

## Conference Paper

# Siladang Syntax: A Study of Grammar Typology

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**ORCID:**Purwanto Siwi: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2204-9721>**Abstract**

The analysis of basic clause structures shows that clauses in *Bahasa Siladang* consist of verbal and non-verbal predication. The non-verbal predicate can be filled by an adjective, noun, numeral or prepositional phrase. The analysis of the argument structure shows that the intransitive predicate requires one NP argument as the only argument functioning as the grammatical subject, which can be an agent or a patient. Meanwhile, the transitive verb predicate requires two or more arguments. The presence of these arguments in the predicate in transitive sentences is mandatory. The conclusion from the analysis of the grammatical behavior in syntactic construction is that SL is a language which has a grammatical alignment system which gives the same treatment to A and S, and a different treatment to P. It can be categorized as an accusative language, marking the direct object of transitive verbs, making them different from the subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs.

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## 1. Introduction

*Bahasa Siladang* (*Siladang* Language), henceforth SL, is a language spoken by *Siladang* people living in Sipapaga and Aek Banir villages in Panyabungan Sub-district, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province. Although the SL is used as a means of communication but, because of heterogeneous population, its influence, function and position show a decline in its function. Mandailing language is dominantly used as in traditional markets, at religious ceremonies such as marriage, death and tradition. The decrease is also influenced by BI, television, newspapers, hand phone, and android.

As the priceless asset of a nation, an ethnic language should be preserved since through language a nation will be able to maintain its local culture. In principle, an EL can play its role to act as the identity of a community group, which is always respected and even praised by its native speakers, like the *Siladang* language (SL) which is only

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found in Sipaga-paga and Aek Banir villages. In fact, although it is minority language, the SL posits itself as the symbol of regional pride, identity and communication tool for the SL speakers as well as for the supportive media for the *Bahasa* Indonesia which of course becomes the formal language of instruction at schools.

Thus, the efforts to preserve the SL, for example, its structure, form, meaning, function, and value are a must to increase the number of bilingual speakers. The SL has its own peculiarities and belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian family. The native speakers speak quickly and use vowels ə, ə, and aə as shown in the examples *mələngkəh* 'to go', *pəntə* 'beach' and *aə* 'water'. Interestingly, different with the BI, the SL has the consonant v, for example, *uvong* 'people', *jovi* 'fingers'.

Some previous researches on SL are focused on traditional and structural studies, for example, morphology, phonology, and syntax, but, this research is oriented to the typology of language, namely, clauses and sentences. The typologists basically recognize the universal grammar which tries to find the same features in all human languages; in addition, they also recognize the differences among languages (Comrie 1995: 30). The study of language typology proposed by Comrie (1989) is a form of reaction to the theory of generative transformation which is based on the English behavior. The theory of language typology is claimed as a neutral theory for various languages. Testing the theory of typology is important to know whether the theory can be applied to determine the typology of SL.

This study is based on the Greenberg's rule (1963: 76-77) which sees the effect of word order on the formation of ad-position types (prepositions or postpositions) and nominal phrases involving both adjective and genitive forms. In this case, he develops a universal word order theory that divides the world's languages into three types, namely S-V-O, S-O-V, and V-S-O. He also proposes a typology which is called Basic Order which concludes that there are six sentence patterns: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. Initial research by Pawiro and Siwi (2015) shows that typologically, the word order of SL is S-V-O as shown in the examples (1)-(5).

1. *lənə bisə mam-bantu dong ku*

[3SG] be able [PREF-help to] [1SG]

S V Prep O

'He/She can help me'.

2. *Oku tak mangarti*

[1SG] NEG understand

S V

'I do not understand'.

3. *Mang-gimbal kambing*

[PREF-hit] goat

V O

'To hit goat'.

4. *Ba-kojar le basi-handok le*

[PREF-run] PAR [PREF-hide] PAR

V V

'Please run and hide'.

5. *Bopok-ku ma-mavi dong-ku sabuoh buku*

[Father-GEN,PREF-give,to-1SG,a book]

S V Prep-OTL OL

'My father gives me a book'.

## 2. Literature Review

Previous Research on *Siladang* Language; Butar-Butar et.al. (1984) focus their attention on the morphology and syntax, such as, morphemes and their types, word classification, morphological and morphophonemic processes, types of phrases, clauses, and sentences. Pawiro and Siwi (2005), in their preliminary research report, discuss dwellings, culture, and linguistic information; the last provides a complete picture of parts of speech. Sinar and Syarfina (2009) illustrate the prosody and record 26 phonemes consisting of 7 vowel phonemes and 19 consonant phonemes. Although all these studies are encouraging, they only provide preliminary descriptions and do not classify the SL on the structurally behavioral traits in terms of the syntactic typology.

About this issue, some linguists, such as, Verhar (1988), Artawa (1994 and 1998), Arka (2000), Jufrizal (2004, 2007 and 2009), Sawardi (2007), Basaria (2011), Sukendar (2012), Budiarta (2013), and Tambusai (2016) have given contributions. Verhaar determines the syntax of *Bahasa* Indonesia (BI) as the ergative-split and accusative language. When doing research on Bali language, Artawa (1994 and 1998) provide explanations of grammatical relationships, valence changing mechanisms, typological and sentence analysis based on formal syntactic theory. Artawa's analysis and findings are useful in

this study especially in the traces of syntactic typology and typological transcription analysis.

Arka (2000) who examines some aspects of split intransitive of the Indonesian languages (ILs) concludes that typologically the IL tends to have split S with head marking strategy, such as, *Bali*, *Lamholot*, *Tetun*, and *Dawan* languages, or with dependent marking strategy, such as, *Kolana* but Aceh with both strategies. Verbal marking is usually seen with affixes with various degrees of detail. In isolation languages, such as, *Sikka* which has poor morphological processes especially in its affixation, the split S is displayed through a sequence between S and its verbal shaft. Jufrizal (2004) concludes that the basic sequence of basic clause/phrase in *Minangkabau* (Min) is S-V-O (or A-V-P). In contrast to the views of previous scholars, he argues that Min had split-S and flow-S. Min tends to have grammatical alliance system leading to a mixed typology between accusative and ergative. About pragmatic functions, Min prioritizes the subject so its basic structure is categorized into S-P. This language works on S/A pivot, has active diathesis (as basic diathesis) and passive diathesis (as a diathesis of the derivative) and medial diathesis. Studies on Min's structure of arguments and grammatical alliances contribute to this study.

Jufrizal (2007) specifies that Min is syntactically nominative-accusative with split-S and flow-S typology. Argument structure and grammatical alliances involve simple and compound sentence/clause. Grammatical studies on subjects and subjectivity, objects, oblique, and verbal structures are concluded that the Min is categorized as syntactically accusative (see also Jufrizal 2009). Sawardi (2007) concludes that based on pivot test, formulation can not be formulated whether it is S/A or S/P pivots so Javanese language is classified as the third category that does not have pivot mechanism. The pivot in Javanese language can only be explained from its verbal semantics and context of discourse. Syntactically, Javanese language cannot be grouped as accusative or ergative type. If the pivot is one of the features that the grammatical subject has, this is not accepted in Javanese language.

The results of Budiarta's (2013) study reveal that the retention of the basic structure of the *Kemak* language clause consists of verbal predicate and non-verbal predicate clauses. The nonverbal predicate clauses can be occupied by nominal, adjective, numeral, and prepositional phrases. The verbal predicate clauses are dominated by intransitive and transitive verbs. Then the denunciation of predication shows that the predicate of the intransitive clause requires an element of the FN argument that serves as a grammatical subject and semantically acts as an agent or patient. Predicates with transitive verbs require two or more arguments. The presence of such arguments in

transitive sentence is mandatory. A recent study made literary review is the result of research. Tambusai (2016) reveals that Riau Malay (BMR) includes the language of affixes and morphological typology in BMR including the typology agglutinative. Agglutinative languages have words that contain some of the morphemes which are always clearly indistinguishable each other. Each morpheme presents one grammatical meaning and the boundaries between the morpheme can easily be segmented.

### 3. Research Method

This research is qualitative with descriptive approach and designed to make systematic, factual and accurate description about the SL characteristics. It uses typological method with comparative and inductive sub-methods; the nature of this study is empirical. Van Valin and Randy (1999: 2002: 3) state that linguistic research is aimed at explaining linguistic phenomena. The natural data of this study are collected on the basis of existing facts or the phenomenon of language that is empirically used by SL speakers without considering right or wrong prescriptive grammar. The data should be semantically and pragmatically grammatical and acceptable (Sudaryanto 1986: 62). Mithun (2001: 34-43) believes that the quality and quantity of data collection is highly dependent on the researchers and the time and skills of speakers.

This research focuses on the disclosure of basic clauses with tangible verbal language (logical meaningful words) that are naturally available and acceptable. Two of three kinds of data sources are used (see Mallinson and Blake, 1981:12-18). Four criteria of sentences, such as, well-formed and acceptable, and ill-formed and unacceptable sentences are used as the selection by the researcher (see Haegeman and Gueron, 1999: 14-18). When a sentence is formed according to the rules of the internal grammar of the speaker's language, the sentence must be grammatical; when a sentence is not formed on the basis of grammatical rules, it must be ungrammatical. However, very often, native speakers use less well-structured sentences and having been cross-checked, the sentences are acceptable.

The research instrument waiss the researcher himself who sets the focus of the research and selects informants as the data source. Questionnaires are based on what Comrie (1983) proposes. Methods of data collection might include direct elicitation, recording, and checking elicitation (Mithun, 2001: 34-43). Techniques of data collection are the hearing and the speech. The *agih* method is used to analyze data and place the parts of the language studied as a determinant of analysis (Sudaryanto, 1993: 31-100).

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Clause Structure of *Siladang* Language

Clause structure in SL consists of (1) nonverbal predicate and clause structures (2) structures of verbal clause. Nonverbal predicate clause structure can be tangible (1) clause predicate adjective, (2) nominal predicate clauses, (3) clause predicate numeral, and (4) of clause predicate phrase prepositional. SL does not have a copula verb (verb pinkies) so the copula verb is not present on a nonverbal predicate clause. Meanwhile, the structure of the verbal predicate clause consists of (1) intransitive clause, (2) mono-transitive clause (the clause argued two nuclei), and (3) di-transitive clause (the clause argued three core/extended transitive).

Grammatical relation SL is associated with subject and object as a grammatical relation core and oblique, complement, and adjunct as a grammatical relation non-nucleus. The role of grammatical relations and there is only one argument on the clause which is SL intransitive semantical relations have grammatical role agent. The role of the main grammatical SL can be categorized as an agent (actor) and patients (undergoer). The subject is a grammatical relation nucleus in BS. The subject of SL can be identified based on its behavior or properties owned by the subject.

### 4.2. Argument Structure of *Siladang* Language

The argument structure of SL is predicate of SL which is built by predicate and arguments. Predicate SL can be verbal predicate and nonverbal predicate. Nonverbal predicate can be occupied by nominal, adjectival, numeral, phrase prepositional, and one argument that occupies a position in front of the predicate that functions as a grammatical subject. Nonverbal predicate SL requires one argument subject to form predicate. Same as predicate SL that is formed by the nonverbal, verbal predicate intransitive also requires one argument NP elements that can be function as grammatical subject and semantically can serve as agent or patient. Predicate SL with transitive verbs requires two or more arguments. The presence of such arguments in the predicate of transitive sentence is mandatory.

### 4.3. Syntactic Typology of *Siladang* Language

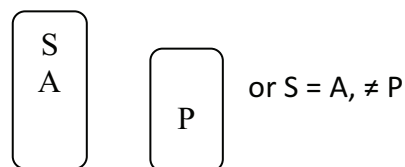
Determination of syntactic typology of SL can be done by observing the behavior of the grammatical construction of syntax of SL that includes the construction with the verb unlimited, jussive complement construction, coordinative construction, subordinate construction, and formation of question sentences. (1) construction with infinite verbs and jussive complement construction shows that if S co-reference with A, then the deletion one argument can be done directly. However, when S co-reference with P, then the process requires the decrease (derivation) syntactic through topicalization and passivization. Thus, SL shows that A is treated the same as S, but different P. (2) construction of coordinative and subordinative by using a pivot test based on eleven framework advanced by Dixon (1998) showing that SL works with pivot S/A. This conclusion is drawn based on the evidence found at the time when the process of merging the two clauses, either coordinative or subordinative indicating deletion process can occur directly in S co-reference with A. Conversely, if S co-reference with P, then the process requires the decrease (derivation) syntax through topicalization and passivization. Finally by the formation question sentence SL also shows that A is treated the same as S, but different to the P.

## 5. Conclusion

Clause structure of BS consists of (1) nonverbal predicate clause structure and (2) structures of verbal clause. Nonverbal predicate clause structure can be tangible (1) clause predicate adjective, (2) predicate clause nominal, (3) clause predicate numeral, and (4) clause predicate phrase prepositional. SL does not have a linking verb so the linking verb is not present on a nonverbal predicate clause. Meanwhile, the structure of the verbal predicate clause consists of (1) clause intransitive, (2) clause monotransitive (the clause argues two nuclei), and (3) clause ditransitive (the clause argues three core/extended transitive). The grammar of word order typology that customarily used in clause of SL is S V O (A – V – P). In special circumstances (and the particular sentence construction topicalization construction, for example) can be either O-S-V (P-A-V). This is different from the language of Mandailing in certain circumstances that uses the grammar of word order V O S (V-P-A). SL has morphological processes that can change the active construction being passivity. BS has affixes that can turn passive into active construction.

The relationship of predicate and structure of argument in SL shows that predicate is built by the elements of the predicate and arguments. Predicate SL can be verbal and nonverbal predicate. Nonverbal predicate clause can be occupied by nominal, adjectival, numeral, prepositional, and one phrase occupying a position in front of the predicate that serves as a grammatical subject. Nonverbal predicate of BS requires one argument that is subject to form predicate. Same as predicate of SL that is formed by the nonverbal, predicate intransitive verb also requires one argument NP elements that can serve as the subject of grammatical and semantic differences serving as agent or patient. Predicate of SL with predicate transitive verbs requires two or more arguments. The presence of arguments in the predicate transitive sentence is mandatory.

The determination of the syntactic typology of SL is done by observing the behavior of the grammatical construction of syntax SL that includes: unlimited verbs with construction and construction by complement, pivot test against coordinative construction and subordinative construction, and question sentences of SL. The conclusion of this study is that the behavior of grammatical construction of syntax of SL shows that syntactically it is a language that has grammatical alliance system that treats A equal to S and gives treatment different to P. Grammatical alliance system of SL is described as follows:



Grammatical alliance system shows that SL treats A equal to S and different with P so SL could be characterized as the language of accusative typology. SL has active-passive diathesis which is an important feature in the accusative typology language. In addition to the active-passive diathesis, SL also has a medial diathesis.

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