

A Morphosyntactic Analysis of the Pronominal System of *Southern Alta*

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Abstract

Pronouns are one of the universal components of language and they provide information on the morphosyntactic characteristics of any languages such as Philippine languages. Past researches show various analyses on the morphosyntax of PLs, a recent typological study claims that Philippine languages (PLs) are ergative. Another study shows a similar claim; however, this study utilizes the pronominal systems of major Philippine languages and uses an ergative-absolutive framework. This research examines the pronouns of *Southern Alta language*. It aims to contribute in the typological studies of pronominal systems of Negrito and Non-negrito languages. This study employs an ergative-absolutive framework. The initial result shows that the pronominal systems of the Southern Alta language consist of absolutive, ergative, oblique, and genitive pronouns. The ergative-absolutive framework unravels the morphosyntax of the pronominal system of Southern Alta. The framework helps describe the functions and characteristic of the different sets of pronouns. The study also reveals linguistic phenomena such as inclusivity/exclusivity, first person dual pronouns, homomorphy, cliticization, hierarchy, person-deixis interface and portmanteau pronouns. In conclusion, the ergative-absolutive framework fits the morphosyntactic analysis of the Southern Alta language. This study also suggests to examine the clausal construction including the noun phrases (NPs) of Southern Alta.

1 Introduction

The Philippines has over 150 languages (Reid, 2013, pp. 330-331). This large inventory excludes the Sama varieties spoken in the Sulu Archipelago and the South Mindanao languages. Although these varieties are spoken within the Republic of the Philippines; they differ morphosyntactically from other Philippine languages and are generally not included in generalizations about Philippine languages (Himmelmann, 2005, p. 111). However, Reid (2013) made a distinction between the original settlers and migrants of pre-colonial Philippines. They are the Negritos and non-Negritos, respectively. Although both groups spoke Austronesian languages, the former was non-Austronesian not until the first Austronesian immigrant the Negritos came in contact 5,000 years ago while the latter groups are the Austronesian-speaking peoples in the Philippines.

Reid and Liao (2004, p. 435) conducted a typological study of the syntax of most Philippine languages and claim that Philippine languages are ergative. In support to the previous claim, Dita (2011) conducted a typological study anchored on ergative-absolutive framework by examining the pronominal systems of most of the major languages of the Philippines.

Dita (Dita, 2011, p. 1) explains that pronominals are a universal component of human languages and are considered basic vocabulary of any given language. In addition, she explains that personal pronouns are generally closed-class and are unaffected by borrowing or code-switching (Dita, 2011). Pronouns exist together with other closed-class words such as prepositions, articles and conjunctions. Unlike open-class categories (e.g. verbs and nouns), pronouns do not change over time, and

they signal grammatical relationships between the verb and the subject or object of a clause. The pronominal system of a language is one of the key components to uncover the morphosyntactic structure and properties of the languages, not to mention other linguistic features that may come along with the analysis. She also explains that this new analysis will provide ample understanding on the morphosyntax of many languages in the Philippines (Dita, 2010).

Past studies on the pronominal systems of Negrito and non-Negrito languages focus on reconstructions such as word lists and phonologies (Reid, 1971), Northern Cordilleran subgroup (Tharp, 1974), Arta (Reid, 1989), Alta languages (Reid, 1991), Central Cagayan Agta (Liao, 2005) and Umiray Dumaget (Lobel, 2013). Other topics include deictics (MacFarland, 2006), reference grammar (Headland & Healey, 1974), supplementary texts (Miller & Miller, 1991). This study aims to contribute in the typological study of the pronominal system of Negrito and Non-negrito languages in the Philippines.

1.1 Previous analysis

Dita (2011) explains that early studies on Tagalog language (Bloomfield, 1917) utilized the nominative-accusative distinction and has then dominated the literature on PL for many years. She further explains other analyses have emerged such as active-stative analysis (Drossard, 1994); the fluid voice analysis (Shibatani, 1999); the hybrid analysis (Machlachlan 1996), and the precategorial symmetrical voice analysis (Foley, 1998). But many of the morphosyntactic analysis of Philippine languages remain unclear. However, ergative-absolutive analysis that came about in the 1980s with the works of Payne (1982) and Starosa (1986) and, Gerds (1988) show viable results.

One of the studies that introduces ergative-absolutive framework is the study of Dixon (1972) on Dyirbal language. This framework is a departure from the nominative-accusative framework that has dominated the early studies of world's languages such as the Indo-European languages. It is, thus congruent to the fact that about a quarter of the world's languages have this unique case-marking. Dita (2011) compares the nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive analyses. She illustrates the analysis labeled as Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Ergative-absolutive alignment and nominative-accusative alignment

Figure 1 shows two analysis, the one in the left is the ergative-absolutive alignment and on the right is the nominative-accusative alignment. The first row is labeled as A (agent) and O (patient), and they are core arguments of a canonical transitive agent (A) and object (O). The second row with only one argument is marked as S (subject). The object of the transitive clause (or the patient) and the sole argument of an intransitive clause (or the subject) in second row are treated alike, that is, they both receive absolutive case-marks. While on the right shows that the agent of a transitive clause and the subject of an intransitive clause are treated alike, thereby receiving the same case-marks. Dita (2010) simplifies, “if S=A, then the language belongs to the nominative-accusative type, and if S=O, it belongs to the ergative-absolutive type”.

Below are examples in Tagalog language (1), (2), and (3) (Dita, 2010).

- (1) Bibili ako ng mangga.
will.buy ABS.1S DET mango
'I will buy a mango (or some mangoes).'
- (2) Binili ko ang mangga.
bought ERG.1S DET mango
'I bought the mango.'
- (3) Nakita nila ako
saw ERG. ABS.1S
'They saw me.'

The absolutive is the actor in an intransitive clause, as in (1); and the ergative is the agent in a transitive clause, as in sentences (2), (3)

1.1 Background of the Study

The *Southern Alta language* is one of the Alta languages, a single branch subgroup of the Meso-Cordilleran languages, an Austronesian language spoken by a group of Negritos in the Philippines.

The Southern Alta language with ISO 639-3 and a three-letter code agy is also known as *Kabuloan Dumaget* in the literature. They live primarily in the Sierra Madre of Eastern Nueva Ecija and the adjacent coastal areas of Quezon Province (north of Umiray Dumaget), Bulacan towns of San Mi-

guel, Norzagaray (Reid, 1991; 2013), and also in Sitio Bato, Baranggay Sapang Bulac, Dona Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan (Abreu, 2014). They are also present in the areas of Luzon, coastal areas of Quezon and Aurora Province, east Nueva Ecija, Sierra Madre (Reid, 1991; 2013). The language status of Southern Alta, according to the Ethnologue, is ‘vigorous’ (Lewis, Simon, & Fenning, 2015). However, Headland (2010) and Reid (pers. comm., 2016) consider Southern Alta as a “highly endangered” Philippine Negrito language.

2 Methodology

Data includes oral and written forms. Oral data came from the fieldwork of the researcher last year while the written data came from the books or commentaries of the New Testament (Bible). The transcripts consist of elicitations and oral traditions of *Dumagat* elders while the commentaries of the New Testament are being used in Southern Alta communities in Nueva Ecija¹. The list of abbreviations used is in the footnote.²

3 The pronouns and their grammatical functions

The pronouns of Southern Alta consist of absolutive (3.1), ergative (3.2), oblique (3.3), and genitive pronouns (3.4). Each will be dealt separately including the subsets³: free and enclitic. The absolutive consists of the free (3.1.1), and enclitics (3.1.2). Similarly, ergative (3.2) consists of free and enclitics (3.2.1). They are followed by the oblique and genitive pronouns respectively.

Person	Absolutive		Ergative		Oblique	Genitive
	Free	Enclitic	Free	Enclitic		
1S	tiyak	=(y)ak	ko	=k	diyak	ko
2S	tikaw	ka	mo	=m	dikaw	mo
3S	siya	siya	na	na	dikana	na
1D	tikita	kita	ta	Ta	dikita	ta
1PE	tikami	kami	me	Me	dikame	me
2P	tikayo	kayo	yo	yo	dikayo	yo

¹ Because of lengthy the sentences in all my written data, readers may email the researcher for a complete interlinear gloss.

² List of Abbreviations: AF(Actor Focus), DEG degree, DET determiner, GF(Goal Focus), LIG ligature, OBL oblique, PART particle, PERF perfective, PN proper noun, TL topic linker

³ The subsets are labeled ‘Free’ and ‘Enclitic’. The former is a morphological terms which means free morpheme in contrast to the latter, ‘Enclitic’ or bound morpheme.

3P	side	sid	de	de	dikade	de
1PI	tikitam	kitam	tam	tam	dikitam	tam

Table 1- Pronoun System of Southern Alta Negritos

A summary of Southern Alta pronouns is labeled as Table 1. Pronouns in Southern Alta encode person, number, case, and respect⁴. The columns show person, number, and categories. Below the categories specify the subsets. Person refers to the speaker or 1st person, addressee or 2nd person, and the 3rd person ‘is some person or thing which is neither speaker nor addressee’ (Dixon, 2010, p. 190) while number consists of uppercase S (singular), P (plural), and D (dual). Like other pronominal systems of Philippine languages such as Ilocano, Ibanag or Tagalog, the first person singular has exclusive (does not include the addressee) and inclusive (includes the addressee) forms. They are labeled above as 1PE for first person exclusive and 1PI for first person inclusive. The case system consists of four. They are *absolutives (ABS)*, *ergatives (ERG)*, *obliques (OBL)*, and *genitives (GEN)*⁵.

Absolutive and genitive have two subsets: free and enclitic. All cases show no distinction on gender unlike English third person singular pronouns (he, she, or it). Neuter forms (e.g. English pronoun *it*) referring to animate or inanimate common nouns (e.g. such boar or arrow) are absent in the pronominal system of Southern Alta. Honorifics and respect in Southern Alta pronouns are shown in the second and third persons plural (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that the ergative (free) and genitive cases are similar in both respect. They are phonologically and morphologically identical, but they differ in their function and distribution.

This study follows the ergative-absolutive framework of Dita (2007; 2011). The author explains that ergative is used to refer to the agent in a transitive construction while the term genitive is used to refer to the possessor in an NP. She also explains that if a pronoun precedes a verb, it is ergative, and if pronoun precedes a noun, it is genitive.

⁴ The initial letter of some pronouns that may refer to God or any Supreme Being is capitalized, and the translation is italicized.

⁵ Like other pronominal systems of Philippine languages such as Ilocano, Ibanag or Tagalog, the first person singular has exclusive (E) and inclusive (I) forms, they are labeled above as 1PE for exclusive and 1PI as inclusive.

tive. The former is labeled **ERG** as agent of a transitive clause while the latter is labeled **GEN** as the possessor of a possessive construction.

- (4) ...*iatod ko dikayo at*
 <i>atod ERG.1S OBL.2P TL
 GF-give I to you TL
nu pala lahi yo."
 DET PL lahi GEN.2P
 DET PL descendant your

...I will give this to you, this one place in Canaan, and to all your descendants.

- (5) ..."*Lawin mo yi gewang ko.*"
 lawin ERG.2S DET gewa<ng> GEN.1S
 see you DET to do my
 ..."Witness what I can do".

Sentence 4 shows that first person *ko* and second person *yo* pronouns. First person pronoun *ko* precedes a verb while the second person *yo* precedes a noun. The first pronoun functions as a subject and as agent of the transitive clause while the second pronoun *yo* functions as genitive. The genitive *yo* modifies the possessum, *lahi*; this distinguishes second pronoun *yo* as having a possessor-possessum relationship. A similar case in Sentence (5), second person *mo* also precedes a verb while first person *ko* precedes a verbal inflection or a nominal. Both sentences are deemed to provide ample evidence of an ergative-absolutive framework.

3.1 Absolutive pronouns

Absolutive pronouns have first person singular exclusive (1PE) and inclusive (1PI) both in free and bound forms. The singular first person *siya* has no gender distinction.

3.1.1 Free Absolutives

Person	Long	Gloss	Description
1S	tiyak	I	1 st person sing
2S	tikaw	you (singular)	2 nd person sing
3S	siya	he or she	3 rd person sing
1D	tikita	I and you	1 st person dual
1PE	tikami	we (excluding 'you')	1 st person excl
2P	tikayo	you (plural)	2 nd person plural
3P	side	they	3 rd person plural
1PI	tikitam	we (meaning 'all')	1 st person incl

Table 2 - Free absolutive pronouns

Free absolutive pronouns may stand alone in an utterance. They are usually a response to a ques-

tion or it can be a form of self-referencing from previous utterances. The functions of absolutives are as follows:

- (i) As a subject, a response from a previous inquiry, or as vocative. They are clause-initial. Example (6) is a transcript of an interview. Below the respondent uses absolutive, genitive, and oblique pronouns. All pronouns are first person singular. Pronouns in (7) and (8) are used as a subject, while (9) is vocative.

- (6) "**Tiyak** ti Sonny.

ABS.1S PN Sonny
I PN Sonny

Pangawi diyak na pamilya ko, Yayo.

nickname OBL.1S DET family GEN.1S Yayo

Asawa ko ay ti Ema.

wife GEN.1S TL.PN Ema

Yi panganay me, ti Latdok, at

PN eldest GEN. 1PE PN Latdok TL

ti Lagyu ti pangaduwa.

PN Lagyu OBL second

Ti Salon duman ay pangsangay...

PN Salon EXP TL third

Tiyak a tatlongpu at pito."

ABS.1S LIG thirty and three
I LIG thirty and three

I am Sonny. My family calls me *Yayo*. My wife('s name) is Ema. My eldest son('s name) is *Latdok*, and the second is *Lagyu*. *Salon* is the third. I am thirty-seven years old.'

- (7) *Tikitam i pala anak Na.*

ABS.1PI DET PL anak GEN.3S
We(all) DET PL child His

We (including you) are His children.

- (8) *Side I umawit.*

ABS.3P DET <um>awit
they DET PERF.sang

They are the ones who sang.

- (9) '*Tiatin i ki adi tu sundang?*' '*Tiyak.*'

Q DET EXIST adi DET dagger ABS. 1S
'Who owns the dagger?' 'I am (or I own it).'

- (ii) Serves as predicates of identificational constructions such as (10) and (11)

- (10) "*Tikaw linaway ko nuapon.*"

ABS.2S <in>way ERG.2S TIME
you PERF-saw I yesterday

You are the one I saw yesterday.

- (11) ... "*Tikaw mismo tu petang ko*

ABS.1S PART DET <peta>ng GEN.1S
you PART DET choice my

a tu alta a mamahala nu iddi."

LIG DET alta LIG <ma>mahala DET DEM
 ...“You are the one, my chosen person, who
 will take care of these.

(iii) As appositive in (12)

(12) “*Tikami a pala Dumaget*

ABS.1P LIG PL Dumaget
 we LIG PL Dumaget

ay mondongol kami na lutu.”

TL listen ABS.1P DET lutu
 TL listen we DET lutu

We, the Dumagats, (we) listen to the sounds
 made by the bird *lutu*.

(iv) As a form of respect or honorific. A singular addressee (13) is addressed in the plural form, such as God or any Supreme Being in (15). Sentence (16) is a reference to the elders.

(13) *Tikayo amo yi isa=y mongnol,*

ABS.2P amo yi NUMBER know,
 you PART DET one know

Ta uwannak ki magewa,

Ta uwan=(n)yak ki magewa,
 CONJ NEG=ABS.1S EXIST <ma>gewa
 and NEG.I EXIST can do

labes tai nu kabudiyang yo

ADV DEM DET <ka>budi<yan> GEN. 2S
 ADV this DET goodness your

You are the only one who knows everything
 and I can’t give much of it unlike the goodness you
 do for all us.

(14) ...*Side tu monudu,*

ABS.3P DET <mon><tu>udu
 they DET teach

at side tu mogdisisyon na...

TL ABS.3P DET <mog>disisyon PART
 TL they DET decide PART

Taking care of the council is the responsibility
 of the elders in the council. They should teach and
 do the decisions on any matters that need to be
 done in the council.

3.1.2 Enclitic absolutives

Table 3 - Enclitic absolutive pronouns

The ‘short’ forms in Table 3 show the absolute enclitics. Although some can stand alone, a few needs a host to complete its syntactic function. The functions are:

(i) as subject in an intransitive clause (15), (16), (17), and (18) or as a sole argument or experiencer in an intransitive clause (19).

(15) *Nakakannak din.*

<naka>kan=(n)yak din.
 already.eat=ABS.1S
 eat=I already

I have already eaten, too. (lit. Already ate I)

(15) ...*sinabi ni Lot, a "Umakang kitam."*

s<in>abi PN Lot LIG <um>akang ABS.1PI
 PERF-said PN Lot LIG AF-walk we
 ...Lot said, “Let’s walk.”

(16) *Ta=din kita.*

let go 1D.ABS
 let go I and you

Come, let’s go. (lit. I and you go.)

(17) *Mun i budi kita.*

like 1D.ABS
 like I and you

We like one another. (lit. I and you like.)

(19) ...*molamang modognin siya.*

PART <mo>dognin ABS.3S
 probably feel.cold he and she

... probably, he feels very cold.

(ii) As a subject of a monadic intransitive clause,

(20) *Sumubli kayo.*

s<um>ubli ABS.2P
 AF.come back you-P

Come back, all of you.

(iii) As subject in a dyadic intransitive clause:

(21) *Linumukdes siya ti gebunay.*

l<inum>ukdes ABS. 3S OBL gebunay
 AF-descended down he on earth

He descended down on earth.

(iv) As object in a dyadic transitive clause

(22) *Sinabi na dut a apostol siya.*

s<in>abi 3S.ERG PART LG apostle 3S.ABS
 PERF-said PART LG apostle he

He also said that he is an apostle.

Person	Short	Gloss	Description
1S	yak=(y)ak	I	1 st person sing
2S	ka	you (singular)	2 nd person sing
3S	siya	he or she	3 rd person sing
1D	kita	I and you	1 st person dual
1PE	kami	we (excluding ‘you’)	1 st person excl
2P	kayo	you (plural)	2 nd person plural
3P	sid	They	3 rd person plural
1PI	kitam	we (meaning ‘all’)	1 st person incl

(23) *Inabuyanan de siya*

<in>abuyanan ERG. 3P ABS.3S
 PERF-knew they he

They knew him.

(v) As object in a triadic transitive clause

(24) *Olagean Na sid mopatud*
 <o>alage<an> ERG.3S ABS.3P <mo>patud
 GF-took care of he they male siblings
 He took care of them, the brothers.

(vi) As respect to God (24) and to the elders (14). Example (14) and (24) also shows that absolutive free and clitic pronouns co-exist in a clause.

(25) ... "*Dingol ta=kayo a*
 hear ERG.1D=ABS.2P DET
 hear I.she=you
monakang, kanya nonsuksuk kami
 DET PROG-walk PART PST-hide ABS.1P
 DET PROG-walk PART PST-hide we
ta motakottak dehil tiyak ay obe."
 PART <mo>takot=(t)yak PART ABS.1S TL obe
 PART <mo>takot=ABS.1S PART ABS.1S TL obe
 PART fear= I PART I TL obe

Adam said, we heard *You* walking towards us, so we hid ourselves and I was scared (of *You*) because I am nude.

3.2 Ergative pronouns

Dita (2011) explains that genitives are morphologically identical with ergatives. It is with this morphological synonymy that prompted some Philippinists to use the label GEN to both ergative and genitive pronouns. She argues that these items should not receive similar treatment. Again to distinguish the two, PL genitives are generally post-nominals whereas ergatives are postverbals (Dita, 2011). Table 4 is a summary of the ergative (free and enclitic) pronouns.

Person	Ergative	Gloss	Description
1S	ko=k	I	1 st person sing
2S	mo=m	you (singular)	2 nd person sing
3S	na	he or she	3 rd person sing
1D	ta	I and you	1 st person dual
1PE	me	we (excluding 'you')	1 st person excl
2P	yo	you (plural)	2 nd person plural
3P	de	they	3 rd person plural
1PI	tam	we (meaning 'all')	1 st person incl

Table 4 – Ergative (Free and Enclitic) Pronouns

(i) As subject of a transitive clause, either dyadic (26) and triadic (27) and (28).

(26) ... *iatod ko dikayo at*
 <i>atod ERG.1S OBL.2P CONJ
 GF-give I to you and
nu pala lahi yo."

DET PL decendant GEN.2P
 DET PL decendant your

God said, I will give this (place) to you to all your descendants.

(27) *Inotos Na sid*
 <in>otos ERG.3S ABS.3P.
 GF-ordered he they
a mampakaadu
 LIG to become many
 He orders them to multiply.

(28) ... "*Lapditan mo tu detnap*
 lapdit<on> ERG.2S DET detnap
 GF-hit you DET stone
nu salokod mo."

DET salokod GEN.2S
 DET cane your

Then it happened, God said to Moises, (You) Strike the stone with your cane.

(ii) Ergative and genitive constructions co-exist in a clause

(29) ... "*Dehil nu ginawam=mo,*
 CONJ DET g<in>awa=ERG.2S
 CONJ DET GF.do =you

ialagang mo i tiyan mo
 <i>alaga<ng> ERG.2S DET tiyan GEN.2S
 GF-take care you DET belly your

ti dupit umpisa niedut."
 OBL dupit <um><p><isa> TIME
 OBL soil PERF.starting now

Then, God said to the snake, "Because of what you've done, you will carry your belly on the ground from this day onward.

3.3 Oblique pronouns

Person	Oblique	Gloss	Description
1S	diyak	'to me'	1 st person sing
2S	dikaw	'to you' (singular)	2 nd person sing
3S	dikana	'to him/ her'	3 rd person sing
1D	dikita	'to me and you'	1 st person dual
1PE	dikame	to both of us	1 st person excl
2P	dikayo	'to you' (plural)	2 nd person plural
3P	dikade	'to them'	3 rd person plural
1PI	dikitam	'to us'	1 st person incl

Table 5 - Oblique pronouns

Dita (2010) explains that oblique pronouns are used to express direction towards a person or persons, or the transmission of an object towards the entity or party specified by the oblique pronoun. They are formed by adding pronouns to the stem *di-*. Table 5 shows the oblique pronouns. Their functions are the following:

(i) as semantic role of ‘source’ (29).

(30) *Opodin tam tu Makidepat*
 <o>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat
 praise we(all) DET Makidepat
pagmogpasalamat kitam dikana,
 <pag><mog><pa>salamat ABS.1PI OBL.3S
 to give thanks we(all) to him
ta ipalaway tam dikana
 CONJ <ipa>laway ERG.1PI OBL.3S
 CONJ to see we(all) to him
nu pamamagitan nu paagpasalamat
 DET pa<mama>gitan DET <paag><pa>salamat
 DET act of DET to give thanks
tam dikana, a Siya
 ERG.1PI OBL.3S LIG ABS.3S
 we(all) to him LIG he
tu ki kapangyadihan at ki gewa
 DET EXIST kapangyadihan CONJ EXIST gewa
 DET EXIST greatness and EXIST creation
na lahat, bala lahat a
 DET PART PART PART LIG
 of all before all LIG
mopeya ay unalang dikana.
 <mo>peya TL una<lang> OBL.3S
 goodness TL came from him

Let us praise and give thanks to Him, and let us show Him our gratitude by glorifying His greatness and His creations. Because all things before us are good, and that all things came from Him.

(ii) As a semantic role of ‘goal’ in (31)

(31) *I ginawa nu Makidepat, ay impanol Na*
 DET g<in>awa DET Makidepat TL inform ERG.3S
 DET GF-make DET Makidepat TL inform he
dikade tu kailangan de
 OBL.3P DET kailangan GEN.3P
 to them DET kailangan their

God made sure that what He informs them is what they should write about.

(iii) Third, obliques can also function as benefactives (Dita, 2010)

(32) *Namate ti Hesus pade dikitam.*
 <na>mate PN Hesus PART OBL.3P
 AF-die PN Jesus for all of us
 Jesus gave his life for us.

(iv) obliques express possession when they co-occur with existentials.

(33) *Ki katahimekang kitam dikana.*
 exist peacefulness ABS.1PI OBL.3S
 exist peacefulness we (all) (to) him
 We have peacefulness in Him.

(v) as a deictic pronoun in place of a personal pronoun

(34) *Yie magkalake tu pinakaminona tam*
 this <mag><ka>lake DET <pinaka>minona GEN.1PI
 this adult man-P DET DEG.old our
a lahat, kanya matotkakaylang kitam
 LIG PART PART <matot>kakaylang ABS.1PI
 LIG all PART DEG.close relative we
a lahat ti gebunay.
 LIG PART OBL earth

These men, the oldest of all, are our ancestors, so we are all relatives on earth.

(35) *Yie lahat a alta ay kausil*
 PROX/SP PART LIG alta TL companion
 this all LIG person TL companion
ni Pablo de idi...
 PN

of Paul before there
 Long ago, these people are companions of Paul there.

In (33), the proximal spatial demonstrative *Yie* (this) can be replaced with third person plural *side* (we) such as (34) and (35).

(36) *Side a magkalake tu pinakaminona tam*
 ABS.3P LIG men DET DEGREE.old GEN.1PI
 they DET men DET DEGREE.old our
a lahat, kanya...
 LIG PART, PART
 They, the old men, are our ancestors, so...

(37) *Side a lahat a alta ay kausil ni Pablo de idi...*
 ABS.3P LIG PART LIG alta TL
 they PART all DET person TL
 companion PN Paul before there

Long ago, they, all the people there, are companions of Paul.

3.4 Genitive pronouns

Genitive pronouns encode possession. The noun (possesum) follows the pronoun (the possessor) which is opposite to the phrase structure like English language (e.g. my book, possessor-possesum) (Payne, 1997). Table 6 shows the genitive pronouns. Besides possessive phrases (36) and (37), many other examples are shown in sentence (6).

(38) *tu anak de*
 DET anak-S GEN.3P
 their child

(39) *tu bele na*
 DET house GEN.1S
 his/ her house

Person	Genitive	Gloss	Description
1S	ko	my	1 st person sing
2S	mo	your (singular)	2 nd person sing
3S	na	his or her	3 rd person sing
1D	ta	our (mine and yours)	1 st person dual
1PE	me	ours (excluding 'you')	1 st person excl
2P	yo	your (plural)	2 nd person plural
3P	de	their	3 rd person plural
1PI	tam	our (meaning 'all')	1 st person incl

Table 6 - Genitive Pronouns

3.5 Other linguistic phenomena

This study uncovers other linguistic phenomena, similar to the results found in Dita (2010). These are homomorphy (3.5.1), cliticization (3.5.2), hierarchy (3.5.3), and person-deixis interface (3.5.4).

3.5.1 Homomorphy

Dita (2010) explains that ergatives and genitives are spelled and pronounced the same but they differ in their distributional properties. Consider the sentences (23) and (24), and compare them with sentences (38) and (39). The third person plural *de* is labeled ERG (23) while GEN in (38). And also the first person singular *na* is labelled ERG (24) while GEN (39). Consider also sentence (29), second person singular ERG and GEN co-exist in the clause.

3.5.2 Cliticization

Clitics are grammatical words that are unable to stand on their own phonologically, but must instead lean on another adjacent word. They must be incorporated into the prosodic structure of another word. Dita (2010) explains that pronominal clitics exhibit various characteristic. Examine Table 1 above. Absolutes and genitives have enclitics and they enclitizes with the preceding word such as sentence (13), (15), (25) and (29), and they all enclitize with the predicate.

3.5.3 Hierarchy

Another note-worthy observation is the study of Schachter (1973) on Tagalog language (in Dita, 2010). According to him, monosyllabic pronouns always precede disyllabic. Consider the sentences (4), (23), (25), (30), (31), and (33).

3.5.4 Person-deixis interface

Another note-worthy study is done by MacFarland (2006) on Tagalog language (in Dita, 2010). He explains that it is quite common in PL to use a deictic pronoun in place of a personal pronoun. Consider the sentences (34) and (35) and the revised sentences (36) and (37). The revised sentences are replaced with third person plural pronouns, and yet the contextual meanings of the clauses are the same.

3.5.5 Portmanteau

Dita (2011) explains that portmanteau pronouns exist in Philippine languages. These portmanteau pronouns is a combination of ERG.1s and ABS.2s, where the former is the agent and the latter the patient in a clause. Data shows that it is also present in Southern Alta language. Interlinear gloss and symbols use **1D** instead of **1s** in Dita (2011) such as (40). In addition, the absolute pronoun in (25) encodes ABS.1D+ERG.2P as a form of respect to a Supreme Being.

(40) *Besan taka.*

read ta=ka.

read ERG.1D+ABS.2S

Let us read this biblical passage.

4 Summary and Recommendation

This initial analysis shows that the pronominal systems of the Southern Alta language consist of absolute, ergative, oblique and genitive pronouns. The ergative-absolute framework unravels the morphosyntax of the pronominal systems of Southern Alta. The framework help describe the functions and characteristic of the different sets of pronouns. Other linguistic phenomena are revealed such as inclusivity/exclusivity, first person dual pronouns, homomorphy, cliticization, hierarchy, person-deixis interface and portmanteau. In conclusion, the ergative-absolute framework fits the morphosyntactic analysis of the Southern Alta language. In conclusion, the ergative-absolute framework fits the morphosyntactic analysis of the Southern Alta language. This study also suggests to examine the clausal construction including the noun phrases (NPs) of Southern Alta.

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