

How Nias Sees English Personal Pronouns Used as Preposition Objects

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Abstract: This paper was a part of study contrasting functions of Nias personal pronouns with those of English. While English have only two types of personal pronouns, the subjective and the objective cases, Nias has four, all of which are possible to be made subjects or objects. Thus, describing how both languages realise these functions is complex. To see how they work, personal pronouns in both languages were collected from short stories and analysed from the perspective of contrastive analysis. One of the main findings was that Nias renders English personal pronouns being objects of prepositions in more complex constructions; not using its personal pronouns. This paper, focusing on discussing those constructions and, by doing so, aimed to reveal an aspect of Nias linguistics in relation to that of English.

Keywords: *Nias, personal pronoun, Li Niha, preposition object*

Abstrak: Artikel ini adalah bagian dari riset yang mengontraskan fungsi kata ganti bahasa Nias dengan fungsi kata ganti bahasa Inggris. Sementara kata ganti dalam bahasa Inggris hanya terdiri dari dua kelompok, satu untuk subjek dan satu untuk objek, kata ganti bahasa Nias terdiri dari empat kelompok yang hampir semuanya dapat berfungsi sebagai subjek atau objek. Karena itu, mendeskripsikan bagaimana kedua bahasa merealisasikan fungsi-fungsi ini adalah kompleks. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan tersebut, dikumpulkan data penggunaan kata ganti dalam kedua bahasa dari beberapa cerita pendek. Fungsi kata-kata ganti tersebut dianalisa dari perspektif linguistik kontrastif. Salah satu dari temuan utama adalah bahwa bahasa Nias merealisasikan kata ganti bahasa Inggris yang berfungsi sebagai objek preposisi dengan frasa-frasa yang kompleks, bukan dengan kata ganti. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan struktur frasa-frasa tersebut agar aspek bahasa Nias ini dapat dipahami dalam kaitannya dengan bahasa Inggris.

Kata-kata kunci: *bahasa Nias, kata ganti, Li Niha, objek preposisi*

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Compared to other languages, Nias language, known as *Li Niha* (literally: the language of people) by its native speakers, is one of unique languages in the world (Bauer, 2001, p. 538; Blust, 2013, p. 673; Brown, 2001, p. 39; Ladefoged & Maddieson, 1996, p.133-134). Although its main unique features are more phonological and morphosyntactic, its personal pronouns have also attracted the attention of researchers (Arka & Nazara, 2002; Brown, 2001; Crysmann, 2009). While English personal pronouns (Table 1) consist of only two types, the subjective case used for subjects in sentences and the objective case used for objects including preposition objects (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002, p.100; Radford, 2004, p. 46; Quinn, 2005, p.24), Nias personal pronouns are more complex.

Seen from Table 2 (Arka & Nazara, 2002, p. 270; Brown, 2001, p. 42, 71), Nias has a pair of free personal pronouns and a pair of bound ones. Further, the free personal pronouns consist of mutated and unmutated forms while the bound ones consist pronominal prefixes and pronominal suffixes.

Table 1. English Personal Pronouns

Person/ Number	Case	
	Subjective	Objective
1 st Sg	I	me
2 nd Sg	You	you
	<i>fem.</i> she	her
3 rd Sg	<i>mas.</i> He	him
	It	it
1 st Pl	We	us
2 nd Pl	You	you
3 rd Pl	They	Them

The study was thus done on the personal pronouns of the two languages. How the functions of the four types of Nias personal pronouns shown above in Table 2 rendered those two types of English was the main

question. In line with what has been underlined by other researchers (Nazara, 2019; Suprayogi, 2019), the objective was to pose linguistic features of vernacular languages like Li Niha through a globally known linguistic structures like English (Pandarangga, 2015).

Table 2. Nias Personal Pronouns & Possessives

Person/ Number	Free		Bound		Pos
	UP	MP	PP	PS	
1 st Sg	ya'odo	ndra'odo	u-	-do	-gu
2 nd Sg	ya'ugö	ndra'ugö	ö-	-ö	-u/-mö
3 rd Sg	ya'ia	ia	i-		-nia
1 st Pl	<i>exc.</i> ya'aga	ndra'aga	ma-	ø-ga	-ma
	<i>inc.</i> ya'ita	ita	ta-	ø	-ga
2 nd Pl	ya'ami	ami	mi-	-mi	-mi
3 rd Pl	ya'ira	ira	la-	ø	-ra

Among the findings, it was found out that English personal pronouns used as objects of prepositions did not have one to one relationship to those of the other language. None of Nias personal pronouns were used to render those of English. Nias sees those simple constructions of English preposition phrases containing personal pronouns with complex syntactic and semantic structures. Common possibilities shown by the Nias data varied from using one to two prepositions and combined them two a possessive and sometimes with a noun in it. These theoretically add to what has been elaborated by a Nias researcher (Nazara, 2006) about the natures of common object in Nias.

METHOD

Because the languages are not socio-culturally linked, they were studied from contrastive analysis perspective (Fisiak, 1985, p. 3; Gast, 2009, p. 1; Willems *et al.*, 2003, p. 1). This method examines how a universal category X realized as Y in a language is rendered as Z in another

language and analyses the consequences of applying this to a given field. This centered personal pronouns as a language universal present but realised differently in all languages. With this perspective, the way personal pronouns used in both English and Nias were examined.

English data were obtained from a short story entitled *The Seven Poor Travelers* (Dickens, 2005) and Nias data were obtained from some short stories and writings posted on *Niasonline.net* (Halawa, 2013). The English data source was quite long and more than enough data were obtained from just the one. The Nias data sources, in contrary, were short, some of which were only one page long. There was no particular reason to choose the above English short story since data related to the use of English personal pronouns could be obtained from many different sources. Writings Nias languages, however, were still limited but from the ones used here have already been obtained enough data to arrive at the conclusion made.

Sentences employing personal pronouns were examined to find out how each type of Nias personal pronouns was structurally and semantically equivalent to either those of English. After collecting English personal pronouns being objects of prepositions, they were compared to those of Nias. This was done in two different ways. First, the English phrases (or sentences) were translated into Nias. By doing this, it was found out how those prepositions were rendered into Nias. Second, Nias sentences from short stories were examined to see the equivalent of these translations and contrasted back to those of English. While doing the two steps, the researcher also took notes for other possible usages. This means that although all of the English prepositions containing personal pronouns and the Nias constructions presented here were found in the short stories, other examples were also given to enhance the

data being discussed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the data collected, there were fifteen English prepositions found, each of which was used with personal pronouns as their objects with different amount of times. After analysing and contrasted them to the Nias data, it was found out that these phrases were equivalent to four groups of different constructions in Nias, namely *khö*-possessive, preposition plus *khö*-possessive, noun-possessive, and preposition plus noun-possessive. As seen in Table 3, four English prepositions fall under *Khö*-Posphrase, three under Prep + *Khö*-Pos, five under N-Pos, and three under Prep N-Pos.

Table 3. Findings of English Preposition vs Nias Equivalence

English Prepositions	Nias Equivalences
to, with, in, for	<i>Khö</i> -Pos
of, from, about	Prep <i>Khö</i> -Pos
before, behind, in front	N-Pos
of, under, above	
among, beside, on	Prep N-Pos

As the English data discussed are consistent, preposition phrases with personal pronouns as their objects, the findings are presented here based on the above four of Nias constructions. English sentences are presented first under each point in order to have the same perspective on the Nias linguistic elements that follow. For abbreviations and symbols, notes are provided in the end of the article.

Khö-Possessive

In Nias, one of ways to understand English personal pronouns being objects of prepositions is by using Nias preposition *khö*-along with a possessive. It was found that prepositions *to*, *with*, and *in* along with the personal pronouns functioning as their

objects fall into this *khö*-Pos construction. English sentences [1] and [2] below demonstrate the use of preposition *to* and personal pronouns as its objects.

[1] I read it to him.

[2] She never addressed the word to you.

Following the preposition *to* above, objective cases *him* and *you* of English personal pronouns are used. Nias does not use either free or bound personal pronouns as equivalent constructions for these preposition phrases. It is the combination of preposition *khö*-, which literally means *to*, with a possessive which is used. This is illustrated by two Nias sentences presented below.

[3] Adöni dödöda khönia.
Adj N.Pos Pre.Pos
attracted heart. Our to. his/her
We are attracted to him (her).

[4] Ihatö'ö ia khöda sogömi-gömi.
PP.IV MP Pre.Pos NP
it.approach it to.our darkness
Darkness gets closer to us.

As seen from both translations of [3] and [4], *khönia* and *khöda* in Nias data above are equivalent in meaning and function to English preposition phrases *to him* and *to you* in [1] and [2]. Structurally, however, they are different. Although the given phrases of both languages consist of the same number of elements, those of English are free morphemes but those of Nias are bound ones. Preposition *khö*- is attached to the possessives *-nia* 'his/her' in [3] and *-da* 'our' in [4]. This differs the given phrases in both languages. The English phrases consist of two free elements namely a preposition and a personal pronoun. The Nias phrases, in contrary, also consist two elements but are elements combined in just one word as both of them are bound forms. There are other English prepositions treated this way such as *with* and *in*.

[5] It stayed with us the whole year.

[6] Tola isausi niha bö'ö

Mod PP.TV NP
can it.influence people other
It can influence other people

sifariawö khöra.
Con.IV Pre.Pos
who-befriend with.their
who are friends with them.

The preposition phrase *with us* in [5] above, in which the personal pronouns *us* acts as the object of the preposition *with*, grammatically corresponds to *khöra* in [6]. Again, the preposition *khö*- is bound to the possessive *-ra* 'their' that follows. The preposition *with* refers to 'accompaniment' and is rendered in Nias this way. As seen in the previous examples, the English phrase here comprises two elements in two words while that of Nias comprises two in just one word. English preposition *in* in the datum below is rendered the same way in Nias.

[7] I would rather see this in you.

[8] Khönia usöndra da'ö.
Pre.Pos PP.TV Pro
in.his/her I.find that
I found it in her.

The preposition phrase *in you* in [7] is the same in structure as *khönia* 'in his/her' in [8]. The striking future here between the two languages is that unlike *in you*, *khönia* is put in the beginning of the sentence. Syntactically, *khönia* can be put after *usöndra* or even after the pronoun *da'ö*. Either position is grammatically acceptable but with a slight difference in meaning when it comes in the middle and in focus or emphasis when it comes after the pronoun.

The constructions discussed show that the simple structure of English phrases containing a preposition and an objective personal pronoun is realised as complex in Nias. First, it is the bound form of *khö*-, not the free one (Hämmerle, 2013, p.108; Lase, 2011, p.183-184), which is used. Second,

unlike that of English, it is the possessive, not the personal pronoun, which is attached to the preposition. These apply to prepositions denoting beneficiary like *to* in [1] and [2], accompaniment like *with* in [5], and locative like *in* in [7]. It was found from the data that preposition *for* was also rendered this way in addition to those three.

Preposition + Khö-Possessive

Some English preposition phrases containing personal pronouns are also rendered into Nias by using the above construction but in combination with other prepositions. For that reason, it is referred to as preposition + khö-possessive construction. As listed in Table 3, there are three English prepositions used in this way. They are rendered into Nias by using a free preposition and bound preposition *khö-* that is attached to a possessive. The preposition *From* that begins the sentence below takes personal pronoun *them* as its object. Typical position of English preposition phrases like this is in the end of clauses or sentences (DeCapua, 2017, p.245; Murphy, 2019). However, although they are put in the beginning, like in [9], they do not influence grammatical structure of the sentences and the internal structures of the phrases.

[9] From them I gathered the greatest part of the property.

As seen here, English personal pronouns used as objects of prepositions are always from the objective case. In Nias, preposition *from* is rendered by translating it into Nias preposition *moroi* ‘from’. The process does not stop here. It is obvious from the sentence in [10] that *moroi* is followed by the construction *khö-Poskhönia* ‘to/for him’. When these two elements are combined, they mean *from him* or *from her* only, even though there are two elements being prepositions in the phrase.

[10] Sökhi tafandröndröu ita
Adj PP.IV MP
good we.avoid we
It is good if we keep away

moroi khönia.
Pre Pre.Pos
from to.his/her
from him.

Another English personal pronoun rendered into Nias this way is the one that functions as object of the preposition *about*. In the sentence below, there are objective cases of English personal pronouns *I* and *she*. *Me* is indirect object of the verb *tell* and *her* is the object of the preposition *about*.

[11] The matron had told me about her.

Comparing [10] to the sentence below in [12], Nias free preposition is also used in addition to the construction *khö-Pos*. The preposition *ba* alone means *at* or *in*. The construction *khöra* alone means *to them* or *for them*. It consists of dative preposition *khö-* and possessive pronoun *-ra*. When *ba* and *khöra* are combined, however, they form two possible meanings *about them* and *in their house*. Context helps in determining which of the two is at work.

[12] Lö huhuo sanandrösa
Adv N RP.V
No talking which.refer
There is no discussion

ba khöra.
Pre Pre.Pos
at to.their
about them.

Looking back at the preposition phrase in [11], this is the way to render the preposition *about* and the personal pronoun in it. Compared to the previous construction, they have similarity in the way *khö-* is used with the possessive. These two linguistic elements have to be attached together. However, in addition to the bound preposition *khö-*, a free preposition is used here.

How does the use of this preposition +*khö*-possessive relate to *khö*-possessive alone? There are two tests that can be used to answer this question. First, if *moroi* in [10] and *ba* in [12] are omitted, the sentences are still syntactically well-formed and they convey the same meanings. For this reason, it is proposed that *khö*-possessive is the common one. Second, if free prepositions *moroi* and *baare* are inserted before *khö*-possessive phrases in [3], [4], [6], and [8], only [3] and [8] will work. They are not applicable to [4] and [6]. This means that although *khö*-possessive is the most common between the two, the use of free prepositions is not merely an option.

To conclude, using the construction *khö*-Pos alone like discussed in the first point is not the only applicable way in rendering English adverbials in which personal pronouns are used as objects of prepositions. Shown by the sentences elaborated under this point, there are cases in which *khö*- with the possessives need free prepositions to precede them in order to semantically complete the constructions.

Noun-Possessive

Another way of rendering English personal pronouns functioning as objects of prepositions into Li Nihä is by combining nouns with the possessive pronouns. Shown in the table of the findings, there are five English prepositions found from the data that are equivalent to this Nias construction. This is a relatively different way from the other two discussed above. Even though a possessive pronoun is also used here, it is not combined to the bound preposition *khö*. Instead, it is attached with a noun. This makes the construction a noun phrase, not preposition phrase like that of English.

Both English transitive sentences in [13] and [14] contain adverbials namely *behind us* and *in front of him*. The first adverbial can be moved in front of the sentence (Brown and Miller, 2016, p.34) without influencing the structure of the other functions.

[13] We left a long tail of fragrance behind us.

[14] He didn't see the pit in front of him.

The preposition *behind* in [13] takes the personal pronoun *us* as its object. The preposition *of* or *in front of* in [14] takes *him* as its object. Both of these English personal pronouns are from the objective case. As seen here there is consistency in using the objective case when English personal pronouns are used as objects of prepositions. Nias, in contrary, has different ways in rendering English preposition objects. For the kind and structure discussed here, the language uses nouns and attach them to the possessive pronouns. By doing so, phrases equivalent to the English preposition phrases above are made.

[15] No musindro ira furinia.
Adv IV MP N.Pos
already stand they back.his
They had stood behind him.

[16] Ilau dandra
PP.TV NP
s/he.do sign
She did miracles

sahöli-höli dödö fönada.
Con.Adj NP N.Pos
which.amazed heart front.our
which is amazing in front of us.

In Nias sentences [15] and [16], for instance, the noun *furi-* 'back' is attached to the possessive pronoun *-nia* 'his/her' and the noun *föna-* 'front' is attached to the possessive pronoun *-da* 'our'. Looking at the English meanings of *furi-* and *föna-*, one might conclude that they are pure prepositions. They are not, in fact, as in addition to their capability to be 'owned' by the possessives, they semantically refer to *the place that is in front* or *the place which is behind*. Based on this consideration, this kind of structured is referred to as N-possessive.

There are three other words that carry the same semantic content with these two.

They are *tou* ‘under’ and *yawa* ‘above’. Semantically these words are equivalent to English spatial prepositions *above* and *under*.

[17]	Hana	ö’agö	tougu?
	Adv	PP.TV	N.Pos
	why	you.stay	under.my
	<i>Why are you there under me?</i>		

Although not all of the Nias words in [17] have one to one relationship with those in the English translation, the phrase *tougu* is equivalent to *under me* in meaning. However, as can be seen from the gloss, *tougu* does not consist of a preposition and a personal pronoun like the English preposition phrase it is translated into. While *tou-* can be translated *under*, it actually means more than that as it refers to *the place which is below or lower*. In other words, it is a noun. This is why it can be attached or owned by the possessive *-gu* that follows. The combination thus forms a noun phrase, not a preposition phrase.

Another reason for this conclusion is obtained by looking at the clause *ö’agö* that precedes *tougu*. This clause might look like a phrase but it is not as *ö-* here is second singular personal pronoun *you* being the subject and *-agö* is the verb. The gloss and the translation can be confusing as in English *stay* is intransitive and *are* intensive. These are the closest translations. However, structural-ly, *-agö* is transitive as it can not stand alone. It needs object which is fulfilled by the noun phrase *tougu*.

[18]	Yawami	so	ndra’aga.
	N.Pos	IV	MP
	above.your	exist	we
	<i>We are above you.</i>		

The phrase *yawami* ‘above you’ in [18] is also the same. Although from the English translation of *yawa-* one might say it is a pure preposition but in Nias it actually refers to *a place*. Thus, combined with the possessive *-mi* ‘your’ they form a noun phrase and become an adverbial to the intransitive clause *so ndra’aga*.

In addition to *behind* and *in front of*, after contrasting data from both languages like in the translation of Nias data presented above, it was also found that English prepositions *before*, *under*, and *above* are used this way. In other words, along with *behind* and *in front of* that have been discussed, these prepositions are used with Nias possessive personal pronouns. When used in this way, the prepositions are attached to the possessives.

To conclude, in addition to using *khö*-possessive and preposition + *khö*-possessive, Nias employs noun with a possessive in rendering English personal pronouns being objects of prepositions. When contrasting, although both given phrases in both languages carry relatively the same meaning, but they are structurally different.

Preposition + Noun-Possessive

There are cases in which English personal pronouns functioning as object of prepositions are rendered into Nias by combining a preposition to a noun attached to a possessive. This is different from the previous one in the sense that this takes a Nias free preposition and combined it with the N-Pos construction. As shown in the table of the findings, three English prepositions were found rendered this way into Nias language.

[19] They made a little fête among them in the garden.

[20]	Lö	ba	gotaluada	zilö
	Adv	Pre	N.Pos	NP
	not	in	middle.our	who.not
	<i>There is no among us who</i>			

irai	mamondrongo	da’ö.
Adv	TV	Pro
ever	hear	that
<i>never heard that.</i>		

The data above exemplify this kind of construction. It is obvious in [19] that preposition *among* is directly followed by

personal pronoun *them* as its object. Again, in English, there is consistency to use personal pronoun from the objective case as object of preposition. From Nias linguistic perspective the preposition phrase *among them* is translated *ba gotaluada* in which *ba* is a preposition, *gotalua-* noun, and *-da* possessive. This applies to sentence [20]. The preposition *bais* needed but in turn, its presence requires a noun, in this case *gotalua* (mutated form of *otalua*) ‘center/middle’, as its object. This noun, however, needs the possessive pronouns *-da* ‘our’ in order to ‘create’ the sense of *our center* or *our ‘middle’*. Combined with the preposition *ba*, this phrase means *between* or *among us*.

[21] He stood beside them.

[22] No so zatus ba zingami.
Adv VP N Pre N.Pos
already exist parent in side.your
Parents are beside you.

If *beside them* in [21] is translated into Nias, the preposition made is exactly the same as that in [22]. Their constructions, however, are different from each other. The phrase in [21] simply consists of preposition *beside* and personal pronoun *them* as its object. In [22], *ba* is a preposition but, as seen from the gloss, its object is not a personal pronoun. Instead, it is a noun phrase. The noun in it is mutated form of *singa* ‘side’ and is combined with possessive pronoun *-mi* ‘your’. Together these two elements form the object of the preposition.

[23] My hat was on it.

[24] Itaria labe’e fakake
Adv PP.TV N
Sometimes they.give thing
Sometimes they put things

ba detenia.
Pre N.Pos
on top.its
on it.

The same preposition structure is also seen when comparing *detenia* ‘its top’ to the pronoun *it* coming after the preposition *on* in [23] above. Further, the preposition *ba* in [24] is followed by a noun phrase which consists of mutated form of noun *tete* ‘top’ and possessive pronoun *-nia*. As shown by the data discussed so far, the preposition *ba* thus can convey various meanings, according to what kind of word it is combined.

Besides those three spatial words *otalua*, *singa*, and *tete*, *ngai* ‘side’ is also used this way. They can be used with a possessive pronoun to form a noun phrase. It has to be underlined, however, that Nias nouns are mutated. This mutation system relies on at least two things. First, mutated and unmutated forms show syntactic functions of the nouns used. Second, mutation affects the first syllable of the nouns. Although not all nouns are mutated, it is because the first letter of a given noun falls under a group of letters that do not undergo mutation, not because mutation is inconsistent. This explains why *otalua*, *singa*, and *tete* above are in mutated forms *gotalua*, *zinga*, and *dete*.

Unlike the construction preposition + *khö*-possessive above, however, in which some of the free prepositions can be omitted, here none of the free prepositions can be omitted. In other words, the phrases have to be *ba gotalua*, *ba zinga*, *ba dete*, and *ba ngai* plus the possessives attached to them nouns

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while English personal pronouns used as objects of prepositions are always from the objective case, Nias employs various kinds of constructions which are *khö*-possessive, preposition + *khö* possessive, N-possessive, and preposition + N-possessive. From these four, only particular prepositions are optional in preposition + *khö*-possessive

constructions. The other constructions and elements in them are obligatory to have. Although there is consistency in using objective personal pronouns as objects of English prepositions, from the data that collected and analysed data, these four are the common choices available.

Another key point to be emphasized here is that, even if the use of nouns and free prepositions varies from one kind to another in all kinds of constructions, no Nias personal pronouns are used. None of Nias mutated personal pronouns, unmutated personal pronouns, pronominal prefixes, and pronominal suffixes are used in rendering English personal pronouns being object of prepositions. All of four constructions, however, always involve possessive pronouns.

Notes

Symbols and Letters

- ∅ This symbol marks an empty element and unspecified meaning.
- .
- Dot separates English words resulting from Nias elements put together in one word or construction.
- ' Apostrophe marks intervocalic glottal stop in Nias.
- ö This Nias vowel carries open-mid central unrounded sound.

Abbreviation

Adj	adjective
Adv	adverb
Con	conjunction
exc	exclusive
fem	feminine
inc	inclusive
IV	intransitive verb
mas	masculine
MP	mutated personal pronoun
N	noun
NP	noun phrase
Pos	possessive
PP	pronominal prefix
PS	pronominal suffix
Pre	preposition
Pro	pronoun

Sg	singular
TV	transitive verb
UP	unmutated personal pronoun.

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