

4.4.8. AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES: SEPIK PROVINCES

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4.4.8.1. GENERAL REMARKS

The Austronesian languages of the Sepik and western Madang regions have been very little studied; all available material is listed in the chapter on the history of research in these languages (see 4.2.2.). This article draws heavily on material in these languages collected by Laycock during fieldwork in 1970-71, and on fieldwork carried out by J. Z'graggen (Anthropos Institute, Alexishafen). I am grateful for data he has placed at my disposal. The few papers of major significance are mentioned where relevant.

Laycock (1973a) lists eleven Austronesian languages along the north-west coast of Papua New Guinea, in the area west of the Sepik mouth (which we may call the Sepik coast), and just east of the Sepik mouth, and on the offshore islands. However, this list, by an oversight, omits the language of Medebur, and also treats Wogeo and Bam as a single language. More recent work by Z'graggen has established the independent status of Bam. Accordingly, we have to deal here with thirteen languages, which together form some kind of subgroup within the Oceanic group of Austronesian languages, but their exact status cannot be determined without much more work on other Austronesian languages of the New Guinea area. The languages further appear to subgroup among themselves as follows:

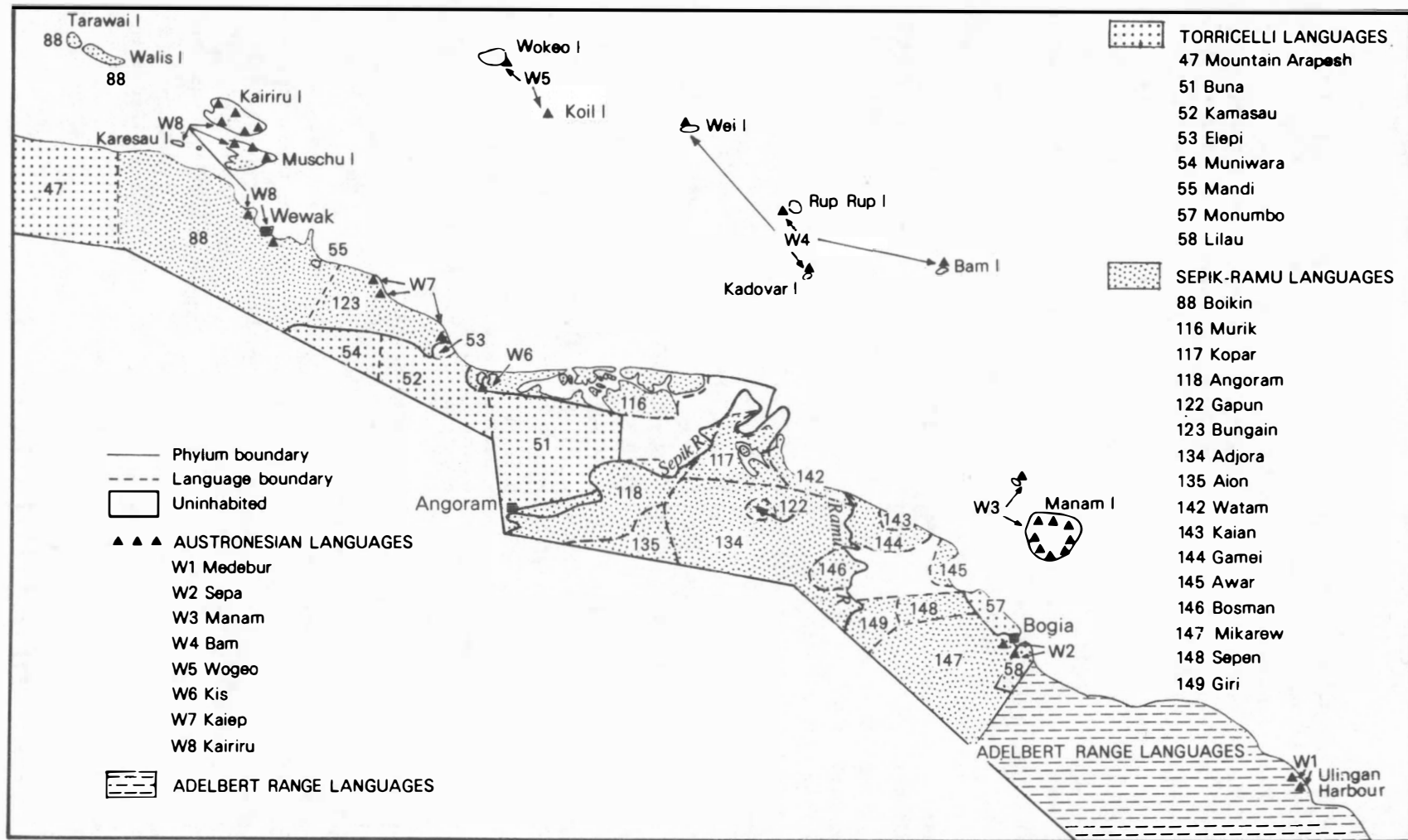
checked against Gregersen (1974) and some additional items included; Böhm (1975), which includes a Manam dictionary, has not yet been seen. All of the languages share some typological features, such as subject-prefixes on verbs, lack of an article, adjective following noun, suffixed object pronouns on transitive forms, and markers similar to or identical with these to express 'alienable' possession (in which the pronoun form, or pronoun plus particle, follows or is suffixed to the noun). The languages differ in their number systems, in the presence or absence of a dual number and of an inclusive/exclusive distinction, in the degree of morphological complexity of subject-prefixes to verbs, and in basic word-order of free constituents within the sentence - the last feature correlating, essentially, with the split between the 'western' and 'eastern' groupings. These features are set out in the chart of typological features. The presence of pronominal suffixes indicating 'inalienable' possession, for instance, is strongly evidenced in the group only in the case of 'body parts', and even here not in Kis, and perhaps not in Sera (though the data is fragmentary). The same marking with kinship terms is strongly evidenced in the western group only in Ali; it apparently occurs in Sissano and Tumleo, but present-day informants seem to prefer the more general possessive marking of noun plus (sometimes modified) pronoun suffix. Data for Ulau-Suain and Kairiru are inconclusive. Inalienable kin possession does not occur in Kis, but is found in the other languages of the eastern group.

Features 6 and 7 in the chart deal with the universally present feature of subject-marking in verbs, which in the western group at least shows a number of unpredictable patterns, differing from verb to verb; cf. Schmidt (in Schnee 1920, article 'Melanesische Sprachen'):

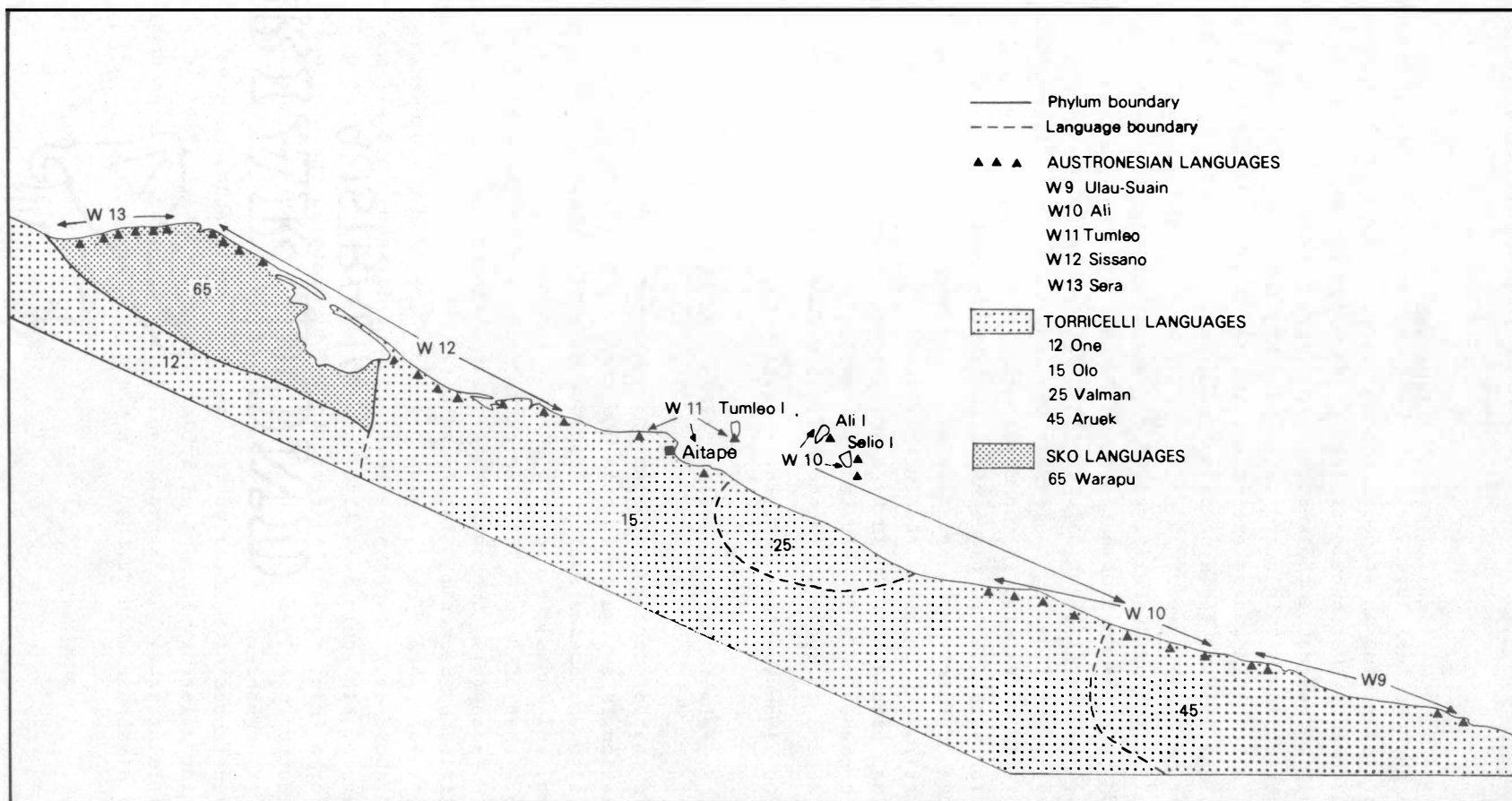
In mehreren Sprachen von Deutsch- und Holländisch-Neuguinea ist dieser Subjektausdruck zugleich mit der ev. vorhanden gewesenen Verbalpartikel so eng mit dem Auslaut des Verbalstammes verschmolzen, dass die verschiedenen Personenbezeichnungen wie Anlautveränderungen des Verbalstammes erscheinen.

The corresponding markers in the eastern group have more transparent forms, and show less tendency to vary for tense - although information on this feature is not complete.

Finally, the numeral systems show an interesting grouping. The binary systems (with word for 'five') are found only in the westernmost members. The remaining languages all have, basically, a quinary system, but in some a distinct word for 'ten' ('imperfect decimal system') is found, while at least three of the eastern languages show the somewhat unusual feature of a distinct word for 'six' - 'seven' being nevertheless 'five plus two', and 'ten' being 'two fives'. Data on this last point are lacking for Bam, Sepa, and Medebur.



MAP I: AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES: EAST SEPIK AND WESTERN MADANG AREA



MAP II: AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES: WEST SEPIK AREA

On the phonological level, all the languages probably lack a voiced/voiceless distinction in stops, although there are some indeterminate areas that make it worthwhile preserving the distinction for the time being. All languages of the western group show a strong tendency to palatalisation in certain contexts, a tendency that is shared by Kairiru. All the languages except Kairiru and Wogeo have lost POC *k when initial; initial *p is sometimes retained, sometimes lost, while initial *t is usually retained.

Palatalisation of dental/alveolar consonants is found in Sera and Sissano only in the environment i-#; in Tumleo, all such consonants are palatalised before /i/, but palatal consonants are also found preceding other vowels, and finally, as is also the case in Ali and Ulau-Suain. Characteristic of Kairiru is the development of [tʲ] to [ʃ], which accounts for such Kairiru place names as 'Shagur' and 'Sham'. All occurrences of Kairiru [ʃ] are treated in the wordlist as being the sequence /si/, but this may require revision.

The final palatalisation in Sera and Sissano arises in many instances from the presence of a POC *-u, as is exemplified by the following possible schema to account for the differing forms of the word for *bird*:

POC	*manuk	-	*manu	-	*mani	-	*mañi	-	*maiñ	-
	1		2		3		4		5	
	*miañ	-	*mian	-	*mien	-	*mien	-	*mien	
	6		7		8		9		10	

State 5 is that of Sera and Sissano (phonemicised as /main/, as the palatalisation is automatic in this position). State 7 is that of Kairiru, although speakers of one dialect have simply man (as do also Wogeo, Bam, and Manam); state 8 is that of Tumleo, state 10 that of Ali, and state 2 that of Sepa. The same pattern is seen in the word for *water* (POC *ndanu(m)), and comparable palatalisation for Sera and Sissano is exemplified by Sera uit, Sissano tə'uit (POC *kutu louse), and Sissano uil (POC *kuiu(r) breadfruit). The order of some of the sound-changes suggested above could perhaps be reversed, but it seems that all must have occurred. It would seem also that the Ulau-Suain and Kairiru dialect forms (man, ran) arise from state 7 by dropping the developed -i-, and not by simply losing the final V(C) from *manu(k), *ndanu(m); but this is arguable.

Other instances of palatalisation seem less explicable, as does the somewhat irregular development of Tumleo diphthongisation (*su(n)su breast yielding saus, but *Ruŋma(q) house yielding loum). These anomalies may disappear when further data are available.

Enough has been said to give a brief idea of the nature of the Sepik region languages in general. A few brief notes on the location, speakers, and previous literature on the individual languages follow; a similar tabulation, with some further minor details, can be found in Laycock (1973). Population figures for languages 1 to 8 are as of 1 January 1970; but this is supplemented by census figures correct to May 1974 obtained by Z'graggen for all languages of the eastern group, and some of the western group; where the figures differ, the second figure (in parentheses) is that given by Z'graggen.

4.4.8.2. INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

4.4.8.2.1. WESTERN GROUP

1. SERA (Serra, Ssia, Ser). Spoken by 432 people in three small villages, Puindu, Rainuk, and Sarai, lying between Sissano and Leitere on the north-west Sepik coast. In literature prior to Laycock (1973) listed, if at all, as a dialect of Sissano (e.g. Friederici 1912, 1913; Neuhauss 1911); see discussion in 4.2.2.

2. SISSANO (Sisano, Sissanu, Aissano, Eissano, Zissano). Spoken by 4320 (4717) people in the villages of Sissano, Arop, Malol, and Teles, along the Sepik coast west of Aitape. Some dialect divergences between villages, and between the hamlets of the first three villages, which are very large. Some possible influence from the neighbouring non-Austronesian languages of Olo and One as far as Malol village is concerned (see Laycock 1973 and 4.2.2.), but the specific suggestion of the Sissano language as a whole being very heavily influenced by these languages, and by Warapu, is denied by Laycock (1973b). Previous data consists only of wordlists by Erdweg (1901), Neuhauss (1911) and Friederici (1912, 1913), reprinted by Churchill (1916). Closely related to Sera.

3. TUMLEO (Tamara). Spoken by 610 (675) people on the island of Tumleo (Tamara), off Aitape, and in the relatively new mainland settlements of Raiyu and Yakoi (east and west of Aitape respectively). Documented, but with arguable phonology, in a grammar by Schultze (1911); a brief wordlist is given by Erdweg (1901). Dialect information is scanty.

4. ALI. Spoken by 2079 (2118) people on the islands (off Aitape) of Ali, Angel, and Seleu, and in the mainland villages of Paup, Yakamul No.1, and Yakamul No.2. The western side of Ali Island speaks a dialect which differs from the speech of the other Ali-speaking areas in various phonological features, especially in the correspondence of /s/ to /h/ in many (but not all) words. Brief grammar and further data are in

Klaffl and Vormann 1905, and a short wordlist from Seleu and Paup in Erdweg 1901.

5. ULAU-SUAIN (Ulau-Suen, Ulau-Sueng, Ulau-Suein, Sauvein). Spoken by 1271 (1369) people in three villages, Ulau, Suain No.1, and Suain No.2, on the mainland east of Aitape (and east of Yakamul). Previous data confined to a brief wordlist by Erdweg (1901), and grammatical notes and a wordlist by Klafl and Vormann (1905), who regard Ulau-Suain as a dialect of Ali - to which it stands moderately close.

4.4.8.2.2. EASTERN GROUP

6. KAIRIRU. Spoken mainly on Kairiru Island and part of Mushu Island, off Wewak, with scattered settlements on the mainland opposite; also spoken on Karesau and Yuo Islands, although these islands also contain some speakers of Boiken. Speakers number 2552 (2811); published data consist only of short texts by Schmidt (1907, 1909), although Capell (1971) mentions that he prepared a (presumably extensive) Kairiru vocabulary in 1950.

7. KAIEP (Terebu, Turupu, Samap, Sumup). Spoken by a total of approximately 300 people living mainly in the village of Kaiep (east of Wewak), but also scattered throughout Terebu and Samap villages, still further to the east. No published data, although occasionally mentioned (by, e.g., Gehberger (1950)). Fairly closely related to Kairiru.

8. KIS. Spoken only in Kis village (216 inhabitants) immediately west of Murik Lakes (which form part of the Sepik River delta). No previous data, and apparently first mentioned as an Austronesian-speaking village by Capell (1962a), on the basis of comments supplied by Laycock. Closer relationships are perhaps to be sought among the island languages of Wogeo or Manam; local tradition favours the second possibility, but the linguistic evidence offers little support for this view.

9. WOGEO (Wokeo, Vokeo). Spoken on the islands of Wokeo and Koil in the Lesser Schouten group north of the Sepik River delta; total speakers 1237. Linguistic data only in recently-published texts by Gagin (1972), and fieldnotes of Z'graggen; the published anthropological material of H. Ian Hogbin (see bibliography, various dates) contains usable data, and a few pages of his unpublished notes have been examined in preparing this paper.

10. BAM. Spoken on the islands of Wei, Blupblup, Kadovar, and Bam, east of Wokeo and Koil; formerly regarded as a dialect of Wogeo (by, e.g., Hogbin - see bibliography) but established as a separate language

by Z'graggen who says (personal communication) that it is more closely related to Manam than to Wogeo. Population 1455.

11. SEPA. Spoken in the two mainland villages of Sepa and Wanam, opposite Manam Island, by approximately 265 people; very closely related to Manam, according to Z'graggen (1971). For further information, see contributions 4.2.3. and 4.4.1. by Z'graggen in this volume.

12. MANAM. Spoken by 5572 people in 16 villages on Manam (Vulcan) Island and Boisa Island; little previous published data, but for such as there are see contributions 4.2.3. and 4.4.1. by Z'graggen in this volume, and Z'graggen (1971) (where the pronouns are given). A dictionary by Böhm (1975) is available, and a brief grammatical statement has recently been prepared by Gregersen (1974).

13. MEDEBUR. Spoken in the mainland villages of Medebur and Toto, with a combined population of 429; listed as Melanesian by Hölzker (1937); no other published information apart from Z'graggen (1971).

It will be seen from this very brief presentation that a great deal of work still remains to be undertaken in the Austronesian languages of the Sepik region.

N O T E S

1. In Laycock 1973, an uncorrected misprint transformed the 'western' group into the 'eastern', and vice versa. Z'graggen proposes the names 'Aitape Sub-Group' for the western group, and 'Schouten Sub-Group' for the eastern; the entire group he calls 'Wewak Austronesian'.

2. The POC forms are intended to be suggestive of the possible origins of the words listed, and are not to be regarded as being definitive; nor are the forms cited necessarily those from which the words of the Sepik Coast languages are derived, as Grace's reconstructions come from a variety of groups within Oceania. The meanings of the POC forms are not cited here, but in many cases they differ from the English key word given - note especially POC *mp-anupe *caterpillar*, which seems to be the origin of most of the words for '*snake*'.

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APPENDIX A

Comparative Wordlist - Austronesian Languages of the
Sepik/Western Madang Region

ENGLISH	<i>man</i>	<i>woman</i>	<i>eye</i>	<i>nose</i>	<i>ear</i>
SERA	reisiouk	tamein	tapuŋ	suvətaŋ	tenerpiŋ
SISSANO	vəru	tamein	ta-k	su-k	tənerpo-n
TUMLEO	lama	tamen	matalaŋi-k	sulapi-k	tana'aliə-k
ALI	rama	tamiŋ	matakəriə-k	yisu-k	tənakei-k
ULAU-SUAIN	ramat	taĩ	matali-k	sundʔela-k	ŋu-m
KAIRIRU	ramat	mwoin	mata-k	kwokala-k	tələŋa-k
KAIEP	ramet	main	mata-k	naŋa-k	tələŋa-k
KIS	mata	win	məta	ŋwak	kəŋabi
WOGEO	ramata	reine	mata	ŋariri	talŋa
BAM	tamot	ain	mata	giŋa	talŋo
SEPA	tamota	waine	mata	ŋgaŋa	tailŋa
MANAM	tamoata	aine	mata	gaŋa, susukuri	kuŋi
MEDEBUR	tomat	waidik	mata	kamu	ti iŋa
POC	*taŋmata	*tapine, *pine, *papine	*mata(q)	*isu(ŋ), *usu	*talŋa

ENGLISH	<i>arm/hand</i>	<i>breast</i>	<i>blood</i>	<i>sun</i>	<i>moon</i>
SERA	ləyaŋ	tuit	tenei	rau	bul
SISSANO	avea-k	tus	təni	rau	sanar
TUMLEO	awi tʔeii-k	saus	tʔani	uas	sanar
ALI	awiə-k	sus	tʔiŋi	as	sənar
ULAU-SUAIN	ayi-k	sus	tʔenayi	adaŋ	musuar, sənar
KAIRIRU	kawiə-k	sus	sinai	warəŋ	kaleo
KAIEP	au-k	sus	nderə	amar	sənar
KIS	dəmakei	sus	dara	usem	alewa
WOGEO	lima	ñoño	dara	varəŋ	kaleva
BAM	lima	sus	dar	nau	kaleu
SEPA	lima	lulu	dala	ŋamali	kalewa
MANAM	debu, luma	ruru	dara	amari	kalea
MEDEBUR	nima	zuze	dar	uyem	lam
POC	*qapaRa, *lima	*su(n)su	*tinaqi, *daRaŋ	*dran(i), *ndaŋi	*pula(n), *sina(R)

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

ENGLISH	<i>night</i>	<i>water</i>	<i>sea</i>	<i>stone</i>	<i>mountain</i>	<i>fire</i>
SERA	puŋ	rain	na	ak	sol	teŋ
SISSANO	poin	rain	na	at	ol	tein
TUMLEO	puŋ	rien	lef	elitun	sol	yiap
ALI	puəŋ	rien	nau	paluək	saul	liap
ULAU-SUAIN	bui	ran	na	at	suən	asuwiñ
KAIRIRU	abwuŋ	rian	nau	buŋ	worəŋ	luf
KAIEP	bulom	ndan	nou	vat	gulien	you
KIS	doma	dan	masak	pat	selu	yuwa
WOGEO	taum	dan	booka	buer	bulum	yowa
BAM	taum	dan	buek	pat	sakur	iow
SEPA	wabubu	ndanu	makasi	pa·tu	bu·ka	ewa
MANAM	rodo, wabubu	daŋ	makasi	patu	buku	ewa
MEDEBUR	didomo	daŋ	tal	pat	kowora	yo
POC	*ŋpoŋi, *(dr)on(st)o	*ndanu(m)	*iau(d), *ma-asi(n)	*patu	*kor(ao), *solo	*api

ENGLISH	<i>tree</i>	<i>sugarcane</i>	<i>sago</i>	<i>banana</i>	<i>coconut</i>	<i>dog</i>	<i>pig</i>
SERA	ai	to	ləpi	bur	ne	biŋ	poi
SISSANO	ai	to'	iipii	apone, vur	ni'	aun	pui
TUMLEO	iyei	tu	lapi	wour	neu	aun	pul
ALI	ai	tu	rapi	wur	niu	ouŋ	por
ULAU-SUAIN	ai	abuas	rabi	ud	niu	aun	bur
KAIRIRU	kai	tu	rapi	wur	niu	woñau	pur
KAIEP	ai	tou	buobə	wundə	niu	vanau	bor
KIS	ai	səkak	beiv	kwoipa	niu	kiou	bwor
WOGEO	ka	--	--	kwarem	--	ke	--
BAM	kai	--	--	u·d	--	kiu	--
SEPA	kai	--	--	undu	--	keu	--
MANAM	kai	tou	bobe	udi	niu	keu	boro
MEDEBUR	ka	--	--	ud	--	wona	--
POC	*kai	*topu	*rumpia, *rampia	*puti	*niu(R)	*ŋkaun	*mpoRo

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

ENGLISH	<i>bird</i>	<i>snake</i>	<i>fish</i>	<i>fly</i>	<i>mosquito</i>	<i>louse</i>
SERA	main	meni	mwoiŋ	laŋ	nənei	uit
SISSANO	main	vəni	peii	lan	nam	tə'uit
TUMLEO	mien	ani	su	tamiel	ñuəm	aut
ALI	miəŋ	ani	wa'air	lapitʸ	ñuəŋ	wut
ULAU-SUAIN	man	ani	ui	lusuwai	nam	ut
KAIRIRU	mian	vaniu	siasi	ləmwok	niam	--
KAIEP	man	atom	moyolə	loŋ	nam	out
KIS	man	ali	ŋgam	alaŋ	nugur	kukut
WOGEO	man	kef	ika	laŋo	ñam, samkir	kut
BAM	man	kiep	ik	malpurŋ	ñam	kut
SEPA	manu	mota	ika	ŋalambuti	namu	kutu
MANAM	maŋ	moata	ika	laŋo	naŋ	kutu
MEDEBUR	nepa	muat	ik	luwut	nam	kut
POC	*manu(k)	*mp-anupe, *ŋmata	*paRi, *ika(n)	*laŋo	*namu(k)	*kutu

ENGLISH	<i>house</i>	<i>white</i>	<i>black</i>	<i>cold</i>	<i>eat</i>
SERA	nou	wuipul	neknek	marir	'ain
SISSANO	nu	vokpus	niknik	marir	'ain
TUMLEO	loum	pos	ŋek	tareitʸ	i'ən
ALI	anou	pous	tyumutʸ	tyityetʸ	'eəŋ
ULAU-SUAIN	anu	sabus	dʸerañ	marid	an
KAIRIRU	pial	bunbun	siisir	marir	an
KAIEP	əlim	sambweu	kərkərə	marirə	'ani
KIS	baza	ŋgaoron	nugundon	katakip	an
WOGEO	ruma	buŋabuŋa	jimjimu	kwel	kan
BAM	rum	sabau	jimjam	kumbir	manek
SEPA	pela	wawaraki	mbotambota	ndisuau	kani, monako
MANAM	pera	wauwau	zimzimi	tumura, madidi	kaŋ, mwanako
MEDEBUR	rum	wavlav	geragir	ekiam	kan
POC	*nua, *panua, *Ruŋma(q), *pale	*poti, *puti	*ŋkele	*ma(n)di(n)diŋ	*kani

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

ENGLISH	<i>come</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>three</i>	<i>four</i>
SERA	ma	pi	pontenen	eltiŋ	eltiŋ pal	eltiŋ eltiŋ
SISSANO	ma	uar	pondenen	tin	tin pondenen	tinutin
TUMLEO	miei	wi	mata	lou	tul	u
ALI	ma	ie/owa	tei	rou	tul	au
ULAU-SUAIN	mwai	la	batai	ru	tuəl	oungənañ
KAIRIRU	miai	liak	tai	wulu	tuol	viat
KAIEP	ama	alie	ta	lu	tol	tənal
KIS	me	nakei	ageiv	urani	toni	owani
WOGEO	wot	lako	ta	rua	tol	kuik
BAM	pur	lal	tini	aru	tuəl	kiki
SEPA	sopu, -pula	lako	teke	lua	toli	wati
MANAM	mai, pura	lako	teke	rua	toli	wati
MEDEBUR	zalu	va	takana	aru	tol	bilital
POC	*mai	*lako, *pano	--	*rua	*tolu	*pat

ENGLISH	<i>five</i>	<i>1sg</i>	<i>2sg</i>	<i>3sg</i>	<i>1du</i>	<i>2du</i>	<i>3du</i>
SERA	pingari?	ya	e	iŋ	ou	brou	rouso
SISSANO	tartar	ya	e	i	oit	uit	ruit
TUMLEO	leim	auiou	yiyi	yeyei	--	--	--
ALI	lim	eu	yi	eŋ	etri	yitrei	entren
ULAU-SUAIN	ayakalun	dʔau	i	wui	--	--	--
KAIRIRU	vələri	kiau	yik	ei	təmwoi	--	--
KAIEP	lim	dʔa	yi'	yi	--	--	--
KIS	lima	au	ik	e	tukwa	--	--
WOGEO	kwik bogoba	va	iko	iye	--	--	--
BAM	kiki be kuboa	ñau	kaik	ŋai	--	--	--
SEPA	lima	ŋa(yau)	kiko	ai	--	--	--
MANAM	lima	ŋau	kaiko	ŋai	--	--	--
MEDEBUR	lim	ŋa	kai	ani	--	--	--
POC	*lima	*au	--	*ia	--	--	--

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

ENGLISH	<i>1pl/i</i>	<i>1pl/e</i>	<i>2pl</i>	<i>3pl</i>
SERA	uit	uit	bruit	rei
SISSANO	eit	eit	om	ri
TUMLEO	etet	etet	emem	reirei
ALI	yit	yit	am	rei
ULAU-SUAIN	it	it	am	ari
KAIRIRU	kait	?	kam	ri
KAIEP	eit	am	am	di
KIS	tukwa	am	ikpo	dei
WOGEO	kita	kita	kam(im)	die
BAM	takit	kiki <i>ai</i>	kakam	didi
SEPA	ki·ta	kami	kamu	ndia
MANAM	kita	keka	kam	di
MEDEBUR	ki	kam	kom	adi
POC	*kinta	*kami	*kamu	*sida

APPENDIX B
Typological Features

	FEATURES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SERA	- ?	- ?	+	-	SVO	+	+	binary/5
SISSANO	+	disappearing	+	-	SVO	+	+	binary/5
TUMLEO	+	disappearing	-	-	SVO	+	+	quinary/10
ALI	+	+	-	-	SVO	+	+	quinary/10
ULAU-SUAIN	+	- ?	-	-	SVO	+	?	quinary
KAIRIRU	+	+	+	?	SOV(SVO)	partly	+	quinary/6
KATAP	+	+	-	+	SOV	partly	partly	quinary/6
KIS	-	-	-	+	SOV	+	+	quinary
WOGEO	+	+	-	+	SOV/SVO	+	+	?
BAM	+	+	-	+	SOV/SVO	?	+	?
SEPA	+	+	-	+	SOV	+	+	quinary/?
MANAM	+	+	-	+	SOV	+	+	quinary/10
MEDEBUR	+	+	-	+	SOV	+	+	quinary/?

Key to features:

1. Special set of pronominal markers for body parts (inalienable possession).
2. Special set of pronominal markers for kin terms (inalienable possession) - same as body parts marking when present.
3. Dual number expressed in pronouns or verb concordance by distinct forms not synchronically derivable from the word for 'two'.
4. Inclusive/exclusive distinction in first person pronouns.
5. Basic word-order.
6. Subject-prefixes in verbs closely assimilated to verb stem and/or tense particle, with morphological changes necessitating setting up of conjugation classes.
7. Subject-prefixes in verbs vary for tense.
8. Numeral system: binary (with word for 'five'), quinary (with word for 'ten'), quinary (with word for 'six'), quinary.