

## P A R T II: M O R P H O L O G Y

### Introductory

The morphology of Sonsorol as treated in these pages calls for a little explanation as to its order. It is to be recognised always that the categories of Western European grammar ought not to be applied unchanged to native languages. In many there is not the hard and fast distinction between parts of speech that are found in English or Latin. In many languages such divisions answer to no reality at all, when a grammar is drawn up along conventional lines, with chapters on nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and so on. In others, again, the relative importance of what parts of speech can be predicated, is different again from that of English or the classical languages. In Sonsorol the pronoun must be thoroughly understood before any grasp of the language can be attained. A sentence can be made without a noun, sometimes even without a verb, but not without a pronoun. No verb can be used without a prenominal particle before it; the pronoun enters into the expression of possession and frequently of the verbal object. It is the only element of the language that makes any approach to inflection.

For such reasons as these the pronoun is treated first in this grammatical sketch, and the illustrative sentences then become clearer to the student. The term "cardinal pronoun" has been used in preference to "personal pronoun", because in Sonsorol as in other Oceanic languages person is found in other types of pronoun than 'I', 'you' and 'he'.

### I. THE PRONOUN

Pronouns in Sonsorol are the key to the language

and must be thoroughly understood as a preliminary to mastering the structure of the language itself. Given these, the rest of the structure is simple. Pronouns may be divided into the following kinds:

- A. Cardinal Pronouns
- B. Suffixed Pronouns
- C. Possessive Pronouns (and adjectives)
- D. Demonstrative Pronouns (and adjectives)
- E. Interrogative Pronouns (and adjectives)
- F. Indefinite Pronouns
- G. Relative Pronouns

They will be treated in the order listed here.

#### A. CARDINAL PRONOUNS

The cardinal pronouns do not vary much from dialect to dialect, except for the normal phonemic change of Son. l to Tobi γ. There are two numbers, singular and plural, and no regular provision is made for a dual number, as in most Melanesian and some Micronesian languages. After the simple forms, certain rare compound forms will be noticed. The first person plural calls for special attention. It is divided into inclusive and exclusive forms, and the distinction is vital. The inclusive first person includes the person addressed ('you and I' or 'we and you') while the exclusive first person excludes him ('he or they and I, but not you'). Thus in English, "we will go the beach" is ambiguous, it may or may not include the person addressed. In Sonsorol, if all are to go, including the person addressed, I say kis; if the person or persons spoken to are not to go, I say 'xamem. The inclusive, therefore, is always used in Prayers. In the Lord's Prayer, for example, "give us", "forgive us", "lead us" must be exclusive - otherwise it would

imply that God was part of the object of all these acts. This use is found in all Oceanic languages with very rare exceptions, such as Gilbertese, but is much less common in New Guinea languages. It also occurs in Australia.

The following are the Cardinal Pronouns in the four dialects.

	SONSOROL	PUL	MERIR	TOBI
Singular				
	1. <u>na:ŋ</u>	<u>na:ŋ</u>	<u>na:ŋ</u>	<u>na:ŋ</u>
	2. <u>xere</u>	<u>gere</u>	<u>γete</u>	<u>ke:re</u> , <u>ke:r</u> , <u>k<sup>1</sup>e:ra</u>
	3. <u>i:e</u>	<u>i:e</u>	<u>i:e</u>	<u>i:e</u>
Plural incl.	1. <u>kis</u>	<u>gise</u>	<u>γis</u>	<u>kic</u>
excl.	1. <u>xamem</u>	<u>xamem</u>	<u>xamem</u>	<u>xamem</u>
	2. <u>xami</u>	<u>xami</u>	<u>xami</u>	<u>xami</u>
	3. <u>ile</u>	<u>ile</u>	<u>ile</u>	<u>iye</u>

There is no distinction of gender in the third person; i:e may be he, she or it. Certain compounded forms of these pronouns exist, e.g. xai'rewa, "we indeed", which is a compound of the verbal pronoun with 'dewwa, very. The word saku, 'only', may also be added to the cardinal pronouns themselves to produce an emphatic form na:ŋ<sup>1</sup> saku, 'I alone', 'I myself', 'I for my part', e.g. na:ŋ<sup>1</sup> saku i γa bawγø, I saw it myself. So, too, ke:ra saku or xere saku, and similar other compounded forms. Saku is also used with numerals to strengthen or make them exclusive.

The cardinal pronouns are used as a rule only when a certain emphasis rests on the pronoun. They must always be followed by a verbal pronoun if they are the objects of a verb (see under 'Verbs'), or preceded by a suffixed pronoun (see next section), if they are objects, but in each case the verbal or suffixed pronoun is normally sufficient

without a cardinal pronoun. Thus if one says 'i bwito, 'I'm coming', that is normally sufficient; if one says ɲa:ɲ i 'bwito, the implication is 'I at any rate, am coming', or 'I but not you are coming', etc. Cardinal pronouns before verbs are therefore rare in all Oceanic languages.

If stress needs to be placed on the number "two", it is expressed after the plural pronoun, linked to it with the ligative particle me. Thus "we two" is kis me di limar<sup>u</sup>, lit. we (who are) we-two-people; for "we three" it is possible to say kis me di derumar<sup>u</sup>. (This note is based on Eilers; the present writer found it very hard to get agreement, but was given such a phrase. Apparently Eilers found trouble in Merir, for she gives ɣete ma ɲa:ɲ, 'you and I' as inclusive, and ɣete ma jädimer, 'you and the man' as exclusive, i.e. you and he. Such forms, that is to say, are not normally used in Sonsorol, as they would be in most Melanesian languages. They have to be compiled when needed).

## B. SUFFIXED PRONOUNS

Suffixed pronouns may indicate in these languages either a possessive relationship or the object of a verb, and the forms differ to some extent in each case. The objective forms may be considered first, as the possessives lead to one of the most difficult aspects of the language. The object indicated may be either direct or indirect, as in "he sees me" or "he gives to me". Sometimes the stem of the verb is modified in the process of receiving the objective suffixes. The forms of the suffixes are the same in the dialects, except in the third plural, when there is the normal change of l to ɣ in Tobi. They are as follows:

Singular	1. iei <sup>i</sup>	2. -ɣo	3. -ja, -je
Plural incl.	1. -ɣis		
excl.	1. -mami	2. -ɣami	3. -i:l

There is slight variation in the form of the third person plural, apart from the Tobi change to -i:γ. Sometimes the i unites with a preceding vowel to form a descending diphthong, as in -a:<sup>i</sup>l, sometimes it is linked to the verb by means of -e-, as in xadieil, bring them, sometimes it links immediately with a preceding -i-, as in m<sup>w</sup>awas'ri:l, want them. Examples:

i:e bwe	γau-jei	he tells me
	γau-γo	tells you (singr.)
	γau-je	tells him, her, it
	γau-γis	tells us (incl.)
	γauγ'mami	tells us (excl.)
	γau-γami	tells you (plur.)
	γau-l	tells them

If the verb has a noun object, the pronoun object may still be inserted in an anticipatory manner. It does not seem compulsory to do this in Sonsorol, as it is in many Melanesian languages, but one finds, e.g. i't<sup>u</sup> mara'gara xo m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri:l? who are those (whom) you love? E m<sup>w</sup>asa ri:l lei tipaŋaki, he loves them the upright, the good-hearted. In the former example the suffix makes up for the absence of a true relative pronoun in Sonsorol, but the second is a case of an anticipatory object. It is also correct, however, to omit it: i m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri: lei fiteki ri moŋau, I want someone to do the cooking (for m<sup>w</sup>asa ri:je). Apart from the third person singular, the uses are fairly constant, e.g. e wauti-ei, he hit me; γannejāi, give me; i bwe γanneγo, I give (it) to you; xadije, ask him; i t<sup>o</sup> kuray<sup>o</sup> I don't know you (or understand you); me'ta me e γari:l jālimat? what did he give the people? E γarikis, he gives it to us (incl.) (In the last example the root of the verb is slightly irregular, appearing as both γan- and - γar-.

If a verb is followed by an adverb, it is usual to transfer the pronoun object to the adverb: i m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri: dewwa:<sup>i</sup>l, I love them very much; e pari dewwakis, he helps us a lot. This is common practice in Oceanic languages.

### C. POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

There is more than one way of expressing possession in Sonsorol. The first method is by the suffixing of pronoun to the noun or to a separate possessive-noun root. Thus mata-i, my eye, but jare-i ta:ri, my rope. In each instance a suffixed pronoun is used, but in the first it is added directly to the stem of the noun, in the second to a separate noun of possession, in this case jar-. The former are called suffixed possessives, the latter independent possessives. Nouns which take suffixes are shown in the Dictionary with a hyphen, e.g. mat-, eye.

#### 1. Suffixed Possessives

The suffixed possessives in the Sonsorol dialects are as follows:

		SONSOROL	PUL	MERIR	TOBI
Singular	1.	-i	-i	-i	-i
	2.	-m	-m <sup>u</sup>	-m	-m
	3.	-r <sup>a</sup>	-r <sup>e</sup>	-r <sup>a</sup>	-r
Plural	1. incl.	-s	-s <sup>o</sup>	-s	-c
	1. excl.	-memi	-mem <sup>i</sup>	-mi	-mi
	2.	-mi	-mi	-mi	-mi
	3.	-l	-l <sup>e</sup>	-l	-γ

There is some variation in the vowels preceding the final consonant or vowel of the suffix, which will be discussed

below. The above are the skeleton forms.

The suffixes are used with parts of the body and relationship terms. In most Oceanic languages they are also used with parts of a whole, and this is the usage in Truk, but in Sonsorol a difference has developed which will be explained later. There are, however, some less obvious uses of the suffixed forms in Sonsorol, e.g. with im, a house, which is neither a part, like a limb, nor an inseparable natural possession like a relative. The use is found in some Melanesian languages as well as in Micronesia. Examples of each use:

1. parts of the body: matai, my eye; pei, my arm; sai, my blood.
2. relationships: papai, my father; neirai or dirai, my mother; rai, my child.
3. other nouns: imwei, my house; pølinei, my hat; wai, my canoe.

The forms of the suffixes may be judged from that of the first person singular, which may end in -ai, -ei or -i. The following examples will show the variations in the final vowels in each case:

		BLOOD	ARM	TOOTH
Singular	1.	sai	pei	ŋi
	2.	sam	poum	ŋim
	3.	sar <sup>a</sup>	paur <sup>a</sup>	ŋir <sup>a</sup>
Plural	1. incl.	sas	peis	ŋis
	1. excl.	samem <sup>i</sup>	paumem <sup>i</sup>	ŋimem <sup>i</sup>
	2.	sami	paumi	ŋimi
	3.	sa: <sup>i</sup> l	paul <sup>e</sup>	ŋi:l

Sometimes there is slight variation from these norms, e.g. itei, my name, gives ita:r<sup>a</sup>, his or her name; and imwei, my house, is similar; li, my spouse, gives lɔm lir<sup>a</sup>, etc. Actually these vowel changes rest upon phrase rhythm.

Mental characteristics are regarded as inseparable possessions, justifying the use of suffixed pronouns, as shown, e.g. in busos, our folly, from bus, silly, mad (really an adjective functioning word as a rule); tatara:<sup>1</sup>l, their evil; tama:us, our sins.

The question of final vowels is always difficult to solve in Sonsorol. A final -i on -memi would be expected from comparison with other languages, but although often written in the Catechism, it is hardly ever heard in practice.

What objects are regarded by the native as sufficiently closely possessed to require suffixed pronouns is not always obvious to Europeans. Some less apparent cases are shown in, e.g. xamalei, my sweetheart; pɔlinei, my hat; uwei, my clothes, my shirt; wai, my canoe. Attention must be paid to the forms as given in the Dictionary.

### ii. Independent Possessives

Nouns other than those indicating parts of the body, relationships, or close or valued possessions, take independent possessives. In many languages there is only one or perhaps two such, but the possessive noun-roots in Sonsorol are numerous. The roots are themselves nouns, to which the suffixed pronouns already given are added. They are descriptives, i.e. they describe the type of object to which reference is made. Thus, the root yosa-i, my, is used with fish foods, and is connected with the verb yasausa, to eat fish; rai, my child, is used with children and other



dependents, including pigs; talei, is 'my' with belts.

The following possessive nouns are found:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1. ja- i  | General possession, not covered by any other class |
| 2. kare-i | Food in general, except fish                       |
| 3. yosa-i | Fish food  |
| 4. rume-i | Things to drink                                    |
| 5. wa-i   | Canoes and other vehicles                          |
| 6. ra-i   | Children, dependents                               |
| 7. tale-i | Belts  |
| 8. kie-i  | Sleeping mats                                      |

Similar groupings of possessives are found in Ulithi and Truk, but in Truk the list is longer than in Sonsorol. The following are Sonsorol examples:

1. jai mæe, my breadfruit (as a possession - to eat would be karei mæe);  
jasa ta'mor, our chief(s); jai γøγø, my bracelet.  
This is the commonest possessive.
2. karei maŋaw, my food; karei tabak, my tobacco;  
karei fado, my banana. Sometimes used alone to indicate food: e wola karami? Have you any food?  
(Actually the sound here becomes fricative: e wola γarami?).
3. γosai i:γ, my fish, and with names of particular fishes.
4. rumei saru, my drinking water (jai saru would be water for any other purpose); rumei sigaret, my cigarette, because Sonsorol follows most Oceanic languages in using 'drink' for 'smoke' as a verb.

5. wai, my canoe; wai jeep, my jeep; wai 'motoka, my motor-car.
6. rai, my child; rai riweis, my boy; ra ri itøu peig<sup>i</sup> ra? Whose is that pig?
7. talei uv, my loincloth (as against uvei, my clothing); talei kurias, my belt.
8. kiei sobu, my sleeping mat.

It will be seen from some of the examples given that a change of meaning may result from a change in the possessive used with a given noun. Thus, jai fado, my banana (simply as a possession-: karei fado, my banana (as a food). In a few cases the word used varies in a way not found in English, as in the case of the coconut, for which different names are used at different stages of its growth. Thus the fruit in general is called wanu, and one would say jai wanu, my coconut; but the green nut for drinking is rutøi, and one would therefore say rumei rutøi, if one were about to drink a green coconut. Again, tabak, tobacco, is regarded as food and takes karei as possessive, but sigaret, whose smoke is drunk in, is regarded as a drink and takes rumei. These usages are common in other parts of the Pacific such as Fiji.

#### D. DEMONSTRATIVES

There are two kinds of demonstratives in Sonsorol, one which stands by itself, and so functions as a pronoun, and the other which depends on a noun, and so functions as an adjective.

##### 1. Pronominal Demonstratives

Demonstratives can be arranged for personal variations in Sonsorol, and set out side by side with the

cardinal pronouns, as follows:

	PRONOUN	DEMONSTRATIVE
Singular	1. <u>na:n</u>	<u>me:re</u>
	2. <u>xere</u>	mina
	3. <u>i:e</u>	iga'ra:ra

Thus me:re is 'this', near the speaker; mina, 'that' near the person addressed, and iga'ra:ra, 'that yonder', near the person or object referred to. The two latter are not regularly distinguished in English, and their use is something to be learned by practice in Sonsorol. The 2nd. person form also varies in itself. It is often heard as mena, minna, and it may also add the -ra which marks the third person: i m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri: mi'na:ra, I want that one (which you have). There is no distinction of gender or number in these demonstrative pronouns (although there is distinction of number in the adjectival forms). Examples: meta me:re? what is this?; meta iga'ra:ra? what is that? it~~o~~u iga'ra:ra? who is that yonder?; yannejai mi'na:ra, give me that (by you); xadato mina:ra, bring that one (near you); xale xo faulu me:re? did you make this ('xale' merely asks a question); xere it~~o~~u mena? who are you (there)? An extended use is found sometimes, as in mena di d~~o~~l<sup>u</sup> ba..., when we say...; in the matter of our saying..., e.g. me'ta ni-far men e d~~o~~lu ba... what is meant when it is said that ...?

#### 11. Adjectival Demonstratives

As adjectival words follow the noun they qualify in Sonsorol, so do demonstratives used adjectivally. There are several forms of some of them, especially the words for 'this'. The words are:

this: iere, i, e

these: gale, yaie

- that (i) near you: ra, er those (i): gar<sup>a</sup>, yar<sup>a</sup>  
 (ii) yonder: rara (ii) ga'ra:r<sup>a</sup>

Examples:

pe:pa iere, this paper or book; pe:pa er, that paper; riweis i, this child; jəlimat er, that person; fəraje i, this village; xo bwe jamwiri da'lamire 'r, wash out those flasks; xo bwe wesil xapiteki yar, rinse those things; faini ramu yara, kill those mosquitoes; 'e mire ni pata ri fada ya'ra:ra, it is between those stones.

Amongst other examples, one compounded form should be noticed, i.e. marayara, those people, compounded of mar<sup>e</sup>, man, and ga'ra:ra. The singular is mare'r. Mare 'r e m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri:, this man wants it; tama:ul<sup>e</sup> mara'ya:ra, the offences of those people; itəu mara'yara xo m<sup>w</sup>asari:l? whom do you love? (lit. who those-persons you love-them); me'ta ni'far ni ru:tur e? What is purpose of this fence? me'ta ni'far ri titiro e? what is the meaning of this word?; i mori itena rani sugu ra, I have put it in that bag (near you); itəu na e kura rama e? who is there that understands this language? (the first e is a verbal particle, the second the demonstrative); sujəmai viri saru ra, come away from that water; e da m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri: vitigo e, he wants this meat.

There are examples in which iere is used pronominally, but the idea then is rather 'here is', as a thing is proffered, than simply 'this is': iere fa'raoa, here's some flour - or pointing out the existence of something: iere jap pigipigi, here's my ball; iere wawou ri pigipigi, here's the bat. There are also examples of ie used pronominally, as in ie mtama ri mmago dewaa, this one is the best; or sometimes the particle me (see SYNTAX) is put in:

iere me tagi?et dewaa dɔgu-je, this is the highest mountain. On the other hand, when mere is used for 'this one' it often comes at the end of the sentence: imwe ti itɔu mere? whose house is this?

### E. INTERROGATIVES

Here again there is a dual function of the interrogative word, as pronoun and adjective, but as there is no difference in form, both can be treated together. The interrogative words are:

who? itɔu?                      what: me'ta?

#### USES: (1) Pronominal and Adjectival

This is seen in such phrases as itɔu iga'ra:ra? Who is that? itɔu ilefil? which of them? Who of them? Xere itɔu? Who are you? The only point to notice about itɔu is that its presence in the sentence does not affect the order of the words, e.g. you who? = who are you? It is almost universal in Oceania that the question, "What is your name?" becomes "Who is your name?" In Sonsorol, however, the European idiom is used: me'ta itom? Me'ta ita:r jəlimat<sup>a</sup>ra? what is the name of that man? For me'ta the following examples will suffice: me'ta iga'ra:ra? What is that? Me'ta xo dɔlw? What did you say? Me'ta xo bwe fiteki? What are you going to do?

If the words are used as adjectives, they follow the noun, like normal adjectives: maɲaw me'ta? what food? which food? It is also possible to make a compound phrase for "which" as a pronoun: mere i'fa ma i bwe ɲanneyo? which one shall I give you? Another very common compound is the phrase me'ta ni'far? what is the meaning, purpose, use of, usually coupled with the next phrase by the particle or

conjunction me; as in me'ta ni'far me Dios e faulekis? Why did God make us? There is also another word for "which" - i'fa, as in ifa'ra xo m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri:? which do you want? This is the word involved in the example above, mere i'fa, but here the accent is moved by 'ra'.

## (2) Interrogative Verb

Sonsorol has an interrogative verb which is a little hard for a European to grasp. It is feita, and the meaning is 'to do what?', 'to be what?' and hence 'how?', etc. Examples: xo feita i'ya? what are you doing here? Xo feita xo da bwito? how did you get here? (lit. you did what and so you came?); xo bwe feita? what are you going to do?; xo feita na e ya metaki pødum? how did you hurt yourself? (lit. you did what and you body is sick); and the answer might be, e.g. i pøn e da ya metaki pei, I fell and it-is-sick (=hurt) my hand.

Very frequently me'ta is combined with me, as in me'ta me ie m<sup>w</sup>a-sa'ri:? What (is it) he wants? The answer might be then, iere me i m<sup>w</sup>asa'ri: it is this that he wants. So me'ta me e ya'ri:l<sup>i</sup> jälimat? what did he give the men?

"Whose" is expressed by itøu preceded by the possessive appropriate to the class of noun referred to: rau ri itøu? Whose child? ra ri itøu peig<sup>i</sup> ra? Whose is that pig? ja ri itøu wadi ra? whose knife is that? ja ri itøu faruføru mere? whose writing is this? uve ri itøu, ere? Whose clothes are these? Imwe ri itøu, whose house? Any of the possessive nouns can be used.

## F. INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

There are no true indefinite pronouns in Sonsorol; it is necessary to paraphrase the idea of "someone" as

"one person" or a similar expression: demaru, as in demaru e dɔl<sup>u</sup>, someone said. "No one" will be similarly paraphrased as "not one person", as i tei bauyɔ demaru, I did not see anybody. So, again, 'have you any sisters?' is rendered 'are there not your sisters?' - xale e ta wol' mweanəm? And the answer, 'I have no sisters' might be e tai wola (sc. mweanai). Sometimes a ligative particle such as na (see SYNTAX) can be linked with a direct interrogative, as in itɔu na e kura rama e? Is there anyone who knows this language? "Have you any...?" is "Is there any... with you?": xale e wola ... iolom? Sometimes the word is not expressed at all: "I won't give you any" becomes simply "I won't give you", i towai ɣanneyo.

#### G. RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Words which can be regarded as relative pronouns - apart from demonstratives that may seem to function as relatives - are comparatively rare in Oceanic languages. In Sonsorol there are several types of expression for the idea of who, which, what.

1. We. This word is frequently used as a relative much in the same way as English who or which, but nearly always as the object of the verb rather than as its subject. Thus: vitigo we e xadi e da punutiwo rani saru, the meat which he was carrying fell into the water; e bwe tai mire pensil we xo xori, xo da duwe ri ɲara deau, if you have not the pencil that you borrowed, you should replace it with another.

There is sometimes assimilation of the vowel to that of a neighboring dependent word, e.g. wo xo rute ri mayo, thou who art the source of goodness - where the word-order also, wo xo, is worth noticing; as against the English idiom

"thou who", Sonsorol, like German, says "who thou".

From this close linking of we with a preceding or following word it becomes almost an appositional particle: (Catechism) Ta'mor we jai Toutub<sup>e</sup>, The Lord (who is) my God. As, however, the Catechism was translated from Palauan, and Palau has a ligative particle el ("a Ru'bak el Di'os er nak), this may be an introduced usage.

2. No relative expressed. In some cases the relative is omissible, as again in English: xapiteki i parujeri me igera e mmayo dewaa, the goods (which) I bought today are very good; e tai wola jalimat e mire iga'ra:ra, there is nobody who lives there, nobody living there; xale e sujø ba xo bwe kato babai e mori mas ba i bwe yanneje? Can you bring a papaya (which) has ripened (= a ripe papaya) and I will give it to him?

3. The demonstrative ra can be used to replace a relative: na:n i tø kura jalimat<sup>a</sup> ra e bwito me igera, I don't know the man who came today; di da faule jasa parimarao ra Padre e yarikis, we then do the penance (which) the priest gives us.

4. The third person pronoun may be used in a similar way: yannejai i:e pwesepwese, give me it (which) is white, give me the white one; te'rappari faivi e bwe kamasu i:e pwesepwese; the little girl has the white one.

5. After me'ta, me and mo have something of a relative force. (See SYNTAX)

## 2. THE VERBAL SYSTEM

The Sonsorol Verb will be treated under the following heads:

### A. The System in General