

## ABSTRACT

This paper responds to a concern about the neglect of minor sub-dialects such as Samor in a wide range of research that focus on the analysis of tense. It is noted in this research that a majority of studies tend to focus on dominant languages leaving out minor sub-dialects. This paper focuses on the varying morpho-syntactic features in Samor a minor subdialect that mark tense. A linguist's desire is to investigate less studied dialects so as to describe their grammar. This paper responds to that concern. The paper contends that there is need to investigate the unique grammatical properties of minor subdialects since this aids in the preservation and understanding of the unique character traits that describe the people of this earth. One such character trait that describes people is the language they speak. The paper discusses the phonological features and strategies used in expressing tense and aspect in Samor. The research used the non-probability sampling using the convenience or opportunity sampling to sample one hundred utterances in Samor that were used to analyze the data. The paper used tape recording, interview and field notes to collect data. Non-probability sampling was also used to select the ceremonies that would be tape recorded. The data was transcribed, organized and analysed for tense marking strategies. Using Feature Checking Theory, this theory is important since it identifies the grammatical features that are used to mark tense. The theory proposes the following tense marking features: tense, person, number and gender. The theory proposes that such features are checked against any utterance to ensure grammaticality. In addition, the study used another theory in descriptive linguistics referred to as Grounded Theory. This theory enables a researcher to categorize data into analyzable units. The paper found out that Samor is a verb initial sub-dialect and morpho-syntactic features such as tense and aspect are marked in the verbal stem by attaching affixes. In addition, the paper found out that phonological processes such as tone, vowel lengthening and doubling play a key role in tense and aspect marking in Samor.

**Index Terms**— Syntax, phonological processes, morphological, features, tone, syllable, monosyllable and bisyllabic.