THE MEANING OF THE WORD *YADUHU* IN NIAS LANGUAGE: ANTHROPOLINGUISTICS STUDY

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ABSTRAK

Yaduhu is a Nias language term used to translate the word "amen" in prayer. A preliminary study conducted by researchers reveals that all translations of the Lord's Prayer in the 5 (five) dominant regional languages of North Sumatra Province—specifically, Batak Toba, Batak Karo, Batak Simalungun, Mandailing, dan Pakpak Daeri — render "amen" as "amen." Uniquely, Nias is the sole language among these that employs a different term, *yaduhu*, instead of the word amen. This research aims to delineate the meaning of *yaduhu* and explore the cultural context that led to its adoption as the translation of "amen" in Nias liturgical practice. This study is a qualitative study, utilizing an anthropolinguistics approach. Data collection was conducted through interviews and literature study. The data analysis process comprised three stages: 1) data reduction, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that Christianity's introduction to Nias Island occurred with the arrival of the German missionary whose name is Lodewick Denninger, on September 27, 1865. Subsequently, the work of Denninger was continued by Wilhelm Heinrich Sundermann. Sundermann dedicated the period from 1849 to 1919 to translating the Bible into the Nias language, followed by the publishing a Nias dictionary and grammar. In his translation of amen, Sundermann opted for *yaduhu*, a term semantically equivalent to "amen," conveying affirmation and confirmation within the prayer context and serving as an expression of faith. Furthermore, the Nias language's characteristic of consistently concluding words with a vowel sound presented a phonological challenge with the word "amen." Its pronunciation as "ami" would be unavoidable, yet "ami" also carries the meaning of "delicious." Consequently, *yaduhu* was selected, aligning with both the cultural and linguistic nuances of the Nias language. It is recommended that *yaduhu* be retained in Nias language prayers to preserve the distinctiveness and identity of the Nias language.

Keywords: *Yaduhu, Amen, Anthropolinguistic*

ABSTRAK

Yaduhu adalah istilah dalam bahasa Nias yang digunakan untuk menerjemahkan kata "amen" dalam doa. Berdasarkan studi pendahuluan yang dilakukan oleh para peneliti dapat dijelaskan bahwa semua terjemahan Doa Bapa Kami dalam 5 (lima) bahasa daerah dominan di Provinsi Sumatera Utara—yaitu, Batak Toba, Batak Karo, Batak Simalungun, Mandailing, dan Pakpak Dairi—menerjemahkan kata "amin" sebagai "amin." Uniknya, Nias adalah satu-satunya bahasa di antara bahasa-bahasa yang dimiliki Sumatera Utara yang menggunakan istilah yang berbeda, yaitu "yaduhu", alih-alih kata "amin". Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan makna yaduhu dan mengeksplorasi konteks budaya yang menyebabkan adopsi kata yaduhu sebagai terjemahan "amin" dalam praktik liturgi orang Nias. Studi ini merupakan penelitan kualitatif, dengan pendekatan antropolinguistik. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan analisis dokumen. Proses analisis data terdiri dari tiga tahap: 1) reduksi data, 2) penyajian data, dan 3) penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Berdasarkan penelitian dapat dikatakan bahwa masuknya agama Kristen ke Pulau Nias ketika seorang misionaris Jerman yang bernama Lodewick Denninger datang ke Pulau Nias pada tanggal 27 September 1865. Selanjutnya, apa yang telah dilakukan Denninger dilanjutkan oleh Wilhelm Heinrich Sundermann. Sundermann mendedikasikan dirinya periode dari tahun 1849 hingga 1919 untuk menerjemahkan Alkitab ke dalam bahasa Nias, yang diikuti dengan penerbitan kamus dan tata bahasa Nias. Dalam terjemahannya untuk kata amin, Sundermann memilih kata yaduhu, sebuah kata yang secara semantik setara dengan kata amin, yang menyampaikan penegasan dan konfirmasi dalam konteks doa dan berfungsi sebagai ekspresi iman. Lebih lanjut, karakteristik bahasa Nias yang secara konsisten mengakhiri kata dengan bunyi vokal menghadirkan tantangan fonologis dengan kata amin. Sehingga pelafalan kata amin kemungkinan dibaca dengan pelafalan ami hal tersebut sulit dihindari, sementara kata ami memiliki arti kata enak. Pada akhirnya, kata yaduhu dipilih, karena kata tersebut selaras dengan nuansa budaya dan linguistik bahasa Nias. Direkomendasikan agar yaduhu tetap dipertahankan dalam doa berbahasa Nias untuk melestarikan kekhasan dan identitas bahasa Nias.

Kata kunci: *Yaduhu, Amin, Anthropolinguistik*

INTRODUCTION

Nias Island, an integral part of North Sumatra province, is strategically located to the west of Sumatra's mainland. The Nias language presents a wealth of unique linguistic phenomena, many of which warrant more in-depth investigation. This particular study examines one such intriguing aspect: the term *Yaduhu*. While "amen" is consistently retained in the translations of the Lord's Prayer across the five dominant

regional languages of North Sumatra Province—namely, Batak Toba, Batak Karo, Batak Simalungun, Mandailing, and Pakpak Daeri—preliminary findings indicate that the Nias language stands in contradistinction to this prevailing pattern, utilizing *yaduhu* as its alternative. This distinction is further detailed in the subsequent table.

Table 1: The Lord's Prayer in five dominant regional languages of North Sumatra Province
(comparing with Nias Language)

Batak Toba Language	Batak Karo Language
Ale Ama nami na di banua ginjang.	*O Bapa kami si i Surga.*
Sai pinarbadia ma goar-Mu.	*Kam kap Dibata Si Tonggal.*
Sai ro ma harajaon-Mu.	*Kam kap Raja kami.*
Sai saut ma lomo ni rohaM di banua tonga on songon	*Kam kap si erkuasa i doni janah sura-SuraNdu seh*
na di banua ginjang.	*kerina bali ras i surga.*
Lehon ma tu hami sadari on hangoluan sianari.	*Bereken min man kami nakan cukup i bas wari si*
Sesa ma dosa nami songon panesanami di dosa ni	*sendah enda.*
dongan na mardosa tu hami.	*Alemi min salah kami bagi ialemi kami salah kalak*
Unang hami togihon tu pangunjunan.	*kempak kami.*
Palua ma hami sian pangago.	*Ola bere bene kiniteken kami tupung ikenai percuban,*
[Ai Ho do nampuna harajaon dohot hagogoon ro di	*tapi pulahi min kami i bas si jahat nari.*
hasangapon saleleng ni lelengna.	*(Sabap Kam kap Raja si Simada Kuasa ras Kemulian*
Amen.]	*seh si rasa lalap.*
	Amin.)
Batak Simalungun Language	**Pakpak Daeri Language**
Ham Bapanami na i nagori atas.	*Ialè Bapa nami si ni sorga: Dak niperbadia mo*
Sai pinapansing ma Goran-Mu.	*gerarMu.*
Sai roh ma harajaon-Mu.	*Dak roh mo kerajaenMu. Saut mo lemmo atèMu i*
Sai saud ma harosuh ni uhur-Mu	*babo tanoh èn bagè si ni sorga.*
i nagori tongah on songon na i nagori atas.	*Berrèken mo bai nami sidari èn pangaan nami sipat*
Bere Ham ma bannami sadari on hagoluhan ari-ari.	*ari.*
Sasap Ham ma dousanami,	*Sasa mo, dosa nami bagè penasa nami, i dosa ni*
songon panasapnami bani dousa ni hasoman na	*dengan simerdosa taba kami.*
mardousa dompak hanami.	*Ulang kami arahken mi pengajiin, paluah mo kami*
Ulang ma bobai Ham hanami hu parlajouan	*ihas pengago nai.*
tapi paluah Ham ma hanami humbani pangagou.	*[Ai Ko ngo sidasa kerajaen, dekket kegegohen, bang*
[Ai Ham do simada harajaon ampa hagogohon ampa	*pè kesangapen soh mi amman sumendah Amèn.]*
hasangapon sadokah ni dokahni.	
Amen.]	
Mandaling Language	**Nias Language**
Ale, Amangnami na di banua ginjang: Pinarbadia ma	*He Ama khõma si so ba zorugo: Yate'amoni'õ dõiu*
goarMu, ro ma HarajaanMu tulus ma rohaMu di tano	*Yatobali banua U fefu niha Yaitõrõ zomasi ndra'Ugõ,*
on, songon di banua ginjang. Lehen ma di hami	*hulõ ba zorugo, ya si manõ gõi ba gulidanõ. Oma*
panganonnami na porlu sadari on, sesa ma angka	*sirugi ma'õkhõ be'e khõma ma'õkhõ andre. Ba efa'õ*
dosanami, songon hami manyesa dosa ni angka na	*khõma horõma, si mane fangefa'õma sala ba zi so sala*
mardosa tu hami, jana ulang pamasuk hami tu	*khõma. Ba bõi ohe ndra'aga ba wanandraigõ. Ba*
bagasan pandugaan, tapi palua ma hami sian	*efa'õga ba zi lõ sõkhi. Me Ya'ugõ zomo'õ tõrõ banua*
pangago i, Ai Ho do Raja na markuaso, jana na	*ba sokhõ fa'abõlõ, awõ lakhõmi, irugi zi lõ aetu.*
marsangap salolot-lolotna. Amen.	*Yaduhu.*

The unique application of the term *yaduhu* served as the impetus for this investigation. This study endeavors to delineate the meaning of *yaduhu* and to analyze the cultural factors that led to its integration as the translation of "amen" within Nias liturgical practices.

Nias Language

The Nias community traditionally distinguishes between two primary linguistic varieties: Li Niha Yõu (North Nias Language) and Li Niha Raya (South Nias Language). This linguistic distinction has been substantiated by academic research (Zagõtõ, 2018). However, upon their arrival in Nias Island to propagate Christianity, missionaries predominantly utilized the North Nias Language for efficiency, consequently translating the Bible exclusively into North Nias Language

Furthermore, as noted by Laiya (2006:5), the missionary Edward Fries, in his 1919 publication "Nias, Amoeta Hoelo Nono Niha" (p. 52), explicitly articulated his rationale for discouraging the use of the South Nias language. Fries contended that the South Nias Language exhibited greater complexity and a harsher phonological character compared to the North Nias Language. Moreover, he observed significant lexical divergence, affecting both the pronunciation and meaning of numerous words between the two dialects. Consequently, these considerations led to the exclusive translation of the Bible for the Nias people into the North Nias Language.

This linguistic preference extended to all liturgical practices within the Nias church, ensuring that prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, were uniformly rendered in the North Nias Language.

Anthropolinguistics

Anthropolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field, fundamentally integrates insights from anthropology and linguistics. Specifically, Hamawand (2020:63) defines it as the study of the intricate interaction between language and culture, investigating how cultural practices directly affect linguistic patterns. Complementing this perspective, Duranti (2009:1) characterizes the field as being dedicated to examining language as it is utilized across various social, individual, and communal activities. Furthermore, Sibarani (2024:1) elaborates on anthropolinguistics as a discipline focused on the convergence of language and anthropology, particularly by exploring the complexities of human existence with a distinct emphasis on cultural influences.

Collectively, these perspectives underscore that anthropolinguistics synthesizes the study of language and culture, recognizing their mutual support and profound interdependence. Human communication, inherently expressed through language, is thus perpetually shaped by and reflects the cultural contexts in which individuals live.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employs an anthropolinguistics approach. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and a literature study. The interview participants were strategically selected for their expertise and interest in Nias history and language:

1. ASD**:** A lecturer with a background in sociology, also possessing a "si'ila" (royal lineage) background and a keen interest in Nias history.
2. AG: A lecturer and priest
3. BL**:** An anthropologist with a strong interest in Nias history.
4. SZL**:** A linguist and lecturer specializing in the Nias language, with a significant interest in Nias and its linguistic history.

Additionally, the researchers conducted a literature study, meticulously examining historical documentation pertaining to the missionaries who translated the Bible into Nias languages: Ludwig Ernst Denninger, Wilhelm Heinrich Sundermann, C.W. Frickenschmidt, and E.E.W.G.S. Schröder.

There are three steps of data analysis are used in this study, based on the theory of Miles, et al (2014: 12-14) they are:

1. Data condensation: known as data reduction, involves streamlining the raw qualitative data by choosing, highlighting, streamlining, summarizing, or altering the information found in research materials such as field notes, interview records, and various documents.
2. Data display: is simply an organized and condensed way to show information, helping us draw conclusions and decide what to do. Think of everyday examples like a gas gauge, a newspaper, or even a Facebook status update. By looking at these displays, we can grasp a situation and then either dig deeper or take immediate action based on what we've learned.
3. Conclusion and Verification: the purpose analyzes the meaning of things by identifying patterns, offering explanations, tracing cause-and-effect relationships, and forming propositions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The combined findings from the literature study and interviews elucidated the meaning of *yaduhu* within the context of the Lord's Prayer. It was established that the term *yaduhu* was originally introduced by missionaries as the translation for "amen" during their endeavors to render the Bible into the Nias language on Nias Island. This translation effort was notably spearheaded by three missionaries, namely :

1. Ludwig Ernst Denninger (1815-1875), a German missionary, initiated his service in Indonesia within Kalimantan, subsequently extending his ministry to the Batak people in North Sumatra. His arrival in Nias occurred on September 27, 1865. By 1874, Denninger had successfully completed the translation of the Books of Luke and John into the Nias language, a task in which he was aided by local youth. These translated works were later published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. A significant limitation of these early translations, however, stemmed from Denninger's attempt to synthesize elements from both North Nias and South Nias dialects, a practice that frequently resulted in linguistic ambiguity for readers. Illustratively, Luke 1:1 features *manömanö* (South Nias) for news, while the prevailing North Nias term is *waöwaö*. Furthermore, in Luke 1:5, he employed *Balugu* (North Nias) for Nobleman/King, contrasting with the South Nias equivalent, *Si'ulu*.

2. Wilhelm Heinrich Sundermann (1849-1919), a German missionary, arrived on Nias Island and, leveraging his friendship with Salawa Fali'era (Ama Mandranga**)**, successfully completed the translation of the Nias Bible. He finished the New Testament in 1889, followed by the Old Testament in 1910. The complete Nias Bible was subsequently published in Amsterdam in 1911 and named *Soera Ni'amoni'ö*.

3. C.W. Frickenschmidt, a German-Dutch missionary affiliated with the Lutheran Mission in the Batu Islands (South Nias), undertook the translation of specific biblical texts into the indigenous Nias language of the region. This endeavor led to the creation of the *Turia Ni'amoni'ö*, intended for the Batu Islands. Nevertheless, this localized translation was never fully completed, as the missionary community eventually standardized on Sundermann's Soera Ni'amoni'ö as the sole authorized version..

In their investigation, the researchers ascertained that the word *yaduhu* is utilized in the *Soera Ni'amoni'ö* version of the Nias Bible, with its occurrence noted in Matthew 6:13

Picture 1: Matthew Chapter 6 verse 13 (*Soera Ni'amoni'ö*)
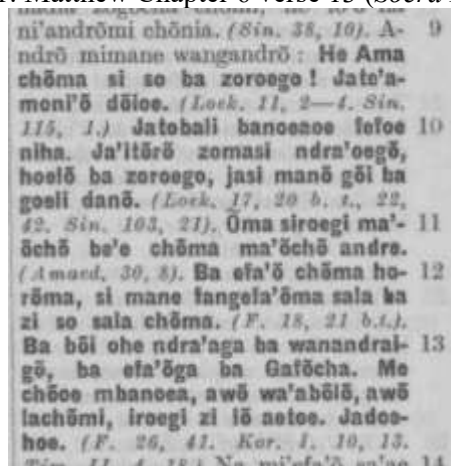
In earlier orthography, the word *yaduhu* was rendered as *jadoehoe*. Nevertheless, this word is absent from the *Turia Ni'amoni'ö* version of the Bible, a consequence of that particular translation being incomplete and encompassing only fragmented sections of scripture.

Edward Peake, in his dissertation "Tradition, Christianity, and The State In Understandings Of Sickness And Healing In South Nias, Indonesia" (2000: 92-93), indicates that it was Sundermann who integrated the term *yaduhu* into the Nias Bible. This word, however, originated from traditional Nias oral practices, specifically as one of several affirmative cries uttered by a speechmaker's partner during orahu (traditional Nias community meetings).

Supporting that, Hummel's dissertation, "Cross and Adu" (2007: 262-263), posits that *yaduhu* was not an invention of the missionaries, including Sundermann, but rather an existing term within Nias language and culture. Hummel details instances where Nias people responded to missionary sermons,

such as those by Denninger, with phrases like *ya'ia ya ho* (yes, that's right) or simple vocalizations like "eeee…" or "mmm…". While missionaries initially perceived these responses as impolite, they were, in fact, culturally appropriate expressions of appreciation for the preacher. This understanding was reinforced by observations like Krumm's sermon in Lahusa, where congregants affirmed his words with *Siduhu, ya'ia niwa'ou Tuha* (Amen, yes, you said it rightly, Sir), ultimately clarifying this local communication tradition for the missionaries

Further documentation was obtained from the Nias-German dictionary (1905:53), which is illustrated in the accompanying image.

Picture 2: The Explanation of Duhu in Nias-German Dictionary (old spelling)

doehoe, adj., *wahr, echt,*
a. si ndroehoe, *letzteres als*
adv., in Wahrheit, wahr-
haft; jadoehoe, *Amen*; osi-
doehoegō mang-, v. a., *das*
Wahre tun, od. sagen; fa-
doehoe dōdō, i S. fasidoe-
hoe dōdō, v. n., *überzeugt*
sein, glauben; fadoehoe'ō,
mam-. v. a, *bezeugen, be-*
kräftigen; — dōdō, mam-,
v a. *überzeugen.*

From the picture above it explains all the words which relate to the word of *yaduhu*

Table 2: The Explanation of the Word *Yaduhu* Based on Nias-German Dictionary

The word	The meaning	Explanation
Duhu	true	adjective
Sindruhu	truly true, correct, right	adverb sidruhu (South Nias Language)
Yaduhu	amen	verb
Osiduhugō	do it wholeheartedly or do it with full commitment	verb
Fasiduhu dōdō	do it from the heart	Combination verb and noun
Faduhu dōdō	believe	Combination verb and noun

Moreover, interviews with native Nias speakers revealed findings consistent with the aforementioned observations. The term *yaduhu* in the Nias language originates from the indigenous words *duhu* or *sindruhu* (North Nias Language) and *sidruhu* (South Nias Language), all signifying "correct" or "truly correct." These terms are commonly employed in daily communication and serve as traditional affirmative cries or exclamations during orahua (traditional community meetings).

Furthermore, in the Nias language, the initial *ya* component of *yaduhu* is not a prefix. Instead, it derives from the word *yaia* which functions to confirm or affirm someone's statement

Table 3: The Explanation of the Word *yaduhu*

The word	The meaning	Explanation
Ya= from the word *yaiya*	1. Someone or a person 2. To make the positive confirmation about someone says (yes, right)	This word has similar meaning either in North Nias Language and South Nias Languange
Duhu or *Sindruhu* *Sidruhu*	Truly true, correct, right	*Duhu* or *Sindruhu*: North Nias Language *Sidruhu*: South Nias Language
Yaduhu	convey both affirmation and confirmation as the word amen, and to function as a theological expression of faith	Sundermann translate amen as *yaduhu* because the meaning is appropriate

Furthermore, interviews with Nias language speakers revealed the phonological considerations that influenced the Bible translators' decision not to use "amen" to conclude prayers. A key characteristic of the Nias language is its consistent tendency to end words with a vowel sound. This presented a significant challenge for "amen," as its pronunciation would unavoidably become "ami." Crucially, *ami* already carries the distinct meaning of "delicious" in the Nias language, which would have led to an unintended and incongruous meaning in a liturgical context.

The last finding base on the interview the reseachers found the missionaries recognized the pre-existence of a concept of truth (*duhu*) within Nias culture. This indigenous concept of truth was subsequently integrated into the theological doctrines they introduced.

In Hebrew and Greek, the word "Amen" functions beyond being a mere prayer closing, encompassing an affirmation of truth, an expression of conviction, and a statement of agreement. *Yaduhu* fulfills this function as well, namely, affirming truth. and to indicate assent. Therefore, it appears they subsequently opted to substitute "amen," a sacred formula that remained untranslated, by integrating the indigenous concept of truth (*duhu*) into the liturgy.

DISCUSSION

The missionaries' adoption of *yaduhu* as the concluding word for prayers and for confirming truth was highly appropriate due to its widespread familiarity among both North Nias and South Nias language speakers. The core term, duhu or yaduhu is deeply embedded in both communities' linguistic landscapes. This aligns with Zagōtō's 2008 dissertation, which confirms the presence of these two distinct Nias language varieties on Nias Island. While the North Nias and South Nias languages share some commonalities, these similarities are minor; the predominant differences are found in both pronunciation and lexical meaning.

This research affirms the strong, inherent relationship between language and the culture of its speakers. As supported by Hamawand (2020), Duranti (2009), and Sibarani (2024), language is not merely a tool for communication but is profoundly shaped by, and in turn shapes, the cultural context of a society

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

In summary, the decision to replace "amen" with *yaduhu* in Nias liturgical practice stemmed from a combination of linguistic, cultural, and practical considerations. Firstly, *yaduhu* was already deeply ingrained in the traditional communication practices of the Nias people, serving as an affirmative cry within their cultural rituals. Secondly, the phonological characteristics of the Nias language presented a significant challenge. Nias words consistently end with a vowel sound, making the accurate pronunciation of "amen" difficult. It would inevitably be pronounced as "ami," a word that carries a distinct and common meaning for Nias speakers: "delicious." This potential for awkward and inappropriate misinterpretation in a sacred context made "amen" unsuitable. Lastly, both "yaduhu" and "amen" shared a similar function as sacred or affirmative formulas, making *yaduhu* a culturally intuitive and compatible substitute.

Ultimately, by analyzing a single term like *yaduhu* we gain a profound understanding of the distinct cultural and linguistic identity of the Nias people.

Suggestion

Therefore, a primary recommendation is that the term *yaduhu* be maintained and not substituted by any other linguistic form, including "amen." Its inherent suitability for concluding prayers and conveying emphatic affirmation is already well-established within the Nias linguistic and cultural framework. Ultimately, the preservation of *yaduhu* is crucial, as it represents a fundamental component of Nias identity.

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