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 pronouns 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 mophosyntactic 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](image)

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 ang 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 Kabaloan Dumagat 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 Ecija\(^1\). 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 subsets: free and enclitic. The absolute 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      | na       | ko      | k        |
| 2S     | tikaw      | na       | no      | m        |
| 3S     | siya       | na       | na      | na       |
| 1D     | tikita     | ta       | Ta      | ta       |
| 1PE    | tikami     | me       | Me      | me       |
| 2P     | tikayo     | yo       | yo      | yo       |

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 respect\(^4\). 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 as an 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 geni-

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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.
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) ...i<1>atod ko dikay<2>o at <1>and ERG.1S OBL.2P TL GL 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 gew<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 possesee, lahi; this distinguishes second pronoun yo as having a possessor-possession 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 Absolutes

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

Table 2 - Free absolutive pronouns

Free absolutive pronouns may stand alone in an utterance. They are usually a response to a question or it can be a form of self-referencing from previous utterances. The functions of absolutes 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 DET PL child His

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.1P PN Latdok TL

Ti Lagyu ti pangaduwa.
PN Lagyu OBL second

Ti Salon duman ay pansangangay...
PN Salon EXP TL third

Tiyak a talonggup 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.1P DET PL child His

We(all) DET PL we(incuding you) are His children.

(8) Side I umawit.
ABS.3P DET <umawit> 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 <linaway> 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 <petang> GEN.1S
you PART DET choice my

a tu alto a mamahala nu iddi.”
…”You are the one, my chosen person, who will take care of these.

(iii) As appositive in (12)
(12) “Tikayo amo yi isa=y mongnol,
ABS.2P amo yi NUMBER know,
you PART DET one know
Ta uwannak ki magewa,
Ta uwannak=(y)ak ki magewa,
CONJ NEG=ABS.1S EXIST <ma>gewa,
and NEG.1 EXIST can do
labes tai nu kabudiyam yo
ADV DEM DET <ka>budi<y>an 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.

(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 uwannak=(y)ak ki magewa,
CONJ NEG=ABS.1S EXIST <ma>gewa,
and NEG.1 EXIST can do
labes tai nu kabudiyam yo
ADV DEM DET <ka>budi<y>an 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> ci>udu
each DET teach
at side tu mogdisiyyon na...
TL ABS.3P DET <meg>disiyyon 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 absolutes
Table 3 - Enclitic absolute 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.

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.
lit 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>num>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 | 1   | 1st person sing |
| 2S     | ka     | you (singular) | 2nd person sing |
| 3S     | siya   | he or she | 3rd person sing |
| 1D     | kita   | I and you | 1st person dual |
| 1PE    | kami   | we (excluding ‘you’) | 1st person excl |
| 2P     | kayo   | you (plural) | 2nd person plural |
| 3P     | sid    | They | 3rd person plural |
| 1PI    | kitam  | we (meaning ‘all’) | 1st person incl |

(23) Inabuyanan de siya
<s>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 absolute free and clitic pronouns co-exist in a clause.

(25) "Dingol ta=kayo a
hear ERG.1D=ABS.2P DET
hear 1.sh=you
monakang, kanya nonsuksuk kamu
DET PROG-walk PART PST-hide ABS.1P
DET PROG-walk PART PST-hide we

na motatatak 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 hear= 1 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 synonymity 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 postnominals whereas ergatives are postverbal (Dita, 2011). Table 4 is a summary of the ergative (free and enclitic) pronouns.

| Person | Ergative | Gloss | Description |
|--------|----------|-------|-------------|
| 1S     | k=ko     | I     | 1ˢ person sing |
| 2S     | mo=m     | you (singular) | 2ⁿ person sing |
| 3S     | na/ha    | he or she | 3ⁿ person sing |
| 1D     | ta       | I and you | 1ˢ person dual |
| 1PE    | me       | we (excluding ‘you’) | 1ˢ person excl |
| 2P     | yo       | you (plural) | 2ⁿ person plural |
| 3P     | de       | they | 3ⁿ person plural |
| 1PI    | tam      | we (meaning ‘all’) | 1ˢ 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.”

(ii) As object in a triadic transitive clause

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

(28) "Lapdition mo tu detmap
lapditi<on> ERG.2S DET detmap
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.

3.3 Oblique pronouns

Table 5 shows the oblique pronouns. Their functions are

| Person | Oblique | Gloss | Description |
|--------|---------|-------|-------------|
| 1S     | diyak   | ‘to me’ | 1ˢ person sing |
| 2S     | dikaw   | ‘to you’ (singular) | 2ⁿ person sing |
| 3S     | dikana  | ‘to him/ her’ | 3ⁿ person sing |
| 1D     | dikita  | ‘to me and you’ | 1ˢ person dual |
| 1PE    | dikame  | ‘to both of us’ | 1ˢ person excl |
| 2P     | dikayo  | ‘to you’ (plural) | 2ⁿ person plural |
| 3P     | dikade  | ‘to them’ | 3ⁿ person plural |
| 1PI    | dikitam | ‘to us’ | 1ˢ 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:

1. DET PL decendant GEN.2P
2. DET PL decendant your
3. God said, I will give this (place) to you to all your descendants.

4. DET PL decendant your
5. ‘Because of what you’ve done, you will carry your belly on the ground from this day onward.’
(i) as semantic role of ‘source’ (29).

(30) Opodin tam tu Makidepat
   <o>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat praise we(all) DET Makidepat
   pagmosgasalamat kitam dikanak.
   <pa>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat to give thanks we(all) to him

ta ipalaway tam dikanak
   CONJ <pa>laway ERG.1PI OBL.3S CONJ to see we(all) to him

nu pamamagitan nu paagpasalamat
   DET pa<mama> gitan DET <pa>ga salamat DET act of DET to give thanks

tam dikanak, a Siya
   ERG.1PI OBL.3S LIG ABS.3S we(all) to him LIG he

(29) Opodin tam tu Makidepat
   <o>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat praise we(all) DET Makidepat
   pagmosgasalamat kitam dikanak.
   <pa>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat to give thanks we(all) to him

(30) Opodin tam tu Makidepat
   <o>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat praise we(all) DET Makidepat
   pagmosgasalamat kitam dikanak.
   <pa>podin ERG.1PI DET Makidepat to give thanks we(all) to 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>aawa 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 katahimkang kitam dikanak.
   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>hay lang 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 LIGalta 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 DEG.OLD GEN.1PI they DET men DET DEG.OLD our
   a lahat, kanya...
   LIG PART, PART

   They, the old men, are our ancestors, so...

(37) Side a lahat a alta ay
   ABS.3P LIG PART LIGalta TL they PART all DET person TL

   kausil ni Pablo de idi...
   companion PN Paul before there

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

3.4 Genitive pronouns

Genitive pronouns encode possession. The noun (possessum) follows the pronoun (the possessor) which is opposite to the phrase structure like English language (e.g. my book, possessor-possessum) (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
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. Absolutives and genitives have enclitics and they enclitizes with the preceding word such as sentence (13), (15), (25) and (29), and they all enclitze 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 absolutive 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 absolutive, ergative, oblique and genitive pronouns. The ergative-absolutive 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-absolutive framework fits the morphosyntactic analysis of the Southern Alta language. 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.

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

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

Table 6 - Genitive Pronouns
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