



AN ANALYSIS OF METAPHOR IN *FAMOTU* AT THE TRADITIONAL WEDDING NIAS CEREMONIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the metaphors embedded in *Amaedola*, the traditional Nias proverbs recited during *Famotu*, a ceremonial advisory session for the bride in Nias wedding traditions. It seeks to classify the metaphor types, identify the dominant categories, and analyze the rhyme patterns characterizing *Amaedola* in *Famotu*. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, the research is informed by the metaphor frameworks of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and Ullmann (1977). Data were gathered over a two-month period in Iraonolase Village, Gunungsitoli Alo'oa Sub-district, through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving three *Satua Banua* and one female cultural elder. The analysis identified seven metaphor types: structural, orientational, ontological, anthropomorphic, animal, synesthetic, and concrete-to-abstract. Orientational and ontological metaphors predominated, drawing on natural elements, body parts, and animals to express ethical principles, social norms, and cultural values. Six rhyme patterns were also identified: AAAA, ABAB, ABBA, AABB, AAB/ABAA, and ABBB, each enhancing the aesthetic appeal and memorability of the proverbs. The findings underscore the vital role of *Amaedola* in safeguarding Nias cultural heritage while contributing to linguistic scholarship and educational enrichment.

Keywords: *Amaedola*, *Metaphor*, *Famotu*, *Rhyme*, *semantic analysis*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nias, one of Indonesia's culturally diverse islands, possesses a rich cultural heritage manifested through its language, performing arts, traditional attire, culinary practices, folk songs, and, most prominently, its customary wedding traditions. As an indigenous language, the Nias language functions not only as a medium of daily communication but also as a repository of cultural knowledge, traditional values, and collective identity. According to Geertz (2020), every Indonesian ethnic community embodies a distinctive cultural system that shapes the identity and worldview of its members. Likewise, Santoso (2022) argued that local wisdom constitutes a fundamental pillar of national identity while fostering social

cohesion. In this respect, Nias culture and its language represent not merely an ancestral inheritance but also an integral component of Indonesia's multicultural landscape.

Traditional marriage occupies a pivotal position within Nias society, functioning as both a sacred institution and a cultural mechanism for preserving collective values across generations (Laia & Zai 2020). Haryanto (2021) emphasized that marriage ceremonies ensure the continuity of cultural traditions, whereas Haviland (2019) viewed wedding rituals as important social institutions that reinforce kinship, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and preserve customary norms. Within the Nias community, traditional weddings extend beyond the union of two individuals; they symbolize the consolidation

of family ties, communal solidarity, and cultural continuity through a series of highly symbolic rituals, including *famotu*. The ritual is also a linguistic event in which ceremonial language is employed to communicate cultural philosophy, ethical principles, and social expectations. Zega (2020) further observed that the evolution of Nias wedding customs reflects the community's deeply rooted kinship system and its emphasis on collective responsibility.

The Nias customary marriage ceremony, locally referred to as *fangowalu*, is regarded as a sacred rite of passage because it signifies the establishment of a new family and is traditionally performed only once in an individual's lifetime. This study specifically examines the Laraga customary marriage tradition practiced in Iraonolase Village, Gunungsitoli Alo'oa District. Zaluchu (2020) categorized the Laraga marriage process into three principal stages: *famaigi ono alawe/famaigi niha* (searching for a prospective spouse), *fanunu manu* (proposal and engagement), and *falöwa* (the wedding ceremony). Expanding upon this framework, Bate'e et al. (2024) identified fourteen sequential customary procedures, beginning with parental involvement in selecting a prospective spouse, negotiations between both families, the appointment of an intermediary (*si'o* or *samatötö bahuho*), formal proposal (*fa me li*), the exchange of bracelets and rings (*fa me köla/fa me laeduru*), engagement (*fanunu manu*), reaffirmation of family agreements (*famangelama*), dowry negotiations (*femanga bawi nisila hulu*), preparations for the ceremonial feast, the presentation of ritual offerings, and culminating in the *falöwa* ceremony.

Field interviews conducted with Lase (2025) further revealed that several ceremonial stages are considered obligatory before the bride is escorted to the groom's household. These include *fame'e laeduru* (exchange of rings), *fanunu manu*, *famözi aramba*, *famotu*, and *fame'e niowalu*. Each stage embodies specific symbolic meanings and cultural functions, illustrating the philosophical worldview and social values upheld by the Nias community.

Among these ceremonial stages, *famotu* occupies a particularly significant position. It is a ritual in which advice and moral guidance are imparted to the bride before she begins her married life within her husband's family.

Traditionally, this counsel is communicated through *amaedola*, a collection of traditional Nias proverbs characterized by figurative language, ethical teachings, and philosophical reflections. Naomi (2025) explained that *famotu* is typically delivered by respected female elders, including *ina satua banua*, *umönö sarege*, the wife of the bride's paternal uncle (*uwu*), and other senior maternal relatives. The linguistic expressions found in *amaedola* employ metaphorical and poetic language to communicate social norms, moral values, and cultural expectations in ways that are both persuasive and aesthetically meaningful (Lase, 2022; Zalukhu et al., 2024). The *amaedola* recited during this ceremony contain symbolic expressions intended to instill virtues such as respect, responsibility, harmony, and proper social conduct, thereby preparing the bride for her new familial and social roles.

Amaedola constitutes a valuable element of Nias oral tradition and represents an important repository of indigenous knowledge. Sembiring et al. (2022) classified *amaedola* as part of Indonesia's diverse oral literary heritage, functioning similarly to proverbs and parables. Gea (2014) further described *amaedola* as encompassing proverbs, allegories, brief narratives, and figurative expressions enriched with lexical, contextual, idiomatic, connotative, and metaphorical meanings. Consequently, these expressions serve not only as linguistic artifacts but also as effective vehicles for transmitting cultural values, moral principles, collective memory, and community identity (Muliadi et al., 2024; Aziz et al., 2023; Sue et al., 2022). From a linguistic perspective, *amaedola* demonstrates the richness of the Nias language through its use of figurative language, semantic symbolism, and distinctive poetic forms (Sulystio, 2024; Sapari, 2024; Adika & Budiarsana, 2023). Simanjuntak (2018) similarly argued that the philosophical foundations of Nias marriage traditions originate from ancestral beliefs emphasizing social and spiritual interconnectedness, with *amaedola* remaining one of the principal media through which these values are communicated.

Despite its cultural significance, the practice of using *amaedola* during *famotu* has gradually diminished in contemporary society. Observations in Iraonolase Village indicate that younger generations, and even some older

family members, increasingly omit *amaedola* during wedding ceremonies. This trend is consistent with Koentjaraningrat's (2022) theory of cultural transformation, which argues that modernization and globalization have substantially altered traditional cultural practices, including symbolic communication and the use of traditional language. Likewise, Sibarani (2018) contended that globalization has marginalized numerous oral traditions, accelerating cultural shifts and weakening the transmission of indigenous knowledge. Consequently, the decline in the use of *amaedola* also threatens the preservation of the linguistic richness embedded in the Nias language, raising concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of both the language and its cultural heritage.

Safeguarding local traditions has become increasingly important because regional cultures collectively shape Indonesia's national identity (Islami, 2022; Arhire, 2023). The preservation of *amaedola* aligns with broader governmental initiatives promoting cultural sustainability, including the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which integrates local cultural values into educational practices (Taib et al., 2024; Annisha, 2024). These initiatives are reinforced by Law Number P.34/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/5/2017 concerning the Recognition and Protection of Local Wisdom, which highlights the state's responsibility to preserve indigenous communities and their cultural heritage. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2023) emphasized that protecting local traditions constitutes a strategic effort to strengthen the national principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).

From a language and linguistic perspective, metaphors embedded in *amaedola* constitute essential mechanisms for expressing cultural concepts and social values (Kartika et al., 2024; Umiyati, 2020; Sakhiyya, 2019). Lakoff and Johnson (2021) argued that metaphors function as cognitive instruments through which abstract concepts are conceptualized via concrete human experiences. Similarly, Steen (2023) maintained that metaphor provides a conceptual framework enabling individuals to interpret life experiences through symbolic language. Within *amaedola*, ordinary objects such as needles and thread frequently

symbolize unity, perseverance, cooperation, and familial harmony, illustrating how tangible imagery conveys profound philosophical meanings concerning marriage and social relationships. Besides metaphorical meaning, the sound patterns and rhyme structures of *amaedola* represent important linguistic features that contribute to their aesthetic value, memorability, and effectiveness in oral performance. Consequently, this study investigates both the metaphorical language and the rhyme patterns embedded in *amaedola* as distinctive characteristics of Nias oral literature.

To achieve these objectives, this research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, which Creswell (2023) considers particularly suitable for interpreting meanings and understanding cultural phenomena within their natural contexts. The study was conducted in Iraonolase Village, Gunungsitoli Alo'oa District, a community recognized for the presence of numerous *Satua Banua* traditional elders possessing extensive knowledge of Nias customary law, language, and oral traditions thereby providing a rich cultural and linguistic setting for data collection.

Drawing upon the foregoing discussion, this study seeks to explore, document, and preserve the cultural wisdom embodied in *amaedola* by examining both its linguistic characteristics and cultural functions, particularly its metaphorical constructions and rhyme patterns within the *famotu* tradition of Nias customary weddings. More specifically, the research aims to identify the categories of metaphors employed in *amaedola*, analyze the dominant conceptual patterns, and describe the rhyme structures that characterize this oral tradition. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute not only to language and linguistic studies, literary scholarship, and semantic research but also to the preservation, revitalization, and intergenerational transmission of the Nias language and its cultural heritage in the face of rapid social and cultural change.

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research method to explore and interpret the use of metaphor in *amaedola* within the Nias cultural context, particularly in

traditional wedding ceremonies. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables a deep examination of social meaning, cultural interpretation, and contextual understanding based on non-numerical data obtained through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2020; Neuman, 2019; Tisdell et al., 2025). The research was carried out in Iraonolase Village, Gunungsitoli, North Sumatra, from May 26 to June 26, 2025. The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary materials. Primary data were collected directly from *amaedola* used in the Famotu ceremony, interviews with cultural figures who understand and practice *amaedola*, and field observations during wedding rituals. Secondary data were gathered from written sources such as cultural books, dictionaries, documentation of Nias customs, and previous studies.

The researcher served as the main instrument of the study, supported by observation sheets, interview guidelines, and analytical indicators used to identify the structure, metaphorical elements, and contextual meanings of *amaedola*. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews with four knowledgeable informants; three male cultural practitioners and one female participant familiar with Nias wedding traditions direct observation of *amaedola* practices during the ceremony, and document analysis using Zega et al. (2025) *Proverbs of Nias (Amaedola Ono Niha)*, which categorizes hundreds of proverbs into various thematic groups. The data analysis was conducted inductively, beginning with identifying metaphors in selected *amaedola*, classifying them according to Ullman's theory and the conceptual metaphor framework of Lakoff and Johnson, and then interpreting the underlying semantic meanings. The analysis also emphasized the cultural significance embedded in each proverb, examining how metaphors reflect values, norms, and philosophical insights within Nias society. Through this descriptive interpretative process, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of metaphorical expressions in *amaedola* and their role in shaping communication and cultural identity in

traditional Nias weddings (Mauliddiyah, 2021; Susanto et al., 2023; Herdayati & Syahrial, 2019).

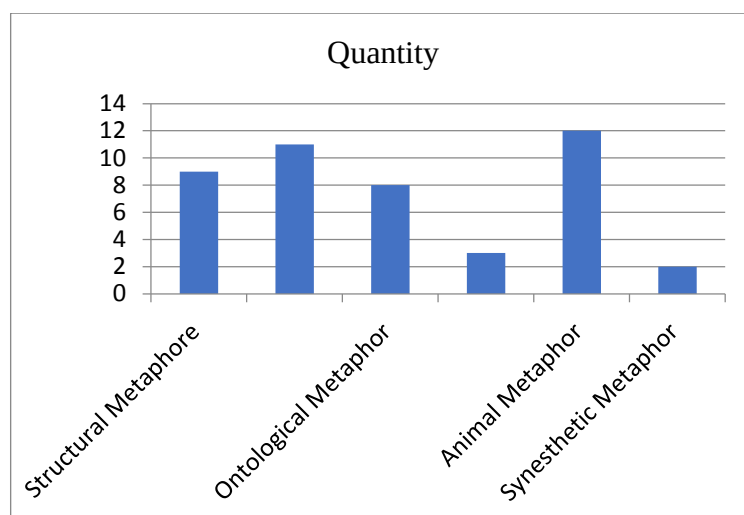
3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding of the Research

Famotu is a part of the Nias wedding tradition in which advice is given to the bride and groom, usually delivered by the bride's mother, her sister, the groom's uncle, and village elders through *amaedola*, a set of meaningful proverbs. However, the use of *amaedola* has become increasingly rare due to limited knowledge and preservation of these expressions. Therefore, this research was conducted in Iraonolase Village, Gunungsitoli Alo'oa, a community that still strongly maintains Nias marriage customs and has many knowledgeable traditional leaders. The researcher also lives in this village, which supported accurate and efficient data collection. Four informants participated in this study; three men and one woman who are respected elders actively involved in Nias wedding ceremonies. Data were collected using three techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Following the supervisor's advice, the researcher first conducted observations by attending a traditional wedding to document *amaedola* used during the famotu ceremony, then continued with interviews and document analysis. The findings are presented in the following section.

Predominant types of metaphors in wedding Nias ceremony (famotu)

Based on the results of observation and interview, therea six types of metaphors were found to appear, namely Structural metaphors (9 *amaedola*), Orientational metaphors (11 *amaedola*), Ontological metaphors (8 *amaedola*), Anthropomorphic metaphors (3 *amaedola*), Animal metaphors (12 metaphors), and Synesthetic metaphors (2 *amaedola*).



Picture 1. Predominant types of metaphors in amaedola use in Famotu

The findings show that the most dominant type of metaphor in amaedola used during famotu is the animal metaphor, with a total of 12 examples. Animal metaphors use the traits and behaviour of animals both positive and negative to describe human attitudes in daily life. The Nias community often uses animals as metaphors because they are familiar, observable, and easy to relate to. For example, in amaedola number (31), the chicken (*manu*) and fish (*gia*) are used to illustrate human character. A chicken lays one egg but makes a loud noise that attracts attention, while fish lay thousands of eggs silently. This metaphor teaches people to be humble like fish, rather than boastful like chickens.

The second most common type is the orientational metaphor, with 11 examples. These metaphors express ideas through direction, distance, or position. This appears frequently because Nias culture highly values relationships, social position, and family ties. For instance, in amaedola (20), the contrast between “drawing near to the sky” and “distancing oneself from the earth” illustrates that siblings remain closest to us, no matter how far we try to distance ourselves or how close we become to others.

The third most common type is the structural metaphor, with 9 examples. Structural metaphors use concrete objects to explain abstract ideas. For example, in amaedola (18), “Sōkhi aeru moroi aetu,” a rope

is used to represent relationships: just as a rope will break if pulled too hard, a marriage will break if neither partner is willing to yield. This metaphor reflects the cultural view that marriage is sacred and that separation is never the ideal solution.

Next, the ontological metaphor appears 8 times. This type explains abstract ideas by treating them as more concrete objects. For example, in amaedola (12), the “mouth” (*bawa*) and “light” (*haga*) represent conflict. When both sides refuse to give in symbolised by lights from the east and west crashing marital conflict becomes destructive. This teaches couples to avoid arguing without compromise.

The anthropomorphic metaphor, found 3 times, gives human qualities to non-human objects. An example is amaedola (4), where the “eye” represents physical distance and the “heart” represents emotional closeness, meaning that even when far apart, loved ones remain close in the heart.

There are also synesthetic metaphors, found 2 times, which connect sensory experiences. In amaedola (13), *mbulu nakhe* (dark green palm leaves) is used as a metaphor for giving something in public because the leaves are visually striking, the proverb warns against giving gifts in front of others, which can create jealousy.

Based on Lakoff & Johnson and Ullman’s metaphor taxonomy, there are seven possible metaphor types. However, this study found six types in amaedola used in famotu;

the Concrete-to-Abstract metaphor did not appear. This type uses a concrete object to explain an abstract concept (e.g., “ladder of success,” “heart of steel”). It does not occur in famotu for several reasons:

1. Cultural Characteristics of Amaedola
Amaedola tends to use concrete-to-concrete comparisons, or the structural and ontological forms that are easier to visualise.
2. Practical Communicative Purpose
Amaedola is designed to give clear advice to the bride and

groom, so metaphors rely on visible, everyday symbols rather than abstract concepts.

3. Oral Tradition Based on Real Experience

Nias oral culture is rooted in farming, fishing, and daily life, so metaphors naturally use familiar, tangible references shared by the speaker and listener.

Types of Rhyme Patterns Were Found in Amaedola As Part of Nias Oral Tradition

Table 1. Organizing types of rhyme in amaedola used in famotu

Types of Rhyme	Amaedola
AAAA (Full rhymes)	5) Muzuna-zuna gelefufu wa ngalui idanõ sohaahau 6) Hadia zami ba manu? na tenga iwo-iwo nia 10) Akha mate mbaewa ba si radi nawõ 15) Hulõ mbaewa gala fasui bawa 21) Zina-zina Marafadi, bõi ahatõ bõi arõu 22) Bu'u haga famago nasu 24) Ha fa'afusi ngai ba gelefufu, ba ha fa'aitõ hulu ba mbakhu, ba no fagõlõ hua na mutunu 31) Hulõ manu sawena mangadulo... 35) Mohede gi mohede ga... 36) Mana na zikhõ na falukha ba fa'ago mbawa 40) Ha fa ombuyu nõsi ba mbakhu... 43) Lamane satua fõna... ono nasu simate
ABAB (Cross rhyme)	3) He ide-ide ia na odo'õ, ba he ebua ia na atakhi 8) Bõrõta wa'atuatua fangata'ufi Lowalangi 19) Ta'arõ-arõukõ danõ ba tahundrahundra... 20) Tahatõ-hatõ'õ dalu mbanua... 26) Akha lõ omuhua asala lõ abõu 28) Hulõ gaolo-gaolo wadati, so mõi yawa so mõi tou 29) Andrõ alua gowasa... ndramatuandra'alawe 37) Amuata ba mbale bua bua ba humane 38) Kaoko ba hili... ufaolo gõi drao 41) Fangewua gamuata solakhõmi ba sogena... 44) Nasõkhi ma wowanua... ba tõdõ gae dra'alawe
ABBA (Hug / Sandwich rhyme)	7) Tufõi-tufõi mbeweu ua bulu lato, awena muhede õ 18) Sõkhi aeru moroi aetu 23) Bõi su'agõ gaheu ba gahe nawõu 25) He badalu dai na so gana'a ba lara'u faoma bawa 27) Asala gadulo ba hele-hele ba fatiti 30) Aoha noro nilului wahea... tafaewolowolo 33) Fa'asalawa mbosi nora... afatõ nitarai zato

	34) <i>Hulõ harita, olifu ia guli nia</i> 42) <i>Bõi faritõ zondro ma haru... iwai khõnia satua tuho nomo</i>
AABB (Twin rhymes)	2) <i>Bõi aekhugõ luobawõnu</i> 9) <i>Abu'a gömõ, ba lö abu'a li</i> 11) <i>Bawa badakera... bagalitõ</i> 12) <i>Bawa moroi yõu... bafaoma nofazuzu haga</i> 16) <i>Lõlõ nafo moroi yomo...</i> 17) <i>Sonekhe manõrõ tundraha... falõ'itandaõlõ angi</i> 32) <i>Alõlõ nafo nano mu'a... ha taromali si sambua</i> 45) <i>Ya tobali'õ simane falõlõwa ba mbana, bõi tobali guti ba nirugimõ</i>
AAB / ABAA (Paired rhymes)	1) <i>Amawa fatua so zowõli</i> 4) <i>Arõu ba hõrõ, ahatõ ba dõdõ</i> 39) <i>Tõlu dõdõ ba mbatõ sambua dõdõ isalagoi dombua dõdõ ibini'õ</i>
ABBB (Broken rhyme)	13) <i>Bõi dõni mbulu nakhe ba gotalua niha sato</i> 14) <i>He no lafatambai... ba bõi tademadema</i> 19) <i>Ta'arõ-arõukõ danõ...</i> 20) <i>Tahatõ-hatõ'õ dalu mbanua...</i> 31) <i>Hulõ manu sawena... ba nasi lõ nini nini</i> 38) <i>Kaoko ba hili...</i> 43) <i>Lamane satua fõna...</i> 45) <i>Ya tobali'õ simane... nirugimõ</i>
Initial rhyme	
Middle rhyme	

From the eight positional rhyme types identified, Amaedola contains five rhyme types: Enclosed rhyme (ABBA) found in 9 Amaedola, Cross rhyme (ABAB) in 11 Amaedola, Twin rhyme (AABB) in 8 Amaedola, Broken rhyme (ABBB) in 8 Amaedola, and Chain rhyme (AAAA/full rhyme) in 12 Amaedola. Two rhyme types Initial rhyme and Middle rhyme are not found in the data.

The overall analysis shows that the rhyme patterns in Amaedola used in famotu (wedding speeches) create strong musicality, rhythm, and memorability, supporting the poetic and ceremonial nature of Nias oral tradition. The most frequent pattern is AAAA, appearing in twelve Amaedola, all of which use animal metaphors. This repetition of identical end sounds gives unity, humor, and a strong rhythmic effect, fitting the expressive style of ritual speech.

The ABAB (cross rhyme) pattern appears in eleven Amaedola, mostly containing orientational metaphors. This pattern helps express cultural relationships and adds humor

and memorability through alternating sounds. The ABBA (enclosed rhyme) structure, found in nine Amaedola, is associated with structural metaphors, using symmetry to express harmony and continuity. The AABB (twin rhyme) pattern, found in eight Amaedola, often conveys ontological metaphors, pairing ideas to emphasize unity and clarity. The ABBB (broken rhyme) pattern appears eight times and introduces asymmetry, symbolizing tension or complexity in the messages conveyed.

Across the data, the dominant rhyme endings are perfect rhymes with open vowels, especially -a, -i, and -õ. These vowels create smooth resonance and ease of articulation, which are important in oral performance. Slant rhymes and more complex rhyme schemes appear but mostly serve to add variation and prevent monotony.

Initial rhyme and middle rhyme are absent because of the phonological and cultural characteristics of Nias oral tradition. Phonologically, Nias language relies on final vowel harmony rather than repeated sounds at

the beginning or middle of lines. Culturally, *amaedola* prioritize clarity, balance, and rhythmic closure at the end of each line. Structurally, short and compact lines leave little space for internal rhyme, and the end-line rhyme plays the key role in marking rhythm and aiding memory.

So that, the rhyme analysis of 45 *Amaedola* shows that end-line rhyme patterns are central to their structure, creating both musicality and meaning. While some use simple identical endings and others use varied patterns, all contribute to the aesthetic and communicative power of *Amaedola* in Nias ceremonial speech.

Discussion

The analysis identified 40 *amaedola* containing metaphorical expressions employed during the *famotu* ritual. Interview data indicate that *amaedola* generally follow a tripartite rhetorical structure consisting of an introduction, the central message, and a concluding statement, although the completeness of this structure largely depends on the speaker's cultural competence and rhetorical expertise. Experienced speakers tend to employ elaborate introductory lines to engage the audience and establish the ceremonial atmosphere, whereas less experienced speakers often deliver the *amaedola* directly without a formal introduction. This finding supports Gea (2017), who explains that *amaedola* constitute a highly structured form of Nias oral literature in which rhetorical organization enhances both the aesthetic quality and communicative effectiveness of traditional advice. Likewise, Zalukhu et al. (2024) emphasize that *amaedola* are carefully constructed to transmit moral values and cultural philosophy during customary ceremonies. For example, in the *amaedola Mohede gi mohede ga, Mohede sa nono gaga, Mo'ao nono go gowaya, Ba draha geu laliwa'a, Sabônô lai fa'alawa*, the opening line functions as the introduction, the second line presents the central message, and the remaining lines serve as the conclusion.

The findings further reveal that *amaedola* possess distinctive rhythmic

characteristics, predominantly employing AB and ABAB rhyme schemes, with many verses ending in identical vowel sounds, particularly -u. Their poetic quality is reinforced through elevated diction, symbolic imagery, and sophisticated metaphorical constructions that require cultural and contextual interpretation. Such stylistic features distinguish *amaedola* from everyday speech and explain why they remain largely confined to ritual settings. This observation is consistent with Lahay (2024), who argues that rhyme patterns in oral literature function not only as aesthetic devices but also as mnemonic strategies that facilitate oral transmission across generations. Similarly, Zega et al. (2025) note that the poetic arrangement of *Amaedola Ono Niha* reflects the linguistic artistry and cultural identity of the Nias people.

The metaphorical analysis was conducted using Ullmann's (1972, 1977) semantic classification alongside the conceptual metaphor framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). From the perspective of cognitive semantics, metaphors enable speakers to conceptualize abstract ideas through concrete experiences, thereby shaping cultural understanding and human cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Within the *famotu* tradition, metaphor serves as a powerful medium for expressing cultural philosophy, spirituality, and interpersonal relationships. Several conceptual metaphors identified in the data correspond to universal metaphorical mappings, including life is a journey, emotions are objects, and relationships are commercial contracts. For instance, the expression *Amawa fatua so zowôli* ("seller and buyer") conceptualizes marriage is a transaction, illustrating that marriage in Nias society encompasses emotional commitment as well as social, customary, and economic responsibilities. This interpretation aligns with Zaluchu (2020), who argues that Nias traditional marriage is fundamentally a social institution governed by customary obligations and reciprocal relationships between extended families.

From Ullmann's (1972, 1977) semantic perspective, many *amaedola* demonstrate semantic transfer from concrete physical

experiences to abstract psychological meanings. The expression *Tufoi-tufoi mbeweu ua bulu lato*, which compares hurtful speech to coarse feathers, illustrates how tangible physical characteristics are employed to conceptualize emotional pain. Such semantic shifts exemplify both ontological and structural metaphors by mapping sensory experience onto abstract emotional concepts. As Abdurrahman (2019) explains, semantic interpretation enables researchers to understand how lexical meanings evolve beyond their literal senses through figurative language.

Several *amaedola* also portray patterns of social interaction through metaphorical imagery. In *amaedola* number 42, the sounds produced in the kitchen symbolize hidden dissatisfaction toward guests, representing a synesthetic metaphor in which auditory perception conveys emotional meaning. Likewise, the expression *Muzuna-zuna gelefua wa ngalui idanō sohaheu*, comparing humans to fish searching for clean water, employs an animal metaphor to represent perseverance and the continuous struggle for a better life. These findings reinforce the argument of Zalukhu et al. (2024) that *amaedola* consistently utilize symbols derived from nature, animals, and daily life to communicate ethical teachings and communal values.

Other metaphorical expressions rely on body parts and familiar household objects to communicate abstract cultural principles. For example, *Hulō mbaewa gala fasui bawa* employs the mouth as a metaphor for leadership, communication, and collective cooperation. Similarly, *He ide-ide ia na odo'ō, ba he ebu ia na atakhi* uses the sensory experience of taste to symbolize moral integrity, illustrating how sensory metaphors communicate ethical values. Ontological and structural metaphors are equally evident in descriptions of domestic life, where ships, seas, and storms metaphorically represent the challenges encountered within family life, while the husband is portrayed as the captain responsible for guiding the household through adversity. These findings support Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) proposition that abstract

concepts are systematically understood through concrete experiential domains.

In *amaedola* number 41, harmonious family relationships and virtuous conduct are represented through the metaphors of carrying burdens and strong stone foundations, integrating ontological, structural, and orientational metaphorical mappings. Meanwhile, *amaedola* number 43 compares individuals of immoral character to the offspring of monkeys or dead dogs, illustrating how animal metaphors function as instruments of moral evaluation. In *amaedola* number 44, natural elements such as ferns and banana blossoms symbolize dignity, honor, and familial responsibility. Similarly, *amaedola* number 45 employs sewing implements as symbolic representations of social relationships: needles and thread signify individuals who strengthen social bonds, whereas scissors symbolize those who create division and conflict. These symbolic representations demonstrate the richness of Nias oral tradition in embedding cultural wisdom within figurative language (Gea, 2017; Zega et al., 2025).

Collectively, these metaphorical expressions communicate a broad spectrum of cultural values, including wisdom, affection, loyalty, perseverance, cooperation, responsibility, and social harmony. Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) conceptual metaphor theory explains how abstract social and moral concepts are comprehended through concrete human experiences, whereas Ullmann's (1972, 1977) semantic theory clarifies the mechanisms through which lexical meanings shift from literal to figurative interpretations. Together, these complementary theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive explanation of the cultural meanings embedded within *amaedola*. Furthermore, these findings corroborate previous studies indicating that *amaedola* function not merely as linguistic expressions but also as repositories of indigenous knowledge and cultural identity within Nias society (Zalukhu et al., 2024; Zega et al., 2025).

This study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge by integrating semantic metaphor analysis with an

examination of rhyme patterns in *amaedola*. Previous investigations have primarily focused on interpreting the meanings of *amaedola* or the communicative functions of *famotu* (Gea, 2017; Zalukhu et al., 2024), while relatively little attention has been devoted to exploring the interaction between metaphorical structures and poetic sound patterns. By combining these analytical perspectives, the present research offers a more comprehensive understanding of how metaphor and rhyme jointly reinforce the aesthetic quality, memorability, and cultural significance of *amaedola* within the *famotu* ritual, thereby contributing to the preservation and documentation of Nias oral literature.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings reveal six types of metaphors in *amaedola*: animal metaphors (12), orientational metaphors (11), structural metaphors (9), ontological metaphors (8), anthropomorphic metaphors (3), and synesthetic metaphors (2). Animal metaphors emerged as the most dominant category, reflecting the tendency of the Nias community to conceptualize abstract ideas through familiar elements of their natural environment, particularly animals that are closely associated with everyday life. In addition, the rhyme analysis demonstrates that *amaedola* display rich and varied poetic structures, predominantly characterized by vowel-ending rhymes, especially the distinctive Nias vowel *õ*. The most frequent pattern is the AAAA (full/perfect rhyme), identified in 12 *amaedola*, followed by ABAB (cross rhyme) in 11, ABBA (enclosed rhyme) in 9, AABB (twin rhyme) in 8, and ABBB (broken rhyme) in 8. In contrast, no instances of initial rhyme or middle rhyme were identified. The predominance of perfect rhymes with open vowels, particularly -a, -i, and -*õ*, enhances musicality, rhythm, aesthetic appeal, and memorability, while occasional slant rhymes (e.g., -eu ~ -u or -a ~ -u) and varied rhyme schemes contribute to stylistic diversity and prevent monotony. Overall,

these findings highlight the oral and performative nature of *amaedola*, where sound resonance and ease of pronunciation play a crucial role in cultural transmission and the preservation of traditional authority. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis was restricted to a relatively small corpus of *amaedola* used specifically in the *famotu* ritual and employed only a descriptive qualitative approach; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all forms of *amaedola* or the broader Nias oral tradition. Furthermore, the study did not incorporate recently developed *amaedola*, limiting opportunities for diachronic comparison. Future research is therefore encouraged to investigate other thematic categories of *amaedola*, expand the dataset across different ceremonial contexts and regions, and adopt mixed-method or quantitative approaches to produce more comprehensive and generalizable findings.

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