

Morphological Complexity in Wawonii: A Documentation of Affixation Patterns in a Threatened Language

Firman A.D.

Research Centre for Language and Literature Preservation, BRIN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Dwiani Septiana

Research Centre for Language and Literature Preservation, BRIN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Siti Fatimah

Research Centre for Language and Literature Preservation, BRIN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Evi Maha Kastri

Research Centre for Language and Literature Preservation, BRIN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Tamrin

Research Centre for Language and Literature Preservation, BRIN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Dermawan

Secretariat of the Regent at the Government of Konawe Kepulauan Regency, Indonesia

Muhammad Darwis

Faculty of Cultural Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract—This study aims to describe the affixation system in the Wawonii language, encompassing types of affixes (prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and circumfixes), the allomorphs that arise in affixation processes, and their derivational and inflectional meanings. Data were collected through fieldwork on Wawonii Island, Southeast Sulawesi Province, using a language documentation approach and morphological analysis based on both spoken and written corpora. This study employed distributional methods and the markup reading technique, drawing on the morphophonemic frameworks of Matthews and Hayes. The findings reveal that Wawonii exhibits a complex and productive affixation system, with prefixes such as {moN-}, {me-}, {pa-}, {po-}, {in-}, {um-}, {te-}, {ko-}, {ndo-}, and {mek-}; infixes {-in-}, {-um-}; as well as circumfixes {pe-...-a}, {poN-...-a}, {pompoko-...-a}, {mek-...-ako}, and {mek-...-ira}; and suffixes {-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, {-akondo}, {-si}, {-omo}, and {-o}. Affixation processes frequently involve nasal assimilation, elision, and phoneme alternation as part of morphophonemic operations. Furthermore, pronominal-benefactive suffixes such as {-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, and {-akondo} encode both agent and recipient information within a single morpheme. Wawonii exhibits characteristics of an agglutinative morphology, with distinct affix boundaries and reciprocal, causative, and resultative affixes that reflect local innovations within its morphological system. These findings reinforce the position of Wawonii within the Bungku-Tolaki subgroup of the Austronesian family, with nasal affixation such as {moN-} serving as a distinctive feature also found in related languages across Southeast Sulawesi.

Index Terms—affixation, language documentation, morphological complexity, Southeast Sulawesi, Wawonii

I. INTRODUCTION

The Wawonii language, spoken on Wawonii Island in Southeast Sulawesi, belongs to the Bungku-Laki subgroup of the Austronesian family and comprises two dialects: Wawonii and Menui (Mead, 1999; Ethnologue, 2019). These dialects differ in phonology and lexicon—for instance, ‘bridge’ is /dambata/ in Wawonii but /jambata/ in Menui, and ‘small’ is /mehewu/ versus /okidi/. Historically recorded as *Wawoni*, *Wowoni*, or *Wlywongi* (Toarima, 2024), the language is now classified as “threatened” (EGIDS 6b) (Ethnologue: Languages of Sulawesi, 2019). Since Wawonii became a regency in 2013, migration has increased, bringing speakers of Buginese, Bajonese, Butonese, Menui, Kulisusu, Tolakinese, Wakatobi, Javanese, and Florenese (Nolan, 2019). This growing multilingual environment poses risks to the vitality of Wawonii, prompting the need for descriptive documentation studies.

Ado and Bidin (2017) stated that one of the key activities that can be undertaken to sustain and revitalize endangered or moribund minority languages is through linguistic work and descriptive studies. Accordingly, this article describes one

aspect of linguistic structure—affixation—as part of a morphological system. Documenting the affixation system should be prioritized in preserving endangered or declining languages because this process typically encodes more complex and meaningful grammatical structures than isolated words. Affixation is crucial for meaning formation and functional expression in a language. If this system is not adequately documented, the loss of grammatical elements will be difficult to reconstruct or understand in the future.

According to Bloomfield (1933), defining characteristics of a language are more prominent in its morphology than in syntax. The analysis of morphology requires distinct approaches, depending on the typological nature of the language under study. Because Wawonii is a less-studied and under-documented language, intensive investigation is recommended, particularly regarding the phenomena of affixation. Affixation is a fundamental process in word building that gives both grammatical and lexical meanings. The study of affixation in Wawonii is important for maintaining local morphological complexity, supporting linguistic description and contributing to the preservation and sustainability of the language.

This paper addresses two main issues: (1) how affixation is described in the Wawonii language and (2) what kinds of form changes occur during the affixation process, including allomorphs and the meanings of affixes. In line with these issues, this study aims to describe the affixation system in Wawonii and the morphophonemic processes involved, and examine the meanings conveyed in derived words resulting from affixation.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Affixes are essential elements in the morphological system as they play a role in word formation, meaning expression, and marking grammatical relations. Gleason (1961) stated that “affixes are subordinate to root words” (p. 59), while Napa (1992) explained that “affixes are part of morphological studies, consisting of letters or sounds added to modify the meaning or function of words” (p. 5). Haspelmath and Sims (2010) emphasized that affixes are bound morphemes that cannot stand alone and are generally fewer in number than words in a language.

In documenting local languages such as Wawonii, the analysis of affixation is crucial for understanding the structure of the language. Affixation is a morphological process of adding bound morphemes to a base, either for creating new words (derivation) or for adjusting word forms grammatically (inflection). The most common types are prefixes and suffixes, with suffixation being typologically more frequent (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010; Goethem, 2020). Matthews (1991) also included infixation as another type, noting that the number and types of affixes vary across languages depending on their morphological structures.

According to Yasin (1987), “affixes are characterized as direct elements, bound morphemes, attachable to various forms, lacking independent lexical meaning, and able to change the grammatical category of words” (p. 53). In relation to derivation and inflection, affix productivity is an important factor (Nishikawa & Nakamura, 2004). Matthews (1991) highlighted two features: the derived form consists of a base and an added morpheme, and the affix remains constant across bases (see also Arkadiev, 2020).

The distinction between derivational and inflectional morphemes lies in the fact that inflection marks grammatical features without creating new words, while derivation may change a word’s grammatical category (Darwis, 2012; Yule, 2014; Schmid, 2015). Morphemes are classified based on their free or bound nature, position relative to the base, and grammatical function, which can also relate to semantics (Veselovska, 2018). Morphophonemic analysis, aimed at identifying underlying forms and rules, follows Hayes’s (2009) procedures: segmenting forms into morphemes, identifying alternating morphemes and their allomorphs, locating alternations, and establishing underlying representations through phonological rules (see also Genon-Sieras, 2020). This study applies Hayes’s (2009) framework to examine allomorphic variants in Wawonii affixation.

Previous studies on Wawonii affixes include Sain and Syarif (2020), who identified affix types but did not classify their semantic functions or analyze word-class changes. Neng (2002) examined Wawonii verbs, though some data were mixed with Tolaki forms and lacked affixal meaning analysis. Juniatin (2005) studied inflectional affixes in verbs but without phonological or morphophonemic detail. Halwiah (2008) focused only on derivational nouns, while Nazar (2018) analyzed derivational clause structures. Yulianti et al. (2024) on Bentian affixation serves as a methodological reference for data collection.

III. METHODS

The methods employed in this study comprised several components, including research location, corpus data collection, and data analysis.

A. Data Collection and Processing

This research was conducted in the speech community of the Wawonii ethnic group on Wawonii Island, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. Fieldwork was the method used to gather linguistic data, most specifically, to record the speech of the Wawonii people. The primary data consisted of written and spoken texts collected through fieldwork and existing linguistic corpora (Kessler et al., 2023; Kessler & Polio, 2023). The texts covered a range of genres, including folklore, traditional speech, and everyday conversation, to guarantee the broadest possible coverage of the language (Sneddon, 1996; Alfraidi et al., 2022).

It is important to note that native Wawonii speakers participated in the interviews and transcription process (Borges & Faria, 2023) to ensure the naturalness and authenticity of the data. The findings highlight the significance of community cooperation in language documentation. Documentation modalities included recording, transcribing, translating, and editing, with an initial recording time of seven hours.

The secondary data in this study were partly derived from several previous studies, including those by Neng (2002), Juniatin (2005), and Halwiah (2008). These data were reanalyzed and further elaborated to provide a more detailed explanation of the various affixation processes present.

Recordings were transcribed orthographically or phonemically using ELAN and FLE_x, in accordance with Matan and Velvizhy (2024), who highlighted the advantages of these tools in managing audio/video data alongside linguistic annotations, including morpheme boundary marking and grammatical function tagging.

The data were qualitatively analyzed to identify the forms, functions, and meanings of affixes, as well as their syntactic dependencies. The analysis considered linguistic aspects such as tense, aspect, mood, voice, and valency changes (Arkadiev, 2020; Haspelmath, 2021; Inglese, 2022), aiming to reveal the complexity of affixation in the Wawonii language.

B. Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis employed the extension and marker-reading techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015). Free morphemes or bases serving as the primary data were extended by adding affixes to observe the phonemic realizations resulting from combining these morphemes. The marker-reading technique was also used to deepen the data analysis. This technique can be applied to sort or classify data based on characteristics, properties, and patterns found in the affixation and morphophonemic processes of the Wawonii language.

In addition, this study describes the discovery of general rules governing affixation and morphophonemic processes in Wawonii. Morphophonemic evidence related to affixation was defined and compared to identify recurring patterns. Based on these findings, variations in affix forms can be categorized within the morphophonemic processes of the Moronene language. The analytical model referenced in this study follows Matthews (1991) and can be modified as NECESSARY TO SUIT SPECIFIC NEEDS.

IV. RESULTS

As part of the Austronesian language family, Wawonii exhibits distinct characteristics in its affixation system in terms of form, function, and distribution. The following discussion elaborates on the types of derivational affixes found in Wawonii and their morphological functions on the basis of linguistic documentation and analysis data.

A. Wawonii Language Prefixes

Prefixes are affixes added at the beginning of a root word to form a new word or alter its meaning. In Wawonii, prefixes function as tools for word formation, both in derivational processes (creating new words) and inflectional processes (modifying word forms to align with grammatical functions).

Prefix {moN-}

The affixation process involving the prefix {moN-} with a root exhibits several variations, namely {mo-}, {mon-}, {mom-}, and {mong-}. The notation (N) in this prefix indicates the presence of a nasal element that undergoes allomorphic variation depending on the initial phoneme of the following root. The nasal phoneme assimilates into the initial phoneme of the root, resulting in different allomorphic forms of the prefix {moN-}.

- a. When the prefix {moN-} is attached to a root beginning with the phonemes /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /l/, or /n/, it becomes {mo-}.

(1) {moN-} + ala 'take'	moala 'to take'	(7) {moN-} + degu 'knock'	modeku 'mengetuk'
(2) {moN-} + ena 'plait'	moena 'to plait'	(8) {moN-} + hea 'slice'	mohea 'to slice'
(3) {moN-} + ia 'live'	moiya 'to live'	(9) {moN-} + bambara 'draw'	mogambara 'to draw'
(4) {moN-} + onto 'look'	moonto 'to look'	(10) {moN-} + lali 'move'	molali 'to move'
(5) {moN-} + unda 'invite'	mounda 'to invite'	(11) {moN-} + nahu 'cook'	monahu 'to cook'
(6) {moN-} + bebe 'hit'	mobebe 'to hit'		

Based on the data, the change occurs because the phoneme /N/ in the prefix {moN-} undergoes either elision or assimilation with the initial phoneme of the root word to facilitate pronunciation and maintain phonetic fluency in word formation.

- Daho asade bawa turuna mokole **moiya** asade kampo. 'There is a family of royal descent that lives in a village.'
- Kuku oleo kadi i laloraha dadahano **monahu** ronga **moena** empe. 'Every day she just stays at home to cook and to plait the mat.'

- b. If the prefix {moN-} is added to the basic word with /s/ and /t/ as the first letter, it becomes {mon-}.

(12) {moN-} + sanga 'fry'	monsanga 'to fry'
(13) {moN-} + tunggu 'guard'	montunggu 'to guard'

When the prefix {moN-} is attached to a root word beginning with the phoneme /s/ or /t/, the phoneme /N/ undergoes assimilation to /n/, resulting in the allomorph {mon-}. This process occurs because the phoneme /n/ (alveolar nasal) shares

the same place of articulation as /s/ and /t/ (alveolar), thus facilitating pronunciation and maintaining phonetic fluency.

- Mewangu toou, Wa Ida **monsanga** punti. 'Early morning, Wa Ida fries banana.'
- Wulangkinokoti daao totoro **montunggu** pae pinuai. 'Wulangkinokoti is sitting to guard the dried rice.'
- c. If the prefix {moN-} is attached to a base beginning with the phonemes /p/ or /w/, the prefix changes to {mom-}. The morphological process of the prefix {moN-} on verbs in Wawonii can be observed in the following data.
 - (14) {moN-} + podea 'hear' mompodea 'to hear'
 - (15) {moN-} + wawa 'bring' mombawa 'to bring'

When the prefix {moN-} is attached to a base beginning with the phonemes /p/ and /b/, the phoneme /N/ assimilates to /m/, resulting in the allomorph {mom-}. This process occurs because the phoneme /m/ (bilabial nasal) shares the same place of articulation as the phonemes /p/ and /b/ (bilabial), thus facilitating pronunciation and maintaining phonetic fluency.

- Tetehe binata mia dada i larongkeu, itai iraomo **mompodea**. 'All of the animals in the jungle hear it.'
- d. If the prefix {moN-} is added to the basic word with /k/ as the first letter, it becomes {moŋ-}. The morphological process of the prefix {moN-} as inflectional verb affix can be observed in the following ways.
 - (16) {moŋ-} + keke 'dig' Moŋkeke 'menggali'
 - Tamangku **mongkekeo** ahua woino raha. 'My father digs a well in front of the house.'

When the prefix {moN-} is attached to a base beginning with the phoneme /k/, the phoneme /N/ undergoes assimilation to /ŋ/ (velar nasal), resulting in the allomorph {moŋ-}. This process occurs because the phoneme /ŋ/ (velar nasal) shares the same place of articulation as the phoneme /k/ (velar), facilitating articulation.

- e. The derived forms may change if the root begins with the sound /r/. The following are examples of such data.
 - (17) {moN-} + ruru 'pick up' monduro 'to pick up'
 - (18) {moN-} + rere 'fence' mondere 'to fence'

The affixation process involving the prefix {moN-} is called nasal substitution. The data illustrate the occurrence of homorganic assimilation (nasal + voiced alveolar). This process indicates that the /N/ in {moN-} assimilates to the place of articulation of the root-initial consonant or replaces it with a prenasalized segment (such as [nd]). Consequently, the root-initial /r/ is not retained, but is instead replaced by [d] in the derived form.

Prefix {me-}

The prefix {me-} is a morpheme affixed to nominal base, deriving denominal verbs.

- (19) {me-} + bingku 'hoe' mebingku 'to hoe' (21) {me-} + tako 'hide' metako 'to hide'
- (20) {me-} + piriri 'think' mepikiri 'to think' (22) {me-} + dandi 'promise' medandi 'to promise'
- Tamangku dakareho **mebingku**. 'My father is digging with a hoe.'
- Tuwaingku dakareho **mesangka** iso sando. 'My younger sibling is seeking treatment from a traditional healer.'

These data illustrate the use of the affix {me-}, which functions as a verbal prefix. This prefix is productive for forming verbs from nouns and, occasionally, from basic verb roots. The resulting meaning typically denotes an action performed using an instrument or an action related to the concept expressed by the root.

Prefix {pa-}

In Wawonii, the prefix {pa-} is categorized as a derivational prefix that can change the word class of the base, for example, by deriving nouns from verbs and adjectives.

- (23) {pa-} + batara 'speak' pabitaro 'speaker' (25) {pa-} + ndou 'drink' pandou 'drinker'
- (24) {pa-} + wuti 'lie' pawuti 'liar' (26) {pa-} + siki 'angry' pasiki 'angry person'
- **Pabitaro** i kawiano Ani suaranano moikoho. 'The speaker's voice at Ani's party is good.'
- Nade nai pinarasaya kanaumpu **pawuti**. 'He/She is not believed because he/she is liar.'

The prefix {pa-} forms agent nouns from verbs. The base is generally a verb, except for example (27), which is derived from an adjective. The resulting form is a noun denoting the agent or doer of the action. No phonological changes occur during the affixation process. All derived forms belong to the category of agent nouns, which are nouns referring to the subject or performer of the activity.

Prefix {po-}

The prefix {po-} has two functions based on the available data. The first function is to transform verbs into nouns. The prefix {po-} functions as an instrument marker, indicating a tool or means used for action.

- (27) {po-} + bebe 'hit' pobebe 'hammer' (29) {po-} + pole 'cut' popole 'cutter'
- (28) {po-} + sudu 'probe' posudu 'prober' (30) {po-} + garisi 'line' pogarisi 'ruler'
- Ue mioko dinadi **pobebe**. 'Rattan is very good as hammer.'
- **Pogarisi** iso wineweu binta keu. 'The ruler is made of wood.'

The prefix {po-} forms instrument nouns by referring to objects used to perform the action expressed by the root word. Unlike {pa-}, which forms agentive nouns, {po-} functions to create nouns denoting instruments or tools. Most forms do not exhibit significant phonological changes; the prefix {po-} is added directly to the base.

The second function of the prefix {po-} is to form verbs that denote activities or actions performed by the subject. This prefix indicates that the subject is performing a particular action or activity.

- (31) {po-} + ala 'get' poala 'to get'
- (32) {po-} + binti 'lift' pobinti 'to lift'

- Kai **poala** baho, sangkaakono mobelano anano. 'She get water and treat her daughter's pain.'
- Taho **pobinti** besikalino. 'Don't lift his bucket!'

In each of these examples, the prefix {po-} is added to the root word to form verbs that describe actions or activities performed by the subject.

Prefix {in-}

The prefix {in-} produces a morphological derivation process that forms nominal nouns derived from verbal roots and generates passive verbs.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| (33) {in-} + asa 'sell' | inasa 'merchandise' | (36) {in-} + ala 'take' | inala 'be taken' |
| (34) {in-} + oli 'buy' | inoli 'expenses' | (37) {in-} + ehe 'like' | inehe 'be liked' |
| (35) {in-} + nahu 'cook' | inahu 'cooked food' | (38) {in-} + opini 'pinch' | inopini 'be pinched' |

- **Inasa** i toko iso mohalino. 'The merchandise at that store is very expensive.'
- Daaomo lumo, limbaopo binta raha nahinamo **inehe**. 'Do not even go, just raise from home, he is disliked by her parent.'

The nouns resulting from this affixation process do not denote agents or instruments but rather entities produced by the action. In linguistic typology, this is referred to as resultative nominalization. The derived nouns fall into the category of resultative nouns. For example, *inasa* denotes an object produced from the act of selling, i.e., merchandise; *inena* refers to an object produced from weaving, i.e., woven goods.

Different from the function and meaning in data (36–38), which produce passive forms, the base to which it attaches are generally verbs. From these data, it can be concluded that the base does not have an initial consonant other than a vowel, so the infix {-in-} cannot be inserted. Therefore, the prefix {in-} is used as an allomorph of {-in-} for phonological reasons.

Prefix {um-}

The prefix {um-} functions to form active transitive verbs. This prefix can be classified as an inflectional affix.

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| (39) {um-} + ehe 'like' | umehe 'to like' |
| (40) {um-} + owahi 'pay' | umowahi 'to pay' |
| (41) {um-} + onto 'see' | umonto 'to see' |

- Kude nadu **umehe** mobinti koporo iso. 'I do not want to lift the luggage.'
- Uwangku lakoo **umowahi** tinangano i toko. 'My grandfather goes to pay his debt in the shop.'

Prefix {te-}

The prefix {te-} functions to form passive verbs, indicating that the subject has undergone a specific action or state.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| (42) {te-} + hea 'slice' | tehea 'be sliced' | (44) {te-} + umpu 'connect' | teumpu 'be connected' |
| (43) {te-} + wawa 'bawa' | tewawa 'be brought' | (45) {te-} + ihi 'fiil' | teihi 'be filled' |

In each example, the prefix {te-} transforms an active verb into its passive form, indicating that the subject performs the action without specifying the agent. The prefix {te-} also implicitly conveys that the activity is performed unconsciously.

- Limano **teheao** karna piso. 'His hand is sliced by a knife.'
- Boobongku **tewawao** laronu taasino. 'My book is brought in her bag.'

Prefix {ko-}

The prefix {ko-} is used to form intransitive verbs, which are verbs whose subjects act without requiring a direct object. The use of this prefix indicates that the subject acts independently.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| (46) {ko-} + bua 'work' | kobua 'to work' |
| (47) {ko-} + leu 'sway' | koleu 'to sway' |

- Kuku oleo ndolako **kobua** i larowita. 'They go to work in the field every day.'
- Bangka ai modasoo **koleuo** tonia malo. 'Last night, this ship was swayed very hard.'

In each example, the prefix {ko-} is attached to the base to form an intransitive verb that describes an action performed by the subject without a direct object.

Prefix {mek-}

The prefix {mek-} functions to form reciprocal verbs. Reciprocal verbs indicate that the subjects in the sentence act mutually or toward one another.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (48) {mek-} + tulungi 'help' | mekatulungi 'help each other' |
| (49) {mek-} + tidu 'punch' | mekatidu 'punch each other' |

- Miano ai kampo daanomo **mekatulungi**. 'The people in this village always help each other.'
- Nahinapo ndotende **mekatidu**. 'They have not stopped punching each other.'

This affixation process is often accompanied by partial or full reduplication of the base. The reduplication of the base reinforces the reciprocal meaning ('each other' or 'mutual').

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (50) {mek-} + gunti 'scissor' | mekagunti-gunti 'cut each other' |
| (51) {mek-} + tidu 'punch' | mekatidu-tidu 'punch each other' |

- Ondade **mekagunti-gunti** wuu woino raha. 'They were cutting each other's hair in front of the house.'
- Kami **mekatidu-tidu** kahapo tilaro. 'We were punching each other for fun.'

Prefix {ndo-}

The prefix {ndo-} functions as a third-person plural subject marker with the meaning of ‘they’.

(52) {ndo-} + kokolaro ‘love’ ndokokolaro ‘they love’

(53) {ndo-} + tena ‘ask’ ndotena ‘they ask’

- Modasoo **ndokokolaroo** ana tinando. ‘They really love their daughter.’

- Tinano ronga tamano **ndotena**o anando tahida lakoano. ‘Her mother and her father ask her not to go everywhere.’

The position of the prefix {ndo-} is at the beginning of the verb, indicating that more than one person acts. The data consistently demonstrate the use of {ndo-} to denote a plural subject in declarative sentences.

Prefix {tepo-}

The prefix {tepo-} conveys a reciprocal meaning or the notion of ‘each other’, indicating that two or more participants in the action mutually act upon one another.

(54) {tepo-} + anto ‘melihat’ tepoanto ‘saling melihat’

(55) {tepo-} + humpu ‘meet’ tepohumpu ‘meet each other’

(56) {tepo-} + binta ‘separate’ tepobinta ‘separate each other’

- Rabutundo **tepoanto**, Durubalewula ronga Wulangkinokoti daaho pelarondo mesalako. ‘When they see each other, they fall in love.’

- Mebinta isomo kando mokora **tepo**humpu mari metako. ‘From that moment, they always meet each other but hide.’

The prefix {tepo-} is attached directly at the beginning of the verb root, forming a derived verb with an additional meaning. The prefix marks reciprocity, indicating an action performed by and upon the same subjects (with mutual meaning). This is characteristic of reciprocal verbs in verbal semantics.

Prefix {mompoko-}

This data illustrates the use of the complex prefix {mompoko-}, which functions to form causative or resultative verbs, generally meaning ‘to make into what is expressed by the base’ or ‘to cause to become more like what is expressed by the base.’

(57) {mompoko-} + kaea ‘rich’ mompokokaea ‘to enrich’

(58) {mompoko-} + moiko ‘good’ mompokomoiko ‘to improve’

(59) {mompoko-} + merende ‘speed’ mompokomerende ‘to speed up’

- Mia iso dakareho **mompokomoiko** pantano. ‘That person is improving himself/herself.’

- Tia dakareho **mompokomerende** lakono. ‘Tia is speeding up her walk.’

This complex prefix is likely derived from a combination of morphemic elements such as {moN-} (an active verbal nasal prefix) and {poko-} (a root form that can mean ‘to make’ or has a causative function). The entire form functions as a causative, forming verbs that mean ‘to cause to become’ or ‘to make more like’. All derived words carry causative or resultative applicative meanings, whereby the subject causes or brings about a state or condition indicated by the root.

Root forms such as *miko*, *kata*, and *perenne* may already be adjectival or stative verbs. The prefix {mompoko-} then adds elements of agency and causativity, resulting in a transitive verb. This affix enhances the status (enrich), improves the conditions (repair, accelerate), and imparts an effect on the object.

B. Wawonii Language Infixes

Infix {-in-}

This infix has two meanings when attached to the root form: it can form resultative nouns and passive verbs. The data presented show the use of the affixes {-in-} and {in-}, which are infixal and prefixal forms, respectively. The first meaning and function (i.e., the resultative noun) is the same as the prefix {in-} discussed previously. This is likely a variation of the prefix {in-}, differing based on the initial segment of the root to which it attaches. If the root begins with a vowel, the affix {in} can appear as an infix (inserted within the root). However, if the root begins with a consonant, the affix {in} occurs as a prefix (placed before the root). This affix can transform verbs into nouns.

(60) kaa ‘makan’ + {-in-} kinaa ‘makanan’

(61) pondou ‘minum’ + {-in-} pinondou ‘minuman’

(62) seu ‘menjahit’ + {-in-} sineu ‘jahitan’

- **Kinaa** wineweuno tinangku moikoho. ‘The food made by my mother is very delicious.’

- **Sineuno** tinangku modasoo mehinao. ‘There are many my mother’s sewing.’

The infix {-in-} is a derivational affix inserted after the first consonant of the root word. It forms resultative nouns, which are entities produced as a result of actions expressed by the verb. Its morphological derivation process is the same as the prefix {in-}, producing resultative nouns from verbal roots and conveying the meaning of the result of an action performed by someone else.

In addition, the infix {-in-} functions as a marker of the passive voice. Here, {-in-} is an infix, an affix inserted in the middle of a word, specifically after the first consonant of the root.

(63) rako ‘catch’ + {-in-} rinako ‘be caught’ (65) weweu ‘make’ + {-in-} wineweu ‘be made’

(64) toori ‘know’ + {-in-} tinoori ‘be known’ (66) dowi ‘call’ + {-in-} dinowi ‘be called’

- Mia monako **rinako** iwangi. ‘The thief was caught yesterday.’

- Nai **tinoori** pembintahano ai tama. ‘This boy is not known where he comes from.’

The prefix {-in-} denotes a passive verb, indicating an action received by the subject. The infix form {-in-} is used when the root word begins with a consonant. In this context, the affix {-in-} functions to form passive verbs, with the meaning 'done by another party.' This indicates that the subject is the recipient of the action rather than the agent performing it. There is no phonemic alteration in the root word except for the insertion of the affix {-in-}, meaning that this infixation does not significantly modify the phonological structure of the root; it merely inserts a morpheme at a specific position.

Infix {-um-}

This infix has a similar function and meaning to the prefix {um-} when affixed to the root form. The infix may appear as the prefix {-um-} when attached to a root that begins with a consonant.

- (67) lako 'go' + {-um-} lumako 'to go' (69) weweu 'work' + {-um-} wumeweu 'to work'
 (68) pikiri 'pikir' + {-um-} pumikiri 'to think' (70) dowi 'call' + {-um-} dumowi 'to call'

- Molingano tamano **lumako** rahano tumpu wita ongkora mensaru teasalibu wita. 'The next day, his father went to the landowner's house and conveyed his intention to borrow the land.'
- Pesa saiaia periu **pumikirio** atora mia pinatantu. 'Not long after, they considered the conditions set by the landowner.'

The data indicate that the infix {-um-} is used to form active verbs from base in the Wawonii language.

C. Wawonii Language Confixes

Confix {pe-...-a}

This confix functions as a nominalizing element. This is a combination of the prefix {pe-} and the suffix {-a}. Neither of these affixes can stand alone; they function together as a single morphological unit to form a new meaning.

- (71) {pe-...-a} + batara 'speak' pebitaraa 'speaking place'
 (72) {pe-...-a} + judi 'gamble' pejudia 'gambling place'

- **Pebitaraa** iso tenosi ongkora guru. 'The speaking place is only for teacher.'
- **Pejudia** iso kinansa polisi. 'The gambling place is raided by the police.'

The semantic function of this affix is to form nouns denoting places or instruments derived from verbs. Generally, it means "a place for performing a certain activity." In one case (pepayasaa), the resulting noun refers to an instrument (a mirror) rather than a place, but it still implies a place or tool used for carrying out an action (to look in a mirror). The form *papayas* is a semantic deviation (an instrument rather than a place), indicating that the morphological productivity of this affix can extend to metonymic meanings. Furthermore, the suffix {-a} does not delete the final vowel of the base; the result is a double vowel, as seen in *payasa* becoming *pepayasaa* and *pute* becoming *peputea*.

Confix {poN-...-a}

This confix has two variations, namely {po-...-a} and {poŋ-...-a}. The prefix becomes {poŋ-...} when the base begins with the phoneme /k/. Meanwhile, it takes the form {po-...-a} when the base does not start with the phoneme /k/, whether it is a consonant or a vowel.

- (73) {poN-...-a} + turi 'sleep' poturia 'place for sleeping' (75) {poN-...-a} + dou 'drink' pondoua 'drinking place'
 (74) {poN-...-a} + buri 'write' poburia 'writing place' (76) {poN-...-a} + asa 'sell' poasaa 'sales place'

- Pantasa yo **poturia**. 'Bed is a place for sleeping.'
- Meda biasing angora **poburia**. 'A table is a place usually used for writing.'

The confix {poN-...-a} undergoes nasal assimilation when attached to roots beginning with /k/, with /N/ realized as [ŋ] for smoother articulation. Functionally, it serves as a derivational nominalizer, marking locative or instrumental nouns ('a place/tool for performing an activity') and consistently derives nouns from verbs. It parallels and may represent a dialectal variation of {pe-...-a}, while preserving the base intact. Examples such as *pondoua*, *pobasaa*, and *poasaa* also show vowel sequence retention, reflecting the stability of root morphemes in Wawonii's phonological system.

Confix {pompoko-...-a}

The complex confix {pompoko-...-a} is used to form nouns denoting instruments or places derived from verbs or adjectives.

- (77) {pompoko-...-a} + momapu 'cold' pompokomomapua 'place to refrigerate water'
 (78) {pompoko-...-a} + ndau 'ajar' pompokondaua 'place to teach'
 (79) {pompoko-...-a} + lunda 'clear' pompokolundaa 'a tool to clean rice'
- Lemari es konano ongkora **pompokomomapua** baho. 'The refrigerator is used to refrigerate water.'
 - Sikola angora **pompokondaua**. 'School is a place to teach.'

The data illustrate complex and productive derivational morphology in Wawonii, particularly the confix {pompoko-...-a}, formed through multiple prefixations ({pom-} + {po-}) and the suffix {-a} marking place or instrument. Such forms (e.g., *pompokomokulaa*) may involve reduplication or intensification, representing a development from {poN-...-a} and reflecting possible dialectal, semantic, or social variation. Overall, this structure highlights Wawonii's rich and flexible affixation system for creating new word classes, especially those denoting place or instrument.

Confix {mek-...-ako}

The confix {meka-...-ako} forms reciprocal verbs, indicating that an action is performed mutually or reciprocally by two or more participants.

- (80) {meka-...-ako} + saru 'pinjam' mekasaru-saruako 'to lend to each other'
 (81) {meka-...-ako} + kobua 'mengerjakan' mekakobua-kobuaako 'to jointly carry out'
 - Ondade mekasaru-saruako pake. 'They lent clothes to each other.'
 - Kami mekakobua-kobuaako rahamami. 'We jointly worked on our houses.'

The prefix {meka-}, cognate with {me-}/{mo-}, marks reciprocal relations, while the suffix {-ako} adds emphasis or benefactive nuance. When combined with reduplication, these elements form a complex and productive verbal construction that signals mutual or reciprocal action between participants.

Confix {meka-...-ira}

The complex affix {meka-...-ira} is used to form comparative reciprocal verbs, which denote the meaning 'to compare one another concerning a property specified by the base.' This process involves attaching the prefix {meka-} and the suffix {-ira} to a base, which consists of adjectival or predicative forms in the present data, as illustrated in the following examples.

- (82) {meka-...-ira} + owose 'big' mekaowoseira 'to compare big things with each other'
 (83) {meka-...-ira} + moiko 'baik' mekamoikoira 'to compare good things with each other'
 - Ondade mekaowoseira oto-otondo ondade. 'They compared their cars with each other.'
 - Ondade mekamoikoira buri ondade. 'They compared their writings with each other.'

The structure of these data indicates that two or more participants engage in a reciprocal act of comparison involving specific qualities or attributes.

Confix {ka-...-ta}

The confix {ka-...-ta} is used to form stative-intensive verbs or adjectives, conveying the meaning of 'too' or 'excessively', referring to the quality expressed by the base. This construction indicates a state that exceeds the standard or acceptable limits of the property in question.

- (84) {ka-...-ta} + wohi 'satiated/full' kawohita 'overfull'
 (85) {ka-...-ta} + male 'tired' kamaleta 'overly tired'
 (86) {ka-...-ta} + liwaso 'hungry' kaliwasota 'starving'
 - Mia iso kawohita. 'That person is overly full (from eating).'
 - Ondade kamaleta i salaha. 'They became overly tired during the trip.'
 - Ondade kaliwasota i salaha 'They are starving on the road.'

This confix expresses a state of 'excessiveness' or experiencing something to an excessive degree, whether physically or emotionally.

D. Wawonii Language Suffixes

Suffixes {-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, {-akondo}

These suffixes are grouped in this discussion because they share the same core meaning but differ only in the person of the pronominal target they encode. The suffix {-akuo}, which consistently attaches to verbal bases, forms new verbs with a causative-benefactive meaning and simultaneously encodes a first-person singular pronoun ('I'). The suffix {-akono} indicates that the action is performed for a third-person singular beneficiary ('for him/her'). The suffix {-akitao} marks the formation of benefactive verbs, semantically meaning 'for us', specifically first-person plural inclusive (you and I [and possibly others]). The suffix {-akondo} generally expresses that the action is performed for a third-person plural beneficiary ('for them'). The following are data and examples illustrating these suffixes in sentences.

Base	{-akuo}	{-akono}	{-akitao}	{-akondo}
(87) ala	alaakuo 'get it for me'	alaakono 'get it for her/his'	alaakitao 'get it for us'	alaakondo 'get it for them'
(88) bini	biniakuo 'hold it for me'	biniakono 'hold it for his/her'	biniakitao 'hold it for us'	biniakondo 'hold it for them'
(89) pole	poleakuo 'cut it for me'	poleakono 'cut it for his/her'	poleakitao 'cut it for us'	poleakondo 'cut it for us'

- **Alaakuo** piso dapura! 'Get me a knife in the kitchen!'
- **Biniakono** limano ana iso! 'Hold her hand!'
- **Biniakitao** ika ai! 'Hold this fish for us!'
- **Poleakondo** keu iso! 'Cut the wood for them!'

The suffixes {-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, and {-akondo} attach to verbs in Wawonii, simultaneously encoding benefactive meaning and pronominal reference (1st, 2nd, 3rd person). Though they appear orthographically complex, they function as derivational suffixes, likely originating from the fusion of pronominal and benefactive elements that have since grammaticalized into single semantic units.

Suffix {-si}

The suffix {-si} has a specific semantic function to express the exclusivity or limitation of an action.

- (90) leu 'come' + {-si} leusi 'only come'
 (91) lako 'go' + {-si} lakosi 'only go'

- Ana ai **leusi** mokomosaa bitarando. ‘The child only comes to break our speech.’
- Mari toloro **lakosi** tepohumpuakono ai tina. ‘In fact, he only goes to meet with this girl.’

This suffix does not change the word class (the verb remains a verb) but adds a semantic meaning. The suffix {-si} appears to be a derivational affix conveying the meaning of exclusivity of the action, indicating that only that particular action occurs. Additionally, the suffix {-si} can function to emphasize a limited action or serve as a marker of contrast or regret within a discourse context.

Suffix {-omo}

The use of the suffix {-omo}, which attaches to verbal bases, appears to mark a change of state or the achievement of a condition inherent in the action, particularly in relation to movement or the transition from one state to another.

(92) lako ‘go’ + {-omo} lakoomo ‘go out’

(93) wangu ‘wake’ + {-omo} wanguomo ‘wake up’

- Nai meu olotano, **lakoomo** ai tama melamasi. ‘Not long after that, this boy go to propose.’
- Dahoopo melange tou, **wanguoma** Wulangkinokoti. ‘Early morning, Wulangkinokuti wakes up.’

Based on the data, the suffix {-omo} expresses a resultative or perfective aspect, indicating that the action is not only performed but also completed or results in a change of state. Additionally, it encodes directional or locational (spatial) aspects, functioning as a directional marker. Thus, {-omo} is a derivational suffix attached to verbs that adds an aspectual or locational meaning to the verbal base. The addition of this suffix does not change the word class—the verb remains a verb—but it enriches the verb with semantic meaning and pragmatic nuance.

Suffix {-o}

The suffix {-o} is a grammatical affix that functions as a third-person marker on verbs. This suffix acts as a bound pronominal, indicating that the action is performed by the respondent or refers to a third-person entity.

(94) tena ‘ask’ + {-o} tenao ‘ask’

(95) gumara ‘cry’ + {-o} gumarao ‘cry’

- Wulangkinokuti **tenao** takano lumo monte kanaka ‘Wulangkinokuti is asked by her father to go to deliver food’
- Wulangkinokuti same **gumarao** adeno ticino laron ‘Wulangkinokuti is crying because of her deep feeling’

The data illustrate the use of the suffix {-o} attached to verbs, which serves as a grammatical rather than lexical function. This suffix has a pronominal or grammatical deictic function, specifically as a third-person marker (third person singular or plural) that refers to the subject or agent of the action within a clause structure. While it does not change the word class—the verb remains a verb—it encodes essential syntactic information regarding the subject or actor in the clause.

The grammatical function of this suffix is its role as a pronominal marker for the third person (3SG or 3PL). This indicates that the action was carried out by a third-party referent, typically occupying the subject or agent (or experiencer) position in the clause.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In describing affixation in the Wawonii language, this study adopts an approach that is not solely structural but also attentive to the social and cultural contexts in which the language lives and evolves. In line with Crystal’s (2000) view that a language requires a community in order to thrive (see also Hannaford & Alexander, 2024), the process of data collection and analysis involved the active participation of the speaker community, through oral narratives, everyday conversations, and reflections on the use of specific linguistic forms.

The affixes described focus on both derivational and inflectional affixations, with attention to prefixes, infixes, circumfixes, and suffixes. Each type of affix is defined in terms of its morphological, semantic and phonological functions, accompanied by data illustrating base and derived forms as well as example sentences. The description of affixes is organized according to their positional category, including: Prefixes: {moN-}, {me-}, {pa-}, {po-}, {in-}, {um-}, {te-}, {ko-}, {meka-}, {ndo-}, {tepo-}, {mompoko-}; Infixes: {-in-}, {-um-}; Confixes: {pe-...-a}, {poN-...-a}, {pompoko-...-a}, {meka-...-ako}, {meka-...-ira}, {ka-...-ta}; Suffixes: {-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, {-akondo}, {-si}, {-omo}, and {-o}.

Research on the Wawonii language shows the existence of bound stems, which are bound morphemes that are not affixes and can only function as words when combined with other morphemes (Kridalaksana, 2008). Verhaar (1999) refers to this category as bound bases, defined as forms that require affixation, cliticization, or compounding to become free forms. Examples include morphemes such as *aa* ‘eat’, *solo* ‘flow’, and *bua* ‘work’, which can become free forms through affixation, as in *mongkaa* and *kinaa*.

The nasal assimilation in the prefix {moN-} is demonstrated through a detailed phonological account. For instance, {moN-} + /p/ yields {mom-}; {moN-} + /k/ becomes {moŋ-}; and {moN-} + /s/, /t/ results in {mon-}. From a semantic perspective, the affixes are also explicitly interpreted: {po-} functions to indicate instrumentality and action; {in-} and {-in-} serve as markers for resultative nouns and passive verbs; {pa-} is used to derive agent nouns; {meka-...-ira} marks comparative reciprocals; and {-omo} functions as a marker of resultative aspect and directionality.

Wawonii exhibits high morphological productivity, especially in affixation processes that derive verbs, nominalized forms, and complex structures with affixes like {mompoko-} and {pompoko-...-a}. It also has pronominal-benefactive suffixes (e.g., {-akuo}, {-akono}) that encode both beneficiary and pronominal reference in a single morpheme. Overall,

Wawonii's inflectional-agglutinative system, with features such as allomorphs, circumfixes, and semantically fine-grained affixations, highlights its unique balance of morphology–phonology interaction and Austronesian affinities.

Wawonii, classified within the Austronesian–Malayo–Polynesian branch and more specifically in the Bungku-Laki subgroup (Mead, 1999), exhibits a productive affixation system typical of Austronesian languages. The prefix {moN-}, with its nasal allomorphs such as {mom-}, {moŋ-}, and {mon-}, reflects the nasal substitution process also found in Tagalog (De Voz, 2011), Indonesian, Malay, and several other Southeast Sulawesi languages (Sailan et al., 1995; Firman, 2017, 2021; Dermawansyah, 2022). Similar affixation patterns are observed in Kulisusu, Moronene, Tolaki, Bungku, and Limola (Sailan et al., 1995; Asmi, 1995; Muthalib et al., 1991; Kadja et al., 1998; Agus et al., 2024), where {moN-} functions as a marker of intransitive active verbs. In Wawonii, this prefix is highly productive and displays nasal assimilation processes conditioned by the root-initial phoneme, highlighting the complexity of its phonological system.

Wawonii shares many affixation features with its Bungku-Tolaki relatives, such as {me-}/{meN-} for denominal verbs, {po-}/{poN-} for instrument nouns and action verbs, {pa-} for agentive nouns, and {te-} for passive constructions. At the same time, it shows unique innovations, including complex prefixes and circumfixes (e.g., {meka-}, {mompoko-}, {pompoko-...-a}, {meako-...-ako}, {meka-...-ira}) that extend to reciprocal, causative, locative, and instrumental functions. Wawonii is especially distinctive for its pronominal-benefactive suffixes ({-akuo}, {-akono}, {-akitao}, {-akondo}) and other unique forms like {-omo} (resultative) and {-si} (exclusivity), which are absent in related languages, highlighting its advanced and innovative morphological system.

The affixation system of Wawonii reflects historical consistency with the Bungku-Tolaki group while showing structural and semantic innovations, particularly in complex affixes that express benefactive, locative, instrumental, reciprocal, and intensive functions. Infixation forms like {-in-} and {-um-}, also found in Tagalog (Guzman, 1991), serve as passive markers and inputs for word-formation processes, exhibiting morphophonemic alternations typical of Austronesian languages. Additionally, affixes such as {pa-}, {po-}, {ndo-}, {meka-} in Wawonii, alongside forms like {pa-}, {paka-}, {pakaN-} in other Austronesian languages, demonstrate the family-wide tendency toward causative and applicative derivation, highlighting Wawonii's productive and innovative morphology.

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Firman A.D. completed his undergraduate studies in the Department of Language and Literature at Universitas 45 Makassar in 2000 and earned his master's degree in Communication Studies from Hasanuddin University in 2004. He has been a researcher since 2010 and currently serves as a Senior Researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), under the Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation. He can be contacted via email at firm013@brin.go.id; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8295-6502>



Dwiani Septiana is a researcher at the Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She holds a Doctorate in Linguistics from the Sebelas Maret University. Her research interests include ethnolinguistics, documentation, and description of minority languages in Indonesia. Email: dwia019@brin.go.id



Siti Fatimah was a researcher working for the Agency for Language Development and Cultivation from 2001–2021. From 2022 until now, she joins the National Research and Innovation Agency (known as BRIN). Her research interests are sociolinguistics, dialectology, comparative historical linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and language documentation; Email: siti085@brin.go.id; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6564-9893>



Evi Maha Kastri, born in Tanjung Karang, Lampung, in 1979, is a Associate Researcher at the Research Organization for Archaeology, Language, and Literature, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. She began her career at the Lampung Provincial Language Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. She earned her master's degree in Indonesian Language and Literature Education from the University of Lampung in 2016. Her research interests focus on interdisciplinary linguistics. Contact: mahakastri2@gmail.com / evi.maha.kastri@brin.go.id | ORCID iD: 0000-0003-1305-3593



Tamrin was born in Sinjai on March 12, 1973. He completed his undergraduate studies in 2000 at Makassar State University and his master's degree at the same university in 2013. He is a researcher at the Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). His research focuses on interdisciplinary linguistics and language preservation. He can be contacted via email at tamr001@brin.go.id



Dermawan completed his undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Halu Oleo University in Kendari. He subsequently obtained his Master's degree from the same university in 2012, with a specialization in Educational Administration. He is currently serving as an expert staff member for community affairs and human resources at the Regional Secretariat of Konawe Kepulauan Regency. He can be reached via email at dermawankonkep@gmail.com



Muhammad Darwis is a professor of linguistics in the Department of Indonesian Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia. He holds a Bachelor's degree (Indonesian Linguistics) from the Faculty of Letters, Hasanuddin University (1982), a Master's degree (1990), and a doctoral degree (1998) in the same field at the Postgraduate Program at Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia. He can be contacted via email at hmdarwis@unhas.ac.id; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0005-8256>.