

**On the Typology of Personal Pronouns of Austronesians of Geelvink Bay and
those of West Papuan Phylum**
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Abstract

One of salient grammatical characteristics of languages in the New Guinea area is their personal pronouns constructions. This feature has been noticed by many linguists such as Wurm (1975), Voorhoeve and McElhanon (1975), Foley (1986), Bromley (1981), Burung (1994), Sawaki (2002) and many others. This study aims to describe the typology of personal pronouns among Austronesian languages of Geelvink Bay and that of West Papuan languages of the Bird's head region.

Studies on languages in the the western part of New Guinea classify these two different groups, i.e. Austronesian groups and Papuan groups consisting of Trans-New Guinea and West Papuan (Wurm, 1975; Foley, 1986, and Donohue, 200?). However, languages of these groups shares some common features, which are really different from Papuan languages of Trans New Guinea phylum, the widest-spread Papuan languages in the New Guinea area. Personal pronouns structures are one common features found in these groups.

Studying cross-linguistically among individual languages of these two groups show a first result that a structure of personal pronouns in some grammatical categories- noun, adjective, verb, and preposition – is “universally” found. These characteristics mark the similarities across languages in these two groups:

- 1) prefixed-possessor on noun phrase.
- 2) prefixed-agent/subject on verb phrase.
- 3) prefixed-person marker on adjective phrase.
- 4) prefixed-person marker on prepositional phrase.

However, individual languages in these groups demonstrate different degree of dependency between independent subjects and their dependent counterparts syntactically. Some languages show the same degree of importance of the presence of independent subjects and their dependent ones (category A); while in some languages, dependent subjects overtly marked and independent pronouns could be eliminated (category B). These could be shown in the rules as:

category A: dependent subjects = independent subject

category B: dependent subjects > independent subject

The rules are applied to all agreement between prefixed-subjects/person makers and verbs and adjectives. However, morphosyntactically nouns agree with dependent-possessor in two semantic ways; alinable and inalainable possessions. Prepositional phrase takes an morphological agreement with person markers.

Our result is just a preliminary analysis and raises the issue of further study is looking at a deep typological study in these two areas of languages.

References:

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