

Unveiling Acehnese Subject Properties: A Typological Analysis of Grammatical Relations and Behaviors

Juliana Juliana ^{1*} & Mulyadi Mulyadi ²

¹ Universitas Potensi Utama, Medan, Indonesia

² Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

juliana.ssmsi@gmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 2024-05-31

Revised : 2024-08-03

Accepted : 2024-08-08

KEYWORDS

Acehnese language
Grammatical relations
Linguistic diversity
Syntactic typology
Word order
Sentence structure
Typological analysis



ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive typological analysis of the grammatical characteristics of subjects in Acehnese, focusing on the unique subject properties in this lesser-studied language. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive methodology, data were sourced from Acehnese language corpora and existing grammatical accounts. Selective sampling identified 200 sentences, which were analyzed across six syntactic parameters: fronting, floating quantifier, control, relativization, word order, and interrogative sentence construction. The analysis employed distributional and permutation techniques to identify patterns and deviations in subject behavior. Findings reveal that Acehnese subjects, typically noun phrases preceding verbs, can function as patients in transitive clauses without distinct marking. Crucially, Acehnese does not conform to a single 'subject' relation; instead, syntactic processes differentiate between Actor and Undergoer roles. This non-conformity to conventional typological theories underscores the unique syntactic structure of Acehnese. The results highlight the flexible and complex nature of grammatical relations in Acehnese, challenging traditional notions of subjecthood. This study contributes significantly to the broader understanding of syntactic diversity, emphasizing the need for refined and flexible theoretical frameworks in grammatical relations. By illuminating the intricate grammatical systems in Acehnese, the research underscores the importance of adaptable models in linguistic theory to accurately capture the diversity and complexity inherent in human languages. This insight is crucial for advancing linguistic typology and enhancing comparative linguistic analysis in the Southeast Asian region.

1. Introduction

Grammatical relations, particularly the concept of the subject, form the cornerstone of linguistic typology, offering critical insights into the structure and function of languages. Subjects, typically realized as nouns or noun phrases, play a pivotal role in both intransitive and transitive clauses, occupying the highest echelon in the grammatical hierarchy (Keenan, 2014b; Shopen, 1985; Comrie, 2014). This hierarchical prominence is evident in intransitive clauses where the subject is the sole core argument, and in transitive clauses where it holds the highest grammatical function (Blake, 2001, 2016). As Comrie (1983, 1989) elucidates, the subject is prototypically an agent and often serves as the topic of a sentence, the argument that experiences the action of the transitive verb, positioned second in the grammatical hierarchy after the subject (Li, 1976).

The distinct grammatical characteristics and behavioral traits of subjects can be categorized into autonomy, case markers, semantic roles, and immediate dominance (Keenan, 2014; Song, 2014; Blake, 2001; Primus, 2015; Jufrizal, 2018). Autonomy traits include free existence, non-displacement, and self-reference. Case marker traits involve the unmarked status of subjects in intransitive sentences and changes in case markers in causatives and nominalizations. Semantic roles pertain to the subject expressing the agent of an action or the purpose phrase in imperative forms. Immediate dominance refers to the hierarchical position of subjects within grammatical relations. However, these traits are not absolute and exhibit considerable variation across languages, as noted by Jufrizal (2018).

Despite extensive research into grammatical relations, particularly subject properties, the field remains ripe with questions and unexplored territories.

For example, while subjects are universally acknowledged as key grammatical functions, the specifics of their behaviors and categorizations can vary significantly. Various studies have focused on autonomy traits, case markers, and semantic roles, yet there remains a gap in comprehensive analyses of these features across different languages. [Blake \(2001\)](#) and [Keenan \(2014\)](#) have provided foundational insights, but their frameworks often do not account for the full range of syntactic behaviors observed in lesser-studied languages like Acehnese.

The grammatical relations in Acehnese, one of Indonesia's most widely used regional languages, have been the subject of numerous studies ([Durie, 1988](#)). However, these studies have not thoroughly examined the subject properties within a typological framework, particularly focusing on the subjugation and behavior of subjects. Previous research has often overlooked specific grammatical tests such as restriction, threshold, control, relativization, word order, and interrogative sentence formation ([Artawa, 2018](#)). This study seeks to address these gaps by applying these grammatical tests to analyze Acehnese subject behavior comprehensively ([Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018](#)).

The significance of this research lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of Acehnese grammar within a typological framework. By providing valuable data for comparative linguistic analysis in the Southeast Asian region, the study contributes to the documentation and preservation of Acehnese linguistic structures. Additionally, it supports language revitalization efforts and tests the applicability and effectiveness of [Artawa's \(2018\)](#) parameters in analyzing a language that challenges traditional notions of subjecthood ([Wardana, 2023](#)). The findings may inform debates about universal versus language-specific features, refining typological research methodologies ([Sales, 2022](#)).

This study offers several original contributions to the field of linguistic typology and deepens our comprehension of Acehnese grammar. While previous studies have explored various facets of Acehnese syntax, this research stands as the first comprehensive examination of subject properties in the language utilizing the complete range of typological parameters put forth by [Artawa \(2018\)](#) ([Jufrizal et al., 2006](#)). The investigation uncovers a distinctive arrangement of subject characteristics in Acehnese that challenges established concepts of grammatical relations ([Velupillai, 2013](#)). Specifically, the study reveals how Acehnese lacks a cohesive 'subject' relation, instead showing a division between Actor and Undergoer properties that transcend the intransitive/transitive distinction ([Durie, 1987](#)). This discovery has significant implications for typological theory, indicating the necessity for more refined models of grammatical relations capable of accommodating languages with similar complexities ([Mustafa, 2023](#)).

By systematically analyzing the syntactic behavior of Acehnese subjects, this research highlights the need for more nuanced and flexible models in linguistic theory.

In the following sections, the study systematically applies [Artawa's \(2018\)](#) parameters to analyze Acehnese subject behaviors. This approach reveals complex behaviors that challenge traditional typological frameworks, emphasizing the diversity of syntactic systems across languages. The findings demonstrate that the grammatical relations in Acehnese do not conform to a singular 'subject' relation but instead differentiate between Actor and Undergoer roles. The concluding sections of this paper discuss the broader implications of these findings. By shedding light on the intricate nature of grammatical relations in Acehnese, the study promotes a better understanding of syntactic diversity and the array of potential grammatical systems present in human languages ([Artawa, 2004](#); [Karimova et al., 2023](#)). It underscores the necessity for refined theoretical frameworks that can better capture the complexity of linguistic phenomena across different languages, thereby advancing the field of typological linguistics. Additionally, this research enriches the domain of Austronesian linguistics by providing an intricate case study of non-traditional subject behavior in a lesser-studied member of the language family ([Legate, 2011](#)).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Grammatical Alliance System

The grammatical alliance system involves grouping basic semantic-grammatical units: Subject (S), Agent (A), and Patient (P). These units are essential for understanding the relationship between intransitive and transitive clauses in linguistic typology. According to [Artawa \(2018\)](#), this system is a fundamental concept in cross-linguistic typology, determining the argument structure of a basic clause through syntactic and semantic roles ([Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018](#); [Basaria, 2018](#)). Specifically, in intransitive clauses, S represents the sole argument, while in transitive clauses, A is the agent and P is the patient ([Artawa, 2018:116](#)).

[Artawa \(2018:117\)](#) further classifies languages based on their grammatical alliance systems. In ergative-absolutive typologies, the patient argument (P) is treated the same as the intransitive subject (S), while the agent argument (A) is treated differently ($S = P, \neq A$). Conversely, in nominative-accusative typologies, the intransitive subject (S) is treated the same as the agent (A), with the patient (P) receiving different treatment ($S = A, \neq P$) ([Shopen, 1985](#); [Dixon, 1994](#)). This distinction highlights the diverse ways languages can align their syntactic structures, influencing our understanding of grammatical relations across linguistic systems.

2.2 Grammatical Relation

Grammatical relations refer to foundational assumptions about sentence structures in linguistic typology. These assumptions include the concept that predicator structures can be universally applied to all languages and that arguments within clauses differ in their semantic roles and grammatical markers (Comrie, 1983). Typically, these roles are divided into agents (perpetrators) and patients (sufferers), marked by grammatical features (Humairah et al., 2023). Besides these primary roles, other grammatical roles include beneficiary, locative, and instrumental, providing additional layers of semantic meaning.

Relational Grammar expands on these roles by introducing the concepts of direct object (OL) and indirect object (OTL), which are purely syntactic relations, while oblique (OBL) relations are semantic and include locative, benefactive, and instrumental roles (Jufrizal, 2016; Artawa & Purnawati, 2020). This differentiation between syntactic and semantic grammatical relations underscores the complexity and variability of language structures, necessitating a nuanced approach to analyzing and categorizing grammatical functions.

2.3 Subjecthood

The concept of subjecthood is integral to understanding grammatical relations, as subjects are typically defined as actors or doers within a sentence and often serve as the topic (Humairah et al., 2023). The determination of subjects is based on grammatical, rather than semantic or pragmatic, criteria. Cross-linguistically, subjects can be identified through various morphosyntactic tests, including case marking, correspondence, word order, omission, binding, relativization, and obligatory presence (Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018).

Additional methods for determining subjecthood include reduction, threshold, control, order pattern, and interrogative sentence formation. These methods highlight the diverse strategies languages employ to encode subject properties, illustrating the variability and complexity of grammatical systems (Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018). Understanding these tests and their applications is crucial for accurately identifying and analyzing subjects across different languages and linguistic frameworks.

2.4. Grammatical Relations and Subjecthood: Implications for the Study of Acehnese

The literature on grammatical alliance systems, grammatical relations, and subjecthood reveals comprehensive theoretical frameworks and empirical findings that enhance our understanding of language typology. Artawa (2018) offers foundational insights into how languages align their syntactic structures, distinguishing between ergative-absolutive and

nominative-accusative typologies, which is crucial for understanding syntactic diversity.

Grammatical relations, as detailed by Comrie (1983) and expanded through Relational Grammar, demonstrate the complexity of syntactic and semantic roles within clauses. The differentiation between syntactic (S, OL, OTL) and semantic (OBL) relations highlights the intricate interplay between syntax and semantics in shaping grammatical structures.

The concept of subjecthood, explored through various morphosyntactic tests, underscores the importance of grammatical criteria in identifying subjects. Artawa and Jufrizal (2018) provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing subject properties, emphasizing the need for a multifaceted approach to understanding grammatical relations.

Despite a robust foundation in the existing literature, several gaps remain. There is a need for more empirical studies applying these theoretical frameworks to lesser-studied languages, such as Acehnese, and further research is necessary to explore the interaction between syntactic alignment and morphosyntactic tests for subjecthood in diverse linguistic contexts. This study addresses these gaps by applying Artawa's (2018) parameters to analyze the subject properties in Acehnese. By doing so, it contributes to the broader field of linguistic typology, providing valuable data for comparative analysis and enhancing our understanding of syntactic diversity.

3. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research methodology rooted in linguistic typology theory, as described by Sugiyono (2014). The research was conducted in three primary phases, as delineated by Creswell and Miller (2000): Data Collection Stage, Data Identification Stage, and Data Analysis Stage (Sugiono, 2018).

3.1 Data Collection

The primary sources of data were published works and papers on Acehnese grammar and syntax, comprising 3-5 crucial sources with complete citations. The data consisted of Acehnese sentences featuring verbal clauses that exhibit diverse grammatical relationships. Selective sampling was employed to choose sentences that specifically showcased the subject characteristics under scrutiny. A total of 200 Acehnese sentences were collected for examination, deemed sufficient to saturate the analytical categories based on analogous typological investigations (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.2 Data Identification

During the Data Identification Stage, the collected sentences were classified according to the six parameters of subject testing proposed by Artawa (2018): (a) Fronting, (b) Floating quantifier, (c)

Control, (d) Relativization, (e) Word order, and (f) Interrogative sentence formation. Each sentence was assigned codes corresponding to the pertinent parameter(s) it demonstrated (Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018).

3.3 Data Analysis

In the Data Analysis Stage, the study implemented the agih method, employing direct element division and permutation techniques as elucidated. The following analytical procedures were followed:

- 1) The sentences were segmented into their constituent elements.
- 2) The permutation technique was utilized to evaluate the positioning strength of elements within the grammatical framework.
- 3) Each sentence was scrutinized against the specific criteria for each of Artawa's (2018) six parameters.
- 4) The behavior of potential subject elements was recorded for each parameter.
- 5) Patterns and regularities across the dataset were identified and classified (Artawa & Purnawati, 2020).

To ensure credibility, two researchers independently coded and scrutinized 20% of the dataset. A reliability score of 0.85 was attained, indicating substantial consistency in applying the analytical framework. Findings were presented through a combination of descriptive analysis and illustrative examples of subject characteristics throughout the dataset (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2007).

4. Result

This section explores the grammatical characteristics of subjects in Acehnese, specifically examining their behavior across six syntactic parameters: fronting, floating quantifier, control, relativization, word order, and interrogative sentence construction. By investigating these areas, the study sought to understand how Acehnese subject properties align with or differ from typological norms. The findings highlight the behavioral traits of Acehnese subjects, revealing their unique syntactic patterns based on the subjugation tests (Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018).

These traits encompass fronting, threshold, control, relativization, sequence patterns, and interrogative sentence formation. This comprehensive analysis offers a nuanced view of how Acehnese subjects function within their linguistic framework, contributing to a broader understanding of syntactic behavior in lesser-studied languages.

Through this examination, the study provides insights into the distinct grammatical structures of Acehnese, enriching the field of syntactic typology and expanding the knowledge of language variation and complexity. The exploration of these parameters not only illustrates the particularities of Acehnese grammar but also situates it within a larger linguistic context, offering comparative perspectives that underscore both universal and language-specific syntactic phenomena (Artawa & Jufrizal, 2018).

4.1 Fronting

Fronting in Acehnese sentences is a syntactic phenomenon where constituents are moved to a different position within the sentence for pragmatic purposes. This involves raising and relocating the grammatical elements and functions of certain constituents from their basic position while maintaining their original semantic roles. This movement demonstrates the flexibility and distinctiveness of sentence structure in Acehnese. An example of this phenomenon is as follows:

a. Fronting of Patient Constituents

- 1) a. **Gopnyan geu-pajoh bu.**
Gopnyan (A) geu-pajoh (Verb) bu (P)
'He ate rice'
- b. **Bu geu-pajoh gopnyan.**
Bu (P) geu-pajoh (Verb) gopnyan (A)
'The rice he ate'

Sentence 1 (a) is a basic Acehnese transitive sentence with the order Actor (A) - Verb - Patient (P). No fronting occurs here.

Sentence 1 (b) shows fronting where the Patient *bu* (rice) moves to the beginning, changing the order to Patient - Verb - Actor (PVA). This emphasizes the Patient without altering the semantic roles: *bu* remains the Patient, and *gopnyan* remains the Actor. However, grammatically, the pre-verbal *bu* can be treated as the Subject, and the post-verbal *gopnyan* as the Object. This syntactic adjustment underscores the role of word order in conveying emphasis and highlighting specific sentence elements, a common feature in many languages. The fronting of *bu* to a pre-verbal position illustrates how Acehnese can manipulate syntactic structures to foreground particular components of a sentence. Such flexibility in assigning grammatical functions based on position rather than inherent properties of the nouns themselves demonstrates the dynamic nature of Acehnese syntax. This characteristic allows speakers to structure their sentences in a way that aligns with their communicative intentions, thereby enriching the expressive potential of the language. The treatment of the pre-verbal *bu* as the Subject and the post-verbal *gopnyan* as the Object reflects this adaptability and highlights the intricate relationship between syntax and semantics in Acehnese.

- 2) a. **Lôn lôn-bloe bajee barô.**
Lôn (A) lôn-bloe (Verb) bajee barô (P)
 'I bought a new shirt'

- b. **Bajee barô lôn-bloe lôn.**
Bajee barô (P) lôn-bloe (Verb) lôn (A)
 'I just bought a new shirt'

Sentence 2 (a) follows the basic order Actor (A) - Verb - Patient (P) with no fronting. Sentence 2 (b) demonstrates fronting where the Patient *bajee barô* (new shirt) is moved to the beginning, changing the order to Patient - Verb - Actor (PVA). This highlights the Patient without changing the semantic roles: *bajee barô* remains the Patient, and *lôn* remains the Actor. Grammatically, the pre-verbal *bajee barô* can be treated as the Subject, and the post-verbal *lôn* as the Object.

The fronting of patient constituents in Acehnese transitive sentences illustrates the language's flexible word order, allowing speakers to emphasize the Patient as the focus without altering the sentence's basic meaning. This process reflects the interaction between syntactic structure and information structure in Acehnese, accommodating the communicative needs of its speakers. By moving the Patient to the beginning of the sentence, speakers can foreground this element, thereby highlighting its importance or relevance within the context of the conversation.

This syntactic maneuverability underscores the role of word order as a strategic tool for managing focus and topicality in Acehnese discourse. Such flexibility not only enhances the language's expressive range but also demonstrates the intricate ways in which syntactic and informational structures are intertwined. The ability to front patient constituents while maintaining semantic clarity and grammatical integrity exemplifies how Acehnese syntax supports diverse communicative functions.

This characteristic enables speakers to effectively convey emphasis and nuance, thereby enriching the overall communicative efficacy of the language. The interaction between syntactic structure and information structure in Acehnese, as seen in the fronting of patient constituents, highlights the dynamic and adaptable nature of the language's grammatical system.

b. Fronting of Verb Constituents

- 3) a. **Aneuk miet nyan geu-meuen bal.**
Aneuk miet nyan (A) geu-meuen (Verb) bal (P)
 'The little boy is playing ball'
- b. **Geu-meuen aneuk miet nyan bal.**
Geu-meuen (Verb) aneuk miet nyan (A) bal (P)
 'Playing the little boy with ball'

Sentence 3 (a) shows a basic Acehnese transitive structure with the order Actor (A) - Verb - Patient (P). The actor *aneuk miet nyan* (the little boy) is in the pre-verbal position, followed by the verb *geu-meuen* (to play) and the patient *bal* (ball). No fronting occurs.

Sentence 3 (b) demonstrates verb fronting. The verb *geu-meuen* (to play) is moved to the initial position before the Actor *aneuk miet nyan* (the little boy) and the Patient *bal* (ball).

This fronting changes the order from Actor - Verb - Patient (AVP) to Verb - Actor - Patient (VAP), emphasizing the action *geu-meuen* (to play). Despite this change, the semantic roles remain unchanged: *aneuk miet nyan* (the little boy) is still the Actor, and *bal* (ball) is still the Patient.

Grammatically, *aneuk miet nyan* continues as the Subject and *bal* as the Object, with their positions unchanged relative to each other. This flexibility in word order allows speakers to emphasize the verb's action without altering the sentence's basic meaning, reflecting the interaction between syntactic and information structure in Acehnese. The ability to rearrange elements within a sentence while preserving its core semantics highlights the importance of word order as a tool for managing focus and topicality. Such syntactic flexibility is a crucial aspect of Acehnese grammar, enabling nuanced expression and facilitating various pragmatic functions.

Additionally, this feature underscores the adaptability of Acehnese syntax in accommodating different communicative needs, demonstrating the dynamic relationship between form and function in language use. By allowing changes in word order to foreground specific parts of the sentence, Acehnese exemplifies how grammatical structures can support diverse informational and emphatic purposes, further illustrating the intricate interplay between syntax and discourse.

c. Fronting in Intransitive Sentences: Adjunct Constituents

- 4) a. **Droeneuh neu-jak u peukan.**
Droeneuh (A) neu-jak (Verb) u peukan (Adj)
 'You go to the market'
- b. **U peukan droeneuh neu-jak.**
U peukan (Adj) droeneuh (A) neu-jak (Verb)
 'To the market you go'

Sentence 4 (a) follows the basic structure of an intransitive sentence in Acehnese with the order Actor (A) - Verb - Adjunct (Adj). The actor *droeneuh* (you) is in the pre-verbal position, followed by the intransitive verb *neu-jak* (go), and the adjunct *u peukan* (to the market) in the post-verbal position. No fronting occurs.

Sentence 4 (b) demonstrates fronting of the adjunct. The adjunct *u peukan* (to the market), originally post-verbal, is moved to the initial position before the Actor *droeneuh* (you) and the verb *neu-jak* (go). This fronting changes the order from Actor - Verb - Adjunct (AVAdj) to Adjunct - Actor - Verb (AdjAV), emphasizing the location *u peukan* (to the market) as the main information. The semantic roles remain unchanged: *droeneuh* (you) is the Actor, and *u peukan* (to the market) is the adjunct expressing location.

Grammatically, *droeneuh* remains the Subject and *neu-jak* the Predicate. The fronting process changes the relative positions without altering the sentence's basic meaning, showing the flexibility of word order in Acehnese to emphasize certain information. This syntactic flexibility allows speakers to highlight different parts of the sentence based on the communicative context. By fronting the adjunct, the speaker can bring attention to the location, making it the focal point of the sentence. This characteristic of Acehnese syntax illustrates how word order can be manipulated to serve various discourse functions, thereby enhancing the language's expressive capabilities. The ability to rearrange sentence elements while preserving their semantic roles demonstrates the dynamic interaction between form and meaning in Acehnese, showcasing the language's adaptability in meeting the communicative needs of its speakers

- 5) a. **Gopnyan geu-beudoh laju.**
Gopnyan (S) *geu-beudoh* (Verb) *laju* (Adj)
 'He got up quickly'
- b. **Laju gopnyan geu-beudoh.**
Laju (Adj) *gopnyan* (S) *geu-beudoh* (Verb)
 'Quickly he got up'

Sentence 5 (a) follows the basic intransitive structure in Acehnese with the order Subject (S) - Verb - Adjunct (Adj). The subject *gopnyan* (he) is in the pre-verbal position, followed by the verb *geu-beudoh* (get up), and the adjunct *laju* (quickly) in the post-verbal position. No fronting occurs.

Sentence 5 (b) shows fronting of the adjunct. The adjunct *laju* (quickly), originally post-verbal, is moved to the initial position before the Subject *gopnyan* (he) and the verb *geu-beudoh* (get up). This fronting changes the order from Subject - Verb - Adjunct (SVAdj) to Adjunct - Subject - Verb (AdjSV), emphasizing the manner *laju* (quickly) as the main information. The semantic roles remain unchanged: *gopnyan* (he) is the Subject, and *laju* (quickly) is the adjunct expressing manner.

Grammatically, *gopnyan* remains the Subject and *geu-beudoh* the Predicate. The fronting process changes the relative positions without altering the sentence's basic meaning, demonstrating the flexibility of word order in Acehnese to emphasize

certain information. This syntactic flexibility highlights how Acehnese speakers can manipulate sentence structure to foreground specific elements according to their communicative intentions. By fronting the adjunct, the speaker underscores the manner of the action, making it the focal point of the sentence. This ability to rearrange components while maintaining semantic integrity exemplifies the dynamic nature of Acehnese syntax. It shows how the language accommodates various discourse needs, allowing speakers to tailor their messages for clarity, emphasis, or stylistic effect. The interaction between syntactic structure and information focus in Acehnese thus reveals a sophisticated grammatical system that supports effective and nuanced communication

4.2 Penjangka Kambang (A floating Quantifier)

A floating quantifier in Acehnese does not need to appear next to the noun it modifies; it can "float" to other positions in the clause. This differs from typical quantifiers that stay with their nouns. In Acehnese active sentences, the floating quantifier tests whether the agent can bind the theme.

- 1) a. **Tieptiep maq geu-lindong aneuk geuh.**

'Every mother protects her child'

- b. **Aneuk geuh geu-lindong tieptiep maq.**

'Her child protects every mother'

In sentence 1 (a), *tieptiep maq* (every mother) is the subject or agent of the action *geu-lindong* (protect), and *aneuk geuh* (her child) is the object or theme. The quantifier *tieptiep* (every) is syntactically bound to the noun *maq* (mother). The possessive pronoun *geuh* (her) refers back to *maq* (mother), indicating that each mother protects her own child. This shows that the agent can bind the theme using a coreferential possessive pronoun.

In sentence 1 (b), the object *aneuk geuh* (her child) is fronted, and the quantifier *tieptiep* (every) is separated from *maq* (mother). The pronoun *geuh* (her) no longer refers back to *maq* (mother), changing the meaning to "a particular child protects every mother." This separation shows that the agent cannot bind the theme when the quantifier floats, demonstrating the interaction between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation in Acehnese.

This syntactic phenomenon illustrates how word order affects the coreferential relationship between the subject and object in Acehnese. When *tieptiep maq* remains intact, the possessive pronoun *geuh* establishes a clear link between the agent and the theme, preserving the intended meaning. However, when *aneuk geuh* is fronted and the quantifier is separated from the noun it quantifies, the possessive pronoun loses its coreferential anchor, leading to a shift in meaning. This example highlights the

importance of syntactic cohesion in maintaining semantic clarity and demonstrates the intricate ways in which Acehnese handles possessive and quantifier structures. The ability to manipulate sentence components while navigating these coreferential relationships underscores the language's syntactic and semantic complexity, showcasing the nuanced interaction between grammatical forms and meaning in Acehnese.

- 2) a. **Karap mandeum gurèe geu-peu-runoe mured geuh.**

'Almost all the teachers taught their students'

- b. **Gurèe jih geu-peu-runoe karap mandeum mured.**

'His/her teacher taught almost all the students'

In sentence 2 (a), *karap mandeum gurèe* (almost all teachers) is the subject or agent of *geu-peu-runoe* (teaching), and *mured geuh* (their students) is the object or theme. The quantifier *karap mandeum* (almost all) is bound to *gurèe* (teacher). The pronoun *geuh* (their) refers back to *gurèe* (teacher), indicating that almost all teachers teach their respective students.

In sentence 2 (b), the subject *gurèe jih* (her teacher) is fronted, and the quantifier *karap mandeum* (almost all) is separated from *mured* (students). The pronoun *jih* (his) cannot refer back to *mured* (students), changing the meaning to "a particular teacher teaches almost all students." This demonstrates that the agent cannot bind the theme when the quantifier floats, showing how syntactic structure and semantic interpretation interact in Acehnese.

These examples show that when a quantifier appears with the noun it modifies, binding is possible through a coreferential possessive pronoun. However, when the quantifier floats and separates from the noun, binding between the agent and theme becomes semantically impossible. The process of *penjangka kambang* illustrates the flexibility of Acehnese syntax and its impact on semantic interpretation, revealing how floating quantifiers test the binding capabilities in active sentences.

The interaction between quantifiers and noun phrases in these sentences highlights the intricate relationship between syntax and semantics in Acehnese. When *karap mandeum* remains bound to *gurèe*, the possessive pronoun *geuh* successfully maintains its coreferential link, preserving the intended meaning. Conversely, when the quantifier is separated, the binding relationship is disrupted, altering the semantic interpretation of the sentence. This syntactic flexibility allows Acehnese speakers to manipulate sentence structure to convey different emphases and meanings, demonstrating the language's adaptability.

The examples underscore the significance of maintaining syntactic cohesion to ensure clear semantic interpretation, illustrating the sophisticated nature of Acehnese grammatical and interpretive mechanisms.

4.3 Control

The subject control structure with the verb *t'em* "want" in Acehnese determines the grammatical relationship between Agent (A), Patient (P), and Subject (S). The verb *t'em* "want" functions as a subject control verb, meaning the subject of the main verb (*t'em*) controls the subject of the subordinate verb, which is its complement (Legate, 2012).

- 1) a. **Dokto geu-t'em peu-ubat aneuk miet nyan.**

Doctor 3POL-wants to CAUS-drug the little boy

'The doctor wants to treat the little boy'

In this sentence, *t'em* (want) functions as a subject control verb. The subject of the main verb *t'em* (*dokto* - doctor) controls the subject of the subordinate verb *peu-ubat* (treat). Structurally, this sentence has two clauses: the main clause with *t'em* (want) and the subordinate clause with *peu-ubat* (treat). The subject of the main clause, *dokto* (doctor), is the Agent (A) of the action "want." Meanwhile, *aneuk miet nyan* (the little boy) is the Patient (P) of "treat" in the subordinate clause.

The grammatical relationships are: a. The Agent (A) *dokto* (doctor) controls the subject of the subordinate clause. *Dokto* is also the implicit Agent (A) of "treat" in the subordinate clause. b. The Patient (P) *aneuk miet nyan* (the little boy) does not influence the subject interpretation in the subordinate clause. c. The Subject (S) *dokto* (doctor) is the same as the Agent (A) of the main clause. The subordinate clause's subject is controlled by the main clause subject.

The control structure with *t'em* (want) shows that the Agent of the main clause controls the subject in the subordinate clause. In this example, *dokto* (doctor) as the Agent controls the interpretation of the subordinate clause's subject, indicating the doctor performs the action of "treating" (Legate, 2012).

This control relationship is crucial for understanding the syntactic and semantic interactions in Acehnese. By having the subject of the main clause (*dokto*) control the subject of the subordinate clause (*peu-ubat*), the sentence maintains a coherent and clear relationship between the two actions. The main clause Agent's influence over the subordinate clause's subject highlights the hierarchical structure of the sentence, where the main verb's subject dictates the subordinate verb's subject. This hierarchical control mechanism ensures that the meaning remains consistent and unambiguous, reinforcing the role of

the subject control verb in Acehnese syntax. Additionally, it illustrates how complex sentences are structured to convey precise relationships between actions and participants, further demonstrating the language's syntactic sophistication.

- 2) b. ***Dokto geu-t'em geu-peu-ubat aneuk miet nyan.**

3POL-wanting doctor 3POL-CAUS-medicated the little boy

'The doctor wants him to treat the little boy'

Sentence 1 (b) is ungrammatical. The subject control structure with *t'em* "want" indicates that the subject of the main verb controls the subject of the subordinate verb. In this sentence, *dokto* is the subject of the main verb *geu-t'em* and also the Agent (A). The subordinate verb *geu-peu-ubat* should refer to the same subject as the main verb *dokto*, but it does not, causing ungrammaticality.

Using the subject control structure and the verb *t'em* "want" in Acehnese, we identify the grammatical relationship between Agent (A), Patient (P), and Subject (S). Here, Agent (A) and Subject (S) are the same entity, *dokto*, while Patient (P) is *aneuk miet nyan*. The main verb *geu-t'em* controls the subject interpretation of the subordinate verb *geu-peu-ubat*, indicating that the subject of the main verb is responsible for the action expressed by the subordinate verb. The ungrammaticality arises because the subordinate verb *geu-peu-ubat* does not correctly reference *dokto* as its subject. In a correct subject control structure, the subject of both the main and subordinate verbs must be the same, ensuring a consistent and clear relationship between the actions described. The sentence fails to maintain this consistency, leading to a breakdown in grammatical structure.

4.4. Relativization

Relativization in Acehnese involves forming relative clauses to compare the behavior of the Agent (A) and Patient (P) towards the Subject (S). Relative clauses in Acehnese are formed by removing the relativized noun phrase (NP) from the relative clause along with any pronominal clitics that refer to it. Unlike many languages, Acehnese does not use relative pronouns. Instead, relative clauses are introduced by the marker "nyang," which functions as a complementizer.

- 1) a. **Gopnyan geu-jak u keudè bunoe.**

3POL-go to market earlier
'He went to the market earlier.'

- b. **Lôn-ngieng ureueng [nyang-jak u keudè bunoe].**

1S-see person COMP-go to market earlier
'I saw a person who went to the market earlier.'

In example (1b), the relative clause *nyang-jak u keudè bunoe* modifies the noun *ureueng* (person). The relativized NP *gopnyan* (him) is omitted from the relative clause, as well as the pronominal clitic *geu-* that refers to it. This demonstrates how Acehnese forms relative clauses without using a relative pronoun, relying instead on the complementizer *nyang*.

There are two types of relativization in Acehnese that correspond to two types of argument raising (fronting): core relativization and peripheral relativization. Core relativization involves the relativization of arguments that are essential to the verb, such as the subject or direct object. Peripheral relativization involves the relativization of less central arguments, such as indirect objects, oblique arguments, or adjuncts.

The process of forming relative clauses in Acehnese shows the interaction between syntactic structure and information structure in the language. By removing the relativized NP and its associated clitics, Acehnese speakers can create relative clauses that provide additional information about a noun without repeating elements that are understood from context. This syntactic feature enhances the clarity and economy of communication, contributing to the overall linguistic efficiency in Acehnese. Moreover, it reflects the language's ability to manage informational flow while maintaining coherence.

This method of relativization highlights Acehnese's reliance on syntactic and contextual cues rather than explicit pronouns to convey meaning. The use of the complementizer *nyang* allows for the integration of relative clauses in a manner that is both syntactically economical and semantically clear. The distinction between core and peripheral relativization further illustrates how different types of arguments are treated within relative clauses, reflecting their varying degrees of importance to the verb's action.

Core relativization, which deals with essential arguments, ensures that subjects and direct objects are prominently positioned and understood within the relative clause. Peripheral relativization, on the other hand, allows for the inclusion of additional, less central information without disrupting the core meaning of the sentence. This dual approach enables Acehnese speakers to construct sentences that are both informative and succinct, maintaining a balance between detail and brevity.

Overall, the formation of relative clauses in Acehnese underscores the language's capacity for nuanced expression and its efficient use of syntactic structures. By leveraging contextual understanding and the complementizer *nyang*, Acehnese achieves a high level of clarity and economy in communication, showcasing the sophisticated interplay between syntax and semantics in the language.

4.4.1 Core Relativization

In core relativization, the relativized expression holds the status of a core relation within the relative clause. If explicitly stated, this expression would function as an Actor, Undergoer, Dative NP, argument of a non-verbal predicate, ascended possessor, or Core NP raised from a subordinate clause. A key characteristic of core relativization is that the preverbal position, which is the target of argument raising, must remain empty and cannot be occupied by another Core NP (Durie, 1986). This can be illustrated with the following examples:

- 2) a. **Gopnyan geu-bloe moto nyan.**
3POL-buy that car
'He bought that car.'
- b. **Lôn-ngieng ureueng [nyang-bloe moto nyan].**
1S-see person REL-buy that car
'I saw the person who bought that car.'
- c. ***Lôn-ngieng ureueng [nyang-moto nyan geu-bloe].**
1S-see person REL-car that 3POL-buy
'(I saw the person who bought that car.)'

In (2b), the relative clause with core relativization is acceptable because the preverbal position is empty, allowing the relative clause to function correctly. The sentence means "I saw the person who bought that car," with *nyang-bloe moto nyan* (who bought that car) modifying *ureueng* (person).

In contrast, (2c) is unacceptable due to the presence of the core NP *moto nyan* (that car) in the preverbal position, which violates the rule that the preverbal position must remain empty in core relativization. This results in an ungrammatical sentence because *moto nyan* occupies the preverbal position while the Actor *gopnyan* (he) is also relativized, creating a conflict.

Core relativization in Acehnese thus demonstrates how the language manages syntactic structure to maintain clarity and grammaticality. The empty preverbal position is crucial for forming relative clauses that accurately convey relationships between the core arguments without redundancy or ambiguity. This highlights the language's syntactic rules and the importance of maintaining specific structural positions for successful relativization.

The requirement for an empty preverbal position ensures that the relative clause can seamlessly integrate into the main clause without disrupting the overall sentence structure. By adhering to this rule, Acehnese maintains a clear and unambiguous relationship between the elements of the sentence. This structural clarity is essential for conveying precise meaning, particularly in complex sentences

with multiple clauses. Furthermore, the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable relative clauses based on the presence of core NPs in the preverbal position underscores the importance of syntactic constraints in Acehnese grammar. These constraints help to avoid confusion and maintain the integrity of the sentence, ensuring that each element is correctly interpreted within its syntactic context.

The ability of Acehnese to manage such syntactic intricacies demonstrates the language's sophistication and its capacity to handle complex grammatical relationships. By following specific rules for core relativization, Acehnese speakers can construct sentences that are both grammatically correct and semantically clear, facilitating effective communication. This aspect of Acehnese syntax showcases the interplay between grammatical rules and meaning, highlighting the language's efficiency and precision in structuring information.

4.4.2 Peripheral Relativity

In peripheral relativization, the relativized expression has a peripheral status in the relative clause. If explicitly stated, this expression would be a prepositional phrase (PP) or adverbial NP. Unlike core relativization, there is no restriction on raising the Core NP in peripheral relative clauses. This can be illustrated with the following examples (Durie, 1987):

- 3) a. **Ureueng nyan lôn-kalôn bak jalan nyan baruoe.**
'I saw that person on that road yesterday.'
- b. **Lôn-jak bak jalan [nyang-ureueng nyan lôn-kalôn baruoe].**
'I went to the road where I saw that person yesterday.'

In (3b), the Core NP *ureueng nyan* (that person) can be raised to the preverbal position in a peripheral relative clause modifying "road," unlike in core relativization. This illustrates that peripheral relativization in Acehnese provides greater syntactic flexibility, allowing elements to be raised more freely compared to the more restricted core relativization structure. This distinction highlights the unique ways Acehnese handles relative clauses, offering insight into the broader syntactic possibilities of the language.

Thus, relativization in Acehnese indicates that: a. Both A (Agent) and P (Patient) can be the target of core relativization, but only one Core NP can be raised at a time. This shows that A and P are treated equally in core relativization. b. In peripheral relativization, there is no distinction between A, S (Subject), and P. All three can appear as a Core NP raised together with the peripheral expression. c. This relativization behavior is consistent with the general argument raising behavior in Acehnese, where only one Core NP can be raised at a time (Legate, 2011).

These characteristics highlight the syntactic rules governing relative clause formation in Acehnese, emphasizing the different treatments of core and peripheral elements within relative clauses. This distinction between core and peripheral relativization reflects the language's nuanced approach to syntactic structure and information presentation.

The flexibility in peripheral relativization allows Acehnese speakers to manipulate sentence structure to accommodate various communicative needs. By permitting multiple Core NPs to be raised with the peripheral expression, Acehnese can provide additional context and detail without compromising grammaticality. This flexibility contrasts with the stricter constraints of core relativization, where only one Core NP can be raised, ensuring clarity and preventing ambiguity.

The ability to raise different types of arguments (A, S, P) in peripheral relativization showcases the language's capacity to integrate diverse informational elements into a single clause. This integration enriches the sentence, allowing for a more detailed and comprehensive description of the action or state being described.

The consistency of these relativization patterns with the general argument-raising behavior in Acehnese underscores the language's systematic approach to syntax. By adhering to the rule that only one Core NP can be raised at a time, Acehnese maintains a clear and organized sentence structure, facilitating effective communication.

Overall, the distinction between core and peripheral relativization in Acehnese highlights the language's sophisticated syntactic mechanisms. These mechanisms enable speakers to construct sentences that are both grammatically correct and semantically rich, reflecting Acehnese's nuanced handling of syntactic structure and information presentation (Legate, 2011). This syntactic versatility contributes to the language's expressiveness and clarity, demonstrating the intricate interplay between grammatical rules and meaning in Acehnese.

4.5 Word Order

The word order between S (Subject), A (Agent), and P (Patient) in Acehnese sentences can be quite flexible, as shown in the following examples:

- 1) a. **Geu-woe**
3p return
'(S)he returned.'

This sentence consists of the intransitive verb *woe* (return) with a subject/agent marker '3p' attached to the verb. The lexical subject is not overtly present. The word order is [Intransitive verb-S].

- b. **H'an beusôt**
not loose
'It wouldn't come loose.'

This sentence has the intransitive verb *beusôt* (loose) with no lexically expressed subject or agent. The verb is preceded by the negation *h'an*. The word order is [Negation-Intransitive verb].

- 2) a. **Di-cok**
3f take
'(S)he took it.'

This sentence contains the transitive verb *cok* (take) with the agent marker '3f' attached to it. Neither the agent nor the patient is present as overt noun phrases. The word order is [A-Transitive verb].

- 3) a. **Ara nyan di-pubeureusih**
fig that U 3f tidy up
'They tidied up that fig tree.'

- b. **Geu-buka mön meuh**
3p open well gold U
'He opened the well of gold.'

Both sentences have transitive verbs with the agent marked by a clitic on the verb ('3f' and '3p') and the patient as noun phrases *ara nyan* (the fig tree) and *mön meuh* (the golden well). In (3a), the patient precedes the verb while in (3b) it follows the verb. The word orders are [P-A-Transitive verb] and [A-P-Transitive verb].

- 4) a. **Asèe nyan i-kap-keuh**
dog that A 3f bite 2f
'That dog will bite you.'

- b. **H'an geu-patéh-kuh gopnyan**
not 3p believe 1f 3p A
'(S)he doesn't believe me.'

Sentences (4a) and (4b) also contain transitive verbs with the agent marked on the verb ('3f' and '3p'). The patient is expressed by the clitics '2f' and '1f' attached directly to the verb. In (4a), there is the noun phrase *asèe nyan* (the dog) as the agent preceding the verb, while in (4b), the agent *gopnyan* (him) comes after the verb. The word orders are [A-Transitive verb-P] and [Negation-Transitive verb-P-A].

From these examples, it can be seen that in Acehnese sentences: a. The intransitive subject (S) can be omitted and marked only by clitics on the verb. b. The transitive agent (A) is generally marked on the verb and can be omitted or present as a noun phrase before or after the verb. c. The patient (P) can be a noun phrase flexibly positioned in front of or behind the verb, or simply a clitic attached to the verb. d. A common pattern is [A-Verb-(P)] or [P-A-Verb], with A and P being potentially omitted (Durie, 1987).

Thus, the order of S, A, and P constituents for verbs is quite flexible in Acehese; there is no rigid pattern. However, verbs tend to always come with the A/S marker attached to them. Based on the analysis of Acehese sentences, it can be concluded that Acehese has a fairly flexible word order pattern, especially in terms of the position of core arguments such as Subject (S), Agent (A), and Patient (P) in the sentence.

This highlights that Acehese exhibits flexible and less restrictive word order patterns, especially for core arguments. Although there is a tendency for the subject/agent to precede the verb and the patient to follow the verb, variations are possible without significantly changing the meaning of the sentence. The flexible word order in Acehese allows for various syntactic constructions while preserving the meaning of the sentence. This flexibility is especially useful for emphasizing different parts of the sentence or for accommodating different discourse contexts. The ability to omit certain elements, such as the subject or agent, while maintaining grammatical correctness through the use of clitics on the verb, further illustrates the language's syntactic versatility.

Additionally, the presence of clitics attached to the verb serves as a marker for the omitted arguments, ensuring that the sentence remains clear and unambiguous despite the omission of explicit noun phrases. This syntactic feature demonstrates how Acehese efficiently encodes grammatical relations and argument structure within the verb itself.

Overall, the analysis of Acehese sentences reveals a language that balances flexibility with clarity, allowing speakers to manipulate word order and argument structure to suit various communicative needs. This characteristic of Acehese syntax not only enhances expressive capabilities but also reflects the language's adaptability and efficiency in conveying meaning.

4.6 Question Sentence Formation

In Acehese, the formation of interrogative sentences involves the use of *wh*-words as well as the particle “*nyan*” which functions as a focus marker or relative clause marker. The constituent that is the focus of the question, be it the Actor or the Undergoer, will appear in front of the particle “*nyan*”. The affix attached to the verb in the interrogative sentence still indicates the Actor's features such as persona and social status, rather than referring to the subject of the sentence. The formation of interrogative sentences in Aceh can be seen in the following data

1). An interrogative sentence with the Actor as the focus:

- a. *Soe (nyan) geu-peu-ubat lôn?*
who C 3POL-CAUS-drug 1SG
'Who is treating me?'

- b. *Pajan Fatimah geu-kalon Ibrahim?*
when Fatimah 3POL-see Ibrahim
'When did Fatimah see Ibrahim?'

2. An interrogative sentence with Undergoer as the focus:

- a. *Peu (nyan) neu-bloe baroe?*
what C 2POL-bought yesterday
'What did you buy yesterday?'
- b. *Soe (nyan) noodles nyan di-kap lé asu?*
who C the cat was 3FAM-bitten by the dog
'Who (the cat) was bitten by the dog?'

3. A *yes/no* question sentence (polar question):

- a. *Peu neu-jak u keude?*
Q 2POL-go to market
'Did you go to the market?'
- b. *What is the geu-deungo lé droeneuh?*
Q news that PERF 3POL-heard by you
'Have you heard the news?'

Based on the data in sentences 1, 2, and 3, it can be seen that question words such as *soe* ('who'), *peu* ('what'), and *pajan* ('when') appear at the beginning of the sentence. The particle *nyan* can be used to mark the constituent that is the focus of the question. Affixes on verbs such as **geu*-, **neu*-, and **di*- indicate Actor features such as persona and social status. For example, *neu*- refers to a higher-status second person (2POL), **geu*- refers to a higher-status third person (3POL), while *di*- refers to a lower or familiar third person (3FAM). These affixes are present even if the argument acting as the Actor does not appear explicitly in the interrogative sentence. In *yes/no* polar questions, the particle '*peu*' is used at the beginning of the sentence to indicate that the sentence is a question that requires a *yes* or *no* answer.

The formation of interrogative sentences in Acehese involves an interaction between the interrogative word, the particle “*nyan*” as a focus marker, and affixes on verbs that indicate the Actor feature. The questioned constituent can act as either Actor or Undergoer, and no single grammatical relation such as 'subject' receives special treatment in Acehese interrogative constructions. The use of interrogative words at the beginning of the sentence establishes the question context right away. The particle *nyan* functions as a focus marker, highlighting the specific constituent that is being queried. This feature is particularly useful in ensuring that the focus of the question is clear and unambiguous, regardless of the word order or the presence of explicit noun phrases.

Affixes on verbs play a crucial role in maintaining clarity and providing additional context about the Actor's persona and social status. This

aspect of Acehnese syntax ensures that even in the absence of explicit noun phrases, the social dynamics and respect levels are communicated effectively. The presence of these affixes allows the interrogative sentence to convey nuanced social information, making the language both contextually rich and socially aware. In yes/no questions, the particle *'peu'* at the beginning of the sentence functions as a clear marker that a binary response is expected. This straightforward indicator simplifies the process of forming polar questions and provides a consistent structure for speakers to follow.

Overall, the interaction of interrogative words, focus markers, and verb affixes in Acehnese interrogative sentences illustrates the language's syntactic sophistication. It shows how Acehnese can efficiently encode complex grammatical and social information, ensuring clarity and precision in communication. This flexibility and richness in interrogative constructions highlight the adaptive and context-sensitive nature of Acehnese syntax, making it a robust system for various communicative scenarios.

5. Discussion

This study unveils crucial findings concerning the characteristics of subject behaviors in Acehnese through the utilization of a typological linguistic methodology. The outcomes offer fresh perspectives on the syntactic framework of Acehnese and enhance our comprehension of subject characteristics across various languages. This discussion will summarize the key results, provide a critical analysis, relate them to existing literature, address gaps in the field, speculate on their broader implications, and suggest future directions.

Our examination of fronting in Acehnese reveals a versatile sentence structure that allows the elevation of elements for pragmatic purposes. This adaptability extends beyond the subject to include both Patient and Verb elements, as demonstrated in sentences such as *"Bu geu-pajoh gopnyan"* ('The rice he ate') and *"Geu-meuen aneuk miet nyan bal"* ('Playing the little boy with the ball'). This flexibility aligns with concept of subject independence, which includes the potential for displacement within the sentence. However, our results indicate that in Acehnese, this adaptability is not limited to the subject alone. This finding supports Song's (2014) syntactic typology, which emphasizes the significance of variations in word order for characterizing language types. Acehnese demonstrates a higher degree of constituent order flexibility compared to many other languages, suggesting a unique syntactic behavior.

The study of floating quantifiers in Acehnese uncovers intriguing patterns that enhance our understanding of quantifier behavior and its relationship with subject properties. In sentences like

"Tieptiep maq geu-lindong aneuk geuh" ('Every mother protects her child') and *"Aneuk geuh geu-lindong tieptiep maq"* ('Her child protects every mother'), the quantifier *"tieptiep"* (every) can either be next to the noun it modifies or float away from it. This floating phenomenon significantly impacts semantic interpretation and binding relationships. These findings align with Sportiche's (2005) analysis of floating quantifiers in French, where quantifier float results from NP movement, positioning the quantifier in its base location. However, our observations in Acehnese suggest a more complex relationship between quantifier placement and semantic interpretation. The data supports Boas' (2010) view that floating quantifiers exhibit adverbial traits rather than functioning solely as nominal modifiers, as they can occupy different positions within the clause like adverbs. Additionally, the absence of binding opportunities when quantifiers float in Acehnese supports Benmamoun's (1999) assertion that floating quantifiers are influenced by the hierarchical structure of the clause.

Our examination of control structures in Acehnese, particularly involving the verb *t'em* 'want,' offers valuable insights into the characteristics of subject properties within the language. The verb *t'em* operates as a subject control verb, with the subject of the main verb influencing the interpretation of the subject in the subordinate clause. For instance, in *"Dokto geu-t'em peu-ubat aneuk miet nyan"* ('The doctor wants to treat the little boy'), *"dokto"* (doctor) acts as both the subject of the main verb *t'em* (want) and controls the implicit subject of the subordinate verb *peu-ubat* (treat). This behavior aligns with Landau's (2013) control theory, which argues that in subject control structures, the controller (e.g., *"dokto"*) and the controlee (the implicit subject of *"peu-ubat"*) must share reference. Unlike many Indo-European languages that use infinitival forms in control structures, Acehnese employs finite verb forms in both main and subordinate clauses, similar to Raposo's (1987) observations on Portuguese. The use of the causative prefix *"peu-* in the subordinate verb also raises questions about the relationship between control structures and valency-altering operations, as noted by Shibatani (2002).

The investigation of relativization in Acehnese reveals complex patterns that significantly contribute to the understanding of subject properties and grammatical relations in the language. Acehnese utilizes two types of relativization: core and peripheral. In core relativization, both Agent (A) and Patient (P) can be relativized, but only one core argument can be promoted to the pre-verbal position, as seen in the grammaticality of *"Lôn-ngieng ureueng [nyang-bloe moto nyan]"* ('I saw the person who bought that car') and the ungrammaticality of *"Lôn-ngieng ureueng [nyang-moto nyan geu-bloe]"* ('I saw the person who bought that car'). This aligns with Keenan's (2014)

Accessibility Hierarchy, which posits that subject are the most accessible for relativization across languages. In peripheral relativization, there is no distinction among A, S, and P, allowing any of these to be raised along with peripheral expressions, as illustrated in "*Lôn-jak bak jalan [nyang-ureueng nyan lôn-kalôn baruoe]*" ('I went to the road where I saw that person yesterday'). This supports [Croft's \(2001\)](#) argument for construction-specific grammatical relations.

The study of word order in Acehnese uncovers significant flexibility, challenging traditional notions of strict word order classification. Despite preferred sequences, Acehnese allows variability in the arrangement of Subject (S), Agent (A), Patient (P), and Verb (V) constituents. Examples such as "*Gopnyan geu-woe*" ('(S)he returned'), "*di-cok*" ('(S)he took it'), and "*ara nyan di-pubeureusih*" ('They cleaned that fig tree') showcase diverse feasible word sequences like VS, AV, and PAV. This flexibility aligns with [Dryer's \(2008\)](#) observation that languages with elaborate verbal morphology often exhibit more adaptable word orders.

However, verbs in Acehnese consistently carry the A/S marker, indicating that while word order is flexible, morphological marking is crucial for denoting grammatical relationships. This interaction between flexible word order and morphological marking supports [Nichols' \(1986\)](#) concept of head-marking languages.

The formation of interrogative sentences in Acehnese provides additional insights into the nature of grammatical relations and subject properties. The system does not favor any particular grammatical relation, as seen in "*Soe (nyan) geu-peu-ubat lôn?*" ('Who is treating me?') and "*Peu (nyan) neu-bloe baroe?*" ('What did you buy yesterday?'). Both Actor-like and Patient-like elements can be interrogated using the same structural format, with the questioned component appearing at the beginning of the sentence followed by the optional particle "*nyan*". This approach corresponds with [Siemund's \(2001\)](#) categorization of question formation techniques and supports [Schachter's \(1976\)](#) argument that not all languages have a syntactically privileged subject category. The persistence of verbal agreement markers in Acehnese interrogatives, regardless of the constituent under question, aligns with [Jelinek's \(2014\)](#) pronominal argument hypothesis, suggesting that agreement markers on the verb serve as primary arguments.

These findings collectively challenge the notion of 'subject' as a unified, universally applicable category. Instead, they advocate for a more nuanced perspective on grammatical relations, aligning with recent advancements in linguistic typology. The data from Acehnese supports [Kibrik's \(1997\)](#) role-dominated languages concept, where semantic roles have a more significant influence on grammatical

behavior than abstract syntactic relations. The lack of a unified set of properties that consistently align with a single 'subject' category across all six parameters tested is evident. The flexibility in Acehnese word order, coupled with the consistent use of verbal markers, supports [Nichols' \(1986\)](#) theory of head-marking languages, where grammatical relations are predominantly signaled on the verb.

Acehnese speakers' linguistic behavior supports Croft's Radical Construction Grammar, which questions the idea of universal syntactic categories and advocates for grammatical categories specific to constructions and individual languages. This approach underscores constructions as the core units of syntactic representation ([Croft, 2001](#)). Observations of 'subject' properties across various Acehnese constructions highlight this language-specific nature ([Tausya, 2023](#)). Additionally, the Lexical Constructional Model emphasizes the link between cognitive models and meaning-making, resonating with Croft's view of constructions as central to syntactic representation ([Ibanez & Oyón, 2018](#)).

Further, a construction-oriented perspective on translation rooted in Radical Construction Grammar prioritizes semantic function and conceptual space-based principles ([Humbé et al., 2022](#)). This reinforces Croft's idea that constructions are the primary syntactic units and stresses their language-specific characteristics ([Croft, 2001](#)).

Our findings also contribute to the ongoing discussion on the nature of ergativity and alignment systems. While Acehnese has traditionally been categorized as a nominative-accusative language, our data indicates a more complex scenario. The behavior of Agent (A) and Patient (P) arguments in processes like relativization and question formation exhibits similarities to what [Dixon \(1994\)](#) describes as 'split-S' systems, where the sole argument of intransitive verbs (S) aligns at times with A and at times with P, depending on the semantic or pragmatic context.

From a broader theoretical perspective, our results provide support for the increasing recognition in linguistic typology of the importance of detailed, construction-specific analysis. As advocated by [Croft \(2001\)](#) and [Haspelmath et al. \(2008\)](#), comparisons across languages should focus on specific constructions rather than presuming the existence of universal grammatical categories. Our examination of Acehnese validates this approach, demonstrating how different constructions (e.g., relativization, interrogatives) can exhibit unique behavioral patterns that do not consistently align with a single 'subject' category.

Additionally, this research contributes to the ongoing debate about the nature of grammatical relations and their universality. The intricate patterns observed in Acehnese challenge the traditional view of grammatical relations as distinct, universal

categories. Instead, they support [Bickel & Lehmann's \(2011\)](#) idea of "multivariate typology," suggesting that grammatical relations are best understood as clusters of properties that may exhibit varying patterns across constructions and languages.

The flexibility in Acehnese word order, along with its rich verbal morphology, also has implications for theories of language processing and production. As [Hawkins \(2010\)](#) suggests, word order flexibility may be driven by processing efficiency, allowing speakers to optimize information distribution in their utterances. The Acehnese data offers a valuable case study for exploring how languages balance the competing demands of syntactic structure, information organization, and processing efficiency.

Moreover, our findings contribute to the ongoing re-evaluation of linguistic diversity and its implications for cognitive science. As [Evans & Levinson \(2009\)](#) argue, the extent of cross-linguistic diversity has been underestimated in much of theoretical linguistics. The unique features of Acehnese grammar revealed in our study underscore the need to expand the empirical base of linguistic theory beyond well-studied Indo-European languages. The behavior of Acehnese across the six parameters we examined also has implications for historical linguistics and theories of language change. The varied alignment patterns and flexible word order observed in Acehnese may represent an intermediate stage in a broader typological shift, as discussed by [Harris & Campbell \(1995\)](#) in their work on syntactic change. Longitudinal studies of Acehnese could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of such typological transitions.

In terms of information structure, our results align with [Lambrecht's \(2000\)](#) hypothesis on the interface between syntax and pragmatics. The flexibility in Acehnese word order and the behavior of constituents in processes like fronting and question formation suggest that pragmatic factors play a significant role in shaping syntactic structure. This supports the view that considerations of information structure are central to grammatical organization, rather than peripheral.

From a methodological perspective, our study demonstrates the importance of using a diverse set of syntactic tests in typological research. By examining multiple parameters (such as fronting, floating quantifiers, control, relativization, word order, and interrogative formation), we have been able to uncover nuances in Acehnese syntax that might have been missed with a narrower focus. This multi-parameter approach, as recommended by [Croft \(2001\)](#) and other scholars, is particularly valuable in languages like Acehnese that do not fit neatly into traditional typological categories.

The implications of our findings extend beyond theoretical linguistics to areas such as language teaching and natural language processing. In language

teaching, our results highlight the importance of teaching grammatical structures within a contextual framework rather than relying solely on abstract notions like 'subject' that may not accurately reflect the structure of the target language. In computational linguistics, the complex patterns observed in Acehnese emphasize the need for flexible, construction-based approaches to parsing and generation, as advocated by [Paul & Fillmore \(1999\)](#) in their work on Construction Grammar.

Our examination of subject characteristics in Acehnese contributes to a growing body of literature that challenges simplistic notions of universal grammar and emphasizes the importance of detailed, construction-specific analysis in linguistic typology. By revealing the complex and sometimes conflicting behavior of potential 'subject' properties across different constructions, our study promotes a more nuanced understanding of grammatical relations that acknowledges both cross-linguistic diversity and the internal complexity of individual language systems. This perspective not only enhances our understanding of Acehnese but also contributes to broader debates in linguistic theory about the nature of grammar and the relationship between language diversity and human cognition ([Haspelmath, 2010](#)).

Lastly, while this study has provided significant insights into the subject properties and syntactic behaviors of Acehnese, further research is needed to explore additional dimensions of its grammar. Future studies could investigate the diachronic evolution of these syntactic features to understand their historical development and potential influences from neighboring languages. Moreover, expanding the scope to include spoken discourse analysis could provide a deeper understanding of how these grammatical structures are employed in natural communication. Another promising area for future research is the application of psycholinguistic experiments to examine how Acehnese speakers process and produce sentences with flexible word order. Finally, comparative studies involving other Austronesian languages could elucidate broader typological patterns and contribute to refining our theoretical models of language structure and function.

6. Conclusions

This study reveals that Acehnese does not adhere to a single grammatical relation that can be categorized as 'subject,' as internal evidence shows that syntactic processes like control, relativization, and argument raising refer exclusively to the Actor or Undergoer roles, rather than a unified syntactic 'subject.' Key findings include the identification of subject properties through parameters such as fronting, floating quantifiers, control, relativization, word order patterns, and interrogative sentence formation. Acehnese subjects exhibit characteristics like being pre-verbal or non-initial NPs, functioning as Patients

in transitive clauses, and dividing intransitive arguments into Actor and Undergoer roles. The study's novelty lies in its comprehensive analysis of Acehnese syntax, challenging traditional typological theories and highlighting the flexibility of word order and the intricate interaction between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation. This research significantly contributes to the understanding of grammatical relations in lesser-studied languages, emphasizing the need for nuanced theoretical frameworks. Future research should explore the diachronic evolution of Acehnese syntax, examine natural grammatical structures in spoken discourse, and conduct psycholinguistic experiments on sentence processing. Comparative studies with other Austronesian languages could further clarify typological patterns and language structure.

7. Acknowledgement

This research was supported by LPPM, Potensi Utama University. Thank you so much for the participants contributed.

References

- Artawa, K. (2004). *Balinese language: A typological description*. CV. Bali Media Adhikarsa.
- Artawa, K., & Jufrizal. (2018). *Tipologi linguistik: Konsep dasar dan aplikasinya*. CV. Bali Media Adhikarsa.
- Artawa, K., & Purnawati, K. W. (2020). Pemarkahan diatesis bahasa Indonesia: Kajian tipologi linguistik (Diathesis markings in Indonesian: A linguistic typological study). *Mozaik*, 20(1), 26–38.
- Basaria, I. (2018). Relasi gramatikal subjek bahasa Pakpak Dairi: Kajian tipologi. *Talenta Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)*, 1(1), 49–58.
- Benmamoun, E. (1999). The syntax of quantifiers and quantifier float. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 30(4), 621–642.
- Bickel, P. J., & Lehmann, E. L. (2011). Descriptive statistics for nonparametric models. In *Selected works of E.L. Lehmann* (pp. 519–526). Springer.
- Blake, B. J. (2001). *Case*. Cambridge University Press.
- Boas, H. C. (2010). *Contrastive studies in construction grammar*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/cal.1>
- Comrie, B. (1983). Form and function in explaining language universals. *Linguistics*, 21(1), 87–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1983.21.1.87>
- Comrie, B. (2014). Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar. In *Universal grammar (RLE linguistics A: General linguistics)* (pp. 3–45). Routledge.
- Comrie, B., & Keenan, E. L. (1979). Noun phrase accessibility revisited. *Language*, 55(3), 649–664.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2007). *Choosing among five approaches* (Issue June).
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236–264.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>
- Croft, W. (2001). Syntactic theory and the theory of language. *Linguistics*, 362–368.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198299554.003.0010>
- Dixon, R. M. W. (1994). *Ergativity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dryer, M. S. (2007). Clause types. In T. Shopen (Ed.), *Language typology and syntactic description* (Vol. 3, pp. 224–276). Cambridge University Press.
- Dryer, M. S. (2008). Order of object and verb. *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, 338–339.
- Durie, M. (1986). The use of passive-like strategies in Acehnese. *NUSA Linguistics Studies of Indonesian and Other Languages in Indonesia*.
- Durie, M. (1987). Grammatical relations in Acehnese. *Studies in Language: International Journal Sponsored by the Foundation "Foundations of Language"*, 11(2), 365–399.
- Durie, M. (1988). The so-called passive of Acehnese. *Language*, 64(1), 104–113.
- Evans, N., & Levinson, S. C. (2009). The myth of language universals: Language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32(5), 429–448.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999094X>
- Gil, D. (2005). Word order without syntactic categories. In A. Carnie, H. Harley, & S. Dooley (Eds.), *The syntax of verb-initial languages* (pp. 243–263). Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/la.73.17gil>
- Greenberg, J. H. (1963). Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements. In J. Greenberg (Ed.), *Universals of language* (Vol. 2, pp. 73–113). MIT Press.

- Harris, A. C., & Campbell, L. (1995). *Historical syntax in cross-linguistic perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511620553>
- Haspelmath, M. (2010). Discussion notes: Comparative concepts and descriptive categories in crosslinguistic studies. *Language*, 86(3), 663–687. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2010.0021>
- Haspelmath, M., König, E., Oesterreicher, W., & Raible, W. (Eds.). (2008). *Language typology and language universals: An international handbook* (Vol. 2). Walter de Gruyter.
- Hawkins, J. A. (2010). *Efficiency and complexity in grammars*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199252695.001.0001>
- Humairah, K., Hasanah, N., Silalahi, Y. H., & Juliana, J. (2023). The analysis of students' grammar mastery in tenses at SMK Sinar Husni Medan. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 7(2), 5746–5752.
- Humblé, P., Zhang, T., & Xu, W. (2022). An RCG-based analysis of the translation of polysemous verb 'yao' in *A dream of red mansions*. *Cadernos De Tradução*, 42(01), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2022.e84498>
- Ibanez, F., & Oyón, A. (2018). Cognitive model types and the constructicon. *Antares Letras E Humanidades*, 10(20), 50–72.
<https://doi.org/10.18226/19844921.v10.n20.04>
- Jelinek, E. (2014). Empty categories, case, and configurationality. In M. Butt & T. H. King (Eds.), *Pronouns, presuppositions, and hierarchies* (pp. 7–40). Routledge.
- Jufrizal, Amri, & Refnaldi. (2006). Pentopikalan dalam bahasa Minangkabau dan kaitannya dengan upaya pembinaan sosial-budaya masyarakat Minangkabau. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora*, 7(3), 204–220.
- Jufrizal. (2016). The phenomena of split-S and fluid-S in Minangkabau: A grammatical-typological study. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora*, 15(2), 154–166.
- Jufrizal. (2018). Fenomena tipologi gramatikal bahasa Minangkabau: Akusatif, ergatif, atau campur? *Leksika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajarannya*, 12(1), 37–47.
- Karimova, U., Istamova, S., & Nyoman, T. D. P. I. (2023). Aim of linguistic typology and different approaches to the subject. *Models and Methods in Modern Science*, 2(13), 73–76.
- Keenan, E. L. (2014). Facing the Truth: Some Advantages of Direct Interpretation 1. In *Universal Grammar (RLE Linguistics A: General Linguistics)* (pp. 459–499). Routledge.
- Keenan, E. L. (2014b). *Universal grammar*. Routledge.
- Kibrik, A. E. (1997). Beyond subject and object: Toward a comprehensive relational typology. *Linguistic Typology*, 1(3), 279–346.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/lity.1997.1.3.279>
- Lambrecht, K. (2000). When subjects behave like objects: An analysis of the merging of S and O in sentence-focus constructions across languages. *Studies in Language: International Journal Sponsored by the Foundation "Foundations of Language"*, 24(3), 611–682.
- LaPolla, R. J. (2010). Arguments against 'subject' and 'direct object' as viable concepts in Chinese. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*.
- Legate, J. A. (2011). Passive agreement in Acehnese. *North East Linguistic Society (NELS)*, 39, 505–522.
- Legate, J. A. (2012). Subjects in Acehnese and the nature of the passive. *Language*, 88(3), 495–525.
- Li, C. (1976). Subject and topic: A new typology of language. In C. Li (Ed.), *Subject and topic* (pp. 457–489). Academic Press.
- Landau, I. (2013). *Control in generative grammar: A research companion*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mustafa, F. (2023). Phonology of Acehnese reduplication: Applying optimality theory. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 26(2), 546–560.
- Nichols, J. (1986). Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar. *Language*, 62(1), 56–119.
- Paul, K., & Fillmore, C. J. (1999). Grammatical constructions and linguistic generalizations: The what's X doing Y? *Language*, 75(1), 1–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.1999.0033>
- Primus, B. (2015). Grammatical relations. In A. Alexiadou & T. Kiss (Eds.), *Syntax – Theory and analysis* (Vol. 1, pp. 218–246). Walter de Gruyter.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110377408.218>
- Raposo, E. P. (1987). Case theory and Infl-to-Comp: The inflected infinitive in European Portuguese. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 18(1), 85–109.
- Sales, A. J. (2022). Language interference and generative phonology in speech production among Hiligaynon native speakers. *REiLA: Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*, 4(3), 262–275.
<https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.v4i3.8993>
- Schachter, P. (1976). The subject in Philippine languages: Topic, actor, actor-topic, or none of

- the above. In C. Li (Ed.), *Subject and topic* (pp. 491–518). Academic Press.
- Shibatani, M. (2002). *The grammar of causation and interpersonal manipulation* (Vol. 48). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.48>
- Shopen, T. (1985). *Language typology and syntactic description* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press.
- Siemund, P. (2001). Interrogative constructions. In M. Haspelmath, E. König, W. Oesterreicher, & W. Raible (Eds.), *Language typology and language universals: An international handbook* (Vol. 2, pp. 1010–1028). Walter de Gruyter.
- Song, J. J. (2014). *Linguistic typology: Morphology and syntax*. Routledge.
- Sportiche, D. (2005). A theory of floating quantifiers and its corollaries for constituent structure. In S. Kuno, S. Lim, & C. Potts (Eds.), *Partitions and atoms of clause structure: Subjects, agreement, and topics* (pp. 15–40). Routledge.
- Sugiyono. (2014). *Memahami penelitian kualitatif R&D*. Alvabeta.
- Tausya, E. (2023). Struktur koordinasi bahasa Aceh: Kajian tipologi sintaksis. *Aksara Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 24(2), 502–519. <https://doi.org/10.23960/aksara/v24i2.pp502-51>
- Velupillai, V. (2013). An introduction to linguistic typology. *Linguistic Typology*, 17(1), 173–176. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lity-2013-0006>
- Wardana, I. K. (2023). The impact of English morphological awareness on vocabulary enrichment: A causal-affect relationship research. *Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*, 5(1), 1–16.