

# Sanvitores' Parts of Speech Grammar of Chamorro compared with modern day insights

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There are more than 300 years between the first grammar of Chamorro, written by Father Sanvitores in 1668 and Topping's Chamorro Reference Grammar, published in 1973. There are obvious differences between the two grammars. Sanvitores' grammar is only a first and rudimentary version of what the author had planned to elaborate in a more detailed and more accurate description of the structure and dynamics of the language, an ambition thwarted by his untimely death. He also had to finish this first version in less than two months' time, before having spoken with any Chamorro native, learning the language from a Filipino and at the same time composing his grammar, without any written resources at his disposal.

There are, of course, also linguistic differences. A major linguistic difference, on which I will focus in this paper, is that Sanvitores uses the classical parts of speech (noun, adverb, verb, etc.) as a framework for describing and explaining the language. Topping argues that these parts of speech are not suitable for Chamorro and replaces them with so-called Word Classes. In past and present days other scholars have followed either the classical parts of speech strategy or the word class strategy, mostly without giving explicit arguments for their choice. In this paper I will describe how Sanvitores uses this parts of speech framework to describe Chamorro, compare it with Topping's word classes strategy and attempt to find an answer to the following question: do both strategies exclude each other – and, if so, which one may be preferred – or can they be considered as complementary?

## References

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