

A SKETCH OF NOMINAL CONCORD IN ABU' (AN ARAPESH LANGUAGE)

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

1.1 General

There are a number of languages in Papua New Guinea (PNG) which have noun class systems (see Fortune 1942; and Capell 1969).

Abu' is one of these languages.² It has a complex classification system with a regular system of concord within the Noun Phrase (NP) and Verb Phrase (VP) structures. Nouns in the language arbitrarily fall into classes determined by their singular and plural forms. These forms in turn determine the forms that nominal modifiers take in NPs as well as the coreferential elements in VPs.

During an introductory class in PNG languages at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1975 with Drs John Lynch and Adrienne Lang, it became apparent to me that the description of Arapesh noun classes given by Fortune (1942) was inadequate. There were more noun classes in Abu' than the 13 reported by Fortune for the closely-related Mountain Arapesh dialect of his grammar. Therefore, this study attempts to provide examples to show the system of nominal concordance and to sort out the number of noun classes in Abu', the language of my speech community.

1.2 Background

Although Arapesh society has been the subject of anthropological literature since 1938,³ literature on the language is comparatively meagre, except for the work of Fortune cited above. Fortune's study which was basically aimed at the description of Arapesh grammar, mentioned that there were 13 general noun classes in the dialect on which his study was based. He made a general statement about nominal concord but did not provide full details of how nominal concord operates. The Mountain Arapesh grammar of Gerstner (1963) has not been consulted.

A few other people have either made some comments or referred to the language. Glasgow and Loving (1964) in their classification of the Maprik District languages, made reference to the extension of Mountain Arapesh, with dialect changes into the Wewak and Aitape districts as far as the coastal villages of Matapau and Dagua (see map). They also mapped the distribution of the Arapesh languages as then known, namely Bumbita, Southern and Mountain Arapesh. The map published in this study is partly based on this mapping. Laycock (1973)

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elaborated on the classification of Arapesh languages within the Torricelli Phylum, but, as mentioned in note 2, did not recognise Abu' as a separate language. A brief note on the classes, with a bibliography mentioning early word-lists, is to be found in Laycock (1975). Capell (1969:122 fn.) describes Arapesh as belonging to the same typological subgroup as the Baining language of East New Britain.

Tuzin (1972:11) in his ethnographic description of the Ilahita (Southern) Arapesh, briefly mentioned the fact that the common feature of the Arapesh languages is their complex noun classification system. He made no further comments about the nouns or nominal concord as these were outside his area of ethnographic investigation.

At the time this study was first written (1977), Bob and Jo Conrad were doing some work on the morphophonemic rules of the Buki dialect of Mountain Arapesh, which is spoken between Maprik and Yangoru.⁴

1.3 Materials

The present study represents an analysis of materials collected by the author with the assistance of his wife during the second half of 1976 and the first half of 1977. The materials are from Abu', which is closely related to Mountain Arapesh. The form of Abu' described is that spoken by about three hundred people living in Womsis village about 70 km west of Wewak. Two Abu' dialects are spoken in Womsis.⁵ In this study I have concentrated on the Southern dialect since I am a native speaker of that dialect.

1.4 Presentation

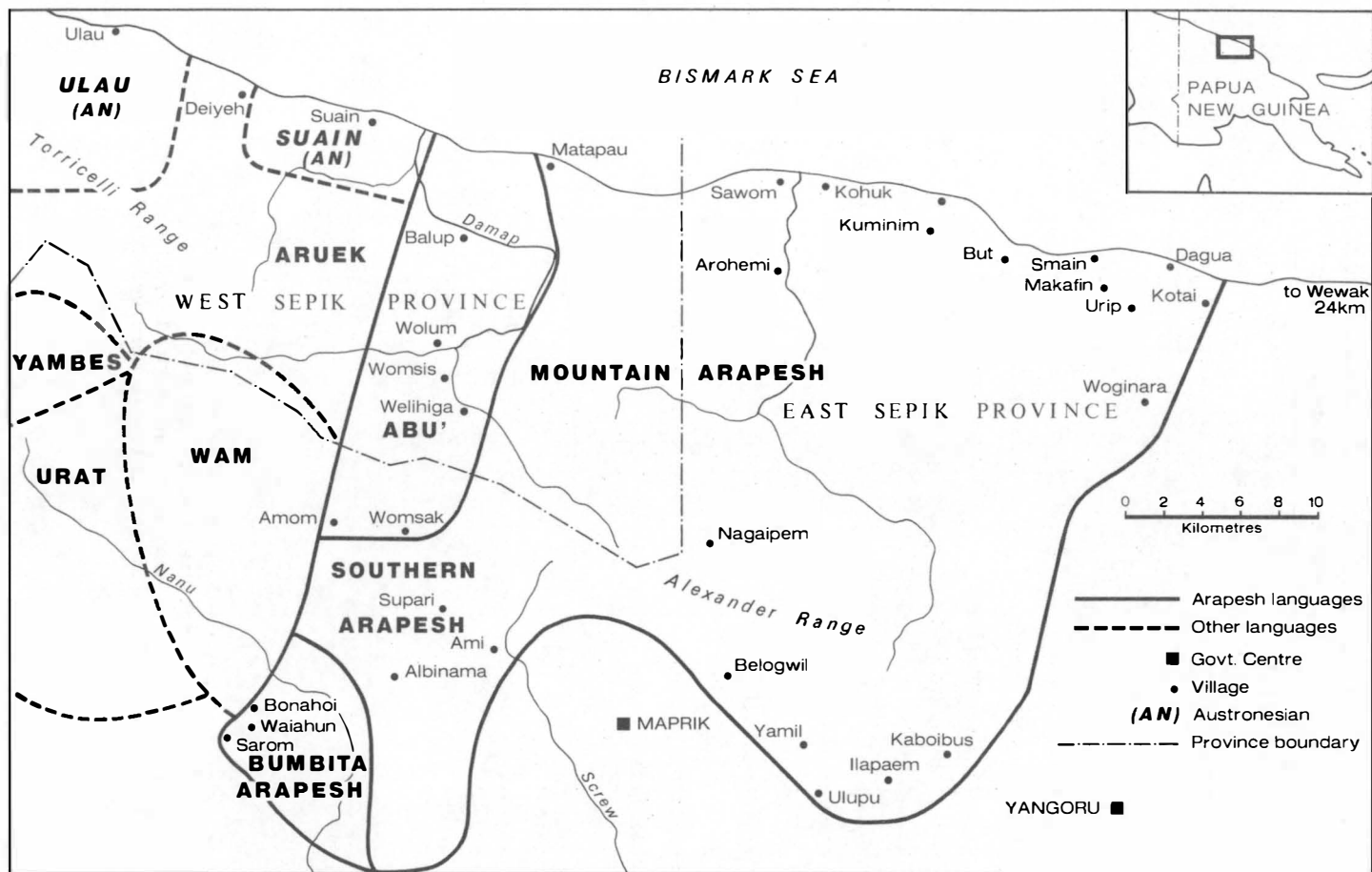
In this study the following orthography and other symbols are used for listing and describing the Abu' materials:

1.4.1 Phonology

The following symbols are employed to represent 16 consonants and five vowel phonemes:

	Labial	Apical	Velar	Rounded velar	Glottal
Voiceless stops	(p)*	t	k	k ^w	'
Voiced stops	b	d			
Nasals	m	m			
Fricatives	f	s			
Laterals		l			
Flaps		r			
Semivowels	w	y			h

* An introduced phoneme from Tok Pisin.



MAP: DISTRIBUTION OF ARAPESH LANGUAGES

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

Other symbols and abbreviations

Adj	adjective	TP	Tok Pisin
AdjC	adjective of colour	vb	verb
AdjQ	adjective of quality	V	any vowel
AdjS	adjective of size	V-	initial vowel or syllable
Adv	adverb	-V-	medial vowel
AdvL	adverb of location	-V	final vowel
AN	Austronesian	VP	verb phrase
excl	exclusive	x/y	x or y
C	any consonant	<u>l</u>	concord feature (underlined)
-C	final consonant	>	becomes
-C-	medial consonant	<	derives from
dem	demonstrative	'	primary stress (in phonetic transcriptions)
incl	inclusive	'	glottal stop (in phonemic representations)
N	noun	ʔ	glottal stop (in phonetic transcriptions)
NP	noun phrase		
num	numeral/number		
O	object	V'	primary stress
P	past	V*	half length
pl	plural	*	unacceptable item or borrowed TP word
S	subject		
sen	sentence	#	word boundary
sg	singular	∅	zero symbol

The Abu' phonetic system does not seem to have a voiceless bilabial stop but because of exposure to Tok Pisin whose phonetic system has the allophonic variants [p] and [f] which are generally represented by the phoneme /p/, Abu' speakers are now using that sound especially in borrowed Tok Pisin words containing /p/.

It is apparent in this study that the voiceless bilabial fricative and the labio-dental voiceless fricative are allophonic variants of the same phoneme, represented in this study by /f/ so that the phoneme /f/ has two allophones, [f] and [p] = [ɸ] which occur in free variations in all positions.

$$/f/ \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [f] \\ [p] = [\Phi] \end{array} \right\} \quad [f] \sim [p] \text{ in all positions}$$

The voiceless alveolar stop and the voiceless velar stop are slightly aspirated in word-final position but remained unaspirated elsewhere.

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} /t/ \\ /k/ \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left[\begin{array}{l} t^h \\ k^h \end{array} \right] \quad / - \# \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} t \\ k \end{array} \right] \quad \text{elsewhere} \end{array} \right.$$

The grooved voiceless alveolar fricative becomes an alveolar palatal fricative in word-final position.

$$/s/ \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [\text{ʃ}] \quad / - \# \\ [s] \quad \text{elsewhere} \end{array} \right.$$

The liquid sounds [l] and [r] are flapped in word-initial and word-medial positions but are trilled in word-final position.

$$/l/ \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [\text{ɫ}] \quad / - \# \\ [l] \quad \text{elsewhere} \end{array} \right.$$

$$/r/ \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [\text{ɽ}] \quad / - \# \\ [r] \quad \text{elsewhere} \end{array} \right.$$

The voiceless velar stop k contrasts with the glottal stop which is represented in this study by the apostrophe '.

1.4.2 Nasalisation

A nasal optionally assimilates to the point of articulation of the following voiced obstruents. Similarly a vowel is nasalised when occurring between two nasal consonants or when the vowel occurs next to a nasal, for example, ['utaba]/ ['utãmba] *stone/stones*; [m'ãduh]/[m'ãnduh] *rope*. This nasalisation rule is non-obligatory.

1.4.2.1 Labialisation

It was suspected that the rounded voiceless velar stop k^w may represent two separate units of sounds namely k and w. However, the observation has been that both sounds are inseparable. They comprise a single segment and consequently contrast with k as the following minimal pair indicates: ['kaʔutu] *tree stands*

as opposed to ['kʷarutu] *she stands*. Also because of its function as a third person female subject prefix as illustrated in the above example or as in kʷahe' *she went* in contrast with nahe *he went*, or *it went* and sahe' *they went*. kʷ also occurs at the onset of words implying femininity as for example kʷa'araka *frog*.

1.4.2.2 Vowels

The semivowel /y/ varies freely with the high front unrounded vowel /i/ in all positions. Seeing that vowel glides are predictable, it is plausible to suggest that /i/ = /y/ and /u/ = /w/ so that it is equally acceptable to write /iah/ = [iyah] *road*, /niboal/ = ['niʔm'bowa] *two days ago*.

The phoneme /i/ has two allophones. In word-initial and word-final positions it remains a high front unrounded tense vowel but is generally lax in word-medial position. Hence:

$$/i/ \longrightarrow \begin{cases} [i] & / C - C \\ [i] & \text{elsewhere} \end{cases}$$

1.4.2.3 Vowel length

Vowels occurring in word-final positions are generally half-length. $V \rightarrow V^{\cdot} / -\#$. Stress falls on the initial syllable. $V \rightarrow V^{\cdot} / V-$.

Syllables may be open or closed. Neither stress nor tone appear to be phonemic in Abu'.

1.4.3 Minimal/subminimal pairs and other examples

/f/ \rightarrow [f] \sim [p] or [ɸ] in all environments, /ufaf/ \rightarrow ['ufaf] or ['uɸɸ] *banana*. /fifikil/ \rightarrow ['f'ɪfɪkɪl] or [p'ɪɸkɪl] *bone*.

/f/ \sim /p/ in all environments for borrowed words from Tok Pisin into Abu', as for instance:

/pater/ *priests* ['pater], ['fater] or ['ɸater].
 /piptin/ *fifteen* ['piptɪn], ['fɪftɪn] or ['ɸiɸptɪn].
 /bilip/ *belief* or *faith* ['bilɪp], ['bɪɪɪf] or ['bɪɪɪɸ].

/t/ and /d/ contrast as indicated by the following minimal or subminimal pairs:

/idaf/ [ʔidaf] \sim [ʔidap] *split timber*
 /itaf/ [ʔitaf] \sim [ʔitap] *earth, ground*
 /dalata/ [dʔalata] *end of something*
 /tata/ [ʔtata] *rock*

$$\begin{bmatrix} /t/ \\ /k/ \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{cases} \begin{bmatrix} t^h \\ k^h \end{bmatrix} & / - \# \\ \begin{bmatrix} t \\ k \end{bmatrix} & \text{elsewhere} \end{cases}$$

Hence: /nubat/	[^h nũmbat ^h]	or	[^h nubat ^h]	dog
/lawak/	[^h lawak ^h]			tree
/tata/	[^h tata]			rock
/kaki/	[^h kaki]			that tree

/k/ and /'/ differ as indicated by the following minimal pairs: /akup/ [^hakuf] or [^hakup] *kind of tree*; /a'uf/ [^ha'uf] or [^ha'uf^h] *liver*.

/i/ →	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} [i] \\ [i] \end{array} \right.$	/ C - C	/benikoh/ [^h 'benikoh]	skin
		elsewhere	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} /# - / \text{ iyah} / \\ /- \# / \text{ emi} / \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ['iah] \\ ['emi] \end{array} \right.$

/s/ →	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} [š] \\ [s] \end{array} \right.$	/ - #	/esis/ [^h 'esʔstš]	they/them
		elsewhere		
		e.g. /# - /sapas/ [^h 'sapaš]		<i>kind of ants</i>

/l/ →	[l]	/ C - C	/aluf/ [^h 'aɽuf] or [^h 'aɽuf ^h]	body
		/ # -	/labuf/ [^h 'labuf] or [^h 'labuf ^h]	outmost division of garden
	[l]	/ - #	/bakeɽ/ [^h 'bakeɽ]	stick

/r/ →	[r]	/ C - C	/arub/ [^h 'aɽub]	soot
		/ # -	/rabuf/ [^h 'ɽabuf] or [^h 'ɽabuf ^h]	rib
	[r]	/ - #	/bur/ [^h 'buɽ]	breakage

Nasalisation

/b/	→	[^m b]	nV - V	
/d/	→	[ⁿ d]	mV - V	
/noboil/	→	[^m nõ ^m boil] or [^h 'nobiɽ]		marsh
/nubat/	→	[^h nũmbat ^h] or [^h 'nubat ^h]		dog
/nibowa/	→	[^h nĩ ^m boa] or [^h 'ñi ^m bowa]		two days ago
/maduh/	→	[ⁿ mäduh] or [ⁿ mäduh]		rope or vine
/mada'as/	→	[ⁿ mäda ⁿ ʔaš] or [ⁿ mädä ⁿ da ⁿ ʔaš]		the men did the assigned task
/i/ = /y/		/iah/ = [^h 'iyah]		road
/u/ = /w/		/niboa/ = [^h 'ñi ^m bowa]		two days ago

Stress rule

/V -	/kwafita/	[^h 'kwafita]	spoon
	/dabah/	[^h 'dabah]	finger
	/utam/	[^h 'ʔutäm]	stone

Neither stress nor tone are phonemic in Abu'. Syllables may be open or closed.

2. ORDER OF ADJECTIVES

Since a considerable part of the study will deal with concord and adjectives, it is better to give the regular order in which the adjectives occur in various syntactic constructions.

All adjectives come after the noun in the following regular order: N + Dem + AdjS + AdjC + AdjQ. The nominal concord inflections occur as adjectival suffixes as for instance:

<u>Alifen</u>	<u>ene</u>	<u>etin</u>	<u>ubahini</u>	<u>alialini</u>	<u>numehelini</u>
N	dem	AdjN	AdjS	AdjC	AdjQ
<i>man</i>	<i>this</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>big</i>	<i>dark</i>	<i>bad</i>
<i>This one big dark person is bad.</i>					

Adverbs that modify adjectives occur after them. For instance:

<u>Alemam</u>	<u>mami</u>	<u>afumi</u>	<u>mami</u>
N (pl)	dem	AdjQ	adv
<i>men</i>	<i>these</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>very</i>
<i>These very good men.</i>			

The word in Abu' that functions as the English 'that' changes its ending according to the noun it modifies and is phonemically similar in most occurrences to the Abu' word for the adjective intensifier as indicated above. To differentiate one from the other, the order in which they occur in the syntactic constructions is important. When it occurs before the adjective it functions as a demonstrative and when it occurs after the adjective it functions as an adjective intensifier. In the following pages are samples of the various concord bearing syntactic structures. The concord elements in these structures are indicated by underlining. Incidentally concord does not extend to all syntactic structures. For instance, possessive and locality expressions do not participate in concord as shown by the following examples

<u>Aulaf</u>	<u>iei</u>	and	<u>sakarfa'</u>	<u>uma</u>
<i>house</i>	<i>my</i>		<i>where</i>	<i>they</i>
<i>my</i>	<i>house</i>		<i>fought.</i>	

3. CONCORD IN NOUN PHRASES

<u>Alemam</u>	<u>biom</u>	<u>ubahimi</u>	<u>mami</u>	<i>Two very big men</i>
N	num	AdjS	adv	
<u>Numatawa</u>	<u>biawa</u>	<u>ubahiweri</u>	<u>wawi</u>	<i>Two very big women</i>
<u>Barakas</u>	<u>biakas</u>	<u>ubahikesi</u>	<u>kekisi</u>	<i>Two very big heads</i>
<u>Alis</u>	<u>bies</u>	<u>ubahisi</u>	<u>sesi</u>	<i>Two very big skins or bodies</i>
<u>Madulih</u>	<u>bialih</u>	<u>ubahilihi</u>	<u>halihi</u>	<i>Two very big ropes or vines</i>
<u>Bakuh</u>	<u>biakuh</u>	<u>ubahukihi</u>	<u>kakuhi</u>	<i>Two very big sticks</i>
<u>Utaba</u>	<u>biaba</u>	<u>ubahiberi</u>	<u>babi</u>	<i>Two very big stones</i>
<u>Naif</u>	<u>bief</u>	<u>ubahifi</u>	<u>fefi</u>	<i>Two very big eyes</i>
<u>Alhuabis</u>	<u>biebis</u>	<u>ubahibisi</u>	<u>bebisi</u>	<i>Two very big eggs</i>
<u>Disuk</u>	<u>biok</u>	<u>ubahuki</u>	<u>kwakui</u>	<i>Two very big mountains</i>
<u>Nulub</u>	<u>bialub</u>	<u>ubahulubi</u>	<u>baluubi</u>	<i>Two very big bellies</i>

Relihēs bies ubahisi sesi	<i>Two very big pieces of roadmesh</i>
Eheb bieb ubahebi babi	<i>Two very big cold river fish</i>
Dabakwih biekwih ubahehi hehi	<i>Two very big fingers</i>

Forms for diminutives and mass nouns are discussed later.

4. CONCORD IN VERB PHRASES

N. sg.	nom. prefix Vb. stem	N. pl.	nom. prefix Vb. stem	Gloss
1. aleman	n-ahē'	alemam	m-ahē'	<i>man</i> Past real go
2. numata'	k ^w -ahē'	numatawa	w-ahē'	<i>woman</i> Past real go
3. amaliek	k-ahē'	amelies	s-ahē'	<i>centipede</i> Past go
4. bahi'atef	f-ahē'	bahi'atas	s-ahē'	<i>river fish variety</i> Past go
5. ihiaburuh	h-ahē'	ihiburulih	h-ahē'	<i>butterfly</i> Past go
6. almil	l-ahē'	alimikuh	h-ahē'	<i>bird</i> Past go
7. utam	m-ahē'	utaba	b-ahē'	<i>stone</i> Past go
8. ufu'al	n-ahē'	ufu'elim	m-ahē'	<i>male spirit</i> Past go
9. amia	k ^w -ahē'	amiawa	w-ahē'	<i>mother</i> Past go
10. unaru'	k ^w -ahē'	unaruwa	w-ahē'	<i>cassowary</i> Past go
11. asubul	b-ahē'	asulub	b-ahē'	<i>traditional singing</i> Past go
12. paip*	p-ahē'	paipihes	s-ahē'	<i>smoking pipe</i> Past go

The above data shows that a verb is influenced to agree with the noun of the VP structure, by a general rule that reproduced either the ultimate or the penultimate consonant of the noun with the VP structure in preverbal position. There are several alterations to the rule in that those nouns bearing masculine or feminine implications take on the same preverbal nominal concord affix as the nominal prefix of nouns having masculine and feminine meaning as in 8 and 10. The preverbal affixes are summarised below:

1. n-	6. l-	11. w-
2. kw-	7. m-	12. p-
3. k-	8. t-	13. Mass noun (endings)
4. f-	9. b-	
5. h-	10. s-	

5. MODIFIER CLASSES AND CONCORD

5.1 Adjectives

Abu' is no different from Chambri (Pagotto 1976:16) in that all adjectives have been found to agree with whatever nouns they modified in number and class. The following table provides the stems of adjectives of quality, size, and colour in Abu'.

sg. Adj. stem	pl. Adj. stem	Gloss
madin-	madin-	<i>unripe</i>
didiki-	didiki-	<i>hard, selfish</i>
ker'es-	ker'es-	<i>sharp</i>
ka'amar-	la'amar-	<i>blunt</i>
ubah-	ubah-	<i>big</i>
diba-	diba-	<i>big</i> (northern dialect of Abu')
lou-	lou-	<i>tall/long</i>
bada-	bada-	<i>short</i>
afu-	afu-	<i>good</i>
numehel-	numehel-	<i>bad</i>
awe-	awe-	<i>bad</i> (northern dialect)
koio-	koio-	<i>small</i>
so'sou-	so'sou-	<i>small</i> (northern dialect)
mader-	mader-	<i>minute</i>
alu'-	alu'-	<i>ripe</i>

Except for *koio*'*small* the above bound morphemes need to employ the various nominal singular and plural suffixes summarised in the General Noun Class Matrix (see page 192).

5.2 Demonstratives

Deictic morphemes in Abu' that refer directly to the locational characteristics of the noun about which an utterance is made and whose meaning is thus relative to that noun differ in their final vowels. Proximal deictic vowels are: {a/e} and distal deictic is {i} and are the same for both the singular and plural form of the demonstratives. Consonants of these morphemes vary according to the noun class, and are reduplicated in plural forms:

	N. sg.	<i>this</i>	<i>that</i>	N. pl.	<i>these</i>	<i>those</i>	Gloss of N.
1.	aleman	ana	nani	alemam	ama	mami	<i>man</i>
2.	numata'	au'a	kw'a'i	numatawa	awa	wawi	<i>woman</i>
3.	baraka	aka	kaki	barakas	akese	kekisi	<i>head</i>
4.	aulaf	afa	fafi	aulas	ese	sesi	<i>house</i>
5.	maduh	aha	hahi	madulih	alaha	halih	<i>vine/rope</i>
6.	bakel	akala	kakili	bakuh	akuha	kakuhi	<i>stick</i>
7.	aul	ala	lali	akuh	akuha	kakuhi	<i>eel/mosquito</i>
8.	utam	ama	mami	utaba	aba	babi	<i>stone</i>
9.	borotom	ama	mami	beritef	efe	fefi	<i>umbrella</i> <i>tree</i>

	N. sg.	<i>this</i>	<i>that</i>	N. pl.	<i>these</i>	<i>those</i>	Gloss of N.
10.	walub	aba	babi	walubis	ebese	bebisi	<i>river</i>
11.	du'it	ata	tati	disuk	auka	kauki	<i>mountain</i>
12.	keina	ene	neni	keinab	aba	babi	<i>bow</i>
13.	asubul	ebele	bebili	asulub	aleba	balebi	<i>singsing</i>
14.	beseh	ehe	hehi	—	—	—	<i>oratory/ speech</i>
15.	paip	apa	papi	pais	ese	sesi	<i>smoking pipe</i>

The Abu' demonstrative which is similar in meaning to the English 'this' generally takes the following feature: aCa or eCe. The medial consonant is far more variable than the vowels and is usually identical phonemically with the final consonant of the noun the demonstrative modifies.

The demonstrative that functions like the English 'that' also takes two forms, namely: CaCi and CeCi. These are partial duplications of the 'this' demonstrative ending in / — i#.

The demonstratives that bear plurality as do the English 'these' and 'those' generally take on forms similar to the singular features given above but some add on an extra syllable medially.

Apparently the demonstratives analysed above end in vowels. These denoting distance away from the speaker end in -i which I understand to be a directional morpheme indicating distance away from the speaker, while those indicating distance within the speaker's proximity end in -a or -e.

5.3 Concord in quantifiers

The Abu' quantifier which approximates to the English 'many or a lot' also adapts the endings of the various nouns in harmony with the nouns it modifies, as shown by the following examples.

N. pl.	Quantifier	Intensifier	Gloss
aleman	welei-mi	mami	<i>very many men</i>
numatawa	welei-weri	wawi	<i>very many women</i>
barakas	welei-kesi	kekisi	<i>very many heads</i>
aulas	welei-si	sesi	<i>very many houses</i>
awalih	welei-lihi	halih	<i>very many songs</i>
alimikuh	welei-kuhi	kaukuhi	<i>very many birds</i>
utaba	welei-beri	babi	<i>very many stones</i>
abef	welei-fi	fe fi	<i>very many breadfruit seeds</i>
subarif	welei-fi'	fe fi	<i>very many grass skirts</i>
alhu'abis	welei-bisi	bebisi	<i>very many eggs</i>
disuk	welei-kui	kauku	<i>very many mountains</i>

N. pl.	Quantifier	Intensifier	Gloss
dabakuih	welai-hi	hehi	<i>very many fingers</i>
akalub	welai-lubi	baliubi	<i>very many coconut fronds</i>

5.4 Concord in colour terms

The stems of basic colour terms in Abu' are given in the table below.

Colour term stem	Gloss
alial- or barhab-	<i>dark or black</i>
sekewel-	<i>white</i>
ou'es	<i>red</i>
ati'al-	<i>yellow</i>
keredu-	<i>blue</i>
bebeio-	<i>(light blue)</i>
a'a'a'ah-	<i>vermilion</i>

Colour terms, being adjectives, change their endings to agree with the endings of the nouns they modify in number and class. Consider the following examples which take on the formula: NP + AdjC + VP. For example:

Aleman ana aliali-neri n-ahe' kani aulaf.
man this black he-went to house
This black man went to the house.

Alimil sekewelihili latemun lawak
bird white is-sitting on tree
A white bird is sitting on a tree.

Walub ou'esiberi
river red
A red river.

5.5 Concord in numerals

The Abu' counting system is a modified quinary system. The regular counting terms are given below. When these numbers are used as modifiers their singular or plural endings change to agree with whatever noun ending the number modifies. There seem to be no terms to express the cardinal numbers. The numbers have stems which employ the ending of the noun they modify. For instance, enen e-tin *one thing*, numata a-tu' *one woman* and so on.

Base form for numbers in Abu'	Literal translation in English	Approximation in Arabic numerals
etin	<i>one thing</i>	1
bies	<i>two things</i>	2
wenis	<i>three things</i>	3

Base form for numbers in Abu'	Literal translation in English	Approximation in Arabic numerals
nubatis	<i>dog-things/four things</i>	4
lakel wa'arakel-(is)	<i>other hand things</i>	5
lakel wa'arakel-(is) e etin	<i>other hand and one thing</i>	5 + 1 = 6
lakel wa'rakel e bies	<i>other hand and two things</i>	5 + 2 = 7
lakel wa'arakel e wenis	<i>other hand and three things</i>	5 + 3 = 8
lakel wa'arakel e nubatis	<i>other hand and four things</i>	5 + 4 = 9
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel	<i>other hand and other hand</i>	5 + 5 = 10
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel e etin	<i>other hand and other hand and one</i>	5 + 5 + 1 = 11
.....	etc.
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel e bur'ah atuh	<i>other hand and other hand and one leg</i>	5 + 5 + 5 = 15
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel e bur'ah atuh e etin	<i>other hand and other hand and other leg and one</i>	5 + 5 + 5 + 1 = 16
.....	etc.
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel e bur'ah wa'arah i wa'arah	<i>other hand and other hand and other leg and other leg</i>	5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = 20
lakel wa'arakel i wa'arakel e bur'ah wa'arah i wa'arah e etin	<i>other hand and other hand and other leg and other leg and one</i>	5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 1 = 21
.....	etc.

Alternatively the counting system takes the following forms with the first three digital terms similar to the ones above. However a change to a system where each of the first three digits are doubled is followed. The doubling system mentioned by the way does not seem to extend to numbers beyond the term that approximates to the Arabic numeral five.

etin		1
bies		2
wenis		3
bies i bies		4
wenis i wenit	<i>three things + three things</i>	3 + 3 = 6
nubatis i nubatis	<i>four things + four things</i>	4 + 4 = 8
lakel wa'arakel-i- wa'arakilis	<i>five things + five things</i>	5 + 5 = 10

6. TEXT

This is a short story about two men who were living together in a hollow tree for some time and then one of them died. The one who was still living fled until he reached a village where he was accepted and given a wife by the community and became the ancestor of the 'tree clansmen'. Concord between elements is indicated by underlining.

Sawa kani alemam biom mafan mara lawak kakari
long time ago men two stay Past contained tree hollow
Long ago two men were living in a hollow tree.

Mafan raraif u - we-'e anana aleman naka'. Anai nakefani
they stay Past until and then one man died. The living one
They stayed until one of them died. The one who was living

nasahal e naluha. Naluha raraif uma neketaka anabul wabul
he-got up and ran away. He-ran away until he arrived at one village
got up and ran away. He ran away until he reach a village.

Essei wabulisi sa'i safan uwe'e sati anai
those villagers as they were staying suddenly saw the one
Suddenly the villagers saw the alive one come running up

nakafani nubulawa nedekieri
alive he came running he came up
(inferentially) to the village.

Essis sa'i sasahal saluha' uwe'e narifes na'i fa'i
they as about to get up run away but he told them why
As they were about to get up and run away he told them not to run

fasahal filuha' uma melein? Fai iye mauran iye' uma alifen
do you want to run away for what? Don't think I am a devil I am a human being
away because he was not a devil but a human being

Essis sekemine' na'a-e sau'ulana safan e sasa'ana a'u'e
they heard such (story) they received him and gave him a wife
When they heard what he said they received and welcomed him and gave him a wife

nasa'a' nafan uma nakara betois essei dauna
he married and stayed so he bore children those today
and he married her and became the father of the children who

sukuhalasuma lawakisi.
they call tree-of-children
are now called the tree clansmen.

7. GENERAL NOUN CLASS MATRIX

Noun Class Example sg; pl	SINGULAR			PLURAL			Gloss
	Noun Suffix	Adj. Suffix	Verb Prefix	Noun Suffix	Adj. Suffix	Verb Prefix	
1.a. aleman; alemam b. mohun; mohulihim c. pater; paterimi*	-n	-neri	n-	-m -lihim -imi	-mi	m-	<i>man</i> <i>in-law</i> <i>priest</i>
2.a. numata'; numatawanes; nesiwa*	-l -C	-li -li	kw- kw-	-wa -wa	-weri -weri	w- w-	<i>woman</i> <i>nurse</i>
3. baraka; barakas	-a	-keri	k-	-s	-kasi	s-	<i>head</i>
4.a. aluf; alis b. aulaf; aulas	-f -f	-fi -fi	f- f-	-s -s	-si -si	s- s-	<i>skin</i> <i>house</i>
5.a. maduh; madulih b. su; sulih*	-h	-hi -ni	h- n-	-lih -lih	-lihi -lihi	h- h-	<i>vine/rope</i> <i>shoe</i>
6.a. bakel; bakuh b. aul; akuh	-l -l	-kili -li	k- l-	-kuh -kuh	-kuhi -kuhi	h- h-	<i>stick; eel/</i> <i>mosquito</i>
7. utam; utaba	-m	-mi	m-	-ba	-beri	b	<i>stone</i>
8.a. naim; naif b. nikam; nikef c. butum; bitif d. berotom; beritef	-VM	-mi -mi -mi	m- m- m-	-if -ef -if	-fi -fi -fi	f- f- f-	<i>eye</i> <i>taro</i> <i>penis</i> <i>umbrella</i> <i>tree</i>
9. du'it; disuk	-t	-teri	t-	-suk	-ki	k-	<i>mountain</i>

Continued...

Noun Class Example sg; pl	SINGULAR			PLURAL			Gloss
	Noun Suffix	Adj. Suffix	Verb Prefix	Noun Suffix	Adj. Suffix	Verb Prefix	
10.a. alhuab; alhuabis b. aun; aubis	-b -n	-bi -ni	b- n-	-bis -bis	-bisi -si	s- s-	<i>egg</i> <i>moon, month</i>
11. nubul; nulub	-bul	-bili	b-	-lub	-libi	b-	<i>belly,</i> <i>stomach</i>
12. Diminutives	-ikin -ikil -tawas	-kini -ikuli -siri'		-kuh -ikuh ?			see examples on pp.197ff
13. Borrowed TP words ending in -ihes e.g. rel; relihes	-C	—	—	-hes	-hisi	s-	<i>rail</i>
14. Mass nouns	-C	—	—	—	—	—	see examples on pp.200-201
15. Proper names & and							see examples on p.201
16. Place names			—	—	—	—	
17. awata; awatawk	-a	-tari	t-	-wk	-kwaki	kw-	<i>chicken</i>
18. ehen; eheb	-n	-ini	n-	-b	-bi	-b	<i>cold river</i> <i>fish</i>
19. dabah; dabakwih	-h	-ihi	h-	-kwih	-ihi	h-	<i>finger</i>

7.1 Noun classification

7.2 Introduction

It is apparent from the noun class summarised above, that there are altogether 19 noun classes. Classification is arbitrary and is done on the basis of the plural suffixes of the nouns or by the concord suffixes of nominal modifiers and verbal prefixes. Although the concord inflections found in the table of demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals and other concord bearing features appear to reduce the number of noun classes, it would be a bit misleading to go by demonstratives alone in determining the number of noun classes in Abu'. The objection is based on the apparent principle raised earlier that the demonstrative reduplicates the ultimate syllable of the noun it qualifies and it is evident that if a new phonemic sound is introduced into the Abu' phonetic system, the demonstrative would inflect that sound thus increasing the number of noun classes as instanced by the Tok Pisin word *pater priest*. There is of course an Abu' phonemic consonant namely /d/ which is not inflected at all principally because there are, according to one's knowledge, no nouns ending in d.

There are classes that appear to have subclasses such as 1 and 2 which are referred to in this study as male and female classes respectively because the majority of nouns assigned to this class are male or female or nouns implying both genders.

The rest of the noun classes are determined on the basis of either the plural suffixes or the nominal affixes of the nominal modifiers and there is practically no semantics involved in determining the classes. In general therefore, the moment there are differences shown between nouns from the point of view of nominal concord features, such nouns are assigned to different classes. In the following paragraphs a brief mention will be made about each of the 19 noun classes.

For further clarification, Class 1 is practically a male class and the nouns assigned to this class end their singular in one of the following ways: -n; -a; or -C for borrowed nouns like *pater*. The plural suffixes forms for the male class are: -has/-hes or -imi for borrowed Tok Pisin words. The nominal modifiers like adjectives take on two allomorphic suffixes namely -nari or -neri. The occurrence of the former or latter allomorph is conditioned by the preceding sound. If the preceding vocalic sound of the adjectival stem ends in a mid-low vowel /a/, the following suffix vowel will be the same but if the preceding vowel is a high front unrounded vowel, the suffix vowel will be lowered to an /e/ as for instance in *bada-nari short man*, and *ubahi-neri big man*. The vowel attached to the end of the nominal modifier is a syncretistic feature which, in this context, functions as an emphatic particle.

Class 2 is principally a female class but unlike the male class above where all nouns denote masculinity, the female class contains some nouns that do not seem to have any association with femininity, as indicated in the table (see examples on p.196). Nouns assigned to this class end their singular forms in /' / or /V'/. The plural suffix forms of these operate under the following rules: /' / \rightarrow \emptyset /V - wa or /u' / \rightarrow \emptyset /v - liwa#.

Class 3 contains most nouns that have to do with eating except for a few inedible ones. The singular form ends in -ka and adds -s to form the plural. The form of the plural is easy for this class: just add /s/ as in English.

Class 4 contains a mixture of nouns from anatomical terms to assets. The singular suffix forms of these nouns end in /uf/ or /f/ but delete these suffixes and add on /is/ or /s/ respectively to form the plural, which could be summarised in the following rule: /uf/ > /is/ or /f/ > /s/. The latter phonological change from the labiodental voiceless fricative to a sibilant (fricative) seems to occur elsewhere as for example the intervocalic /f/ of /fifikil/ becomes an intervocalic /s/ in the plural form of the word. Hence /fifikil/ > /fifikuh/ ~ /fisikuh/.

Class 5 has names of trees and vines as well as anatomical terms. Except for a few irregularities, all nouns end in /h/ in the singular which gets deleted in the environment between a V and /l/ in the formation of the plural form. The rule seems to be as follows:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} /h/ \\ /k/ \end{array} \right\} \emptyset/V - lih\#$$

Class 6 also contains a mixture of all kinds of nouns. This class has been labelled the kuh class after the plural taken by the nouns assigned to this class. Nouns that operate under the rule that causes the singular suffix /l/ to go to zero in the environment between a vowel and the plural suffix /kuh/ have been assigned to this class.

Class 7 is a small class containing names of plants or inanimate objects like stones. These nouns end in the singular in a bilabial nasal but delete it before adding the plural suffix /ba/. It may be assumed that the plural form is a mere nasalisation of the singular form, but it has been noticed that nasalisation does not occur after non-nasal syllables in Abu'.

Class 8 has a few subclasses which are predictable on the basis of the following rule: -um#>if# or om#>ef#. In other words the back vowels of the singular are fronted in the plural form before the labio-dental voiceless fricative.

Class 9 is small. Nouns assigned to this class end the singular suffix in 'Vt which is deleted before the adding of the plural suffix -suk. The final apical voiceless stop becomes /s/.

Class 10 contains edible nouns which end their singular in /b/ and /n/ but employ the suffix -bis to form the plural as in /uwab/ > /uwabis/ *night* or /walen/ > /walebis/ *wild fowl variety*.

Nouns which metathesise their singular suffix form to form the plural are assigned to Class 11. This is a large class containing names of all kinds of nouns. The rule to change from singular to plural for this class is: -bul > lub; for example nubul > nulub *stomach*.

Class 12 contains diminutives. The diminutives do not take on the regular endings of their respective classes but take on three different singular endings namely, -ikin; -ikil; and -tawas. These are approximated to the English -*let* of *piglet* or -*ette* as in *laundrette*.

Class 13 contains borrowed Tok Pisin words which usually retain the original singular form but which employ the suffix -ihes to form the plural. For example, taul > taulihes *towel*; rel > relihes *rail (roadmesh)*, etc.⁶

Class 14 contains mass nouns such as abal *water*; unil *pus* or the borrowed Tok Pisin mass nouns like rais *rice*; sol *salt*; suga *sugar* or bia *beer*. These nouns do not take on any plural suffix form but the quantifier /welei-/ *a lot* is used to indicate great quantity.

Classes 15 and 16 contain proper names and place names respectively. Most proper names and place names have meanings which are associated with animals, reptiles, places or habitative actions. These nouns do not have plural forms but instead numerals are used to enumerate the number of people or places if there is more than one person or place involved.

Class 17 contains names of birds, utensils, as well as other nouns which take on the suffix *-wk* to form the plural. For example, *selita* > *selitowk yan/taro masher*.

Class 18 contains nouns that merely add on */b/* to pluralise. There are also borrowed TP words which fall into this class.

Class 19 contains nouns ending the singular form in */h/* but nouns which delete it to employ the suffix *-kwih* to form the plural are assigned to this class, for instance, *dabah* > *dabkwih finger*.

Finally, the Abu' word for 'fire', */afiab/* > */unih/* is an interesting word in that its plural takes on a suppletive form, and no other words in this study have been found to follow suit. It is highly plausible to conjecture that it is an irregular noun which changes in that way. The word could have been a borrowing from an Austronesian language. The second conjecture is purely speculative and is based on a piece of information that the word for 'fire' in Malay is *api* (Codrington: rep: 1974:43-67).

Codrington maintained that this root for 'fire' is widespread in the Malayan, Polynesian and Austronesian languages suggesting an ancient distribution (1974:67). The words for 'fire' in the abovementioned languages closely resemble one another, for example, Malay *api*; Polynesian *ahi*, *afi* and so on. If the word has been borrowed it has become Abuanised, maintaining only the first syllable *afi-*. Furthermore, the word for 'fire' in the neighbouring AN language, Suain, is *(i)yah* from which I suspect Abu' *unih* to have been derived. The northern dialect of Abu' has *(as)ieh* as the plural form and it is highly plausible to conjecture that *-ieh* sounds like *yah* in Suain. At any rate, all of this is pure speculation and may incite interest among historical linguists to do further analysis. The word *afiab* > *unih*; could be assigned to Class 6 or 18 depending on what one chooses. If one goes by the singular form one would assign it to Class 18 for the reason that it takes on similar concord affixes as the singular forms of nouns assigned to Class 18. However the plural form *unih* concord affixes harmonise very well with nouns of Class 6.

7.3 Samples of noun classes

Class 1: The male class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
<i>aleman</i>	>	<i>alemam</i>	<i>man</i>
<i>anen</i>	>	<i>amum</i>	<i>husband</i> ; 3rd person sg.
<i>mohun</i>	>	<i>mohulihim</i>	<i>in-law</i>
<i>ahanina</i>	>	<i>ahalihim</i>	<i>FaBr</i>
<i>sahalina</i>	>	<i>sahalihim</i>	<i>MoBr</i>
<i>baah</i>	>	<i>belhehim</i>	<i>GrFa/GrSo</i>

Borrowed Tok Pisin words:

Singular		Plural	Gloss
pater	>	paterimi	<i>priest</i>
kiap	>	kiapimi/kiapihes	<i>patrol officer</i>
tultul	>	tultulimi/tultulihes	<i>village chief</i>
kaunsil	>	kaunsilimi/kaunsilihes	<i>a councillor</i>
tisa	>	tisaimi	<i>teacher</i>
katekis	>	katekisimi	<i>catechist</i>

Class 2: The female class and other nouns

Singular		Plural	Gloss
numata'	>	numatawa	<i>woman</i>
numa'u'	>	numaliwa	<i>FaBrWi</i>
a'u'	>	awuw	<i>wife</i>
isa'u'	>	isaliwa	<i>GrMo/GrDa</i>
nikau'	>	nikalwa	<i>daughter</i>

Borrowed Tok Pisin words:

tisa	>	tiseiwa	<i>female teacher</i>
nes	>	nesiwa	<i>nurse</i>
sister	>	sisteiwa	<i>sister</i>
hostes	>	hostesiwa	<i>(air) hostess</i>

Other nouns denoting femininity:

aha'	>	ahawa	<i>coconut or red parrot</i>
mofa'	>	mofowa	<i>edible river frog</i>
nikila'	>	nikilawa	<i>earthworm</i>
unaru'	>	unaruwa	<i>cassowary</i>
amula'	>	amulawa	<i>bird of paradise</i>

Nouns with no feminine meaning yet which take on similar concord affixes are given below:

aba'	>	abawa	<i>kind of tree</i>
woba'	>	wobawa	<i>spear</i>
waiu'	>	waiuwa	<i>hole</i>
mutu'	>	mutuwa	<i>nose</i>

It seems that kinship terms which end in /u'/ drop it and insert an /l/ intervocalically in the plural.

Class 3: The class of nouns associated with eating

Singular		Plural	Gloss
ahaka	>	ahakas	<i>tongue</i>
akiaka	>	akiakas	<i>ant (generic term)</i>
amaka	>	amakas	<i>face</i>
al'a'naka	>	al'a'nakas	<i>sand</i>
awaka	>	awakas	<i>mass of eggs</i>
baraka	>	barakas	<i>head</i>
halaka	>	halakas	<i>kind of sago palm</i>
baka	>	bakas	<i>sago palm frond</i>
numunika	>	numunikas	<i>ugliness; shame/derogatory</i>

Class 4: Anatomical terms and others

Singular		Plural	Gloss
aluf	>	alis	<i>body</i>
a'uf	>	a'uis	<i>liver</i>
rabuf	>	rabis	<i>rib</i>
o'o'suf	>	o'o'sis	<i>bottom</i>
asaf	>	asas	<i>pubic covering</i>
aulaf	>	aulas	<i>house</i>
bahiataf	>	bahiatas	<i>scaly river fish</i>
du'u'naf	>	du'u'nas	<i>tree with edible leaves</i>
idaf	>	idas	<i>fencing timber</i>
itaf	>	itas	<i>land, ground or soil</i>
ihiaf	>	ihias	<i>sliced taro/yam</i>
nabulaf	>	nabulas	<i>tree used for making drums</i>
suaf	>	suas	<i>stone for sharpening knives</i>

Class 5: The -lih class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
awah	>	awalih	<i>song</i>
bur'ah	>	bur'alih	<i>leg</i>
lahuh	>	lahulih	<i>sago</i>
maduh	>	madulih	<i>vine/rope</i>
naluh	>	halih	<i>tooth</i>
lah	>	lalih	<i>gouging utensil</i>

Singular		Plural	Gloss
nubah	>	nubalih	<i>tree root</i>
halihif	>	helih	<i>feather</i>
usak	>	usalih	<i>net bag</i>
ihlaburuh	>	ihlaburilih	<i>butterfly</i>
mabulah	>	mabulalih	<i>kind of tree</i>
nukofuh	>	nukosilih	<i>navel</i>

Class 6: The -kuh class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
alimil	>	alimikuh	<i>bird</i>
abunal	>	abunakuh	<i>green tree-snake</i>
abuhutanakil	>	abuhutanakuh	<i>wing of bird</i>
ahal	>	ahakuh	<i>kind of tree</i>
aul	>	akuh	<i>eel; mosquito</i>
bakel	>	bakuh	<i>stick</i>
bul	>	burkuh	<i>pig</i>
ilakel	>	ilakuh	<i>tree mushroom</i>
lakel	>	lakuh	<i>hand</i>
fifikil	>	fifikuh/fisikuh	<i>bone</i>

Class 7: The -ba class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
utam	>	utaba	<i>stone</i>
itam	>	itaba	<i>kind of tree</i>
adum	>	aduba	<i>right; right side</i>
likam	>	likaba	<i>left; left side</i>

Class 8: Nouns that operate under Umlaut rule

Singular		Plural	Gloss
butum	>	bitif	<i>penis</i>
naim	>	naif	<i>eye</i>
subarum	>	suberif	<i>grass skirt</i>
wasum	>	wesif	<i>pitpit (wild sugarcane with edible top)</i>
abom	>	abef	<i>breadfruit seed</i>
natam	>	natef	<i>digging stick</i>

Singular		Plural	Gloss
nikam	>	nikef	<i>taro</i>
weitam	>	weitef	<i>testicle</i>
sututuram	>	su tuturef	<i>kind of river lobster</i>
borotom	>	beritef	<i>umbrella shape tree</i>

Class 9: The -suk class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
du'it	>	disuk	<i>mountain</i>
al'ut	>	alsuk	<i>dusk</i>

Class 10: Edible nouns

Singular		Plural	Gloss
alhuab	>	alhuabis	<i>egg</i>
bub	>	bubis/bibis	<i>betelnut</i>
uwab	>	uwabis	<i>night</i>
walub	>	walubis	<i>river</i>
aun	>	aubis	<i>moon, sun, month</i>
walen	>	walebis	<i>variety of wood-fowl</i>

Class 11: Metathesis noun class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
afurubul	>	afurulub	<i>dribble</i>
akabul	>	akalub	<i>frond</i>
asubul	>	asulub	<i>singing, i.e. traditional dance</i>
atabul	>	atalub	<i>ridgepole</i>
dabul	>	dalub	<i>garden fence</i>
dohiribil	>	dohirilib	<i>lip</i>
dokibul	>	dokilub	<i>pimple</i>
nabul	>	nalub	<i>magic vine</i>
nahubul	>	nahulub	<i>yam fibre</i>
nubul	>	nulub	<i>belly</i>
numabul	>	numalub	<i>twisted netbag string</i>
wabul	>	walub	<i>village, home, place</i>
walakabul	>	walakalub	<i>plant with broad leaves used for wrapping</i>
safabul	>	safalub	<i>kind of tree</i>

Class 12: Diminutives

Singular		Plural	Gloss
bulikin	>	bulikuh	<i>piglet</i>
asaulikin	>	asaulikuh	<i>tree grub</i>
nikamikil	>	nikefikuh	<i>small taro</i>
alimilikan	>	alimilikuh	<i>small bird</i>
utamikil	>	utabakuh	<i>small-sized stone</i>
lehitawas	>	lehitawasukuh	<i>small portion of sago</i>
raitawas	>	raitawasikuh	<i>small portion of rice</i>
fifikilikan	>	fifikilikuh	<i>small bone</i>
dubaunikin	>	dubausikuh	<i>small river lobster</i>
alemanikin	>	—	<i>small man</i>
numata'ikin	>	numatawaku	<i>small woman</i>
dubarinikin	>	dubarinikuh	<i>small hornbill</i>
du'itikin	>	du'itikuh	<i>small mountain or hill</i>
uwabikin	>	uwabikuh	<i>twilight</i>

Class 13: Borrowed Tok Pisin words ending in -ihes

Singular		Plural	Gloss
raipel	>	raipelihes	<i>rifle</i>
rel	>	relihes	<i>rail (roadmesh)</i>
sadel	>	sadelihes	<i>sandal</i>
wil	>	wilihes	<i>wheel</i>
travel	>	travelihes	<i>travel</i>
kandel	>	kandelihes	<i>candle</i>
balus	>	balusihes	<i>plane</i>
tos	>	tosihes	<i>torch</i>
masin	>	masihes	<i>machine</i>
sukul	>	sukulihes	<i>school</i>
piksa	>	piksaihes	<i>picture</i>

Class 14: Mass nouns

aub	<i>coconut</i>
abal	<i>water</i>
abif	<i>breath</i>
nikiris	<i>fat</i>

uhin	<i>wind</i>
unil	<i>pus</i>
uba	<i>excrement</i>
beseh	<i>speech</i>
masuk	<i>dirt</i>
ouih	<i>fur; body hair</i>
kul'is	<i>vomit</i>
usibel	<i>blood</i>
alibis	<i>urine</i>

Class 15 and 16: Proper names and places

Proper names	Place names
Nekitel	Womehis
Abeliwa	Erinikama
Unaruwa	Iduanama
So'osin	Laut
Nalapan	Geteh
Nailiah	Sokou'kama
Kwailiah	

Class 17: The -wk class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
awata	>	awatawk	<i>hen</i>
ahata	>	ahatawk	<i>marsh</i>
bata	>	batawk	<i>bamboo</i>
berita	>	ber itowk	<i>bed</i>
kwapita	>	kwapitowk	<i>spoon</i>
selita	>	selitowk	<i>masher</i>
sibu'ata	>	sibu'atawk	<i>kind of bird</i>
akata	>	akatawk	<i>back</i>

Class 18: The -b class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
ehen	>	eheb	<i>cold river fish</i>
buburan	>	buburab	<i>ladle made from coconut shell</i>
dubaun	>	dubaub	<i>lobster, crayfish</i>

Singular		Plural	Gloss
kedin	>	kedib	<i>softwood tree</i>
dubaren	>	dubarub	<i>hornbill</i>

Borrowed Tok Pisin words:

tin	>	tinab	<i>tin, can</i>
supun	>	supunab	<i>spoon</i>
pin	>	pinab	<i>pin</i>
baten	>	batenab	<i>button</i>

Class 19: The -kwih class

Singular		Plural	Gloss
dabah	>	dabakwih	<i>finger</i>
haleh	>	halekwih	<i>breadfruit tree/fruit</i>
iyah	>	iyokwih	<i>path/road</i>
numunah	>	numunakwih	<i>day; daytime</i>
waluh	>	walukwih	<i>fog</i>
salah	>	salakwih	<i>landslide</i>
sa'a'li'ah	>	sa'a'li'akwih	<i>kind of river crab</i>
lufah	>	lufokwih	<i>laplap, i.e. piece of loincloth</i>

8. CONCLUSION

Nominal concord inflections as shown on the various syntactic structures have corresponding phonemic and syllabic similarities with the nouns they modify. Even after all these presentations, I am more than sure that the non-Arapesh reader would still wonder about how the Arapesh speaker operates the 'complex' noun system and how we, the Arapesh speakers, handle the concord principle so naturally. The non-Arapesh reader may be puzzled at the way Arapesh speakers get to know at the click of a second the plural form of a noun and the instantaneous choice of correct inflections to make nominal modifiers agree with the noun in usage. Obviously this may sound involved and the data provided may look intricate but let me assure the reader that the Arapesh system is quite simple and learnable just like learning A, B, C. Children can manipulate most of it by age six.

An obvious feature in the data provided so far is the presence of a very modified form of sound (vocalic or consonantal) harmony as shown in the various syntactic structures in which concord operates. As previously noted the concord affixes are, to a degree, monophonous with that of the head except for anomalous cases such as the metathesised noun class.

Admittedly the inconsistencies of the plural suffixes and nominal modifier affixes require a very careful phonological analysis in order to achieve some degree of workable pattern. At this juncture, only a few but very general

phonological changes have surfaced as we have previously noted. There is, for instance, an Umlaut rule which fronts the back vowels and vice versa. There is the general rule whereby certain sounds go to zero in certain linguistic environments as for example in intervocalic position the /f/ → /s/ or /t/ → /s/ and the insertion rule where /l/ is inserted intervocalically before #/C - /Vk# and so on.

One thing I hope this study has achieved is a better picture with concrete examples of noun classes and better samples of how nominal concord operates in Abu'. This study is the first linguistic attempt at description of noun classes and nominal concord in Abu' and I hope this will serve as a basis for further expansion of the morphophonemic behaviour of Abu' and its related languages and dialects.

9. NOTES

1. This is a somewhat revised version of my 1977 B.A. Honours thesis submitted to the University of Papua New Guinea, under the title 'A sketch of nominal concord in the Abu' dialect of Mountain Arapesh (West Sepik Province) Papua New Guinea'. Details of the analysis of the concord system have not been changed, although the author now feels that some of the classes could be treated differently.
2. In previous literature (e.g. Laycock 1973, 1975) Abu' has been regarded as a dialect of Mountain Arapesh. It is regarded by the present author as a distinct language, within the Arapesh family, spoken in the villages of Aspeis, Balup, Malin, Walihiga, Womsis, Amom, Womsak No.1 and Womsak No.2. (Laycock (1973) incorrectly given the last two villages as speaking Southern Arapesh). As all the languages of the Arapesh family share a similar system of noun-classification, the group is sometimes referred to in this paper simply as Arapesh.
3. See Margaret Mead (1938-49) for more information.
4. Bob and Jo Conrad are members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Papua New Guinea Branch, based at Ukarumpa in the Eastern Highlands. Their publications in the Buki dialect (which they call Bukiyip, or Bukiyūp) are mainly literacy and religious material (see Bibliography). The dialect is fairly difficult for me to comprehend with ease.
5. In an *Oral History* article entitled 'The history of Womsis' (see Neckitelly 1975) a claim was made that there are two languages spoken concurrently in Womsis village today. However, during the course of this study, an analysis of lexical and phonological differences of the two so-called languages indicated very minor differences which led the author to maintain that these are dialects and thus not languages as such. Examples of lexical differences between the two Abu' dialects are provided below.

Southern dialect	Northern dialect	Gloss
bunohuka	welihika	(TP) balbal <i>big shady coral tree with bright red flowers during wet season; Erythrina indica</i>
akabua	korehis	<i>wrapping leaves</i>

Southern dialect	Northern dialect	Gloss
nikitok	aureh	<i>play/sport</i>
lehin	kwin	<i>stirred sago</i>
sirah	uram	<i>basket</i>
unak	warua	<i>pumpkin leaves</i>
ouruf	urah	<i>bush; jungle</i>
numa'ita	na'ur	<i>in-law</i>

6. Regarding borrowed Tok Pisin words, Fortune (1942:10) had noted that when nouns are borrowed from English [Tok Pisin] into the dialect his study was based, they are made to conform to the Arapesh rules of noun classification. This has been found to be true also for Abu'. However, this study has specifically noted that when nouns are assimilated into Abu' they retain the original singular Tok Pisin form but the plural suffixes adapt the various suffixes which are determined morphophonemically (as for example the male and female nouns) or conditioned by phonological changes.

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