



1963

Semantic components of Subanon pronouns

Robert M. Brichoux
SIL-UND

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers>



Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brichoux, Robert M. (1963) "Semantic components of Subanon pronouns," *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*: Vol. 7, Article 2.

DOI: 10.31356/silwp.vol07.02

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers/vol7/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session by an authorized editor of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.common@library.und.edu.

SEMANTIC COMPONENTS OF SUBANON¹ PRONOUNS

Robert M. Brichoux

Kenneth L. Pike has written an article entitled "Matrix permutation and conflation" in which he demonstrates a tool for gaining insight into complex morphemic patterns.² The present paper purposes to use the same tool to clarify the semantic components of a personal pronoun system.

The familiar matrix into which the Malayo-Polynesian pronoun systems are placed contains the oppositions of first:second:third persons; singular:dual:plural number; and exclusive:inclusive of first person, plural. Taking one of the four personal pronoun sets in Subanon as illustrative, the following paradigm is indicated:

| | | <u>Number</u> | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|------|------------------|
| | | Sing. | Dual | Plur. |
| <u>Person</u> | First incl. | -u | | ita ³ |
| | excl. | | | ami |
| | Second | -a | | amu |
| | Third | -yən | | ilan |

Obviously, dual is not a relevant category for Subanon. It should be noted that ita indicates speaker plus other individuals, one of whom must be the hearer. When the real world antecedents of ita are one speaker and one hearer, it hardly seems to be plural. Neither "dual" nor "plural"

fits the number component of this form. In fact, the same is true for ami which does not indicate many speakers, but rather the speaker plus other(s), none of whom may be the hearer.

The first permutation of the matrix by exchanging second for first person along the vertical axis yields a neater system.

| | Sing. | Plur. | |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Second | -a | amu | |
| First | -u | ita | incl. |
| | | ami | excl. |
| Third | -yən | ilan | |

This rearrangement suggests that as ita is related to amu in containing the component of second person, so ami may be related to ilan in containing the component of third person. To change the labels as suggested by Thomas, McKaughan, and Conklin in dealing with other Philippine languages, to add one more category, and to exchange axes results in the matrix

| | <u>H</u> | <u>H+S</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>S+O</u> | <u>O</u> | |
|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|----------------|
| Plural | amu | | | | ilan | <u>Hearer</u> |
| Singular | -a | | -u | | -yən | <u>Speaker</u> |
| Unnumbered | | ita | | ami | | <u>Other</u> |

The final matrix presents the relevant oppositions for Subanon pronouns in a manner which does not force "plurality" on forms, ita and ami, whose conversational relevance is whether or not the hearer is included. It also

indicates that there is no "first person, plural". For a people who neither chant nor sing in unison this is especially apropos.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Subanon of Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. Material was gathered under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics from 1958-1960.

² From a pre-publication copy.

³ The singular forms are bound, the plural forms free.

⁴ Dave Thomas, "Three analyses of the Ilocano pronoun system," Word, 11.204-208.

Howard P. McKaughan, "Semantic components of pronoun systems: Maranao." Word, 15.101-02.

Harold G. Conklin, "Lexicographical treatment of folk taxonomies." IJAL, vol. 28, part 4.119-41.