

## A BRIEF GRAMMAR OF THE EASTERN ATADEI LANGUAGE OF LEMBATA, INDONESIA

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to briefly describe the grammar of Atadei, or more precisely Eastern Atadei, an under-described Flores-Lembata language spoken by about 8,000 people in Atadei District of Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Atadei is an agglutinative language with fusional elements and SVO word order. Adjectives follow the noun they modify and are inflected in attributive position, but are not inflected when used as a predicative. Atadei verbs may agree with the subject, depending on the verb class. This is similar to Lamaholot, but the verb classes in these two languages are different. Some verbs exhibit inflection for all persons, while others do not inflect at all. Pronouns follow a complex system in Atadei, depending on their syntactic function. It is noteworthy that the Alor-Pantar languages of the neighboring islands Alor and Pantar do not belong to the Austronesian language family, and may have contributed to a Papuan substratum in Atadei, such as inalienable possession and clause-final negation (Klamer et al., 2008, p. 136).*

Keywords: *Atadei, grammar, Lembata, Lamaholot*

### Abstrak

*Makalah ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan secara ringkas tata bahasa Atadei, atau lebih tepatnya bahasa Atadei Timur, yang sejauh ini belum dideskripsikan secara rinci. Bahasa Atadei termasuk rumpun Bahasa Flores-Lembata dan dituturkan oleh sekitar 8.000 orang di Kecamatan Atadei di Pulau Lembata, NTT, Indonesia. Secara gramatikal, bahasa Atadei adalah sebuah bahasa aglutinatif dengan elemen-elemen fusional dan berurutan subjek-predikat-objek (SPO). Kata sifat mengikuti kata nama yang dipaparkannya dan dikenakan deklinasi jika digunakan dalam posisi atributif, tetapi tidak dikenakan deklinasi jika digunakan dalam posisi predikatif. Dalam bahasa Atadei dapat ditemukan kesesuaian reguler antara verba dan subjek, tergantung pada jenis verba. Pola ini mirip dengan bahasa Lamaholot tetapi jenis verbanya berbeda-beda antara kedua bahasa itu. Berbagai verba Atadei mempunyai konjugasi bagi semua pronomina sedangkan verba lainnya tidak dikonjugasikan sama sekali. Sistem pronomina dalam bahasa Atadei cukup majemuk karena tergantung pada fungsi sintaksisnya. Patut diperhatikan pula bahwa kelompok bahasa Alor-Pantar yang dituturkan di pulau-pulau bersebelahan itu tidak termasuk rumpun bahasa Austronesia dan barangkali memberikan sumbangan substrat Papua terhadap bahasa Atadei, misalnya pronomina pemilik untuk benda-benda yang tak terasingkan (yaitu inalienable) dan negasi pada akhir klausa (Klamer et al., 2008, hlm. 136).*

Kata kunci: *Atadei, tata bahasa, Lembata, Lamaholot*

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Eastern Atadei,<sup>2</sup> also called South Lembata<sup>3</sup> and in this paper referred to as 'Atadei', is an Austronesian language spoken by about 8,000<sup>4</sup> people in Atadei District (*Kecamatan Atadei*) in the southern part of Lembata Island (*Pulau Lembata*), formerly called Lomblen. The Atadei district extends over about 150 square kilometers where the majority of the population work as farmers and declare themselves as Catholic. Politically, Lembata Island forms the Lembata Regency (*Kabupaten Lembata*) of East Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia.



**Figure 1. Road map of Lembata Island, from [http://www.indonesiatravelingguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Lembata\(Lomblen\)-800.jpg](http://www.indonesiatravelingguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Lembata(Lomblen)-800.jpg).**

On the map in Figure 1 above, the Atadei District is roughly situated between the villages Wolopado and Oedek and covers everything south of these two villages. All linguistic data in this essay are from people born and raised in Atalojo (East Atadei district) but living in Lewoleba, the capital of Lembata Regency. Currently, there is only one rugged and rocky way connecting the capital of the regency with Atadei district, so that many people live in rural circumstances and have no written records on their language. Therefore, all linguistic data that I have collected so far comes from personal communication when I spent some time living with a Atadei family in Lewoleba in July 2015, as well as from contact to the same family thereafter.<sup>5</sup> I noted down all sentences they gave me to learn their language with the translation into Indonesian, however they were often not able to explain the grammar and rules for their language, since all Atadei speakers only learn their language at home, as it is never studied in any educational institution.

The borders of the Atadei district, its capital Kalikasa (also spelled Kalikassa), and the neighboring districts Lebatukan, Wulandoni, Nagawutung, and Nubatukan are illustrated on the map in Figure 2 below. Atadei district is known for traditional whale hunting near Tanjung Atadei and for its natural gas well near Watuwawer, locally called 'natural kitchen' (*dapur alam*), which can be used for boiling water and cooking food.

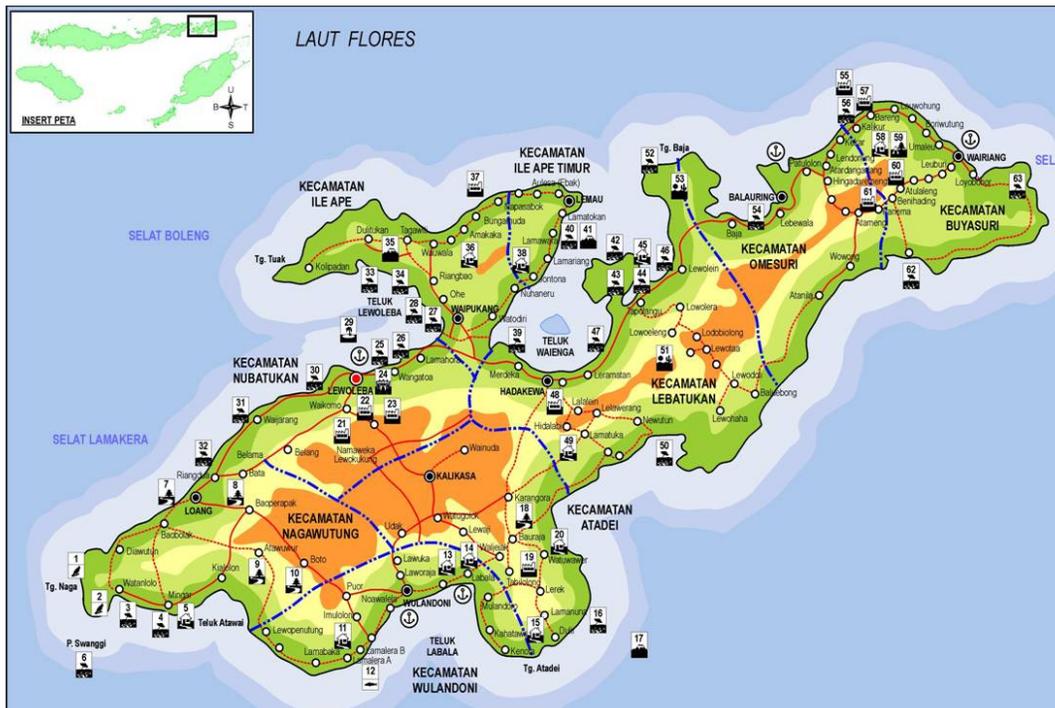


Figure 2. Tourist map of Lembata Island, from <http://www.giantkomodo.com/general-info/lesser-sunda-islands/beta-lembata1-2/>: accessed Dec 12, 2015 at 20:05

## LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATION

So far, there has not yet been any description of the language of Atadei district. In Grime's 'A Guide to the people and languages of Nusa Tenggara' (1997), no literature has been listed for the South Lembata language, which is also the name used in Ethnologue's language list for Indonesia. However, I prefer to use the name *Atadei language* (*Bahasa Atadei*) because this is how its speakers refer to their own language.

According to Grime (1997, p. 83), Atadei or South Lembata is a Flores-Lembata language of the Timorese subgroup of the Central Malayo-Polynesian branch of Austronesian, whereas the latest Ethnologue report classifies it as a Bima-Lembata language of the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family (Lewis, 2015). This discrepancy is due to a newer classification of the languages of the Lesser Sunda Islands. Keraf (1978, pp. 449-452), on the other hand, subdivides the languages of the Atadei district into Painara, Kalikasa, Lewuka, and Lewokukun, all of them belonging to the Central Lamaholotic branch of the Flores-Lembata languages. By lexical comparison of Keraf's basic vocabulary lists (1978, pp. 406-447) and my own data, it is obvious that his Painara list exactly corresponds to my Atadei list. The language spoken in the Atalojo village may therefore be called South Lembata (in a regional sense), Atadei (according to the district's name), or Painara (as used by Keraf).

Some Atadei people also classify their language as a strong dialect of Lamaholot, which is the *lingua franca* on the islands between Eastern Flores and Alor. Nagaya (2010, p. 158) describes Lamaholot as a dialect chain, of which the individual dialects may not be mutually comprehensible. The following sentence clearly illustrates the difference between Lamaholot

(1a) spoken in Lewoingu, Titihena, East Flores (Nishiyama & Kelen, 2007) and Eastern Atadei (1b):

- (1) a. *Go kan a to'u di hala'*  
 1SG eat what one EMPH not  
 'I eat/ate nothing'  
 (Nishiyama & Kelen 2007:20)
- b. *Gò tĕk ka nó anam≈anam wéi hi*  
 1SG.PROCL NEG eat.1SG there.is thing(?)~RED some(?) NEG  
 'I eat/ate nothing'

As can be seen from the example, Lamaholot and Atadei differ greatly from each other, not only lexically but also syntactically.

The following list shows some Atadei words that are very similar to neighboring dialects and languages along with their translations into Indonesian and English:

Atadei (Atalojo) <sup>6</sup>	Lamaholot (Lewolema) <sup>7</sup>	Lamaholot (Lewoingu) <sup>8</sup>	Kedang (Omesuri) <sup>9</sup>	Indonesian	English
<i>ama-</i>	<i>ama</i>	<i>ama</i>	<i>ame, &gt;amo</i>	<i>ayah</i>	father
<i>ata</i>	<i>ata dikā</i>	<i>atadikvn</i>	<i>&gt;ata diqen</i>	<i>orang</i>	man, human
<i>butó</i>	<i>buto</i>	<i>buto</i>	<i>buturai</i>	<i>delapan</i>	eight
<i>évèl(ě-)</i>	<i>wewe(r)</i>	<i>wewel</i>	<i>èbèl</i>	<i>lidah</i>	tongue
<i>(hě)pulò</i>	<i>pulo</i>	<i>pulo</i>	<i>pulu</i>	<i>(se)puluh</i>	ten
<i>ina-</i>	<i>ina</i>	<i>ina</i>	<i>&gt;ino</i>	<i>ibu</i>	mother
<i>ka<sub>g</sub></i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>kan</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>makan</i>	eat
<i>kèn<sub>m/n</sub></i>	<i>kenū<sub>m/n</sub></i>	<i>kenun<sub>m/n</sub></i>	<i>in</i>	<i>minum</i>	drink
<i>kusing</i>	<i>kusī</i>	?	<i>kusing</i> ( <i>mama</i> )	<i>kuching</i>	cat
<i>léma</i>	<i>lema</i>	<i>lema</i>	<i>leme</i>	<i>lima</i>	five
<i>li-</i>	<i>lei</i>	?	<i>lèi</i>	<i>kaki</i>	foot, leg
<i>lima-</i>	<i>lima</i>	<i>lima(n)</i>	<i>ling</i>	<i>tangan</i>	hand
<i>manuk(ě-)</i>	<i>manuk</i>	?	<i>manuq (&gt;ai)</i>	<i>ayam</i>	chicken
<i>mata-</i>	<i>mata</i>	<i>mata</i>	<i>mato</i>	<i>mata</i>	eye
<i>nang</i>	<i>nange</i>	<i>nange</i>	<i>nangi</i> ( <i>&gt;oyang</i> )	<i>berenang</i>	swim
<i>nayan</i>	<i>narā</i>	?	<i>naya</i>	<i>nama</i>	name
<i>nuh(ě-)</i>	<i>nuhu, wəwa</i>	<i>wvwa(n)</i>	<i>nunu (wowo)</i>	<i>mulut</i>	mouth
<i>panau</i>	<i>pana (leĩ)</i>	—	<i>pan</i>	<i>pergi</i>	go
<i>pat</i>	<i>pat</i>	<i>pak</i>	<i>&gt;apaq</i>	<i>empat</i>	four
<i>péhéněng</i>	<i>pehě</i>	<i>pehen</i>	<i>pènè, tobol</i>	<i>memegang</i>	hold
<i>pitó</i>	<i>pito</i>	<i>pito</i>	<i>pitu</i>	<i>tujuh</i>	seven
<i>rai(-rai), lei</i>	<i>aja', wərakā</i>	<i>aya</i>	<i>rai waran</i>	<i>banyak</i>	many, much
<i>ratu</i>	<i>ratu</i>	<i>ratu</i>	<i>ratuq</i>	<i>ratus</i>	hundred
<i>tèl</i>	<i>təlo</i>	<i>tvlo</i>	<i>telu</i>	<i>tiga</i>	three
<i>ténar</i>	<i>tena</i>	<i>tena</i>	<i>tene</i>	<i>perahu</i>	boat
<i>una-</i>	<i>(lango') uma</i>	<i>uma</i>	<i>huna</i>	<i>rumah</i>	house

## RESEARCH ON THE LANGUAGES OF LEMBATA

SIL International provides a linguistic map for the Flores Sea (Figure 3) and lists eight languages for Lembata, these being from east to west: West Lembata, Ile Ape, Levuka, Lamalera, South Lembata, Lamatuka, Lewo Eleng, and Kedang. This corresponds exactly to what has been described by Grimes, but he adds that Lamaholot is also used in the area as a language of wider communication (Grimes, 1978, p. 79).



**Figure 3. Excerpt of linguistic map of Nusa Tenggara Timur and Alor (dotted: Malayo-Polynesian, i.e. Austronesian languages; undotted: Alor-Pantar, i.e. Papuan languages), from Ethnologue 2015: [http://www.ethnologue.com/map/ID\\_ntz](http://www.ethnologue.com/map/ID_ntz).**

Linguistic research on the languages of Lembata is scarce, compared to the rich literature on Lamaholot and its dialects. The first publication on the linguistic situation of the East Flores region, including Lembata, is Paul Arndt's study (1937) of the Solor language, spoken on Solor island. A more thorough outline and classification of the languages spoken on Lembata is Gregorius Keraf's dissertation (1978) on the morphology of the Lamalera dialect, including studies on all languages and dialects of Lembata, i.e. the West Lembata dialects, Ile Ape, Lewo Eleng, Lamatuka, and Kedang, as well as on the languages of Adonara island, Solor island, and East Flores. Karl-Heinz Pampus (1999) has published a comprehensive dictionary on the Lewolema dialect, the morphology and syntax of the Lewoingu dialect has been studied by Kunio Nishiyama and Herman Kelen (2007), and the phonology of the Lewotobi dialect has been thoroughly described by Naonori Nagaya (2009). The best documented language of Lembata is Kedang with several publications by Ruth H. Barnes (1977, 1980, 1982) and Ursula Samely (1991).

Additionally, Indonesian as the national language is also spoken and understood by the majority of the people on Lembata Island. It is 'used in a diglossic relationship with regional varieties of Malay which tend to be used in urban areas and for inter-ethnic communication, expressing regional solidarity' (Grimes, 1978, p. 9).

It is noteworthy that the Alor-Pantar languages of the neighboring islands Pantar and Alor, east of Lembata, do not belong to the Austronesian language family, and may have contributed to a Papuan substratum in some Austronesian languages of the region with regard to their syntax, e.g. inalienable possession and clause-final negation (Klamer et al., 2008, p. 136).



The comparison of At. *kuhing* ‘cat’ with Lamaholot *kus̃* ‘id’. (Pampus, 1999, p. 211) and Kedang *kusing* ‘id’. (Samely, 1991, p. 178) confirms the assumed sound change for Atadei.

Vowels are not distinguished by length in Atadei. The vowels /a/, /e/, /ɛ/, and /i/ have no rounded counterpart, whereas the vowels /ɔ/, /o/, and /u/ have no unrounded counterpart. The schwa sound /ə/ can occur word-initially after the inherent glottal stop, in medial position between two consonants or between a vowel and consonant, as well as word-finally in proclitics, such as *ně* ‘he, she, it’. It also occurs in medial position with monosyllabic unstressed words, like *těk* ‘not’. An epenthetic schwa is inserted between the root ending in a consonant and a suffix starting with a consonant, e.g. *wul-* ‘neck’ and *-g* ‘my’ becomes *wulěg* ‘my neck’.

Syllables in Atadei are basically CV or CVC, and no word can start with a vowel, as the glottal stop precedes any word-initial vowel. Diphthongs are to be regarded as one vowel (V). The following list illustrates the syllable structure of basic Atadei words:

Structure	Example	Pronunciation	Translation
CV	<i>tu</i>	[tu]	‘one’
CVC	<i>těl</i>	[tɛl]	‘three’
	<i>an</i>	[ʔan]	‘what’
CVVC	<i>móěn</i>	[ˈmo.ən]	‘yours (sg.)’
CV.CV	<i>léma</i>	[ˈle.ma]	‘five’
	<i>éna</i>	[ˈʔe.na]	‘who’
CV.CVC	<i>ěnam</i>	[ʔə.ˈnam]	‘six’
	<i>ténar</i>	[ˈte.nar]	‘boat’
CVC.CV	<i>puljua</i>	[ˈpul.juə]	‘twelve’
CV.CV.CV	<i>hěpulò</i>	[hə.ˈpu.lə]	‘ten’
	<i>kikilai</i>	[ˈki.ki.laj]	‘fingers’
CVC.CVC	<i>pultěl</i>	[ˈpul.tɛl]	‘thirteen’
	<i>kantar</i>	[ˈkan.tar]	‘to sing’
CV.CV.CVC	<i>kělurak</i>	[kə.ˈlu.rak]	‘small’
CVC.CV.CV	<i>pulléma</i>	[ˈpul.ˌle.ma]	‘fifteen’
CV.CV.CV.CV	<i>kěněmata</i>	[ˌkə.nə.ˈma.ta]	‘in front of the door’

Schwa /ə/ is often dropped, resulting in other syllable structures, such as CCVC for *kěnik* ‘rice’ > *knik*. The latter is also used in casual writing, such as chats and SMS.

There is no standardized spelling for Atadei, neither is there any for Lamaholot. Therefore, I will make use of my own spelling for Atadei, which only slightly differs from the orthography used in other articles on neighboring languages. Virtually all consonants are written as they would be in IPA, except <j> being used for [j], <ng> for [ŋ], and <w> for [v]. The glottal stop [ʔ] is not represented in Atadei orthography. The vowels <a>, <i>, and <u> in Atadei spelling are the same as their pronunciation in IPA, but <é> is used for [e], <è> for [ɛ] and <ě> for [ə], and <ó> is used for [o], while <ò> represents [ɔ]. The same spelling is used for diphthongs.

## MORPHOLOGY

Atadei is an agglutinative language with fusional elements. Adjectives follow the noun they modify and are usually inflected when they occur in attributive sense, but are not inflected when used as a predicative, similar to German and unlike French.<sup>11</sup> The following illustration explains this contrast:

- (2) a. *Méja*<sup>12</sup> *kělurak-Ø*      b. *méja*    *kělurěk-ěň*  
       table    small-Ø                    table    small-3SG.POSS  
       ‘The table is small’                    ‘the small table’

When an adjective agrees with the noun it modifies, the enclitic form of the third person possessive pronoun is used, i.e. *-(ě)n*, which will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Atadei verbs may agree with the subject, depending on the verb class, depending on the conjugation for the second and third singular pronoun. Some verbs show complete inflection (e.g. *kèn<sub>m/n</sub>* ‘to drink’), some are partially inflected (e.g. *òlig<sub>g/ng</sub>* ‘to come’), while others have no inflection at all (e.g. *buai<sub>ø</sub>* ‘to eat’). In this paper, I will, if necessary, indicate the verb class with a subscript morpheme for the 2SG and 3SG. The dictionary form is usually the 1SG.

- |        |           |                                 |               |    |             |                                     |               |
|--------|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------|----|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| (3) a. | <i>Gò</i> | <i>k-èn</i>                     | <i>téh ké</i> | b. | <i>(Ně)</i> | <i>n-èn</i>                         | <i>téh ké</i> |
|        | 1SG.PROCL | <b>1SG</b> -drink               | tea already   |    | 3SG.PROCL   | <b>3SG</b> -drink                   | tea already   |
|        |           | ‘I have already drunk some tea’ |               |    |             | ‘He/She has already drunk some tea’ |               |
| (4) a. | <i>Gò</i> | <i>òlig-Ø</i>                   |               | b. | <i>Ně</i>   | <i>òli-ng</i> (?< <i>òli-g-n</i> )  |               |
|        | 1SG.PROCL | come- <b>1SG</b>                |               |    | 3SG.PROCL   | come- <b>3SG</b>                    |               |
|        |           | ‘I come’                        |               |    |             | ‘He/She drinks tea’                 |               |
| (5) a. | <i>Gò</i> | <i>buai</i>                     | <i>kěnik</i>  | b. | <i>Ně</i>   | <i>buai</i>                         | <i>kěnik</i>  |
|        | 1SG.PROCL | eat                             | rice          |    | 3SG.PROCL   | eat                                 | rice          |
|        |           | ‘I eat rice’                    |               |    |             | ‘He/She eats rice’                  |               |

Further rincis on the verbal inflection are explained later in this chapter.

## Nouns

Atadei nouns are not inflected for case, number, or gender. To express plurality, some nouns may be reduplicated, but is not necessary after numerals or quantifiers. Attributes are usually postpositive, and adjectival attributes agree with their head noun by adding the possessive marker for the third person, i.e. *-(ě)n*. The same method is used to make nominal compounds.

Pronouns appear in different forms, depending on their syntactical function: The 3SG disjunctive form (e.g. *nané* ‘he, him’) is used in isolation, for emphasis, and in object position; the postpositive pronoun (e.g. *naěn* ‘his’) indicates the possessor of alienable nouns; its procliticized form (e.g. *ně* ‘he’) in subject position precedes verbal expressions; the prefixed pronoun (e.g. *kěr-* ‘he is’) is attached to adjectives and some verbs in subject position; and the suffixed pronoun (e.g. *-n* ‘his (own)’) is added to inalienable nouns as a possessive marker. Pronominal agreement is discussed in further rinci later in this chapter.

## Attributive Agreement

As shown in example (2b) above, attributive agreement indicates that an adjective is used as an attribute that modifies a noun, while the unmarked adjective, as shown in example (2a) above, may be compared to a copula phrase in English. Two different inflections are possible: In example (6b), the adjective simply receives the suffix of the third person singular, while some adjectives, as in example (7b), change their root when suffixed for attributive agreement.

- |        |                  |    |                      |
|--------|------------------|----|----------------------|
| (6) a. | <i>Kěr-gólòk</i> | b. | <i>méja gólòk-ěn</i> |
|        | 1SG-tall         |    | table tall-3SG.POSS  |
|        | ‘I am tall’      |    | ‘a tall table’       |
| (7) a. | <i>Děr-kéda</i>  | b. | <i>méja kéděk-ěn</i> |
|        | 3PL-big          |    | table big-3SG.POSS   |
|        | ‘They are big’   |    | ‘a big table’        |

The same agreement between the modified noun and the attributive modifier allows for nominal composition in Atadei:

- (8) *wéi mata-n* (9) *manuk tĕluk-ĕn* (10) *tap tawa-n tĕl*  
 water eye-3SG.POSS chicken egg-3SG.POSS coconut tree-3SG.POSS three  
 ‘well (= eye of water)’ ‘chicken egg’ ‘three coconut palms’

The three examples above could be literally translated with a possessive construction, i.e. ‘the water’s eye’ (8), ‘the chicken’s egg’ (9), and ‘three trees of coconut’ (10), respectively. However, true possessive constructions are formed by adding a proclitic pronoun between the possessor and the object:

- (11) *Daniel ně una-n*  
 Daniel 3SG.PROCL house-3SG.POSS  
 ‘Daniel’s house’
- (12) *Nĕbé bò gur≈gur dĕ una-i*  
 this EMPH(?) teacher~RED 3PL.PROCL house-3PL.POSS  
 ‘This is the teachers’ house’

### Pronouns

Pronouns follow a rather complex system in Atadei. They appear in five different forms depending on their syntactical and pragmatic function. The following table shows all possibilities for the pronouns.

	Disjunctive	Postpositive	Suffixed	Procliticized	Prefixed
function	isolation, emphasis, object position	possessive for alienable nouns	possessive for inalienable nouns	subject position before a verb, possessive	subject position before an adjective and some verbs
1SG	<i>góĕn</i>	<i>góĕn</i>	<i>-(ĕ)g</i>	<i>gò</i>	<i>(gò) kĕr-</i>
2SG	<i>móĕn</i>	<i>móĕn</i>	<i>-(ĕ)m</i>	<i>mò</i>	<i>(mò) mĕr-</i>
3SG	<i>nané</i>	<i>naĕn</i>	<i>-(ĕ)n</i>	<i>nĕ</i>	<i>(nané/nĕ) nĕr-</i>
1PL INCL	<i>tité</i>	<i>tité</i>	<i>-(ĕ)hĕ, -ha, -hu</i>	<i>ti(té)</i>	<i>(tité) tĕr-</i>
1PL EXCL	<i>kamé</i>	<i>kamé</i>	<i>-(ĕ)hĕ, -ha, -hu</i>	<i>kam</i>	<i>(kam) mĕr-</i>
2PL	<i>miò</i>	<i>miòn</i>	<i>-(ĕ)i, -ya</i>	<i>miò</i>	<i>(miò) mĕr-</i>
3PL	<i>dané</i>	<i>daĕn</i>	<i>-(ĕ)i, -ya</i>	<i>dĕ</i>	<i>(dané/dĕ) dĕr-</i>

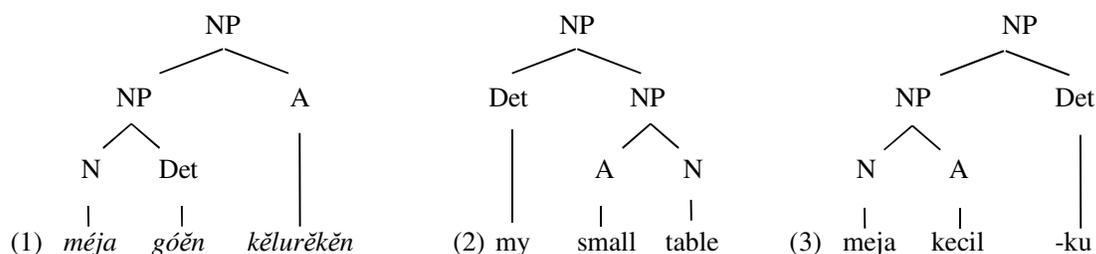
The suffixed pronoun of the first person plural has three allomorphs. This may be due to harmony with the preceding vowel. While in Austronesian languages final vowels often change their quality (being raised or lowered) when the word they appear in is affixed, vowel harmony is not a very typical phenomenon in Austronesian, usually only found in some Oceanic languages (Alderete & Finley, 2016). The vowel harmony for the suffixed 1PL INCL/EXCL pronoun may be described in phonological rules as follows:

- $/-hə/ \rightarrow /-ha/ / i\#\_ \text{ or } a\#\_$   
 $-hə/ \rightarrow -hu / u\#\_$   
 elsewhere  $/-(ə)hə/$

This is exemplified with the following phrases:

- (13) a. *lima-ha* hand-1PL.POSS ‘our hands’  
 b. *li-ha* foot-1PL.POSS ‘our feet’  
 c. *ulu-hu* head-1PL.POSS ‘our heads’  
 d. *latar-ĕhĕ* hair-1PL.POSS ‘our hair’  
 e. *kom-ĕhĕ* thigh-1PL.POSS ‘our thighs’  
 f. *riaw-ĕhĕ* hairs-1PL.POSS ‘our hairs’





This sentence in Atadei is not to be confused with ‘my table is small’ (Indonesian: *mejaku kecil*), which would be *méja góěn kělurak*. Another option to express possession is shown in the next chapter.

### Procliticized Pronouns

This kind of pronoun has two functions: It is the subject when used with a verb (examples 16-18 below) or the possessor when used before a noun (examples 19 and 20 below). However, inalienable nouns require the addition of the suffixed pronoun, too (example 20 below).<sup>14</sup> Consider the following examples showing the different uses of procliticized pronouns:

- (17) (Dě) *d-èn téh*  
3PL.PROCL 3PL-drink tea  
‘They drink tea’
- (18) Gò *ka kěnik*  
1SG.PROCL eat.1SG rice  
‘I eat rice’
- (19) (Kam) *těk m-ia rěbé hi*  
1PL.EXCL.PROCL NEG 1PL.EXCL-live here NEG  
‘We (excl.) do not live here’
- (20) Gò *ina-g na wěl una òra*  
1SG.PROCL mother-1SG there.is inside.CIRC house inside.CIRC  
‘My mother is inside the house’
- (21) Éna *ně oto?*  
who 3SG.PROCL car  
‘Whose car is it?’

Subject pronouns may be dropped when the verb is inflected for person. These procliticized pronouns are also optionally used before prefixed pronouns as explained in the following chapter.

### Prefixed Pronouns

Generally, Atadei adjectives require the subject pronoun to be directly prefixed to the adjectival root, however some adjectives seem to behave differently. There is at least one verbal adjective that also requires a prefixed pronoun for conjugation. Procliticized pronouns as explained earlier in this paper are optional before prefixed pronouns, but are usually necessary whenever ambiguity arises. For 3SG and 3PL, the disjunctive pronouns *nané* and *dané*, respectively, are also possible. The following scheme should suffice as a general overview of how prefixed pronouns are used in Atadei:

root	<i>gólòk</i>	English translation	<i>òga</i>	English translation
1SG	(gò) <i>kěrgólòk</i>	I am tall	(gò) <i>kěròga?</i>	what am I doing?
2SG	(mò) <i>měrgólòk</i>	you are tall	(mò) <i>měròga?</i>	what are you doing?
3SG	(ně) <i>něrgólòk</i>	he/she is tall	(ně) <i>něròga?</i>	what is he/she doing?
1PL INCL	(títé) <i>těrgólòk</i>	we and you are tall	(títé) <i>těròga?</i>	what are we and you doing?
1PL EXCL	(kam) <i>měrgólòk</i>	we not you are tall	(kam) <i>měròga?</i>	what are we not you doing?
2PL	(miò) <i>měrgólòk</i>	you all are tall	(miò) <i>měròga?</i>	what are you all doing?
3PL	(dě) <i>děrgólòk</i>	they are tall	(dě) <i>děròga?</i>	what are they doing?

I have observed some adjectives used differently from the scheme above, e.g. *kam kédar* ‘we are big’ from *kéda* ‘big’, where one would expect \**kam mērkéda*, but I cannot offer any explanation for this discrepancy at the moment. Apart from this, it is also possible to simply use the disjunctive pronoun with an adjective, e.g. *góěn kělorak* ‘I am small; it is me who is small’, which seems to put more stress on the pronoun than (*gò*) *kěrkělurak* ‘I am small’.

## Verbs

Many Atadei verbs are inflected in agreement with the subject, but do not indicate tense or aspect. The verbal inflection follows different patterns, which means that the personal marker may be prefixed, suffixed or absent, depending on the verb. In this paper, I indicate the verb class by subscript morphemes for the second and third person. This inflection is similar but not identical to the system used in Lamaholot. It is very different, though, from verbal derivation in Indonesian. I have found at least five verb classes, i.e. full prefixed conjugation, prefixed defective, suffixed defective, irregular, and absent conjugation. Most verbs that I have come across belong to the last group, while only one example each could be found for the defective and irregular conjugation. The following conjugation scheme shows all five groups exemplified by *kia<sub>m/n</sub>* ‘to live’, *ka<sub>g</sub>* ‘to eat’, *òlig<sub>g/ng</sub>* ‘to come’, *lěbò-<sub>irr</sub>* ‘to take a bath’ and *nang<sub>∅</sub>* ‘to swim’:

	root group	<i>kia</i> <i>m/n</i>	<i>ka</i> <i>g</i>	<i>òlig-</i> <i>g/ng</i>	<i>lěbò-</i> <i>irr</i>	<i>nang</i> <i>∅</i>
person						
1SG	<i>gò</i>	<i>kia</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>òlig</i>	<i>lěbòkěg</i>	<i>nang</i>
2SG	<i>mò</i>	<i>mia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òlig</i>	<i>lěbòk</i>	<i>nang</i>
3SG	<i>ně</i>	<i>nia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òling</i>	<i>lěbòkěm</i>	<i>nang</i>
1PL INCL	<i>tité</i>	<i>ťia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òligěhě</i>	<i>lěbhò</i>	<i>nang</i>
1PL EXCL	<i>kam</i>	<i>mia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òligěm</i>	<i>lěbòkěm</i>	<i>nang</i>
2PL	<i>miò</i>	<i>mia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òligěm</i>	<i>lěbòm</i>	<i>nang</i>
3PL	<i>dě</i>	<i>ďia</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>òling</i>	<i>lěbhò</i>	<i>nang</i>

Verbs belonging to the *m/n* group that I have encountered during my stay in Lembata are *kèi* ‘to go’, *kèn* ‘to drink’, *kětěn* ‘to know’, *kia* ‘to live’, and probably \**kèk* ‘to say’, of which I have only come across *mèk* ‘we (excl.) say’. For the *g* group only *ka* ‘to eat’, for the *g/ng* group only *òlig* ‘to come’, and for the irregular group only *lěbò-* ‘to take a bath’ can be offered for the time being. By far, most verbs seem not to conjugate at all: *běngolěng* ‘to hit’, *buai* ‘to eat’, *dor dėngé* ‘to follow, to obey’, *gěpar* ‘to tell(?)’, *kantar*<sup>15</sup> ‘to sing’, *lěbu* ‘to bathe (someone)’, *nang* ‘to swim’, *panau* ‘to go’, *péhěněng* ‘to hold’, *rupa* ‘to see’, *těděk* ‘to say’, *tóbé* ‘to sit’, and *tui* ‘to want’.

## SYNTACTIC FEATURES

The syntax of the languages on Lembata Island and around is still understudied, but I shall at least mention how negation, interrogation, and some deictic expressions work in Atadei. There is still a lot more to say about the syntax of Atadei, but sufficient data is missing.

### Negation

Negation in Atadei is formed by the particle *těk*, placed directly before the verb, and the particle *hi* at the end of the sentence. However, the final *hi* is optional in some cases:

- (22) (*Dě*)            *těk*    *d-ia*        *rěbé*    *hi*  
                          3PL.PROCL    NEG    3PL-live    here    NEG  
                          ‘They do **not** live here’

- (23) *Kam pəŋghasilan wulan tu tək sampé rib rat léma hi*  
 1PL.EXCL earnings month one NEG until thousand hundred five NEG  
 ‘Our monthly income is not even five hundred thousand rupiah’
- (24) *Rěbé tək no kěnik*  
 here NEG there.is rice  
 ‘There is no rice here’

To express an action that has not yet taken place, Atadei makes use of the particle *nawa-* ‘(not) yet’, which is inflected for person and number and placed before the negation particle *tək* ‘not’. The sentence-final particle *hi* is obligatory. The inflection of *nawa-* can be seen from the following sample sentences:

- (25) a. (*Gò*) *nawa-k-ěg tək k-èn téh hi*  
 1SG.PROCL not.yet-SG-1SG NEG 1SG-drink tea NEG  
 ‘I have not drunk tea yet’
- b. (*Mò*) *nawa-k-ěm tək m-èn téh hi*  
 2SG.PROCL not.yet-SG-2SG NEG 2SG-drink tea NEG  
 ‘You have not drunk tea yet’
- c. (*Ně*) *nawa-k-Ø tək n-èn téh hi*  
 3SG.PROCL not.yet-SG-3SG NEG 3SG-drink tea NEG  
 ‘He/She has not drunk tea yet’
- d. (*Kam*) *nawa-Ø-m tək m-èn téh hi*  
 1PL.EXCL.PROCL not.yet-PL-1PL.EXCL NEG 1PL.EXCL-drink tea NEG  
 ‘We (excl.) have not drunk tea yet’
- e. (*Tité*) *nawa-Ø-ha tək t-èn téh hi*  
 1PL.INCL.PROCL not.yet-PL-1PL.INCL NEG 1PL.INCL-drink tea NEG  
 ‘We (excl.) have not drunk tea yet’
- f. (*Miò*) *nawa-Ø-m tək m-èn téh hi*  
 2PL.PROCL not.yet-PL-2PL NEG 2PL-drink tea NEG  
 ‘We (incl.) have not drunk tea yet’
- g. (*Dě*) *nawa-Ø-i tək d-èn téh hi*  
 3PL.PROCL not.yet-PL-3PL NEG 3PL-drink tea NEG  
 ‘They have not drunk tea yet’

For the time being, I can say that *nawa-* is the only particle that must be inflected for person. It may also be an auxiliary verb with suffixed conjugation.

### Interrogation

Simple yes–no questions in Atadei have the same syntactic structure as declarative clauses with altered intonation. An optional interrogative particle *bò* may be used at the beginning of the sentence.

- (26) (*Bò*) (*mò*) *m-èn téh ké?*  
 Q 2SG.PROCL 2SG-drink tea already  
 ‘Have you (sg.) drunk tea already?’

As already explained earlier in this paper there is a special verb for the question ‘what ... doing?’, i.e. *-òga* (27). This is similar to the colloquial Indonesian construction *ngapain* (27'). The difference between Atadei and Indonesian is that *-òga* is morphologically not overt, while *ngapain* does contain the word *apa* ‘what’:

- (27) (*Miò*) *měr-òga?* (27') *Kalian ng-apa-in?*  
 2PL 2PL-do.what 2PL TR-what-CAUS  
 ‘What are you (pl.) doing?’ ‘What are you (pl.) doing?’

Interrogative adverbs may be placed at the beginning or at the end of a sentence:

- (28) *Mò òlig-Ø jěma pira?*  
 2SG.PROCL come-2SG hour how.much  
 ‘When do you want to come?’
- (29) *Mò m-èi rěga?*  
 2SG.PROCL 2SG-go where  
 ‘Where are you going?’
- (30) *Bò an kě ně panau?*  
 Q what ? 3SG.PROCL go  
 ‘Why is he going/did he go?’
- (31) *Něbé bò harga pira?*  
 this Q price how.much  
 ‘How much is this?’
- (32) *Nayan-ěm éna?*  
 name-2SG.POSS who  
 ‘What’s your name?’

The interrogative adverb *what* is translated as *an* in Atadei. It is not clear what *bò naoga* means, as it is used for *how* in Atalojo Atadei, but seems to mean *why* in Western Atadei.

### Deictic Expressions

In Atadei, pronominal and adnominal demonstratives are morphologically identical. The adnominal demonstratives follow the noun they modify, for example:

- (33) *Gò lěbu anakěn něbò*  
 1SG.PROCL bathe child that  
 ‘I bathe that child’

Atadei distinguishes at least four locative adverbs, i.e. *rěbé* ‘here’, *rěwal* ‘there’, *rělau* ‘down there’, *rějé* ‘up there, atop’. The interrogative adverb for location is *rěga* ‘where’. Deictic adpositions appear after, before or around the noun they refer to. The following five examples should suffice to show the syntactical features of Atadei adpositions:

- (34) *Una kěněmata nó lalan*  
 house in.front.of.door there.is street  
 ‘There is a street in front of the house’
- (35) *Tité tóbé rěbé bělakang una*  
 1PL.INCL sit here behind house  
 ‘We are sitting here behind the house’
- (36) *Gò motor na běyé una papa*  
 1SG.PROCL motorbike there.is next.to.CIRC house next.to.CIRC  
 ‘My motorbike is next to the house’
- (37) *Gò ina-g na wěl una òra*  
 1SG.PROCL mother-1SG .POSS there.is inside.CIRC house inside.CIRC  
 ‘My mother is inside the house’
- (38) *Kam manuk na yé una uwung*  
 1PL.EXCL.PROCL chicken there.is on.top.CIRC house on.top.CIRC  
 ‘My chicken is on the house’

The origin of the Atadei adpositions above are not known to me. Circumpositions do appear in various languages around the world, but are a relatively rare phenomenon. It is not clear why both

Atadei and Lamaholot (Nishiyama & Kelen, 2007, pp. 89-90) use circumpositions, as it does not seem to be an areal feature. The closely related Sika language only has prepositions. Tetum, however, is the best-known language in the area to employ quasi-circumpositions with *iha* (usually called locative marker) and a deictic postposition (Williams-van Klinken et al., 2002, pp. 29-30).

## CONCLUSION

This paper has briefly shown how the Eastern Atadei language works and has given an overview of its phonology, morphology, and basic syntactic features. So far, this paper has been the first description about the Atadei language, and I would argue that it may safely be called a language on its own, having at least two mutually intelligible dialects: Eastern Atadei (previously called *Painara*) and Western Atadei (may be called *Kalikasa dialect*). The feature of inalienability possession and clause-final negation are a clear indicator of a Papuan substratum in Atadei, probably due to language contact with the neighboring Alor-Pantar languages.

## NOTES

\* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for very helpful comments on the earlier drafts.

<sup>1</sup> List of Abbreviations: A: adjective, ACD: Austronesian Comparative Dictionary (Blust & Trussel), At.: Atadei, C: consonant, Det: determiner, id.: the same meaning as the aforementioned, IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet, N: noun, NP: noun phrase, PAN: Proto-Austronesian, PMP: Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, SIL: Summer Institute of Languages, V: vowel, +v: voiced, -v: unvoiced; List of Glossing Abbreviations: CAUS: causative, CIRC: circumpositions, EMPH: emphatic element, EXCL: exclusive, INCL: inclusive, NEG: negative particle, PL: plural, POSS: possessive, PROCL: proclitic, Q: interrogative particle, RED: reduplication, SG: singular, TR: transitive prefix.

<sup>2</sup> The designation is a compound of *ata* ‘man, human being’ and *dèi*, a dialectal variant of *dir* ‘to stand’, both of them being Austronesian root words: PAN *\*qa(R)(CiT)a* ‘alien people’ with PMP *\*qaRta* (Blust, 1972) and PAN *\*diyí* ‘to stand’ (Wolff, 2010, p. 822) or PAN *\*diRi* (ACD, 7386).

<sup>3</sup> SIL International (<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/lmf>) names the language of the same area South Lembata (ISO code: *lmf*), but this categorization seems to represent several dialects that are told apart by the people of the Atadei district. The specific isolect of the Atadei district is called *Bahasa Atadei* in Indonesian, and this is also the language described in this paper, more precisely the eastern variant of it.

<sup>4</sup> No official information is available for the number of people speaking the Atadei language. The most recent and accurate census (Sensus Penduduk 2010) does not list individual groups of Lembata Island. The number is, therefore, taken from what has been stated by the SIL International on the South Lembata language, supported by the Hanna Fricke’s (Leiden University, personal communication) estimation of Western Atadei (3,000 inhabitants) and Eastern Atadei (between 3,000 and 5,000 inhabitants).

<sup>5</sup> My main informants were the son of the family, Chanz Tukas, and his parents Philipus Gego Tukan and Yuliana Pega Within. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them very much for all the information they gave me and for their hospitality during my stay in their house in Lewoleba.

<sup>6</sup> This is my own data collected during my stay in Lewoleba with a family from Atalojo.

<sup>7</sup> Data taken from Pampus (1999).

<sup>8</sup> Data taken from Nishiyama & Kelen (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Data taken from Samely (1991).

<sup>10</sup> The final *-r* in Atadei is probably an old remnant of a nominative marker still found in neighboring dialects (Hanna Fricke, personal conversation). Some other dialects also have the final *-r* without marking the nominative, e.g. Lewotala: *aoru*, Imulolo: *aor*, Lewuka *aor*, Lewokukun: *aoru*, Mingar: *aoru*; Lewopenutu: *aoru* (data taken from Keraf, 1978, pp. 409-423). Keraf (1978, p. 423) also lists *aho* ‘dog’ for Painara, being the same language as Atadei, however according to my observation it is *aor*.

<sup>11</sup> In Standard German, the adjective *klein* ‘small’ is not inflected in predicate position, e.g. *Der Tisch ist klein-Ø* ‘The table is small’, however it is inflected by case, number, and gender in attributive position, e.g. *der kleine Tisch* ‘the small table’. In French, the modifier *petit* ‘small’ agrees with the head noun *table* ‘table’ in any position, e.g. *La table est petite* ‘The table is small’, and *la petite table* ‘the small table’. The Atadei adjective works similar to German.

<sup>12</sup> This word is probably a direct loan from Portuguese, although it also exists in Indonesian.

<sup>13</sup> Compare French *moi* ‘I, me’, *toi* ‘you’ etc.

<sup>14</sup> There seem to be exceptions to this rule, e.g. 1PL EXCL: *kam limam* ‘our (excl.) hands’, not *\*kam lim(a)ha*, whereas *limaha* ‘our (excl.) hands’ is said to be correct. The construction *mò unan* ‘your house’ is more frequently used than the correct *mò unam*, whereas it is normal to say *mò lim* ‘your foot’, but not *\*mò lin*.

<sup>15</sup> This word is a loanword from Portuguese *cantar* ‘to sing’, also found in several dialects of Lamaholot, but not in Kedang, which uses *lali*, and Indonesian, which has *bernyanyi*.

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