

Journal 2

Phonology. From what we've heard so far, here's what I would guess is the Arapesh sound system.

Consonants, in order of POA: (b,p,m,ϕ*),
(t,d,n,r,s),
(tʃ, dʒ, ʃ),
(ŋ),
(k,g,ŋ,w,x*),
(h)

Everything that does not have an asterisk I am pretty confident about. The palatal nasal is undeniably present in *negir* 'stick, name', and at least I have felt no overt evidence of allophony with *ŋ*. But we have never seen *ŋ* in an initial position yet, so we will have to keep our eyes and ears open going forward. *ϕ* has the distinction of being in only one form we've elicited so far: *əgədətʃau bərahəbigi gani urobaihwɪ suruϕ*, 'this bag has many colors', or lit., 'this black bag and many colors'. I remember looking Babwen in the eyes and saying *suruϕ*, thinking about Sapir's proverbial candle, and as far as I remember I got a *wosik*. To my ear it could have also been a *x*, which I believe I've heard in other words, like *etʃaurux*, 'string bags'. We'll see if this lone *ϕ* will survive. Further, there are some aspirated forms like *thani* that require further investigation. (Is it better to treat them as a sequence of /t/ /h/ or as /th/?)

Vowels. I've detected no signs of harmony. I have assumed on intuition that Arapesh has *i, ɪ, u, e, ə, o, a*. *ə* and *ɪ* are uncertain. I am reasonably confident I have heard a phonetic *ɪ* over and over that is distinct from phonetic *ə*, but I have no reason to believe as of now that they are not in complementary distribution. Similarly I have heard *ɛ* and *ɪ* for *e* and *i*, but I have not distinguished them in my transcription as the difference does not strike my ear as phonemic. There are also a few diphthongs like *au, ei, ai, oi*. I thought I heard an *oə* in *doək* 'today' during the elicitation of just that form, but it also sounded like a plain *o* when he spoke it in a sentence.

Morphology. After the end of session 1 it was clear that there was some sort of not-your-garden-variety sound alternation going on. The question is whether it's being conditioned by mere phonological rules, or morphological entities. A recap of the relevant forms collected:

<i>chup</i>	<i>pani ...</i>
<i>utaber</i>	<i>bani ...</i>
<i>numbat</i>	<i>thani ...</i>
<i>jegir</i>	<i>jani ...</i>
<i>rowem</i>	<i>mani ...</i>

That is, 'x and...'. We also see a similar sort of alternation in the 'small' and 'many of' words. Some samples:

<i>chokupi</i>	<i>chup</i>	'small leaf'	
<i>chokumi</i>	<i>utom</i>	'small stone'	
<i>chokuti</i>	<i>numbat</i>	'small dog'	
<i>chokwiti</i>	<i>rowep</i>	'small berry'	
<i>biəber</i>	<i>chokuberi</i>	<i>utaber</i>	'two small stones'
<i>orubaisi</i>	<i>chokusi</i>	<i>chus</i>	'pile of small papers'

Let's assume, as many linguists do, that economy of analysis is our sole criterion for evaluation of these forms. This is probably due to a lack of experience and imagination on my part, but I can't think of a way to account for these sound changes using purely phonological processes. (That is, without positing ad-hoc rules.)

See for example *numbat **th**ani*, but *chokuti numbat*. Consider also *utaber **b**ani*, but *chokuberi utaber*. Perhaps the alternation in the 'and' word could be handled by a phonological rule. But it seems that to account for the 'small x' forms using phonological rules we would need wildly ad-hoc rules. Especially note *chokwiti rowep*, 'small berry'. Assuming we “started out” with a form like *choku_i*, which seems to work with the other forms, we would have to claim that some part of *rowep* populated the preceding word with *-it-* to yield *choku-it-i = chokwiti*. This seems dangerous to me.