

FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF PRONOMINALS IN MIDDLE YALI

Yusuf W. Sawaki¹
Universitas Negeri Papua

Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan bentuk-bentuk pronomina dalam bahasa Yali Tengah, salah satu bahasa rumpun Papua dari keluarga Trans-New Guinea. Bahasa ini mempunyai dua tipe pronominal, yaitu bentuk pronominal bebas dan pronominal terikat. Bahasa Yali Tengah memiliki 6 bentuk pronominal bebas, yang berfungsi mengidentifikasi orang pertama, kedua, ketiga, dalam bentuk tunggal dan jamak. Hal yang menarik adalah bentuk pronominal terikat, yang dikategorikan sebagai salah satu ciri terpenting dalam struktur bahasa Yali Tengah. Pronomina terikat secara morfologis berdiri sebagai penanda orang kelas kata, seperti pada kata kerja sebagai penanda subyek dan obyek, pada kata benda sebagai penanda milik, dan pada kata sifat dan posposisi sebagai penanda orang.

Abstract

This paper aims [at describing](#) pronominal forms in Middle Yali, a Papuan language of Trans-New Guinea phylum. The language has two kinds of pronominals, i.e. independent pronouns and dependent counterparts. The language applies a set of 6 independent pronouns, which identify first, second and third person, with singular/plural number. The more interesting kind is the dependent pronouns, which may be considered as one of salient features of Middle Yali grammar. On various verb types, they attach to mark agent/subject and patient/object; while, on nouns, dependent pronouns function to mark possessive markers. It is also true for adjectives and postpositions where dependent pronouns mark prefixed-person markers.

Keywords: pronominals, independent pronouns, dependent pronouns.

¹ I am a lecturer at English Department, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Papua, Manokwari since 2004. I graduated from Universitas Cenderawasih for my undergraduate degree in 1998, majoring in English and Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI, USA for my MA in 2002, majoring in TESOL. My specializations are TESOL and Linguistics, especially descriptive linguistics, linguistic typology, and sociolinguistics as well as language documentation.

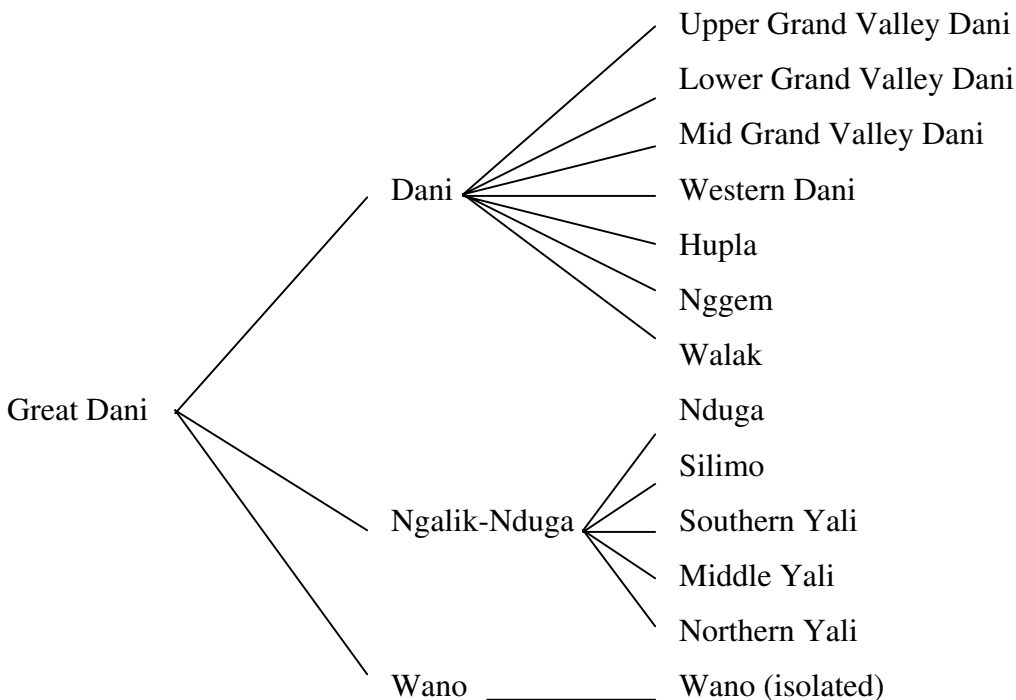
1. Introduction

This small paper aims [at describing](#) forms and functions of personal pronouns in Middle Yali. I show two kinds of personal pronouns in term of independency in the Middle Yali grammar. I especially stress my discussion [on](#) the dependent pronouns which are overtly marked in almost all grammatical categories of the language. The dependent pronouns I will discuss function as subject, object markers on verbs, possessive markers on nouns, person markers on adjectives and postpositions. They will be preceded by general description of their independent counterparts.

2. Background of the language and its classification

Yali, a Papuan language of Trans-New Guinea Phylum, is classified as a Dani language family, spoken by approximately 15,000 people in the central highlands of New Guinea, northward to eastward of Grand Valley Dani (Wurm, 1975; Grimes, 1988). The word Yali is used by the Dani people addressing their eastern neighbors meaning the people who live in the east or those who live in the place where the sun rises. The place is called *Yali-mu*, 'place in the east'.

As one of Great Dani language family, Middle Yali is classified [within](#) the Dani family tree as follows:



(See Wurm 1975; Voorhoeve 1975; Bromley 1981; Grimes 1987)

In Ngalik-Nduga subfamily, Voorhoeve (1975) and Wurm (1975) refer the Yali languages as North Ngalik languages. Grimes (1987), however, used the terms Yali of Ninia referring to Southern Yali, Yali of Angguruk to address Middle Yali and Yali of Pass Valley to address Northern Yali.

Middle Yali has been studying partially since 1970s by Ziegfried Söllner and Yusuf Sawaki. However, no complete grammar description has been produced. Söllner in 1970s had written two papers about the language but those papers were lack of linguistic analysis.

However, these two papers has a great contribution to my work that I started in 1997 as I just have the papers as my main references to begin my study in Middle Yali.

Middle Yali is characterized as SOV word order, with agglutinating system, in which morphosyntax characteristics are very complex. Verbs are very complex, with morphological agreement with person/number and tense-aspect-modality. The morphological verb configuration may be considered as the core of the grammar as a verb could stand as, more or less, a complete sentence. Noun morphologically agrees with person/number showing possessor-possessee structure. This structure is also true for any other grammatical categories such as adjectives and postpositions as they agree with person/number showing person marker-adjective/postposition structures.

3. Methodology

As have been mentioned, Söllner's works were written in German and there is no Indonesian or English version available and the data is lack of linguistic analysis, so I could not use his works in term of data collection and analysis. My data, however, is a collection of elicited sentences from native speakers of Yali living in Jayapura. There are approximately 200 elicited sentences taken from them as I started my study with no data available. The analysis of data came with the help of Yoram Peyon, a native speaker of Welarek village, who went to study in Jayapura. As my focus is on morphological processes, I then analyze the data by using a linear-morpheme-by-morpheme analysis to see the forms and functions of every potential morpheme. This study is purely descriptive and is based on the corpus of the spoken language used by native speakers of Middle Yali (Nida, 1949).

4. Literatures Review

One basic trait of Papuan language grammar is in their abbreviated/restricted forms of pronouns, which attach to other grammatical categories. As mentioned in Wurm (1975), Voorhoeve (1975), and Foley (1986), all Papuan languages employ two types of personal pronouns in their pronominal systems, which are independent and dependent pronouns. Their concerns are in the dependent pronouns where they give significant characteristics to Papuan grammar as stated by Foley (1986: 12) that pronominal systems take various types of abbreviated forms when they agree with person and number, as well as tense-aspect and modality. Such characteristics of pronominal systems are also represented in Dani language family including Middle Yali. I therefore refer my description based on Bromley (1981) and Van der Stap (1966) since they give very detail description on Lower Grand Valley Dani grammar. Bromley (1981) in his description presented very thorough pronominal systems in Lower Grand Valley Dani as all major grammatical categories and ad positional category really depend on the morphological agreement with personal pronouns, which are highly abbreviated. It is true across Dani languages as in Wano (Burung, ms), Western Dani (Donohue, 2005), and Middle Yali (Zöllner, ms and Sawaki, 1998).

5. Outline of the paper

In this paper, I will give a description of sets of independent pronouns and dependent counterparts. This description will be followed by explanation and examples. In 6, I introduce sets of independent pronouns and their explanations. In 7, I present the profiles of dependent pronouns. In the next, the profiles are followed by the descriptions of dependent pronouns in

grammatical categories – nouns, verbs, adjectives, and postpositions – and examples. The last section will be wrapped up with the summary.

6. Independent Pronouns

Middle Yali has a set of six independent pronouns, which mark first, second, and third person and two numbers: singular and plural. This language, however, does not mark gender differences and neither does it has exclusive or inclusive person forms. The set of six independent pronouns are shown in table 1, as follow:

Table 1

Independent Pronouns		
Person	Singular	Plural
1	<i>an</i>	<i>nit</i>
2	<i>hat</i>	<i>hit</i>
3	<i>at</i>	<i>it</i>

The characteristics of vowel patterns within the independent pronouns distinguish number: singular and plural. Morphologically, *a* can be correlated with the singular and *i* with the plural. From the independent pronouns, person marking prefixes functioning as object marker on verbs, person marker on adjectives and postpositions and possessor marker on nouns are derived, as *n-* ‘first person’, *h-* ‘second person’, and zero morpheme *O-* ‘third person’.

Syntactically, the set of independent pronouns function as both subject of intransitive sentence and object of transitive sentence, as in 1, 2 and 3.

- (1) *an suburu na- r- uk- lah- i- on*
1s sweet potato eat-REAL-PRET-PROG-1S-HAB
‘I always eat (some) sweet potatoes’
- (2) *an-ten at wa- r- ih- i*
1S-AGT 3s 3s.hit-REAL-NRPAST-1S

‘I hit him recently’

- (3) *nit sono wam wa- b- uh- uk*
 1p not.today pig kill-PN-FFUT-1P
 ‘We will kill (the) pig tomorrow’

When they function as agent of transitive verbs, they will take the agentive suffix –en, with morphophonemic process of the last consonant sound of independent pronouns /t/ changes to /r/ sound, as described in table 2 below:

Table 2

Independent Pronouns		
Person	Singular	Plural
1	<i>an[t]en > an + en</i>	<i>ni[r]en > nit+ en</i>
2	<i>ha[r]en > hat + en</i>	<i>hi[r]en > hit + en</i>
3	<i>a[r]en > at + en</i>	<i>i[r]en > it + en</i>

Such forms could be exemplified as in 4 and 5:

- (4) *ar-en an nu-wa- r- eh- ek*
 3S-AGT 1S 1S- hit-REAL-NRPAST-3S
 ‘He hit me recently’

- (5) *an-ten at wa- r- ih- i*
 1S-AGT 3S 3S.hit-REAL-NRPAST-1S
 ‘I hit him recently’

7. Dependent Pronouns

Morphologically, Middle Yali marks some grammatical categories i.e. verbs, nouns, postpositions and adjectives, with a variety of dependent pronouns. On verbs, dependent pronouns function as subject/agent markers suffixed to the verb stem and object/patient markers prefixed to the verb stem. On nouns, dependent pronouns function to indicate

possession toward nouns. In some cases, adjectives take prefixed-person markers. It is also true when postpositions take prefixed-person marker.

7.1 Suffixed-subject/agent and prefixed-object/patient structure on verbs

Commonly, verbs in Middle Yali demonstrate the following internal structure in which Prefixed-object/patient and suffixed-subject/agent are marked obligatorily. The structure of verbs is shown in table 3, as follows:

Table 3

Verb structure
(VSTEM1)-OBJ-VSTEM2-TAM1-SUBJ-(TAM2)

VSTEM1 and TAM2 in the structure are optional and appear when the structure take serial verb constructions (VSTEM1) and tense-aspect-modality in certain cases, i.e. the habitual aspect, and the perfective aspect in the farther past tense (TAM2). The structure of OBJ-VSTEM2-TAM1-SUBJ is the obligatory pattern of verb systems in Middle Yali. In Intransitive sentence, however, prefixed-object marker is not overtly marked. Suffixed-subject markers are obligatorily marked and vary according to TAM.

7.1.1 Suffixed-subject/agent markers on verbs

In the Middle Yali language, verb forms are highly complex when they interact with TAM and person/number. Dependent pronouns which function as suffixed-subject/agent in this respect vary according to TAM, as shown in table 4 below:

Table 4

Person	Dependent Pronouns								
	Suffixed-Agent/Subject								
	IMP	PRET/HAB/ PROG	NRPAST	FPAST	FRPAST	POT.	NRFUT	FFUT	COND.
1s		-i	-i	-ik	-y	-ik	-in	-uk	-e
2s	-in	-en	-en	-in	-n		-hin	-un	-en
3s		-O	-ek	-i	-b		-isi	-u	-ep
1p		-e	-e	-uk	-w	-uk	-ul	-uk	-a
2p	-iek	-ep	-ep	-ip	-b		-ip	-up	-ep
3p		-O	-esa	-usa	-b		-usa	-up	-ep

Example 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the near past tense below will give a detail picture of various suffixed-subjects that change according to TAM and person/number as well.

(6) *an ketia suburu ni- ngg- i*
 1s recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST-1S
 ‘I ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

(7) *hat ketia suburu ne- ngg- en*
 2s recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST-2S
 ‘You ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

(8) *At ketia suburu ne- ngg- ek*
 3s recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST-3S
 ‘He/she ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

(9) *Nit ketia suburu ne- ngg- e*
 1p recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST-1P
 ‘We ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

(10) *Hit ketia suburu ne- ngg- ep*
 2p recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST-2P
 ‘You(p) ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

(11) *It ketia suburu ne- ngg- esa*
 3p recently sweet potato eat-NRPAST- 3P
 ‘They ate (some) sweet potato(es) recently’

7.1.2 Prefixed-object/patient marker on verbs

The prefixed-object/patient marker operates a very stable set of dependent pronouns when overtly marked in transitive verbs, as shown in example 12 and 13.

(12) *Ar-en sono nit ninu- wa- t- is- i*
3S-AGT yesterday 1P 1P:PAT-hit-REAL-FPAST-3S
'He/she hit us yesterday'

(13) *Nir-en sono it inu- wa- t- uk- uk*
1P-AGT yesterday 3P 3P:PAT-hit-REAL-FPAST-1P
'We hit them yesterday'

As the object marker has very stable forms, they do not interact with TAM. They therefore remain stative as they are on nouns, adjective/stative verbs and postpositions. This will be described in detail in the following sections.

7.1.3 Prefixed-subject marker on adjectives and stative-intransitive verbs

Adjectives and stative-intransitive verbs are almost identical and difficult to draw a line. They represent psychological events done by human that may appear in terms of adjective words such as 'lazy', 'afraid', and 'ashamed' or abstract/cognitive verbs such as 'feel', 'know' and 'love'. When representing an event with time reference, adjective could, however, function identically as stative-intransitive verbs. In term of taking dependent pronouns both takes prefixed-person markers functioning to identify person marker to adjectives and subject marker to stative-intransitive verbs. The agreement between subject markers and adjective stems may be so-called adjective-like-noun structure, as similar structure is also operated on nouns. Example 14 and 15 show the form.

(14) *An n-ampit*

- 1s 1s-lazy
'I am lazy'
(15) *at akol*
3s 3s.afraid
'he is afraid'

The form *is*, however, applied also for stative-intransitive verb as such a verb may take time reference as that of regular transitive and intransitive verbs. Example 16 and 17 will show the evidence.

- (16) *an n-akol ha- r- ik- ik*
1s 1s-afraid become-REAL-FPAST-1S
'I was afraid yesterday'
(17) *nit nin-apelehen ha- r- uk- uk*
1p 1s-not know become-REAL-NRPASt-1P
'We didn't know it yesterday'

7.2 Prefixed-possessor marker on nouns

The identical forms marking object of transitive verbs, person marker on adjectives and subject marker on stative-intransitive verbs also occur on nouns. The person markers prefixing to nouns function to identify possession toward nouns. Table 5 gives the forms of such possessive forms.

Table 5

Person marker on nouns	
Person	Prefixed-Possessor markers
1s	n-
2s	h-
3s	O-
1p	nin- n- + in- [plural]
2p	hin- h- + in- [plural]
3p	in- O- + in- [plural]

Such possessor markers apply for both alienable and inalienable nouns. Nouns categorized as alienable are nouns that are common and do not have very significant functions and roles in Yali communities; while inalienable nouns includes body parts, kinship terms and some nouns that are culturally important to Yali communities. Example 18, 19, 20, and 21 give patterns of possession on inalienable nouns in Middle Yali.

(17) *n-unggul*
1s-head
'my head'

(18) *h-enggik*
2s-hand
'your hand'

(19) *ikni*
3s-father
'his/her father'

(20) *nin-owe*
1p-uncle
'our uncle'

(21) *in-ambohom*
3p-pig
'their pigs'

Alienable nouns could also take the possessive markers but morphological process is optional and nouns may stand as themselves as independent lexicons, as exemplified in 22 and 23.

(22) *sum* 'net' > *na-sum*
1s-net
'my net'

(23) *pusie* 'axe' > *ha-pusie*
2s-axe
'your axe'

7.3 Prefixed-person markers on postpositions

Grammatically, all postpositions in Middle Yali may take person markers, which are really [identical](#) with possessive form in nouns. They prefix to postposition stems and carry a semantic indication of people who are establishing a relationship in a spatial and temporal as well as direction in which communication occurs. The prefix n- prefixes to postpositions to indicate people in the established communicative environment, who have a relation to the speaker, while the prefix h- indicates their relationship to the hearer and O- indicates a relation to third person whether he/she presents in the speaking spatial and temporal or not. The prefixed-person marker and postposition relationship can be exemplified as in 24, 25, and 26.

(24) *it at ambol-ma ho-r-iek*
3p 3s 3s-back-LOC sit-REAL-PRET.PROG.3P
'They are sitting behind him/her'

(25) *An n-ikni n-ambol-ma undu-h-uk*
1s 1s-father 1s-back-LOC stand-REAL-PREST.PROG.3S
'My father is standing behind of me'

(26) *Demi an n-olohot-ma horie-r- is- i*
Demi 1s 1s-front-LOC sat- REAL-FPAST-3S
'Demi sat in front of me yesterday'

8. Summary

In Middle Yali, pronominal systems have a great grammatical distribution in that they form verbs, nouns, adjectives and postpositions. Pronominal systems in Middle Yali have two kinds: independent and dependent pronouns. Forms of independent pronouns mostly function as subject/agent and object/patient markers in syntactical level and they can stand alone as independent lexicons. Middle Yali employs a common set of six independent pronouns, which mark first, second, and third person and two numbers: singular and plural. On the other

hand, dependent pronouns, which inflect to other grammatical categories, function as subject, object, person markers and possessive markers at the morphological level.

Suffixed-subject markers of transitive and intransitive verbs may be considered very complex morphologically as they tightly interact with TAM in verb systems, so they permanently change according to TAM; while prefixed-subject of stative-intransitive verbs and prefixed-object markers of transitive verbs take identical forms and they are very stable and do not interact with TAM. The same forms of prefixed-subject of stative-intransitive verbs and prefixed-object markers of transitive verbs also apply for person markers on adjectives and postpositions. It is also true for possessive markers on nouns as they employ the similar forms.

REFERENCES

- Bromley, HM. 1961. *The Phonology of Lower Grand Valley Dani: a comparative structural study of skewed phonemic patterns*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. Martinus Nijhoff Den Haag.
- Bromley, HM. 1981. *A Grammar of Lower Grand Valley Dani*. Pacific Linguistics. C-63. Canberra.
- Burung, W. nd. *A Grammar of Wano*. Doctoral research, preparatory stage. Leiden:RUL, ms.
- Burung, W. 1997. *Possessive Pronouns in Wano*. Paper presented at the UBS Triennial Translation workshop, Merida, Mexico.
- Donohue, M. 2005. Configurationality in the languages of New Guinea. *In Australian Journal of Linguistics* 25 (2), 237-274.
- Foley, WA. 1986. *The Papuan languages of New Guinea*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Grimes, BF. (ed). 1992. *Ethnologue: languages of the world*, 12th ed. SIL Inc. Dallas.
- Laycock, DC and Voorhoeve, CL. 1975. general Papuan Characteristics. *In Wurm, SA (ed)*. Pacific Linguistics. C-38. Canberra.
- Nichols, J. 1998. *On alienable and inalienable possession*, ed. by William Shipley, 557-609. Mouton de Gruyter. Santa Cruz, CA.
- Nida, EA. 1949. *Morphology. The descriptive analysis of words*. The University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor.
- Payne, TE. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax. A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Purba, T. and Budi R. 1995. *Formations of Western Dani verbs*. Paper presented at the International conference on New Guinea language and linguistics, Cenderawasih University. Jayapura, Irian Jaya.

- Purba T, Paidi Y, Fakihuddin L & Setiawati E. 1997. *Sintaksis Bahasa Dani Barat*. Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa. Jakarta.
- Sawaki, YW. 1998. *A comparative study of Middle Yali verbal systems and those of English*. Unpublished Undergraduate thesis. Cenderawasih University. Jayapura.
- Sawaki, YW. 2005. *Person marking systems in Dani languages*. Paper presented in the 6 ALT Conference, Padang, West Sumatera, Indonesia.
- Thomas, E., Bendor-Samuel, J., & Levinsohn, S. 1988. *Introduction to grammatical analysis. Self-instruction and correspondence course*. SIL. England.
- Van der Stap, PAM. 1966. *Outline of Dani Morphology*. S-G Ravenhage. Martinus Nijhoff.
- Voorhoeve, CL and McElhanon, K. 1975. The Trans-New Guinea Phylum in General. *In Wurm, SA (ed)*. Pacific Linguistics. C-38. Canberra.
- Voorhoeve, CL. 1975. Central and Western Trans-New Guinea Phylum Languages. *In Wurm, SA (ed)*. Pacific Linguistics. C-38. Canberra.
- Wurm, SA. (ed). 1975. *New Guinea area languages and language study. Papuan languages and the New guinea Linguistic Scene*. Pacific Linguistics. C-38. Canberra.
- Zöllner, Z. nd. *Verbformen der Angguruk-sprache und Syntax der Angguruk-sprache*. Angguruk. ms.