



# Tri-dimensional Social Praxis in the Metaphor of Ke-afo-an in Central Nias Dialect

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**Abstract.** The Nias language that records the richness of Nias culture is ke-afo-an. ke-afo-an is a mixture of five entities originating from nature or the environment that are often used as snacks or cigarettes by residents who live in the geographical area of the Nias archipelago. The five main afo-an entities are fino (betel nut), gambe (gambir leaf), becu (lime), tawuo (betel), and bako (tobacco). The aim of this research is to know the Tridimensional Social Praxis in the metaphor of Ke-afo-an in Central Nias Dialect. This research was designed with a mixed methods research approach (qualitative and quantitative). The result shows the social praxis dimension of the afo-an lexicon influences the Central Nias dialect in Lahusa 1. The biological dimension is shown through the persistence of the actual reference of each lexicon. The ideological dimension refers to the lexicon used in the metaphor for the symbol of reference to the concept referred to in a situation. Finally, the sociological dimension is shown through the use of the afo-an lexicon in delivering a certain concept by speakers and listeners of Central Nias Language in the village of Lahusa 1.

**Keywords:** Nias Language · culture · The biological

## 1 Introduction

Humans will die without oxygen, as well as humans will die without language and environment [1]. It is believed that this analogy is not an exaggeration when referring to the functions of language, which are essential in the survival of human life in this world. These functions include social functions, cultural functions, and ecological functions. Based on social functions, language is used as a tool to interact with other human beings [2]. Furthermore, in terms of cultural functions, language is used as a means of cultural preservation from one generation to the next because it can store cultural values, including ethics and morals that are stored in various forms of language, including vocabulary, rhymes, folklore, literature, legends, traditions—word of mouth and expression. At the same time, the ecological function is to protect the environment. This ecological function is assumed to be born from the impact of language that can influence human behaviour and views, including the environment itself [3]. This assumption is emphasized by the view that language is not only a tool to interact with other humans but also to talk about the world, both the external world (inanimate objects, living things, and events) and the

world within humans (thoughts, beliefs, and feelings). Another opinion supporting this assumption is that language can contribute to preserving the environment [1]. In addition to the crucial function of language itself, the existence of language is believed to precede the presence of science [4]. The two descriptions of these statements are at least a strong reason for the language being used as an exciting and crucial object to research.

Ecolinguistics is a new interdisciplinary science that examines the reciprocal correlation between language and the environment. According to Mbetete (2013), the close correlation of language with the environment can be described by two terms, namely language environment (language ecology) and environmental language (ecological language) [5]. Environmental language records and constructs the reality of the language environment. For example, green language (green speak) for the land environment and blue language (blue speak) for the marine environment. That is, the human environment of speakers of a particular language can determine the richness of the human language lexicon of its speakers.

Meanwhile, the language environment is the environment or place where the language lives, such as humans, the natural environment, and the social environment of language [6]. For example, the Balinese language environment, ecologically, clearly exists on the island of Bali and in several other transmigration enclaves in various places. Furthermore, language functions as an instrument representing the reality of life in the socio-cultural and natural environment (Mbetete, 2013), while the environment contributes to the richness of the lexicon of a language speaker [7]. In addition, Sidu (2017) also explained that language could have positive and negative implications or other terms, namely constructive and destructive [8, 9]. It is said to have positive or constructive implications if the use of language aims to preserve the environment. For example, a word in a language that invites people to reduce plastic waste and a ban on throwing garbage in the sea and rivers. On the other hand, it is said to have negative implications if it is terrible for the environment. Apart from being a response to criticism from other sciences, ecolinguistics is also a language's sensitivity to the environment, which humans themselves are increasingly damaging.

The Nias language, also known as Li Niha, is one of the regional languages belonging to the Polynesian, Austronesian Malay language family which is actively used by the people of Nias [10]. As a minor language or minor language, it must receive special attention from various groups, including linguists and especially their heirs. The concern in question is scientific research on regional languages. This regional language research is intended as a response to a critical issue in the world of language education, namely the extinction of regional languages. Environmental changes are one of the factors that threaten the existence of regional languages towards extinction.

The Nias language that records the richness of Nias culture is ke-afo-an. ke-afo-an is a mixture of five entities originating from nature or the environment that are often used as snacks or cigarettes by residents who live in the geographical area of the Nias archipelago. The five main afo-an entities are fino (betel nut), gambe (gambir leaf), becuca (lime), tawuo (betel), and bako (tobacco). This afo-an is a cultural heritage of the ancestors of the Nias people. Furthermore, ke-afo-an has an important meaning in Nias culture such as in welcoming guests and in wedding processions. However, along with the times, the existence of afo's began to be eroded by the modern lifestyle. Some of

the main factors are the dominance of the existence of cigarettes and the complexity of their implementation at the wedding ceremony. The erosion of this afo tradition is assumed to have an impact on the environment and language. The negative impact on the environment is the loss of the biological existence of the natural afo material and with the loss of that existence there will be a shift in the Nias language lexicon which then threatens the existence of the Nias language. Responding to the phenomenon of cultural shift towards afo-ness and knowing that there is a reciprocal correlation between language and the environment, afo-an research in ecolinguistic studies is considered an appropriate and useful action to be researched.

Ke-afo-an atau afo is a form of concoction of fino 'pinang', tawuo 'sirih', gambe 'gambir leaf', becuca 'limestone', and mbako 'tobacco' [11]. As quoted from Liputan6.com, Afo has long been known by people in Indonesia, especially people from the islands of Java, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara, Papua and Nias. For the people of Nias, usually afo can be interpreted as a form of candy or traditional cigarettes. In addition, afo is also usually used as an important treat for guests who come to the island of Nias. Another thing, afo is also used in traditional wedding ceremonies in Nias. In short, because of its inherent in the people of Nias, afo is considered to have cultural values. The purpose of this research is to know the Tridimensional Social Praxis in the metaphor of Ke-afo-an in Central Nias Dialect.

## 2 Method

This research was designed with a mixed methods research approach (qualitative and quantitative). Mixed research combines qualitative and quantitative research [12]. This approach was chosen because it can answer the problem formulation that has been formulated in the previous introduction. A qualitative approach is used to answer the first, second, and third problem formulations, and a quantitative approach is needed to answer the fourth problem formulation.

This study uses a sequential mixed method strategy (sequential exploratory method). In this case, qualitative methods are used first and then followed by quantitative methods. Quantitative methods are used to strengthen the results of previous qualitative research.

## 3 Result and Discussion

The sociological dimension is how we regulate relationships with the natural environment, which can be found through language in expressions/conversations. This sociological dimension relates to the language background used by the community in regulating the relationship between one individual and another. The ideological dimension shows individual relationships with mental cognitive, and collective, including the treasures of lexicon knowledge and expressions, speech or discourse, and physical systems in the form of material elements, both biotic and abiotic, such as water and air. Each of these cognitive knowledge has an ideological existence for the language community, which can be identified through the production and use of language by the language community itself. While the biological dimension is about our relationship or existence biologically side by side with other species, both living and non-living things. The people who speak

Central Nias Dialect in Lahusa 1 are close to the ke-afo-an tradition. This can be evidenced by several ecolexicon ke-afo-an. However, it should be emphasized that only some ecolexicons can be described in terms of social praxis, but only those that are categorized as nouns and appear in metaphors. In this section, what is explained is only the dimensions of the social praxis of the afo-an contained in the metaphor. Metaphors that use the ke-afo-an lexicon are as follows:

1. Hulo tome so-fano fatua olölö nafo  
Like a guest Pref-go before the nutmeg.  
'Like a guest who leaves before the nutmeg is crushed'  
Meaning:  
'Guests who like to leave early before the hosts allow'

This metaphorical sentence shows that the relationship between speakers of the Central Nias Dialect and mental cognitive is still well maintained. This relationship is called the ideological dimension. Then, in the sociological dimension, this metaphor is still used in the conversations of Central Nias Dialect speakers. This metaphor describes a situation that takes place in a short time. Finally, in the biological dimension, it can be explained that the kinang entity still exists today, and the betel nut activities are still being carried out.

Based on the biological dimension, the kinang entity exists and is often used in the traditions of the Lahusa 1 community for various purposes, as described previously. Furthermore, by seeing the biological entity of kinang, chewing kinang, and feeling kinang, the people of Lahusa 1 begin to know that it takes several minutes to crush kinang. This awareness makes speakers of the Central Dialect of the Nias Language use a metaphor to symbolize a short tempo.

2. U-bici afo-u dania  
Pron Per PT- mix kinang-pron Post later  
'I mix betel for you later'  
Meaning:  
'I'll hit you later'

The metaphor which reads ubici afou dania or which in Indonesian means 'I will mix kinang for you' also contains an afo-an lexicon because of the use of the word afo in this metaphor. This metaphor shows that there is a harmonious relationship between speakers of the Central Nias language and the biotic elements of afo'kinang' so that it saves the cognitive wealth in the form of this metaphor. This metaphor is still used in daily conversations between speakers of the Central Dialect of Nias Language, especially to describe one person's threat to another. Thus, the sociological dimension is declared positive or harmonious. The biological dimension can also be declared positive because the kinang entity still exists and the betel nut is still practiced today. This positive biological dimension helps the harmony of the other dimensions.

3. Ijo gö-u bako  
It's food- Pron Pos tobacco

‘That’s tobacco for you’

Meaning:

‘That’s the payoff for you’

One of the compositions of this metaphor is the word *bako* “tobacco.” Existence, The existence of this word has become evident that this metaphor is related to the *afo*-an lexicon. The form of this metaphor is the wealth of the BNDT-speaking community lexicon, and therefore its ideological dimension is stated to be positive or harmonious. Furthermore, based on information from informants, this metaphor is still used in everyday conversation. This metaphor describes the indirect meaning of “That’s your reward.” Its use in daily conversation by speakers of the Central Nias language is a strong reason that the sociological dimension is still positive. Finally, in terms of the biological dimension, it can be said to be positive because the *Bako* entity still exists today.

4. *Olölö nafo nano munganga, fefu göna nano mu’a, awai’i jilö taya ha taromali.*  
Crushed nutmeg if you chew it, everything gets hit if you eat it, but it doesn’t just disappear, just the word.  
“Kinang must be crushed when chewed, all splattered when eaten but only one that is eternal, namely the word”  
Meaning:  
Good deeds are more lasting than any food.

Biologically, the *nafo* entity can still be seen in *Lahusa 1*. Ideologically, the *nafo* is still recorded in the memory of the Central Nias dialect speakers. This metaphor can prove this. The ideological relationship can be explained that the *nafo* that has been chewed will be thrown away, but the mind of a person with us will never be forgotten, like the eternal word of God. Sociologically, this metaphor is often used in women’s marriage ceremonies in *Lahusa 1 Village*. Apart from the proposal procession, someone can also use this metaphor when they want an expert or teacher to teach a non-food science or skill that is quickly depleted. Thus it can be concluded that the ideological, sociological, and biological dimensions are harmonious.

5. *Hulö so-lalau sinasa, teta manawuli ia ba mborota-nia.*  
Like Pref-weaving pandan leaves, he keeps coming back at first.  
‘Like a person weaving pandan leaves, always returns to the beginning of the weaving’  
Meaning:  
‘Problem solving must remain based on the root cause’

Biologically, *sinasa*, or in Indonesian, a kind of pandan leaf, is one of the materials used to weave *napo* balls. However, *Sinasa* has become rare and can even be said to be extinct in *Lahusa 1*. This assumption is based on the absence of *nafo* ball craftsmen or weavers in *Lahusa 1 Village* and the difficulty in obtaining the entity. Based on this fact, it can be explained that the biological dimensions are not harmonious. Furthermore, although the biological relationship is not harmonious, the ideological dimension is still harmonious. This statement is evidenced by the presence of the word *sinasa* in this

metaphor. Based on the sociological dimension, this metaphor is often used to emphasize to a person or group of people that solving problems must always be based on the root of the problem and not something else unrelated to the root of the problem. This usage proves that the sociological dimension is still maintained.

6. Hulö passesö weathered value, afusi yawa dete ba töla jimate bakha nösi.  
 Like a limestone pref-climbing grave, white on the surface but the bones of the dead inside.  
 ‘Like a grave covered in chalk, the surface is white but it is filled with bones’.  
 Meaning:  
 “He who says good but his heart always intends evil”

In a sociological context, this metaphor is intended for people who always say good things in speaking but always have bad intentions toward others. This metaphor has something to do with the afo-an lexicon because it uses the word becu, which is the material used in the afo-an tradition. The existence of the word becu is proof that the afo-an tradition has contributed to the lexicon product for speakers of Central Nias Dialect in Lahusa 1. This product is called the wealth of the lexicon in the ideological dimension. Finally, it was explained that his biological harmony with the speakers of the Central Nias dialect is still maintained because the entity still exists today.

7. Hulö dawuo danö geu, mehönö lafajawa mehönö manawuli ia tou.  
 Like a betel nut, a thousand times Pref V-raised a thousand times he came back down  
 Like betel danö geu, a thousand times it is lifted up a thousand times and it also spreads downwards.  
 Meaning:  
 People who have difficulty developing or progressing even though they have often been helped optimally.

The existence of the words dawuo danö geu in this metaphorical sentence proves there is harmony between speakers of the Central Nias language in Lahusa 1 and the afo-an tradition. This metaphorical sentence also shows a harmonious relationship in the ideological dimension between the speaker and the dawuo danö geu. Furthermore, this metaphor is still heard and used in conversations between speakers of the Central Dialect of the Nias Language to describe someone who has difficulty progressing even though he has often been helped to achieve maximum welfare. The use of this metaphor is the reason that the sociological dimension is still harmonious. Finally, the biological dimension is less harmonious. The difficulty of obtaining the entity is one of the strong reasons for this statement.

8. Hulö li wadela saekhu tou  
 Like the sound of Pref- cerana falling down  
 ‘like the sound of a falling cerana’  
 Meaning:  
 ‘a punch that sounds like a knock’

The word related to the afo-an tradition in this metaphor is wadela. Biologically, wadela can be described like the previous description: a container for storing bako, becuca, and gambe in the betel nut tradition. So far, the wadela entity still exists even though there are changes in the raw material for making it, which used to be made of wood. Now wadela can be in the form of a used balm container. Thus, it can be concluded that the biological dimensions are harmonious.

Furthermore, the presence of the word wadela in this metaphor is an indication that the ideological dimension is also harmonious. In this metaphor, the sound of a falling wadela is used to describe a knocking sound produced by a hand blow. Therefore, the sound of this metaphor in everyday conversation shows that its sociological dimension is harmonious.

9. Hulö bako si faoma wa'aukhu  
 Like hot tobacco  
 'Like the same hot tobacco'  
 Meaning:  
 'Both sides who are equally strong or smart.'

This metaphor contains the word bako, which is one of the additional ingredients used in the afo-an tradition. The existence of the word bako in this metaphor shows that there is harmony between the speaker and the afo-an tradition in the ideological dimension. In the sociological dimension, this metaphor is often used to describe two people or groups of people who are equally strong or smart in a debate or competition. In addition, the Bako entity is also used by speakers of the Central Dialect of the Nias Language to be traded. The use of bako in this metaphor can be used as evidence that the sociological dimension is still harmonious. Finally, from the biological dimension, it can be explained that the Bako entity is still available in Lahusa 1 Village, so it can be said that the biological dimension is still maintained.

## 4 Conclusion

The social praxis dimension of the afo-an lexicon influences the Central Nias dialect in Lahusa 1. The biological dimension is shown through the persistence of the actual reference of each lexicon. The ideological dimension refers to the lexicon used in the metaphor for the symbol of reference to the concept referred to in a situation. Finally, the sociological dimension is shown through the use of the afo-an lexicon in delivering a certain concept by speakers and listeners of Central Nias Language in the village of Lahusa 1.

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