

Some Elementary Data of the Manobo Language

By EUGENE VERSTRAELEN

From April 20th to May 26th 1968 I had the opportunity to visit the Manobo. They form a tribe which occupies a large area along the Agusan-river in Mindanao, Philippines. The first Manobo, south of Butuan, are found at Bitan-ágan, a small barrio about 12 km from Butuan. Bitan-ágan is situated at a small tributary, also called Bitan-ágan, of the great Agusan-river. Only a few Manobo have settled here, the rest of the area being occupied by Bisayan.

Farther to the south the Manobo are very numerous. They all speak locally slightly different dialects ¹.

Since I made this research mainly for comparative studies, the Manobo-dialect is presented by the same scheme as that used for the description of Minamanwa ². In this manner the differences and agreements of the dialects will be more obvious.

A. Grammar

I. Phonemes

There are three vowels:

- /a/: pronounced more or less like the *a* in the German word "kann". In unstressed syllables it may sometimes be pronounced like the *o* in the German word "konnte". This phoneme will be written *a* and *o* according to the pronunciation.
- /i/: pronounced more or less like the *i* in the English word "pin".
- /o/: pronounced more or less like the *oo* in the German word "Boot".

¹ My main informants in Bitan-ágan were: Si Diding (58 years old); her full name is Gregoria Balansag; - Si Sambidan (about 60 years old); his full name is Victorino Tanoga; - Sophronio Yanoga (about 35 years old); he is the son of Sambidan.

² Cf. EUGENE VERSTRAELEN, Some Elementary Data of the Mamanwa Language. *Anthropos* 60. 1965: 803-815.