccuracies. Furthermore, in the morphological analysis discussed in this study, especially regarding the prefix {ma}, it needs to be reconsidered because the prefix {ma} is not an affix that changes word meaning. Instead, the prefix {ma} functions as a past marker aspect in South Nias clauses, for example: *ma-i-halö zekhula andre* [PERF-3T-take MUT-coconut DET] ‘he has taken the coconut’. Moreover, the prefix {ma} in Nias is generally categorized as a pronominal person marker, for example: *ma-halö* [1Je-take] ‘we take’. In addition, almost all data presented in that study use North Nias, whereas the present study uses data from South Nias.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) focuses on “A Grammar of South Nias.” This study is well-structured and highly comprehensive. The aspects discussed include phonology, morphology, verbal clauses, and noun mutation. The emergence of Brown’s (2001) study opens opportunities for current researchers to analyze South Nias in terms of semantic roles of verbs as proposed by Dixon (2010b).

Subsequently, Crysmann (2009), in “Deriving Superficial Ergativity in Nias,” presents a purely typological study stating that Nias generally follows a nominative-accusative system. This research serves as a rebuttal and critique of Brown (2005). Crysmann’s study can be considered as mainly comparing Brown’s data with other datasets. Compared to the present study, it is clearly different, as this research focuses more on the analysis of verb functions and semantic roles in South Nias using Dixon’s (2010a) framework, also considering Artawa & Jufrizal (2018) and Kroeger (2005).

In addition to the studies above, there is phonological research conducted by Yoder (2010), which analyzes prenasalization and the release of trilled consonants in Nias. This study examines specific sounds in Nias, such as the phoneme /mb/ realized as /ʙ/, for example *mbambatö* [ʙaʙatə] ‘in-law’, and “ndr” realized as /ɽ/, for example *ndraha* [ɽaha] ‘branch/twig’. Compared to the present study, this research differs significantly as it focuses on morphosyntactic analysis.

Another study was conducted by Kasni (2012) on clause combining strategies in the Wajewa dialect of Sumba. This dissertation research was conducted in Sumba. The previous study is related in terms of syntactic analysis; however, the present research is conducted in a different location, namely South Nias. Nevertheless, this earlier study serves as supporting material for analyzing verbs in South Nias.

Furthermore, Gulo (2014) describes the uniqueness of the Nias language. This study reveals unique features of Nias, particularly in phonological aspects. However, it

does not discuss grammatical structure or semantic roles of verbs. Even so, Gulo's findings support the present study on syntactic-typological analysis of South Nias.

Another study entitled "*Verbal Characteristics in Gunung Sitoli Dialect of Nias Language*" by Marulafau (2018) focuses solely on morphological processes in the Gunung Sitoli dialect. The data presentation in this study still contains many inaccuracies, particularly the use of the number "6" as a phonetic symbol for the vowel "ö." Additionally, the word *mahalö* 'taken' is presented as evidence that the word formation begins with the prefix {ma-}. In fact, the base form is *halö* 'take', and the element *ma* should not be considered a prefix, as its actual function is a realis pronominal marker that is proclitic. Therefore, the present research aims to reveal new insights by presenting empirical data so that such scientific writings can serve as reliable references. Moreover, previous studies did not address the semantic roles of verb arguments, which motivates the present study to analyze verbs in South Nias.

Furthermore, Polili et al. (2018) examined the genetic relationship of the Nias language using lexicostatistics and glottochronology. Overall, this study analyzes the relationships among the three dialects of Nias. In contrast, the present study focuses on grammatical structure, verb functions, and semantic roles in South Nias.

In the same year, Zagötö (2018) conducted research on language variation in Nias. This study specifically analyzes phonological and lexical differences across dialects and makes a significant contribution to the classification of the Nias language. The findings indicate that there are two languages in the Nias Islands: the northern variety known as "Li Niha Yöu" and the southern variety known as "Li Niha Raya." Thus, Zagötö's research provides strong support for the present study in examining South Nias (Li Niha Raya) within a morphosyntactic framework.

Subsequently, Ndruru (2019) analyzed clause structure and semantic roles in Nias, with the research conducted in Central Nias, while the present study is conducted in South Nias. Additionally, Nazara (2019b) conducted a dissertation on syntactic representation in the Nias language. Although both studies share a focus on syntactic analysis, they differ in terms of data and research location. Nazara's study was conducted in Nias Regency, whereas the present study is conducted in South Nias Regency. Nevertheless, Nazara's research serves as supporting material for analyzing verbs in South Nias.

Based on the studies described above, it can be concluded that the present research shares similarities with previous studies in terms of the research object or topic, namely syntactic analysis of the Nias language. However, this study is fundamentally different from earlier research, as in-depth studies on grammatical typology (morphosyntax), particularly in South Nias, have not yet been conducted. Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that South Nias is not merely a dialect but a distinct language with unique features in both lexical and grammatical structures. Therefore, this research aims to reveal the grammatical structure, functions, and semantic roles of verb arguments in South Nias, which constitute the main focus of this study.

3. Research Method

This study was designed in a qualitative approach by using descriptive method. The data in this study were sourced from 16 informants who meet the criteria (Zaim, 2014). Informants consisting of 16 people are representatives from every village in the Telukdalam Subdistrict, namely 4 people as key informants (2 people from Nanowa Village and 2 people from Hiliganowo Village) and 12 others are supporting informants. The selection of informants was carried out intentionally (purposive sampling), selected based on several provisions, as mentioned above (Bungin, 2008). Data were collected through semi structured interview and observation. The data were analyzed using the distributional method (Sudaryanto, 2015), in which linguistic elements were examined based on their internal structural properties. This method enabled the identification of morphological processes such as affixation, as well as syntactic patterns related to argument structure (Sudaryanto, 2015).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Grammatical Form of Verbs in South Nias Language

In the process of analysing the grammatical form of the verb, it is examined at the morphological level. In general, grammatical words refer to 'words' which can be seen as a representation of a lexeme associated with certain morpho-syntactic elements, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. However, in this study only the grammatical forms of the verbs are examined. As explained in the previous section, verbs are the most important thing in a sentence because verbs can show actions and describe situations and can affect the semantic role of a clause. According to Crystal (2008), a verb refers to an element which can display morphological contrasts of tense, aspect, voice, mood, person and number. Then, the verb form is a linguistic form where the grammatical meaning is signified, and the grammatical device is a signifier (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). So, the verb form is a lingual form or a linguistic unit form that has syntactic and semantic functions. Next, the analysis of the forms of the South Nias language verbs describes the basic verbs and derived verbs. Verbs basic form that do not undergo morphological processes such as prefixes, suffixes, inserts and so on. In other words, the basic verb is a free morpheme (free morpheme) which is completely as a root word and does not undergo any morphological process. Furthermore, the basic form of South Nias Language is described below.

<i>a</i>	[ʔa]	'eat!'
<i>bokai</i>	[bokai]	'open!'
<i>chili</i>	[chili]	'throw!'
<i>duhö</i>	[duhö]	'close!'
<i>erai</i>	[erai]	'count!'
<i>förö</i>	[fərə]	'sleep!'
<i>faoso</i>	[faoso]	'wake up/rise up!'
<i>gili</i>	[gili]	'run over!'
<i>halö</i>	[halə]	'take!'

<i>inu</i>	[inu]	‘drink!’
<i>jojo</i>	[jojo]	‘eat (spend directly)!’
<i>ko’e</i>	[koʔe]	‘prying!’
<i>lulu</i>	[lulu]	‘hold out!’
<i>ra’u</i>	[raʔu]	‘catch!’
<i>sifa</i>	[sifa]	‘kick!’
<i>tataro</i>	[tataro]	‘sit down!’
<i>ohi</i>	[ʔohi]	‘chase!’
<i>ombanö</i>	[ɔbanə]	‘wash your hands!’

All the basic verbs above are the base form (base word) which is called the root. Root is the core of a word that cannot be reduced, without any affixes attached to it (Katamba, 1994). This basic form can be the core of a sentence or an imperative clause in South Nias Language as described below.

(5). *Ohi n-asu andre!*
Chase MUT-dog DET
‘Chase the dog!’

(6). *Faoso moroi ba naha-u!*
Wake up from LOC place-2TPOSS
‘Get up from your place!’

(7). *Gili manö manu andre!*
Run over just chicken DET
‘Just run over the chicken!’

Clause (5-7) are clauses formed by a basic verb and followed by a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase. It can be seen in clause (5) that the verb *ohi* ‘chase’ occupies the subject position and is followed by the noun “*nasu*” which mutates from the base form “*asu*” and is followed by a determiner to emphasize the object. At first glance, the argument that appears in this clause is not clear, but actually A acts as an AGENT. Then, clause (6) of the verb *faoso* ‘wake up’ which occupies the position as the subject is followed by the prepositional phrase “*moroi*” ‘from’. However, argument A that emerges from this clause requires a place/location statement, namely “*ba nahau*”, because without an explanation of the place, speech or construction of the clause is not acceptable in South Nias Language. In other words, the South Nias Language imperative sentence can also be followed by an adverb phrase. Next, clause (7) of the verb *gili* ‘run over’ which occupies the subject is followed by a noun phrase, namely “*manu*” ‘chicken’ acts as a patient and a determiner as an emphasis on the object being addressed. The word *manö* ‘just’ which comes after the basic verb form is a subtle/polite expression in the South Nias Language imperative sentence.

Derived verbs are verbs that are obtained from the morphological process in the form of merging free morphemes and bound morphemes, so as to form new verbs. In the process of analysing the derivative verbs of South Nias Language, they will

be described based on their classification division, including: affixed verbs, duplicated verbs, combined verbs or combinations of affixes, and compound verbs. It should be noted that there are several basic forms of words in the South Nias language which are bound stem. Stem is a root or part of a word that comes before any inflectional affix (Katamba, 1994), thus requiring the presence of affixes in the construction of the word, for example the root (-basö). The shape of this root can have a full meaning if it is attached to the prefix {a-} → abasö ‘wet’ or suffix {-i} at the end of the root word → basöi ‘dampen’. Consider some of basic forms of words that are bound or called the bound stem such as -bali-, -bini-, -boka-, -abasö-, -beto-, -gilo- and -hani-. The word form above is a bound root found in the South Nias language which requires a process of affixing at the beginning or at the end so that it forms the basis of a new word that has meaning, for example affixing the prefixes {te-}, {to-} and {a-} to the root above can form a word that is categorized as an intransitive verb. Consider the following affixing process.

Prefix	Bound root		New Form	Meaning
to- +	<i>bali</i>	→	<i>tobali</i>	‘capsized/upside down’
to- +	<i>bini</i>	→	<i>tobini</i>	‘hidden’
te- +	<i>boka</i>	→	<i>teboka</i>	‘open’
te- +	<i>gilo</i>	→	<i>tegilo</i>	‘swayed’
a- +	<i>basö</i>	→	<i>abasö</i>	‘wet’
a- +	<i>beto</i>	→	<i>abeto</i>	‘pregnant’
a- +	<i>hani</i>	→	<i>ahani</i>	‘drift/float off’

Some of the new word forms obtained from the affixing process above can function as subject in the following clause.

(8). *Tobali göfa-ra börö mbade sebua*
Upside down ship-3JPOSS due to storm big
‘Their ship capsized in a big storm’

(9). *Ma-teboka golu-ra me i-lau ani*
Past- opened door-3JPOSS when 3T-occurs wind
‘Their doors open when the wind blows’

(10). *Ahani n-ukha-nia ba luaha*
Drifting MUT-fabric-3TPOSS PREP river
‘Her clothes drifted in the river’

In addition to the process of adding prefixes that can be done to the root of the word above, there are also several types of suffixes that can be attached to the end of the word, such as the suffixes {-ö}, {-i}, {-gö} and {-si} which can form a new words that are categorized as transitive verbs, as described below.

Bound root	Suffix			New Form	Meaning
<i>bali</i>	+	-ö	→	<i>bali'ö</i>	'reverse'
<i>bini</i>	+	-ö	→	<i>bini'ö</i>	'hide'
<i>boka</i>	+	-i	→	<i>bokai</i>	'open'
<i>basö</i>	+	-i	→	<i>basöi</i>	'wet'
<i>gilo</i>	+	-gö	→	<i>gilogö</i>	'shake'
<i>hani</i>	+	-gö	→	<i>hanigö</i>	'make drift'
<i>betö</i>	+	-si	→	<i>betosi</i>	'make pregnant'

The new word forms obtained from the process of adding the suffix above can be seen in the following clause.

(11). *I-bini'ö gowi ba naha n-awu*
3T-hiding potato PREP place MUT-ash (kitchen)
'He hid potatoes in the kitchen'

(12). *I-basöi mbaru n-ina-nia*
3T-wetting MUT-shirt MUT-mother-3TPOSS
'He wets his mother's clothes'

(13). *I-gilogö mbatu sebua*
3T-shake rock big
'He shook a boulder'

(14). *I-betosi n-ono alawe Votre*
3T-impregnates MUT-child girl Votre
'Votre impregnates daughter'

Based on the description described above, it can be concluded that the grammatical form of South Nias Language verbs is not only in the root form which can be the core of the imperative clause, but there is also a bound stem which requires the presence of an affix process at the beginning, middle and end.

4.2 Function of Verbs in South Nias Language

In simple terms, verb is the core or predicate of a clause, verb a serves as the core of an imperative sentence, and verbs also function to encode events such as in a clause. However, the function of the verb is not only that but can also affect the syntactic-semantic role of a clause. A verb largely determines the role of an argument in a clause. This is because its transitive nature (verb) affects the language's grammatical alliance system (the relationship between an intransitive verb clause and a transitive verb clause), for example an intransitive verb clause, S is the only argument present, while a transitive verb clause, A is an argument that present as an agent (actor).

In general, there are three types of verbs that are related to the sentence they form, namely intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, and semi transitive verbs (Dixon, 2010). Intransitive verbs are verbs that can stand alone without requiring an object. However, in the clause, intransitive verbs involve at least one core argument, namely S which has a semantic role as agent or patient. The following is a list of intransitive verbs in South Nias Language.

Intransitive Verbs	Pronunciation	Meaning
<i>ahani</i>	[ahani]	‘drift’
<i>anakhö</i>	[anakhə]	‘tired’
<i>fagoi</i>	[fagoi]	‘run’
<i>mofanö</i>	[mofanə]	‘go’
<i>mörö</i>	[mərə]	‘sleep’
<i>mosindro</i>	[mosisiðo]	‘stand up’
<i>motataro</i>	[motataro]	‘sit’

The semantic role of the intransitive verbs above can be well recognized if they are used in clauses, such as the following.

(15). *Ahani n-ukha*
Drift MUT-fabric
‘Fabric (S) drifts away’

(16). *Fagoi ia*
Run 3T
‘He (S) ran’

(17). *Mofanö ira*
Go 3T
‘They (S) left’

The construction of the clause (15-17) above uses the VO (Verb-Object) formula. All clauses only involve one argument, such as clause (15) the subject is filled by the verb *ahani* ‘to drift’ and the object is *nukha* ‘fabric’. The only argument S present acts as the patient, while clauses (16)-(17) argument S that is present acts as the agent. In addition to intransitive verb types, there are also core extension intransitive verbs. This core extension has a large effect on the number of arguments present in the clause. One way to find out the number of core arguments of a clause is to identify the predicate of a clause (Dixon, 2012). In English there is a core expansion intransitive verb, namely *stay*, the argument S is not the only one present, but requires location information. This is called the expansion of the nucleus which is symbolized by E (Expanded). The South Nias language also has several core expansion intransitive verbs, as described below.

toröi [torəi] 'stay'
möi [məi] 'go'

The following is described into clauses to find out the number of core arguments that are present in core expansion intransitive verbs.

(18). *Toröi ia ba Bali*
Only 3T PREP Location
'He (S) lives in Bali (E)'

(19). *Möi ia ba Jakarta*
Go 3T PREP Location
'He (S) went to Jakarta (E)'

Clause (18) is classified as a core expansion intransitive verb because it requires two core arguments, namely S (he) as argument-1 and E (Location) argument-2. Adverbs of location are needed to give meaning to the sentence. The basic form of the word *toröi* 'stay' is a root form that has the full meaning without experiencing the prefix {to-}. Likewise, clause (19) of argument S, which is present, turns out to have an extension of argument E (dative). Verb *möi* 'go' really needs information on the meaning of the sentence.

In simple terms, transitive verbs are forms of verbs that require an object in the sentence. In other words, a transitive verb is a verb that requires two arguments to be present in the clause, namely the agent and the patient. The function of transitive verbs in a clause not only requires an object but also affects the semantic role of a clause. The following describes some transitive verbs with prefix {maN} in South Nias Language.

Tran-Verbs of the prefix {maN}	Pronunciation	Meaning
<i>manaba</i>	[manaba]	'cut'
<i>manura</i>	[manura]	'write'
<i>manifest</i>	[manifa]	'kick'
<i>molohi</i>	[molohi]	'chase'

The basic form of the transitive verb above is obtained from the prefix {maN}. The form of this verb has an effect on the construction of a clause with a VOS pattern, as described below.

(20). *Manaba eu n-ama-gu*
Cutting wood MUT-father-1TPOSS
'My father (A) chops wood (O)'

(21). *Manura sura-ia*
Write letter-3T
'He (S) wrote a letter (O)'

As explained in the previous section that transitive verbs affect the number of arguments, at least two must be present in every clause that is formed. In addition, there are also types of core expansion transitive verbs that affect the number of arguments needed in each clause, namely arguments A, O and E, extensions of argument O. Pay attention to the following form of transitive verbs.

<i>be'e</i>	[beʔe]	'give'
<i>oroma'ö</i>	[oroma]	'show'
<i>ombakha'ö</i>	[obakhʔə]	'tell'
<i>böji</i>	[bəji]	'hit'
<i>tou'ö</i>	[touʔə]	'put'
<i>saigö</i>	[saiʔə]	'hook'

Furthermore, the basic form of the core expansion transitive verb above is described into a clause with a SOV pattern to indicate the number of arguments that are present in the clause.

(22). *I-be'e mböra khö zilumana*
3T-give rice to poor people
'He (A) gives rice (O) to a poor person (beggar) (E)'

(23). *I-böji n-akhi-nia ue*
3T-hit MUT-sister-3TPOSS rattan
'He (A) hit his sister (O) (with) rattan (E)'

(24). *La-tou'ö gö'ö ba meja*
3J-put food PREP table
'They (A) put food (O) on the table (E)'

Clauses (22)-(24) are clauses formed by transitive verbs with core expansion where there are not only two but three arguments, such as clause (23) argument A (he) has a semantic role as Agent (actor) and O (sister) as a patient. Argument O is the direct object, while E (rattan) is the instrument or tool used by the actor. Likewise, the other clause has three arguments.

The findings of this study show that verbs in South Nias language function as the central element of clause construction, determining both syntactic structure and semantic role distribution. The grammatical behavior of verbs is closely related to their morphological form and transitivity, which influence the number and type of arguments in a clause. Three main verb types are identified, each associated with distinct argument structures involving roles such as agent, patient, and additional elements like location or instrument. Furthermore, morphological processes, especially affixation, play an important role in shaping clause patterns and argument realization, including variations such as VOS and SOV structures. The relationship between syntactic functions and semantic roles is dynamic, as it depends on verb type, clause structure, and context.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the grammatical forms of the South Nias language verbs have two forms, namely basic verbs (free morphem) and derived verbs. The basic form of the South Nias language verb consists of a root form and a bound root form. The productivity form of transitive and intransitive verbs is affected by the morphology such as prefixes, suffixes, reduplication process. Several types of prefixes were found to function as marker i.e: prefix {a-} which is attached to the basic form, and semantically forms a passive meaning. Prefixes {fa-}, {fe-}, {f-}, and {fo-} form causative verbs. Sela in the prefix {te-} and {to} form verbs resultatif. Likewise, some kind of suffix forming causative verbs such as suffixes {-i}, {o}, {-fi}, {-ni}, {-SI}, {-khi}, {-mi}, {- Gö}, {-I'ö}, {-content} and {-this}. Then, the function of the South Nias Language verb can be the core of the imperative clause. In addition, according to the transitivity nature of South Nias Language verbs, they can form intransitive clauses which generally have one argument, namely S which acts as an Agent (actor) such as the words me'e 'cry', mosindro 'standing', miwo 'crow', and döröfö 'sleep'. In addition, there are core expansion intransitive verbs such as toröi 'stay' and möi 'go'. The two words have two arguments, namely S which acts as an Agent (actor) and E (Expanded core argument). Transitive verbs have two arguments namely A and O such as taba 'cut', sura 'writes', sifa 'kick' and core expansion transitive verbs which have three arguments namely A, O, and E (Expanded core argument) such as be'e 'give', oroma'ö 'show', böji 'hirt', tou'ö 'put', saigö 'hook'. Likewise, the semantic role of verb arguments obtained from the analysis of the semantic type of verbs, namely the A verb South Nias Language argument can have the semantic roles of agent, donor, speaker, thinker, observer, and experiencer, while the argument of the South Nias Language verb O can have a semantic role of target, gif, greeting, thought, impression and stimulus.

Despite providing important insights into the grammatical structure of verbs and semantic role alignment in South Nias language, this study has a limitation, particularly in that the data were obtained from a relatively limited number of informants within a specific geographical area, namely Telukdalam Subdistrict, which may not fully represent the broader linguistic variation across all South Nias communities. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of data collection by involving a larger and more diverse group of speakers from different regions of South Nias in order to capture dialectal and sociolinguistic variation more comprehensively.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the writing of this scientific article.

Authors' contribution

The author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study.

The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript

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