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SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF ABU', A PAPUAN LANGUAGE OF THE  
SEPIK AREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

By

Otto Ignatius Manganau Soko'um Nekitel

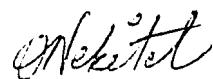
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Doctor of Philosophy  
at the Australian National University.

May 1985



DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated  
this thesis is my own work.



Otto I.M.S. Nekitel

May 1985

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All those mentioned, and some of those not mentioned specifically have played a part in the development of this thesis, but the author alone is responsible for writing and for any misrepresentations or errors that may occur.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to describe sociolinguistic aspects of Abu' Arapesh, a Papuan language spoken by about 5,700 speakers who live in the central Sepik area of Papua New Guinea. It is the first of its kind on this community.

In brief, chapter 1 gives a summary of the thesis, followed by a more detailed description of the Abu' language area and its dialects, as seen from a linguist's point of view, in chapter 2. This and Chapter 3, which gives an overview of the grammar and phonology of Abu', provide the general background knowledge of the nature of the language as a basis for the discussions on sociolinguistic aspects of Abu' in chapters 4 to 7. In chapter 4, the Abu' world-view is examined showing the relatively influential role it has on the determination of noun classes. This is followed in chapter 5, by a description of speaker's speech repertoire. This focusses on the pattern of verbal behaviour among different social groups. In chapter 6, non-verbal means of communication (excluding gestural communication) is treated. Chapter 7 examines language attitudes and use among the Abu'.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: THE SETTING

Abu' is a Papuan language spoken in the mid-central Sepik region of Papua New Guinea -- see map 1. Its speakers number approximately 5,700 according to the census of 1980. They live in nine major villages with a number of hamlets clustered around them. The names of the main villages are Balup, Malin, Aspeis, Welihika, Wolum, Womsis, Amom, Womsak No.1 and Womsak No.2. The first six villages mentioned belong to the West Sepik Province. They are administered from Vanimo (the provincial headquarters) via the district headquarters at Aitape. The last three villages belong to the East Sepik Province and are administered from Maprik, one of the main centres of the same province. The area stretches from about  $142^{\circ}48'E$  to about  $143^{\circ}5'E$  and from approximately  $3^{\circ}23'S$  to  $3^{\circ}28'S$  covering roughly 300 square kilometres of mountainous land. Being landlocked, the Abu' share their northern border with the Suain, their western border with the Aruek, their south-west border with the Miye (also known as Wam), and their southern border with Muhiang (variably known as Southern or Ilahita Arapesh), and Weri' (also known as Bumbita) and finally their eastern border with the Buki (also known as Mountain Arapesh). The Suain speak the Ulau-Suain Austronesian language. The rest of the communities speak non-Austronesian or Papuan languages which belong to the Kombio stock of the Torricelli Language Phylum (Laycock, 1973 and 1975).

### 1.1 Historical Background

It is not known how long the Abu' have been in their present position or how and where they originated. However, oral traditions of the Womsis and Wolum clans of Womsis village suggest they came from the south or southwest, although the Subak clan of the same village disagreed. The members of this clan claim that they originated from a place not far inland from Lelap or Suain No. 2, shown on map 2.<sup>1</sup> Warfare and inter- and intra-ethnic marriages were claimed as being the main social factors causing migrations of people who make up the Womsis and Wolum population. If so, these movements would seem to be part of a general movement of Arapesh speakers, who, it is claimed (Laycock 1969; and Tuzin 1973), were being pushed into the Alexander and Torricelli mountains by the Boiken and Abelam probably many years prior to European contact in the 1870s.

At about this time the Germans were claiming that part of New Guinea and officially annexed it in 1884. However, before the Germans there were Malays. Literature on colonial contact in the Aitape (spelt Eitape in German records) district<sup>2</sup> makes direct or indirect reference to the presence of Malays and Germans in the Sepik region. However, there is no direct mention of their presence in the Abu' area. Evidence for their presence in Womsis and other Abu' villages comes mainly from oral accounts obtained from Abu' and a few Miye elders, none of whom had firsthand knowledge of the two groups of outsiders.

A widely-held view among Womsis oral historians is that the Malays (variably known to the Abu' as koukou (probably intended for Chinese from Hong Kong), Malai 'Malay' or Parani a word derived

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<sup>1</sup> Aspects of this oral history are treated more fully in Nekitel, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Cf.e.g., Parkinson 1900, McCarthy 1936, Peter Sack and Damphne Clark eds., 1980; Townsend, 1968; Seiler, 1983; Allen, 1976 and Swadling 1979.

probably from the Bahasa Malaysian word parang<sup>3</sup> 'cleaver, chopper', were in the area before the arrival of Germans. These Malays were involved in the bird-of-paradise plume trade.

Although informants claimed that the Malays were once widespread in the Abu' area and further inland, available literature on early contact with the area provides no direct confirmation of the oral accounts. The only direct mention of the presence of Malays in the coastal village of Suain (with whom the Abu' share a common geographic and linguistic border) has been made by Bryant Allen (1976) and Frances Deklin (1979). In these accounts we find (p.58 and p.31 respectively) that the Malays, after establishing trading bases at Yakamul, Ulau and Suain penetrated the Torricelli mountains in search of bird-of-paradise plumes. Allen noted in passing that the Malays followed the "Danop" (probably intended for Mabam/Danmap) River to get to the interior. The route along the Danmap is more convenient than the mountain ones for people to travel to the Abu' country and further inland. It would seem likely that the Malays and Germans had been visiting the Abu' villages by following the Danmap up to the Torricelli divide as suggested by the Womsis oral historians.

Contact between Malay plume traders and the Abu' appears to have been slight however. The only form of contact between them appears to have been when Malay overseers recruited Abu' and Wam men to help hunt down birds-of-paradise. The plumes of the captured birds were wrapped in bundles of 'dark palm sheaths' (Tok Pisin limbum) and were taken to the coast (presumably to the abovementioned bases) from where they were shipped away to buyers' for the international market.

There is nothing of significance left behind which can be attributed to the Malays' language and culture. The only relics left

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Haji Abdul Rahman bin Yusop 1984:195

behind are a few Malay words that have become part of the Abu' Tok Pisin vocabulary. Words such as (Tok Pisin) binatang (< Bahasa Malaysian word binatang 'animal, creature'<sup>4</sup> 'bug, insect, gnat' sayor (< Bahasa Malay sayur) 'vegetable' and klambu 'mosquito net'<sup>5</sup> and the Abu' vernacular word for 'master or European' duak (pl. duasimi) are derived from Malay. Duak is a probable derivative from the Malay word tuan, 'master' or 'European'. So'eh, the word used in Abu' for 'raw tobacco', is another probable reflex of the Malay word sake. However, because binatang, sayor and klambu are common Tok Pisin (formerly New Guinea Pidgin or Neo-Melanesian) vocabulary items they probably entered Abu' via Tok Pisin.

The German presence in the Abu' area was brief and marginal. One of the Womsis elders (aged about 70 in 1980, died in 1984) summarized the presence of the Germans in the Abu' area in Tok Pisin as follows:

"Ol Siaman i kam raun tupela taim tasol. Na i kam sindaun long Morifibi em ples klostu long Wolum. Ol i kalabusim Wakufa kisim i stap inap long taim ol i bringim Uwasim orait ol i lusim Wakufa i kam na ol i kisim Uwasim -em papa bilong mipela i go long plantesin long Rabaul wantem Nakimo'. Mi i no lukim ol Siaman, mi harim ol papa i tokim mi."<sup>6</sup>

The Germans made two trips to the Abu' area and sojourned at Morifibi near Wolum. They captured Wakufa and kept him until they brought Uwasim to them. Wakufa was then released. Uwasim and Nakimo' (the author's mother's uncle) were taken to work on a plantation in Rabaul. I did not see the Germans, but only heard my fathers tell about them.

Unfortunately, this view receives no direct support from written sources either. However, indirect support for the view occurs in Jinks et al. (1973:240). Thus it was reported therein that "by 1914 the

<sup>4</sup>Haji A.R.bin Yusop 1984:31

<sup>5</sup>Mihalic, 1971:72 & 111

<sup>6</sup>Nuha'um, Womsis village, Nov. 1980.

number of labourers increased from 17,500 to 31,000 in 1921" and that "Aitape, Madang and Kieta" were the main areas from which most of the labour force was recruited and Rabaul and Kavieng became the centres in which most of the "labour force was concentrated". The two Abu' men alluded to in the oral account quoted above were probably among the group of labourers referred to.

Allen (1976:57-59) showed that between 1905 and 1920 "four Chinese-- Ah Long and three others known to the villagers [of Urat] as Kasing, Tulhoi and Nihing -- were recruiting in the Drekikir area". He also noted (p.62) that a "German visited Wam village" around about the same time. It would seem more likely that Womsis, being closer to the coast than Wam is, could have been visited probably by more Germans than the few remembered by the Womsis oral historians. However, on the whole, the Germans were reluctant to proceed beyond areas yet to be brought under administrative control at that time. The Germans were, in our informants' phraseology, "gotten rid of by the Inkilis" 'English'. The Abu' use the term Inkilis to refer to a collection of post-German English-speaking (i.e. Australian) colonial administrations such as:

- a) the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force that administered the Trust Territory of New Guinea from 1914 to 1921,
- b) the civilian administration which took over from military occupation force under the League of Nations from 1921 right to the time of the outbreak of the Pacific or the Second World War in 1941 and
- c) the Australia New Guinea Administrative Unit (A.N.G.A.U., cf. e.g., W.J.Hudson 1971, ed. and B.Jinks 1973, et al.).

The Inkilis (especially the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force and the civilian Administration) were acknowledged and credited by the Abu' with introducing a number of sociopolitical changes among the Abu'. German influence in this regard was nil. Although the Germans left behind a history of the introduction of a

socio-economic and political system that became the model for subsequent colonial administrations, their efforts in this regard were concentrated in the coastal villages and only marginally so inland.

One of the major changes made in the late 1920s, by the Australian administration, was the appointment of 'village chiefs' (*Tok Pisin luluai*) and their assistants (*Tok Pisin tultul*). Once appointed, these men became the intermediaries between the villagers and the colonial administration which exercised its political influence from Aitape, a one-time district headquarters of the Sepik region (cf. e.g., Rowley 1958:36).

Another main structural change was the creation of post-contact communal camps. Dispersed clans were encouraged, or coerced in some cases, to live together in these camps for the convenience of colonial officials. *Haus kiap*, the Tok Pisin word for 'government official rest houses' were built in these camps. From then on, the camps and the *haus kiap* functioned and still do, as symbols of inter-clan sociopolitical unity. Members of different clans went and even still go, to these communal camps whenever they had/have important meetings, or whenever they put on major inter- and intra-village social or political functions.

During the annual official patrols, the *kiaps* sojourned in these camps to census people, settle disputes, punish law breakers and command villagers to maintain general village hygiene. The 'village chiefs', the 'chief assistants' and *titi* 'medical man' or "heil tul-tul", (Jinks, et al. 1973:138) were checked and replaced if there was a need to change. On a number of occasions during these patrols, able young Abu' men were indentured to work for a period of years on plantations away in the New Guinea islands region and other parts of what was then the Trust Territory of New Guinea. For example, the author's father was recruited by a *kiap* to work on Makurapau

plantation which is located in the Kokopo area of East New Britain from 1949-51.

Other groups of Europeans who got into the Abu' area, especially in Womsis and its surrounds, were alluvial gold prospectors, called masta gol in Tok Pisin and land surveyors or cartographers, referred to in Tok Pisin as masta mak. The latter group passed through the area in 1926 and the former were there in the 1930s (cf. Jack K. McCarthy 1935-1936 annual diary reports ).

A number of Abu' men worked as carriers for the land survey team. A few were employed as domestic servants or huntsmen for the masta gol. Apart from a few Welihika men who were employed to dredge gold in the Atob and Mindil rivers (map 2 ), most of the labourers employed there according to oral accounts, were recruited from different coastal areas such as Vanimo, Wewak, Madang, and the inland Sepik River basin.

In 1936, kiap Makati (Administrative officer Jack K. McCarthy), who was stationed at Aitape then, reported in his annual report that he went to the area to investigate a complaint from some of the labourers in Womsis and Welihika gold-fields (McCarthy 1935-1936 annual report). A couple of the employees' spokesmen walked to Aitape and laid a charge against their employers, namely Bell and Johnston, for maltreatment. The two (most probably Australian) overseers were stationed at Welihika and Womsis at that time. Having been told about the maltreatment, McCarthy set out at once for Womsis and Welihika to investigate the reported complaint. When he got there, both men had already disappeared from their bases. One went down to the coast, the other upriver (probably to avoid being interrogated by the kiap). This seems to be the earliest written report that mentions the existence of what is now the West Sepik Abu' villages. Soon after, the land suveyors mapped the Abu' territory and these maps became a useful

source of information for subsequent patrols and during the Second World War.

During the Second World War, the Abu' people experienced the trauma and the harsh social impact created by the military bombardment. The war disturbed the relatively peaceful existence of the Abu'. Many Abu' people were displaced from their villages. As military operations between the allied forces and the Japanese troops intensified in the Abu' area, Abu' people were ordered to evacuate their villages and went down to the coast for a brief sojourn at Ulau. This was to enable the allied forces and Abu' sympathisers to launch a major assault on the Japanese who had infiltrated the hinterland from the coast east of Aitape.

Many young Abu' men, including my father, were enlisted as carriers for the Allied forces. Others were recruited as guides and fighters, and were given guns and handgrenades to fight the Japanese troops both alongside the Allied forces and on their own, when they encountered lone Japanese in the thick jungles of the Torricelli mountains. After the Japanese were expelled from the area, the Abu' people were told to return to their villages.

Another very influential group of Europeans were the Catholic Missionaries who established themselves at Yakamul and Ulau prior to the Second World War. Having established themselves there, they began spreading their influence into the interior. By about 1938, a number of Abu' young men were recruited to do catechetical training, first at Yakamul, and then at St. Xavier's on Kairiru island, about 20 kilometres off the coast of Wewak (map 4). Some completed their training after two years, others, including my uncle Joseph Ubaim, were still there when the War "reached New Guinea in 1941" (Downs 1980). They were, according to Ubaim, evacuated and returned to their villages. In chapter 2, we will discuss the processes of modernization

as a prelude to a more detailed discussion on the Abu' language area and the Abu' dialects.

### 1.1.1 Previous Work on Arapesh Languages

According to Laycock (1973), the Arapesh languages form a family of closely related languages. Taking them as a group, the Arapesh society has been studied by only a handful of social scientists. The earliest ethnographic and linguistic studies on the Arapesh were done by Margaret Mead and Reo Fortune in the 1930s and 1940s. Margaret Mead popularized the term Arapesh, which denotes 'people'. Fortune (1942) examined the noun classes of the coastal dialect of Buki and as a result proposed 13 main noun classes. He adopted the morphological shape of the plural suffixes of nouns as bases for determining the classes proposed.<sup>7</sup>

In their study on the classification of the languages spoken within the Maprik district, Glasgow and Loving (1964) provides us with a first account of the Arapesh linguistic area. In there, the Arapesh languages of Weri', Muhiang and Buki were mapped and referred to as Bumbita Arapesh, Southern Arapesh, and Mountain Arapesh, respectively. Laycock (1973) uses the same names, but regards Southern Arapesh and Mountain Arapesh as distinct languages, not dialects of a single language. Unfortunately these authors were unaware of the existence of Abu' Arapesh and thus no mention is made of it in their publications.

It was about ten years after 1964 that the Abu' speaking villages were cited in a linguistic study for the first time. In his general linguistic survey, Laycock (1973), provided an overview of the types of languages spoken in both the East and the West Sepik Provinces and

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<sup>7</sup>When I analysed the Abu' language noun classes in my 1977 Honours thesis, I adopted (after Fortune) the morphological criteria. However, upon re-examination it has been found to be not too well founded. Consequently a review will be made in chapter 4 on the criteria that trigger the categorisation of nouns in Abu' into different noun classes.

listed villages accordingly. There we find that the Abu' villages referred to above, were assigned as follows: Amom, Womsak No. 1 and Womsak No.2 to Muhiang (southern Arapesh) and all the West Sepik Abu' villages were assigned to Mountain Arapesh.

A little earlier on, Capell (1969:112, note) made a passing remark to the effect that Arapesh is typologically similar to the Baining language of East New Britain. Both languages, like Chambri (Pagotto 1976), Olo (MacGregor and MacGregor 1982), and even languages as far away as the Chinook of North America and the Bantu languages of the southern half of Africa, possess noun classes and also maintain the principle of nominal concord.<sup>8</sup>

Another scholar who has studied the Arapesh (a Southern Arapesh group called by him Ilahita Arapesh) is Donald F. Tuzin (1972, 1976). This anthropologist examined the "complex dual organization of formalized system of social categories and conventions which, by virtue of their dynamic interaction with elements of kinship, affinity, and proximity, provides the key to unity among the Ilahita Arapesh" (Mead, 1976, foreword in Tuzin 1976).

Bernard Narakobi, a Buki speaker, has written about the Arapesh (especially the Buki) beliefs in gods or spirits (cf. Narakobi 1977).

At about the same time, Bob and Jo Conrad (n.d.) provided a preliminary draft of the morphosyntax of Bukiyup (or Bukiyip), a Buki dialect. They had also written on this language's sentences (1973) and conducted a general survey of basic vocabulary of Arapesh languages (Conrad and field-assistants, 1973). The author has only seen the

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<sup>8</sup>Edward Sapir, 1921:114-115, tells us that "..., the essence of the principle [of nominal concord] is simply this, that words (elements) that belong together, particularly if they are syntactic equivalents or are related in like fashion to another word or element, are outwardly marked by the same or functionally equivalent affixes. Concord is always accompanied by sound repetition. The application of the principle varies considerably according to the genius of the particular language".

preliminary draft of Bukiyp morphophonemics, none of the other studies being available at the time of writing.

It is quite obvious that none of the authors of the works cited was aware of the existence of, and separate identity of what the Miye (called Wam by Glasgow and Loving 1964, and Laycock 1973), the Muhiang, Aruek, Buki and the Abu' themselves have, from 'time immemorial', known as the Abu' speech community. The identity of this as a unit or entity separate from those other generally recognized Arapesh languages will be discussed further in chapter 2.

## 1.2 Objectives and Methodology of the Thesis

### 1.2.0.1 Objectives

Papua New Guinea is experiencing an epoch of irreversible social, political, economic, cultural and intellectual dynamism characteristic of many fast developing Third-World countries. Changes, as such, not only affect the traditional structural system of sociopolitical and cultural organizations, which, by virtue of their dynamic interaction give traditional Papua New Guinea communities a sense of multi-ethnic richness and diversity, but also offer an intellectual challenge to different branches of traditional epistemology. Traditional epistemologies of all kind are being challenged, or are at the mercy of an intellectualization process whose "root is to be found 'in western scholasticism'" (Bernard Narakobi, 1980). Our creative myths, legends, oral histories, linguistic theories and skills in our native tongues, as well as a host of other cultural knowledge can no longer be left intact, unquestioned and intellectually unchallenged as they were in the past.

Papua New Guinea has, in many respects, opted to flow with the tide of modernity. Broadly speaking, it recognizes the fact that intellectual change is an inevitability, a process which enhances

modernity. In spite of this recognition, little effort (cf. Narakobi 1980 and 1983 and Waiko 1983) is made by Papua New Guineans themselves to draw from their communities' rich aspects of their epistemologies to blend with introduced values of alien epistemologies in order to effect desirable change. Such knowledge, when tapped and incorporated with western values, should create an interesting and unique nation of Papua New Guinea, a country with many aesthetic values, material culture and various forms of knowledge about human life.

The present study of the social aspects of Abu' is heavily prompted by the concerns about researching, writing and thus preserving the various forms of traditional knowledge from the sociolinguist's point of view. It focusses on the speech community in which the author was born. The aim is to describe how this speech community talks about its language, and how the community uses its language to talk about an endless variety of topics, and how this social use of language binds, or divides different social groups of a community. As such this study is, at least for Papua New Guinea, unique in the sense that it provides an opportunity for the outsider to see, from an insider's perspective, a hitherto undescribed knowledge of a specific speech community of one of the world's multicultural and multilingual nations. The reason why language issues have been focussed on is because language plays a central role in every facet of cultural life. It permeates all aspects of human life and is a "window" into culture. Language, as Hymes (1964:5) observed:

"..., is the simplest and the basic feature among those which make up specifically human activity. Whatever our literary and artistic or our philosophical and religious grasp of human ways, the scientific understanding of man will in all likelihood grow from our understanding of language..."

In preparing the following description I have been well aware of the fact that, being a native speaker of Abu' and a part-time observer-participant of my parents' society, I have had the advantage

of being able to analyse the data and present an insider's perspective. On the other hand, I am aware that I might well be accused of being subjective and biased in the same analysis. Because of this, particular attempts have been made to preclude subjective presentation as far as possible, except where it was felt necessary to stress certain viewpoints. Consequently the description is largely based on data obtained from other Abu', who were considered experts in particular areas of culture. Most of these experts unfortunately died during the period of the fieldwork or soon after.

Because the thrust of the thesis is concerned with hitherto undescribed sociolinguistic aspects of Abu', only a fairly general treatment of the most general features of Abu' grammar will be given. However, this does not mean that the grammar of the language is any less interesting. It is very interesting but a proper description would require too much space. The present sketch, however, not only serves to give some features of the grammar which never previously described, but it is necessary to acquaint the reader with the general background knowledge of the language. This general description of the grammar is also meant to provide the linguistic dimension to the discussions and remarks to be made on the sociolinguistic aspects of Abu' in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The nature and status of Abu' vis-à-vis other Arapesh languages, are dealt with in chapter 2. The chapter commences with an ethnographic description of Womsis, the location in which most of the field data was collected. It then goes on to examine in more detail the Abu' language area, providing a summary of Abu' views on why they regard themselves as a different language group from other genetically related languages. The Abu' language dialects are also discussed in this chapter. On the basis of sociological and linguistic (especially lexical) data, it is established for the first time that Abu' is a separate language and not a dialect of Buki and Muhiang Arapesh.

In chapter 4, the Abu' world-view is discussed and its folk-taxonomy treated in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which these two aspects of Abu' knowledge influence the systematization of the different noun classes. Attempts are also made to specify the factors or determinants assumed to induce the Abu' to apportion creatures and things of the world into the different noun classes in the language. It is established that, although there is a distinction between world-view, as mapped out in the folk-taxonomy presented, and the semantic basis for categorization of classes, it is demonstrated that they can be related.

Chapter 5 examines the speech repertoire on a language-internal basis. The numerous speech styles of Abu' that segment, isolate and identify social groups within the Abu' community are delineated. Sociocultural contexts that prompt the use of social styles and their distribution in culture are specified. Linguistic features that characterize each of the styles are demonstrated to highlight why the Abu' regard these styles to be different, not only from one another, but how and why the speech styles as a whole differ from 'standard Abu' dika ka'is kekehi'i.

The social speech styles differ from one another and from standard Abu' in terms of lexicon, "contextualization signals" and the sociocultural contexts in which they are used and distributed in society and culture. Some of the styles were/are unique to the Abu' Arapesh while others were/are the same as or similar to those used elsewhere. An understanding of standard Abu' does not necessarily mean that one can understand the language of different social groups in the Abu' society. As a matter of fact, the degree of intelligibility decreases from the normal or standard Abu' speech to the more highly poetic or metaphoric styles used in chants, sung oratory and secretive talk. These styles determine both the verbal behaviour of speakers and define the role Abu' members are expected to play in society.

Language, although the primary medium of communication, is not the only available medium. The Abu', because of their geographic position and for cultural reasons have, from 'time immemorial', used natural objects such as plants to represent or relay messages in conventionalized ways. Consequently, chapter 6 examines the speech surrogates used by the Abu'. Although technologically not very advanced compared with modern telecommunication and graphic devices, those surrogates did, and some still do have, clear communicative functions similar to their modern counterparts. Their value should therefore be seen in those terms.

In chapter 7, I examine language attitudes and use. The chapter commences with an analysis of Abu' metalinguistic views about languages. This aspect of sociolinguistics among the New Guinea language communities has been virtually neglected by linguists who have studied the languages of the area. The chapter then goes on to examine the kinds of languages available for use by the Abu'. One of the main concerns is to examine and analyse the social parameters that determine the use of many of the languages. The degree to which neighbouring languages (in which the Abu' have or claim to have multilingual skills) have affected Abu' are looked at towards the end of the chapter.

The conclusion reached in this chapter is that an increasing knowledge of Tok Pisin and its universal use in most speech situations within and beyond the Abu' frontiers discourages the learning of other vernacular languages which was until fairly recently (less than twenty years ago) an important requirement for inter- and intra-ethnic communication. Therefore, it is predicted that if the younger generation of Abu' parents neglect the teaching of Abu' to their children, this language will face a greater risk of reduction and a real possibility of being lost. This situation is augmented by an

increasing number of Tok Pisin-speaking Abu' villagers. Hence it is highly likely that the future trend of the Abu' multilingual scenario might reduce to a monolingual situation where Tok Pisin will become the only language of any serious dicussion or conversation. This trend, according to numerous oral accounts, is demographically gaining momentum in many parts of Papua New Guinea, especially among children.<sup>9</sup>

#### 1.2.0.2 Descriptive Approach

This study is not meant to be an application of a particular sociolinguistic model to a language, nor is it meant to be a delineation of sociolinguistic theory, using data from Abu' for the purpose of demonstration. The work is primarily descriptive and allusions to certain theoretical issues have been made only where this seemed either to facilitate an understanding of the relevant sociolinguistic aspects themselves, or where the Abu' data were seen to be especially relevant and enlightening to those issues.

In view of the rather broad nature of issues described in this thesis, the review of literature and the descriptive framework used for describing sociolinguistic aspects treated in each chapter, are specified in that chapter. On the whole, the presentation is guided by the structuralist approach to linguistic description. Language-internal paradigms are set up and issues are discussed from an Abu' viewpoint.

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<sup>9</sup>Bill Foley, Julie Piau, Sue Holzknecht and Bernard Narakobi, pers. com. Canberra, 1984/5.

### 1.3 Materials

#### 1.3.0.1 The Data

The data which form the basis for this thesis were collected during two field-trips of a total duration of 15 months. The raw data collected from the Abu' instructors comprise roughly 20 hours of transcribed texts. These were supplemented by field notes made especially when recording was not possible. Previous writings on the community were also consulted and appeal was made to personal knowledge as required but a conscious attempt was made not to allow the latter to prejudice the conclusions reached. The only chapter in which personal knowledge is important is the chapter on grammar and phonology. Being a native speaker, the author simply did not have to waste tapes and time in recording the necessary data for this. This does not necessarily mean that the description of the Abu' grammar is purely idiolectal. Since certain aspects of the language were described previously (Nekitel 1977 & 1984) after a number of fellow native speakers of the language were consulted, views of the entire Abu' community were borne in mind when the grammar was described. Unless otherwise indicated, the data are drawn from Abu' Womenika, the 'Upper Abu'' dialect, because it is the one that I speak as my first language. Dialect differences will be dealt with in the following chapter.

I would like to point out too that some of the data presented, especially on certain aspects of non-verbal communication and some of the cultural rituals in chapters 5 and 6, disappeared in the 1950s, or earlier on. Hence some of the issues treated there are from my recollections, and from information made available by Abu' elders. Virtually all the quotations in the different chapters have been taken from personally recorded texts.

## 1.4 Presentation

### 1.4.0.1 A Note on Glosses

When one language is used to write about another, writers are often confronted with the problem of choosing appropriate glosses to approximate morphemes, words or concepts of the language being written about. In this respect, the solution I have arrived at in the glossing of Abu' morphemes, words and concepts is often a compromise. In particular each morpheme has been given one gloss unless the morpheme fulfils more than one grammatical or semantic function. In such instances, appropriate meanings that approximate the range of meanings of the Abu' morphemes are given. To prevent confusion over the singular or plural sense of the Abu' nouns, I have in restricted circumstances used sg. and pl. 'singular' and 'plural' to isolate and maintain semantic distinctions. The English glosses are enclosed in single quotes.

The use of symbols and abbreviations to represent repetitious grammatical categories and words has been adopted to reduce the number of characters and avoid unnecessary verbage. These are listed below. Abu' morphemes or words have been underlined. Morphemes of other languages such as Tok Pisin have been specified wherever reference is made to them to avoid possible confusion of them with those of Abu'. A glossary of the most common Tok Pisin items used in the thesis is listed below for reference. The symbol '['] has been adopted to represent the glottal stop in Abu'.

### 1.4.0.2 A glossary of Tok Pisin terms

garamut 'slitgong'

haus kiap 'rest house (built in village  
for patrol officer)'

kiap 'patrol officer, government official'

kumul 'bird-of-paradise'

kunai	'sword grass' ( <i>Cylindrea imperata</i> )
kundu	'handdrum' (a traditional percussion instrument used in traditional dances)
luluai	'government appointed village chief' (during the period of colonial administration)
mal	'a kind of pubic covering'
mumu	'cooking done over heated stones'
pitpit	'a wild sugarcane with edible top' ( <i>Saccharum spp.</i> )
poisen	'a form of witchcraft'
sanguma	'a form of sorcery'
sayor	'vegetables'
singsing	'traditional dance/folkdance'
tambaran	'cultic-rites and all its secrets'
tanget	'species of cordyline' (also the device used for sending messages when knots are tied in it )
tulip	'a tree with edible leaves and fruit' ( <i>Gnetum gnemon</i> )
tultul	'assistant to luluai'
wantok	'person speaking the same language, compatriot'

#### 1.4.0.3 Abbreviations and Symbols

A	Agent
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
a+b	a and b or a plus b
AN	Austronesian
ASP	Aspect
BEN	Benefactive
C	Consonant
CAU	Causative marker
DAT	Dative
DD	Distal deictic
DEM	Demonstrative
DET	Determiner
DIM	Diminutive
DL	Dual
DO	Direct object
EMP	Emphatic
EXCL	Exclusive
E(V/C)	Epenthetic(vowel/consonant)
F	Female(agent/patient)
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive
GL	Goal

HAB	Habitual
HUM	Human
INCL	Inclusive
IND	Indefinite
IO	Indirect object
IR	Irrealis
k.o.	kind of
LOC	Locative
M	Male (agent/patient)
MOD	Modifier
N	Nominal
NCE	Nominal concord element
NM	Nominal modifier
NP	Noun phrase
NPST	Non-past
NUM	Number
OBJ	Object
PD	Proximal deictic
PL	Plural
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POS	Possessive
PRO	Pronoun
PRST	Present
PST	Past
Q	Interrogative
QTY	Quantifier
R	Realis
SUB	Subject
SG	Singular
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
TP	Tok Pisin
TEM	Temporal
TP	Time phrase (in grammar)
TR	Transitive
V	Vowel
’	Primary stress
’	Secondary stress
Vb	Verb
VM	Verbal modifier
VP	Verb phrase
X=Y	Item x is same as (or is to be interpreted as) item y
'	Glottal stop
!	Imperative
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
[ ]	Phonetic transcription
/ /	Phonemic transcription
*	Ungrammatical
X>Z	X goes to (or is realized as) Z
X<Z	X is derived from Z
-	Morpheme separator
0	Zero symbol or morpheme
{ }	Morphemic symbol
#	Word (or utterance) boundary

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ABU' LANGUAGE AREA IN MORE DETAIL

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the Abu' language area in more detail. I examine the social and linguistic reasons that prompt the Abu' to regard themselves as different from other Arapesh language groups. I also discuss the Abu' dialects towards the end of the chapter.

First, I want to summarize the post-Second World War processes of change experienced by the Abu'. This background information is important and must be known if related issues to be discussed in the following chapters are to be properly understood.

##### 2.1.1 The Universe of the Field Work

The field work was based at Womsis. The name Womsis is derived from Womehis 'ridge dwellers'. Womsis ( $143^{\circ}$ E  $3^{\circ}20'$ S) is situated on a narrow river valley at the junction of Midil and Keteh creeks. It is approximately 150 metres above sea level and is about twenty kilometres inland from the coast (cf. Australian Army Map, SA 54-16, Edition 2, Series T504). The Midil and Keteh creeks ('map 3) feed into the Atob, which flows into the Mabam about six kilometres downstream from the Midil and Atob junction. Below the Mabam and Atob rivers' junction, the river is called Mabam. The same river is referred to by the Suain as Danmap, ('Danmap is a compound) the first part of which is derived from the Ulau-Suain word dan 'water'.

Administratively, Womsis is made up of both Womsis itself and Wolum, a hamlet located on the banks of the Mabam, ('map 3). Broadly

speaking, Welihika is also included here because it belongs to the same political unit that makes up the Womsis council area which is represented by a councillor at the Siau Local Government Council meetings held every two months at Aitape. Throughout this thesis Womsis will be used to refer to both Womsis and Wolum villages. Womsis and Welihika, however, maintain separate registries and their total population in 1980 was approximately 560.

#### 2.1.1.1 Why Womsis was chosen as the base

Womsis was chosen for a number of reasons. The first was personal. Womsis, as my natal home, seemed an obvious choice. To have one's own village as a base for a university-sponsored empirical data collection was a rare opportunity.

Another good reason is that Womsis is the only educational centre in the entire Abu' territory. The establishment of the Womsis community school by the Franciscan Catholic Mission in 1978 has consolidated Womsis' long tradition of being the educational centre of the entire Abu' area.<sup>1</sup>

Students who attend the school often come with their parents. A number of the parents from Labuain, Aruek, Womsak, Niluk, Amom and Wam were interviewed when they came to attend the Parents and Community (P&C) Association's work-parades or when they came to look after their children.<sup>2</sup>

Although there is no vehicular road built to the West Sepik Abu' villages, the building of a small landing strip at Welihika enables

<sup>1</sup>Womsis was the first Abu' village to have catechist schools in the 1940s. This relatively longer exposure to western education has implications for the relatively higher literacy rate among the Womsis adult and child populations (cf.2.1.2.2).

<sup>2</sup>The catchment area for the Womsis community school, includes the Abu' and Aruek villages and children of Womsis and Welihika relatives from the Muhiang speaking village of Niluk (map 3) and some Miye speakers.

the Franciscan Catholic Mission's Cesena 127 to land there (map 3). It occasionally flies in the meagre supplies for the locally-owned trade store and the Catholic Mission and medical personnel. Since it is the only form of transport available, the choice of a field work base was made with that in mind.

#### 2.1.1.2 The Abu' people and their characteristics

Womsis and other Abu' people are akin to other Arapesh language speakers (see Mead 1939, Tuzin 1976). They are of a slight build and are generally of fine physical appearance. In principle, they are amiable, genuine and hospitable. Humility, obedience and loyalty are admired. Oratory skills are valued and disputations are normally settled through consensus. The concept of communalism is very central in Abu' life and has a far-reaching uniting effect. It draws people together to share with one another their skills, labour and its rewards. Communalism should be seen in the context of the practice of reciprocity. In essence it means that when an Abu' gives something of some value to another Abu' or to an outsider, the recipient is expected to do the same. Generous hospitality, for example, is offered with the view that the host will be offered the same when s/he happens to be the guest.

Christianity has had an impact on Abu' spiritual life. Since the Catholic Mission went to the area in the 1930s, many Abu' have been baptized. Womsis is a good example of an Abu' village where almost all are Catholics. Christianity has therefore become an integral part of the Abu' life.

### 2.1.2 Non-traditional processes of modernization

Processes of modernization experienced by the Abu' will be examined under five broad headings: education, health, transport, economic and political. These are discussed in detail as follows.

#### 2.1.2.1 Education

The first non-traditional form of education the Abu' were exposed to was religious instruction. This was introduced by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). The parish priest of Ulau, Father Edmund Kunisch, who built a station there in 1930, was responsible for spreading Christianity among the Abu' (in their terms) "pagans".

Realising that the pastoral duties were beyond his individual capacity to cope with, he and his fellow congregational member, Father Richard Kunze, who was stationed at Yakamul at the same time, established a catechetical training centre at this parish. Young men from the coast and inland were selected, taught smatterings of pidgin English and were told to go to Yakamul for two or three years literacy and pastoral training. Promising students, as noted in chapter 1, were sent off for further pastoral training at St.Xavier's on Kairiru island. The rest returned to their respective villages to teach religion, simple arithmetic, reading, writing, simple history, and geography (mainly of Europe and Israel). The medium of instruction was Tok Pisin. Attendance was compulsory until the day students passed their religious tests and were baptized. A few brighter students continued to attend classes, or became assistant catechists to the established salaried catechists until such time as they were able to open up a bush catechist school and run it on their own. For the majority, baptism was the end of their formal non-traditional education.

It was not until the late 1950s and 1960s that a handful of Womsis and Amom children were fortunate to have themselves enrolled in

a few of the English-medium schools outside the Abu' area. Nearly all of them have proceeded to become members of the educated Papua New Guinean elite.

The example and sheer hard work shown by this group, including the author, have become models, as it were, that many Abu' parents want their children to emulate. Consequently, many Abu' children, especially from Womsis and Wolum were brought down to the parochial English-medium school at Suain in the 1970s. During that period, the Abu' student population constituted about 30 per cent of the total Suain community school enrolment.

Other Abu' children attended schools at Aitape, Dreikikir and Maprik where they could find a place and protection.<sup>3</sup>

Although some succeeded in getting enrolled at the two Sandau provincial high schools at Aitape, and subsequently at different tertiary institutions, for the majority, grade six was the end of their formal non-traditional education. Most of them returned to their villages and continue to live village life, although it is not always appreciated by ambitious members of the group. Many feel that the state has unjustifiably denied them the right to continue their schooling beyond the primary level.

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<sup>3</sup>The author, for example, started his formal education at the Womsis catechist school in 1955, then at Raihu, about six kilometres from Aitape township, and went to Bongos in 1957 to attend the catechist school there. He was baptized there and was then to be sent by his uncle, Joseph Ubaim (the head-catechist at Bongos then), to attend an English-medium school at Warabung near Yangoru. Instead of going to Warabung, he returned to his parents who were patients at the leper colony at that time. He continued his education there and eventually got himself enrolled at the St. Anna Catholic Mission School, and then on to St. Ignatius primary (both are located in the Aitape environs). He was then sent over to do his secondary schooling on Seleo Island. After completing Form 2, he went on to St. Fidelis College in Alexishafen, north of Madang town. There he finished his Form 6 in 1970 and was then sent down to the major Catholic seminary in Bomana, near Port Moresby. After a couple years of priestly studies, he left and enrolled for studies at the University of Papua New Guinea. After graduating with a B.Ed., and a B.A. Honours in 1976 and 1977 respectively, he was sent to the University of Hawaii where he obtained his M.A. in 1979.

It is not only the children who are dissatisfied. Many parents became very discouraged when their children failed to reach the high school entry level exam or if their children obtained the required grade but were not chosen to go on to high school. The degree of dissatisfaction is now further heightened by the recent Womsis school grade six exam and subsequent high school students selection. Because of the quota system imposed upon all schools by the state, only 25 per cent of the grade six finalists will find a place in high schools. The rest have to contend with village life. Interestingly, the trend is now slowly changing. Parents and children are now accepting the fact that the national and provincial governments do not have enough money for compulsory universal high school education. This realization probably explains why Abu's parents (particularly those from Womsis) continue to co-operate and support the maintenance of their community school.

#### 2.1.2.2 Rate of Literacy

Literacy, defined here as the ability to recognize written words and to be able to write (anything from a few words to a letter), is not found amongst all Abu's. Among the Womsis, the following broad estimates were made. About 75 percent of the total Womsis population of 320 is literate. Grade six school leavers make up approximately 12.9 percent,<sup>4</sup> secondary and tertiary students make up about 1.6 percent and literates now employed in the modern sector constitute 3.3 percent. The remaining portion of the 75% literate population only read and write in Tok Pisin. Literacy in English among the former group varies widely.

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<sup>4</sup>Word has been received that the first group of grade six graduates at the Womsis Community School completed their primary final examination and seven out of a total of 20 students were selected to attend high schools in Aitape and Nuku. The rest remain in the village. Thus the percentage of grade six leavers has been increased in 1985.

### 2.1.2.3 Health

Malaria is endemic as everywhere in lowland Papua New Guinea. Tuberculosis, leprosy and skin diseases such as tropical ulcers and tinea are evident but controllable. Traditional cures have always been used, supplemented by Western medicine if available at the local clinic. Fear of sorcery, witchcraft, and ghosts is prevalent and many deaths that occurred were reported to have been caused by these evil forces, even though such cannot be proven scientifically. Patients, whose physical ailments were attributed to sorcery or witchcraft, can only, the Abu' argue, be cured by traditional medicine men or women. This belief in spiritual cure often resulted in the death of many Abu' who could have been cured if taken to hospital in Aitape or Maprik for treatment.

### 2.1.2.4 Transport

The most felt need in this area is a vehicular road. All forms of socioeconomic efforts have been hampered by this lack. The proposed road from Suain to Womsis still remains unbuilt and will probably remain so for many years to come.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1.2.5 Economy

Indicated below is a list of ways by means of which Womsis people earn money. What is described here is also true for Welihika, Balup and Malin. Amom, Womsak No.1 and No.2 are relatively better off economically. The building of the Womsak-Sparek road which terminates at Womsak No. 2 has boosted entrepreneurial activities in the area.

Womsis and Welihika people earn cash by:-

<sup>5</sup>In 1981 Karl Stack, the Sandaun (West Sepik) Provincial member, informed the author that he allocated K4,000 (about 4,800 Australian dollars) towards the project out of his portion of the sectoral fund. When this money was not used within that financial year, it was retrieved by the Transport and Industry Department of the national government. In 1983 about K2,000 was allocated to the project and used to pay Abu' men employed to chop down trees through the proposed route. The money was used up in three months and they were only able to chop trees along the route from Suain to Balup.

1. occasional sale of coffee and cocoa beans, (usually by taking them down to the pick-up points along the nearest vehicular roads, the Sepik Highway or the Wewak-Aitape road;
2. occasional sale of the small amounts of gold dredged from the Atob river and Mindil creek;
3. money received from employed relatives
4. cargo-carrying for official parties who visit the area
5. occasional sale of pork, wild-fowl eggs and vegetables to Wamsok and Wam villages and
6. earnings from the recently-formed Womsis School market.

In addition, several village type trade-stores were opened in both Womsis and Welihika in the mid-1960s but were closed down soon after they opened up for business. Lack of both entrepreneurial skills and a regular source of income to keep the business going led to their closure.

The only village trade store that appeared successful at the time of research and which made a profit due to efficient management was the Womsis-Welihika co-operative store. In 1981, a sum of K200 (c.\$250 was made. Since the departure in 1982 of Sister Coleen (a Catholic nun who helped them establish and supervised the running of the co-operative), the store has virtually run down and its continuity in the future is doubtful.

To sum up, the economic situation among the Womsis and Welihika is poor. Lack of vehicular roads induces a lot of Abu' people to leave coffee and cocoa plantations unattended and trees unpruned. Consequently, trees appear unhealthy and weatherbeaten. Until such time as a road is built into the area, the economic situation will remain as it is.

#### 2.1.2.6 Political

Most Abu' people are aware of the major political changes that have been taking place in the country. Radios, local government councillors, teachers, and educated Abu' have been responsible for spreading and making people aware of such changes. Village level politics has picked up tremendously in the past decade. It is a common experience to see most men and women of all ages and educational background sit and discuss issues as well as expressing their frustrations over the manner their elected members of Parliament (MPs) and provincial government representatives have let them down by not fulfilling their campaign promises. In view of these feelings, many Abu' people have become politically apathetic and frustrated. Their major concern has always been to do with the building of the Suain-Womsis or Womsak-Womsis road to enable them to sell their cash-crops and to have easier access to markets in Aitape, Maprik and Wewak to sell their vegetables.

Unfortunately, it seems as if political party affiliations have dictated political decisions in the local list of priorities. Abu', being supporters of the Melanesian Alliance political party, hold the view that the proposed Suain-Womsis road is being neglected because they did not cast their votes for the two P.A.N.G.U. (Papua and New Guinea Union) party members, namely, Karl Stack, the Sandaun provincial representative and the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and Gabriel Ramoi from Suain, who won the Aitape-Lumi seat in the 1982 national elections.

The apparent political neglect shown by their national and provincial governments' representatives has, for the first time in the political history of the community, prompted the Abu' to have an Abu' man standing for the November 1984 Sandaun (West Sepik) Provincial Government elections. Thus Alphonse Salipen, who was the headmaster of

the Womsis community school till the time of election, stood for the Aitape-East-Coast and Inland provincial seat and had a landslide victory over the coastal candidates.

## 2.2 The Abu' Language

### 2.2.1 The Abu' Language Area

The Abu' language area is sociologically defined as the geographic area in which members of the traditional Abu' speaking community live and assert their ethno-linguistic homogeneity without being questioned or challenged seriously about this status by related and unrelated contiguous language groups.

Linguistically, the Abu' language area is identified by a specific set of lexical, phonological (and possibly grammatical) isoglosses that exhibit considerable differences between it and other genetically related languages.

Having provided in broad terms the sociological and linguistic definitions of the Abu' language area, I wish to direct my attention to the Abu' reasons on why the Abu' language should be regarded as different from other Arapesh languages.

When asked about the relationship of Abu' vis-à-vis other Arapesh languages, the majority of the people interviewed asserted that the Abu' linguistic boundary ends at Balup to the north and Womsak No.1 to the south, including the in-between villages of Malin, Wolum, Womsis, Aspeis, Welihika, Amom, and Womsak No.2. A minority, however, expanded the Abu' linguistic area identified by the majority and included Sparek, Niluk, Nakipeim, Arohemi and Matapau as Abu'-speaking villages as well, thereby maintaining that that is where a boundary line must be drawn to mark off the Abu' from Muhiang and Buki. Many Abu' people did not know that Weri' is a language of the Arapesh language family. What is obvious in view two is the inclusion of villages that are on the fringe of the Abu' area represented in view one (Fig 2-2).

Given these two partly conflicting views, the immediate concern is to try to establish which of the views is more insightful. To achieve that, some understanding of the sociological and linguistic arguments is necessary.

In view of the interaction among neighbouring villages through long-standing social contacts such as inter-ethnic marriages, child adoption from relatives of neighbouring language groups and intra-language sociocultural activities, the task of establishing boundaries (cf. Gumperz and Hymes, 1972) is a thorny one. The problem becomes more acute when one deals with members of genetically related languages as in our case.

Some Abu'-speaking villages shift linguistic loyalties for socioeconomic advantage. For instance, Womsak No. 1 and No.2 and Amom tend to accentuate their social, political and economic affiliation with the Sparek at the expense of their traditional Abu' heritage. This is due to the fact that Sparek has become the socioeconomic outlet to Maprik or Wewak. When the abovementioned Abu' villages have conflicts with the Sparek, the Abu' re-emphasize their Abu' ethnicity.

In spite of the fluid nature of the Abu' linguistic boundary, the majority of Abu' insisted that Abu' is a different language from other Arapesh languages. This differentiation is marked by the degree of mutual intelligibility between Abu' and its sister languages. To demonstrate the linguistic variance, the Abu' have systematized a number of comparative statements and used them to assert the relationship. The phrases recorded were:

1. bulan etin 'one talk', same language
2. mamine' as dua' 'we only hear (language X) '
3. mada' bilibilanas 'we switch languages'
4. mamine' es e matah koikooyo' 'we hear and speak little' (bit of language Y)
5. mamine' enes, matah enes, enes uwa' 'we hear and speak some but not others'

6. satah sakuisihes 'they mix up talk'

7. dika dei'aka 'different language'

These phrases are also those used for determining the multilingual ability of Abu' in other languages. This will be discussed further in chapter 7.

In places like Papua New Guinea, where speakers are illiterate, or may not be literate in their vernaculars (where, in any case, written materials are not usually available), researchers have to contend with broad comparative remarks like ((1)-(7)) as preliminary criteria for determining linguistic relationship or differentiation. These provide the inquirer the basis to further examine the overt linguistic features that cause the varying levels of unintelligibility among languages of immediate concern.

In this study, all Abu' speakers agreed on the genetic relationship of Abu', Buki and Muhiang. The relationship of Abu' to both is subsumed under criterion (4). Many Abu', however, did not know that Weri' is a member of the Arapesh language family (Laycock, 1973). The reason is as stated under criterion (6). A few of the Abu' respondents who have had some contact (e.g., on plantations, or catechetical work) among or with the Weri', contend that to know and speak Weri' depends on the length of time one spends and practises speaking the language with the native speakers of the language concerned. A catechist's wife who accompanied her husband who worked among the Weri' in the 1950s claimed that it took her about a year to know enough Weri' to get by.<sup>6</sup>

The reality of the situation is one that characterizes a "dialect chain". The concept of a dialect chain refers to a linguistic situation in which adjacent villages of a given language speak

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<sup>6</sup>Rita Narasu'i, pers. com., Womsis village, 1984.

dialects which are mutually intelligible but then this degree of (mutual) intelligibility decreases with distance until one reaches villages at the extremity of the dialect chain where dialects become virtually unintelligible (cf. e.g. Bynon 1977:192-195).

For example, Womsis people can hear and speak with villages like Amom, Womsak No. 2, Aspeis, Balup and Malin, but this degree of mutual intelligibility is reduced considerably as one moves beyond these villages, so that speaking with Niluk, Nakipeim and Arohemi may take place, but conversations are not easily understood. When I paid a visit to Niluk, I was able to understand some of the simple conversations but often found myself struggling to make sense out of some shared vocabulary items whose phonological composition is different. For instance, words like alman 'man' in Abu' drops the word medial lateral l resulting in aman/emen in Niluk and Sparek (Muhiang-speakers) and Weri'. The same sound is realized as an alveo-palatal flap [χ] in the Buki-speaking villages of Nakipeim, Arohemi and Matapau, thus alman in Abu' becomes arman in Buki.

During conversation with my host at 'Yiluk, I confused the word aman 'man' with the Abu' word naman 'tomorrow'. The difficulty with understanding neighbouring Arapesh-speaking villages has, as I will demonstrate shortly, not so much to do with grammar as with vocabulary and phonological differences (Table 2-1). Since I did not conduct an exhaustive study into the dialectology of the Arapesh languages as a whole, my discussion will be brief and general.

### 2.2.2 Lexical Differences

The main linguistic feature that impedes mutual intelligibility among the four genetically related languages of the Arapesh family, is difference in lexical items. The Abu' are quite aware of the differences and hence use that as a standard criterion for differentiating their language from other Arapesh languages.

Some of the lexical differences are illustrated in the following table. The asterisked items were drawn from a standard survey word list recorded by Bob Conrad and his field-assistants in 1977. The Buki items were provided by Bernard Narakobi, a native speaker of the same language. The unmarked items were elicited by the author and his cousin Joe Nalapan from native speakers of the languages in Port Moresby. The slash (/), is used to split items under Abu'; the item preceding this symbol is from Upper Abu' and the one following is from 'Lower Abu''. The alternate forms provided by other Arapesh speakers are probably from the dialects of the languages concerned. Singular forms only are given.

Table 2-1: Lexical Differences among Arapesh Languages

	Abu'	Buki	Muhiang	Weri'
1. man	aleman	arman	aman or emen	emen
2. woman	numata'	elmatokw, armatok	nimata'w	opondu'
3. father	aiwa	jaken, iajen	eheluna	enimie
4. husband	anen	remien, araminen	wauluno	ilamine
5. she	'a'u'	ogok, okok	ogokh, ogomba	'o'o'
6. shoulder	rahi'ek	arah	*ikafh	i'ah
7. (his) back	akata	(onanib) ogab	alofunga	se'ete
8. tongue	ahaka/iham	jaham, aham	*afenga	ihah
9. thigh	maruba	mib	bimbita	bwalinge
10. penis	butum	eibit, (butum)	butum	onumb
11. stick	bakl	butum	*bangel	buniangel
12. vulva	aful	niuh or urur	oroful	wale'eh
13. (his) neck	binu'/isur'ah	binuk or aruwigur	*bwini'w or ogokumis	eneneimi
14. skin	aluf	egenih	*aloph	
15. bird	almil/alimil	almil or armir	*amil	a'an
16. betelnut	bub	bub	*bemb	mandebeif

17. pepper leaf	wasuf	wosuf	wosuf	su'utuef/ wasuf
18. lime	ahul	ahur, ohur, aul	afol	siwenif
19. dried banana leaf	ru'af	arukap	upahih	supais
20. coconut shell	nubura'	aburak	nimba'	kwetiwoh
21. (burning) fire	unih/asi'eh (hekedih)	(nanu i) rih nih (hanu)	nif, ape'amp	nigeih or ingeih
22. coconut sheath strainer	muek(if)	mudogip or mudop	mu'uhup	mu'luhup
23. coconut palm	aha'	ohok	afa'w or ahafa'	aha'
24. sprout-ing coconut	arah	warum	ulum	ulum
25. arrow	sikauin	totuor	wambo' or huken	si'aumbun
26. feast	waa'	nig or nigas	?	?
27. pig	bul	bur	*mbol	bul
28. cassowary	unaru'	unaruk	*onalo'w	italu'
29. flying fox	ihial	ohuiar	*ofial	uhial
30. house	aulaf	urupat	*ipat	ondof or ondoh
31. garden	maula	nubarig	ouf	mundes
32. food	we'isi/werikin	worigun	ngwe'eimi	wali'ite
33. sugar-cane	buhuna	oroh	*nate'in	nate'in, ate'in
34. yam	wa'uin	kokwin	*nelemp	bwisin
35. short yam	melhein	urukum	*gaufakh or gaui	wo'ohin
36. long yam	efini	obutin	*apwin	angin
37. bark (tree)	nukutah	ourah	*angwaf or angwhofh	angwoh
38. wind	uhin	uwin	*fufin	wuhin

39.morning	luhut	ruahef/ruaef	*kuhimbita	kusimbite
40.white	sakawal	wamaiji,jogorih	* efifinei	bungalene
41.he says	anin natah	anen nakri/naka	*anan na'e/i	enene nakri'i
42.man goes	anin nahe'	anen ninak	*anan nefe'	enene nambi
43.he eats	anin nasah	anen nawok	*anan na'	wom
44.you sg. enter house	nuus aulaf	no nauij urupat	wha' ufi' ipat	wha' umbi ondoh
45.you sg. fetch water	nira abal	nira abar nugi abar	(fo'o) nila embel	nambi lehe amber
46.he runs	anin nubulawa	onun nahar	*anan nesangih	enene liliwetin
47.(his) foot	eruh (enini)	(aneuh) iorih	efimbe'	bwli'ah
48.he lies down	na'is itaf	onun nabu nakus	*anan nidisilaf nu'is nu'uhf	enen nanges
49.(his) hand	lakl	ragur	* lengel	lengel

Since the thesis was not concerned with a detailed historical or comparative analysis of the linguistic relationship of the Arapesh languages, a definitive statement on the linguistic differentiation and/or relationship of Abu' to other Arapesh languages is not possible. However, broad generalizations about their relationship can be made based on the percentages of cognates shared among them.

The following table shows the percentages of shared vocabulary from the lexical items listed above. As the list contains some cultural items, the counts are probably a little higher than would be the case with standard lists of basic vocabulary.

Shared vocabulary in percentages

Language	Abu'	Buki	Muhiang	Weri'
Abu'	=====	38	28	14
Buki	38	=====	30	14
Muhiang	28	30	=====	28
Weri'	14	14	28	=====

From this chart it is obvious that Abu' shares a relatively higher number of similar words (c.38 % cognates) with Buki and about 28 percent cognacy with Muhiang, but shares a mere 14 percent cognates with Weri'. Two basic explanations can be suggested about the results. First, there seems to be a correlation between linguistic propinquity and the number of words shared among the languages. That is to say that Abu' seems to share a relatively higher percentage of cognates with languages with which it shares a common border than with Weri'.

The second reason why Abu' shares relatively lower percentages of cognates with Weri' and Muhiang has to do with shared inheritance from a common language ancestor and the time that has passed since divergence took place. The percentages of shared vocabulary demonstrates that Weri' is remotely related to Abu' and Buki, sharing with both only 14 percent of the words attested. However, Weri' shares a relatively higher percentage (c. 28 percent cognates) with Muhiang with whom they share a common linguistic border. On the basis of these lexico-statistical counts, it appears as if Weri' was probably the earliest Arapesh group to diverge from an assumed linguistically homogenous community, which for the sake of discussion, will be called Proto-Arapesh. The next to diverge seems to have been Muhiang since it only shares about 30 percent words with both Abu' and Buki. Finally,

Abu' and Buki might have split off at about the same time. The linguistic picture that emerges from this very preliminary comparative statement yields the tree diagram provided on the following page (fig 2-1) (based on Laycock 1973, 1981).

### 2.2.3 Sound Variation

Not only do the Abu' say their language differs from other Arapesh languages because they differ in a number of words; they also hold the view that other Arapesh languages sound different from Abu'. The sound alterations will be considered here. The pattern of sound correspondences between Abu' and other Arapesh languages (especially Buki and Muhiang) shown in Table:2-2 are drawn from cognates listed in Table:2-1. The empty set symbol ( $\emptyset$ ) is used to show that there is no sound correspondence in the word in the language so marked.

Table 2-2: Sound Differences.

Abu' Buki Muhiang Weri'

1	'	k	g	'	intervocally (cf.5,19)
2	'	k	'	'	word finally (cf.2,13,20,23,28,48)
3	h	h	f	h	word medially (cf.18,23,29)
4	l	r	l	-l(?)	word finally (cf.12,15,18,27,29,49)
5	l	r	l	Ø	after [u] (cf.12,18,27,30)
6	l	r	l	Ø	finally & medially (cf.1,14,18,27,28)
7	a	o	o	a,o	in initial syllable and after [w] (cf.5,14,17)
8	u	o	o	Ø	medially (cf.5,14)

#### 2.2.3.1 Summary of Sound Variations.

It should be noted that Arapesh phonology is straightforward. There are no exceptionally difficult sounds in the language except for the voiceless bilabial fricative [p] (I.P.A.) [ɸ] written f in the presentation. The occurrence of a voiceless velar fricative (represented by kh in the presentation] was noted in Muhiang.

A number of general statements can be made about the sound correspondences between Abu' and its sister Arapesh languages (especially Buki and Muhiang). Firstly it can be seen that the velar stop consonant occurring intervocally in the three Arapesh languages

corresponds to glottal stop in Abu' both medially (cf.Table:2-2, No.1) and finally (cf.Table:2-2, No.2). Another regular correspondence is noted between the Abu' and Buki fricative /h/ which corresponds to a voiceless bilabial fricative /f/ in Muhiang.

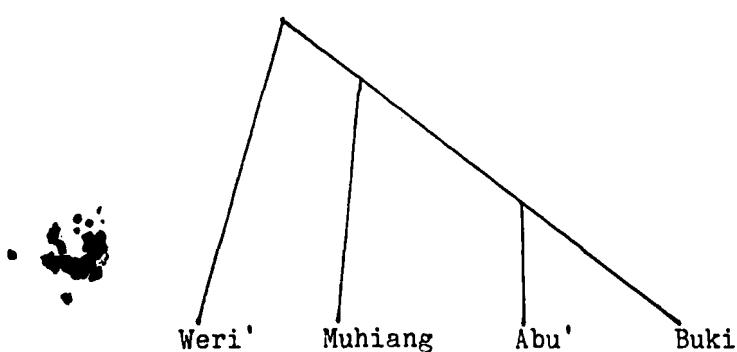
The alveo-palatal lateral /l/ in Abu' and Muhiang seems to match the Buki alveolar flap /r/ and seems to be fairly consistently maintained (see 5 and 6). Vowel variations were difficult to sort out. There is some indication that there is some consistency where /a/ or /u/ in Abu' matches with /o/ in both Buki and Muhiang (cf.7 & 8, Table:2-2).

Whereas the Abu' tend to restrict the prenasalization rule only to consonants that have the feature [+anterior, +coronal] (cf. chapt.3); Muhiang and Weri', according to my knowledge, do not have such restrictions and thus prenasalize velar stops as well.

It was demonstrated that for Abu', although a member of the Arapesh family, the percentages of vocabulary items it shares with other Arapesh languages seem to fit well into a linguistic range (i.e., 28-80 % cognates) that qualifies it as a language in its own right.

Figure 2-1: Arapesh Language Family Tree

\*Proto-Arapesh



## 2.3 The Abu' Dialects

As already indicated (p.21), Abu' has two dialects. These are Abu' Womenika 'Upper Abu', womenika being the word for 'mountain ridge', and Abu' Ounibisima 'Lower Abu', ounibisima being the Abu' word for 'low-land'. The former is spoken in the villages of Womsak Number 1, No.2, Amom, and by the half of the population of Womis village which is mostly descended of southern migrants. The latter is spoken by the people of Wolum, Aspeis, Welihika, Wolum, Malin, Balup and the descendants of Womsis' sedentary clans. Womsis village is thus dialectally divided by the Keteh creek. The western section speaks Abu' Womenika and the eastern section of the village speak Abu' Ounibisima (Fig 2-2). These two dialects are distinguishable from both cultural and linguistic points of view.

### 2.3.1 Cultural differences

The Abu', like other speech communities, not only differentiate one human aggregate from another linguistically, but do so also culturally. Both Upper Abu' and Lower Abu' dialect communities are generally identified with several overtly marked sociocultural features including, among others, food, traditional attire and implements, and certain customs and cultural practices.

Upper Abu' speakers, having closer affinity with the southern Abu' speakers of Womsak and Amom, who in turn have closer ties with other southern communities, such as the Muhiang and Miye, not only share their language but also a lot of customs and culture with them. Lower Abu', being more closely associated with the coastal communities have acquired some of their characteristics. In terms of food, the Upper Abu' are generally regarded as yam eaters and Lower Abu' as sago and meat eaters just like the Suain and other coastal communities. Emphasis on yams entails the practice and observance of a whole host of food taboos. For example, a woman who experiences her

monthly period must stay away from the area where the gardens are made and those involved in making yam gardens must avoid visits to the woman. Sexual intercourse is also avoided in the period during which yams are grown because of the fear that those who engage in such activities will weaken their potency. Taboos that are associated with the yam culture are not observed by the Lower Abu' because they do not, strictly speaking, make yam growing a part of their agricultural life.

Regarding traditional attire, the Lower Abu', according to oral tradition (cf. Nekitel, 1975:29) were known to have been mal 'k.o. pubic covering' wearers while the Upper Abu' did not have any form of clothing. In terms of traditional implements, the spear woba' is always identified with the southern culture and hence with the Upper Abu' and the bow and arrows with the Lower Abu' who claimed to have acquired the skills of making them from the Suain.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding cultural differences between the Upper and Lower Abu', there are two prominent things that differentiate them. First is the practice of 'sorcery' ehu' (Tok Pisin sanguma) and 'witchcraft' auluh (Tok Pisin poison). The former, although claimed to have been dreamed

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<sup>7</sup>The bow and arrow were suggested to have spread to the Aitape east-coast and islands from the Aitape west coast. cf. Woichom, 1979:18; Mead, 1961 and Nekitel 1975:29. In view of the presence of the same in many parts of the Sepik region as well as other parts of lowland and highlands New Guinea, one cannot be too sure of the original homeland of these implements. They could have been developed independently by the Arapesh or other Torricelli mountain communities who needed swift and accurate weapons to catch the wild game in the thick jungles.

up by a Wam man who hence developed it as part of the Miye culture,<sup>8</sup> a number of Upper Abu' men have been trained and have become sorcerers (Tok Pisin sanguma man) and thus are identified by it. Lower Abu' on the other hand, are generally regarded as skilful witches (Tok Pisin poisen man) just as are many coastal men.

The above discussion sums up some of the cultural features that the Abu' often refer to when asked about the sort of things that distinguish one Abu' dialect group from another. In what follows I will discuss the linguistic differences between the two dialects. However, as there are no grammatical nor phonological differences between the two Abu' dialects these aspects of language will not be discussed.

### 2.3.2 Lexical Differences Between Abu' Dialects

The main difference between the two Abu' dialects lies in the area of lexicon. Both dialects have a considerable number of different words and some of these are presented in the following table.

Table 2-3: Lexical dissimilarities between Abu' Womenika and Abu' Ounibisima

(Gloss)	<u>Abu' Womenika</u> (Upper Abu')	<u>Abu' Ounibisima</u> (Lower Abu')
51. children	betois	nikasis

<sup>8</sup>Mahite Butehe, pers. com. 1981, informed me at Hambini village that a man from Bombosilime, another Wam village located south-west of Hambini, had a dream during which he was instructed to make sorcery, which is referred to in Miye as arungineme. If all the instructions were followed correctly, he was told, the sorcery would be powerful and hence could be used to kill his enemies. He followed the instructions and tested its strength by killing a small child. When the child died, he tried it on an old lady. When it proved successful, he tried it on healthy young adults and found it workable. He kept the secret to himself and used that knowledge to kill a number of enemies in the village before he passed its knowledge on to neophytes whom he trained and instructed and accompanied in their initial experimental killings before they were allowed to go out on killing trips on their own. Seniority in the rank of sorcerers is won through the number of people one kills.

52. mother	amiya	ame'u'
53. father	aiwa	ame'ina
54. father-in-law	numa'ita	na'ur
55. eye	naim	nabom
56. nose	mutu'	mukuras
57. big(man)	(aleman) ubahineri	(aleman) dabanari
58. small (girl)	(numata') koio'u'i	(numata') so'u'i
59. big	ubah	daba
60. quiet	mete'	muu'/kusu'a
61. what	melein	uma
62. many	welei	abuwatakw
63. basket	serah	uram
64. food	we'isi	werikin
65. sago soup	maruf	bous
66. stirred sago	lehin	k <sup>w</sup> uin
67. wallaby	masu'	aiban
68. snake (generic)	uul	uleta
69. ground, soil	itaf	amanab
70. forest/jungle	ouruf	urah
71. coconut shell plate	nubura'	aurah
72. k.o.coral tree <i>(Erythrina indica)</i>	bunohuka	welihika
73. play(noun)	nikitok	aureh
74. to sleep	kis	nisuh
75. yes	edilisi	pei'-o'-u-hou/wosi'
76. he-went	n-ala'	n-ediei'

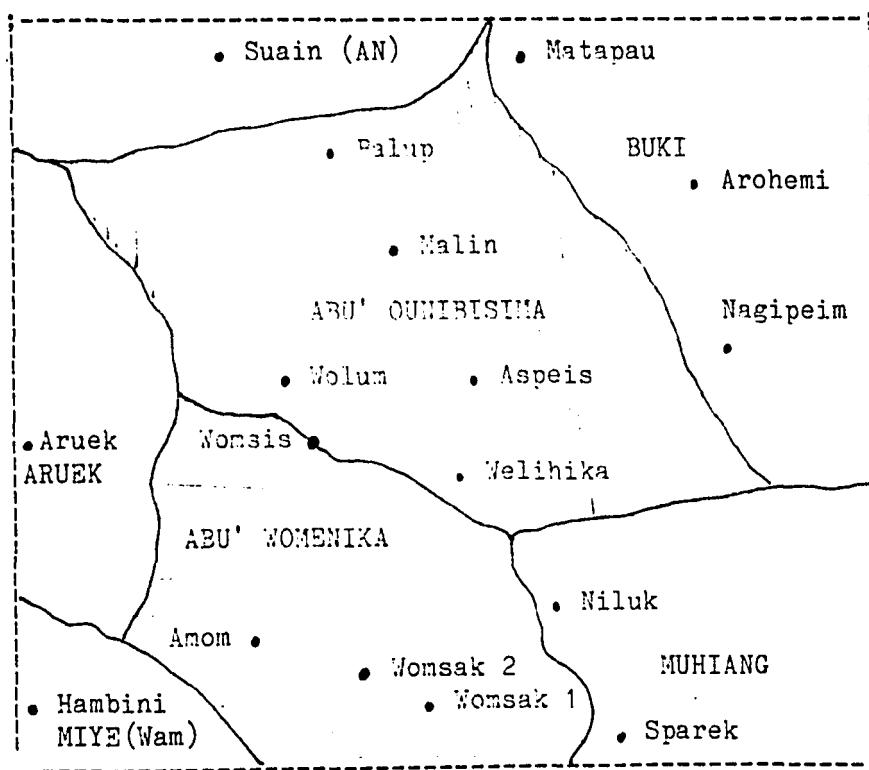
### 2.3.2.1 Summary

Presented in the above table are some of the common lexical differences between the two dialects of Abu'. Although quite considerable in number, they do not hamper mutual intelligibility between the two dialects. The amalgamation of the Upper-Abu' and Low-Abu' speakers at Womsis village since the 1930s intensified sociocultural contact among the two groups. As a result the degree of mutual unintelligibility between the two dialects was reduced. In fact there is so much integration that many young Womsis people cannot tell to what dialect the words they use belong. Many younger Abu' parents cannot distinguish between the two dialects. Lexical items like those presented above are taken as alternative terms for the items and not as words from two different dialects. Consequently, speakers of either dialect may switch codes at any time during conversation and in any context and each party knows that the other will understand with relative ease. Difficulty in understanding words becomes more evident

when speakers representing the two dialects discuss subjects relating to zoology or botany. The vocabulary pertaining to specialized areas tend to differ quite considerably.

I wish to reiterate, by way of conclusion, that the Abu' scene is characterized by a mixing of members of both dialect groups as well as migrants from Miye and Muhiang villages. The mobility and subsequent resettlement of migrants in the Abu' villages created a linguistically disturbed scenario. As a result the Abu' language has been continuously subjected to linguistic pressures to expand its store of lexicon to cope with the changing linguistic trends.

Figure 2-2: The Distribution of the Abu' dialects.



## CHAPTER 3

### AN ABU' PHONOLOGY AND GRAMMAR

#### 3.1 Introduction

##### 3.1.0.1 Aim and Scope of this Chapter

Straight descriptive analysis of Abu' was not a major theme for study in the field work undertaken for this thesis. Consequently, a detailed analysis of the language is beyond both the aim of this chapter as well as the scope of the thesis. Hence, I will be concerned mainly with a description of the most general features of Abu' grammar and phonology. This general description has two basic aims. Firstly, its description is intended to acquaint the reader with the general background knowledge of the language and second to provide the linguistic perspective to the remarks that I will make on the sociolinguistic aspects of Abu' in the following chapters. It revises and builds on Nekitel (1977). The linguistic material on which this chapter is written was drawn from Abu' Womenika 'Upper Abu', the dialect with which I am most familiar, being my mother tongue.

#### 3.2 Phonology

The phonological system of Abu' still contains unsolved problems. The phonemic solutions given here are intended to serve only as a basis for the practical orthography used throughout this thesis.

### 3.2.1 Preliminary remarks about the phonological units

An Abu' utterance constitutes a series of phonological segments which are divided into vowels and consonants. The phonetic (or physical) properties of speech manifested by vowels contrast between front and back vowels as to higher and lower tongue positions. The central high vowel represented by a barred-i [ɨ] is phonemically important when stressed. The lower central vowel [a] occurs with the body of the tongue neither extended nor retracted and contrasts with the front and back vowels. Consonants contrast in manner of articulation among stops, nasals, laterals, flaps and fricatives. Stops and nasals contrast in point of articulation as to labial, alveo-dental, palatal and velar. The lateral occurs about the alveo-palatal point of articulation while the flapped-r, symbolized [ɾ], is made by flapping the apex once against the alveolar ridge, while articulating the necessary pharyngeal constriction.

### 3.2.2 Presentation

In this thesis the following orthography is used for listing and describing the Abu' material:

#### 3.2.2.1 Orthography

The following symbols are used to represent twenty-six Abu' phonemes:

Table 3-1: An Abu' Phoneme Inventory

<u>Chart 1 Consonants</u>					
	Labials	Alveo- Palatal	Velar	Velar	Glottal
V.Less Stops	p	t	k	k <sup>w</sup>	'
Vd.Stops	b	d			
Nasals	m	n			
Fricative	f	s			

Lateral	l			
Flap	r			
Semi-Consonants	w	y	h	h <sup>w</sup>
<u>Chart 2 Vowels</u>				
	Front	Central	Back	
High	i	ɨ	u, u:	
Mid	e, e:		o	
Low		a, a:		

The above orthographic symbols represent twenty-six phonemes of which nine are vowels, the rest are consonants or consonantal in character. Their phonemic status was recognized on the ability the suspicious pairs of sounds had in signalling semantic contrast(s) between or among words (minimal/near-minimal pairs) with identically similar linguistic environments (usually same phonetic properties) except for the sounds in question which differ.

### 3.2.3 Distribution of Abu' Consonant and Vowel Phonemes

In this section, I will demonstrate how suspicious pairs of phones are phonemically distinguished from one another by illustrating the minimal or near-minimal morphological pairs that provide semantic contrast for the phonemic variances noted. I will also be discussing the kinds of phonological problems I faced in my attempt at identifying the Abu' phonemes as well as pointing out the solutions I have arrived at.

The Abu' phonetic system lacks a bilabial voiceless stop (Nekitel, 1977). There is, however, a phone which is phonetically realized as either a voiceless bilabial fricative (symbolized by a barred-p [p̪] which is the same as the IPA [ɸ]) or a labio-dental fricative [f]. The two sounds do not contrast and hence are represented

phonemically by /f/. Some speakers do not contrast Tok Pisin /p/ and /f/, but others have learnt to articulate /p/ and distinguish it from /f/. In the phoneme inventory, I have adopted both the /f/ and /p/. The latter was adopted to cater for circumstances where /p/ may occur, especially in Tok Pisin loan words that have become part of the Abu' lexicon.

One generalization about obstruents in Abu' is that they are not released when occurring word finally, although there may be slight deviations from the rule by certain speakers, especially those who are influenced by foreign language phonologies.

The voiced alveolar stop /d/ contrasts with its corresponding voiceless stop /t/ in word initial and medial positions, although it does not in the word final position. In the final position only /t/ seems to occur. Thus the two sounds are neutralized word finally and the neutralisation process is "context determined" (Sommerstein, 1977:29-31). This rule of utterance-final neutralization of [t] and [d] seems to apply to Tok Pisin loans fairly consistently, although some speakers (mainly those who have had some form of English education) have learnt to maintain a /d/ - /t/ distinction in word final position. Consider the following examples.

/itaf /	[ <sup>h</sup> itaf ~ 'it <sup>h</sup> ap]	'earth, soil, land'
/idaf /	[ <sup>h</sup> idaf ~ 'id <sup>h</sup> ap]	'split timber'
/dauna'/	[da <sup>h</sup> una ~ <sup>n</sup> dā <sup>h</sup> uñā]	'today, at present'
/tauwa /	[ <sup>h</sup> tauwa]	'to squat down'
/du'it /	[du'it ~ <sup>n</sup> dū'it]	'hill/mountain'
/ god /	[kot~got] [<TP: god]	'God'
/skul bod/	[sukul/skul bot] [<TP: skul bod]	'school board'

/ wod /	[wot] [<TP: wod ]	'ward, word'
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### 3.2.3.1 Velars and glottal stop.

The voiced and voiceless velar stops [k] and [g] are allophonic variants of the same phoneme represented at the phonemic level by /k/, being the most utilized allophone of the two.

The glottal stop, represented orthographically by the symbol ['], is phonemic in Abu'. It contrasts with the voiceless velar stop /k/ as the following morphological pairs demonstrate.

/akuf/	[`ak <sup>h</sup> uf ~ ak <sup>h</sup> up]	'k.o.tree'
/a'uf /	['a'uf ~ a'up]	'liver'
/inuk /	['inuk]	'smoke'
/inu' /	['inu']	'k.o.snake'
/'a'u'/	['a'u']	'wife'
/ka'amarin/	[ka`amarin]	'fingernail'

The liquid /r/, is a voiced alveolar flap produced by flapping the apex once against the alveolar ridge, while articulating the accompanying voicing. When occurring in the word final position, it is realized as an apical-trill, as in the word bur 'to break, breakage', written phonetically as [buř]. It contrasts with the voiced alveolar lateral /l/ in all positions, as shown by the following minimal pairs.

/rabuf/	[ 'rábuf ~ 'ra <sup>m</sup> büp]	'rib'
/labuf /	[ 'labuf ~ 'la <sup>m</sup> büp]	'edge of garden'
/bul /	[ bul ~ <sup>m</sup> bül]	'pig'
/bur /	[ buř ]	'a break or breakage'
/ arub /	[ ařub]	'soot'
/ aluf /	[ aluf]	'skin or physique'
/ bir /	[ biř ~ <sup>m</sup> biř ]	'a thud'
/ bilbal /	[bil`bal~ <sup>m</sup> bil <sup>m</sup> bäl]	'to reflect'

### 3.2.4 Semi-Consonants

With regard to the semi-consonants w and y, there is probably no contrast between them and the high vowels u and i; the realization as one or the other depends on the syllabic structure of the utterance. As this thesis is not concerned with detailed phonological analysis, the practical orthography used writes whichever is more appropriate in given circumstances - that is, according to the realisation of vowel or semivowel.

#### 3.2.4.1 The phoneme h

The phoneme /h/ contrasts with /f/. The semantic contrasts which support their phonemic status are illustrated by the minimal pairs:

/ ahul /	[ahul]	'lime'
/aful /	[aful]	'vulva'
/hihireh/	[hihireh]	'k.o.sunflies'
/fifiref/	[fifiref~pipiref]	'sago froth'

### 3.2.5 Secondary Articulations

#### 3.2.5.1 Palatalization

The voiceless alveolar fricative is palatalised in word final position but remains a voiceless alveolar fricative elsewhere, e.g.,

/esis/	[esis̯]	'3PL/ they'
/safas/	[saʃas̯]	'k.o.ants'

#### 3.2.5.2 Aspiration

Aspiration is represented by a raised (<sup>h</sup>). Thus an aspirated t is written [t<sup>h</sup>]. The voiceless obstruent series [p, t, k] are lightly aspirated in word initial position and intervocally, but are unreleased elsewhere.

/kukuhunef/	[k <sup>h</sup> uk <sup>h</sup> uhune{f/p}]	'tickles'
/pipia /	[p <sup>h</sup> ip <sup>h</sup> ia~fifia~pi <sup>h</sup> pia]	(TP pipia) 'refuse'
/ titiakamuna /	[t <sup>h</sup> it <sup>h</sup> iakhamuna]	'millipede'

/ inuk /	[ 'in <u>uk</u> ]	'smoke'
/ du'it /	[ 'du' <u>it</u> ]	'mountain/hill'
/ pop /	[ p <sup>h</sup> op ~ p <sup>h</sup> of ~ p <sup>h</sup> op ] (<TP pop)	'pope'

### 3.2.5.3 Labialization

Labialization is represented by a superscript [ <sup>W</sup> ], and a k with labialization is therefore written [ k<sup>W</sup> ]. In Abu' the following labialized consonants:/k<sup>W</sup> , 'W and h<sup>W</sup>/ are unit phonemes, but are written as sequences for convenience. They contrast with their respective unlabialized counterparts as supported by the following minimal or near-minimal pairs.

/kwarutu/ [k<sup>W</sup>-a-ṛutu] 'she-NPST-stand' versus [k-a-ṛutu] 'tree-NPST-stand'. /au'wa/ [a'<sup>W</sup>a] 'this woman' versus /a'a/ [a'a] 'exclamation form' used when giving something to someone and /hwal/ [h<sup>W</sup>al] 'to open up' (especially used in relation to an opened vulva) and /hal/ [hal] 'Imp. to kill a pig'. Note the labialized velar functions grammatically as a preverbal marker for lexemes implying feminine gender.

### 3.2.5.4 Nasalization

Two nasalization rules are observed by Abu' speakers. The first rule is one that involves consonants being prenasalized (with the homorganic nasals taking on the obstruents' values for the features [anterior] and [coronal]). This is restricted to some Abu' speakers' idiolects - except that velars are not prenasalized (at least not at the surface phonetic level). Secondly, vowels are nasalized when occurring between nasal consonants or when juxtaposed to them and only within and not across word boundaries. The following examples demonstrate the nasalization processes under discussion.

/nubat/	[ n̩ubat ~ n̩ <sup>m</sup> b̩at ]	'dog'
/ bul /	[ bul ~ <sup>m</sup> b̩ul ]	'pig'
/maduh /	[ m̩aduh ~ m̩ <sup>n</sup> d̩uh ]	'vine, string'

/anam alemam ubahimi/ [‘an̩am ál̩em̩am úbah̩im̩i] ‘some big men’

Speakers who maintain these rules tend to carry them over when they speak other languages, such as Tok Pisin. Nasalization rules in Abu' are written more formally below. The variable notation symbol ( $\alpha$ ) standing for alpha, is adopted to mean "has the same value as" or "agrees in value with" ( Schane 1973:69). Thus, rule 1 says that the nasal takes on the same value for the voiced obstruents that take on the features [anterior] and [coronal].

1.  $\left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} - \text{sonorant} \\ \alpha \text{ anterior} \\ \alpha \text{ coronal} \\ + \text{voiced} \end{array} \right] / \left[ \begin{array}{c} - \text{sonorant} \\ \alpha \text{ anterior} \\ \alpha \text{ coronal} \\ + \text{voiced} \end{array} \right]$
2. V  $\longrightarrow$   $\left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right] / \left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right] - \left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right]$
3. V  $\longrightarrow$   $\left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right] / \# - \left[ \begin{array}{c} C \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right] - \#$

### 3.2.6 Vowels and their distribution

The main vocalic segments in Abu' are represented by the primary vowel phonemes /a, i, ɿ, e, o, u/, which contrast with one another. In addition, there are three long vowels: / e:/, / a:/, / u:/ . The three long vowels contrast with their corresponding short vowels as rendered by the following minimal and sub-minimal pairs:

- |                   |         |              |                      |          |          |              |
|-------------------|---------|--------------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| /werin/ 'to chew' | versus  | /weer/ 'pig' | in hunting language. |          |          |              |
| /wa'/             | / [wa'] | 'to eat'     | versus               | /waa'/   | / [waa]  | 'feast'      |
| /bakuh/           | [bakuh] | 'sticks'     | versus               | /baakuh/ | [báakuh] | 'nightmares' |
| /ukuha/           | [ukuha] | '1PL-shout'  | versus               | /uukuh/  | [úukuh]  | 'snakes'     |

#### 3.2.6.1 Lax Vowels

Unstressed vowels usually form a secondary series of lax vowel allophones to their corresponding primary (stressed) vowels.

### 3.2.7 Vowel Length

Vowel length is contrastive in Abu'. Certain words are distinguished from others primarily on the basis of vowel length. Thus the word /wa'/ [wa'] 'to eat' can be distinguished from /waa'/ [waa'] 'feast'; and /ukuha/ [ukuha] 'PL-shout' from /uukuh/ [uukuh] 'snakes'.

Since consonant clusters are rare in occurrence, no long consonants nor consonant gemination were found. Vowels occurring in word final position tend to be prolonged in accordance with the intonation contours to be described below.

#### 3.2.7.1 The status of barred-i ([‡])

Barred-‡ (high central vowel) is a full phoneme in the language. Given equal vowel stress, the (barred-‡) is found to contrast with the high front tense unround vowel /i/ as shown here: /d̩ih/ ['dih] 'to shout!' versus /dih/ [d̩ih] 'to hold firmly', /nikam/ ['n̩ikäm] 'taro' versus /nika'/ [nika'] 'you die'. However, in unstressed syllables, barred-i is realized as a partially reduced high front stressed unrounded vowel, and in cases where [‡] occurs elsewhere in the word, there is also a variant pronunciation closer to [ə]. As has been said, barred-‡ also gets inserted when certain consonants come together and/or are caused to come together by morphophonemic rules. In such cases, it is regarded an epenthetic vowel that gets inserted for euphony or for ease in articulation and thus it is phonemically insignificant and treated as an allophone of /i/.

### 3.2.8 Stress

Stress, the relative degree of intensity with which the syllables of an Abu' word are spoken, is characterized in three different ways. An unmarked syllable has the weakest stress in the word, the strongest stress is marked with a " ' ". Secondary (or intermediate) level of stress is marked by " ^ ". Words of one syllable show no stress mark since there is no other stress level to which the syllable of

monosyllabic words is compared. The following seems to be the pattern of rules governing stress.

The first vowel of diphthong of bi- or poly-syllabic words receives primary stress (diphthongs override vowels). Once that is established, the secondary and the weakest stress is decided. Secondary stress precedes or follows the primary stress, and then the weakest stress follows or precedes the secondary stress. (In tri-syllabic words where primary stress is on the initial syllable, the secondary syllable is weakly stressed while the final syllable receives secondary stress.)

/dih	/ [dih]	'shout'!
/ bata	/ [báta]	'bamboo'
/ wamuta	/ [wámúta]	'hardwood tree'
/nebeti	/ [n̥ébət̪i] ~ [n̥émb̥éti] 'tomorrow'	
/dihihiru'	/ [d̥íhihiru']	'k.o.river snake'
/dubaunikin/	/ [dùbáunikin̪]	'small crayfish'
/ididiafuh /	/ [ídídiafuh̪ ]	'k.o.liana'

The above stress rules are formalized below.

1. [+syl]--->[+stress]/#VCV#
2. [+syl]--->[stress]/#VCVCV#
4. [+syl]--->[stress]/#CVCVVCV#

Stress is predictable and is therefore non-phonemic.

### 3.2.9 Tone and intonation contour

There is no evidence of tone being a contrastive phonological feature in Abu'. Abu' is a non-tonal language. There are, however, intonational contours, which vary as follows:

### 3.2.9.1 Sentence medial-intonation

The intonation contour accompanying sentence medial constructs (Ref. to sentence medial construction) rises slightly from the pitch of the stressed syllable of the phrase and spreads lightly over immediately following syllables, e.g.,

aleman n -a -ha bul  
 man he(NCE)-R-kill pig  
 'A man killed a pig'

### 3.2.9.2 Sentence final-intonation

In simple declarative statements, the intonation preceding the final pause falls on the penultimate syllable to a lower pitch and often lengthens the vowel of the final syllable of the clause.

aleman n-a-ha bul  
 man 3MSG-R-kill pig  
 'A man killed a pig.'

In grammatical strings in which interrogation is not indicated by morphological signals of interrogation (Q), the intonation contour features a sharp rise to high pitch on the stressed syllable of the phrase-final syllable. The high pitch is maintained.

n -i-k-e-hi'i  
 3MSG-IRR-FUT-EV-come  
 He is coming.

### 3.2.9.3 Responding intonation

Responding intonation is characterized by the sequence of low level, high level, low level pitch on the response form u wo hu or on the final syllable of the clause, which is very long.

u wo hu'

'Yes! (or) That is so.'

### 3.2.9.4 Sympathetic intonation

Sympathetic intonation is characterized by stress and length and falling pitch on the penultimate and final syllable of the clause, and it occurs only with a few exclamations denoting sympathy, such as:

n-a-buwasif  
2mix.SG.-NPST-sorry  
'I am sorry for you( sg).'

### 3.2.9.5 Imperative Intonation

Imperative intonation is marked by '!'. It is characterized by stress and high pitch which continue throughout the clause until the final syllable. In the following example the heavy stress is signalled by '^'.

hû'û !      aûlaf !  
go            house  
'Go to the house.!"

### 3.2.9.6 Emphatic intonation

Emphatic intonation is a contrastive phrase intonation indicated by a double vowel in the adjective being emphasized. It is indicated by length and stress and mid or high level pitch, stress and length on the second syllable of the adjective modifying the noun being emphasized. Contrastive examples.

numata'      afu'w-i  
woman        good-AP  
'good woman.'

numata' afu:'w-i  
woman    good very-AP  
'Very good woman'

### 3.2.10 Diphthongs

Diphthongs in Abu' are realizable whenever there are vowel clusters (excluding vowel length, which involves the same vowel being lengthened). When diphthongs occur, articulation may begin at one end of the vowel quadrilateral and end in another, or the diphthongs may be interspersed with transitional glides y and w. For instance:

/iah/	[ia̯ah ~ ia̯ah]	'footpath or road'
/ie'/	[ie' ~ iye']	'I'
/amea/	[a̯amea ~ a̯ameya]	'mother'
/uab/	[uab ~ uwab]	'night'
/niboa'/	[niboa' ~ n̩ib̩owa']	'two days ago'

The glides which develop agree in height, frontness or backness, roundness or unroundness as the preceding high vowels.

### 3.2.11 Syllable Structure.

An Abu' syllable typically centres around a vowel or resonant, which may be preceded and/or followed by other less prominent segments (vowels or consonants) uttered virtually with a single chest-pulse. The most prominent part of the syllable is called the syllabic peak or the nucleus (NCLS). The syllable structure is either open or closed. Consonant sequences, as mentioned earlier, are rare and those noted are restricted to the following:

a) voiced bilabials and alveolar stops (plain or prenasalized) (cf. 3.1.2.10).

b) liquids, being sonorants, have been noted to occur immediately following voiced and voiceless stops and consequently become syllabic. Syllabic consonants are marked by a diacritic [,] only in the phonetic transcription.

- |            |                                      |                                 |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| /blawa /   | [b̩l̩awa ~ b̩l̩awa]                  | 'run'!                          |
| /brinakuh/ | [b̩rinākuh ~ b̩rinākuh ~ b̩irinākuh] | 'mould'                         |
| /krahu' /  | [k̩rahu' ~ ki̯rahu']                 | 'plane, ship, car' <sup>1</sup> |
| /fifikl /  | [fi̯pikl ~ fi̯fikil]                 | 'bone'                          |

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<sup>1</sup>The word could have been an Abu' post-contact creation or could have been adopted from the Buki [kilehu'] 'canoe'. Bernard Narakobi, pers. com. Canberra, 1984. Fortune (1942) listed two synonyms for 'canoe' in Buki namely, bidubig (p.16) and karahoku (p.18). It seems likely that the latter, like the Abu' krahu', is a post-contact creation. The Abu' have no word for canoe. (See chapter 7, p.283)

/kribelin/ [k̪ribelin] 'k.o.frog'

In slow speech, the i is often inserted in between stops and the laterals, but in relatively rapid speech the liquids are syllabified when occurring juxtaposed to a consonant as shown in the word [biʃinākuh] 'mould' in slow utterance; in fast utterance it becomes [brinākuh]

c) The glottal stop ['] occurs after the liquids in some number of words as in:

/bal'ul / [bal'ul] 'leech'

/bur'ah / [bur'ah] 'leg'

/ bor'utoh / [bor'utoh] 'k.o.traditional tongs'

/bar'um / [bar'um] 'k.o.cycles'

The labialized glottal phoneme /'w/ (as in a'wal [áu'wá1]) has been described earlier.

### 3.3 GRAMMAR.

This section focusses on the system of Abu' rules that characterize both the author's native speaker-hearer's competence in this language and his observations on how other native speakers use the language in numerous speech situations.

#### 3.3.1 Morphology

Abu' morphology is complex. The complexity is attributed to a number of interrelated features including among other things, the intricate morphophonemic rules, the complex noun class suffixes and the accompanying feature of nominal concord, as well as the numerous morpheme types.

### 3.3.1.1 Morpheme Types

A number of different types of morphemes occur in Abu'. Each type is identifiable according to its privileges of occurrence. A summary is provided in the following general chart, and examples of each will be provided and discussed further below.

Table 3-2: Abu' Morpheme Types

	Free	Bound
Root	Free root	Bound root
Non-root	Free non-root	Affix

Adopted from Lynch (1980:11)

### 3.3.1.2 Free/Bound Morphemes and/or Roots

There are first of all, two main morpheme types in Abu'-- free morphemes and bound morphemes. Free morphemes in Abu' are linguistic elements that occur as words in isolation and consequently are capable of being pronounced independently (e.g. aleman 'man'). Bound morphemes, on the other hand, are those Abu' words such as ubah- 'big', which must occur with other morphemes attached to them. Free morphemes are not only capable of occurring as independent pronounceable words; they are capable also of having affixes attached to them. Common nouns are good examples. They occur in isolation in the singular, but they take suffixes in the plural.

Abu' free roots are morphologically similar to free morphemes and are thus regarded as synonyms. Abu' bound roots belong to the bound-morpheme paradigm. As such, they occur as semantic cores in words, but are not acceptable as full words by native speakers until they have the appropriate additional morphemes attached to them.

### 3.3.1.3 Free non-roots

In addition to free and bound roots, there are also "free non-roots". The term "free non-root" is adopted from Lynch (1980:12) to refer to those Abu' words such as kani, a prepositional or locative (LOC) form, which, although it is a free morpheme like aleman 'man', does not have other morphemes attached to it, as aleman does when pluralised, e.g., aleman>alemam 'man>men'.

### 3.3.1.4 Affixes

Abu' affixes are bound non-root morphemes. These morpheme types must always occur attached to morphological roots. They fulfil various grammatical functions, such as modifying, altering or defining the semantic content of roots to which they are attached. There are many types of affixes in Abu', but they may be divided into two main types: prefixes and suffixes.

#### 3.3.1.5.1 Prefixes

Abu' morphemes that come before roots are prefixes. These are made up usually of nominal concord elements (NCE) of the non-free subject pronouns, which substitute for or occur in apposition to a noun phrase in a clause. This class of pronouns gives information of number and gender, and it occurs in the Subject, Object, Indirect Object and Instrumental-Benefactive slots of clauses. Preverbal marker pronouns listed in the following paradigm are set off from the root by a hyphen which acts as a morpheme separator, and they occur as the very first morpheme from the left of the verb phrase.

Table 3-3: Non-free pronominal verb markers

1. <i>ə-a-he'</i>	(1SG-REALIS-go)	'I-went'
2. <i>n-a-he'</i>	(2SG-/3SGM-R-go)	'you-/he-went'
3. <i>kʷ-a-he'</i> (3SGF-R-go)		'she-went'
4. <i>w-a-he'</i>	(2DEXCL/3PLF-R-go)	'you-/they(women) went'
5. <i>s-a-he'</i>	(3PL-R-go)	'they-went'

6. m-a-he' (1PLEXCL-/3PLM-R-go) 'we excl./they(men) went'

### 3.3.1.5.2 Suffixes and other affixes

Further affixes differ in form and grammatical function. They may occur phrase medially or finally and are attached to stems. Strictly speaking, there are no infixes of the type that break up verb or adjectival stems in Abu'. Among the more obvious affixes are tense or aspectual forms. These constitute grammatically conditioned allomorphs which are characterized by different vowels (see chart below). They function as realis (R) and irrealis (IRR) markers. The shape of a realis form is marked phonetically by the low-mid vowel a- such as that exemplified in the above paradigm, while the basic irrealis form is i- (phonetically a barred [i]). These usually occur before the past, present and future (PST PRST and FUT) tense forms in the verb phrase. The aspectual forms a- and i- being basic, other aspect markers are phonologically conditioned allomorphs whose phonological shape is determined by the phonological shape of the vowel following the consonant occurring immediately after the given aspectual form. The general phonological motivation for vowel change is vowel harmony.

Thus an aspectual prefix that is marked by a high front unrounded vowel must agree in frontness and unrounding with the succeeding vowel (cf. rule 1 below). Similarly, if an aspectual suffix is signalled by a high back rounded vowel, it must agree in backness, height and roundness with the succeeding vowel (cf. No.2 below), except for the -a- to -i- alternation which does not keep the rule of vowel harmony (Rule 3 below).

REALIS	IRREALIS
1. i -----> i/-C <sup>1</sup> <sub>0</sub>	V [ +high -back -round ]

2. u -----> u/-C [+high ]  
                           [+back ]  
                           [+round]

3. a -----> i (is basic)

### 3.3.1.5.2a Tense suffixes

In addition to the aspectual suffixes there are tense markers. There are three basic tenses in Abu' -- past, non-past (NPST) and future (FUT). Past and present tenses are not marked, but future tense is marked by {-k-} which occurs after the aspectual marker and before the verb root. I will adopt the zero morph {Ø} to indicate past and present tense markers and will ensure that it is clarified in ambiguous contexts.

### 3.3.1.5.2b Nominal concord element affixes

Abu' being a noun classifying language, the coreferential noun and verb phrase must be inflected for concord with the governing subject. This is done by a process where the nominal concord element (NCE) or cross reference marker (CRM) is copied from the governing subject and attached to the "referring expression" (Foley 1983). In other class marking affixes are the Abu' plural suffix forms (cf. Noun Class Matrix), and the genitive (GEN) or attributive particle {-i} (cf. Possessive phrase).

### 3.3.1.5.2c Hiatus forms

There are several hiatus elements which, though not morphologically important, are phonologically so. These elements are intrusive forms that occur between sounds that the Abu' find difficult to articulate when such sounds are juxtaposed. An example of this is suffixation of {-r-} in the possessive and nominal modifying phrases (see Possessive phrase). For example;

1. aiwe -r -i  
        father -EM -GEN  
        'Father's'

2. aleman lou-n-a-r-i  
 man tall-NCE-EM-EM-GEN  
 'Tall man'.

The empty morphs (EM) in Abu' merely function as facilitators in the articulation of words that could otherwise be difficult to pronounce.

### 3.3.2 Word Classes and the Function of Affixes

There are four main word classes in Abu': nominals, verbs, modifiers and adjectives. Verb morphology, and that of nominals, is quite extensive. I will only be dealing with the general aspects of these two grammatical categories in this section. I will begin with a description of the class of Abu' forms that are used for naming things in the real or putative world. These linguistic forms or "referring expressions" (Foley 1983) are termed akuh in Abu'. Akuh, though it literally means 'names', also implies nominals or nouns.

### 3.3.3 The Abu' noun

Notionally, an Abu' noun is a form whose function is to refer or name things, ideas, persons or spirits. Morphologically, an Abu' noun is realised by either a free-morpheme or a bound morpheme.

Grammatically, an Abu' referential term or a noun is the form that takes neither the verbal and attributives or descriptive affixes, but which may be suffixed with either the plural suffix, if the given noun does take on plural form, or the genitive particle {-i}, which occurs in the genitive slot of a Possessive phrase (PP) as shown in 3.3.11.3.

### 3.3.3.1 Abu' Noun Types.

Among the word class set that represents Abu' nominals are different types of nouns, which include:-

- |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| a) general nouns         | (gn)  |
| b) proper names          | (pn)  |
| c) toponyms              | (tpn) |
| d) temporal nouns        | (tn)  |
| e) temporal noun phrases | (tNP) |
| f) directionals          | (dnl) |

### 3.3.3.2 General Nouns

This is a set of referring terms which are characterized by two morphological types: those that can be made plural and those which cannot. These were the subject of study in the author's 1977 work. It was claimed in that study that there were as many as 19 different noun classes in Abu'. This number of classes was determined on the basis of the morphological shape of the different plural suffixes.

The criteria by which the different noun classes are determined have been re-examined in the light of the inconsistencies rendered by the plural suffixes. The review revealed that verbal subject prefixes seem to be more tenable as noun class determinants than our previous approach from the morphological criteria of plural suffixes. This reanalysis according to preverbal subject prefixes has left Abu' with 11 main noun classes.

Whilst the query regarding why and how the Abu' divide things in the world into the different noun classes will be discussed in the following chapter, I might by way of a preliminary remark suggest that phonology seems to be a pervasive feature in the determination of the noun class system in Abu'. Forms that fill the nominal slots are assigned to classes influenced by the "pull" of the final or second last "strong consonant" (i.e. non-syllabic phonetic segment) of the given noun. Once that process has been gone through, then plural

suffixation takes place. Unfortunately the rules that determine plural suffixes are morphophonemically complex and need a lot of work to sort them out properly sometime in the future. Some generalizations have been made, and these can be culled from the author's 1977 study. The rules or processes suggested therein were described in a rather broad and non-formal style. Among the rules were deletion, assimilation, insertion, vowel harmony, partial metathesis and suppletion. The "hard" consonant then becomes the nominal concord element affix, occurring as subject prefix to verb phrases and as suffix in noun phrases. The classes of nouns presented in the following noun class matrix are decided by preverbal markers for singular and plural. The pattern varies as follows:-

1. A noun having n- as singular verb marker, and implying masculine gender in its meaning, has m- as plural preverbal marker.
2. A noun having k<sup>w</sup>- as singular verb marker, and implying (usually) feminine gender in its meaning, has wa- as plural verb marker.
3. A noun having t- as singular and kw- as plural verb markers
4. A noun having m- as singular and f- as plural verb markers
5. A noun having b- as singular and plural verb markers
6. A noun having f- and s- as singular and plural verb markers
7. A noun having k- and s- as singular and plural verb markers
8. A noun having l- and h- as singular and plural verb markers
9. A noun having h- as singular and plural verb markers
10. A noun having b- and h- as singular and plural verb markers
11. A noun having n- as singular, and not implying masculine gender in its meaning, has {-s,-b, and -n} as plural markers.

The rules as described cover 11 classes of nouns. The preverbal subject markers also function as cross reference markers in syntax. Pronouns and noun modifiers obligatorily agree in number and class with the nouns they modify.

Table 3-4: Noun Class Matrix

Noun class	Nominal subject prefix to verbs		Some Examples	
	sg.	pl.	sg. > pl.	
1	n-	m-	aleman> alelam 'man' sahalina>sahalinab 'maternal uncle' aiwa > aiwahas 'father' baah > baalih 'grandfather/-son' pater>paterimi <TP pater 'priest' ufu'al>ufu'elim 'male spirits' Ka'atuman 'creative deity' Got 'God' Jesus 'Jesus'	
2	kw-	wa-	numata>numatawa 'woman' sahalu>sahaliwa 'paternal aunt' isa'u' >isaliwa 'grandmother/-daugther' nekau' >nekaliwa 'daugther' nes >nes(iwa) 'nurse' sista >sista(iwa) 'sister/nun' (<TP sista) udu' > uduwa 'star' mofo' >mofowa 'edible river frog' ufu'elu'>ufu'eliwa 'female spirit' maurenu'>maureniwa 'female ghost' Santu Maria (<TP Santo Maria) 'Saint Mary' defenu'>defenuwa 'mother-in-law' unaru'>unaruwa 'cassowary' nubura'>nuburawa 'coconut shell'	
3	t-	kw-	alahuta > alahutakw 'home, village' kwafita > kwasitokw 'spoon' wamuta > wamutokw 'slit-gong, hard-wood tree' kul'uta>kul'utokw 'k.o.bag' (made out of dark palm sheath) selita'>selitokw 'masher' pelet >peletokw (<TP plate) 'plate'	
4.	m-	f-	sul'um>sul'if 'fruit' abom>abef 'breadfruit seed' afum>asif 'k.o.edible fruit' butum>bitif 'penis' nekam>nikef 'taro' ufam>ufas 'banana'	
5.	b-	b-	nubul>nulub 'intestine' nabul>nalub 'k.o.vine'(used in magic) asubul>asulub 'folk-dance' asabul>asalub 'a yam variety' alhu'ab>alhu'ebis 'egg' abal 'water' aub 'coconut' abilanab 'thunder'	

6.	f-	s-	ufaf>ufas bahi'ataf>bahia'tas aulaf>aulas aluf>alis rabuf>rabis labuf>labis idaf>idas itaf>itas	'banana tree' 'perch' 'house' 'body, physique' 'rib' 'garden edge' 'split timber' 'land, soil, ground, earth'
			asaf>asas paip>pais (<TP paip) nikiris alibis kul'is lehis rais(<TP rais) aus	'G-string' 'pipe' 'fat' 'urine' 'vomit' 'sago starch' 'rice' 'sea, salt'
7.	k-	s-	lawak>lawas amaka>amakas elhuka>elhukes baraka>barakas ahaka>ahakas akiaka>akiakas	'tree' 'face' 'neck' 'head' 'tongue' 'ant'
8.	l-	h-	bul>burkuh alimil>alimikuh uul>uukuh sul>akuh fifikl>fifikuh bakl>bakuh bal'ul>basulukuh	'pig' 'bird' 'snake' 'fish, mosquito' 'bone' 'stick' 'leech'
9	h-	h-	uluh>ululih laah>laalih lahuh>lahulih nukofuh>nukosilih ihiaburuh>ihiaburilih nubah>nubalih	'fig tree' 'gouging utensil' 'sago palm' 'navel, umbilical cord' 'butterfly' 'tree root'
10.	b-	h-	alibal>alibakuh abal >abakuh afi'ab>unih	'knife' 'shadow, spirit' 'fire'
11	n-	s-	walen>walebis aun>aubis wa'win>wa'wis ahun>ahubis biliiken>biliukehes(<TP biliken)	'megapod' 'moon, month' 'yam' 'bandicoot' 'billy can'
	n-	b-	dubaun>dubaub eheh >eheb kedin >kedib dubaren>dubarub buburan>buburab ain>ainab (<TP ain)	'crayfish' 'k.o.river fish' 'k.o. tree' 'hornbill' 'ladle' (made from coconut shell) 'iron, steel, metal'

		supun>supunab(<TP spun) 'spoon' tin>tinab (<TP tin) 'can' baten>batenab(<TP baten) 'button'
	n-	redio (<TP redio) 'radio' televisen (<TP televisen) 'television' komputa (<TP komputa) 'computer'
		.
		.
		etc.

The classes presented above will be re-examined in chapter 4, especially to ascertain the extent to which they might have been determined by semantics. Here I will not enter into discussion relating to semantics of noun classes. What the reader should know is a summary of phonological processes that are involved in the pluralization of the different noun classes. These processes are treated as follows:

### 3.3.3.3 Noun Class 1.

The singular terminal suffix {-n} becomes a cross-reference marker for all syntactic functions just as its corresponding plural marker {-m} does. The class is highly marked, in that all nouns that imply masculine gender are assigned under the class overriding any phonological motivation.

### 3.3.3.4 Noun Class 2

Here the singular and plural preverbal subject prefixes are realized by {kw-} and {wa-}, respectively, while the modifier or adjectival suffix is realised as {-w-} and {-w-}.

### 3.3.3.5 Noun Class 3

In class 3, the singular noun terminal is {-ta} which takes on {kw} for plural. The a following t in {-ta} is used interchangeably with o, the latter alternant is a realization of vowel harmony with the following labial segment.

### 3.3.3.6 Noun Class 4

The singular noun terminal of this class is a bilabial nasal which gets deleted before the suffixation of the plural morpheme {-f} as summarized in the following rules. Vowels preceding the plural morpheme {-f} vary according to a rule of vowel harmony where vowels usually agree in height with preceding vowels.

### 3.3.3.7 Noun Class 5

This is mainly a partial metathesis class. The plural morpheme is usually formed by having the final syllable of the singular being reversed. The singular noun terminal {-l} does not become a preverbal marker, instead the {-b} does for both singular and plural.

### 3.3.3.8 Noun Class 6

The rule that operates in this class for changing from singular to plural is one where the singular noun terminal {-f} becomes an {-s} or remains an {-s} in nouns that imply collectivity.

### 3.3.3.9 Noun Class 7

The noun terminal for singular in this class is {-ka} which merely adds on {-s} to form the plural. Where the singular noun ends in a {-k}, it must be dropped before the addition of the plural marker {-s}.

### 3.3.3.10 Noun Class 8

Assigned to class 8 are nouns that end in the singular noun terminal {-l} (often {-kl}), which subsequently becomes the singular preverbal subject marker. It must be dropped (except where it becomes a flaped-ř as in the plural form of 'pig') when the plural suffix {-kuh} is added. The plural verbal marker is {-kw}.

### 3.3.3.11 Noun Class 9

Rule governing class 9 is one where the preverbal marker for both singular and plural assumes a single marker namely {h}. The plural form of the noun is marked by {-lih}.

### 3.3.3.12 Noun Class 10

Nouns whose singular terminal is {-l}, but whose preverbal marker is signalled by the second last consonant {-b-} and whose plural is either {-h/kw-}, are assigned under this class except for the word for fire which has a suppletive plural form.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.3.3.13 Noun Class 11

Class 11 contains nouns that form exceptions to the rules summarized above. Although they assume n for all grammatical functions, the plural forms change variously; thus no rule or rules are suggested for the class. Of all noun classes, this is the commonest and/or largest. Not being marked, it subsumes many of the indigenous and loan nouns which do not fit into any of the abovementioned rules for marking singular and plural.

### 3.3.4 Proper Names

A noun denoting proper name (PN) in Abu' is a bare word that may occur as a sole constituent in a noun phrase. Personal names among Abu' vary greatly. Some do not seem to have obvious etymologies, but the majority have semantic associations that are readily extractable, provided one knows the language. For example, some Abu' names are adopted from animals. Others are coined to reflect the birthplace of individuals or to represent the bearer's habits or physical traits. Nicknames are good examples of those names that reflect the bearer's characteristics. Grammatically, nicknames or names that reflect a

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<sup>2</sup>See chapt.4, or Nekitel (1977) for an account of its possible derivation from the AN word for fire (viz; \*api).

bearer's personal trait, are rendered by 'naming clauses' whose constituents are made up of preverbal gender affixes, that is {n-} for males and {kw-} for females. These are prefixed to modified verb stems, as shown below. All proper names assume the male or female preverbal markers and other affixes determined by the gender to which the bearer belongs and not by the phonological conditioning of the last "hard" consonant in the name. Consequently, proper names fall under class 1 or 2. Some examples:

#### 3.3.4.1 Names whose derivational history are not presently known:

Nekitel	(male name)
Sa'awan	(male name)
Wehuh'	(male name)
Katimo'	(female name)
Sa'uli'eh	(female name)

#### 3.3.4.2 Abu' names adopted from animals are:

Unaru'	'cassowary'	{male}
Unaru'en	'cassowary'	{female}
Dibiah	'arboreal /terrestrial python'	
Awan	'terrestrial python'	
Abita	'mouse'	
Amun	'harpy eagle'	

#### 3.3.4.3 Personal Names after birthplace or after a person's clan

These kinds of names are usually secondary to the principal names. Many of these are nicknames given to individuals for reasons such as the practice of name taboo, which influences the Abu' to find ways to refer to a person whom a speaker cannot name by his or her first important clan name. Nowadays Christian names, being foreign and hence culturally insignificant, are used in cases where in-laws' important clan names cannot be used.

Males can be distinguished from females usually by gender particles suffixed to the toponym root given as a name to an Abu'. The male gender particle allomorphs are: {-na, -Vm, -es or zero}, female gender particle allomorphs are {-V', 'i and -a/en }. Some examples:

Soko'um -the author's name, derived from Soko'ukama, his birthplace.

Mosbi - a nickname given to one of my sons who was born in Port Moresby.

Nubatina - my uncle's name derived from our clan's name nubat 'dog'.

'Erinikemeu' -- a female's name derived from Erinikama, a hamlet of Womsis.

Welumeu'en -- a female name derived from Wolum village.

Monihes -- a male name derived from a place called Monihes.

Ketehiwes -- a male name derived from Keteh, the main Womsis village.

Ketehu'i -- a female name.

#### 3.3.4.4 Names derived from human traits/habits

n-ail-iyah: (Nailiyah) is a common male name)  
3SGM-be-road

'Traveller' (the male who is always hanging on the road)

kw-ail-iyah: (Kwailiyah is a common female name)  
3SGF-be-road  
'Female traveller' (the female who is always on the road.)

n-i-diwa-kl (The nickname given to my mother's father)  
3SGM-R-break-NCE(for hand/arm)  
man broken hand  
'The man with a broken hand/arm.'

#### 3.3.5 Locative Nouns

Locative nouns (LN) are toponyms which occur as sole free morpheme in an NP but which may be suffixed with locative attributive particle to designate the people of a given village. Toponyms adopt the singular preverbal particle {n-} of class 11. It becomes the nominal concord element in attributes when reference is made to the village or home. For example:

womehis n-a-fan kani Wes Sepik Profins  
Womsis 3SGN-NFUT- exist LOC(there/in) West Sepik Province  
'Womsis is in the West Sepik Province.'

Toponyms may also be suffixed with the genitive particle {-i-}, followed by the objective nominal concord particle to identify different villagers or nationalities, such as:

alifes welim -e -i -s  
people Wolum -<sup>-V</sup><sub>-GEN</sub> -PLNCE(suffix meaning people)

'People of Wolum.'

australia-i-m-i  
australian-EV -NCE(men) -GEN  
'Australian men'

abu'-i -m i abu' -i -wa  
abu' -GEN-PLM conj abu'-GEN -PLF  
'Abu' men and Abu' women.'

### 3.3.6 Temporal Nouns

Temporal nouns (tn) in Abu' are words which again can occur as sole constituents in NPs. Those showing various times of the day are:

1. luhut 'morning'
2. numunah 'day/daylight'
3. uwabikin 'afternoon', i.e. c.3:30pm-c.6:30pm.
4. uwab 'night'
5. uwab er'ehinib 'midnight'

Further examples below show other senses of time-relationship:

6. dauna' ese 'right now, at this juncture'
7. dauna' 'now, today'
8. nebeti' 'yesterday'
9. nibowa' 'two days ago'
10. naman 'tomorrow'
11. bieb 'two nights/days from now'
12. wenibita 'three nights/days from now'
13. inabita 'four days from now'
14. kasabita 'five days from now'
15. sawa' 'before, non-present, long ago'

To show the sense of past and future years, the Abu' simply extract the morpheme {-kl} from ahulakl 'year' and have it suffixed to those numbered 7-15. Such combination yields bound temporal lexemes such as dauna'ikl 'this year', namanikl 'next year', nibowa'ikl 'two years ago', biebikl 'two years time' and so on. The same principle applies to the sense of past, present and future months. These assume the singular noun terminal suffix {-n} of aun 'month' thus yielding lexemes such as nibowa'in, 'three months ago', dauna'in (usually aun ene) 'this month', namanin 'next month', biebin 'third month from the present month'.

### 3.3.7 Directional Phrases

Abu' directional phrases (DP) have morphological structures that vary in complexity. The less complex directional phrase is one whose structural description (SD) is of the form: N<sub>oun</sub> + {-uma}. The word uma functions as a post-position directional (PD) in directional phrases but as a conjunctive in relative clauses. Other directional phrases are complex verbal clauses that constitute all the morphological constituents needed to yield their semantic content. For example:

16. aus-uma  
'sea-wards'
17. bunah-uma  
'bush-wards, towards the bush'.
18. iluh-uma  
'skywards, upwards'.
19. itaf-uma  
'earth/down-wards'
20. n-i-k-e'ihi-ma  
3SGN-IRR-NFT-rise-PD  
sun-rises-whence  
'The place from which the sun rises, the east.'
21. n -u -k -u -wara -ma  
3SGN -IRR -NFT -EV -go down -PD  
'The place where the sun goes down, the west.'

### 3.3.8 Abu' Pro-forms

#### 3.3.8.1 Free pronouns

Abu' speakers use a series of pro-forms in conversations to distinguish: (a) the speaker from the listener, or (b) the speaker and listener from those talked about. These are forms that can be referred to as 'free' personal pronouns (fpn). The term 'free' is used to point out the fact that these Abu' pronoun forms occur as sole constituents in NPs, as opposed to preverbal subject prefixes which must always occur prefixed to verb phrases. Syntactically, Abu' free pronouns vary in gender and number, and they may assume the possessive particle {-i}, thus

yielding pronominal possessive phrases to be shown later. Abu' free pronouns are presented in the following table.

Table 3-5: Free personal pronouns

Gloss	Abu' pronouns
'I'	ei' ~ iye'
'you'	ina'
'he' (also 'husband')	anen
'she' (also 'wife')	'a'u'
'it' (N(euter))	enen
'we two'	'ouha'
'we'	afa'
'you' (Pl)	ifa'
'they' (male + female)	esis
'they' (indefinite things/people)	enes
'they' (males)	amum (also husbands)
'they' (females)	awuw (also wives)

Note, the terms for husband anen and wife 'a'u' are homophonous with the third person singular masculine gender pronominal form and the third person singular feminine gender pronominal form. Similarly their respective plural forms (viz. amum and awuw) are homophonous with the third person plural masculine gender pronominal form and the third personal plural feminine gender pronominal form. Context of conversation or discourse determines the semantic distinctions among the words concerned.

### 3.3.8.2 Interrogative Pronouns.

In addition to personal pronouns there are two forms that may be used in interrogative utterances. These are emi and melein, which approximate the English 'who' and 'what' respectively. When occurring in clause initial position, they are subjects of clauses, while they are objects when occurring clause finally. Other interrogative forms will be described later. Consider the following examples:

emi            n -a -ha -'  
 WH-Q(Sbj)    3SGN -R -hit -3SGF(Obj)  
 'Who hit her'.

k<sup>w</sup>-a -ha emi  
 3SGF -R -hit WH-Q(Obj)  
 'She hit who' ?

melein n -a -ha -'  
 WH-Q(Sbj) 3SGM -R -hit 3SGF(Obj)  
 'What (thing) hit her.'

Nufaul n -a -ha melein  
 Nufaul 3SGM -R -hit/kill WH-Q(Obj)  
 Nufaul he-killed what.  
 'What did Nufaul hit/kill ' ?

### 3.3.8.3 Pronominal Subject Markers

Pronominal subject markers are a series of personal prefixes ('bound pronouns') occurring as the very first constituents in compounded verb phrases and varying in number and gender as summarized in the following chart. Although grammatically redundant, they must by the rule of nominal concordance occur prefixed to verb phrases, except for the imperative (IMP) forms of verbs, which occur subjectless.

In addition, there are preverbal subject markers. These vary in number and class according to the phonological "pull" of the cross-reference marker of the given class terminal (i.e. non-syllabic consonant) of the noun phrase. Examples of these have been shown in the noun class matrix presented above (Table:- 3-4). Presented in the following table are pronominal forms.

Table 3-6: Pro-nominal Subject Markers

	1	2	3
sg.	a-	n-	male      female n-            k <sup>w</sup> -
pl.	m-	f-	m-      w- s-

### 3.3.8.4 Relative pronouns

Abu' forms used as relativizers consist of complex forms whose internal structure is analogous to that of demonstrative phrases and so they will be dealt with later on in the chapter.

### 3.3.9 Nominal Modifiers

The following discussion will be mainly concerned with the class of items which occur with nouns to express a range of semantic contrasts such as quality, quantity, number, and demonstrativity. This class consists of the various sorts of modifier-roots, attached to which are inflectional affixes marking the gender, number and the attributional value of the head noun of the modifier phrase. The following categories of nominal modifiers are recognized in Abu': (a) pointer words (or demonstratives), (b) attributives (adjectives) and (c) quantifiers. Let us consider each of these categories.

#### 3.3.9.1 Pointer words (deictics)

To indicate the location of the subject or object of a given clause, Abu' speakers use a small class of pointer words (demonstratives) whose roots are { -a-/ -e- } and { -i }. The former morphologically-conditioned allomorphs function principally as proximal deictics (pd), the latter as distal deictics (dd). Demonstrative phrases (Dp) consist of a head noun symbolized by N in the initial position of a clause, and a complex demonstrative word, consisting, in order of occurrence, of the deictic element followed by the nominal concord element (NCE), which obligatorily varies in number and class with the head noun, and a repetition of the deictic element. The demonstrative word that hosts the proximal deictic roots takes the following morphological ordering:

$$(N) + \{ \{ -a- \} \} - \{ N(\text{root}) \} - \{ \{ -a- \} \} \\ \{ \{ -e- \} \} \quad \{ \text{NCE} \} \quad \{ \{ -e- \} \}$$

Some examples are provided below.

- 1.(a) sg. aleman a -n -a  
       man      pd -NCE-pd  
       'This man.'
- (b) pl. alemam a -m -a  
       men      pd -NCE -pd  
       'These men.'
- 2.(a) sg. numata' a -'w -a  
       woman    pd -NCE -pd  
       'This woman.'
- (b) pl. numatawa a -w -a  
       women    pd -NCE -pd  
       'These women.'
- 3.(a) sg. keina e -n -e  
       bow      pd -NCE -pd  
       'This bow.'
- (b) pl. keinab a -b -a  
       bows     pd -NCE -pd  
       'These bows.'
- 4(a) sg. du'it a -t -a  
       hill/mountain pd -NCE -pd  
       'This hill/mountain.'
- (b) pl. disukw a -kw -a  
       mountains pd -NCE -pd  
       'These mountains.'
- 5.(a) sg. dubaun e -n -e  
       crayfish pd -NCE -pd  
       'This crayfish.'
- (b) pl. dubaub a -b -a  
       crayfish pd -NCE -pd  
       'These crayfish.'

Demonstrative form whose semantic function is to show that the subject or object of focus is further away from the speaker assume the morphological order:

# {N(root)}-{ {a} } -{N(root)} -{i} #  
   {NCE}    { {e} }    {NCE}

Some examples:

- 6.(a) sg. aleman n -a -n -i  
       man      NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
       'That man.'

(b) pl. alemam m -a -m -i  
 men NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'These men.'

7.(a) sg. numata' k<sup>w</sup> -a -' -i  
 woman NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'That woman.'

(b) pl. numatawa w -a -w -i  
 women NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'These women.'

8.(a) sg. keina n -e -n -i  
 bow NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'That bow.'

(b) pl. keinab b -a -b -i  
 bows NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'Those bows.'

9.(a) sg. du'it t -a -t -i  
 hill/mountain NCE -dem -NCE -i  
 'That hill/mountain.'

(b) pl. disukw kw -a -kw -i  
 hills/mountains NCE -pd -NCE -dd  
 'Those hills.'

10.(a) sg. dubaun n -e -n -i  
 crayfish NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'That crayfish.'

(b) pl. dubaub b -a -b -i  
 crayfish NCE -dem -NCE -dd  
 'Those crayfish.'

11. unih h-e-h-i hekedi-h-i  
 firewood NCE-dem-NCE-dd unburnt-NCE-AP  
 'That unburnt wood'.

### 3.3.9.2 Indefinite demonstrative

The indefinite demonstrative (ID) is marked by the root {-n-}, which must be prefixed with the demonstrative particle {a/e} and must be suffixed with the nominal concord element which agrees in number and class with the head noun. The usual syntactic linear ordering is: ID + N

Some examples:

12.(a) sg. e -n -e -n alifen  
 dem -ID -EV -NCE person  
 {'A person, someone, somebody.'}

(b) pl. e -n -e -s alifes  
 dem -ID -EV -NCE persons/people  
 'Some people.'

13.(a) sg. a -n -a -m utam  
 dem -ID -EV -NCE stone  
 'A stone.'

(b) pl. a -n -a -b -a utaba  
 dem -ID -EV -NCE -EV stones  
 'Some stones.'

### 3.3.9.3 Adjectives

Adjectives (Adj) in Abu' are attributive words whose grammatical function is to describe (good, bad, big, small, red, green etc. ) features of nouns. The category subsumes nominal modifiers that belong to the paradigm 'Adjective'. Morphologically, these nominal modifiers constitute simple and complex lexical words. Simple forms include lexical (or derived) word roots, while complex ones constitute both the roots to which cross reference markers (NCE) and the suffix attributive particles (AP) {-i} or {-ri} are attached. The former (AP) occurs where a NCE ends in consonant while {-ri-} occurs with those ending in vowels. Syntactically, the attributive lexical word consists of the attributive root which occurs at the utterance initial position. It is followed by the nominal concord inflectional affix, which by rule of noun agreement must agree in number and class with the head noun. These are closed by the attributive suffixes {-i} and {-ri}. The syntactic order described is usually maintained if emphasis is to be placed on the noun modified. A shift in syntactic position between the head noun and the nominal modifier (phrase) results in a shifting of emphasis from the former to the latter. The formation of the adjectival noun phrase, might be roughly schematized as:

(Adj NP) ---> #N + { Adj }-(X) -{NCE(V)}-{i }# {NCE(C)}-{ri}"

Some examples:

sg.

pl.

numata' afu -' -i numata -wa afuwa -ri  
 woman good -NCE -AP women -NCE good -AP  
 'good woman.'

pater numehel -i -n -e -ri  
 priest bad -EV -NCE -EV -AP  
 'bad priest'

siste numehel-u -'w -i  
 nun bad -EV -NCE -AP  
 'bad nun.'

utam ubah -i -m -i  
 stone big -EV -NCE -AP  
 'big stone.'

awata koiyo' -u -ta -ri  
 chicken small -EV -NCE -AP  
 'small chicken.'

Table 3-7: Abu' adjective stems

good	afu-	heavy	numan-
bad	numehel-	light	kohel-
big	ubah-	smooth/flat	bililif-
small	koiyo'-	rough	sisar-
tall/long	lou-	sharp	ker'es-
short	bada-	blunt	ka'amar-
young	seisa'	hot/fire	unih-
old	duka-	cold/fat	nikiris-
full	si'ir-	sweetness/saltiness	usis
empty	wehi-	sour	al'uf-
		insipid	kul'u-

Theoretically speaking, any noun can be made into a descriptive adjective by application of the rule schematized above. For instance:

(Gloss)	(Usual form)	(Adjectivised form)	(Gloss)
fire	unih	unih -i -s -i fire -EV -NCE-AP	'hot things'
water	abal	abal -i -n -i water-EV-NCE-AP	'wet thing'
earth	itaf	alemam itaf-u -m -i men earth-EV-NCE-AP/GEN	'earthly men'
tree	lawak	(asa-kuh) lawak -i -kuh -i grub-PL tree -EV-NCE -AP	'tree grub'

### 3.3.9.4 Colour Terms

Colour terms are adjectival forms, and as such take on inflectional affixes that include the nominal concord element and the attributive suffix. The following are the basic colour term adjectives in Abu'.

Table 3-8: Colour Term Roots.

Gloss	Colour term root	Ajectivized Form
white	sakawal(-)	lufah sakawal-i -h -i calico white -EV-NCE-AP 'white calico'
black	alial(-)	lufah alial -u -h -i calico dark/ -EV-NCE -AP 'black/dark calico'
red	ou'es	ou'es-i-s-i 'red things'
green/brown	asu'-	asu'-u-s-i 'green, brown things'
yellow	ati'al	ati'al-i-h-i-s-i yellow-EV-NCE-PL-AP 'yellow things'
blue	keredu'	keredu'-i -s -i 'blue things'
crimson	a'a'a'a	urin a'a'a' -n -i cordyline crimson-NCE-AP 'crimson cordyline'
purple	beibeio'	sul'um beibeio'-u-m-i fruit purple -EV-NCE-AP 'purple fruit'

### 3.3.10 Quantifiers

Nouns may also be quantified or enumerated in Abu' by (a) use of cardinal numbers, (b) a doubling or duplication of cardinal numbers, (c) plural markers (i.e. subject or object forms) (d) use of welei- 'a lot, many' and (e) use of ene- 'some'.

#### 3.3.10.1 Cardinal Numbers

The Abu' counting system is based on a modified quinary system (Nekitel 1977). It is based essentially on fingers and toes, so the highest unit is twenty. Such counting systems are very common among Papuan languages especially those of the New Guinea Highlands (Laycock 1970:11). In the Abu' counting system, the fingers and toes constitute the individual digits and the limbs split the system into

units of fives such that one lot of five is rendered by lakl wa'arakl 'other hand', two lots of five is lakuh biakuh 'two hands', three lots of five is lakuh biakuh e bur'ah wa'arah 'two hands and one leg' and four lots of five is lakuh biakuh e bur'aleh bialah 'two hands and two legs'. If there are too many items to enumerate, the Abu' resort to the alternative means available, including the introduced counting system. The indigenous system consists of cardinal numbers whose semantic core always occurs affixed with nominal subject suffixes, varying, as usual, in number and class in concord with the head noun in the numerical clause. The structure is roughly as follows:

# NumP ----> (N) {NUM}-(X)-{NCE} #

Table 3-9: Cardinal Numbers in Usage.

enen et -i -n thing one-EV-NCE 'One thing'	numata' at -u -' woman one-EV-NCE 'One woman'	utam at -u -m stone one-EV-NCE 'One stone'
ene -s bi-e -s thing-PL two-EV-PL 'Two things.'	numata-wa bi-a -wa women -PL two-EV-PL 'Two women.'	uta -ba bi -a -ba stone-PL two-EV-PL 'Two stones.'
ene -s we-n-i-s thing-PL three-EC-EV -NCE 'Three things.'	numata-wa wa-n-u-wa women -PL three-EC-EV -NCE 'Three women'	uta -ba wa-n-u-ba stone-PL three-EC-EV -NCE 'Three stones.'
ene-s nubat-i -s thing-PL dog -EV-PL 'Four things.'	numata-wa nubat-i-wa women-PL dog-EV-NCE 'Four women.'	uta -ba nubat-i -ba stone-PL dog -EV-NCE 'Four stones.'
(enes) lakl wa'ara-k-i-l-i-s things hand other -NCE-EV-NCE-EV-NCE(PL) 'The other-hand things' or 'Five things.'		
	numata-wa lakl wa'ara -k-u-l-u-wa women -PL hand other -NCE-EV-NCE-EV-NCE(PL) 'A handful of women' or 'Five women.'	
	uta -ba lakl wa'ara -k-l-i-ba stone-PL hand other -NCE-EV-NCE(PL) 'A handful of stones' or 'Five stones.'	

<sup>3</sup>Probably derived from the number of dog's legs.

Numerals between five and ten are expressed by simply adding each of the digits from one to four onto five; thus 'six', 'seven', 'eight', and 'nine' are expressed as follows:

lakl wa'ara-kl e etin  
hand other-NCE and one  
'Five plus one' or ' $5 + 1 = 6.$ '

lakl wa'ara -kl e bi -e -s  
hand other -NCE and two NCE NCE(PL)  
'Five and two' or ' $5 + 2 = 7.$ '

lakl wa'ara-kl e we -n -i -s  
hand other -NCE and three -EC-EV -NCE(PL)  
'Five and three' or ' $5 + 3 = 8.$ '

lakl wa'ara-kl e nubat -i -s  
hand other -NCE and dog -EV-NCE(PL)  
'Five and four' or ' $5 + 4 = 9.$ '

The same principle applies to the counting of numbers between 10 and 15 so that ten is lakuh biakuh 'two hands', while 15 is expressed by adding bur'ah atuh 'one leg' to 'two hands', and 20 is made up of 10 fingers and 10 toes or, in short, two hands and two legs.

### 3.3.10.2 Doubling

The second method of enumerating items is by a use of a modified doubling system where numbers beyond one are doubled. For instance:

bies i bies = nubatis  
'Two things and two things' = 'four things' or ' $2 + 2 = 4.$ '

wenis i wenis = lakl wa'arakl e etin  
'Three things and three things' = 'one hand and a thing' or ' $3 + 3 = 6$ '

### 3.3.10.3 Plural affixes

Nouns are always obligatorily marked for singular and plural, independent of enumeration.

### 3.3.10.4 use of welei- 'many/a lot' and enes 'some.'

Great numbers of things or people can be expressed by the use of welei- 'a lot' or 'many' and indefinite number may be expressed by the use of enes 'some.' For instance:

alife-s welei -s -i  
 people-PL a lot/many-NCE(PL)-GEN  
 'Many/ a lot of people.'

ana -m aleam  
 some-NCE(PL) men  
 'Some men.'

A point needs to be made that at present, the introduced counting system is preferred to the Abu' seketerihes 'counting' system because it is less cumbersome. The rule of nominal concordance again applies. Consequently, the borrowed numerical items are made to assume nominal suffixes in agreement with the gender, number and class of the noun quantified in the numerical phrase. Thus it is common to hear:

alema-m twentipele -i -m  
 man -PL twenty -EV-NCE(PL)  
 'There are twenty men'.

numata-wa tripele -i -wa  
 women -PLM three -EV-NCE(PLM)  
 'There are three women'.

bur-kuh handepele -i -kuh  
 pig-PLM hundred -EV-NCE(PLM)  
 'There are one hundred pigs'.

### 3.3.10.5 Numerical adverbs

Forms that indicate the number of times an event takes place are derived from the cardinal numbers. The adverbial root is marked by the suffix {-h}, which must be preceded by the numerical stems. Theoretically the system is open ended.

ate-h	'once'
bie-h	'twice'
weni-h	'trice'
nubate-h	'four times'

### 3.3.10.6 Ordinal numbers

To designate and specify the order of appearance of persons or things in sequence, the Abu' use clausal constructions such as :

betoin n -e -ke -ri' eti -n -i  
 child NCE-IRR-make -go-before one -NCE-LOC  
 'The first child / The child that came first'.

nubat t -e -ke -ki' -i  
 dog NCE-IRR-make-come-after-LOC  
 'The second dog. /The dog that came second'.

Different semantic interpretations of such constructions are determined by the context of discourse.

### 3.3.11 Adverbial Forms

There are a number of forms used in Abu' to indicate the manner in which actions are performed and these seem to be the only forms that are realised by partial or complete reduplication. In this class also are adverbial locatives.

#### 3.3.11.1 Manner adverbs

mehif/ehi	'quick, fast ...'
mehifmehif/ehiehi	'quick + quick' = 'quickly'
so'ubul	'slow, careful ...'
soso'ubul/so'uso'ubul	'slow + slow /careful + careful' = 'slowly/ carefully'
mete'	'be silent'
mete'mete'	'silent + silent' = 'silently'
kusu'a	'quiet'.
kusukusu'a	'quiet + quiet' = 'quietly'

The above manner adverb forms can be nominalised, thus resulting in complex relative clausal constructions. When occurring before the verbal phrases, they describe the manner in which an action is performed. We will return to this later (see clauses).

#### 3.3.11.2 Locative and directional markers

Locatives are a small class of free stems which occur in the Locative slots in clauses and also in the modifier slot of modified locative phrases. These are listed below.

akena	'here' (nearer to speaker)
akanai'	'here (nearer to listener) near by'
kani	'there, that place'

kano: 'way over there' (nearer to neither speaker nor listener)  
 anakin 'some place'  
 loukuni 'a long way'  
 bedehis 'near'  
 anaken 'some place'  
 anaken dei'aken 'another place'  
 numun 'inside'  
 ade' 'outside'  
 iluh 'above, higher elevation, sky, heaven'  
 itaf 'below, on earth'  
 su'ulamun 'underneath'  
 wa'ar 'side'

The first four of the above locative stems form a subclass of locative relators and occur in the relator slot of Locative Relator Axis phrase with the following locatives: loukuni, bedehis, anaken, numun, ade', iluh itaf, su'ulamun', wa'ar. For example:

kani numun  
 LOC inside  
 'There inside.'

kan-i wa'ar  
 LOC-dd side  
 'That/the other side'.

akanai' bedehis 'there near by'

### 3.3.11.3 Possession

Possession is marked by the morpheme {-i} which, as shown in a number of previous examples, must be suffixed to the possessor noun or pronoun in utterance-final position. The rules for forming possessive phrases are similar to those described for forming adjectives and thus need not be reiterated. Some examples are provided below.

Table 3-10: Possessives

Noun Root	Possessive form
aiwa 'father'	aiweli 'father's
iye' '1SG	iye'i 'mine'
aulaf 'house'	aulafi 'house's
aulas 'houses'	aulasi 'houses''
alimil 'bird'	alimili 'bird's'
nubauwk 'dogs'	nubawki 'dogs''

### 3.3.11.4 Connectives

Two allomorphs which function primarily as phrase or clause connectors are recognized in Abu'. They are realised phonetically as {i} or {e}, in free variation, and occur between two or more independent speech utterances to express grammatical or syntactical relationship between naming words. For instance:

anen i iye'  
3SGM Conj 1SG  
'He and I'

'a'u' i anen  
she/wife and he/husband  
'She and he. Husband and wife'.

nubat e bul  
dog Conj pig  
'A dog and a pig'.

uul l -u-wara e l -a-us utam tata  
snake Subj -R-go-down Conj Subj-R-enter stone rock  
'A snake went down and entered a rock'.

### 3.3.12 Emphasis

Emphasis placed on an utterance to draw the attention of the listener to a specific item mentioned in an utterance is done as follows:

a) by use of supra-segmental stress which falls on the word (in particular the syllabic nucleus) to be emphasized.

.alemam ubáh-i -m -i  
men big -EV-NCE-AP  
'The big men' / The men are big'.

b) by overt specifications such as speech events and direct reference to personal presence in the location at the time when an event occurred.

(i) a -tir -i -s nai-f ie' -i  
1SG-R -see -EV-NCE(PL) eye-PL 1SG -GEN  
'I saw them(persons/things) with my eyes'.

(ii) edilisi ie' a -tir-i -s  
affirmative 1SG 1SG-R-see-EV-NCE(Obj)  
'I truly/factually saw them'.

c) by use of an intensifier form whose phonological composition is homophonic with the distal deictic described earlier.

Possible homophonic clash between the intensifier and distal

deictic are avoided by a context determined rule that demands the syntactic positioning of the forms. Hence, the distal deictic form occurs preceding the adjectival phrase and the intensifier form occurs after the adjectival phrase. The rule is strictly adhered to if semantic contrast between the two are to be maintained in those constructions where the two forms occur, e.g.,

aul lali ubahili lali  
 eel that-eel big-NCE NCE-very  
 'That big eel./ That is a very big eel'.

### 3.3.13 Verbal forms

#### 3.3.13.1 bala 'shall/will'

The temporal bala marks the future when it is added to a verb phrase. For example;

Ie' bala i -k -a -he'  
 1SGA will Ø-IR-FUT-EV-go  
 'I will go.'

bala may also be used to express the idea of 'in order to' as for instance:

m -a -da' -a -s        uma        bala  
 1PLEXCLA-R-Ø-make-EV-3PLNU causative in order  
 e -k -efi -s  
 IR-NONPST-good-3PLNU  
 'We did them in order that they will become good.'

Not only may bala be used to express the above senses, but it may also be used to stress certainty or capability as in:

anen bala n -e -k -a -ha -n  
 3SGM will 3SGMA-IR-NONPST-EV-kill -3SGNU  
 'He will (definitely) kill it.'

#### 3.3.13.2 Intentional forms

Two forms are used as lexical verbs which govern other lexical verbs. These are the optative form {a}, and the desiderative (D) form {a'i} 'wish/want to'. Actions about to be performed or one wishes to perform are expressed by the use of {a}, e.g.,

ie' a i-k-a-he'  
 1SG opt IRR-FUT-EV-go  
 'I am about to go'.

ie' a'i i -k -a -he'  
 1SG D IRR-FUT-EV-go  
 'I want to go now.'

### 3.3.13.3 Expressions of continuity

Events begun and prolonged for an indefinite length of time, are expressed in Abu' by:-

- a) the use of raraif 'until/till' as in

afa' m -a-he' raraif m -a-taka  
 !PLEXCL NCE(PLEXCL,Subj)-R-go until NCE(EXCL,Subj)-R-arrive  
 'We went and went until we arrived'.

- b) repetition of the verb:

afa' mahe-mahe e mataka  
 we we-went-we-went and we-arrived  
 'We went and went until we finally arrived'.

### 3.3.14 Verbs

Up to this point of the grammar I have described the simple to complex lexical words and the nominal modifiers and adverbial terms. A pervasive feature of most Abu' nominal categories is the complex morphological composition of nouns. Few Abu' nouns are morphologically simple; the majority are complex and include appropriate inflectional affixes for semantic and contextual precision. From here on we will deal with verbs, the category of Abu' forms that signify actions, events or states. We will outline Abu' verb types first and then we will demonstrate how objects (human/non-human) undergo or perform events to give an overview of how different verbs are put into concrete use, and how nouns interact in different scenes.

#### 3.3.14.1 Types of verbs

Verbs in Abu' are of two main types. Those that can take on an OBJECT (i.e. transitive verbs) and those that cannot (i.e. intransitive verbs).

### 3.3.14.2 Intransitive verbs

This verb category includes motion verbs such as hu'u 'go', hi'i 'come', bulawa 'run' and position verbs such as kis 'sleep', rutu 'stand'. The structural differences between intransitive verbs (vbi) and transitive (vbt) will be discussed later on in the chapter.

### 3.3.14.3 Transitive verbs

This is a rather large class consisting of numerous verb types. They are structurally marked by the capacity of the verb to take an direct object (shown by either the occurrence of nominal object suffix markers to verb stems or as separate words). I will discuss the grammatical order and the question of case marking in due course. In the following table are some examples of both transitive and intransitive verbs.

Table 3-11: Examples of Transitive and Intransitive Verbs.

Transitive	Intransitive
wa'	'to eat/drink'
saka	'to chew'
ware'	to swallow
mine'	to listen, to hear
ti	to see/perceive
te'	drip,trickle,dribble
ti'ara	to break/tear
taah	to talk/speak,say
da' +N/vbt	to make, shout, cry, sing, pray,
da' uba	to defecate
da' so'eh	to smoke
kahur	'to cough'
libi	'to urinate'
subu'	'to dream'
kis	'sleep, lie down'
faan	'sit on the ground'
tamun	'sit on top of a tree/log/chair'
wamun	'put,lie/place on top of something else'
buu'	'put,lay, place on the ground'
bani	'boil'
bi'eh	'warm, simmer, roast kindle, singe
kata	'burn, incinerate,cremate, ignite, scorch'
yabur	'warm (especially leftovers)
wabar	'fear, frighten,dread, scare
nikilala	'pain'
sera'uh	'bathe, wash, swim'

tufa'	'to cut lying object usually, also to trim/to shave'
ra	'to cut down (a standing object), to give birth', to pour down,
bar	'to sharpen, to peel, to skin (e.g. banana)
suhur	'to skin (esp. penis)
u'ar	'to open (an orifice, e.g. vagina)
waha	'to uncover earth-oven cooked food, to wear'
sufa	'to block, to dam, to trap, to encircle'
buu'	'to put, lay, place'
di'	'to stand/stick on the ground'
dida'	'to prepare, to get ready'
wa	'to plant objects'
du	'to bury'
kohifa	'to hide'
dua	'to bend'
laa'	'to walk about'
wadu	'to find, to search, to seek/consult'
kima	'to follow, to pursue, to go after'
rii'	'to precede', to lead',
haa'	'to carry'
niir	'to carry on a sling'
wadeh	'to carry on shoulder'

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### 3.3.14.4 Compound verbs

Transitive verbs are divided further into generic and tautophonic verb compounds. Generic verbs in Abu', unlike most other Papuan languages in which relatively larger inventories of them have been noted (cf. Foley forthcoming), are confined to only one serial verb; da' 'to make/experience, etc.' (see above). To generate serial verb constructions, the verb da' is attached to adjunct nominals or other verb stems and must always occur preceding them. For example:

n-a-da' uba  
3SGM-R-pass excreta  
'He defecated'

n-a-da' maula  
3SGM-R-make work  
'He worked.'

n-a-da' beten  
3SGM-R-make pray  
'He prayed.'

When the agent undergoes an experience which entails him/her to become the patient of the experience, the Abu' use compound action-verbs by suffixing the serial verb da' with experiential verbs which relate to the given experience. For instance:

s-a-da-tama  
3PL-R-make-copulate  
'They copulated.'

k<sup>w</sup>-a-da-ha  
3SGF-R-make-kill  
'She killed herself.'

Other class of compound verbs are characterized by what I prefer to term (in want of better terms) tautophonic verbs. Verbal constructions of these verb types are manifested by the juxtaposition of verbs that seem to mirror the manner in which certain type of actions are performed, created or experienced by an animate or inanimate agent(-source). These approximate the English 'splash-splash, chit-chat, riff-raff' and other such verb types. Some examples are:

fisi-fasel	'to peep in and out'
siti-sata	'to scatter here-there and everywhere'
kir-kar	(what a tree does when it is about to break)
fir-far	'to flap' (especially in reference to pigs' ears)
tir-tar	'to experience pricking sensation'
bil-bal	'to reflect' (e.g. as a bald head, reflecting light)
sir-sar	'to tangle' (especially with string/vine)
sifi-safa	'to shove' (things over and above the capacity a thing can handle or take)
wis-was	'to grumble'
di-du	'to explode' (continuously)

Now that some broad discussions have been made on nominals and verbs, the two main categories that usually make up the argument and predicate components of a propositional structure, we will turn our attention to the rules that condition their combination to generate acceptable sentence constructions in Abu'.

### 3.4 Abu' Syntax

#### 3.4.1 Abu' grammatical order and case marking

In Abu', sentences consist (in this order) of an actor-subject phrase argument (A) and a predicate. The nominal actor-subject-phrase may consist of an optional number of adjectival adjuncts and a head noun. The noun may belong to one of the different classes each with a different nominal concord affix, which can itself be singular or plural. Adjectives agree in number and class with the modified noun, taking corresponding singular and plural nominal affixes.

The predicate contains (in this order) a nominal concord actor prefix marker, which obligatorily occurs as the left-most constituent, (which can itself show corresponding singular and plural affixes), an aspectual prefix tense, and a verb stem. In the case of transitive verbs, an objective case marker which must again be selected by the number and class of the subject nominal) occurs as the right-most constituent. This morphological ordering is manifested by an actor-verb-undergoer or subject-verb-object [for reference these morphological ordering will be labelled A-V-U/S-V-O). This linear ordering is obligatory, and it makes Abu' different from most Papuan languages, whose word ordering is typically manifested by an A-U-V or S-O-V ordering. This syntactic ordering is also found with free object noun phrases.

A pervasive feature of many of the Papuan languages of Papua New Guinea is overt case marking, a feature that is not found in Abu'. The absence of any overt case marking morphemes are compensated for by the strict S-V-O grammatical word order. The subject and object of a sentence are indicated by their positions in the sentence.

### 3.4.1.1 Noun phrase

The compositional structure of the NP of the argument part of the sentence can be summarised in abstraction as follows:

NP --> (N<sub>sg./pl</sub>) (DEM) (NUM) (ADJ)

( )

The above abstract formula representing the compositional structure of an NP of the argument part of an Abu' sentence should be read as: N equals noun (marking the actor or agent) which can take on the plural suffix which must agree in class with the head noun, as must subsequent adjuncts (ADJ!). DEM stands for demonstrative, NUM stands for number, ADJ stands for adjective. An NP thus consists of a head noun and adjuncts. Because of the compulsory rule of prefixing verb stems (except imperative sentences which occur with no overt subject marker in the surface structure), the noun or free-pronoun that constitutes the head noun of the leftmost NP node, as well as its modifying attributive forms, are often omitted. An example of a fully specified NP is:

aleman	a	-n	-a	ate	-n	-a	ubah	-i	-n	-e	-r	-i
man	DEM-NCE-pd			NUM(one)-NCE-EV			ADJ(big)-CV-NCEM(SG)-EV-EC-dd					
1	2			3			4					
man	this			one			big					
alial-i-n-e-r-i				n-a-n-i								
dark	-CV-NCEM(SG)-CV-EC-dd			NCEM(SG)-DEM-NCEM(SG)-dd								
5				6								
dark				very								

In view of the fact that the Abu' do not have any auxiliary verbs, the nominal modifier adjuncts do not distinguish between attributive and predicative functions of noun modifiers except that one is a sentence and the other is not. Hence the above NP then can be interpreted as 'The one very big dark man' or 'The man is very dark and big'.

### 3.4.2 The verb phrase

A typical verb phrase in Abu' consists of the verb stem, which forms what I will designate here as the verbal phrase 'core'. In the scope of the core are the left and right positions which I will prefer to designate as pre-core and post-core respectively. Occurring in the pre-core position are (in this order) (i) the actor-subject pronominal prefix marker (a pro-form) which varies to agree with the class of the actor-noun but which can itself show the singular and plural; (ii) the aspectual marker which specifies completed and potentially completed events into a realis (R) an irrealis (IR) dichotomy and (iii) a tense marker. The 'past' and 'non-future' are not marked hence the zero morpheme {Ø} is being adopted to represent both tenses. The future (FUT) tense marker is {-k-}.

In the post-core position, an adjunctive form marking the undergoer may be suffixed to the verb stem, provided that two pre-requisites are met. These are (a) the verb must be transitive and b) that the nominal undergoer-marker suffix, if appended, is not redundant (because of the occurrence of the full NP).

Having said that, I think further remarks and illustrations of all that has been said on the nature and structure of 'endocentric constructions'<sup>4</sup> might be pertinently discussed if the reader is first made aware of the sentence types in Abu'.

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<sup>4</sup>Those Abu' constructions with a group of syntactically related words in which one of the words acts as the definable 'head' inside the group and which has the same distribution as the whole. The Abu' NPs and VPs with the head noun and the verbal stem acting as definable 'heads'

of a given sentence can be collectively considered as good examples of endocentric constructions. See e.g. Lyons 1968:chant.4.

### 3.4.3 Abu' sentences

Abu' speech utterances constituting sentences are rendered by three main types: fragmentary, simple and complex.

#### 3.4.3.1 Fragmentary sentences

Abu' Arapesh's fragmentary speech utterances are typified by verb-less phrases that are uttered in response to interrogations or uttered when meeting friends. These include free-forms consisting of exclamations and greetings.<sup>5</sup>

Table 3-12: Exclamative forms

Affirmation:	o !, a !	'yes' !
Negation:	uwa'	'no' !
Interjection:	ata' !	'wait'!
	dau' !	'enough'!
	mete' !	'be quiet'!
	hi'i !	'come' !
	hu'u !	'go' !
	faan !	'sit, stay' !
Exclamation:	awomia !	'woe !, 'alas'!
	ei' !	'hi'!, attention'!
	aha' !	'watch out'!
	us !	'give way'!
	u wo hu !	'okay' !
	u ho u' !	(you) 'come' !

<sup>5</sup>Narakobi (pers.com. 1984) contends that the Arapesh forms of greetings are indigenous to the culture, but it appears to the author that they are either mere loan translations from Tok Pisin verbal greetings or their syntematization can be attributed to indirect influence from the popular usage of Tok Pisin greetings. These were borrowed wholesale from the Buki in the 1950s and have been used ever since.

## GREETINGS

luwahef	'morning' !
(y)afuhi (numunah)	'good day' !
uwabikeb	'good afternoon/evening' !
(y)afubi (uwab)	'good night' !

### 3.4.3.2 Simple sentences

A typical simple sentence in Abu' is marked by a clause structure consisting of no more than one predicate (i.e. one verb) and one or more nominal modifier NPs such as:

11. aleman ubahi-n-e-r-i n-a-ha bul kani walub.  
 man big -NCE(man)-EC-AP 3SGM(A)-R-kill pig PP(LOC) river  
 'The big man killed a pig at the river'.

Abu' speakers, like other language speakers, do not waste time repeating features that become redundant once they have been introduced into a sentence in a conversation. Consequently many of the redundant NPs or unnecessary adjuncts in a sentence can be deleted or contracted to produce a minimal meaning bearing speech utterance. If one were to apply this principle of economy in speech production to number 11 above, we will end up with the following kernel sentence.

12. n -a -ha-l  
 3SGMA-R- kill-NCE (a pig)  
 'He killed a pig'.

Notice that all the pre- and post-core constituents were deleted leaving us with a sentence which, structurally, constitutes a single utterance verbal lexeme . Internally it appears complex. Being a transitive verb, it must take on a direct object and so the noun terminal consonant {-l} of the undergoer (U) is being moved and thus becomes directly attached to verb-phrase maintaining in toto its accusative function.

Not only can a verbal phrase structure be contracted but can be expanded as well by superimposing or subordinating an original sentence with additional sentences to elaborate on the topic focused

upon. If in such a sentence coordination is not marked by sentence boundary markers (e.g. non-hesitant pauses, etc.) and some conjunctives (e.g. -e- 'and') are used instead then complex sentences result. Complex sentences in Abu' are more than one clause, or more than one predicate. Before discussing complex sentences, I want to consider interrogatives and negatives.

### 3.4.3.3 Questions

There are four ways to ask questions in Abu':

1. By a change from statement intonation sentence final fall to a sentence final abrupt rising intonation. This suprasegmental feature indicating interrogation has also been noted by Lynch (1978) for Lenakel and seems a near-universal feature amongst PNG languages.

13. n -i -k -e -hi'i STATEMENT  
 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-come  
 'He will come'.

14. n -i -k -e -hi'i QUESTION  
 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-come  
 'Is he coming' ?

By adding ba uwa' 'or not' at the end of an indicative sentence. Apart from an abrupt rising intonation on ba 'or', and a higher degree of rising intonation on the penultimate syllable of uwa' 'not', followed by sentence utterance-final fall; intonation pattern of these interrogative statements are similar to those of indicative sentences. Applying the intonation pattern described here to the above will yield the following:

15. n -i -k -e -hi'i ba uwa'  
 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-come or not  
 'Is he coming or not' ?

Normally ba uwa' is contracted to ba, accompanied by a sentence final rising intonation on the same. The rising intonation is maintained.

16. n -i -k -e -hi'i ba  
 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-come or  
 'Is he coming or' ?

2. By the use of a number of interrogative pronouns or words such as: emi 'who' melein 'what', uma melein 'for what/why' malma 'how'. These WH-questions may have statement intonation. Their syntactic ordering within the interrogative constructions are as indicated in the following examples:

17. emi n -a -ha -n  
 who 3SGA-R-Ø-kill-3SGNU  
 'Who killed/hit it' ?

Emi may also occur in clause final position, but then it marks the objective or undergoer-case of the interrogative pronoun 'who'.

18. emi na ha emi  
 who hit/kill who ?  
 'Who killed/hit who' ?

19. melein n -a-ha -'  
 what 3SGN-R-hit/kill-3SGFU  
 'What kill her'.

20. k<sup>W</sup> -a -ha melein  
 3SGFA-R-kill/hit what  
 'What did she kill/hit' ?

Like the personal interrogative pronoun emi 'who', the non-human interrogative pronoun melein 'what' can occur either sentence initially or sentence finally. Whichever position it occurs in determines both its subjective and objective-cases, as demonstrated in the examples above.

The interrogative adverbs uma melein 'for what reason' and malma 'how' always occur sentence finally or always occur after the verb phrase constituent, directly opposite to the syntactic positioning of such in English.

21. k<sup>W</sup>-a -da' -a -s malma  
 3SGFA -R -do -EV-3PLNU how  
 'How did she do them?'

22. k<sup>W</sup>-a -da' -a -s uma melein  
 3SGFA -R -do -EV-3PLNU for what  
 'What did she do that for?'

A fronting of the interrogative adverbs of the above in the sentence initial position will yield unacceptable sentences.

23. \* malma k<sup>w</sup>ada'as  
       'how (did) she past do them' ?
24. \* uma melein k<sup>w</sup>ada'as  
       for what she-past do them  
       'Why did she do them'.

### 3.4.3.4 Negation

Two forms are used by Abu' speakers to express negation. These are: uwa' 'not' and duwa' 'nothing' which must occur in utterance-final position. Sentences expressing negation are therefore of the following structure: NEG(S) ---> S + NEG.

25. k -u -k -a -ha -' uwa'  
       3SGFA -IR-NONPST-EV-hit/kill-3SGFU not  
       'She did not hit her.'
26. alemam m -a -fan duwa'  
       men 3PLMA-R-Ø-sit nothing  
       'The men sat doing nothing.'

Negation, being a denial of occurrence of a factual event, is considered by the Abu' in the scope of non-factitive mood. Hence the application of the future or non-factitive marker {-k-} enhances the way Abu' divide events up. Those that occurred or completed are expressed in the past tense, while recursive, unfinished, unperformed and yet to be performed events are encapsulated within the irrealis aspect.

### 3.4.4 Types of clauses

Abu' clause types are enumerated and described fairly broadly below. 

#### 3.4.4.1 Transitive clause

A transitive clause in Abu' is a clause which contains verb or verbs that can take direct objects as opposed to an intransitive clause which does not.

27. k<sup>w</sup>-a-ha nubat  
       3SGFA -R-hit/kill dog  
       'She hit/killed a dog.'

### 3.4.4.2 Intransitive clause

28. k<sup>W</sup> -a'is  
 3SGFA-R-sleep  
 'She slept.'

29. Pater n -a -he' kani aulaf f -a -f -i  
 priest 3SGMA-R-Ø-go PREP house NCE(house)-DEM-NCE(house)-dd  
 'The priest went to the house.'

### 3.4.4.3 Bi-transitive clause

A bi-transitive sentence is a clause in Abu' which contains verbs that take two objects post-posed to verbs as in:

30. k<sup>W</sup>-a -sa'a afa' nikel  
 3SGFA -R-Ø-give 1PLEXCL taro(PL)  
 'She gave us taro.'

31. awuw w -a -r'ifa -m dikebeseh  
 woman(PL) 3PLFA-R-Ø-tell-3PLMU message  
 'The women told them (men) the message.'

### 3.4.4.4 Equational clause

Abu' does possess constructions that approximate equational clauses such as the following example:

32. betoin ie'-i afi-n-i  
 child 1SGfpn-GEN good-NCE(child)-AP  
 'My child is good.'

### 3.4.5 Complex sentence

A typical Abu' complex sentence is a structure which contains more than one independent clause. The coordinate clauses are linked together by either hesitant pauses or by two conjunctives, namely, {e or a}. Grammatically, such conjoining of separate event-dominated expressions enable Abu' speakers to elaborate or exemplify interconnected ideas during discourse. Consider the following complex sentences.

### 3.4.5.1 A prototypical complex sentence

The basic Abu' complex sentence structure is roughly of the form:

34. CS---> S<sub>1</sub> {hesitant pause} S<sub>2,3,etc.</sub>  
{e, a }

In the above, CS stands for complex sentence, S<sub>1</sub> means the clause or sentence to which subsequent clauses may be connected. Since no real attempts were made to sort out sentence topicalization, it is difficult to determine the main and subordinating clauses for many of the equational sentences and hence will not be considered further. Occurring after the initial clause of a complex sentence one has either a hesitant pause or one or the other of the conjunctives {e or a}. The occurrence of the two connective particles are phonologically determined. They can then be followed by the addition of the number of subordinate clauses (diagrammatically marked as S<sub>2,3</sub> etc.) required to communicate an idea or an event. Every compounding or subordinating clause must be connected by connective forms in order for the entire sentence to hang together as one complex unit.

35. CL PAUSE CL  
S PAUSE S PAUSE  
'a'u' k<sup>w</sup>-a -he' --- anen n -a -fan ---  
wife 3SGFA -R-Ø-go husband 3SGMA-R-O-remain  
CL  
S NON-HESITANT PAUSE(period)  
n -u -wabul lahu  
3SGMA-R-Ø-sift sago(starch)  
'The wife went, the husband remained behind and sifted sago.'

36. S CONJ CL CL CL  
ina' n -a he' e n -a -ti s -a -fan s -a -da'  
2SG 2SGA-R-Ø-go and 2SGA-R-Ø-see 3PLA-R-Ø-stay 3PLA-R-Ø-do  
QUEST-INT-RISE  
melei-s kani wabul  
what -3PLNU LOC(PREP) home/village  
'You went and saw them at home doing what things.'

The use of other forms of conjunctives to conjoin clauses is done as well particularly in such clause types as those expressing condition, purpose and so on, e.g.

### 3.4.5.2 Conditional sentence

Abu' sentences that express condition, consist usually of two or more clauses which are conjoined by the conjunctive morpheme uma 'so' and bala 'modal form', as for example:

37. S CONDITIONAL CONJUNCTIVE  
 afa' m -u -hu' mehif uma-r -i bala  
 1PLEXCL 1PLEXCLA-R-Ø-go quickly so -EC-ADV (m) MOD  
 S  
 m -i -k -a -turu -m  
 1PLEXCLA-IR-NONPST-EV-see-3PLMU  
 'Had we gone quicker, we would have seen them.'

### 3.4.5.3 Purpose sentence

A sentence that expresses the purpose of one's action is structurally similar to the above but lacks bala. The difference in semantic content is determined by the speech context or situation and other contextualization cues such as tone of voice, facial expression and gestures.

38. ie' a -ha'i uma i -k -a -turu-'  
 1SG 1SGA+R-Ø-come in order 1SGA+IR-NONPST-EV-see-3SGFU  
 'I came in order to see her.'

### 3.4.5.4 Relative clause

Abu' relative clauses are embedded in sentences and are subjoined to the main clause by relative pronominal forms (Rpn), which change to agree in nominal concordance with the subject of the embedded clause. Examples of these are provided below.

39. Nailiah n -a -mine' ese-i s -e -k -a -tah -i  
 Nailiah 3SGMA-R-Ø-hear 3PLA-RPN 3PLA-IRR-NONPST-EV-Ø-talk-GERU  
 'Nailiah heard those who were talking'.

40. k<sup>w</sup>-a -ha' au'a-i-' anen 'o'u'-i  
 3SGFA -R-Ø-hit(kill) 3SGFU-RPN husband 3SGF-GEN  
 n -e -k -e tama -' -i  
 3SGMA-IR-NONPST-EV-copulate-3SGFU-GERUNDIVE  
 'She hit(kill) the woman her husband was copulating with.'

### 3.4.5.5 Reflexive and reciprocal constructions

Abu' reflexive and reciprocal constructions are formed by combining roots of certain verbs with the serialised verb da 'do, make, experience'. The actor-subject is optionally reflected in the objective or undergoer slot, as shown by the following examples.

41. anen n -a -da-ha (anen)  
 3SGM 3SGMA-R-Ø-make-kill himself  
 'He killed himself.'

Usually the reflexive form and the actor-subject pronominal form are deleted as both are being covertly expressed by the serialized verb phrase da-ha 'to cause oneself to be killed'.

Reciprocal constructions are syntactically and structurally like the above except that their semantic representations are reciprocal and this difference is determined by the types of verbs used. For example:

42. (esis) s -a-da-se'-a-ma (esis)  
 3PL 3PLA-R-make-marry-EV-REC 3PLU  
 'They married each other.'
43. afa' da -retama etin m -a -ha'i  
 2PLEXCL make-came next to each other 2PLEXCLA-R-O-come  
 'We all came together'.
44. awuw w -a -da -dama -m  
 3PLF 3PLFA-R-make-pair of-3PLMU  
 'Each woman paired off with a man.'

### 3.5 Moods

A summary of moods in Abu' is provided in the following chart. Moods are marked by a number of what I will call modal roots (MR) which are morphologically similar to some of the forms that have been mentioned or described. Phrase structures expressing different moods in Abu' fall into the dual aspect system: realis (real) and irrealis (unreal), and since most moods are surface representations of speakers' attitudes, feelings or wishes that are future oriented, most of them fall into the irrealis aspect and subsequently take on the future tense.

Imperatives and permissive constructions lack any specific mood markers and so moods of these type of constructions are determined virtually by contextual features such as the illocutionary force of a statement - referring to actions that are performed by speaker or the addressee by virtue of the utterance having been made. Furthermore, interrogative, admonitive and prohibitive moods are marked by uba uwa' 'or not'.

Table 3-13: Moods

REALIS	IRREALIS
{-θ-} 'PAST'	{-k-} NON-PAST/FUTURE
{-a-} Indicative {-i-} {-u-} Dubitative	{-e-} Indicative, Negative, {-i-} Intentive, Dubitative, {-u-} Desiderative,
{uba uwa}' 'or not' Interrogative	Interrogative, Admonitive, Prohibitive {=ko'isi?}' 'don't
{uma}' 'hortatory'	Hortatory
Imperative Permissive	

Examples of constructions expressing the different moods in Abu' are provided in the following pages.

### 3.5.0.1 Indicative mood

The mood roots {-a-, -u-, -i-} or {-i-, -u-}, in combination with the REALIS (R) or IRREALIS (IR) in ordinary sentence statements, signal indicative mood and the normal past and non-past tenses apply depending on whether an event occurred, has occurred, customarily occurs or will occur, e.g.

45. s -a -he' versus s -i -k -a -he'  
3PLA-R-θ-go 3PLA-IRR-FUT-EV-go  
'They went.' 'They will go.'

46. s -u -abul lahuh versus s -u -k -u -abul lahuh  
3PLA-R-θ-sift pulverized sago 3PLA-IR-FUT-EV-sift pulverized sago  
'They sifted pulverized sago.' 'They will sift pulverized sago.'

47. n -a -k -a-ha mahis-i  
 3SGM-IR-NONPST-EV-kill wild-game-GEN  
 'A habitually good hunter.'

### 3.5.0.2 Benefactive mood

The word uma 'for' is used in Abu' constructions that express this mood as examples below show.

48. ei' i-k-a-he' uma-s  
 1SG 1SGA/IR-FUT-EV-go for-3PL(BEN)  
 'I will go for them.'
49. ina' da'a-s uma-wa  
 2SG do-3PLG for-woman PL(BEN),  
 'You do them for them (women).'

### 3.5.0.3 Intentive mood

The words aa 'intentive' (int) and bala 'a futuritive' form (ff), better rendered as 'later' when used together with a verb phrase, suggest this kind of mood in Abu', e.g.,

50. ei' aa i -k -a -he'  
 1SG intentive 1SGA/IR-FUT-EV-go  
 'I am about to go.'
51. anen bala n -u -k -u -bulawa n -e -k -a-he' kani aulaf  
 3SGM later 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-run 3SGMA-IR-FUT-EV-go to house  
 'He will run to the house later.'

### 3.5.0.4 Comparative

An Abu' comparative is signalled by the verbal lexeme dahuma in an equational clause that approximates to the English 'be same or to be equal to'. The form may or may not be followed by etin 'one and all together'. Consider its use in the examples provided hereunder.

52. alemam. biom m -a -dahuma (etin)  
 man PL two PL 3PLMA-IR-be same together  
 'The two men are equal or similar physically.'

Comparison is also expressed by the use of the verbal phrase sihi si'i 'to be like' or simply by comparative or superlative forms.

53. betoin ene sihisi'i n-e-n-i  
 child DEM be like NCE(child)-EV-NCE-dd  
 'This child is like that one.'

54. betoin neni ubahini-ma ene

'child that is-big comp this'  
 'That child is bigger than this child'.

55. betoin neni ubahini neni  
 child that big-child child-very  
 'That child is very big'.

### 3.5.0.5 Imperative

Imperatives in Abu' have no subject nor objects expressed at the surface level. The imperative mood is often accompanied by loudness and the addressee is always a second person. Utterances like:

56. hi'i !  
 'come'!

or

57. hu'u !  
 'go'!

are usually addressed to a second person. Their underlying structures would be of the form:

58. ina' hi'i !  
 2SG come  
 'you come'!

or

59. ifa' hu'u !  
 2PL go  
 'You go'!

### 3.5.0.6 Prohibitive mood

Prohibitive mood in Abu' involves the use of the negative verbal lexeme ko'isi 'don't', which can be uttered singly or following other verb forms such as:

60. n -i -k -a -he' ko'isi' !  
 2SGA-IR -FUT-EV -go NEG !  
 'Don't go.'!

Prohibitive mood is a negative imperative.

### 3.5.0.7 Instructive mood

Abu' instructive mood is expressed in several ways. Generally it is signalled by the adverbial phrase na'a 'this way/this manner' or 'like this'. This form occurs post-posed to the imperative form of the intransitive verb and as a rule must be accompanied by specific practical action determined by the given speech contexts such as:

61. da'a-s na'a + PRACTICAL ACTION  
 do -3PLNU this way  
 'Do them this way ...'

Additional clauses may be chained onto the above. The semantic intent is to forewarn the likely outcome of an event if the addressee does not take into account the admonitive mood of the speaker's utterance of instruction.

62. da'a-s na'a ma bala sueis +PRACTICAL ACTION  
 do -3PLNU this way later good + PRACTICAL ACTION  
 'Do them this way in order that they'll be good.'

### 3.5.0.8 Admonitive mood

Admonitive mood can be expressed in the same way as the instructive mood or it can be expressed through narrative texts about a real or an imaginary topic aiming at getting the addressee to consider for himself or herself the possible outcome of events if certain steps are taken.

63. s-a-fan s-e-ke'is duwa'i, na'i  
 3PL-R-stay 3PL-IR-sleep do nothing be-FUT-NEG  
 bala s-e-k-e-wa' we'isi  
 later 3PL-IR-FUT-eat food  
 'Those who are lazy will not have food to eat.'

64. so'ubul f -i-fan uma suei-f-a !  
 - take-good-care 2PL-R-stay so good-NCE-EMPH  
 'Stay well and take good care.'

### 3.5.0.9 Dubitative mood

Doubt is rendered by the modal aa'amun 'may be', which occurs after the main clause. Dubitative mood can occur in the past, present, and future tenses. Both the interrogative and negative moods may also be expressed in this mood.

65. k<sup>w</sup>-a -fan aa'amun  
 3SGFA-R -be-there MOD(may)  
 'Maybe she is there.'

66. k-u-k-e-is aa'amun  
 3SGFA-IR-FUT-EV-sleep MOD(may)  
 'Maybe she wants to sleep.'

### 3.5.0.10 Abilitative mood.

This mood is expressed again by the futuritive bala, but its semantic content is approximated to the English 'being able'. The abilitative and intentive moods are determined by the speech contexts as the structures are virtually the same.

67. bala i-k-a-ha-n-a .  
 be-able 1SG/R-FUT-EV-hit/kill-3SGMU-EV  
 'I will (or am able) to hit/kill him.'  
 or 'I will hit/kill him later.'

Unabilitative mood is expressed by fronting the abilitative mood constructions with the verbal phrase na'i and insertion of the contracted form of the negative (yaa') thus:

68. na'i bala i-k-a-ha-n-a yaa' (<uwa' 'NEG')  
 NEG-be able 1SG/R-FUT-EV-hit/kill-3SGU-EV NEG  
 'I don't think I'll be able to hit him.'

### 3.5.0.11 Desiring, wanting and liking

These moods are all expressed by the verbal form aa'i 'wish', 'want', or 'like', e.g.

69. ei' aa'i i-k-i-sira'uh  
 1SG 1SGA/IR-want/wish/like 1SGA/R-FUT-EV-wash  
 'I want to wash (myself).'

### 3.5.0.12 Having, possessing and belonging

Possession, as we have pointed out earlier on (3.3.14.1), is indicated by suffixing the genitive form {-i} directly onto the possessor noun. The Abu' also use the verb bu', which approximates the English 'to put, to have or to possess', to render semantic content of the above, e.g.

70. ei' abu' radio nami -n-i  
 1SG put/have/possess radio new -NCE(radio)-AP  
 'I put/have/possess a new radio.'

### 3.5.0.13 Allowing and Permitting

Moods of this type in Abu' are rendered by the verb asu' 'to allow, permit, or to let'. The two sentences below demonstrate these moods.

71. afa' m-u-asu -a -n -a  
 2PLEXCL 2PLEXCLA-R-Ø-let,permit,allow-EV-3SGMU-EV  
 'We allowed him.'
72. n -a -da'-a -s  
 3SGMA-R-Ø-do -EV-3PLU  
 'We let him do them'.

## CHAPTER 4

## HOW THE ABU' SEE AND TALK ABOUT THE WORLD

## 4.1 Introduction

It was indicated briefly in chapter 3 that the extent to which the Abu' noun class system might be influenced by factors other than phonology has not been delved into. This chapter will attempt to show that the Abu' noun class system (chapter 3) is not an arbitrary system. Equally, it is not determined by phonology alone as has been suggested elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is of course possible to argue that phonology is in fact the more pervasive phenomenon in the determination of many of the noun classes. At least my recent analysis of the Abu' noun class system suggests that the bases for determining the Abu' noun classes are in fact far more complex. There appears to be substantial grounds to suggest that the Abu' noun classes are determined by a combination of phonological and semantic factors that can be attributed to the

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<sup>1</sup>e.g., Fortune 1942, Pagotto 1976, Foley forthcoming, Nekitel 1977 and MacGregor and MacGregor 1983.

way the Abu' perceive the world.<sup>2</sup> For discussion on the way in which the Abu' world-view might be reflected in the language noun class system, we must at the very outset understand some features of the Abu' world-view.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>There is a widely held view that an ongoing interaction exists between language and people's perceptions of the world. cf. e.g., Hymes 1964, part III: 'World View and Grammatical categories', especially the articles by Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Harry Hoijor, and Madeleine Mathiot. Joshua Fishman (1960) also attempted to systematize the long disputed Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Broadly speaking, this school of thought claims that the language a given speech community speaks reflects its views about what life is all about. Accordingly, the study of a language may provide insights into the perceptions that a given speech community has about the world, or in other words its world-view.

In this respect, the Abu' language is no exception. Abu', as a language, is complex. It has an elaborate system of noun classes, a phenomenon which has caused some to wonder just how the Abu' come to have such an elaborate noun system. Through a study of the noun class system, we can discover the underlying factors (i.e. linguistic or extralinguistic themes of the Abu' society's world-view) that might have influenced the development of the noun classes.

<sup>3</sup>Ethnographic studies that provided accounts of various Papua New Guinea communities' world views to date posited two general types.

First, there is the view that detailed cosmological beliefs are either absent or fragmentary and a piecing together of coherent accounts of word-views is not feasible (cf. Malinowski, 1922:403; Mead 1940:339-40 and Brown 1972:5).

Second, there is the view that recognizes the universe as a total cosmic entity either with spiritual elements as described by Narakobi (1980:12-15) and Waisi (1982:2) or one that lacks any direct spiritual influence as suggested by Lawrence (1964:9) and that suggested by the West Sepik Tumleo islanders' creative myth (Andreas Nekitel, pers.com. 1978) and the Miye culture-hero creative myth (Mahite Butehe, pers.com., 1981).

The most recent work dealing with Melanesian world-views is by Aerts (1983:1-54). In his article, the author synthesized Melanesians' beliefs in gods and established three fundamental types: animism, polytheism and monotheism cum polytheism. He concluded that Melanesians, like people of many of the world's communities, have had certain beliefs in spirituality antedating external (especially Christian) influence. He posited the view that a community's pre-Christian belief in deities was largely determined by the nature and the conditions, including the cultural environment of the community. However, the author made no comments about the potential interaction between language and beliefs in cosmology. I offer my views on this vacuum in this chapter based on my recent study of the Abu' language and hope thereby to make some headway towards a theory of metaphysics or cosmology from a linguistic viewpoint. In so doing I am not negating the interaction between environment and belief, but merely emphasizing what appears to have been misconceived or neglected--impact of world-view on language.

#### 4.1.0.1 The Abu' world-view paradigm

<sup>4</sup> The Abu' world-view suggests that it is an encompassing philosophy. It includes both innate and acquired knowledge (i.e. an integration of social, philosophical, religious beliefs, opinions, and attitudes) about the community's relationship with the world itaf and its relationship with Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman, the supreme deity. This complex world-view will be represented in a paradigm below. This rich, complex and obviously difficult subject is not easy to analyse in ordinary language. It is even more difficult to correlate concepts, perceptions and beliefs from one language - Abu' - to another - English. Inevitably, translations whether literal or approximate will be inadequate. Nevertheless, I am making an effort to summarize and present as faithfully as I can the Abu' world-view as given to me by Abu' experts. I will use the paradigm to describe it in detail.

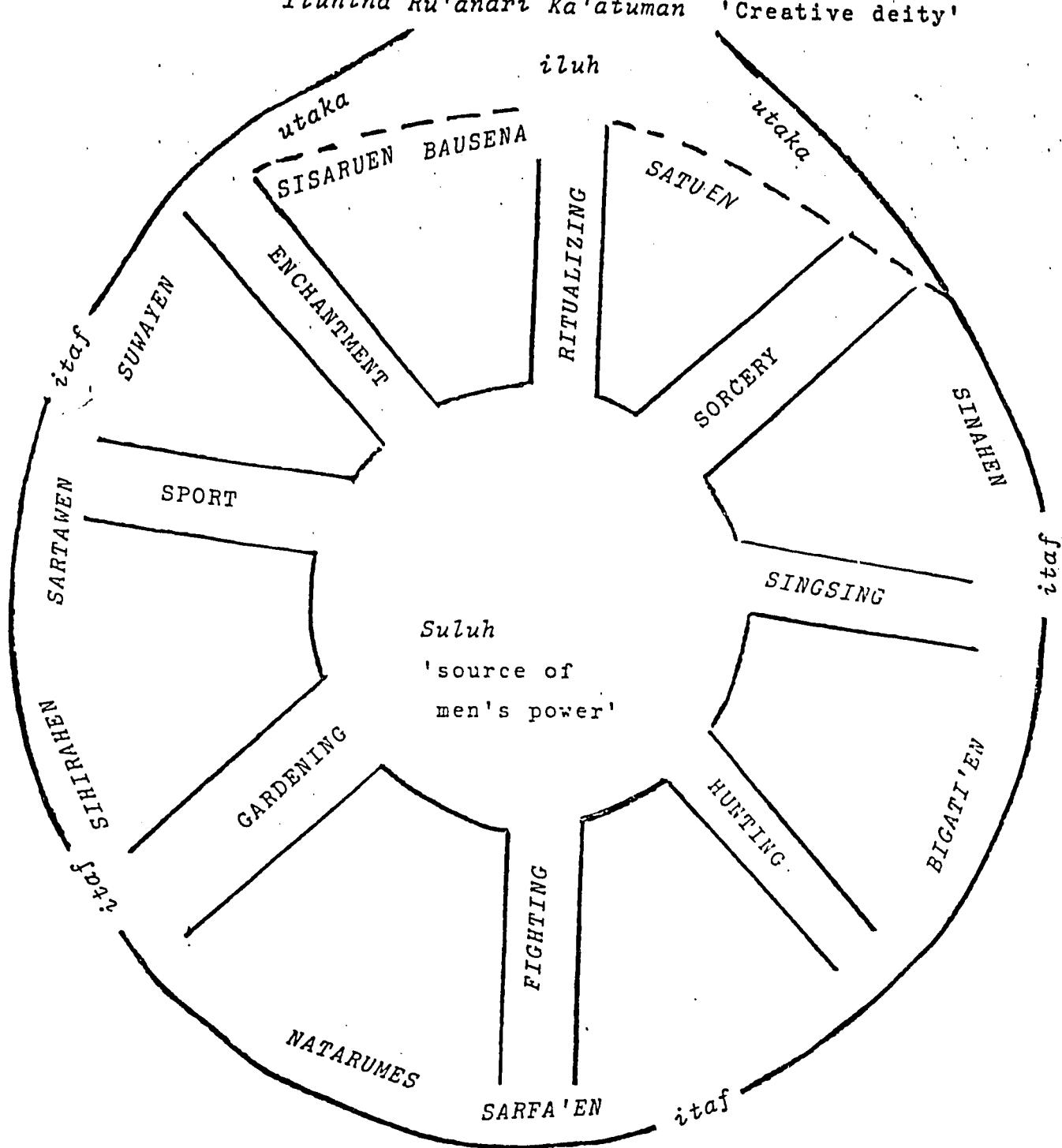
#### 4.1.0.2 Meaning of the paradigm

To better understand the complex nature of the Abu' world-view paradigm, designed to faithfully represent that world-view in a symbolic way (especially the basic elements of that world-view), we need to clarify what the basic elements are. In other words, to understand the whole, we need to take out the parts, examine them and then put them together to make the whole picture. We must not forget all the time that in truth, they are intertwined and not separable. These elements are: iluh 'up and beyond' utaka 'cloud' and itaf

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<sup>4</sup>The Abu' world-view presented here is based on data obtained mainly from my Upper Abu' informants in Womsis village and so the views represented here may not necessarily be representative of the entire Abu' community. From my general interviews with members of other Abu'-speaking villagers, there seems to be a general agreement with what is presented here, though there were slight deviations noted among the Lower Abu' informants.

## The Abu' World-View Paradigm



SOURCE: Fieldwork, 1982.

'earth'. At the peak of this world-view paradigm is the supreme heavenly deity known as Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman (literally the heavenly man, big-men Ka'atuman). The arches represent utaka 'sky', which is sometimes regarded as different from but at other times is said to be similar to iluh 'up and beyond'. The outer circle represents suluh uhaka 'fountain of power'.

The seasons (10 of them) are paradigmatically represented clockwise between the outer and inner circles. The names of the seasons contain the cross reference marker n which agrees with the noun terminal {-n} of aun 'moon' suggesting the Abu' association of seasons with the months of a solar year. The names of the seasons are as follows: Sisaruen [< s(SubjM<utakas('clouds'))-a(R)-ru ('rumble about)-e(EV)-n(NCEun 'moon') ] 'the month of thunder and lightning'. Bausena [< b(SubjM<walub('river'))-a(R)-usi ('flood') -n(NCE)-a(epithetic vowel)] 'the flood month'. Satuen [< s(SubjM< lawas('trees'))-a(R)-tu (to break down)-e(EV)-n(NCE)] 'the month when trees get up-rooted'. These three months make up the wet season, which stretches from about November to late January. The wet season is followed by the dry season, and the Abu' divide and name it as follows: Bikati'en [< b(SubjM<walub('river'))-i(R)-kadi ('to be dry, or low')-e(EV)-n(NCE)] 'the month of low-tide' or 'the dry month'. Suwayen [< s(SubjM<suus/udis (leaves/black-palm sheathes')-uwa('shed')-y(glide)-e(EV)-n(NCE)] 'Fall', the month during which trees shed their leaves and black-palms drop their sheathes. These coincide with the dry season of the year which extends from June to about September. The Abu' also make gardens during the dry season and hence have names for the months during which major agricultural activities are performed. These months are: Sisaruen [< s(SubjM<wa'wis('yams'))-i(R)-saru ('sprout')-e(EV)-n(NCE) 'the month during which yams sprout.

Sartawen [~~(SubjM<wa'wis('yams'))-a(R)-rita('to ascend/climb')-w(glide)-n(NCE)] 'the month during which yam vines sprout and climb poles and vines set up for them in the gardens.~~

Sihirahen [~~(SubjM<wa'wis('yams'))-i(R)-hirah('to bear')-e(EV)-n(NCE)] 'the month during which yams bear roots' and~~

Natarumes [~~SubjM<aun('month'))-a(R)-taruma('collect/gather')-s(NCEObjM<wa'wis('yams'))] 'the yam harvesting month'.~~

Sarfa'en [~~(SubjM<kalifes('people'))-a(R)-rfa('fight')-e(EV)-n(NCE)] 'the fighting month'.~~

It is obvious from our description of the Abu' seasons, that the names make reference to the prevailing weather conditions characteristic of the area or to the socio-cultural activities the Abu' engage in within the span of the 'year' ahulakl, the length of which is determined by the ten seasons that constitute the Abu' traditional calendar. Notice that the names of the seasons contain the nominal concord affix {n-, -n- or -n}, in agreement with the noun terminal {-n} of aun 'moon', suggesting that these names are lunar nominals; hence, seasons are, in a way, associated with months. The Abu' differ in their counting of their months in that they only have ten and not 13 months in a solar year. The Abu' could have erred by not keeping a good mental record of the months, hence missed three of the months. There is also the possibility that some of the seasonal activities such as gardening usually take up two or three months to complete. Some of the gardening months such as Sartawen and Natarumes could well spread over a period of two to three lunar months, thus reducing the mental count of the months from thirteen to ten.

The focus of male physical potency is anchored in suluh uhaka, the 'energy source', which, according to my informant Sa'uan, imbues whatever activities men do. The major socio-cultural activities originate and radiate outward from suluh uhaka and are represented by the radii. That being

the structural description of the Abu' world-view paradigm, what we need to do now is to expound the cosmology behind the paradigm.

#### 4.1.1 Abu' Cosmology

I should point out at the outset that the Abu' knowledge of the universe is, as a rule, restricted to those things that can be sensed. In this respect, their knowledge of the three basic elements constituting the cosmosphere (viz. iluh, 'up and beyond', utaka 'cloud/sky' and itaf 'earth') are as follows:

##### 4.1.1.1 Iluh 'Up and beyond'

Iluh is devoid of the presence of both human and terrestrial spirits. It is the abode of the 'heavenly deity' Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman and all the celestial bodies. As it may be noticed, the nominal phrase iluhina consists of iluh 'up and beyond', {-i-} 'epethetic vowel, followed by the male gender affix {-n-} which is suffixed with an epenthetic vowel -a. Thus iluhina means approximately: 'the man from above'. Ru'anari means 'the big man' and Ka'atuman is a reference name given to this heavenly male deity. The name is revered, and thus it is not used by human beings to name others by.

Iluh is where all the stars, the sun and the moon are. The Abu' knowledge of astronomy is, as suggested above, limited to those celestial bodies that they can see and are important to them. Apart from the obvious recognition of the sun, aun arifini, and the moon, aun uwabini, they also recognize the galaxy, alehel or nukwaf. In addition, they recognize both the Southern Cross, wa'arasuwa, and the pointers which they name nadikilakuh. Nadikilakuh are the only group of stars that the Abu' regard as male. The sun, uwah, literally sunshine (sometimes it is referred to as aun arifini for day time moon), is not spoken of as either a male or a female. It assumes either h- or n- as the nominal concord affix. The moon aun uwabini is often

personified as a male. We will return to the reasons for this general association later. The stars are collectively regarded as females. Both the morning and the evening stars are recognized and are named laramo'an and kwakeres, respectively.

#### 4.1.1.2 Utaka 'sky or cloud'

Utaka is a bisemous concept. It can mean rain clouds or the sky. The latter is perceived as a celestial wall which circumscribes the cosmosphere and is said to intersect the earth at the horizon. Mythical terrestrial beings, who are neither human beings nor spirits, live at the horizon. They are said to keep themselves busy by cutting and eating the growing edges of the sky. This prevents the sky from growing out of proportion, somewhat analogous to the way stalactites are formed. It is no wonder that the Abu' draw the logical conclusion that the world ends on all sides at the horizon, a view very similar to that reported of the Ilahita by Tuzin (1972:35 ftn). Hence the spherical world-view paradigm presented is indicative of the Abu' cosmic-view.

#### 4.1.1.3 Itaf 'earth'

Earth (itaf) is much more familiar to the Abu', being their abode as well as the abode of terrestrial spirits (ufu'elim 'male spirits') and (ufu'eluwa 'female spirits'). Unarguably, it is the centre of human activity where human beings are, as it were, in an interminable encounter with the animal, the plant and the spirit worlds-- a view which has been expressed elsewhere (see e.g. Narakobi 1980:5). In sum-- itaf is a concrete manifestation of the Abu' world-view par excellence. Let me expand on this point further.

#### 4.1.1.4 Ka'atuman 'the creator'

As described in the structural description of the Abu' world-view, the exponents of Abu' cosmology argue that their world was put there for them by the male supreme deity Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman. He is the primordial cause, and the world and all that it contains is the ultimate effect. The conception of this process of causality was expressed succinctly in the following linguistic construct:

1. n-e-k-e-s-i-bi'-i  
3SGM-NPST-FUT-EV-3PLN-EV-put-GEN  
'The one who puts or creates things'.

by Sa'uan, one of our Womsis informants. Ka'atuman, according to Sa'uan, is the spirit who not only put or created things, but is also the one who continues to create things and consequently is claimed to manipulate as well as control the entire cosmic order. A distinction needs to be drawn between two causative verbs in Abu', which pertain to the analysis of cosmotellurian theory. The two verbs are bu' 'to put' and the serialised verb da' 'to make, to produce.' The use of the latter as in:

2. n -a -da' asah  
3SGMA-R -make rain  
'He made rain'

usually implies both human and non-human involvement in whatever the process of making rain. Whereas:

3. n -a-bu' asah  
3SGMA-R-put/create rain  
'He put or created rain'

implies the idea of creating or evolving from a spiritual or a divine source. In this respect, Ka'atuman is the one who creates as well as the one who manipulates the entire cosmic order. My skepticism that the theory was a version of the traditional Jewish or Christian theory of monotheistic creation was dismissed not only by my informants' insistence on the Abu' having had deism long before the

advent of the Catholic mission into the area, but is augmented further by other researchers' findings (e.g. Aerts, 1984) on the presence of such beliefs among a number of other Papua New Guinea communities, such as Buki (Narakobi 1977:9), Baining (Laufer 1946:49) Binandere (Jojoga 1981:64) and the Huli of the Southern Highlands (see Glasse 1965:37).

In defending the theory of the Abu' having had a belief in a creator deity who is more powerful than the other natural or terrestrial spirits, Sa'uan expressed the following view, which was later confirmed by Naisch and further supported by Sister Casey (pers.com., Canberra 1983), an Australian nun who did some investigation into the traditional religious beliefs of the Abu'. The view was expressed in the rural Tok Pisin variety with Abu' phrases being interspersed to emphasize the most important points. The underlined items were expressed in Abu' and were translated by the author. Some modifications had to be made on spelling to agree with that of standard Tok Pisin.

BS: A -- masalai yet i kamapim dispela samting na olgeta samting. Tru bipo ol i save em god i stap. Ol papa tumbuna ol i save em god i stap. Ol i tok em masalai i ya Iluhina. Iluhina em i stap. iluhina'em istap.

Yu wokim olgeta samting yu singautim Iluhina. Yu noken hambak long Iluhina-nogat. Iluhina'bai i kilim yu. Ol i kros long pik na dok na wonem samting ol i tok: Iluhina hamarim baksait bilong yu na yu dai go. Yu dai i go.

Tru dispela samting ol i gat. Ol i save i gat man long antap -- Iluhina. Em Iluhina Ka'atuman. Em ol i save kolin em olsem. Taim ol i wokim olgeta samting-- taim yu painim abus yu singautim Iluhina-- yu wokim wonem samting o yangpela meri na ol i wokim tambaran no, taim yu soim olgeta samting yu kaikai wonem samting yu tambu long em i go go na yu laik soim em yu soim Iluhina. A-- yu noken kaikai nating na lusim tingting long spetim i go antap. Kaikai spetim i go antap. Ol i kaikai spetim antap--ol i toktok -- ol i tok olsem:

'Em nau mi kaikai dispela samting nau.'

Taim ol i lukim mun san i senis ol i tok o Ru'anari em i wok long senis. Ol i winim taur --ol i paitim garamut-- singautim ol i lukim taim san i senis--san i laik mekim olsem wonem no mun no bai ol i singautim. Bai ol i singautim -- ol singautim olsem:

'a -uu-ha-waaaa. wa--waaaa uu ha - waaaa'  
Em ol i save singautim em olsem".

In the following English translation, the underlined items are

same as the underlined Tok Pisin words which were originally expressed in Abu' when the recording was made.

A--m spirit himself created these things and all things. True - before - they knew God exists. They say he is spirit that is Iluhina- Iluhina exists. Whenever you do something you call upon Iluhina. You must not offend Iluhina. Iluhina will kill you. When they quarrel over pigs, or dogs, or whatever they say Iluhina damns you to death. True they had all these things [knowledge (?). They knew there is a person up there Iluhina-- his name is Iluhina Ka'atuman. Iluhina Ka'atuman that is how they call him.

When they do all kinds of things-- when you hunt wild game you call upon Iluhina or whatever you do - or the young women (reference to female rite of passage) or when they make tambaran 'cult-worship' or when you show all the things (i.e. food being avoided during period of food taboo) you tabooed you show them to Iluhina. You must not just eat them without showing them first to Iluhina. Masticate and spew them into the sky and say:

'Here I am eating these things now.'

When they see the sun and the moon change (i.e. eclipses), they say, 'Hmm, Ru'anari, 'big spirit', is changing places! They blow the triton, they beat the slitgong, they call- they see the moon and the sun change (and) if the sun or the moon wants to do whatever -- they will shout and call Iluhina thus:

'a-uu ha-waaaa. wa-waaaa uu ha waaaa.'

That is how they call him.

In the foregoing sketch, we observed a summary of how an Abu' cosmogonist presented and defended his community's cosmological views. The Abu' argue that cosmotellurian creation emanates from a heavenly deity who they address as Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'acuman. Ka'atuman is believed to hail from somewhere in the distant sky. He is the spiritual cause, and the itaf 'earth' is a direct emanation from that cause. In this respect, he assumes control over the entire cosmic order. A question arises: what does control over the cosmic order mean ? This the Abu' cosmogonists answer by providing true life experiences (usually natural events whose causes or control lie outside the human or terrestrial spirits' potency) that were or are done with invocation to the heavenly deity if positive results were or are desired. The underlying principle they adhere to is that anything that happens and whose cause- cannot be explained by deduction from earthly or circumstantial evidence, they automatically attribute

to Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman. In this respect, the Abu' do not differ from other communities who possess theistic beliefs of one type or another (cf. Aerts 1983).

Extra-terrestrial events such as eclipses are believed to be the makings of Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman, a logical association perhaps of heavenly events with the heavenly deity. Since he is detached from the earth, the Abu', if they want to invoke him to have mercy on them or to save them from incumbent wrath, they either acclaim their messages or relay their messages by the use of speech surrogates (e.g. slitgong and triton, referred to in chapter 6 ) to transmit their voices through invisible and timeless distance to Ka'atuman.

Ka'atuman is also invoked during certain cultural rites that adherents and custodians of Christianity readily condemn as sinful or as practices of idolatory. An obvious and logical conclusion that could be drawn from this is that the Abu' had always believed in Ka'atuman long before the advent of Christian missions. Sa'uan, one of my informants, equated Ka'atuman with the introduced concept 'God'. He argued that although the deity expressions differ, the referent is one and the same entity that Christians call 'God' and we the Arapesh call Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman which by the way is cognate with the Buki Arapesh Iruhin (cf. Narakobi 1982:18).

The mastication and subsequent spewing into the sky of food that a young woman had foregone during the period of her first menstruation by the ritual performer during the ceremony called satuwa' au'al is a ceremony testifying to the Abu' belief in the existence of the heavenly deity-- Ka'atuman.

Now, what of Ka'atuman's responses to Abu' supplications? Like the Christian God, Ka'atuman has the prerogative to respond positively or negatively, depending on human capacities to placate him. If rituals are performed in accordance with laid-down divination norms,

efficacious results are expected. Should anticipated results be not attained, or if rituals fail to materialize, reasons for failures are sought or suggested. The Abu', like many world communities, do not readily accept the view that denies or underrates the theory of causality.

#### 4.1.1.5 The Abu' monotheistic or polytheistic

The Abu' Arapesh could be regarded as either mono- or polytheistic. They believe in the existence of a heavenly deity -- Ka'atuman, but they also believe or accept without question the existence and influence of numerous natural or terrestrial spirits. These are referred to as ufu'elim (sg. ufu'al) 'male spirits' and ufu'eliwa (sg. ufu'elu') 'female spirits'. In addition to these, they recognize the existence of ghosts, mauras (sg. mauran), and the fairly remote and distant mythical beings referred to earlier (p.119) who are unimportant and have no direct influence at all over their daily life.

Nature spirits are believed to occupy various geographic (usually dangerous and inaccessible) spots such as 'cliffs' aselas, 'waterfalls' walub badasefre', 'river pools' waas, 'caves' waiwa, huge rocks or boulders tatakw and huge trees lawas.

Unlike Iluhina Ru'anari Ka'atuman who is for all people everywhere, and thus is not subject to ownership, natural spirits and ghosts are owned and they are consequently identified with the owners of the land they are said to preside over. They, therefore, are supposed to be on amicable terms with the owners of the land, but infliction of punishment on imprudent intruders or trespassers is likely if they are unduly disturbed.

Human disturbances include, among other things, trespassing, tree felling or an act of sexual intercourse within the bounds of the spirit's territory. In the event of an encroachment of this nature, the culprits usually redress these faults by making reconciliatory

offerings to appease the offended spirit if a peaceful coexistence between the disturbed spirit and the offender(s) or the community at large is to be maintained.

An interesting aspect of this process is the Abu' attempt to try and divert the curse the spirit might make upon another person or enemy community. The offender must cut off a part of a 'cane' waku (Calamus sp.; TP=kanda), circle it around his head and body, then throw it towards the direction of a hostile village. This gesture is supposed to redirect the spirit's curse against that village and saves the offender or his/her village from the incumbent 'catastrophe' (kaha). The term kaha is best expressed by the English 'a destructive storm'.

#### 4.1.1.6 Life after death

The Abu' Arapesh, like most societies of the world, believe in life after death. However, they do not have any theories on the question of predestination. The existence of "good place" and "bad/evil place" are unknown. It is probably due to the absence of the two concepts that the Abu' lacks expressions in their language to infer or suggest concepts that might approximate 'heaven' and 'hell'. At death, people's spirits go to live with their previously dead relatives in dark pools of water or at the cemeteries. As a rule, every clan has or possesses a water pool waak which has become the abode of dead relatives.

Unlike adherents of Christian belief, the Abu' do not draw or speak about a dichotomy between the spirit and the human worlds. It is no wonder that the Abu' regard spirits and ghosts as part and parcel of the Abu' world-community to which humans belong. For Abu', a "communion of saints" would include all known and forgotten Abu'--living and the dead. There are no good Abu' in heaven and bad Abu' in hell. They all live together-- the living are visible and the

dead are visible, but only in restricted and controlled circumstances. This rationalization is encapsulated quite clearly in the language structure where human beings and spirits of all kinds are being conjugated under the same classes (i.e. male vs. female classes (cf. chapter 3, p.65ff) and subject themselves to the same morphosyntactic rules.

Having expressed this view, I next go on to examine the extent to which the Abu' word-view might throw light on the noun class system and how the Abu' world-view as a whole might be reflected in their verbal mode of expression--the Abu' language.

An in-depth understanding of the Abu' world-view may be arrived at through Abu' folk-taxonomy; that is, how Abu' apportion information so as to highlight their world-views (cognitive universe) through semantic domains.<sup>5</sup>.

#### 4.2 Abu' folk-taxonomy

Given that the Abu' expound a polytheistic theory of cosmotellurian creation, how can this be reconciled with what appears to be a monotheistic view of a single deity, Iluhina Ka'atuman, who is the cause and effect of all creation? Perhaps an explanation is to be seen not so much in the strict dichotomy between monotheism and polytheism, but

<sup>5</sup>A number of previous researchers into pre-literate communities have warned that it should not surprise the modern botanist or biologist if the categories of pre-literate communities such as the Abu' categories of things do not square up with those of the biologists: (e.g. Bulmer, 1966; Adrianne Lang 1975). In pre-literate communities like the Kalam, the Enga and the Abu' which do not have theories of evolution, the categories emphasized in their system of folk-taxonomies are generally different from those of the botanist or biologist and are determined by either the geophysical features, such as the regions or areas in which things are found, or are assigned according to particular features of their life. This does not, as Bulmer (1966) pointed out, make the pre-literate communities any less scientific than their Western counterpart. After all, even Western communities, do not use the 'Linnaean' method in all contexts when they want to talk about things in the world. In most contexts, they use the common system of ideas to categorize things. In this respect the Abu' categories I will present and discuss should be viewed from the Abu' point of view.

in the pervasive nature of spirit. In other words, Ka'atuman is the ultimate pervasive masculine spirit, beyond and above all. The other spirits are subordinate, yet no less powerful in the daily lives of the Abu' people. Iluhina Ka'atuman assumes the core, the primacy of the tree-branching Abu' (apex of a pyramid by analogy) folk taxonomy. From the primacy of Iluhina Ka'atuman ensue three principal categories which, together with all other deities and entities, constitute the Abu' cosmosphere. The three elements are iluh, utaka and itaf.

The Abu' know very little about Iluh and utaka. Hence these domains are not important to the Abu'. Consequently these become terminal lexemes per se and so we cannot discuss them further. The Abu', however, have simple knowledge of celestial bodies. The celestial bodies important to the Abu' are those that they can see and which are believed to have some influence over their lives. To the Abu', the celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, and the stars appear to share in common the feature [+animate]. To the Abu' these objects appear to be bodies which are self-mobile and in a way behave like animate terrestrial creatures.

The stars are all collectively seen as female things, even though a group of them called nadikilakuh 'pointers' are regarded as males. To the Abu' stars are smaller but more beautiful to look at than the moon, who is personified as a show-off male. The male image of the moon is probably influenced by the Abu' folklore which regard the moon as some kind of male spirit. In his relationship with women, he "kills", which signifies sexual assault or influence on women causing them to menstruate. The moon is thus a deity whose influence on human beings and on nature causes visible change. Women lose blood, days and nights are light, tides change, rains come down and winds blow. Regarding his influence on women to discharge blood, the Abu' use the euphemistic expression:

4. aun n-a-ha-'  
 moon 3SGM-R-kill/hurt-3SGFU  
 'The moon kills or hurts her'.

Note that the moon aun is personified as a male who kills or hurts (since 'to kill' ha expresses a number of English causative verbs, such as 'hit , kill , hurt, injure, assault) the woman (i.e. the goal), thus causing her to discharge blood. Broadly speaking, the moon is the actor and women are the goal recipients and by this implication are the wives of the moon.

A question arises: why do Abu' portray the stars as females? Is it because the stars are normally small, sparkling and beautiful to the naked eye and as such are like Abu' women or in a way reflect the Abu' general image of women? I am inclined to think of the affirmative response to the second question as a possibility, not necessarily the reason. As noted in chapter 3, stars uduwa are assigned under the category 'female' (cf. class 2, chapt.3). I think the Abu' might have been influenced by their general view of stars being female, and hence this image is encapsulated in the assignation of stars with the female lexemes under the same noun class.

Whereas iluh 'up and beyond' is less familiar to the Abu', itaf 'earth' is more familiar. The Abu' knowledge of it is very detailed. In this respect, one cannot possibly detail all the things that constitute it in a small section of a chapter of a thesis. I will thus be examining the prominent components only.

#### 4.2.0.1 A few opening remarks on componential values

Before analysing how the Abu' segment or categorize 'sublunary things' itafisi, there are a few preliminary remarks that need to be made regarding the problems the author faced in his attempt at synthesizing the Abu' perceptions of itafisi and the complexity with which they go about categorizing them. One of the problems I faced was

the choice of componential values or features when several feasible alternatives are available. Connected with this is the problem that emerged when trying to justify the choices out of a number of equally possible and acceptable alternatives.

Consider, for example, the problem of choosing componential values to capture the Abu' folk-taxonomy's categories: 'heavenly/arboreal creatures' iluhisi; 'terrestrial creatures' itafisi and 'aquatic creatures' walubisi. These can all be represented in several ways such as: a) [+heavenly] or b) [+terrestrial] or c) [+aquatic]. The general principle to resolve cases such as these is to adopt the overt (i.e. more transparent features) categories or features. Categories or features that are important and intelligible in terms of the Abu' system of ideas about their life and their world-view. Hence, the above categories will merely be represented by the overt categories thus: [+heavenly], [+terrestrial] and [+aquatic] representing the Abu' categories: iluhisi, itafisi and walubisi, respectively. These will be supplemented with other additional information for clarity where relevant.<sup>6</sup>

Knowledge of the concrete world itaf is often influenced by two prominent human experiences, namely life and death. These two

<sup>6</sup>It has been observed elsewhere (e.g. Bulmer 1969; Laycock, 1970; Lang 1975; Witkowski and Brown 1978; Chase and von Sturmer 1982 and Sutton 1982) that a number of prominent determinants appear to form the basic universal constraints for non-scientific analysis of how 'primitive' (i.e. non-scientific) communities of the world segment or categorize the world to encapsulate their world-views. Among the prominent constraints suggested are: geography, folklore, ritualistic beliefs (e.g. food taboo) physical attributes (i.e. of things such as colour, shape, size and length). These may in themselves constitute the broader ethno-categories under which 'sublunary things' (itafisi) are subsumed. This method of classifying itafisi is common not only among Papua New Guinea communities but also among Australian Aborigines (see Sutton, 1982 ed.) and other Pacific communities and I believe among many world-communities that do not have modern theories of evolution as observed by Bulmer (1969:7). The view presented there is, in many respects, similar to the Abu' way of segmenting the 'earth' (itaf) and its constituents (itafisi).

experiences influence the way the Abu' perceive things. Some things are considered in terms of the category [+animate], while other things are covertly subsumed under the category [-animate]. Relating these dichotomies to the world of things, the Abu' developed a linguistic notion afita to reflect their dualistic view of human experiences. Afita must be seen as a cover term for all those things that are considered by the Abu' as [+animate] or are in some ways regarded to have life and can respond when hit, struck, cut or touched. There is no single word in the language that expresses the opposite feature [-animate] or insensate. This the Abu' express by the attributive clause sakaka'i 'dead things'. The immediate Abu' folk-taxonomic branching of 'sublunary things' itafisi, is perceived in terms of the feature [+animate]. Subsumed under the category [-animate] are things like stones, soil, and water, which are nevertheless important elements that the Abu' rely on for growing food and nurturing growth of all other things needed to subsist life. Consequently, the Abu' have developed a rich vocabulary to express different varieties of them, thus indirectly suggesting what the Abu' regard, in their world-view, as significant.

Water abal, for example, is a general term used by the Abu' to include different types of water. Thus 'rivers' are designated as walubis; 'stagnant water' is called baiata; 'river pools' waas; 'rain' is referred to as asah, which may be further described in terms of whether it is a drizzle, torrential or slight. Drinkable water of all kinds, including beverages, are collectively subsumed under the term abal, but with modifying (descriptive or attributive) phrases for semantic specificity. For example; abal maduhibeli 'vine water'; (abal muli<TP 'moli' orange') 'orange water', abal bia (<TP 'bia') 'beer' and so on. Coconut water is designated by a single lexeme -- numat. Water by the way is a powerful magic or sorcery 'cooler' and is

used in many ways to fulfil the spiritual and secular needs of the human person.

Even though the Abu' recognize that water flows and fills space, and that aquatic life walubisi breeds in it, and that it also becomes the home of the dead (cf.4.2.2.2], the Abu' cannot determine its status. I am inclined to regard water as non-living. This position is based on the Abu' belief that objects like stones can be taken as somehow animated if spirits enter them and thus make them able to affect activities of men. Clearly it can be seen that animation (if any), is an a posteriori effect of some external (usually spiritual) cause and not an a priori state of lifeless objects.

To the Abu', rocks are formed from soils and not vice versa. They defend this view by citing several rock types that they see being formed. They say that slate stones are formed from clay type soil and conglomerates are formed from a mixture of pebbles and sticky soil type that are refined by the hydraulic movement of water, especially tides. Expanding on this, John Naisoh expressed that reddish rocks sumaleb are formed from itaf o'osifi 'reddish soil'; 'rocky soil' (kein) forms edim 'k.o.rock'; 'chipped-rock-soil' (karawa) is said to form dimis/si'embois 'slate-stone'; soft bluish soil forms ininuh 'mudstone' and finally soft-sandy soil is said to form si'eh 'sandstone'.

They also know which soils are rich in nutrients and which are good for sorcery and magic making. Makuta 'dark soil' is highly valued for cultivation and is essentially made up of a mixture of rock and debris, while si'eh is highly prized as an ingredient in various forms of magic. Both soil and rock are regarded as lifeless, and thus they rightly assume the feature [-animate].

All other sublunary things that experience growth and mobility

are subsumed under the category afita. Afita, as we have seen, expresses the feature [+animate]. It is only logical that the Abu' distinguish between things that are fixed to a spot (expressed in Abu' by the clause:

5. s -a -k -a -tawa ate-tikin-i  
 3PL.NA-IRR-NPST-EV-stay one-spot-LOC  
 'Things that are fixed to a spot')

and things that are self-mobile sala sekehi'i, which I will categorize as [+locomotion]. I will now provide detail on things that fall under this broad category.

#### 4.2.1 Mobile things sala' sekehi'i

Mobile things sala' sekehi'i form a broad category that subsumes such things as (in this order of importance) human beings, spirits, animals and insects. These categories of mobile creatures seem to share the features [+animate; +locomotion], and contrast with those that assume the features [+animate; -locomotion]. The latter are realised by the taxa 'plants' lawas i madilih to be treated below.

Returning to the category [+animate; +locomotion], a subcategorization is often observed between human beings and spirits, on the one hand, and animals and insects, on the other. The two categories are distinguished by the feature [+anthropomorphic]. Human beings and spirits share the feature [+anthropomorphic] and animals and insects the feature [-anthropomorphic]. The Abu', as communities elsewhere, recognize that human beings are different from spirits, but these dissimilarities are not often clearcut. Belief in spirits and ghosts often entails the view that even though human beings die, they are often said to experience virtually the same things as they did when they were alive. For example, spirits are regarded as capable of eating, capable of possessing things, and they are also believed to posses an excellent sense of perception. This explains why the Abu' lay food and the deceased's valuables at the graveside when the deceased is buried.

One thing the Abu' accept and strive to avoid or prevent from happening is death. The dead are feared, and the Abu' recognize that spirits belong to the category 'crossed the line people' sakaka'i and live human beings belong to the category 'physically alive people' sakafani. On that basis it might seem logical to suggest that the feature [+ animate] may be proposed to separate human beings and spirits; unfortunately, that solution is rather naive because it does not take into account the spirits' ambivalent existence.

Furthermore, if the feature [+human] is proposed to distinguish human beings from spirits, we cannot aptly employ its binary feature [-human] to categorize spirits because the feature [-human] includes other non-human creatures and things as well. To overcome this problem, we need to add the feature [+-anthropomorphic] to separate humans and spirits from creatures and things, then the division of humans and spirits into [+human]. Having done that, a further segmentation needs to be drawn to separate male lexemes from female lexemes. These are realised by their respective terminal lexemes shown in the appended taxonomic chart. Thus nouns which assume the features [+ human; +male] are realized terminally by the lexeme aleman 'man', as opposed to numata 'woman'. Although male and female human lexemes differ from the spirits' terminal lexemes ufu'al 'male spirit' and ufu'elu 'female spirit' or female ghost maurenlu and 'male ghost' maurenina, they all assume similar male or female preverbal markers and subject themselves to similar syntactic rules of both masculine and feminine genders (chapt.3).

#### 4.2.1.1 [-Anthropomorphic] things

Subsumed under the category [-anthropomorphic] are things such as mahis 'animals' alimikuh 'birds'; akuh 'fish' and mahali'okulih 'insects'. As a way of grouping these creatures into broad semantic categories, the Abu' suffixed the three geographic categories namely;

walub 'water', itaf land' and iluh 'air' or 'tree-top' with the plural suffix {-s}, to which the attributive particle {-i} must be attached. Thus the resultant attributive phrases are walubisi 'river-dwelling', itafisi or bunohisi 'land-dwelling' and iluhisi 'arboreal/air-bound things'.

#### 4.2.1.2 Walubisi 'aquatic things'

When the Abu' use the descriptive phrase walubisi 'aquatic things', they do not only mean aquatic life. It is a cover term used to include things that live in, near, or at the river banks or things that have some association with water and the following three main genera--- (a) akuh 'fish'; (b) dubaub 'crayfish'; (c) wele'esiwa 'river-crabs' and those other creatures such as alimikuh walubikuhi 'river birds' (e.g. bamin 'k.o.river bird'), kol'owa walubiweri 'river frogs' (e.g. mofo 'k.o. edible river frog') and uukuh walubikuhi 'river snakes' (e.g. dihihuru 'k.o.river snake'). The Abu' also divide or distinguish members of the category walubisi by using more specific features like sakasahi/sekefenisi = ['+-edible'] and physiological features, for example, didiwehisi/didiweh aa'asi = ['+-scales']. These features are used in dividing creatures and things of almost all other recognizable taxa in the Abu' folk-taxonomy usually at the lower (i.e. secondary or tertiary) level than the primary geographic features.

#### 4.2.1.3 The taxon akuh 'fish'

This taxon of aquatic life is segmented into the following major terminal lexemes: akuh 'river eels'; bahi'atas 'perch'; and others such as elmeten, kobuloh and bubin. These are varieties of fish found in the rivers of the area that flow northward into the Bismarck Sea. Those Abu' rivers which flow into the tributaries that feed into the Sepik River lack eels and crayfish but have other types of fish such as eheb 'k.o.fish'.

#### 4.2.1.4 dubaub 'crayfish'

The taxon dubaub 'crayfish' is divided into four main varieties. They are distinguished from each other by the size and colour of their scales. The biggest crayfish found in the rivers of the area is called waulakl. A term derived from the verb waul- 'beckon' and the noun lakl 'hand'. Waulakl is thus a crayfish which is seen to extend its claws ('hands' in Abu') in anticipation of grabbing foodstuff that passes its way. The term waulakl is an excellent example of how the Abu' have gone about coining a name for a creature after its normal behaviour.

#### 4.2.1.5 wele'esiwa walubiweri 'river crabs'

The taxon wele'esiwa 'crabs' consists of two varieties namely sa'ali'okulih and wele'esiwa. The latter is chubby, lustrous, and smoother than the former. Both are edible. In taste, the former is luscious and is therefore preferable to the latter, which is traditionally regarded as 'female food'.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4.2.1.6 Other aquatic creatures

Creatures other than fish, crayfish and crabs are sometimes regarded aquatic but at other times are not. For example, dihihiru' is sometimes seen to live under water, but at other times is seen on dry aqueous ground and so it is described as a creature that assumes both [+aquatic] features.

<sup>7</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Abu' is a patriarchal society and so male members of the society are given more favourable treatment than women. When it comes to food, for example, men are given or help themselves to the better part of the meals, while the female usually takes the less good. Poor food is not normally eaten by men. However, women who frequently do not get enough to eat from the main meals often find themselves feeding on 'scrap' food. This unfortunate practice probably influences the Abu' to associate the eating of poor food as being womanish.

An opinion was expressed that some of the food taboos the Abu' observe were formed, and their continuity was encouraged, by selfish male members of the society who do not want to share certain delicacies with their wives and children.

The status of things like mosquito larvae asakuh hakara abali, and 'tadpoles' barakasinab, literally, 'heads', are rather dubious. Although the Abu' recognize them as creatures that have their heads sticking out of water, many Abu' are yet to learn or be convinced by biologists or entomologists that larval forms of these creatures and their respective adults are the same, differing only in form at different stages of growth. This lack of knowledge of the metamorphoses of these creatures not only makes it hard for the Abu' to classify them, but also leads the Abu' to see both the larval forms and their respective adults as unrelated.

#### 4.2.2 bunohisi 'land dwelling creatures'

The possessive clause bunohisi is used by the Abu' to broadly subsume all the creatures that customarily dwell on dry ground or in the trees. These are further subcategorized by another quantifier itafisi 'non-arboreal' and 'non-aquatic' to further reduce the semantic ambiguity. Semantic domains such as those derived from geographic regions are not always easy to determine. Creatures regarded as belonging to the category 'land-dwelling' may also subsume some of the low flying birds. Although, the Abu' know quite well that some of the low flying birds like sebiten 'k.o.bird' and sefila'uta 'k.o.bird' are airbound, because they usually fly at an altitude of no more than about 15 metres (i.e. about the height of secondary growth of shrubs or undergrowth), they are regarded as [-arboreal] creatures. This difficulty of specifying the semantic domain illustrates the semantic overlap present in many of the Abu' folk-taxonomy ethno-categories.

The following taxa constitute what the Abu' see as belonging to the category 'land-dwelling' itafisi: (a) mahis 'game';<sup>8</sup> (b) alimikuh 'birds'; (c) uukuh 'snakes'; (d) wahikes 'lizards'; and the following

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<sup>8</sup>The term mahis is broadly used to mean animal, bird, fish, lizard, snake, etc. flesh as food.

order of creatures which are not seen as animal and insect life: (e) kol'owa ourufiweri 'land frogs' (f) wele'esiwa ourufiweri 'land-crab'; (g) asi'afuwa 'spiders'; (h) uribikabif 'dragon flies'; (i) ihiaburilih 'butterflies'; (j) kelmu'is 'grasshoppers'; (k) titiakas 'milipedes; (l) amili'es 'centipede'; (m) heli'esiwa 'flies'; (n) akiakas 'ants'; (o) mahali'okulih, 'small flying insects', such as sunflies, fireflies, gnats and so on), and finally asakuh 'tree grubs' (including all kinds of hylophagous grubs) and 'maggots'. Some tree grubs are edible and are classified as edible mahis 'meat'. The same applies to alhu'abis 'eggs'.

The category of itafisi 'land-dwelling creatures' listed above is segmented further down to families at the sub-order level and these are realized by whatever respective terminal lexemes the Abu' speakers have traditionally known them by. The adoption of physical attributes (e.g. sex, colour, shape, lustre and texture) to provide semantic contrasts among the taxa of insect and animal life is also fairly common. However, it was fairly problematic trying to ascertain the Abu' entomological and zoological knowledge. Consequently, detailed information is unavailable for further analysis.

#### 4.2.2.1 Iluhisi 'arboreal or airbound creatures'

Creatures that the Abu' categorize as iluhisi 'arboreal or air-bound' are represented by certain members of the species of animals and avifauna which have already been presented under the category itafisi 'land-dwelling'. These include mahis 'animals'; alimikuh 'birds'; uukuh 'snakes' and wahikes 'lizards'. The Abu' do not see snakes and lizards as belonging to the same category. They have no term in the language that approximates the biologist's term 'reptiles'.

#### 4.2.2.2 mahis iluhisi 'arboreal animals'

The category mahis iluhisi 'arboreal animals' comprises the following species: (i) ehinab 'tree-kangaroo'; (ii) iluhis 'cuscus'; and (iii) ihawanab 'k.o.edible arboreal rats'.

#### 4.2.2.3 alimikuh iluhikuhi 'arboreal avifauna'

Birdlife of the area is so plentiful that adequate scientific knowledge is far from satisfactory, and so I will only be concerned with the illustration of the major species and how the Abu' attempt to classify them.

The Abu' distinguish members of individual avifaunal species by the use of classificatory labels such as sowohuni and numa'ini, 'male' versus 'female', and their use of physical features such as colour, feathers, beaks, or the size, shape and length of tails to specify and distinguish birds. Furthermore, the way Abu' see individual bird species may also be influenced by folklore or cultural motifs. Hornbills are regarded as males, husbands of the cassowary. According to a myth, the cassowary was once an arboreal bird. One day it fell of a tree and broke its wings. Because of this incident it swapped places with its husband, the hornbill, which was terrestrial. Since that time the cassowary has become a land-dwelling creature and the hornbill an arboreal creature. Hornbills are also an effigy of the kwal (< Abelam ngwal 'ancestral spirit'). Probably for this reason, it is regarded a taboo food. Many Abu' people, especially children and women (and in particular, women of child bearing age) would weaken themselves if this bird food was eaten.

Birds of paradise are regarded as female and, in this respect, beautiful women are figuratively referred to as amulawa 'birds-of-paradise'.

The harpy eagle amun is edible, but many Abu' people do not eat it because they fear that it might debilitate them or make them sick.

Certain parts (claws, feathers etc.) of the eagle are used by some Abu' men in rituals and it is quite possible that because of its use in rituals, some Abu' people avoid eating it.

#### 4.2.2.4 uukuh iluhikuhi 'arboreal snakes'

Two arboreal pythons are found in the area and are edible. The brown and green pythons are named dibiah and abunal, respectively.

#### 4.2.2.5 wahikes iluhikesi 'arboreal lizards'

Arboreal lizards are realized by terminal lexemes. There are a great variety of them. The three prominent species of arboreal lizards are usakina 'k.o. monitor lizard'; wahiko 'striped gecko'; and amekaren 'small green lizard'. These are all important to the Abu' because they are edible. There have been reports of periodic observations of a green poisonous monitor(?) lizard. It is said to live up an umbrella-shaped tree called beritef, from which the lizard gets its name.

We have observed in the preceding pages how the Abu' talk about and categorize mobile creatures found in the area. The creatures are subsumed under afita, a concept that approximates the English notion of [+living]. It encompasses two taxonomic domains, namely, [+locomotion] which we have looked at and [-locomotion] to which we shall now turn.

#### 4.2.3 Sakatawa atatekeni 'things lacking locomotion'

The ethno-category [-locomotion] is adopted to refer particularly to the vegetation lawas i madilih of the area. The vegetation belongs to the tropical rainforest zone.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>With virtually no background training in botany, let alone ethnobotonical procedure for data collection and collation, my presentations will be based on general layman's knowledge from the Abu' standpoint. Consequently, it was considered futile to try to draw any comparative remarks between the Abu' and the botanist's systems of knowledge on ethnobotany.

Before I examine the elements of the category [-locomotion], I wish to acknowledge that in a recently published article titled: "Anthropology and Botany: Turning Over a New Leaf"; Chase and von Sturmer (1982) re-echoed the value that research and subsequent knowledge on "pre-scientific and/or pre-literate" communities of the world may contribute towards the field of cognitive anthropology. A well informed knowledge of "ethno-categories", the two authors observed, might help an outsider who studies another culture gain some insights into the cognitive structures of the culture he/she is studying. We are not dealing with cognitive structures here, but we nonetheless, are fairly interested in these authors' systematization of the ethno-categories of the Aboriginal communities of Cape York Peninsula for the insights these offer in our analysis of Abu' ethno-botanic categories. The two authors concluded that botanical knowledge of the Aborigines is characterized mainly by: (1) environmental zonation; (2) cross-domain terminology where a given lexical entry can be used to classify different things that speech community see as sharing common certain attributes; and (3) 'mate-relationship'. The Abu' categorize flora of the area according to a number of "ethno-categories" that are virtually similar to those the Aborigines use. The Abu' categorize the flora of the area into a number of overt categories. These are: (1) land zonation; (2) male-female relationship; (3) mate-relationship and (4) numerational relationship. These Abu' categories will now be examined in more detail.

#### 4.2.3.1 Land Zonation

The Abu' recognize three land zones according to which trees or plants may be classified. These are (a) wabulisi 'domicile plants', (b) ana'atakwisi 'plants of the zone adjoining the domicile zone', and (c) ar'atakwisi 'forest plants'.

a. wabulisi 'village plants'

The domain of village plants wabulisi includes both cultivated and non-cultivated plants which normally grow near the region within the village area, or near the region of human settlement. These plants are either useful or not useful to humans. Edible fruit-bearing trees such as coconuts, betel-palms (*Areca* palms) and breadfruit trees helukih are examples of what the Abu' regard as members of the domain wabulisi.

b. ana'atakwisi 'plants of the zone adjoining the village zone'

Ana'atakwisi is approximated to the English -- 'plants of fallow land'. The word ana'atakw denotes 'fallow land' on which grow soft wooded trees such as eribikes 'fern-trees', wild-bananas uritok, umbrella-shaped trees beritef, and so on.

c. ar'atakwisi 'non-gardening forest plants'

Uncultivated plants are described as belonging to the region of 'uncultivated land' ar'atakw. The Abu' use the derived possessive clause:

<u>ar'atakw</u>	-i -s    -i
hard-forest-land	-EV-3PLN-GEN
'hard-forest-land things'	

to categorize trees, vines, and undergrowth that typically grow in the ara'atakw 'forest-land'. This area of land is usually not cultivated to allow less interference with the animal life. In this land zone the Abu' hunt wild game and obtain their herbal medicine.

2. Male-female relationship 'sowohini e numa'ini'

Plants may also be classified or identified in terms of being 'a male' sowohini or 'a female' numa'ini. These terms are used only in reference to animals and plants. The basis for dividing animals and plants are determined by sex (in the case of animals) and physical appearance in the case of plants. Plants (or parts of plants, e.g. leaves, stalks, trunks, barks, etc.) exhibiting male characteristics (e.g. slenderness, tall, fuzzy) are subsumed under the category sowohuni and those exhibiting the opposite features (i.e. thick, short, smooth) are subsumed under numa'ini, but they do not necessarily take on male or female class marking.

3. Mate-relationship 'esis etis'

The Abu' also talk about plants in terms of one being a mate to another and this is expressed by the phrase:

esis et-i-s  
3PL one-GEN-3PLObj  
'They are one-and-the same things'

a general declarative statement that suggests the idea of belonging to the same species or order.

#### 4. Enumerational relationship

The Abu' have in recent times become accustomed to the use of Tok Pisin sequential enumeration to express phylic or generic relationship of things. On numerous occasions, the Abu' used the Tok Pisin derived enumerational categories as nambawan kwila 'number one hard-wood tree' [Afzela bijuga], nabatu kwila 'number two hard-wood tree', and namba tri kwila 'number-three hard-wood tree'. An obvious explanation that can be given as to why this method is used has to do with the fact that Tok Pisin is lexically deficient in this regard whereas the Abu' naming is better. Hence Abu' is equipped lexically to provide with precise terms things found in the world, especially within the Abu' language frontier. Consequently the three species of hard-wood trees are realized in Abu' by independent terminal lexemes, namely, wamuta, nubulaf and maluh.

Incidentally, this recent adoption of naming things into an enumerational relationship is also used by the Abu' when they categorize animals into species at the secondary or tertiary level and one might conjecture that this technique is probably used by communities whose languages lack overt terms to designate obvious phylic, generic, or order relationship of animals and plants.

The above being the salient (in Chase & von Sturmer's terms) "ethno-categories", the Abu', when pressed to provide specific details of member lexemes of plants, resort to what Sutton (1982:303) referred to as "attributional classes" for drawing out and distinguishing

minute details about plants. The attributional classes synthesized by Sutton ( 1982 ) in his study of Cape York Aboriginal communities' linguistic aspects of ethnobotany are (1) stages of growth ; (2) plant part names and (3) attributes (i.e. descriptive/adjectival descriptions). Some of these are similar to those used by the Abu' community.

The following salient attributional classes are used by the Abu' for the purpose of plant assortment at the generic or family levels:- (1) use ; (2) attributional components and (3) edibility vis-à-vis inedibility. Let me discuss and illustrate these in detail.

#### 4.2.3.2 The use of plants sueisi sakada'asi

Plants (in particular, uncultivated ones), are usually categorized in terms of the fairly covert category of use and this the Abu' express by the use of the clause:

s-a-k-da'a-s      uma  
 3PLA-R-NPST-to make-3PLObj for  
 'they use them for...(job X)'.

Reference is made to this manner of identifying things, if the inquirer wishes to be informed on what a specific thing is used for.

#### 4.2.3.3 Attributional components

Attributional components or values are a series of nominal descriptive phrases the Abu' use for the purpose of apportioning natural phenomena. The main attributes the Abu' use to classify or categorize plants are (a) colour, (b) dimensional components, such as height, length, size, shape, and (c) other minor attributional class distinctions, such as fuzzy, brittle, rough, smooth and so on.

#### 4.2.3.4 Colour

Colour is a prominent lexical domain used by the Abu' for the purpose of distinguishing one thing from another, especially if those things talked about have common physical attributes. Among the colour lexical domains the colours frequently used are ou'es which means a range of colours ranging from 'red, tan, (light) 'brown' and asu' 'green, dark brown'. Broadly speaking, the world to the Abu' is dichotomized into red and green, which perhaps reflects the environment the Abu' encounter everyday. Use of other colour categories is less frequent because they are less prominent in the Abu' world.

#### 4.2.3.5 Edibility sakasahi

Plants are broadly divided into those whose leaves, stocks, roots, or tubers are edible ([+edible]) sakasahi and those that are inedible ([-edible]) sekefenisi. Detailed ethnobotanical knowledge on the plants belonging to the latter category was difficult to get from informants, who provided some knowledge mainly about edible plants.

Edible plants belong to two subcategories, cultivated and uncultivated, and indications are that both categories are evenly distributed. Cultivated plants comprise fruit-bearing trees, such as ahawa 'coconuts' (*Cocos nucifera*) and edible garden plants. The uncultivated plants include numerous trees or vines with edible leaves and/or fruit, such as akuf 'k.o.tree' (with edible leaves and fruit) and ber'esinaleh 'k.o. vine' (with edible leaves). The main division of cultivated plants are the food crops we'isi, which will be described in the following pages.

Knowledge of we'isi 'foodstuff' among the Abu' is fairly extensive and is very important for its obvious beneficiary effect of sustaining life as well as for its socio-economic importance. The emphasis on the socio-economic value of foodstuffs probably induced the Abu' to develop a fairly elaborate way of talking about them and remembering them.

Yams, for example, form the major component of Abu' cultural exchanges and subsequent redistribution among members of the feast partners referred to in Abu' as the buanim. The only way to win in this kind of competition is to outscore the rival feast partner through a display of many good yams, pigs and other traditional wealth. During such events both partners become heavily involved in an excercise of keeping a mental record of the quality and quantity of yams, other food-crops, pigs and other forms of traditional wealth (e.g. nabalukuhwa 'rings', and kahies 'shells') displayed by the rival feast partner. This is to enable the recipients to try and give better food and wealth in subsequent food exchanges (cf. chapt.5).

The high demand on Abu' men to keep an accurate record of yams probably explains why the Abu' have developed such a rich knowledge of this garden crop. In what follows, I will list and describe the main types of crops the Abu' grow in their gardens. The order in which they are listed broadly reflects their sociocultural significance. This order is not necessarily maintained in the folk-taxonomy appendix.

#### 4.2.3.6 Wa'wis 'yams' (*Dioscorea* spp.)

Sa'uan and Nekitel (my father) cited as many as seventy-two varieties of yams. Many of them constitute terminal taxa (cf. Appendix) whereas in English, they are collectively referred to by the generic term 'yams'. The terminal taxa of yams are named or categorized by:-

- a) physical attributes (e.g. long versus short yams, red versus white and yellow yams; round versus flat yams, straight versus spiral yams.)
- b) naming them after the shape of things. For example, a spiral yam which looks like a snake is called uul 'snake yam'.
- c) naming or identifying yams after the places from which the Abu' got them.

These ways of identifying or classifying yams are also used when the Abu' talk about other foodstuffs.

#### 4.2.3.7 Nikef (TP taro) (*Colocasia esculenta* spp.)

Taro nikef comprise two types: nikef kenekesif 'native taro' and nikef koukou (*Colocasia esculenta*), the variety which is named from the Tok Pisin word kongkong 'Chinese' (<Hong Kong). The Abu' also distinguish different varieties of taro by the colour of the leaves or tubers.

#### 4.2.3.8 Ufas 'bananas' (*Musa* spp.)

Bananas are classified in the same way as yams and taro. The Abu' have identified about 32 varieties of bananas. About half a dozen of them were reported to have been introduced to the area from such far away places as Kavieng, Manus and Lemieng village near Aitape.

#### 4.2.3.9 Buhunab 'sugarcane' (*Saccharum* spp, especially *Saccharum officinarum*)

There are 17 main varieties of sugarcane which the Abu' identify and distinguish virtually on the bases of physiological attributes or are named after natural phenomena because of their resemblance to sugarcane. For example, abelin is derived from abal 'water' because of its high juice content and lawakin is derived from lawak 'tree' to indicate its hard skin when chewed.

#### 4.2.3.10 Wesif (TP pitpit, *Saccharum* spp.)

There are as many as 14 varieties of wesif (*Saccharum* spp.), a kind of plant with edible top (cf. Mihalic, 1971:156). The method the Abu' use in differentiating wesif is same as that used in differentiating bananas or yams.

#### 4.2.3.11 Fufayahes (TP popo) (*Carica papaya*)

There are two varieties of pawpaws, long ones and short ones. Long ones are seen as masculine sowohusi, while the shorter or rounder ones are regarded as feminine and hence are termed numa'isi. Sometimes long pawpaws are seen as mates of water melons because they look like red water melons when cut open.

#### 4.2.3.12 Sul'if 'Zea mays'

Maize consists of five varieties, namely, udukuh, midilib, utakabul, dakua, and sosaiti kon. The name dakua is derived from Dagua, the village from which the Abu' got this corn variety.

#### 4.2.3.13 Mahas i mehiawa 'Cucurbit vines'

There are five varieties of cucurbit vines. Indigenous ones are named mahas 'k.o. cucumbers' and include the following species wautas, maris and efefin. The pumpkin weuhana and cucumbers mehiawa were introduced after contact.

#### 4.2.3.14 A'wal 'edible greens'

Sa'uan classified a'wal into five varieties. Four of them are realized by terminal taxa. These are unakw 'pumpkin leaves', a'wal 'native spinach' (*Aramanthus gangeticus*) and wahuwa 'native cabbage'. The fifth one is made up of a variety of nalibowa (TP abika) 'Hibiscus manihot', a tree with edible leaves and top. Nalibowa is made up of eight varieties and these are distinguished from one another virtually by physical attributes. Pumpkins and many of the Hibiscus manihot are introduced into the area.

Although the folk-taxonomic analysis of the ethno-categories used by the Abu' are by no means comprehensive, what has been presented seems to underscore the way in which the Abu' categorize information about the plant life of the area. This undoubtedly reflects how their world-view is shaped by the environment with which the Abu' are familiar, and the language categorizes information it finds significant from the perspective of the native speaker-hearer.

In relating Abu' ethno-categories to those of the other PNG or Aboriginal communities, the general pattern that emerges from the description of the Abu' system of ideas regarding categorization of things is similar to previous findings (cf. e.g., Bulmer 1969; Laycock 1970; Lang 1975; Farb 1974; Chase and von Sturmer 1982 and Sutton 1982 ed.). It seems possible that some generalisations can be posited in terms of an areal typology of ethno-categories typically shared by communities in this region of the world.

#### 4.3 The interrelationship, if any, of the Abu' world-view and noun class system

Up to now, I have described the Abu' world-view and outlined the community's folk-taxonomy to provide the basis for the remarks that I will make about the underlying factors assumed to play a role in the determination of the noun classes. The position that has hitherto been adopted is that phonology is the major feature determining the classification of nouns in the various noun classes (e.g. Nekitel 1977). What we are not too sure of is whether or not some of these classes are determined by semantics, originating in the Abu' world-view as portrayed in the community's folk-taxonomy. Therefore, the rest of the chapter will re-examine the noun class system (cf. chapt. 3, p. 65) and will try especially to find out if there are semantic principles underlying the Abu' categorization of things into the different noun classes the language has.

Although it is not possible to specify all the factors that might have influenced the Abu' to categorize nouns into classes, some general remarks can be made. These are discussed below. The numbering of the noun classes are arbitrarily made up to facilitate reference. Classes 1 and 2 will be discussed together. The rest of the classes will be discussed individually.

#### 4.3.0.1 Classes 1 and 2

Class one subsumes both loanwords (e.g. TP pater 'priest', dokta 'doctor', tisa (<TP tisa) 'male teacher', 'God', Yesus 'Jesus', Spiritu Santu 'Holy Spirit', Angelo 'Angel') and indigenous words (e.g. Nailiah, Nekitel, So'osin (all male human names), Ka'atuman 'creative deity' from above, Ufu'al Imara 'spirit Imara', mauran 'ghost') humans and spirits that are or thought of as belonging to the category [+male]. Member lexemes of this category, although they differ in their endings, are grouped together by the fact that they assume the same singular and plural cross reference markers, namely, {n} and {m}, which function as preverbal markers in verb phrases (VPs) and nominal (male) concord affixes in noun phrases (NPs) and in the objective slots in clauses.

The same can be said of all the loan (e.g. TP sista 'sister/nun', tisa 'female teacher', dokta 'female doctor', TP Santu Maria 'Saint Mary', Santu Katarina 'Saint Catherine') and indigenous (e.g. Awo'an, Kundiwata, (all female personal names) and ufu'elu' Bafiteis '(female spirit) Bafita', maurenu' 'female ghost') female human and spirit nouns. Although they differ phonologically, they are classified together by the cross referencing female gender affix -- {k<sup>W</sup>-}. It might be queried why nouns imply masculine and feminine genders in their meanings subsume the categories [+male] and [+female] and are subsequently subject to the rules of grammar that govern both genders. An obvious and probably the most plausible reason is that both classes are marked. Consequently, a noun that implies a masculine or a feminine gender in its meaning assumes whichever the appropriate morphological elements (NCE) that signal its membership to one or the other of the classes (irrespective of their phonological shape). Furthermore, since the Abu' world-view draws

no sharp dichotomy between the human and the spirit worlds, and that the human and the spirit belong, as it were, to the category [+anthropomorphic], it is highly likely that this view is encapsulated in the Abu' language structure.

The assignment of nouns such as the 'cassowary' unaru' to the female class is rather precarious as regards underlying motive(s). Its inclusion under the female class and its adoption of the feminine gender cross reference marker might have been motivated either by phonology, or by reasons derived from the Abu' folklore that regard the cassowary as belonging to the category female.<sup>10</sup>

Let us not overlook the fact that some of the nouns assigned to class two that do not seem to reflect any clearly defined semantic domain are probably determined by phonology. The 'pull' of the noun terminal ['] must have been in operation. Consider the examples presented in the following table.

Table 4-1: Some examples of Class 2 nouns determined by phonology

- 
18. nikilo'>nikilowa 'earth-worm'  
19. dihihiru'>dihihiruwa 'aquatic snake'

<sup>10</sup> The cassowary, according to a myth, is a female which lives under the guise of cassowary 'feathers' ahuwalub. A myth has it that one day a bachelor went hunting and, coming to a river pool, heard some noises coming from the opposite direction. He immediately climbed a tree and hid himself, and lo and behold, there was a group of cassowaries making their way to the pool. On arriving they sloughed their skins and turned into beautiful women and started swimming. The man had a good look at them and chose the most beautiful among them and told an ant to go and fetch her skin and take it up to him. As soon as he got the skin from the ant, he hid it.

Having done that, he distracted them by throwing a couple of fruits from that tree into the centre of the pool. When the cassowary women sensed that there was a person around, they got out of the pool, adorned their cassowary skins and made for the forest leaving behind the most beautiful one. Realising that her cassowary skin was missing, the abandoned cassowary woman started crying. In the meantime the real man ascended from the tree and took her home to be his wife. After some time she with the aid of the eldest child found her skin, wore it and turned back into a cassowary and fled to join her own kind in the forest. Since then cassowaries are always seen as females. Similar versions were also recorded of the Muhiang by Laycock 1975, and Buki by Narakobi 1979, and Kalam (Bulmer, 1965) and also the Iatmul and Abelam.

20. mutu'>mutuwa	'nose'
21. waiu'>waiwa	'hole, pit'
22. aba'>abawa	'k.o.tree' (its white sap is used as medicinal cure for headaches and swollen limbs.)
23. woba'>wobawa	'spear', 'k.o. palm' (from which spears are made.)
24. nalibo'>nalibowa	'Hibiscus manihot' (<TP aibika)
25. alu'>aluwa	'k.o.bat'
26. tamio'>tamiawa	'steel axe' [<TP tamiok]
27. kanu'>kanuwa	'canoe' [<TP kanu]
28. patu'>patuwa	'duck' [<TP patu]

#### 4.3.1 Noun Class 3-10

Regarding the rest of the noun classes (viz. 3-10), these are determined principally by phonology and I noticed only a slight semantic pattern developing in some of them. Their assignment to their respective noun classes might, therefore, be attributed to both phonology and semantics, thus reflecting, as it were, the influence of the Abu' world-view on the community's language.

I will first describe the class that contain nouns that seem to me to associate themselves with alahuta 'home' or 'village' and whose grouping I thought might have been influenced by such a view.

##### 4.3.1.1 Class 3

Nouns assuming the singular affix t and the plural marker k<sup>w</sup>- are grouped under this class. There is evidence to suggest that many of the nouns may well be represented taxonomically under the feature [+domicile] and thus suggest a direct or indirect semantic connection of referents with the "sememe" (Crystal, 1980:317) {t} which is derived from the semantic domain alahuta 'home, 'village', 'homestead' or 'camp'. Consider for example:

- 29. nubat >nubakw 'dog'
- 30. awata >awatakw 'hen, 'rooster' or 'chicken'
- 31. abita >abitokw 'rat', 'mouse'
- 32. sibu'ata >sibu'atakw 'k.o.brownish bird' (usually domicile)
- 33. kwafita>kwasitokw 'spoon'
- 34. selita > selitokw 'masher'
- 35. berita > beritokw 'bed', 'scaffold'
- 36. wamuta > wamutokw 'slitgong; 'hard-wood tree' (Afzela bijuga)  
(from which slit-gong is made)

37. *biri'ita*>*biri'itokw* 'wedge'  
 38. *al'ata*>*al'atakw* 'piece of burnt wood'  
 39. *dal'ata*>*dal'atokw* 'end part of food items' (e.g. yams, sugarcane)
40. *uta*>*utokw* 'door'  
 41. *kul'uta*>*kul'utokw* 'male bag' (made out of dark-palm sheath)  
 42. *bata*>*batakw* 'bamboo'  
 43. *akata*>*akatokw* 'backbone', 'midrib' (of coconut leaf/tobacco )  
     or 'sago frond'  
 44. *du'it*>*disukw* 'small hill' (where village sites are a commonplace)  
 45. *barata*>*baratakw* 'corpse'  
 46. *walbata*                 'name of a village'  
 47. *abalukinamata*         'name of a Womsis hamlet'  
 48. *ihata*>*ihatokw*         'sago swamp' (homesteads are usually made there  
     for easy access to sago making)  
 49. *ihat*>*ihatokw*         'taste' (of food which is usually eaten at home)

In addition to these, there are some nouns which assume {t} as the preverbal marker but do not appear to have any semantic connection with 'home'. For example;

50. *kwal'iata*>*kwal'iatakw* 'black cockatoo'.  
 51. *baiata*>*baitokw*         'stagnant water'  
 52. *urita*>*uritokw*         'wild banana'

#### 4.3.1.2 Class 4

Subsumed under this class are nouns whose singular form terminate in {-m} and plural in {-i} and these NCEs seem to bind together many of the nouns that seem to share the attributional class [+round]. The concept 'round' means a number of shapes to the Abu'. It may, for example, mean 'oval shape, round, spherical or round edge. The following list provides evidence of this class.

53. *naim* > *naif*         'eye'  
 54. *weitom* > *weitef*         'testicle'  
 55. *butum* > *bitif*)         'penis'  
 56. *sul'um* > *sul'if*         'heart, fruit' (generic, including such  
     such things as 'corn' and 'ball'  
 57. *abom* > *abef*         'breadfruit seed'  
 58. *afom* > *asif*)         'fruit of Pometia pinnata' (TP ton)  
 59. *du'unam*> *du'unef*         'fruit of Gnetum gnemon' (TP tulip)  
 60. *abitawom*> *abitawef* 'mushroom'  
 61. *ru'um* > *ru'uif*         'round yam variety' (TP patete)  
 62. *kelhanuem*> *kelhanuef* 'k.o. roundish yam with bluish  
     colouring' (*Discorea nummularia*)  
 63. *nikam* > *nikef*         'taro' (*Colocasia esculenta*);  
 64. *wolwotom*> *wolwetef* 'edible white sago grub'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Male testicles are often jokingly being referred to as wolwotom>  
wolwetef

65.	utam>utaba	'stone, stone axe, blunt axe, money' (especially coins)
66.	subarum > subarif	'grass skirt'
67.	suburum > suburif	'round bamboo grill' (used for smoke-drying meat etc.)
68.	borotom > borotef	'kind of tree with umbrella shaped top.'
69.	afum > afif	'fruit from a wild soft wood tree'
70.	bar'um > bar'if	'cycad fruit'
71.	udufum > udifif	'roundish white inedible grub' (found in dried and moist dark palm)

There are some nouns which are assigned the class but which do not seem to have any overt semantic association with the dimensional attribute [+round]. For example,

72.	natam>natakuh	'digging stick' (could well be grouped under above if it is considered as a tool used in digging round yam holes)
73.	wasum>wesif	'Saccharum spp.; (TP pitpit)'
74.	sututuram>sututuref	'k.o. small crayfish'
75.	ususum>ususif	'k.o. bird'.

#### 4.3.1.3 Class 5

Nouns whose singular form end in l, but which assume the nominal concord element b (being the "hard" consonant) for both singular and plural marker are grouped together under this class. The plural of this class is formed by a metathesis of the final syllable of the singular, as the following examples show:

76.	nubul > nulub	'belly, intestine'
77.	afurubul>afurulub	'mouth droplets'
78.	dokubul>dokulub	'pimple'
79.	numabul>numalub	'thin twisted string for making netbags'
80.	akabul >akalub	'coconut frond'
81.	nahabul>nahalub	'fibrous root' (from a certain kind of plant, which when dried has a strong smell and can be used in magic or for curing diseases)
82.	nahubul>nahulub	'yam fibre'
83.	akabul>akalub	'coconut frond'
84.	atabul>atalub	'girder'
85.	dabul>dalub	'fence' (c. 140cm high, usually built around a garden to prevent animals)'
86.	safabul>safalub	'k.o.dragon tree' (Dracaena sp.)
87.	walakabul>walakalub	'k.o.plant with long thin leaves' (used for wrapping food)
88.	nukesibul>nukesilub	'twisted Rastafarian hair style'
89.	ar'ubul > ar'ulub	'midrib of sago-palm leaf'
90.	ahurabul>ahuralub	'peeled banana skin' (slang for 'penis')

It appears that the above set of nouns are classified together or seem

to share in common the feature 'length or slimness' and, in a way, suggest the Abu' physical view of these things. Whether the actual grouping of nouns under the class was determined on that basis alone is a question that we cannot very well answer. I think, the feature the nouns seem to reflect must have probably played a role. What we might suggest is that the Abu' could have been guided by their empirical observations when categorizing nouns, as those listed above by deriving their words by way of semantic associations with the features, such as, [+slimness/length], that capture the physically observable shape of things they encountered in the world. That being established, other nouns which do not appear to have any semantic connections with the feature [+slimness, length] are included under the class virtually determined by the phonological "pull" of the last "hard" consonant {b}. For example:

- 91. wabul > walub 'village, country, nation'
- 92. asubul>asulub 'folk-dance'
- 93. dokubil>dokulib 'black-head pimple'
- 94. ar'ubul>ar'ulub 'k.o. hard sedimentary rock'

The above classes seem to be the only classes that I think have something of a semantic basis. The following noun classes, however, are not. They can, therefore, be described as a mixed bag. As such, they are made up of member lexemes which do not appear to share much in the way of semantic features and, therefore, serve as excellent cases in which their assignment is basically determined by phonology. Let us consider some examples of the remaining noun classes.

#### 4.3.1.4 Class 6

Nouns whose singular noun terminal is {f} and plural form is {s}, which in turn become the preverbal subject markers and coreferential suffixes in NPs and VPs, are grouped under this class. Subsumed under this class also are nouns that imply plurality. Such nouns are signalled by the noun terminal {s}, which is a fairly

consistent plural morpheme. Some examples are listed below for illustrative purposes:

95. aluf>alis	'body, physique'
96. 'o'osuf>'o'osis	'bottom, anus'
97. 'a'uf>'a'uis	'liver'
98. rabuf>rabis	'rib'
99. asaf >asas	'k.o. pubic covering' (TP mal/malo)
100. asuf>asis	'domesticated plant' (with white poisonous sap used in poisoning river-eels)
101. bahi'ataf>bahi'atas	'perch'
102. du'unaf>du'unas	'Gnetum gnemon' (TP tulip )
103. idaf>idas	'cut timber'
104. itaf>itas	'earth, ground, soil, world'
105. ouruf>ourus	'forest'
106. suf>suus	'leaf'
107. suaf>suas	'stone sharpener'
108. aulaf>aulas	'house'
109. nukotof>nuketes	'small knife' (usually eating knife)
110. maruf>maris	'sago soup, saucepan, clay-pot'
111. uduf>udis	'dark palm (Arecoid palm)'
112. enif>enis	'bamboo torch/or bamboo for fetching water'
113. laabuf>labis	'edge of the garden'
114. paip/f>pais	'pipe' [ $\langle TP=paip \rangle$ ]
115. helihif>helih	'feather'
116. alibis	'urine'
117. lehis	'sago' (usually sago starch)
118. kul'is	'vomit'
119. nikris	'lard, cold'
120. rais [ $\langle TP$ rais]	'rice'
121. kris [ $\langle TP$ gris]	'fat, oil'

#### 4.3.1.5 Class 7

Nouns which assume the singular verbal prefix {k} and the plural {s} are grouped under this class. Although some member lexemes appear to suggest that they have something to do with 'eating', there is so much variance that the pattern is not sustainable. Consider the following set of examples:

122. ahaka>ahakas	'tongue'
123. amaka>amakas	'face'
124. baraka>barakas	'head'
125. afuka>afukas	'claw'
126. afinika>afinikas	'saliva' (formed in anticipation of food)
127. halaka>halakas	'variety of sago palm'
128. akiaka>akiakas	'ant' (generic)
129. awaka>awakas	'insect (e.g. ant) eggs'
130. baka>bakas	'sago palm frond'
131. eribika>eribikes	'fern tree'
132. kal'anaka>kal'anakas	'sand'
133. uhaka>uhakas	'stump, root of one's origin'
134. waak>waas	'river pool'

135. numuneka>numunekas 'shame, embarrassment'

#### 4.3.1.6 Class 8

Nouns whose singular form end in {l} and the plural form in {kuh} and which subsequently occur in the cross reference marker slot in a clause or a nominal modifier phrase are grouped under this class. There are no signs of these nouns being assigned to the class on the basis of semantics. They are all determined by phonology. Examples of nouns of this class include such nouns as:

- |      |                 |                   |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 136. | abal>abakuh     | 'shadow, soul'    |
| 137. | aful >afukuh    | 'vulva'           |
| 138. | aul >akuh       | 'fish', mosquito' |
| 139. | usibel          | 'blood'           |
| 140. | alimil>alimikuh | 'bird' (generic)  |
| 141. | bul >burkuh     | 'pig'             |
| 142. | abunal>abunakuh | 'green python'    |
| 143. | uul>uukuh       | 'snake'           |
| 144  | ihial>ihiakuh   | 'flying fox'      |

#### 4.3.1.7 Class 9

Nouns assigned under this class assume the preverbal marker {h} for both singular and plural. Some examples.

- |      |                       |   |
|------|-----------------------|---|
| 145. | uluh>ululih           | 'fig tree'                                |
| 146. | bur'ah>bur'aleh       | 'leg, foot, footprint'                    |
| 147. | laah>laaleh           | 'k.o.dagger' (made from cassowary's shin) |
| 148. | ihiaburuh>ihiaburulih | 'butterfly'                               |
| 149. | nubah>nubaleh         | 'root' (of a tree)                        |
| 150. | aluh>alulih           | 'triton, conchshell'                      |
| 151. | ulah>ulalih           | 'post'                                    |
| 152. | su(h)>sulih [TP su]   | 'shoe'                                    |

#### 4.3.1.8 Class 10

This class is made up of nouns which terminate their singular in {h} and their plural in -(kw)V(e,i,u)h. As can be seen from the examples below, they do not seem to have any semantic commonality. They are grouped according to the "pull" of the last hard consonant and, therefore, are determined by phonology. Some examples:

- |      |                |                  |
|------|----------------|------------------|
| 153. | iah>iakwih     | 'road, footpath' |
| 154. | dumah>dumakwih | 'monitor lizard' |

155. lahuh>lahulih	'sago palm'
156. haleh>halekwihih	'breadfruit tree' ( <i>Artocarpus communis</i> )
157. waluh>walukuih	'fog,mist'
158. lufah>lufokwihih	'calico'
159. uwah>uwakwihih	'sunshine'
160. asah>asakwihih	'rain'
161. karukuh>karukuh	'comb'
162. aluh>alukwihih	'triton'

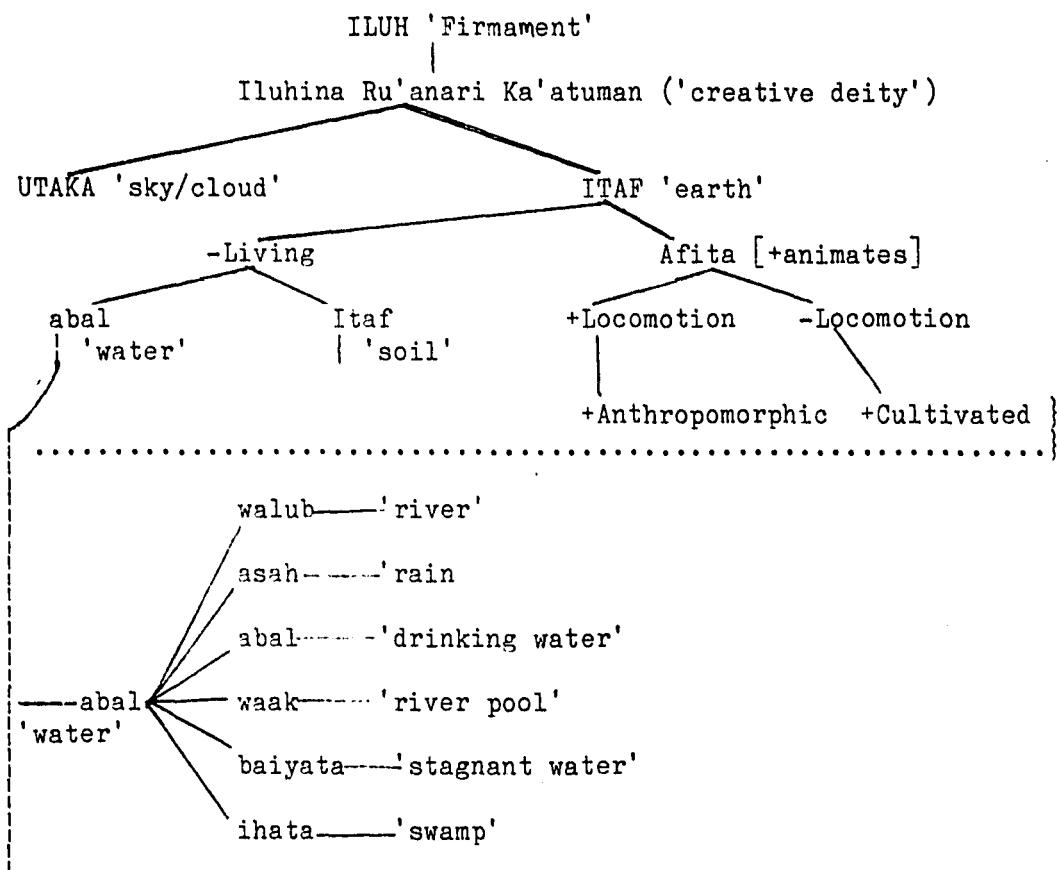
#### 4.3.1.9 Class 11

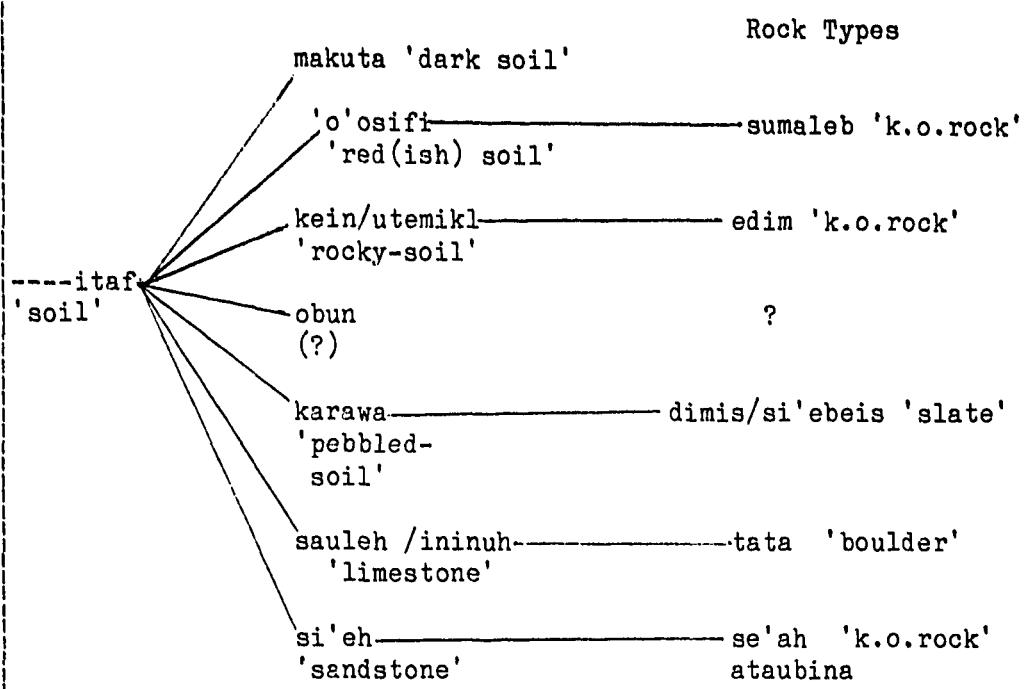
This, as noted briefly in chapter 3, is an unmarked class; hence it subsumes nouns (both indigenous and loan words) that form exceptions to the proposed noun classification rules. Although the nouns assume the preverbal singular marker {n} for all syntactic functions, as does the singular verb marker of class one nouns, the nouns assigned under this class do not appear to imply masculine gender (except perhaps those nouns such as dubaren 'hornbill', and aun 'moon' which might be regarded [+male] on the basis of folklore) in their meanings nor do they reflect any other shared semantic categories.

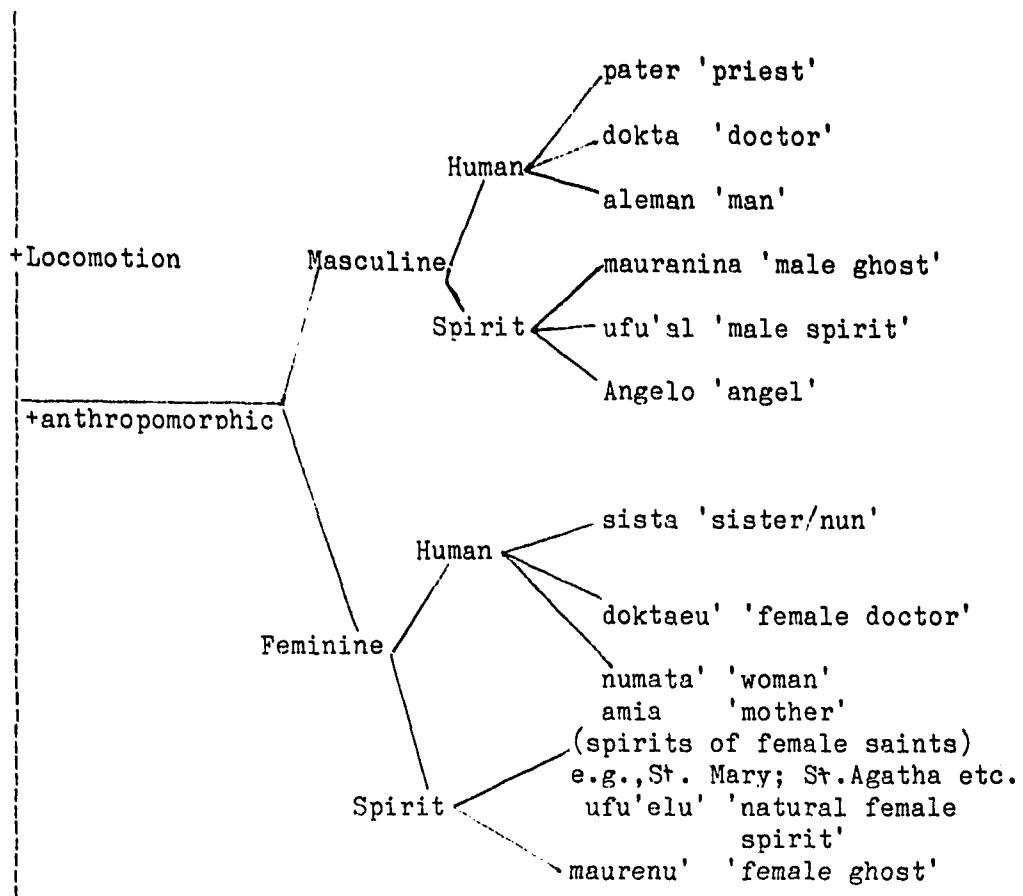
#### 4.4 Final Remarks

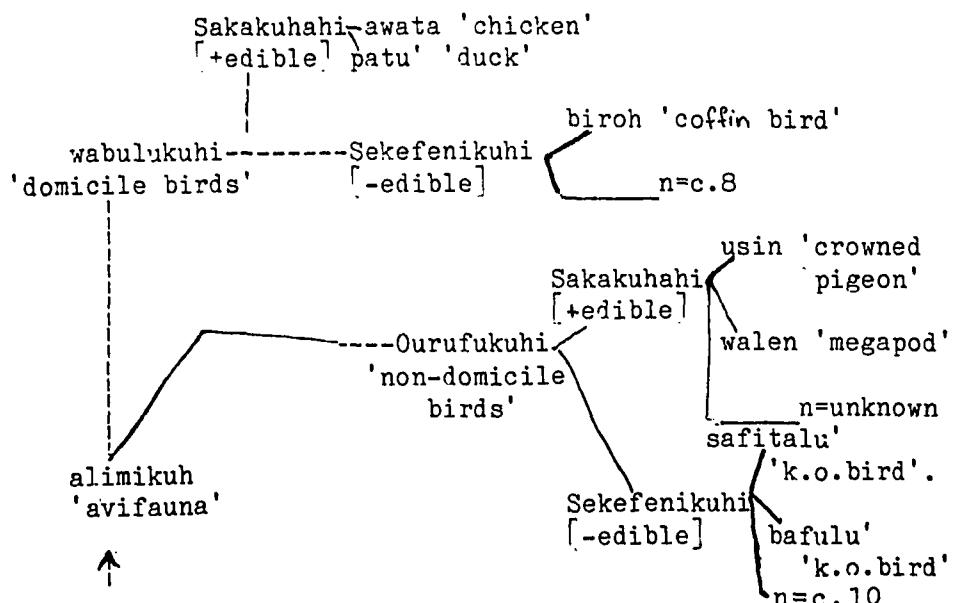
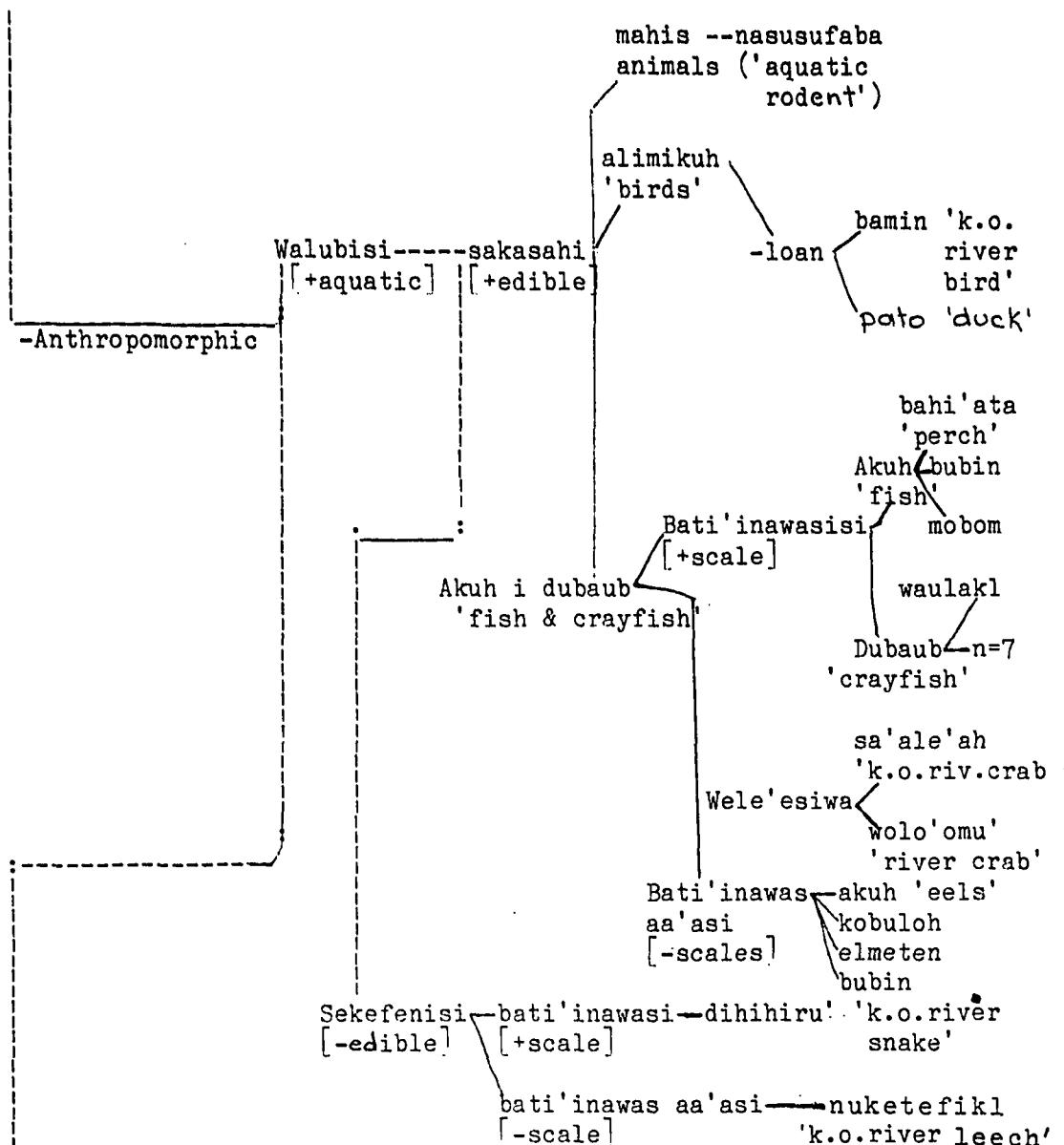
There is a distinction between the Abu' 'world-view' as set out in the taxonomic listing earlier and the semantic basis for categorization of classes in Abu'. Yet it has been demonstrated to some extent that they can be related. Phonology, even though a pervasive feature in the systematization of the noun classes in Abu', the Abu' world-view as portrayed in the Abu' 'folk-taxonomy' does play a role in the determination of some of the noun classes. Therefore, the Abu' world-view is reflected to some extent in the Abu' class-system.

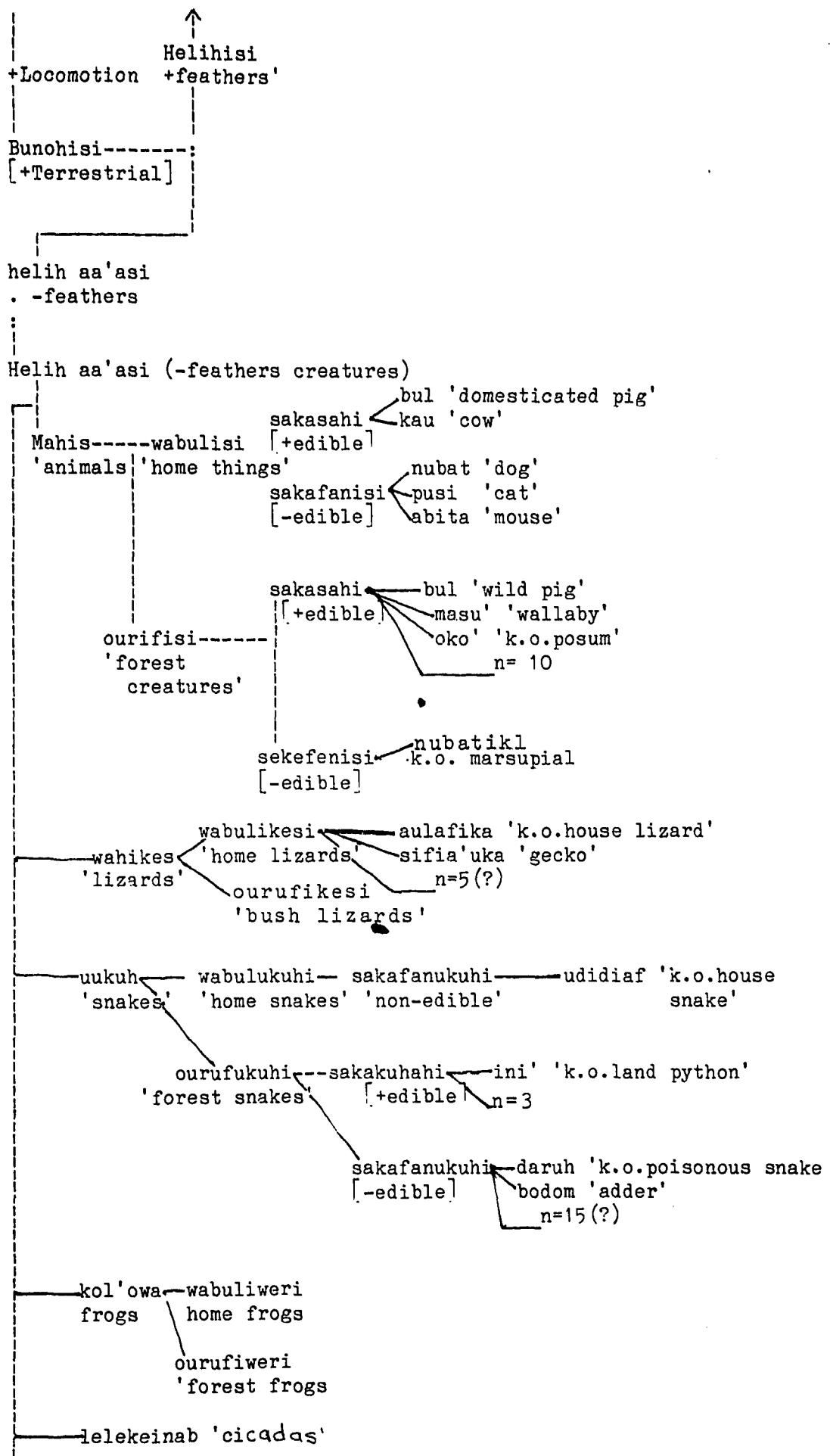
APPENDIX A  
THE ABU' FOLK TAXONOMY.

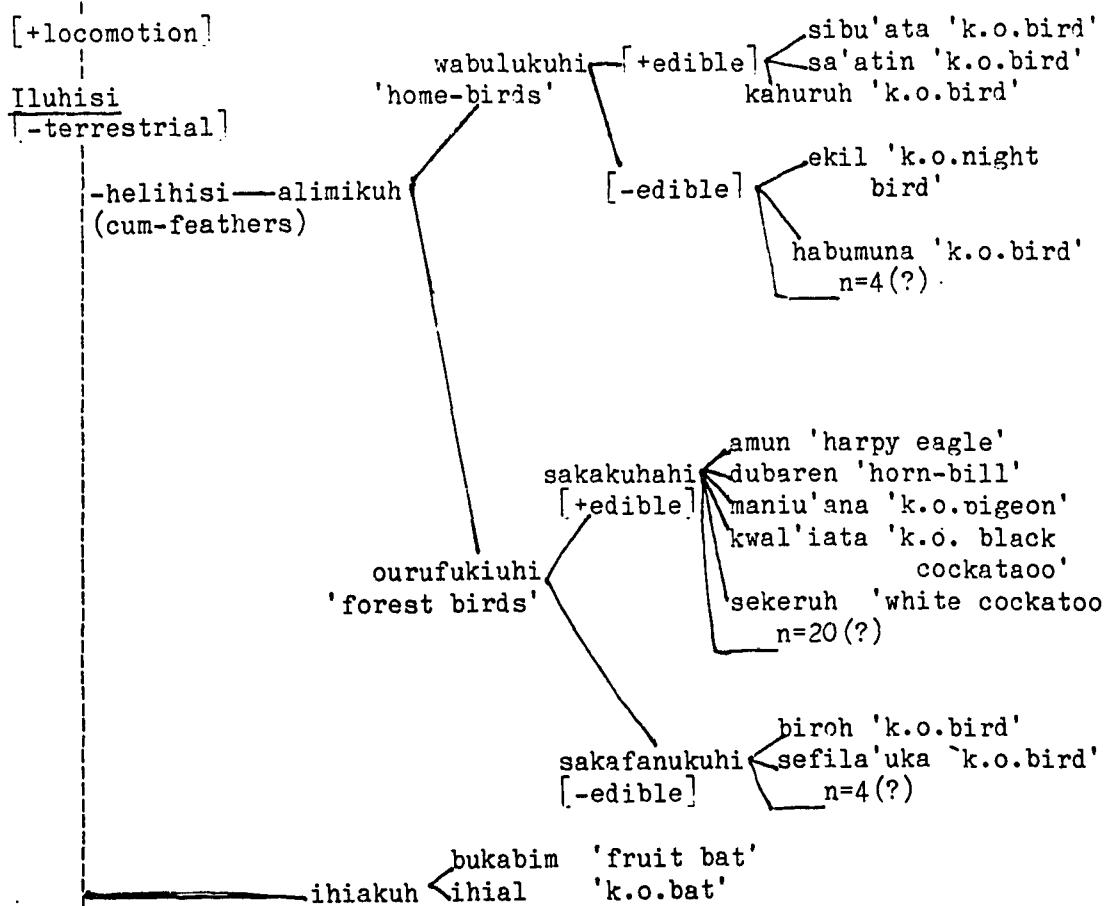
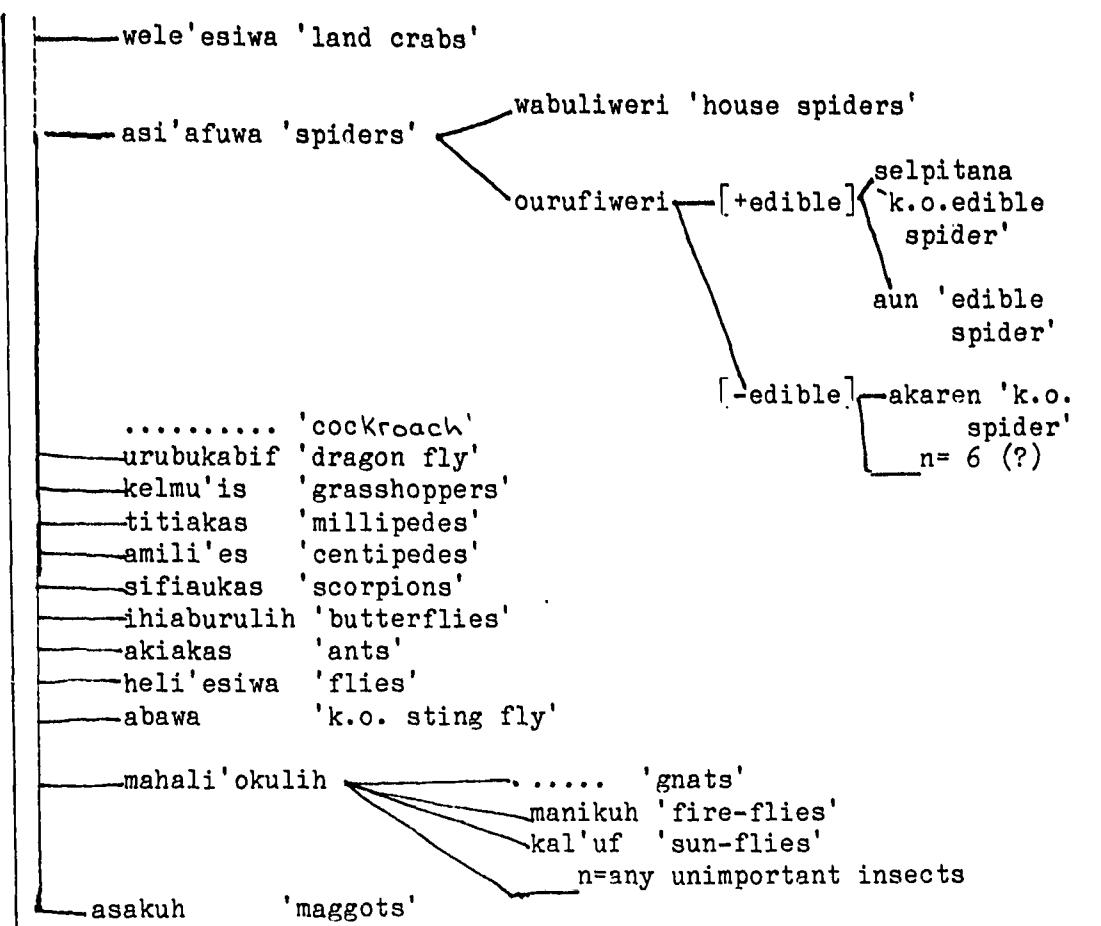


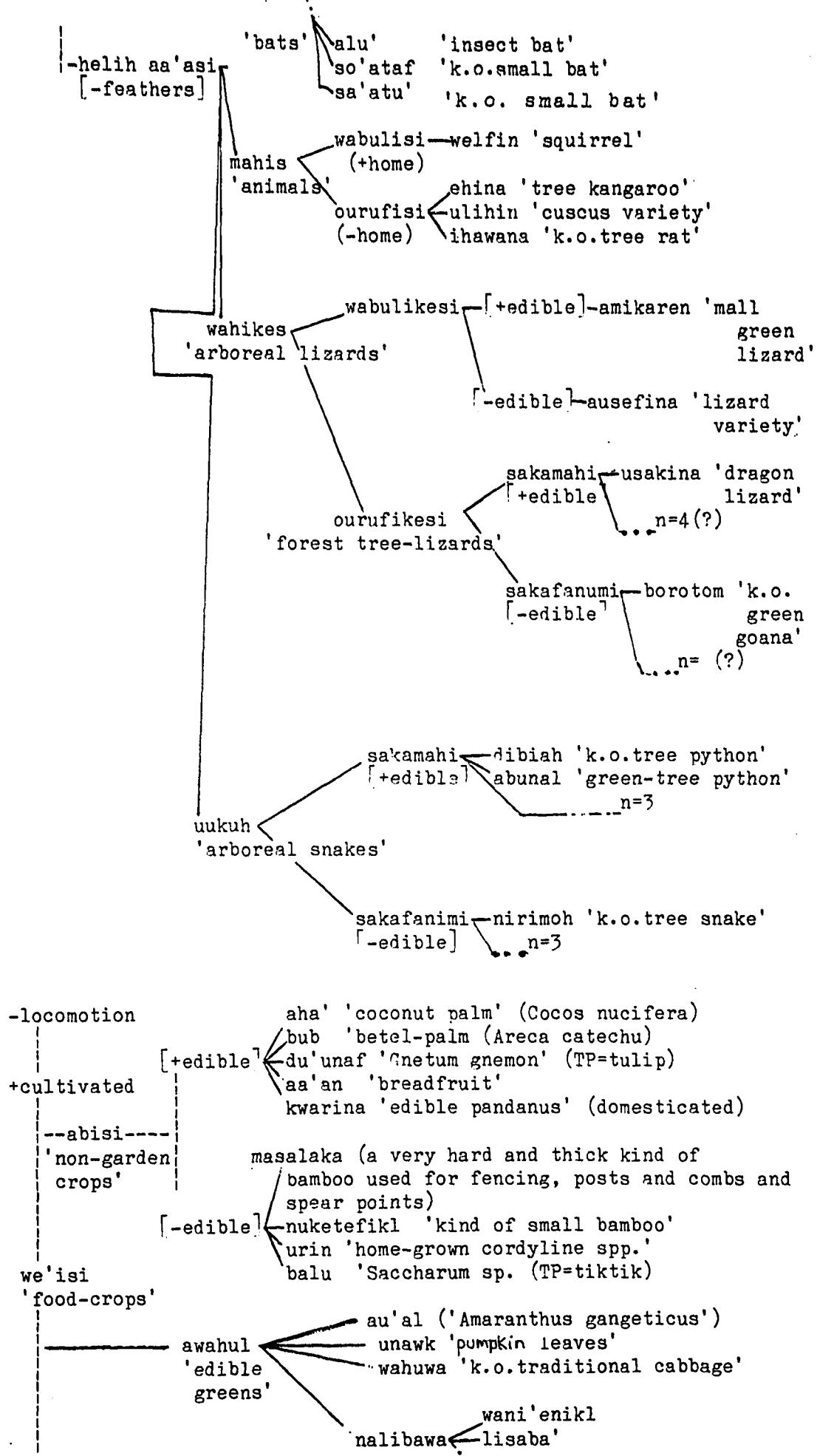


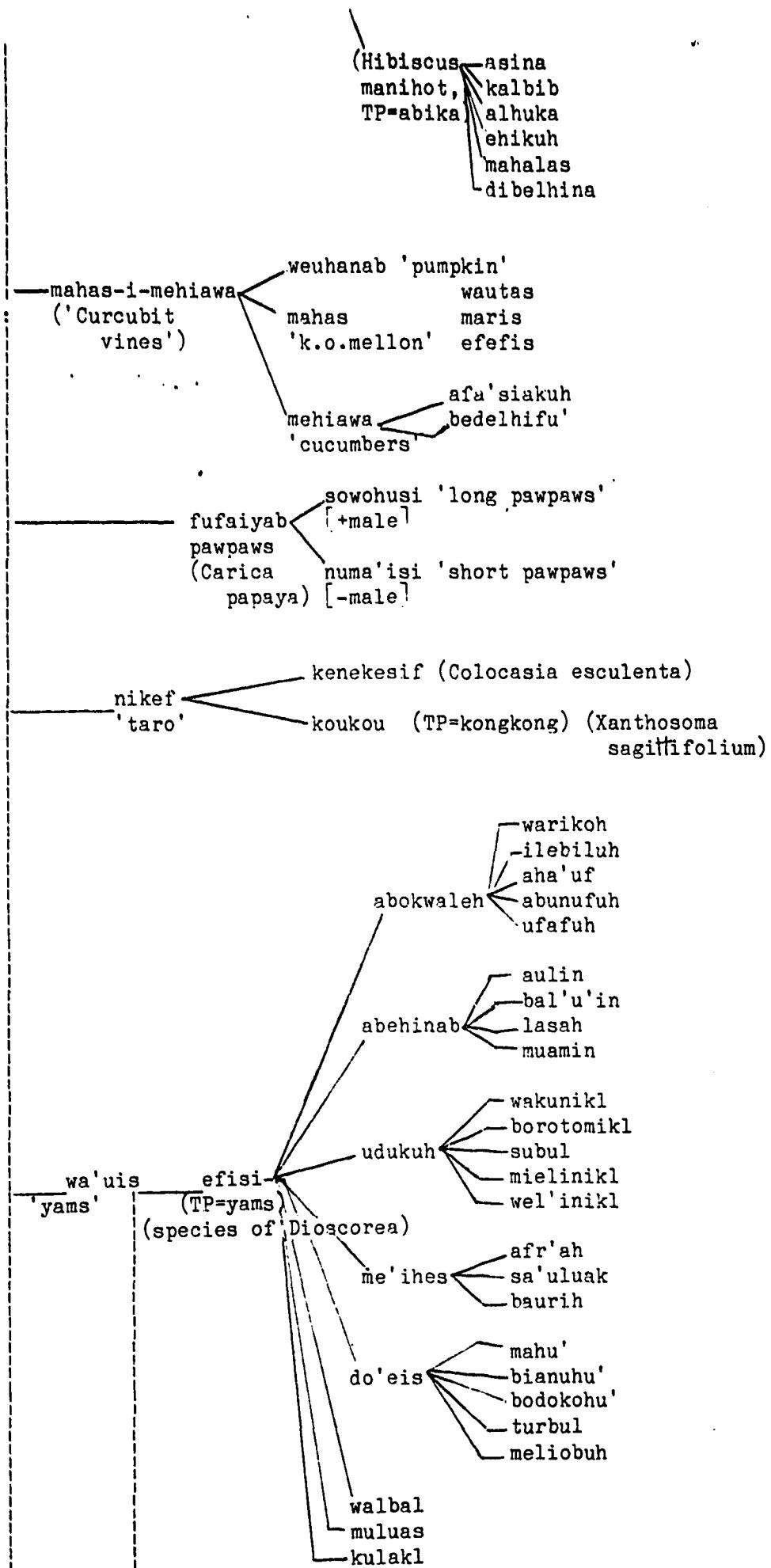












nemataf  
warika  
kohowefi  
asurufu  
bouhemni  
lumu'uf  
wofomoka  
wasaras  
kra'  
emuh  
sefio'  
efelio'  
amo'  
dibolho'  
kwatamunaba  
wahika  
uuil  
kuma'u

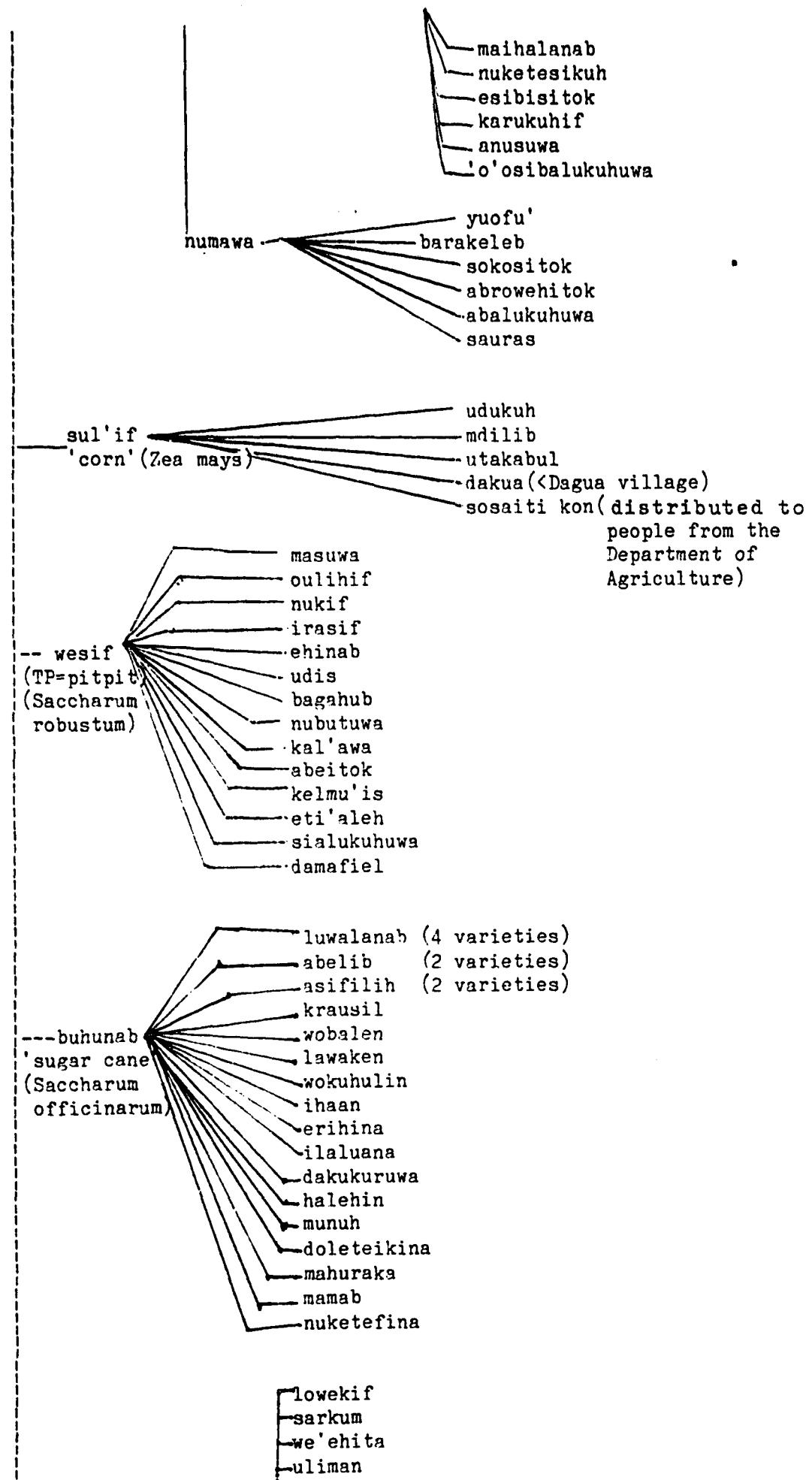
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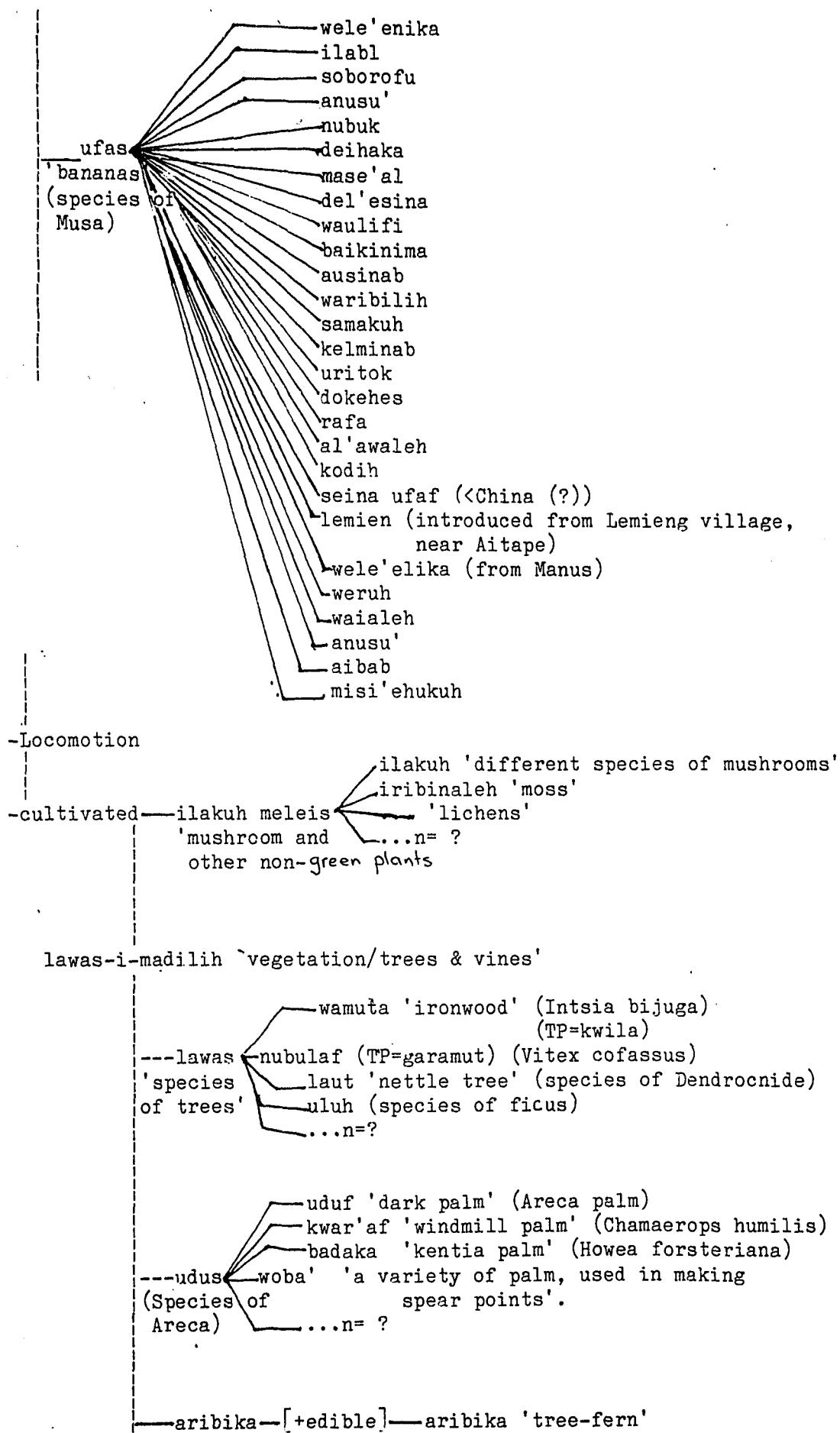
graph TD
    kelemei[kelemeihes] --> weneita[weneita]
    kelemei --> kelemei1[kelemei]
    weneita --> namuwa[namuwa]
    weneita --> namu1[namu']
    weneita --> ubahu'i[ubahu'i]
    namuwa --> namu2[namu']
    namuwa --> koiyo'u'i[koiyo'u'i]
    melheis[melheis  
'short  
yams'] --- short_yams[short yams]

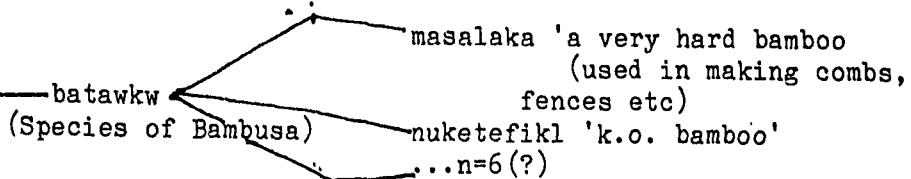
```

sel'inikl  
 -tataka  
 -sol'ata  
 -nikita  
 -simaleb  
 -ladeh  
 -aluh  
 -inimah  
 -we'ata  
 -badaka  
 -udu'  
 -biroh  
 -marafu'  
 -asu'ifina  
 -ta'anu'  
 -aso'aha  
 -madibina  
 -ekikl  
 -elenika  
 -wanimelm  
 -awalub  
 -kelauis  
 -asah  
 -sohesin  
 -kelhanuem  
 -misi'ahis  
 -ouhibikes  
 -o'orakuh  
 -kwian  
 ru'if (Diosc

suduirehem  
nibilena  
elisowem  
kul'fa'ihem  
eribikesif  
ulia'ihes  
la'awa





'fern'<sup>1</sup>

budokwihi  
(Species of wild taro)

erih  
'wild sugar cane'  
(Saccharum robustum)

uritok  
(Species of wild bananas)

madilih  
(Species of vines)

afil  
'Undergrowth'

nubatiuh

ati'aleh

... n= (?)

## CHAPTER 5

## ABU' SOCIAL GROUPS' SPEECH STYLES

## 5.1 Introduction

In recent years, linguistics as a discipline has thrived. In pursuit of elegant answers to theoretical problems the exponents of, or adherents to, linguistic theories of one type or another, have, ironically, tended to lose touch with the fundamental reality of language -- its "function in establishing and maintaining social relationships and the role language plays in conveying information about the speaker" (Trudgill 1974:14).

To a large extent, the above remark reflects the past nature of studies on New Guinea languages. The tendency has been for linguists to go there with linguistic models in mind and to use the enormous linguistic data available to test, expand or refute existing models or to build new models to justify their positions. In so doing, they have tended to lose sight of the fundamental role of language as known by Papua New Guinean communities. How Papua New Guinea communities use language or varieties of their languages in their societies to influence behaviour has been largely neglected.<sup>1</sup> The way Papua New Guinea communities differentiate and contrast the speech styles, registers and varieties used in their respective languages has been much neglected and will probably remain so for a long time. It is hoped that this gap will be somewhat reduced by the material that will

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<sup>1</sup>Except for a few studies (cf. Franklin 1977; Laycock 1977 and 1979).

be analysed in this chapter, which aims to examine speech styles—in particular, the styles or registers used by particular Abu' social groups, in Abu' society. The focus is on speech events, participants, the setting, and the function and form of the styles. All of these sociolinguistic aspects are examined as an integrated whole for each of the individual social styles identified.

#### 5.1.0.1 Techniques used in the sociolinguistic analysis of styles

In studying and describing speech styles of a community one is faced with the problem of identifying the variables that correlate with language differences in the speech and with the problem of deciding what measure or standard to compare one variable against the other. For present purposes I take 'standard' Abu' as that used in mixed company or non-formal occasions or on other occasions when no special group or topic is involved. I also used informants' comments about standard versus non-standard as a guide.

Ervin-Tripp (1967) outlined four general types of methods that can be used in sociolinguistics. In brief, these are:

1. Studies of the speech of social groups. This method assumes some prior knowledge of the existence of social groups and the task the fieldworker has is to ascertain, compare and present the form and function of the styles of speech used by those special groups.

2. Ethnographic studies (Hymes 1962). This is the traditional method where the fieldworker conducts empirical studies by observing what kind of language is used on different occasions and interviewing the participants about the styles identified.

3. Experimental studies. This method involves the setting up of hypothetical cases or situations to test specific linguistic trends.

4. Survey studies. This method involves the distributing of forms and questionnaires to speakers. This is more restricted in use in terms of the type of target population. Although ideal for literate communities, this method presents problems for many Papua New Guinea communities as these are illiterate.

In my attempt at analysing the Abu' speech styles, I have been principally guided by the notion of 'ethnography of speaking' (Hymes 1962), that is, method number 2 (although number 1 was undoubtedly important) because I know the society.

### 5.2 The types of Abu' social speech styles

The Abu' social speech styles are of two main types: those that are characterized by special linguistic forms (mainly different sets of vocabulary) and those that are not. The latter consists of two sub-categories: those characteristic of speakers who exhibit speech defects, such as the speech of stammerers, and those that are differentiated from ordinary speech by "contextualization cues"<sup>2</sup>, such as aural and visual signals. These contextualization signals are readily evident during a "speech act" defined as the "actual verbalization of a speaker's thoughts" (Searle 1965). Each of these categories and subcategories will be discussed in turn beginning with category 1: Vocabulary Differentiated Styles.

### 5.3 Speech Category I:Vocabulary Differentiated Styles

There are four types of these:

1. Dika betoisikeri 'baby talk/language'
2. Waluhu' 'non-spoken linguistic code'
3. Suluh 'secret-talk'
4. Wa'awa'arasikeri (TP=tok haphap) 'innuendo'

#### 5.3.1 Dika betoisikeri 'baby talk or language'

Dika betoisikeri 'baby talk' may be defined as the variety of Abu' that mothers and baby-sitters use when talking to children or vice versa, or which children use among themselves. It differs from other social groups' styles in its special set of vocabulary items in

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<sup>2</sup>Gumperz (1977) cited in Bambi Schieffelin (1978:1).

comparison with standard Abu'. Broadly speaking, it is in its overall structural complexity a reduced form of adult speech.

Linguistic features are not the only things that differentiate this style. Dika betoisikeri is also determined by the social dimension in which baby-talk is used. The role and type of participants, the nature of topics dealt with in this style are salient determining variables, just as are the linguistic features. Before presenting these linguistic features of the Abu' child language, it is worth pointing out a few preliminary remarks about the general process of language acquisition by Abu' children.

I have observed, not only during fieldwork but also in the past, that during the first sixteen months of Abu' children's lives, Abu' mothers tend to become over-enthusiastic about getting their children talking. Consequently, they engage themselves in a high rate of verbal speech output, much of which does not, from the onlooker's point of view, seem to mean anything to the children spoken to. At this age children, like children throughout the world, merely babble away.

From about the 20th month onwards, normal Abu' children begin to produce meaningful utterances which mothers or child minders pick up and decode. They then respond by doing whatever actions they think are required by children to appease them. This language inter-play marks the beginning of a dialogue - usually of a rudimentary - nature between mothers and children. Perhaps an anecdotal experience might help illustrate this generalization.

One evening, my sister's 19 months old son while crying was heard uttering the word tutu, which is an Abu' child language term for breast. My sister, having been told of her son's crying, ran home and asked her ten-year-old daughter why my nephew cried. My niece responded in Abu' with the following adult speech form: nada'as uma

numab 'he-cried for breast'. My sister then breastfed the child and he stopped his crying. This experience clearly demonstrates an act of verbal behaviour characteristic of child-adult discourse that involves two different sets of stylistic varieties of Abu'.

Broadly speaking, language inter-play of this nature goes on until about the 36th month, when children gradually build up a steady command of the adult language form. Consequently, dika betoisikeri 'baby/child language' is normally discouraged by the adult population. In this respect, a mother would be laughed to scorn, if she addressed her, say, four-year-old child to have her/his food using the child language form: kou' taita 'eat food!' when she should, or is expected to, use the adult form: wa' we'isi ine'i.

Subject-matter of Abu' dika betoisikeri 'child language' is mainly concerned with immediate needs and wants that are important to the child. Consequently, it is limited with regards to the range of topics it relates. Terms for food, referential terms for agnates are overt features that characterize child language.

Linguistically, dika betoisikeri 'child language' is marked by a number of linguistic features, such as frequent repetition of certain referential terms (e.g. names of food); frequent use of diminutives for kinship terms (e.g. eben) for the adult form dabanari 'elder brother'. Indicative also of Abu' dika betoisikeri are diminutives that the Abu' use to refer especially to body parts of children. For example, bur'ah 'leg' in adult speech becomes bur'ahikin in child language; butum 'penis' in adult speech becomes butumikin in child language.<sup>3</sup>. Other than that, diminutivization is a fairly productive process, thus an integral part of the standard Abu' speech. Its use is evident when speakers make reference to substandard growth of things or creatures.

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<sup>3</sup>The use of diminutives in child language have also been reported of other Papua New Guinea communities, e.g. Laycock (1977:133-4).

In the following table, I have provided examples of the most common Abu' child language vocabulary items which are universally used by the community.

Table 5-1: Child language Vocabulary

Gloss	Child Language.	Standard Abu'.
1. food	taita	we'isi
2. meat	tatu	mahin
3. crayfish	ubaut	dubaun
4. TP=pitpit [Saccharum spp.]	atum	wasum
5. taro	mamu	nekam
6. stirred sago	tata'[<TP 'saksak']	lehin
7. river eel	alau	aul
8. yam (generic)	ka'u'	wa'uin
9. breast	umab/tutu[<TP 'susu']	numabis
10. mother	amu	amiyaa
11. father	nene/ayee	aiwa
12. elder brother	eben	sarumina
13. elder sister	obo'	dobo'i
14. grandmother	itau	isa'u'
15. paternal aunt	tahau	sahelu'
16. in-laws	mohutit	mohulihis
17. knife	abatu	alibal
19. sore	baba'	ilab/laab
20. give	taa'	sa'a
21. eat	kou'	wa'as
22. sleep	titi'	kis
23. sit	fefe	fan
24. dog	as	nubat
25. something bad	'u'u'	nemehelini
26. something deadly	kaka'[<kaa' 'to die']	nakahasi

A few child language forms are onomatopoeic, that is, words which imitate or echo the sounds created by their referents.

For example:

- 27. plane/car mbř krahу' [imitates the rumbling sound of thunder, a plane or a car]
- 28. to wash mbř sera'uh [imitates the sound of river as it pounds on the rocks].
- 29. pig ehř bul [imitates the grunt of a pig].

There does not seem to be any underlying regularity of Abu' child language except that /s/ becomes /t/. Abu' mothers when addressing their children, regularly substitute t for s in the adult speech. Examples of these can be seen in numbers 1, 4, 6, 9, 14, 15, 20. However, as no detailed study of this has been made, it is not

possible to say if this reflects the order of acquisition of these two phonemes by Abu' children. Personal observations of our 19 months old son (at the time this chapter was drafted) would seem to support such a hypothesis but this needs checking. That is, John Nekitel was first heard uttering words such as taa', taita, tutu, but he did not utter words containing the voiceless alveolar fricative until much later. There is nothing comparable with the practice of Kalam mothers, who substitute voiced for unvoiced phonemes when addressing children (Laycock 1977:134).

### 5.3.2 Waluhu' 'non-spoken linguistic code'

The Abu' term waluhu' refers to a process which involves communication of messages through bokotoh 'whistling', suhafur lakuh 'blowing into folded hands' (as described below), marekl, literally, 'mouth call', and wind instruments sada' aluh 'triton'. Whistled-speech is used in close-up communication, while mouth and triton calls are, in principle, used to communicate important messages over distance. Given fine weather conditions, messages encoded through the aluh 'triton' and its local predecessor (wandihil) can be picked up at about 8 to 10 kilometres away if blown on a high point.

Mouth and triton calls are thus regarded as 'formal styles', while whistled-speech is 'informal' and used for casual non-formal communication. Although the methods of encoding messages through waluhu' differ, the functions and the linguistic forms (according to auditory impressions) are consistent and fairly similar.

The code waluhu' was said to have originated in Wam (whose people call it wanglehel). It then spread among contiguous language communities which share social, familial and cultural ties with them. In this respect, the knowledge of this code among the Abu' is restricted only to the Upper Abu'. Lower Abu' speakers generally do not know it, and those few who do know it learnt the code from their Wam or Upper Abu'

friends or relatives. At the present most younger-generation of Upper Abu' speakers only know how to communicate and interpret simple messages, such as 'you come' or 'who is there', through waluhu'. Detailed messages, such as announcing of a man or woman's death or calling people together to perform a particular task, are usually the preserve of waluhu' specialists, who learnt the code from the elders. Many of the waluhu' specialists have died. Therefore the continuity of the knowledge of the code in the future among the Upper Abu' is doubtful.

How or why the code was developed, we are not sure. Older informants conjectured that the code developed to meet one main need. The mountainous terrain makes travel difficult or slows it down such that villages that live on adjacent ridges may be able to see each other, but may not hear each other in normal speech. Consequently, face to face communication cannot take place and in order for such to take place requires one to travel down and up mountains which may take hours. To economize human energy and to enable prompt delivery of messages, the Upper Abu' probably adopted the code from the Wam. In his patrol from Aitape to Arasili (a Wam village) in 1921, G.W.L.Townsend made a note of one of the waluhu' namely, whistled-speech (Townsend 1968:67-8). He remarked that "people were actually conversing with one another by means of whistle". He continues:

"From a direction of a nearby hut came a 'wi wa wi wo' answered by the boy with 'we wu'. The person in the hut repeated its signal in the most decisive manner and the boy got up of his haunches and went to the hut".

What was communicated in this whistled-speech is that the person in the hut was asking the boy as to whether or not he was going and the boy simply responded that he was.

Townsend also admired the practical value of the code and

mentioned that during the Second World War, some Arasili men were recruited and used the code to relay messages through radios and the messages they sent were not intercepted by outsiders. He reports:

"They acted as scouts for the Australian Army and were armed with voice radio sets. With these the Arasili men shadowed Japanese coastal barge traffic, and through the air, in fluting tones, in the one Army code which was never changed, and never intercepted and never broken, they sent the information that the bombers awaited" (p.39).

Acoustically, waluhu' is typically marked by a series of abrupt short or prolonged syllabic utterances which are 'trimmed down' approximants of the syllabic nuclei of their corresponding spoken forms. All redundant grammatical features are omitted. Needless to say, only the barest minimum sufficient to communicate messages need be sent. As can be seen in the texts provided below, the linguistic forms of waluhu', speaking in terms of broad phonetic transcription, are marked by vocalic sequences segmented by a glottal stop. The basic vocalic segments are the high back round tense vowel [u], the low vowel [a] and the mid-back rounded vowel [o], which is sometimes heard as an open [ɔ] and at other times as a full rounded [o].

In addition, the semi-vowels [h] and [w] can also be heard. The function of the glottal stop intrusion is not too well understood. There is some indication that it seems to function as a substitute for many of the omitted consonants that would be there if the same call were translated morpheme by morpheme into spoken speech as the texts provided below will illustrate.

#### 5.3.2.1 How messages are encoded through Waluhu'

Encoding of messages via waluhu' may be done in four ways:-

(a) by bokotoh 'whistling'. This is used when the addressed is within hearing distance. This is done by lowering the tongue to an almost resting position behind the lower teeth-ridge. This is to ensure a free flow of air which is modified by the rounding and

unrounding of the lips to obtain appropriate syllabic nuclei that appear to approximate their respective spoken forms.

(b) by sada' marekl 'calling'. This involves a movement of the main articulators (raising/lowering of the tongue and rounding/unrounding of the lips) to an appropriate position for the production of relevant nuclei to convey messages. This can be heard at a relatively greater distance than (a)

(c) by blowing into tightly folded hands. This and (d) are the most strenuous and hence are known only by a few men among the waluhu' specialists. This is done as follows. First, hands are folded tightly, the forefingers are released to create a narrow cavity between the forefingers and the thumbs for blowing into. When the caller blows into it, he simultaneously allows the air to escape via a vent that results at the inner section of the wrists and

(d) by the use of wind instruments, namely, aluh 'triton' and its local predecessor wandihil 'bamboo trumpet' (figs: 1 & 2).

The following waluhu' texts were recorded at Womsis from two Abu' Womenika (Upper Abu') speakers. The first sample is a whistled-speech text by Andreas Wehitesim, a descendant of the Uwa' clan which migrated to Womsis eight generations ago from Womsak No.2 (Nekitel 1975:8). The second sample comes from Ignatius Nararama', whose father migrated to Womsis from Wandegei (a Wam village, map 1) and whose mother was a Lower Abu' speaker. In the texts the broad phonetic transcription of whistled-speech is given first with corresponding standard Abu' and accompanying English translation underneath. The abbreviations (wsp) is used for "whistled-speech" and (nlg) for the corresponding normal or standard Abu' which is given. Double slashes mark pauses during the utterance of whistled-speech. A fairly broad indication of waluhu' pitch contour is represented by high and low

lines.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.3.2.2 Sample 1

In this sample, Andreas Wehitesim is calling some of the Womsis boys to go with him to do some work at the Womsis Community School located along the bank of the Atob and Mindil junctions (map 2). Before he begins, however, he explains briefly in Tok Pisin what whistled-speech is. In his view:

"Nau mi laik wokim wanpela wisil. Wisil em olsem planti man i save i gat wisil, tasol ol i save wisil nating. Na mipela hia long Womsis i go inap long Wam -- Urat, mipela i gat main bilong toktok insait long wisil. Yu narapela man harim yu ting olsem em i wisil nating. Tasol mi yet harim, mi gat tok insait long dispela wisil. Olsem na nambawan tok bilong mi, mi singautim ol boi bai mipela i go long wanpela skul long hap bilong Atob bai mipela i go mekim wok. Nau mi laik singautim ol lain boi nau".

I now wish to make a whistle. Regarding whistle, though a lot of people do whistle, their whistles are often meaningless. However, here in Womsis right across to Wam-Urat, we send messages through whistling and so whistles to us are meaningful and important. When outsiders hear us whistle, they think our whistles are meaningless, but when we ourselves hear them, we can tell what messages are sent through whistling. And so the first message I want to send through whistled speech is a message to some young men to come with me to go and work at the school at Atob. I am calling the young men now.

28 a. wsp. // u u' o: hu o // // o uh hu o //

- b. nlg. auwomi wa fimeine'
- c. Eng. gentlemen listen !

29 a. wsp. // o' u' o l hu o // // u h o u //

- b. nlg. ehiehi wa hi'i
- c. Eng. quickly eih come !

30 a. wsp. // u' o' u' // // ah ah //

- b. nlg. ei' bala bala
- c. Eng. me for a while

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<sup>4</sup>The absence of a sound recording machine made it impossible to give an accurate pitch description.

Response from the addressed:

31 a. wsp. // o:hu' // // o'u'ʃo' //

- b. nlg. a:uwe' u wo hu'
- c. Eng. yes-okay! okay!

Addressor continues:

32 a. wsp. // o'o'u' // // u'u'ʃo' //

- b. nlg. atoub sukul
- c. Eng. Atob school

33 a. wsp. // o<sup>5</sup> //

- b. nlg. a:<sup>5</sup>
- c. Eng. hm ?!

### 5.3.2.3 Sample 2

This sample text was made by Mr. Ignatius Nararama' to his wife Sa'uli'eh Waka (from Amom) requesting her to come and see him quickly. This was performed by blowing into folded hands as described above. In the text, (clg) denotes call language.

34 a. clg. // 'o'u'u'ʃo'hu'ʃo' // // 'o'o'wo' //

- b. nlg. Sa'uli'eh Waka
- c. Eng. [ name of caller's wife]

35a. clg. // u[ho]u' // // 'o[u]o'o:' //

- b. nlg. hi'i ba ata' uwa'
- c. Eng. you sg.(pres.)come or not yet ?

Response from the addressed:

36a. clg. // o:hu' // // o:'u'wo:' //

- b. nlg. a: umeya'
- c. Eng. yes ! okay !

Caller winding up the call:

37a. clg. // u[ho:]u' // // 'u'u'wo'u' //

- b. nlg. hi'i ehi-ehi
- c. Eng. come ! quickly !

Both texts can be more or less understood by members of the

<sup>5</sup>An interrogative tag seeking assurance on whether or not the addressed understood the message.

language groups who understand and use this special code. Other words that I recorded individually and which are used in the waluhu' code are:

English	Waluhu' forms	Standard Abu'	Standard Miye
38. men	'a-'u-'u-wa:-ha:'	alemam	elmelndiel
39. women	wa-wa'-'u:ha:wa	numatawa	elmesiye
40. rain	'c-'o-wo-hu:-ho:u:'	asah	anehe
41. bat	au'-u-waha	ihial	?
42. who might it be ?	au'a	emi	emiye
43. no (neg.)	ou-wo'u'	uwa'	imbe
44. a while	aha-aha	uma bala	?
45. (s/he) past go	u'-u'-wo'-o:u'	kwahe'/nahe'	(?)-rembi

### 5.3.3 Suluh 'secret-talk'

Suluh 'secret-talk' has two meanings. Its primary one refers to taboo activities that members of traditional exclusive male clubs engage in, such as male rites of passage, adult male cult rites and worship suluh (TP tambaran, black magic ehu' (TP sanguma), incantation nukuh and naburawa (TP marila) and witchcraft auluh (TP poisen). It may, however, be extended to include female secret activities and knowledge, such as female rites of passage, and other related activities pertaining to physical growth and health and the traditional method of family planning. Thus the Abu' speak of suluh numatawari 'female secret talk' and suluh alemami 'male secret talk or knowledge'.

Its secondary meaning refers to secret verbal instructions, narrative accounts of the history and development of sorcery and magic, words used in cult worship or mere verbal exchange of plans to do with a forthcoming tambaran cult activity. In what follows the emphasis will be on male secret talk, as no examples of female secret talk were obtained.

Suluh alemami 'male secret talk' embraces a broad range of oral knowledge of the sociocultural and political life of the Abu'. This knowledge is important not only to men, but because what men do directly or indirectly affects all sections of the Abu' community, it is important to all Abu'. Male secrets suluh alemami include (i) verbal instruction on rites of passage and (ii) ehu 'sorcery', 'witchcraft' auluh, 'incantation' nukuh and 'enchantment' naburawa'asi.

Theoretically, suluh 'male secret knowledge/talk' of any of the categories listed above may be shared with friends or relatives of the neighbouring speech communities if they want to acquire skills in a particular suluh, so long as they meet the language skills and payment requirements. Payment is made for the right to acquire possession of the knowledge of suluh, whatever that might be. Language skills are important in that until quite recently, when Tok Pisin had proven to be as efficacious as the vernacular, it was believed that suluh when expressed in another language would not work or would yield inferior results. Wam ehu 'sorcery' spread initially to those villages who know and speak Miye, mainly those sharing ethnolinguistic boundaries with them. It is presently known to have been taught to other communities as well, such as the Kwanga and Urim. Tok Pisin is increasingly becoming an effective medium through which suluh of all kind may be passed on.

When suluh 'secret-knowledge' is being discussed, men who have knowledge ensure that no part of suluh is divulged to the public. It must be kept secret at all times and at all costs. Any man found leaking suluh to non-members of the cult-club runs the risk of getting himself killed by ohu'umi 'sorcerers', who are the custodians of the whole gamut of suluh. The fear of falling victims to sorcery led the Abu' to find ways to express subject-matter of suluh in

public without running the risks of divulging its secrecy. There are two ways to do this.

One is to disclose secret knowledge within the precincts of forbidden adult male camps in the forest referred to as suluh hakara lawasuma, a metaphoric term which literally means 'the place where cultists hang in trees' and is used to conceal the camps from the public. Alternatively, erebihes 'ceremonial cult houses' are used to talk about suluh 'secret-knowledge'.

The other is to devise a secret code that can be used to talk about suluh in public without giving too much away. This supposedly led to the development of a secret-talk vocabulary which is used to express subject-matter of suluh.

Some of these are given in the table below by way of illustration. A longer list was difficult to obtain because of the difficulties associated with recording them. All forms are given in standard Abu'. Those on the left are secret-language forms.

	<u>Special Forms</u>	<u>Intended to mean</u>
46.	<u>dubaren</u> 'hornbill'	<u>betoin</u> 'baby'
47.	makaruturi makia dubaren 3mplS-real-stand about 3mplS-real-pick a hornbill Men who stood about picked up a hornbill.	ohu'umi maha betoin sorcerers 3mplS-real-kill a child Sorcerers killed a baby.
48.	usak kara netbag 3-sgS-real-rattle The netbag rattles.	naha uruh 3msgS-real-beat hand-drum He beat hand-drum (in the male ceremonial cult house).
49.	mawa' au'al 3mplS-real-eat edible greens/vegetables They (sorcerers) ate edible greens.	ohu'umi mawa' ehu' sorcerers 3mplS-real-eat sorcery. Sorcerers ate sorcery [meaning sorcerers fed on special diet to prepare their bodies before they go out to kill target victims].

Another important use of secret talk is in yam chants or nukuh wa'usikuhi. These are used when yams are harvested during the month

of Natarumes (cf. Abu'world-view paradigm, chapt.4). The chanter intends the chant to win the good will of the yam deity called kimidi kamada, to bring together all the best yams from other men's gardens to the chanter's yam house(s). A text in this language style is given below. This text was recorded by Bubata from Balup village. In his view, the chant always yielded optimum results and hence he kept it a secret. Realizing that he was aging and that he would sooner or later die (which he did in mid-1983), he wanted to have it recorded in order that it can be preserved and passed on to the younger generation of Abu' men.

He began chanting with an open address to kimidi kamada the deity of harvest and simultaneously he tapped a uduf 'black palm sheath' he sat on in his remote hut as he went through the chant nukuh wa'usukuhi. The chant consists of three verses characterized by a few key words and seemingly endless repetition of two focal verbs, flal and rir 'to increase' and to 'multiply'. The chant, being poetic in form and content, lacks many of the essential grammatical features such as tense, locatives, moods, etc. that normally form part of standard Abu'. This lack is typical of most Abu' songs and chants and is necessary if the chant or song is to have a sense of rhythm that fulfils aesthetic demands.

The entries are flanked by numbers for reference purposes and where there is uncertainty about the meaning of an item, it is marked by a question mark.

#### 5.3.3.1 Nukuh Wa'usukuhi 'Yam Chant'

Chanter: Joachim Bubata of Balup.

Initial address: kimidi-kimidi-kamada(1)

Verse 1. kimidi kamada-ye-ye-ye-(2)  
kimidi-ye-kimidi-ye, kimidi kamada ye-ye-ye.

Natarumes(3) flal-flal-flal-flal-flal(4)  
Iye'(5) enin(6) naliu'(?,(7)) na'imo(?,(8))-flal-flal-flal  
-flal.

Iye' enin nu'im...  
 Anen(9) takul(10)-flal-flal-flal-flal-flal  
 Enin abe'(11) ina'(12)-flal-flal-uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu(13)

Verse 2. Ye-ye-ye-ye-ye kimidi ye  
 kamada-kimidi-kamada-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
 Anen naliu'-fu'uma(14)-flal-flal-flal  
 Anen a ka'ima(15)flal-flal-flal-al-uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu.

Verse 3. Oh-e-ye-ye-fifikl(16)-e-fifikl-sifikl(17)-safekl(18)  
 -ye-ye-ye-ye  
 Iye' anen nali'uma rir-rir-rir-rir-rir(19)  
 Iye' anen silaka'ima (20) rir-rir-rir-rir-rir  
 Natarumas rir-rir-rir-rir-rir  
 Iye' anen rir-rir-rir-rir

[ Em tasol singsing bilong mi bilong tekemautim yam. "This is all, my chant for harvesting yams]

A part by part analysis of this chant according to syntactic formula indicates that all lines are structurally similar. They all have sentential subjects which are marked by [1. kimidi kamada 'a spirit'; 3. natarumes 'harvesting month and spirit'; 5. iye' 'I'; 6. enin 'it'; 9. anen 'he'; 12. ina' 'you singular'; 16. fifikl 'bone']. Of some consistency also is the recurrence of the imperative forms of the multiplicative verbs, flal 'to multiply' (no. 4) and rir 'to increase' (no. 19). Other than that, the chant lines differ in most other respects. For example, items (no. 2 and 13) are meaningless syllables but fairly common features in chants and songs. They are utterance final residuals purported to emphasize the invocative nature of the chant. Those referenced by (nos.: 7, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18 and 20) are items whose meanings are no longer known by the chanter nor known by other Abu' men. They are probably archaic items or borrowed words whose corresponding terms in standard Abu' are no longer recoverable.

A main difference between the language style of chants and standard Abu' is that the latter follow standard rules of grammar, while the former may have a different grammar. In this respect, the person who engages in an ordinary speech act conforms to the

prescriptive and sociolinguistic rules of Abu' in order for him to be properly understood by the addressed or if he were to have any influence at all on the opinion of those he addresses. The chant narrator during chanting does not abide by the rules of grammar. He, being a specialist in mediating with members of the spirit world, has, if you wish, poetic licence to bend the rules of the language any way he thinks fit to win the good will of the spirit he addresses. Consequently, choice of words is most crucial. Redundant and peripheral linguistic elements are omitted, allowing only for the selection and use of most important core words. This means that translation is difficult and in order to turn a poetic or chant line into an acceptable sentence in standard Abu', extra grammatical features need to be added. For example, (50) although an acceptable line in chants, it is a nonsensical statement in standard Abu'. In order, for example, for (50) to make sense in standard or normal Abu' style, it must be dressed with all the necessary grammatical features as has been done below, example (51).

50. Iye' anen rir-rir-rir- uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu  
      I he increase-increase-increase-uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu.
51. Iye' i anen wada'as uma rirakaras.  
      1sgS connective 3sgmS 2pl-excl.-real-do-things(OBJ.)  
      resultative trans.-increase-IRR-FUT-things OBJ  
      I and he (we)-did-things so that these things would  
      increase or grow in large numbers.

Another prominent feature that differentiates standard Abu' and chants is the recurrence of certain core words in utterances. Repetition, although discouraged in dika ka'is kekehi'i 'standard Abu'', is quite acceptable in songs and chants. Its presence in chants probably reflects the psychological disposition of the chanter when attempting to placate a deity before entreating it to respond favourably to whatever the supplicant asks for. In view of the inconceivable physical distance and the uncertainty surrounding the

chanter's mind on whether or not the deity being invoked would listen and respond positively, the chanter sees the need to engage in unceasing intercession marked linguistically by repetition of core words and/or phrases. Repetition in chants is a verbal device and is employed to persuade the deity being addressed to bestow something upon those in need of spiritual, mental and physical assistance.

A further variety of male secret-talk/knowledge is the style of a 'mobile oratory'. Originally this was only used in male secret camps in the bush, but it was gradually allowed to be practised or used in erebihes 'male ceremonial houses' and later in the village plaza between buanim 'ceremonial feast partners'. This special and seemingly unique style of delivering speech by walking back and forth along a straight line is called kwianif. The informants described it in Tok Pisin as: tok i go kam 'talk back and forth'. There are two forms, a spoken form and a sung form. The spoken form is called kwianif and the sung form is called bi'ilihi 'sung oratory'. The characteristics or differences between these two will be returned to after some further details have been given about mobile oratory in general.

#### 5.3.3.2 Sesade' kwianif 'oratorical speech'

Sesade' kwianif 'oratorical speech' is used for formal speech making. Orators not only walk back and forth along a straight line, but they also stamp the ground as they walk along delivering their speeches. This stamping on the ground with the right foot may have developed as a result of angry orators restraining themselves from physically assaulting their rival orators by indirectly pouring out their anger by stamping hard on the ground. Sociologically speaking, Sesade' kwianif is entirely rule-governed verbal behaviour. The rules emanate from suluh 'male secret-knowledge' and must be adhered to by all Abu' people.

Speech participants in sesade' kwianif must be graduates from the 'third' moulomu' and 'fourth' kwal grades of suluh (TP tambaran). This regulation means that if there are persons who have anything to say, they have to pass it on to eligible members to deliver on their behalf. Senior members of clans who are eligible but cannot stand are allowed to sit and deliver their speeches, but then they must tap their lime gourds as a substitution for the stamping on the ground.

Furthermore, while sesade' kwianif is in progress, a number of cultural restrictions are or should be observed, including, (a) no swallowing of afenika 'saliva'; (b) abstaining from food and drink; (c) no standing on the part of anyone except the orators to avoid unnecessary distraction; (d) silence must be observed and (e) the orator must cleanse his mouth with water soon after he finishes delivering his speech before he is allowed to eat, drink and chew betelnut (Areca catechu). These taboos were laid down by custodians of tambaran kwal. Infringement of these restrictions place the non-conformist at the mercy of suluhumi 'tambaran men', who may punish him with ill-health or death. It was reported that some men who did not observe these restrictions have been murdered by ohu'umi 'sorcerers'.

Sesade' kwianif was dying out in the 1960s. In the 1950s, sesade' kwianif was common during feasts where food and goods were exchanged between ceremonial non-affinal clans. The feast is called waa', a name derived from the verb stem wa' 'to eat'. Waa' is a social occasion during which ceremonial feast rivals (buanim) compete against each other in both the display of food (especially yams and pigs) and traditional wealth (e.g. beads, shells, plumes of various birds, etc.), as well as in eating food meant to be consumed in public. The first partner to finish his big saucepan of yam soup or other foods prepared for him by the rival buanim scores a point against his feast rival.

When members of both feast-exchange parties are content with what is being displayed, sesade' kwianif does not occur. However, if one of the parties feels that he has been humiliated by his rival in his ostentatious display of food and wealth and overall hospitality, then he might be prompted by their dismal performance to stage sesade' kwianif after the distribution and eating of the exchanged food. The spokesman expresses on behalf of his clansmen their appreciation for the outstanding achievement by their buanim and admits their defeat and expresses a hope to do better in the next feast.

If the clansmen being addressed pick up any challenging remarks during an oration from an opposing side, a spokesman from the clan being addressed disputes the remarks. He does this by adopting similar oratorical speech style, but then he begins at the opposite direction of the oratory line.

In 1955, I saw a sesade' kwianif for the last time taking place between my clan Nubat, and the Uwa' clan, our principal feast rival in Womsis village. It was instigated by a general discontent among the Nubat clansmen that the Uwa' clansmen were failing to fulfil certain expectations. Nailiah, one of my paternal uncles and a graduate of suluh mouloamu', initiated a sesade' kwianif. He commenced with an abrupt jerk from where he was sitting and simultaneously sprayed spittle towards the general direction where the Uwa' clansmen were assembling, started pounding his right foot on the ground and walked briskly to and fro along an imaginary line. He gave a powerful speech in a loud voice and appeared perturbed.

His speech was responded to by Nelade'as, a kwal graduate from the Uwa' clan who rebuked Nailiah for his outburst over trivia. His remarks only infuriated Nailiah, who became more volatile. Thus this oratorical speech session turned into a verbal duel involving

lashing out at each other's past and present defeats. The rival mood of this sesade' kwianif only attracted more eligible supporters on both sides to take part, thus extending the session until early hours of the following day.

#### 5.3.3.3 Linguistic Features of Sesade' kwianif

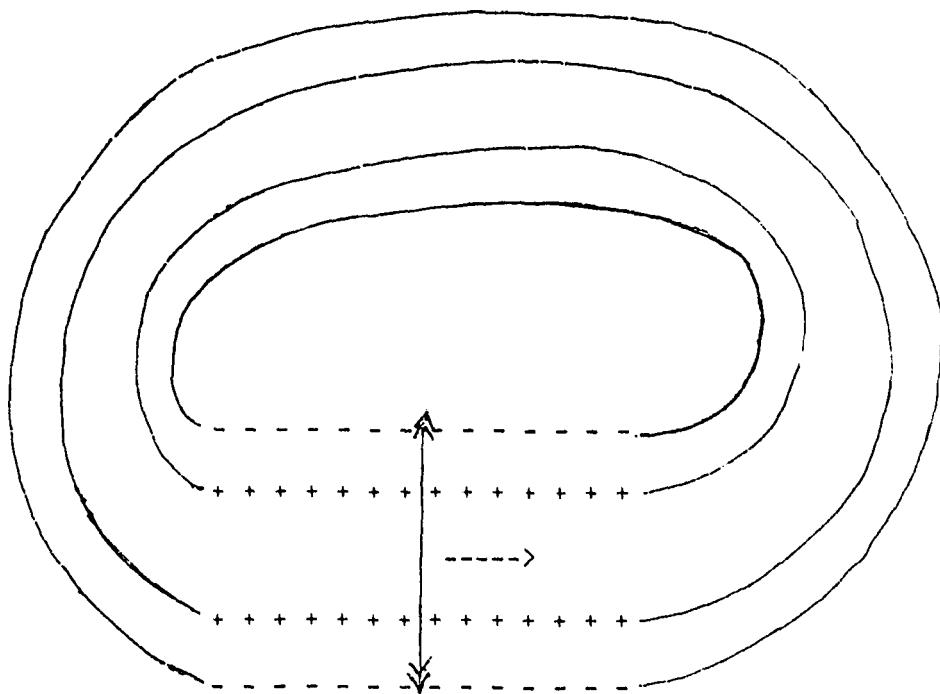
Topics discussed during sesade' kwianif determine stylistic differences between sesade' kwianif and standard Abu'. In discussing ordinary non-tambaran subject-matter, standard Abu' is used. If the subject-matter is to do with men's secrets, then speakers use hidden speech, including idiomatic and allusive words and/or phrases as some did on the day referred to above. If, however, participants find it difficult to freely express themselves in public owing to the secret nature of a given topic, it is postponed until arrangements are made to have the topic discussed in detail in the secluded male tambaran camps or in the male ceremonial houses to which women, children and men who are not members of tambaran rites are forbidden entry. Within the precincts of these exclusive clubs, plain standard Abu' is used to present and discuss the subject-matter of suluh.

#### 5.3.3.4 Bi'ilihi 'sung oratory'

Sung oratory is the kind of oratory used during the special social event called urih 'a folk dance'. This name of the dance is derived from urih 'hand-drums', the basic percussion instruments used in the dance. It was reported to have been given the Mulokoh clansmen of Womsis by a terrestrial spirit called hwaulita. In this dance, dancers line up in a dance formation as diagrammed below. Female dancers are represented by a minus (-) symbol and male by a plus (+). The number of dancers may range from two to fifty men and women usually in pairs.

When an urih dance is about to be put on, participants form into four lines with the male dancers forming the inner flanks in pairs facing

Figure 5-1: Urih Dance Formation



each other while their female dance partners form the outer flanks facing male dancers' backs. The way this dance is performed is as follows. As soon as a man starts a song, all men immediately squat down and start tapping their urih 'hand-drums' and join the song starter in singing the song and simultaneously they move their hips up and down in unison with the rhythm of the dance in readiness for a robust jerk and undulating movement the moment the song increases in tempo. At this time male participants move vivaciously in oscillation in an outwards-inwards dance pattern indicated by the doubled prong arrow. Female participants move in pace with male participants as the dance increases in tempo and they respond after a song line is sung by male participants. The dance participants move clockwise indicated by single pronged arrow ---> until a full circle is completed. The pattern continues all through the night.

When a bi'ihi 'oratorical song' is sung, women withdraw from the

dance. Men merely stand upright and stroll back and forth and the chorus (consisting of male participants in the dance) chant their parts after the cantor nekebi' bi'ilihiri finishes chanting a line. Women withdraw because a bi'ihhi, like sesade' kwianif, is the preserve of the male members of the tambaran cult. As a matter of principle, many of the restrictions on how to behave when sesade' kwianif is being put on must be observed. Thus the cantor, who is a specialist in bi'ilihhi 'oratorical songs' composition and singing, must be a graduate of the senior grades of the tambaran moulomu' and kwal.

Tapping and drum beating is not done until towards the end of a bi'ihhi from which the punch line is sung. At that moment the drums are beaten in rapid succession for about a minute and then the beating of the drums are slowed down, leading eventually to a soft successive beat coda.

Bi'ilihhi are chanted and not sung as ordinary songs, and they are done usually during lulls in an urih dance. The eligible person who performs the role of a cantor chants the lines of a bi'ihhi 'sung oratory' in solo and the rest of the male participants, who form the chorus during the performance, repeat after the cantor finishes chanting the last part of a line. The male chorus repeats the line in reverse. That is, they sing the last part first and the first part last, summarized in the broad formula whereby the cantor sings a line from X ---> Y and the male chorus repeats by singing the line in reverse from Y ---> X as illustrated in the bi'ilihhi texts below.

What is described above is not done when ordinary urih aaleh 'songs' are sung. In these, men sing in unison after a song is introduced by anyone of the male participants, and women join in the ordinary songs and respond in unison after the males.

Before presenting examples, it must be mentioned that subject-matter of most urih songs and most other songs are

anthropocentric. People are the main characters about whom songs are composed and sung. Events in which human beings play an important part predominate in the songs' subject-matter and content. Allusions to natural phenomena or natural events are made, but these are almost always in connection with events that affect the human person.

Historically speaking, most songs mirror the past. When sung, chanted or recited, they conjure up historic events. Through songs the Abu' people redramatize, recreate, reiterate and, as it were, relive their past history. In this respect, songs, apart from their main entertainment function, are oral records through which and by means of which the Abu' oral history is preserved and passed on.

The following two sets of examples show the differences between ordinary songs and oratorical songs and between the language used in ordinary songs and in ordinary speaking.

#### Ordinary urih songs

##### (a) Aah O'olimi 'song about O'olim'.

This song was composed in the 1930s to cajole O'olim, a Lulual (the Tok Pisin term for 'government appointed village chief'), who took advantage of his vested authority to become too authoritarian in conduct. He was reported to have caned people who disobeyed orders, even those who disturbed him when he was asleep at his home in Naras, where the haus kiap (Tok Pisin word for a village rest house for the government personnel) was located at that time.

The song was a satire, composed to poke fun at the flamboyant character whose behaviour was comparable to that of many of the colonial kiaps who patrolled the area during those early years of colonial administration.

(a) Ifa' kusu-kusu'a kiaf na'ise-e-  
 3pl quiet-quiet patrol officer 3smS-r-sleep  
 Na'is-e- nasuh-e- wabul Naras-e-  
 3smS-r-sleep-e-3smS-r-sleep(in Buki)-e-home Naras

i-he-i-ye-i-he'.<sup>6</sup>

You keep quiet, the kiap is asleep  
He is asleep at his home in Naras.  
i-he-i-ye-i-he.

You all keep quiet, the kiap is asleep.(2x)  
He is asleep, is asleep at his home in Naras.

(b) Aah Sahu'ani Wehibeli 'Song about Sahu'an and Wehibel.)

The second song is about a secret love affair between a man called Wehibel, a chief assistant to O'olim, and a woman called Sahu'an. After the affair both got married. According to norms covering kin relationship, sexual relations and marriage between persons who share a numa'ita 'potential father-in-law' and a nekau' 'a potential daughter-in-law' are not allowed because a nekau' is a potential or marriage partner to one's son. Wehibel and Sahu'an, who shared a numa'ita and nekau' relationship, breached the norm when they got married. The song is another satire and its moral is of the same kind as that of song (a).

Nuhelewe na'i numa'ita-numa'ita-numa-numa-ita  
2sgS-r-call-1Sobj as in-law- in-law in-law  
Sahu'an, Wehibel, Bafiti-ye  
lady's name, gentleman's name, place-name-ye<sup>7</sup>

You call me as an in-law in-law  
Sahu'an, Wehibel, Bafita.

(c) Nidiwakl Nadiroh 'song about Nidiwakl Nadiroh'

This song is another historical narrative intended to relate a habitual behaviour of Nidiwakl Nadiroh (the author's mother's father), who was accustomed to banging a giant tree trunk near his home at Asafuma. This he did to notify people in advance of his arrival whenever he returned home from long trips to other villages. Consequently he was nicknamed: N-a-dir-o-h 'He past-beat-trunk'.

Nidiwakl-Nadiroh-Nadiroh-Nadiroh  
The broken-hand-man the-trunk-beater the-trunk beater

---

<sup>6</sup>These are meaningless syllables, added as dressings to the song

<sup>7</sup>ye is a meaningless syllable. It functions merely as a hesitative.

Nidiwakl-Nadiroh-Nadiroh-Asafuma-ye  
 The broken-hand-man the trunk-beater the trunk-beater at  
 Asafuma ihe-iye-ihe.

'The broken-hand-man, the trunk-beater the trunk-beater of Asafuma'.

Example 2

In the following two examples of bi'ilihi 'oratorical songs', all lines have been numbered and question marks are used to show uncertainty about the meaning of items.

(a) Nadi' amula' kuwaulu' e 'about a bird-of-paradise'

This song is sung by Sawai Siduwakuhan who is referred to as the cantor. Note that the song is metaphoric in style and consequently much of the subject-content is not known to many of my informants. In my attempt at extracting the meaning of the first bi'ilihi, I was unable to piece together a meaningful discourse. This lack of understanding is attributed largely to many of its words, whose meaning are unrecoverable from the synchronic lexis of standard Abu'. The words flanked by question marks appear to be archaic or rare poetic forms. Compounding this characteristic is the virtual exclusion of many of the important grammatical forms in bi'ilihi that are needed to produce acceptable language. Forms that must be included in standard Abu' are left out in bi'ilihi. This makes a morpheme by morpheme analysis difficult and hence makes comparative remarks between bi'ilihi and other styles impossible.

Some insights are made possible by lines marked 64-67. In these lines the cantor expressed his cynicism about the conflict between two systems of ideas or two sets of experiences, the traditional and modern. He was concerned that certain aspects of traditional life were fast disappearing and he had, as a matter of fact, reintroduced a number of these such as folk-dances and chewing of betelnut. These cultural things were banned for about 15 years at the beginning of a millenarian movement that began in the late 1950s (cf. footnote 5, chapter 6).

Sawai satirized these modern socio-political changes by suffixing terms for introduced sociopolitical institutions with the scatological attributive {-iba}, a derived form of uba 'excreta' to deprecate these modern political changes that were, in his view, taking up time that could have been well spent reviving dwindling aspects of Abu' traditional life. Thus sukul/skul (a loan word from TP) in standard Abu' becomes sukuliba 'shitty school' in bi'ilahi; kaunsol 'council' > kaunsoliba 'shitty council'; komiti 'committee' > komitiba 'shitty committee'; mitin 'meeting' > mitiniba 'shitty meeting'.

(a) Nadi' amula' kuwaulu' 'about a bird-of paradise plume'

cantor	: (52)	E-nadi'- amula'-kuwaulu'-e
women	: (53)?	Ei-wau-wau
male chorus	: (54)	E-nadi'-amula'-kuwaulu'-e
women	: (55)?	Ei-wau-wau
cantor	: (56)?	O-ehilikuh-e-ihirakuh-e
chorus	: (57)	Ihirakuh-e-ehilikuh-e
cantor	: (58)	O-sawah-awah-e-safuh-safuh(?) -e
chorus	: (59)	Safuh-safuh-e-awah-awah-e
cantor	: (60)?	E-nimila'eh-a-nisi'eleh-e
chorus	: (61)	Nisi'eleh-nimila'eh-e
cantor	: (62)	E-mitin-mitin-e-wafel-wafel(?) -e
chorus	: (63)	Wafel-wafel-e-mitin-mitin-e
cantor	: (64)	E-kansol-iba-e-komiti-iba-e
chorus	: (65)	Komiti-iba-e-kansol-iba-e
cantor	: (66)	E-sukul-iba-e-mitin-iba-e
chorus	: (67)	Mitin-iba-e-sukul-iba-e
cantor & chorus	: (68)	E-nadi'-amula' kuwaulu'-e
women	: (69)	Ei-wau-wau
cantor & chorus	: (70)	E-nadi'-amula kuwaulu'-e
women	: (71)?	Ei-we-o-wau-wau
cantor	: (72)	E-sefe'iyel-e-konde'iyel-e
chorus	: (73)	Konde'iyel-e-sef' iyel-e
cantor	: (74)	O yawoh-yawoh-e-safuh-safuh-e
chorus	: (75)	Safuh-safuh-e-yawoh-yawoh-e
cantor	: (76)?	Ulilita-e-numalita-e
chorus	: (77)	Numalita-e-ulilita-e
cantor	: (78)?	Su'ulata-e-wa'ulata-e
chorus	: (79)	Wa'uleta-e-su'uleta-e
cantor	: (80)?	O wautokuh-e-aurokuh-e
chorus	: (81)	Aurokuh-e-wautokuh-e
cantor	: (82)?	O umila'um-o-usi'alum-e
chorus	: (83)	Usi'alum-e-umila'um-e
cantor	: (84)	O nadi' amula'-o-kuwaulu-o

women : (85) Ei-wau-wau  
 cantor & chorus : (86)? Seker'if'en-e-nadi'ioli  
 women : (87) Ei wau-wau  
 cantor & chorus : (88) Seker'if'en-e-nadi'ioli  
 women : (89) Ei-wau-wau.

(b) Amula' 'bird-of-paradise'

This song was performed as a special favour for me by Ignatius Nararama' of Womsis, who is referred to as the cantor. It was done outside the context of the urih dance.

The song is about a woman who was having postnatal complications. Her husband, a Subak clansman, was mildly scolded by the singer for not taking the initiative in finding enough men to carry his wife to Suain, where she was to be picked up by an ambulance from the Aitape hospital. The woman was depicted in the song as amula' 'bird-of-paradise', which is expressed in line 90 and was repeated in line 105. Line 90 is the punch line of this bi'ihi. The rest of the lines emphasize or elaborate the theme focused upon in this line.

cantor : (90) O amula-amula' kundiawi-kundiawi suulihi (2x)  
                  o bird-of-paradise(2x) it flies about in front of you  
 cantor : (91) Louken badaken, irima? iyawi, irima' iyawi sulihi  
                  Be it long or short I fly with her  
 cantor : (92)? Uha ho:u-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-oho-hi-uh-a-uh-a  
  
 cantor : (93) A-irima' iyawi                   irima' itabul  
                  I with her fly about, I with her return  
 chorus : (94) Irima' itabul-a irima' iyawi  
                  I with her return, I with her fly about  
 cantor : (95) Suhalana -a- suba'iyela-a-arisiyela-a  
                  They call him Subak (?)  
 chorus : (96) Arisiyela-a-sumba'iyela-  
                  ?                                   subak ?  
 cantor : (97) Anatu sama-yohari amayohari (?)  
 chorus : (98) Ama yohari sama-yohari (?)  
 cantor : (99) Wa'uleta-ya-su'uleta-ya (?)  
 chorus : (100) Su'uleta-ya-wa'uleta-ya (?)  
  
 cantor : (101) Ama naman lekarama-ya-lukuwama-ya  
                  ? tomorrow -it'll dawn-ya-when it sets (ref. sun)  
 chorus : (102) Lukuwama-ya-lekarama-ya  
                  when it sets it'll dawn-er  
 cantor : (103) Wa'i asah uwe'i nulub uwe'i  
                  We rain not think nor stomachs  
 chorus : (104) Nulub uwe'i asah uwe'i  
                  stomachs no, rain no  
 cantor  
 &  
 chorus : (105) O amula'-amula', kundiawi suluhi (2x)

cantor  
&  
Chorus : (119) O amula' amula', kundiawi suluhi(?) (2x)  
          O bird-of-paradise it-flies about in front (?)  
cantor : (120) Louken badaken irima' iyawi  
          long short (ref.distance) with-her I fly  
chorus : (121) Irima' iyawi idakani  
          with-her I-fly go-that-way.  
cantor  
&  
Chorus : (122) Aaaaaaaaha'u yaaaa ehe ya-e-ihe ya-e-eheyeeeeee

#### 5.3.3.5 Linguistic characteristics of songs

As already indicated the styles of sung oratory and ordinary songs differ considerably in terms of linguistic features. The latter, although they exhibit some degree of being poetic in form, are not as heavy as poetic language of oratorical songs bi'ilihi. This explains why it is possible to provide a detailed account of the content of urih aaleh but not for bi'ilihi. Part of the reason is to do with the bi'ilihi being the preserve of a small number of orators, most of whom were dead before this study was done, and the other is to do with words. Many of the words used in example 2 text (a), for instance, are not known to the orators nor are they known to those interviewed. Consequently, the meaning of the following list of words are unrecoverable from the synchronic lexis of Abu':

ehilikuh, ihirakuh, line 57  
safuh-safuh, line 59  
nisi'eleh, nimila'eh, line 60  
wafel, line 62  
sefe'iyel, konde'iyel, line 72  
ulilita, numalita, line 76  
su'ulata, wa'uleta, line 78  
wautokuh, aurokuh, line 80 and  
usi'alum, umila'um', seker'if'en and nadi'ioli.

The above items could be borrowed from other related or unrelated languages, or else are archaic words that belong to a special bi'ilahi 'sung oratory' vocabulary. In view of the fact that most other speech styles have special sets of vocabulary of their own, I am inclined to the view that the items listed above are part of the special bi'ilahi vocabulary which must belong to the male secret speech. In this respect, it does relate bi'ilahi 'sung oratory' to sesade' kwianif 'oratorical speech' which is part and parcel of the tambaran cult ethos. The degree of comprehensibility between the language style of ordinary Abu' songs and that of poetry, including bi'ilahi, might be broadly summarized as follows. Given standard Abu', the speech styles indicative of bi'ilahi 'sung oratory', are marked off by lectal lines that are determined virtually by special sets of vocabularies. Broadly speaking, an understanding of standard Abu' does not automatically guarantee a fuller understanding of language of music or poetry. General indications are that the degree of incomprehensibility, as shown in the sample texts, tends to increase as we move from sakatahakari 'ordinary language' or dika ka'is kekehi'i 'standard Abu'' to the more heavily poetic and/or metaphoric style of bi'ilahi 'sung oratory' and nukuh 'chants'.

### 5.3.4 Wa'awa'arasikeri (TP=tok haphap) 'innuendo'

Wa'awa'arasikeri 'innuendo/ambiguous speech' is a way of speaking where the speaker consciously makes a sly and oblique reference to someone or something intended to be understood by the listener or a participant in a conversation. There are different varieties of innuendos. One uses vocabulary that suits one's needs. The other uses a special set of vocabulary. The first is not very important and is done in all languages of the world. The other is restricted to certain domains in some languages<sup>8</sup>. In Abu' it is in hunting.<sup>9</sup> The Abu' believe that animals, especially the larger creatures such as pigs, cassowaries and tree-kangaroos, have a dual state of life. They are not mere animals, but rather they are humans or spirits who live under the guise of animal skins. Pigs, for example, are believed to be ghosts of dead relatives. As such, their senses are like those of human beings. Use of direct speech would mean giving the hunter's chances away. Animals would hear and hide. To confuse hunted animals like pigs and thus increase the chances of a hunter, the Abu' reason that ambiguous speech is a good way of talking about such activity when reference is made to the hunter and animal life.

Broadly speaking, hunting is not talked about. If someone asks about the whereabouts of a man and if the man being asked about went hunting, the addressed if s/he knows simply responds with the sentence: n-a-la' 'he-past-went', implicitly to an unnamed place instead of using the more direct or explicit speech: nala nuwaduma mahis 'he-went looking for wild game'. This ambiguous speech requires that a hunter's name immediately becomes taboo during the entire

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<sup>8</sup>cf. Laycock (1979) and Franklin (1977).

<sup>9</sup>Laycock (1979) reported that the Buin of the North Solomons Province have developed and use hunting vocabulary when people go hunting because animals themselves understand human speech and are likely to run away and hide if ordinary language is used.

period of his absence. Pseudonyms are used instead. Thus a hunter is referred to as nakala'i 'the wander about man'; 'pigs' burguh in ordinary speech becomes weerihes [mahis 'animals] 'destructive creatures' in hunting vocabulary. Unaruwa 'cassowaries' in ordinary speech is called alimil 'bird' in hunting language. A shotgun is referred to as bata 'bamboo' instead of the regular borrowed term--masket/raipol. Wild game as a whole are referred to in hunting speech as au'al sueili 'good edible greens' instead of the usual standard Abu' form mahis and if there is no presence of current or fairly recent animal footprints or signs in the hunting area, then the sentence ouruf hotouf 'forest is dry' instead of the more explicit form: mahis uwe'etin 'there are no wild game'.<sup>10</sup>

#### 5.4 Speech Category II: The Speech of the handicapped and other styles

Up to this point, I have examined speech styles that are characterized by special sets of vocabulary that differentiate them from dika ka'is kekehi'i 'standard Abu''. The rest of the chapter will examine those speech styles used by people who have certain speech defects such as stuttering and those speech categories that are suggested by colloquial expressions or contextualization cues. The Abu' terms for the former are derived from the pathological defects. The Abu' attribute speech defects to spirits and not to malfunctioning of neurological commands that cause untimed or delayed speech output.

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<sup>10</sup>All in all, the basic reason for coining of hunting vocabulary is embedded in the dependency principle where things or activities difficult to attain or achieve depend entirely on how a human person is able to placate and establish peaceful coexistence not only with the animal kingdom, but with the entire forest life. Implicit speech is in the Abu' view, a very effective way to cajole the spirit world to comply with human requests.

### 5.4.1 Speech Category II (A)

#### 5.4.1.1 Selehefikeri 'speech of stammerers'.

Selehefikeri is the speech of stammerers. People who exhibit varying degrees of this speech defect are fairly common among the Abu'. In Womsis, for example, about 30 percent of the 320 people exhibit this defect in varying degrees (some more pronounced than others).

The problem the Abu' in general seem to have is inability to articulate s in consonant clusters. The voiceless alveolar fricative does not occur next to consonants in Abu', and gives difficulty to many Abu' speakers and many speakers of Papuan languages. Consequently, the Abu' when borrowing Tok Pisin words that have an s+C sequence, a vowel is inserted between them to make it easier to pronounce. This explains why words like spika 'speaker', stia 'steer', skul 'school' are pronounced by Abu' speakers as sipika, sitia and sukul respectively. The problem becomes more serious for those Abu' who have speech defects who (depending on how bad they are) usually omit the s altogether or overstressed it. The problem with pronouncing the s+C sound sequence usually leads to overstressing of adjacent sound segments and inappropriate pauses which occur at unexpected syllabic boundaries causing a Tok Pisin phrase like em i stret for that is right or correct, to come out in selehefikeri as e-e-e-e-emmmmm-ssssssss--tret.

The most classic example among the Abu' was recorded at Balup. The person who finds it difficult to pronounce the st- of the pidgin simple sentence: i stret 'it's correct' prolongs the copula {i} to the extent that there is no time to produce the fricative segment, which gets faded out completely. The resultant phrase again in broad phonetic transcription is: iiiiiii--teret 'affirmative'. This person since childhood has been nicknamed Tutuhurait, a pseudonym adopted by

the Abu' to label this person after his apparently unusual "s-less" utterance not only of the pidgin phrase referred to but in such Abu' words as: i'iis itaf 'lie/sleep on the ground' to come out as: iiiii--taf 'ground'. This speech defect does alter meaning of words if important sounds (i.e. phonemes) are omitted or replaced in speech utterances.

In addition to the above, there are also Abu' speakers who are known to replace r by l such that given words like ouruf 'forest/jungle' in normal speaker's speech becomes ouluf in stammerers' speech. Similarly krahu> klahu 'plane' in selehefikeri. Since the two phonemes [ /l/ and /r/ ] do not contrast in those specific linguistic environments, the semantic content of the words remain unchanged.

Normal speakers often find such speech defects hilarious but tend to be polite enough not to show it in the presence of such persons, unless they are on joking terms with the person. A village comedian, however, often finds delight in imitating the speech of his or her stammerer acquaintance in informal joking sessions.

#### 5.4.2 Category II (B)

Under this category are speech styles that the Abu' recognize by contextual cues such as facial expressions and the tone of voice. These do not exhibit any marked linguistic differences from standard Abu' and are therefore recognized virtually by the functions they serve as well as the mood they are expressed in.<sup>11</sup> The most important ones in Abu' are listed and described below.

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<sup>11</sup>Franklin (1977) had cited some of these speech categories in Kewa of the Southern Highlands and Laycock (1977) also made some remarks about the same in his description of special languages of New Guinea.

#### 5.4.2.1 Uirhin 'scolding'

Uirhin is a special way of talking to young people to shock them into listening and behaving as desired. This way of talking is characterized by offensive words and outright abuse. However, this offensive and abusive language is not to be taken literally but rather in a spirit of "educational scolding". That is to mean that the scolded must not respond nor challenge the urihin given by his elder. This can be seen in the following text where Numatim, a well respected and well known traditional big-man who, being alarmed at his son's appalling conduct rebuked him with this style of language.

" A! nafa ma bur'aleh numatawari atum, na'i bala nekewa ana wa'uis nekara'am nikamah a nikemine'am a nikaha ana mahis nikesibi' uma 'a'u' i betois a. Uwe' etin. Nafan na'is uma uba atum. Na'i bala nesahal nekarutu ana na'i bala nekada enes sesi asihisi ma alifes sekada krieinamas a. Uwe'etin"!.

Ho! so you merely hang around and fiddle around with legs of women and think you will grow yams and eat them to savour their taste. Or you reckon you will kill wild game and provide meat to your wife and children to eat. Not by any chance. You loaf around and are good for nothing but shit. You think you will get up and do something worthwhile to deserve favourable comments or praise from the community. None whatsoever!

The apparent provocative mood of urihin appears counter-productive from the Western education physiological standpoint, but it is not so from the Abu' standpoint. To the Abu', such negative criticism given in the form of urihin by one's respectable seniors is a most telling verbal challenge. Any young person who is concerned about acquiring social recognition in the community must take serious note of such negative mood of urihin. It functions as a measuring scale by which young people's potential is tested. If the speaker can persuade the young through this kind of eloquence and go on to do what they are expected to do to the satisfaction of their clans and the community, all parties concerned would be happy. Broadly speaking, such persons would gradually win social recognition and would find

little difficulty vying for "big-men" status in society. Those who do not would find it difficult to win status recognition in the community and may thus be branded betois numehelis (literally 'bad children', but used derogatively to mean "social misfits").

#### 5.4.2.2 Iho'ikeri 'banter'

Iho'ikeri 'banter' is the name used for a speech variety that includes conscious teasing or mockery, usually between joking mates or potential marriage partners. It can, however, be used just for making fun. Thus, for example, Sahabu' of Womsis (died 1956) a well known comedian ihoineri, used to banter the moment he arrived at the communal camp from his hamlet of Ulihikama. His jokes were always aimed at poking fun at or teasing his awuw 'potential marriage partners'.

Linguistically this language is characterized by the use of witty remarks and offensive (idiomatic)<sup>12</sup> phrases but the use of which is sanctioned by society. For example, Sahabu' could use phrases such as:

bahal lawak iye'-i  
hold ! tree 1SG-GEN  
Hold my tree

where 'tree' is being used idiomatically to mean 'penis' or he could make scatological remarks such as:

n -i      -bilele' o'osuf iye'-i  
2SG-NONPST-lick      bottom 1SG -GEN  
'Lick my bottom/arse'.

These days the use of such offensive language in ihoineri 'banter' is discouraged because it is regarded as sinful by many Abu' Christians.

Provided in the table below is an overview of the social speech styles in Abu', their functions and contexts and type of participants have also been briefly indicated.

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<sup>12</sup>A preliminary sketch of Abu' idioms were treated more fully in Nekitel 1979.

Table 5-2: Summary of Abu' Social Styles

Abu' Social Speech Styles and/or Categories						
SPEECH CAT.I	Speech Type	Usual Type of Participants	Usual Topic of Discourse	Speech Context	Contrastive Identificational Features	Intended Effect
1.	Betoisikeri child/baby language	parent/baby minder to or with child and child to child	immediate needs or wants, e.g. food, etc.	home	1. special vocabulary 2. phonology substitute t for s in adult speech]	To inform
2.	Waluhu' 'call lg.' viz.whistled speech/via wind instruments	Upper-Abu' Miye Urat Aruek Yambes	variety of topics example: requests for betel nuts, to pronounce deaths, to declare wars, etc.	village to village esp. if located on ridge top or if addressed is within hearing distance	special call lg. forms. e.g. clg.u-ha-u' nlg.hi'i '(you)come'	To inform, request or invite the addressee
3.	Suluh secret talk or knowledge	elders or experienced members to young and inexperienced Abu'	rites of passage, sorcery, Tambaran cults-- 4 grades: Buas Meikahu' Moulomu' Kwal chants etc.	male ceremonial camps/ houses	special vocabulary or phrases	mainly pedagogic

		elderly women to young women	rites of passage, tradition, al family planning methods, charms, etc.	mens-trual hut, or women-only contexts	information due to interviewer being male	pedagogic
4.	Sesade' kwianif 'oratorical speech' of two type oral & song	moulomu' & kwal 'Tambaran cult graduates'	Topics of cultural/ religious importance	during waa' food or goods} exchange cere-monies	virtually an exercise of polemics} special poetic forms	To thank and admit one's weaknesses and offer a verbal challenge
5.	Wa'awa'ara-sikeri 'allusive/ disguised speech'	adults	hunting, any sorcery, sexual affairs and other private matters.	any speech context	special vocabulary whose use available for public use	To conceal speaker's intent
SPEECH CAT.II (A)	6. Selehefikeri speech of stammerers	stammerers	any topic	any place and at any time	prolonged utterances or defect-ive speech	self-expression

SPEECH CAT.II (B)						
7. Urihin 'advice'	fathers to sons or daughters	topics to do with one's process of proving one's ability	usually at home	special language style e.g. scata- logical remarks etc.	To advise	
8. Iho'ikeri 'banter'	comedians and potential marriage partners	usually trivial topics	any speech context	witty use of language as well as offensive words or phrases	To enter- tain and try and become fami- liar with the add- ressed	

### 5.6 Summary.

Thus far the styles of those social groups' that the Abu' isolate and justify as different from standard Abu' on the basis of salient linguistic and sociological features have been presented and discussed. These, although fairly important, are not the only styles available. The Abu' also recognize other categories of speech. These have names but do not have easily discernible sets of linguistic features. They are recognized mainly by the tone of voice used or the contexts and the circumstantial cues characterising them. Similar styles are found in many other languages of the New Guinea area.<sup>13</sup> In Abu' the following categories have been identified to contrast in function and context, but not necessarily in their linguistic forms.

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<sup>13</sup>e.g., Franklin 1977.

#### 5.4.2.3 Dikebeseh ru'esi 'big or formal talk'

Dikebeseh ru'esi is the name used for 'important or formal speech'. Formal speech is usually convened and conducted in the inter-clan 'camps' to discuss sociopolitical or economic issues. Arbitration over land disputes, sorcery accusations, feasts, and matters relating to the much more recent socio-economic or politico-educational aspects of Abu' life are excellent demonstrations of the range of topics talked about during formal speech sessions.

Although the speech participants are usually restricted to men, women participate more so now than in the past when certain public issues and political decisions such as children's school fees, the local women's club, the co-operative and public works are discussed.

Rules of social conduct and decency are expected or demanded from participants. Verbal jokes or offensive remarks are disallowed but the response form, uwohu' / oo' an affirmative interjection, is often uttered by the audience to acknowledge, but not necessarily consent to, what is being said.

There are no special linguistic forms that mark off formal speech from standard Abu'. As a matter of fact, topics talked about during formal speech sessions determine the nature of the style that is going to be used. If, for example, an inquiry is held into the death of a good hunter, the hunter is referred to in idiomatic language expression as:

keina naruma sikauis afa'i a s-a-he'  
bow and arrows 1PL-GEN 3PLN-R-go  
'Our good bow and arrows have gone'.

This is to avoid mentioning the subject of death, which people fear. A man's death may be referred to indirectly as n-a-he' 'he-past-go' instead of n-a-ka' 'he-past-die' (cf. Nekitel 1979).

A point relevant to this speech category is that it provides the

occasion for young Abu' men to vie for influential and articulate speaker's status. If the young men can discuss and speak with remarkable confidence, develop their argument logically and offer solutions or suggestions to resolve pressing issues affecting the society, they will be admired and will be gradually recognized as spokespersons for the community in inter-clan or inter-village politics.

#### 5.4.2.4 Asihikeri [TP=Tok Bilas] 'verbal challenge'

Asihikeri is a milder form of 'verbal challenge' discussed above. It has little in the way of offensive phrases typical of urihin. Whereas urihin is usually given to the young by elders in society, asihikeri can be issued by Abu' people of any age, gender and social position. It can be made at any place and in any speech situation. Its primary function is to attest an individual's mental or physical ability and usually motivates the individual to optimize her/his talents to achieve goals of whatever one sets out to do.

#### 5.4.2.5 Lekas waris [TP=tru-giaman tok] 'deceptive remarks'

Deceptive remarks or statements are collectively referred to in Abu' as lekas waris. It is made up of the words lekas a derived form of 'left hand', which the Abu' often associate with sinister thoughts or doings, and waris 'falsehood'. When the two forms are combined, they approximate the idea of 'half true' and 'half-lie' speech. It is not marked by any special linguistic features. The truth and falsehood of lekas waris might not be known at the time of conversation until what has been said is being cross-checked.

Those who constantly spread false statements or rumours are nicknamed lekas-waris 'deceptive or unreliable reporters'. Deliberate lie and calumny are also designated under this category but are referred to specifically as warisikeri. Here the degree of offense is determined by the malicious intent of the individual speaker, the

speech context in which such statements are made and at whom the statements are aimed. Those charged with defamatory remarks were severely punished by the village court magistrate who handed down verdicts suggested by the village court act.

#### 5.4.2.6 Edilikeri 'true/factual talk'

This category is a direct opposite of lekas-waris. It is factual report or statements. If a listener is doubtful about the authenticity of what the speaker says, then the speaker may confirm what is said by uttering the affirmative adl/edilisi in utterance final position.<sup>14</sup>

#### 5.4.2.7 Numehelikeri 'abuse'

Numehelikeri is abusive language such as that made by those who are angry. Typical of this speech catgeory are insults such as: maurisino', a phrase that approximates the English 'devil curses you'. If a person is furious, then he might raise the volume of his verbal output and thus may change the mood to wadahukari 'fighting/warring language'. The term wadahukari is derived from wadah 'fight or war'. The range of words constituting offensive vocabulary is limited. Others of the same vein as the above are: iluhino'ukl [Iluhina + ukl] 'Iluhina damns' the addressed and mindanakl. The last word is used frequently, but no one seems to know what it means. Probably it has to do with the physical appearance of a person who looks sickly and not capable to resist a physical blow if being challenged by another

<sup>14</sup>A note of warning: the Abu', like many other Melanesians, have been nicknamed "yes men/women". These are people who say "yes" when they mean "they do not know", thinking that the best way to get rid of a visitor is by saying yes to whatever question is being asked. Traditionally, the Abu' regard it as socially inappropriate to ask strangers too many questions and by the same token, the visitor should not overindulge in asking the Abu' too many questions. Until the Abu' get to know more about the visitor, they tend to maintain their social distance - a situation very much like the Athabascans of Alaska [cf. Scollon and Scollon, 1978]. Broadly speaking, the Abu', like most other Melanesians, say "yes" when they might mean "no" or they may acknowledge what is said to please the visitor or to cut conversations short.

person. Use of scatological expressions such as nabilala'aba 'to lick faeces' are commonly used when people become involved in a fight. A loud-mouthed person is called nikinihari or kwukunuhari 'male/female loud mouth' and speech indicative of this category of persons is beberehika 'rowdy speech'.

#### 5.4.2.8 Marekl-hwakwhakikeri 'nagging talk'

This speech category is typified by constant nagging or complaints about trivia and which tend to gain prominence within domestic settings. For example, a constantly nagging wife is referred to as marekl-whakwhakwu'i and a nagging husband as marekl- whakwhakineri.

#### 5.4.2.9 Mirimiri' 'murmuring talk' and si'isi'af 'whispering speech'.

These two speech types are derived from the onomatopoeic or imitative words that refer to the tone or quality of voice audible to a third party listener when interlocutors are engaged in an ongoing speech discourse. The former is distinguished from the latter in that in an act of mirimiri', the volume of speech is relatively low and is usually identified with deep low volume of speech by men and the latter is identified by a low moderately soft tête-à-tête type. Lovers' talk or conversations were suggested as examples.

## CHAPTER 6

## ABU' SPEECH SURROGATES

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapters 3 and 5 described two aspects of verbal communication in Abu', the grammar of the language and different speech styles used by the Abu'. Language, although the primary medium of communication, is not the only available medium. The Abu', for geographic and cultural reasons use, as other communities in Melanesia<sup>1</sup> and other parts of the world<sup>2</sup> do, natural objects or modified forms of them to represent or relay messages in conventionalized ways. These speech surrogates are referred to in Abu' as dikebeseh hekeilesi, which means things that bear messages. It includes both (a) visual dikebeseh hekeilesi and (b) acoustic sekedeserama dikebesehasi modes. The communicative process per se is referred to in Abu' as sadeserema dikebeseh, which implies an interchange of message, information, discussion and news.

It is the purpose of this chapter to analyse how the Abu' communicate by using these speech surrogates. Before doing that, it must be noted that some of these speech surrogates have either been abandoned or are being replaced by other communicative means such as letter writing. Some are unique to the Abu' while others are the same as or similar to those used by other Melanesian communities, especially those of the lowlanders of New Guinea<sup>3</sup>. In this chapter,

<sup>1</sup>cf. Eilers (1977:241-56) and Laycock (1977:141-4) and references therein.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Farb (1975) and relevant references cited therein.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Eilers op.cit.

(a) visual dikebeseh hekeilesi are described before (b) acoustic sekedeserama dikebesehasi modes. Gestures, which constitute another form of non-verbal communication, were not studied in this study and are thus excluded from the description.

## 6.2 Visual Speech Surrogates

Two kinds of message-bearing devices, dikebeseh and hekeilesi, are used. These are plants and ochre.

### 6.2.1 The General Use of Plants

Lawas i madilih, the Abu' vernacular term for certain kinds of plant forms, are treated in descending order of social or cultural significance from the Abu' standpoint.

#### 6.2.1.1 Plants as Markers of Taboo and Information

The Abu', like others, use plants of various kinds as substitutes for messages that could well be expressed verbally or graphically. In other words, plants continue to express their message when no one is about. Their use in this way becomes, as it were, a form of permanent recording of a message. For example, a person may put a taboo on his garden hut by placing at the hut's entrance a sword-grass plant (Tok Pisin kunai a type of Imperata cylindrica) with a knot tied in it or he may tie a croton onto a coconut or a betelnut palm (Areca catechu) to warn off pilferers from picking the fruit.

When such taboo signs are noticed, the Abu' warn each other to keep away from them by use of such phrases as : numehelisi 'bad things or danger'; nikebahalas kwe'isi' 'do not touch'; nikous kwe'isi' 'do not enter' or 'no entry'. The use of plants as such is a non-verbal communicative mode that seems to be common among many illiterate communities who adopt the system to declare conventional rights to property or Territory.

Closely associated with the use of plants as markers is the planting of crotons and

varieties of cordyline plants (uris, TP tanget) to mark off rights to land. They can be seen at land boundary points along footpaths. These land property markers are, as a rule, zealously guarded against damage as they act as substitutes for codified and registered title descriptions. When people damage these markers, it generally results in inter-or intra-village feuds in the Womsis area, and probably throughout Papua New Guinea.

The use of plants to show direction appears to be a common practice also among Melanesians<sup>4</sup> and many non-literate communities around the world. Among the Abu', directions are shown to a following party by having the bottom of the plant pointing towards the journey's end to suggest the Abu' general view that the top of anything is like the beginning of a task, and the bottom the end of the task or activity.

The Abu' have also used a certain kind of fern called usekesita, (Nephrolepis sp.) to keep a tally of fruit (such as coconuts, breadfruit and mangoes), if the number picked is too many to record mentally, or is so many that the Abu' counting system is too long and cumbersome to use. What happens is for the person on the ground who waits for the climber to pick off fruit, to simply break off leaves of the fern and to leave the bottom of the leaf standing on the branch to match each of the fruits taken from the tree. In principle, a return home occurs only after the fruit picked match in number the partly broken off usekesita leaves.

#### 6.2.1.2 Plants as Totemic Symbols (usas)

Certain plants are declared totems usas 'totems' and have deep-seated cultural and religious connections between a clan and its totem. Of the Womsis clans, some are named after varieties of lianas, bamboos, species of cordyline plants or trees. Other clans are

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<sup>4</sup>See Eilers, 1977:251.

identified with species of animals, insects, or reptiles. An important practice among the Abu' is presentation to the dying of their particular usas to take along to the place of the dead. Without the usas, it was explained, the soul abelif of the deceased may not be recognized and welcomed by already dead relatives. When, for instance, my uncle Benedictus Sa'uan died, we were faced with the problem of finding a nubat 'dog' type usas, dog being our totem, to present him with his identification pass, so I was told, for him to enter the city of the dead.<sup>5</sup> It was finally agreed that a piece of a liana called nubatiuh would suffice and so it was placed on his corpse.

<sup>5</sup>In the 1960s, there was a form of millenarian movement among the Abu' and the Suain. The movement was phrased in Tok Pisin as 'Taim bilong bilip' 'time of faith'. The first thing reported was that a number of men and women reported having experienced deep comas that lasted several hours. When these people regained consciousness, they claimed that they had gone to see their dead ancestors, and a few claimed to have gone to Heaven and met God, Jesus, St. Mary and all the angels and saints. An important message they brought back with them, so one of them told me, was for the entire Abu' community to undergo a spiritual reformation. This reformation entailed an abandonment of many of the traditional ritualistic values; sorcery, witchcraft and all evil practices were preached against, and men who had knowledge of sorcery or other evil doings were revealed to the public and their magic and other evils were revealed and subsequently destroyed.

Certain aspects of culture were forbidden. For example, betelnut chewing, eating of red pandanus, and red clothes were forbidden because they were said to reflect Christ's blood. Mourning over the deceased was disallowed because it was regarded as offensive to the dead. Folk dances and their regalia were disallowed for a period of about 15 years, which became a real turning point in Abu' history. While the motivation was to attain an Utopian life here on earth, the adverse effect of this movement led to an abandonment of a lot of useful and interesting traditional customs, many of which are now unrecoverable. This long description should assist the reader to see why the Abu' have used the anglicised term siti to refer to the place of the dead.

### 6.2.2 More Specific Use of Plants

Plants of certain kinds are used by the Abu' for more specific communicative functions as demonstrated below<sup>6</sup>.

#### 6.2.2.1 Cordyline spp. (uris, TP tanget)

Uris plants are species of cordyline. There are many different types. Wild varieties are not as important as domesticated ones. The latter are grown around village edges, in gardens or along byways, not only for decoration but more importantly for their use in sociocultural activities such as message sending.

The Abu' regularly use uris leaves for sending particular messages. They do this by tying knots kulsuk in them and thus the term saket was adopted probably from the Tok Pisin tanget to refer to this message-sending device. The process of sending saket is referred to in Abu' as sada' saket to be interpreted literally as 'they make tanget'<sup>7</sup>.

This specific use of saket is not unique to Abu'. Other Melanesian communities also use it for similar purposes<sup>8</sup>. In this respect, the data available on Abu' tanget system might not be new as it had been cited elsewhere<sup>9</sup>. The use of tanget for sending messages was and maybe still is practised by many lowland Papua New Guinea

<sup>6</sup> It should pointed out that the kinds of plants used by different speech communities to represent taboos may or may not be the same. The use of plants by the Abu' as signs of taboo are restricted to about a half a dozen or less. Conventional ones being: uris (*Cordyline spp.*); erihis 'wild sugarcane leaves'; warel 'sword grass' (*Imperata cylindrica*; TP, kunai); and okositok 'moss fern' (cf. Krempin, 1983:133). Of these Cordyline plants, uris and moss ferns okositok (sg.okosita) are feared most because of their association with tambaran 'spiritual cult worship' and magic spells nukuh. Nukuh 'magic spells' are said over taboo signs, whose effects may cause trespassers to experience all sorts of physical ailments, such as boils, swollen testicles and swollen limbs.

<sup>7</sup> Tanget is a Tok Pisin word. The concept of sending messages via the tanget is difficult to express in one word in English, so the pidgin term has been used.

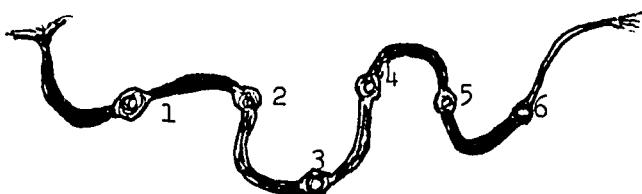
<sup>8</sup> cf. Eilers (1977).

<sup>9</sup> Eilers, op. cit.

communities. Unfortunately, the finer details associated with sending messages via this speech surrogate, such as what message content may be represented by individual knots, what social or cultural overtones the practice of saket sending has, who may send a saket have not been previously discussed in literature, and so it is important that the Abu' version of this system is dealt with to meet this lack.

Among the Abu', when a man wants to send a saket message to someone else, he begins by breaking off a leaf from the variety of cordyline that symbolizes the tambaran moulomu', the third grade of the tambaran cult (*Cordyline terminalis 'inscripta'* (cf. Krempin 1983:109)). Then he singes it over a fire to soften it and finally he ties knots, kulsuk, in it. The knots represent the message-blocks the sender wants to send. These are illustrated below (fig.21-1). The knots are flanked by numbers for reference.

Figure 6-1: Saket (TP=tanget)



All knots kulsuk tied in a saket are alike. They function as mnemonic entities which represent blocks of messages that sender of a tanget sends and whose message contents must be translated to the receiver by the deliverer of the tanget. This the deliverer does by holding out the tanget in front of the person addressed and

goes through each of the tanget and reiterates the block of message each knot purports to represent. Nararama', one of my Womsis informants, demonstrated how to send a tanget accompanied with an oral message as follows:

"Iye' Nararama' ada' saket ata tahe' uma ina' Otto. Numunah aha nikihira' saket ene ma, nifan. Uwe'e safu' aha hekeki'i uba' numunah sha nida' dida'. Numunah sha nisahal nihi'i niti iye'."

I, Nararama', send to you Otto this tanget. This day, (i.e. the day on which the addressed receives the tanget you stay, and so for the next day but should get ready on the day represented by knot 5 (i.e. the third day after the reception of the tanget. On the day represented by knot 6 you (the addressed) must come and see me.

This message-sending by means of saket is called sada' saket. In this context the saket functions as: (1) a mnemonic device and (2) a symbol of authority. As a mnemonic device, the tanget and the knots tied in it help the messenger recall dates, the purpose of the visit and so on. As a symbol of authority, it commands a certain respect and guarantees the messenger safe conduct. However, if it is lost or damaged, the carrier responsible for the loss or damage is placed in a position where he has to account for the damage or loss. In this respect, the authoritative significance of the tanget not only demands that the carrier of the tanget looks after it until he delivers it to the intended receiver, but also prevents the likelihood of making forged tangets. Once it is received, the receiver must respond by either sending an oral message or by using the same speech surrogate.

#### 6.2.2.2 Eribika 'tree fern'

Eribika (pl.eribikes) is a variety of tree fern, whose young leaves are used as a vegetable to garnish cooked pig. Thus when a pig is cooked in a mumu (the TP word for cooking done over heated stones) is uncovered, the pig's entrails nulub and its stomach uluhu'uta, as well as any of the insignificant bits and pieces, are mixed with cooked eribikes.

Even though some may receive only a handful, it is a gesture to ensure that every woman is thought of, and thus prevents complaints that may arise from families who might not have been given a share. From this cultural dietary habit is derived the use of eribika to symbolize a pig. When a hunter returns home with a young tree fern branch the message represented is: naha bul 'he has killed a pig'. Men from the village must then get ready to go and carry the pig home, while women go to the bush to collect eribikes to cook with the pig, get stones, collect firewood, leaves and heat stones to cook the pig in a mumu (earth oven). All of these things may be done without a word being said if all those present can read the message signified by the speech surrogate concerned.

#### 6.2.2.3 Okosita 'moss fern'

Moss fern okosita (pl.okositok) grows as undergrowth in the jungle or in old gardens. It is used to represent several messages. It is used by hunters in a similar way to that of eribika, save that okosita refers to a cassowary rather than a pig. Thus if a hunter is seen returning home with an okosita branch stuck in his hair, those familiar with that non-verbal communicative act conclude that a cassowary unaru' has been killed. The plant okosita is used for this purpose because to the Abu', its light green fronds resemble cassowary's feathers ahuwalub.

Okosita may also be used to indirectly suggest a man's knowledge of another person's witchcraft auluh<sup>10</sup>. The accuser shows this knowledge by pulling up okosita and strewing it sporadically along the path he is following. If the victim-to-be is a mother with a child, then the practice is to display okosita with a young okosita attached

<sup>10</sup>Auluh refers to a neatly tied bundle of witchcraft matter, whose constituents may comprise food crumbs, human hair, fingernails, chewed betelnut husks, remains of partly smoked cheroot, cigarette butts and human exuviae which are mixed in with pulverized herbs, vines, stones, ginger and other matter believed to catalyze the efficacy of auluh when it is heated over a fire to end the life of the bewitched.

to it to symbolize that person. The child may or may not be a potential victim.

### 6.3 The use of body-paint, white ochre, and charcoal

The principal types of body paint are plant dyes, clay paints (ochre of various colours), and charcoal. The use of body paint is observed during traditional folk-dances asulub (sg.asubul). Participants in a dance apply dye to their bodies as part of their dance decor and as beautification. Different dances may also be identified and differentiated from each other not only by their varied rhythm beats of hand-drums urih (sg.uruh) and slit-gong wamuta (pl.wamutok), but also by the type and pattern of dye dancers adorn themselves with. A dance called mowan<sup>11</sup>, for example, is marked specifically by the application of white ochre to dancers' bodies in the form of disjointed circles and parallel lines all over the body. The urih dance, on the other hand, is typified usually by red plant dye, which dancers apply to their bodies in any manner to suit individual taste.

White ochre is used not only in the mowan dance. It is outside the context of asulub that white ochre becomes more important as a speech surrogate.

When mourners apply white ochre to their bodies during funerals, it symbolizes grief for deceased relatives. It was customary in the 1950s to see distant kin from other villages decorated with white ochre conducting a mock attack called uih against the deceased's village. It is characterized by throwing harmless projectiles at the mourners, spearing the walls of houses and axing down of areca and coconut palms, Gnetum trees (du'unas) and other plants grown in the

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<sup>11</sup>This folk-dance was bought off the Matapau in 1952. It was claimed to have been given them by a mauran 'ghost'

village. The mock attack is made for two main reasons: first, to demonstrate anger at their relatives for letting their relative die, and second, to chase away the ghosts believed to be present in the village. When the uih abates, the attackers retreat to where the corpse is laid and begin their wailing which usually last a day or two. The mock attack has also been reported by Tuzin (1976: 258-60) for the Ilahita Arapesh, who were observed using white ochre to express their grief. This mock attack is also practised by the Wam, but it does not seem to be practised outside the abovementioned language groups.

Abu' men also apply charcoal to their bodies and, in particular, to their faces when going out to attack enemies. Its application served initially as a camouflage, and over time it has come to be associated with anger. At other times in the past, men have been seen painting their faces in red paint or wearing red hibiscus when in a challenging mood. However, red hue is associated more so with tambaran decoration than with anger, and as such, its use is restricted to tambaran cult initiates. Any non-member found wearing red flowers, paint or feathers would be challenged for an unauthorized emulation of the traditional decoration of the tambaran and consequently be subjected to verbal or other rebuke from the custodians of the tambaran cult.

If we compare the Abu' association of colours with certain emotive states with that of the West, we notice marked contrasts. Whereas white signifies an emotive state of grief to the Abu', the same is associated with joy by Western communities who associate dark with grief (demonstrated by their wearing of dark garments during funerals). The Abu' in contrast associate dark colours with anger, while Western communities associate red with blood, anger and danger. Red is a highly respectable colour to the Abu' for its association with the highest form of spiritual belief manifested in the tambaran cult activities. Other colours such as (ati'al 'yellow', keredu'

'blue', asu' 'green', bebeyo' 'purple' and a'a'a'ah 'dun or greyish-brown', though used, are mainly decorative, rather than speech surrogates as such.

Why the Abu' associate white with grief is a question that cannot be satisfactorily answered. One plausible explanation is to do with the Abu' popularized image of ghosts. Individuals who claimed to have seen apparitions often say that the ghosts they saw were covered in white ashes. White is also known to be a near-universal feature that many Melanesian communities tend to associate with death.

#### 6.3.1 Art and Tattoos

Carvings and paintings are virtually non-existent among the Abu'. Tattoos, on the other hand, are evident and the pattern of tattoos observed on Abu' people's bodies are characterized usually by simple dots or circles around the eyes. Sporadic semi-circles and parallel disjointed lines are tattooed elsewhere on the body. Tattoos were once done purely for decoration, but since people have learned to read and write, personal names, names of spouses-to-be and the like are often tattooed on exposed parts of the body. Sometimes the names of secret lovers are also tattooed on the body, usually on the less public parts such as the upper part of the thighs or immediately below the navel. These serve primarily as remembrance of romances before (and sometimes after) marriage. Unfortunately, Tattoos may become a cause of frequent jealousy or friction among spouses.

#### 6.4 Acoustic Speech Surrogates Sakadeserema dikebesehasi

Representing spoken language through sound-producing instruments is not unique to the Abu', nor it is unique to Melanesia. It is worldwide (cf.e.g. Farb 1957 :297). Acoustic instruments are used by the Abu' to declare important messages such as arrival of important visitors or to declare war on enemies, announcing deaths and important

social and cultural festivities are described below. The domain in which acoustic instruments are used as speech surrogates by the Abu' is that involving the transmission of simple messages. Instruments used are of two types: (1) percussion and (2) wind instruments.

#### 6.4.1 Percussion Instruments

Percussion instruments number three: slit-gong wamuta; kokolin (a naturally hollow tree) and hand-drum uruh, as described and illustrated below. Though the primary function of wamuta and urih is to provide rhythm accompaniment to folk-dances, these are also used together with the kokolin to beat out simple message-bearing signals.

##### 6.4.1.1 Wamuta 'slit gong'

One of our Womsis informants expressed, with an air of nostalgia, that the knowledge of wamuta 'slit-gong' beats to signal messages among the Abu' of today is not as elaborate or as varied as that of the Abu' of his father's generation. The following quotation illustrates this informant's view. It is written in standard Tok Pisin.

"..., em garamut ol i save paitim tasol. Ol i save long ol bikpela tok. I no long liklik toktok nabaut-nabaut. Olsem mipela manki bilong nau i no kisim gud we bilong paitim garamut. Bipo paitim garamut long singautim nem bilong man na meri, bikpela man i gat. Tasol nau mipela nogat. Paitim tasol singautim ol manmeri long kam bung."

..., the slit-gong is only beaten to declare important messages. Not any and every bit of news or talk. It's like this-- we kids of today do not or have not learned how to beat out messages through the slit-gong. In the old days there were slit-gong signals to call out names of men, women, and names of important men. Today we no longer possess them. We only know how to beat the slit-gong to call people together.

The slit-gong signal (which is also known among the Abelam Laycock (1974:141)) was demonstrated by Nararama' with the following beats, which were beaten out on a slit-gong with a hard slit-gong stick referred to as natakl. He began by spitting into the air and then he pounded on the slit-gong thus:

Kul is an onomatopoeic noun, referring particularly to the sound emitted when a slit-gong wamuta or kokolin is struck with a hard object. There were brief pauses heard after kul-k. The beats are close together and are strong at the beginning and after each of the pauses, they then gradually decrease in strength to fairly soft beats at the end.

The kul-kul drum signal is beaten out on the wamuta to call and hurry people together at the reception of important persons, such as a 'government official' TP kiap or the reception of important messages intended for all people. The other drum signals alluded to by Nararama' cannot be demonstrated as no one knows how to make them. All that is available is oral claims of their existence in the past.

My paternal uncles Joseph Ubaim (a long-time catechist at Bongos and other Kwanga-speaking villages) and his brother Sopik (the councillor of Womsis-Welihiika at the time the fieldwork for this study was undertaken) informed us that the Abu' slit-gong signal system is not as elaborate as that of the Kwanga. In their unequivocal view (expressed in Tok Pisin):

"garamut em i maus bilong ol Kwanga". 'Slit-gong is their (Kwanga's) mouthpiece'.

Anything simple or complex they claimed could be relayed by slit-gong signals. Indeed it would be interesting to ascertain how elaborate the Kwanga slit-gong signal system is as reported by the author's uncles who lived and worked among the Kwanga for a period totalling some 20 years. The author's childhood impressions of the Kwanga drum signal system heard during 1956-7 when he spent some time with his uncle Joseph Ubaim at Bongos is hazy after a period of 20 some years. From the general description provided by Sopik and Ubaim,

it seems likely that Kwanga slit-gong signals are similar to their southern neighbour Kwoma's drum signals (Zemp and Kaufmann, 1969). The Urat whose linguistic boundary is to the north of the Kwanga (map 4), can also send and receive messages through slit-gong signal system<sup>12</sup>.

The Abu' slit-gong signal system is simple and straightforward and is characterized by a basic, invariable monosignal. This the author believes is also true for other communities, such as the Kwoma and Kwanga and the so-called 'talking drum' of the Kele of Congo and other tone language communities of western and central Africa (cf. Carrington (1971:90-94).

The Abu' slit-gong signal system bears no close connection to spoken language as do the sound signals of the bamboo trumpet wandihil and triton aluh. As mentioned earlier, the Abu' onomatopoeic kul refers to the sound emitted when slit-gongs are struck and not to the linguistic content of the message the drum signal is purported to represent. If the kul-k system were to be given verbal interpretation, the approximate meaning would be:

alemam i numatawa datarumari akana ehihi  
men and women come-together here quickly  
'Ladies and gentlemen come here quickly'.

It does not at all correspond with the drum signal kul-k. Similar views have been expressed by Farb (1957:297) and Laycock (1974:141-2) and the latter author's view agrees with observations by Zemp and Kaufmann (1969) on this phenomenon. Thus the view here contrasts drastically with the view held by those who claim that there is a close connection between the drum signals analysed by them and spoken language<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>Bryant Allen, pers.com., Canberra, 1984.

<sup>13</sup>cf. Umiker (1974) and Synders (1968).

#### 6.4.1.2 kokolin 'natural tree-hole'

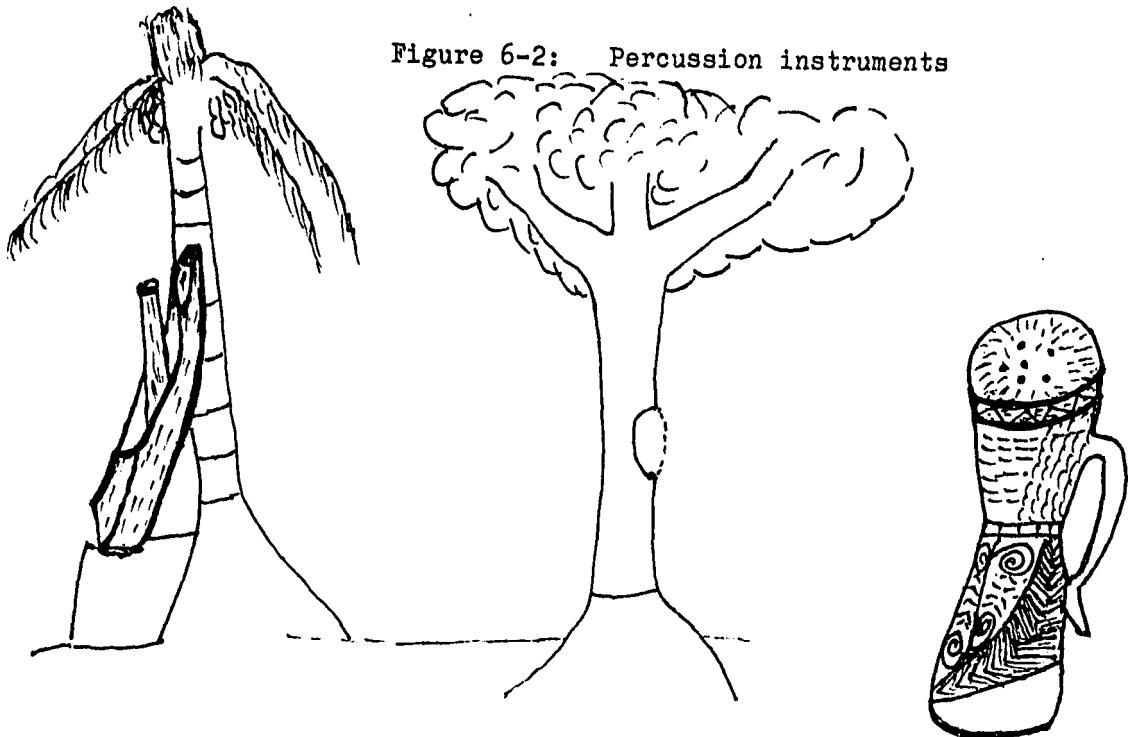
Holes in trees or kokolib (sg.kokolin) may be heard used usually by passers-by to relay advance signals to the host-to-be of a village to be visited. As illustrated on the next page, a kokolin approximates a slit-gong. It is a natural hole in trees whose resonating chamber may be cleaned out so as to allow for effectiveness when beaten with a hard object. When kokolin signals are received, the host-to-be is informed in advance of the visitor's arrival, and he can make the usual preparations such as making a fire out in a public rest house, laying out udis (sheaths from dark palms) for sitting and get betelnuts (Areca catechu) and tobacco so'eh ready to welcome and entertain the guests when they arrive.

Unlike the slit-gong and hand-drum, whose use is restricted only to tambaran cult initiates suluhumi, the kokolin is not governed by any social or cultural rules. Thus it can be beaten at any time during the day by anyone. Being accessible to the public at large, the kokolin signals beaten out are fairly irregular and because of the smaller resonating chamber of the kokolin, the sound it emits does not travel long distances like that of the wamuta 'slit-gong'.

#### 6.4.1.3 Uruh 'hand-drum'

The hand-drums urih (sg.uruh) is used mostly for the purpose of providing rhythm accompaniment to folk-dances asulub. When beaten in tambaran cult houses erebihes, it is metaphorically alluded to as: usak suluhi kara 'cult spirit's netbag is rattling', which is a secretive phraseology used and popularized by the custodians of tambaran cult ethos to conceal and mystify what suluhumi initiates do in the erebihes.

Figure 6-2: Percussion instruments



1. wamuta  
'slit-gong'

2. kokolin  
'tree-hole'

3. uruh  
'hand-drum'

### 6.5 Wind Instruments

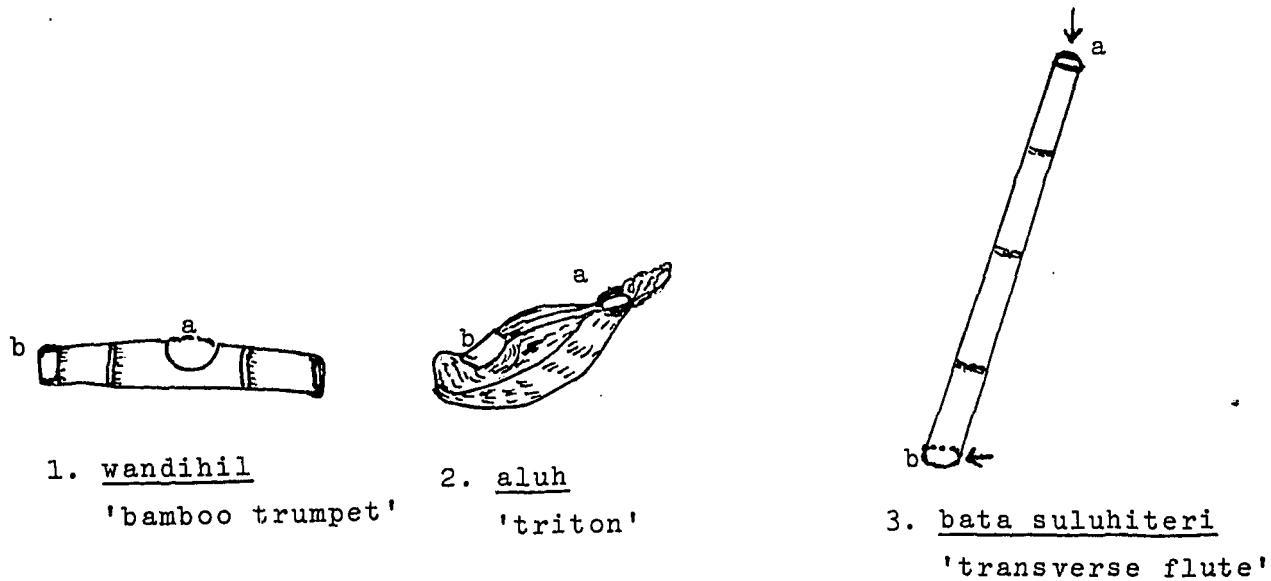
Wind instruments used as speech surrogates by the Abu' are (i) wandihil 'bamboo trumpet' and (ii) aluh 'triton/conchshell'. Transverse flutes are also used but their function is primarily to do with tambaran cult dances (viz. buas, meikahu', moulomu' and kwal. These are kept secret in erebihes 'cult houses'. The transverse flutes are pitched a tone apart to create the two pitches characterized by a simple melody alternating between the players. The pitches are regarded as voices of suluh, which is feared by women, children and non-initiated men. Transverse flutes are also known and used by the Wam, Urat, Aruek, Kwanga and other Sepik communities, as well as other Melanesian communities (cf. Fischer (1984)). Thus they are not unique to the Abu'.

Message sending by blowing through the bamboo trumpet wandihil and the triton aluh (fig. 6-2) involves communication of meaning-bearing sounds signals which can be roughly represented by a

morpheme-by-morpheme analysis in spoken speech similar to whistled speech described in the preceding chapter. It is thus regarded by the Abu' as closer to spoken language than that represented by drum signals.

The process of encoding messages via aluh and wandihil is similar to that of whistled speech and thus need not be reiterated in detail. Briefly, the process of sending messages through the two wind instruments is done by directing sound energy through the hollowed out resonating chambers of these instruments' by blowing in or across the orifice marked (a) in the diagram below and to emerge at b. The opening at which the exhaled sound energy emerges is regulated with the right hand to enable the production of meaning-bearing signals of varied intensity and amplitude, somewhat like the blowing of a trumpet.

Figure 6-3: Wind Instruments.



The same restrictions apply to these instruments as to those

described for percussion instruments, in that women and children are not allowed to use them. They are male-only instruments. Unfortunately, opportunities are not readily available these days for young Abu' men to receive regular practical experience on their use. They have been virtually phased out in all West Sepik Abu' villages. Wandihil, for example, was phased out in the 1940s or thereabouts, while the triton was used for the last time by the late Sawai Siduwakuhen, a well recognized village leader at Uhunabul (see map 3) in 1978. The same instrument, however, is still used on a much more regular basis among the Womsak and Amom, as well as Wam villages. A shift in residence from ridgetop to inter-clan communal camps along the banks of the Danmap, Atob and Mindil rivers in the 1930s was given as the main reason for the dwindling use of the triton among the West Sepik Abu'-speaking villages. Sound waves produced by the triton from low geographic points do not carry, being blocked by the mountain walls that are a common feature in the Abu' area. The establishment of these camps along river banks in the 1930s, encouraged a lot of people to eventually abandon their clan-based villages situated on the top of mountain ridges. Permanent residence in communal camps along the river banks meant that most people are living together, and so messages can be passed on by word of mouth. However, in Womsak, Amom, and Wam, where people still reside in their traditional homes situated along the Torricelli Range ridges, the use of aluh to relay messages is still continued. When I was there for fieldwork in 1981, four triton calls were heard.

The first of these calls was made by Aaron Siyawe at Wandegei across to Hambini (both are Wam villages, see map 1), informing my mother-in-law that I had arrived from Maprik and that I would spend that night with the Delehes at Erinigeme, a hamlet of Hambini 2. It also asked that my mother-in-law send Gertrude Deimbule, my wife, who

was on a two months visit from Womsis to see her folks, and Francis Mahite (her brother) to meet me in the morning and take me to Hambini 1 (my in-laws village) the next day. The message relayed through the triton was perfectly understood by my in-laws living on the opposite ridge. In the morning my wife and my brother-in-law, as well as a few of their relatives, arrived at Erinigeme to take me and my baggage to Hambini where we spent the first few weeks of my fieldwork.

The other three triton calls were heard at Womsak. One was a call heard halfway between Hambini and Amom on the day we were travelling to Womsis. This call was made at Walbata (a few kilometres south of Amom) to Umama village (map 1). It was noticeably different from the one heard at Wandegei. It was marked by rapid calls which were later interpreted to the fieldworker by those familiar with triton calls as a declaration of anger at Sangiele of Umama who was alleged to have attempted to commit adultery with a niece of the man who made the call. Soon after our arrival at Amom, the caller arrived with his clansmen and so also did the accused with his clansmen. Both parties started lashing out at each other with abusive language and a fight was about to occur when luckily both the village councillor and the village court magistrate arrived and managed to calm them down. After a lengthy hearing of the case, an amicable solution to the conflict was reached. The other triton call was made by Pranis at Womsak 2 to Francis Aunu' (a cousin to the fieldworker) at Amom, signalling him to leave the next morning with a party of carriers for Supari to meet his brother, Alphonse Salipen, who was on his way to take up his new posting as the headmaster of Womsis Community School in 1982.

The last triton call was made again by Pranis to men at Amom to intercept and beat up two Albinama men who were on their way to Matapau for the 1981 Christmas Christian Fellowship Reunion. The

reason for the attack was given that it was in retaliation for an attack Albinama gangs had made on a Suparik vehicle. The attack left Francis Aunu' with a deep cut on his left eyebrow. Though the three Albinama men were innocent, being from the same village as the culprits, they were nonetheless regarded as suitable substitutes for those who actually made the attack. The three Albinama men were able to interpret the message conveyed through the triton and consequently they detoured around ~~om~~ by another route and thus avoided what could have been a nasty encounter. This incident stresses the importance of being able to interpret messages sent by speech surrogates.

Unfortunately, none of the triton calls referred to above were recorded because I was not ready for them and, besides, they occurred without notice. However, the triton calls are acoustically fairly much like whistled speech (cf. chapt.5), so that the examples demonstrating whistled speech can be taken as an indication. The signals are impressionistically fairly similar.

#### 6.6 Participants' Role in Communication by Speech Surrogates

There are social and cultural norms that determine who among the Abu' may or may not use the speech surrogates described above to communicate with, even though these norms are not often talked about. Women and children may, for instance, use simple taboo signs (i.e. signs that do not have tambaran overtones) to declare their rights to property. They do not send tanget to other members of the community, however. This practice is restricted to alelam ubahimi 'big men', who, by definition, are men who have been through the different tambaran grades referred to in chapter 5. Women and children avoid the use of those speech surrogates that are likely to upset the inner group members of the tambaran cult.

It should be pointed out, by way of conclusion, that Abu' speech surrogates although technologically not very advanced compared with

modern telecommunication and graphic devices, did have clear communicative functions similar to their modern counterparts. Therefore, their value has to be measured in those terms.

## CHAPTER 7

### LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND USE

#### 7.0.0.1 Purpose

In chapter 5, I dealt with the Abu' speech repertoire, the variety of social groups' styles (registers) available for use by the Abu' in different sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. This chapter focusses on two interconnected themes. These are: 1. Abu' attitudes to language(s) and 2. the practical use of languages available to them. Before turning our attention to these two sub-themes, it is important to review briefly previous sociolinguistic studies of Papua New Guinea languages, especially those focussing on multilingualism.

#### 7.0.0.2 Background

Linguistic studies that have been done in Papua New Guinea to date have concentrated on the descriptive and comparative aspects of the vernacular languages.<sup>1</sup> These types of linguistic studies have contributed greatly to knowledge of the genetic relationships of Papua New Guinea languages.

However, sociolinguistic studies that have been carried out on

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<sup>1</sup> Writings on genetic relationship of languages in Papua New Guinea are many and so we cannot acknowledge all the authors who have contributed towards it here. There are some major works that need to be cited, however, such as Wurm ed. (1975, 1976); Capell (1969, 1971); Chowning (1970); Dutton (1969); (1971); Healey (1964); Hooley and McElhanon (1970); Laycock (1965); Wurm (1960, 1971a); Wurm and Laycock (1961); Z'graggen (1971); and McKaughan (1973)). A lot of this knowledge is shown in the Language Atlas of the Pacific Area (Wurm, S.A. and Shiro Hattori, eds., Part I, 1981).

these languages amount to no more than a handful: e.g. Salisbury (1962), Laycock (1966, 1979); Sankoff (1968, 1969, 1976 and 1977); Wurm (1966, 1967), and Wurm et.al. (1979); Lincoln (1969); and Bradshaw (1978). As a result, little is known about the kinds of attitudes and knowledge Papua New Guinea communities have about the social role of language and languages. Against this background we can see that there is a need for greater in-depth studies on different sociolinguistic aspects such as people's views about language, their use of language, what it means to be multilingual and so on. Results ascertained from sociolinguistic studies done on hitherto undescribed communities in different parts of Papua New Guinea will undoubtedly enrich the meagre knowledge presently available on this relatively less researched area, as Wurm (1979) and other authors have conceded. Such knowledge may also serve useful purposes in the area of social and educational planning and thus the development of Papua New Guinea.

In the Sepik region, sociolinguistic issues have not been studied in depth in any speech community. General observations have nonetheless been made, mainly by Laycock (1966, 1969 and 1979). This study on Abu' language attitudes and use is prompted mainly by the concern expressed above.

The data for the following remarks about Abu' language attitudes and use were obtained during 1980-84. They are extracted from observations and interviews made mainly at Womsis. The Womsis data are supplemented by observations and interviews made at other Abu'-speaking villages. In addition, a few Suain, Muhiang, Miye and Aruek speakers were interviewed to ascertain their views on the different issues alluded to in the chapter.

### 7.0.1 Attitudes to language(s)

In order to enable our analysis of Abu' attitudes towards language and languages and the implications for the Abu' practical use of languages to fall into place, we should note at the outset the Abu' metalinguistic views about language and languages. This aspect of Papua New Guinea linguistics has been overlooked for far too long. A similar view was expressed by Mühlhäusler (1983:102) where he, after discussing other points, concludes that:

"Linguists are only too prepared to impose their metalinguistic system on languages they do not know sufficiently, thereby depriving themselves from finding out about some of the most intriguing aspects of human language".

[Mühlhäusler 1983:203]

Metalinguistic views of Papua New Guinea language communities have indeed been given little attention. In the following paragraphs we will address this issue, but will restrict our discussion only to the Abu' viewpoints. As a point of departure, we present how the Abu' theorize about the origin of their language. Following that, we will describe how the Abu' name or characterize foreign languages.

#### 7.0.1.1 Mythological view of the origin of language and languages

The Abu' share a view that their language was a gift from the spirit Dedeifina. Dedeifina is a personification of the echo. Thus Dedeifina is the male spirit who imitates people when talking, shouting, singing and whistling and is claimed to be heard when one approaches cliffs or holes in rocks and mountains. It is interesting to note here too that the Miye and Aruek share similar mythologies about the origin of their languages. The Miye say Silehi, a culture-hero, gave them language and culture while the Aruek claim that their language was a gift from a male deity called Elipinik, who is the spirit of language, fire and earthquake. He is also said to

have given them the gift of tongues<sup>2</sup> (understanding other languages).

### 7.1 How the Abu' characterize foreign languages

The Abu' characterize or name languages other than their own in one of several ways: 1) by using descriptive phrases; 2) by using the words for 'no' or 'not' in other languages; 3) by using toponyms and/or ethnic names; 4) by naming languages after artefacts and 5) by associating language or dialect with topographic features. Each of these ways of naming is described in more detail below.

#### 7.1.0.1 Language Naming by the use of descriptive phrases

A common way the Abu' distinguish their language from others is by using the possessive pronouns 'ours' and 'theirs' in combination with language such as bulan afa'i "our speech or language" versus bulan esisi "their speech or language". Alternatively the Abu' use phrases such as: bulan/dika etin "one talk or one language" for referring to their own as distinct from dika or dikas dei'akas "other language(s)". Foreign languages as a collective phenomenon are designated as dikebeseh sesisesi, which means all other distant and inconsequential languages .

#### 7.1.0.2 Language Naming by the use of negatives

At least two languages in the Abu' area are named by using the words for 'no' or 'not' in them; one of these is Aruek, the other is Weri'. The Aruek language name is 'aruek', derived from aruek meaning 'no' or 'not' in that language. Similarly, Weri' is derived from the negative weri'. This practice is, however, not restricted to the Abu'. Laycock (1973) commented on this practice, and

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<sup>2</sup>The Miye myth was told to the writer by Mahite Butehe at the Wam village of Hambini in August, 1981, while the Aruek myth was collected from Kelmendu of Aruk village eph in any speech community. General observations were made in Womsis in January 1982.

extended it to languages that perhaps already did not do so. Thus the Nuku and the Wape communities located further to the southwest and northwest respectively of the Abu' have been given language names that are derived from these languages' words for the negative "no" or "not". The Nuku and Wati communities' (both are located near Nuku town) name their language Mehek, which is derived from the negative mehek, while the Wape community's language is Olo, a word derived from the negative olo. Apparently this method of deriving names for languages from terms for negatives in the given languages is common. One possible reason for this is to do with the question of ethnolinguistic identity. People generally want to regard themselves as different from others. One way of emphasizing differences is to choose a linguistic tag that will bring out the given community's ethnolinguistic uniqueness. The use of the terms for negatives provides a set of convenient and distinct labels which in many instances match the linguists' demonstration of the languages of a region.<sup>3</sup>

#### 7.1.0.3 Language Naming by the use of toponyms or ethnic names

The Abu', like other speech communities, use toponyms and/or an ethnic name to refer to other languages in their area. Thus the Ulau-Suain language (see map 1) is referred to as Ulehes or Suenes. The suffix {-s} is a nominal concord morpheme denoting "people". Individual village names are also used to refer to different speech communities within those languages. Linguistically, this is done as follows: N + Toponym + Possessive morpheme where N is the word for language or speech followed by the name of the village (or Toponym), which is suffixed with the nominal concord inflective {-n-} and the possessive morpheme {-i#} in word final position. For example:

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<sup>3</sup>For discussion on how linguists give names to languages or name languages, see Laycock (1973).

bulan Yakamul -i -n -i  
 talk Yakamul -EV-NCE-GEN  
 'Yakamul language'.

bulan Ali -n -i  
 talk Ali -NCE-GEN  
 'Ali speech or language' (lower Abu' bulan = Upper Abu' dika).

In this connection, Tok Pisin, until very recently, was regarded as the whiteman's language. The Abu' phrase dika duasimiri 'whiteman's language' was probably coined in the 1930s to designate this language which the Abu' heard spoken by white colonial government or mission personnel and those Abu' (such as catechists) who had contacts with white people outside the Abu' area. Nowadays, however, this view of Tok Pisin is no longer held as the Abu' have come to realize that Tok Pisin is no longer a whiteman's language. It is a language they now use more readily and is, in point of fact, their alternative language for communication. English, by the way, is now regarded as dika duasimiri 'whiteman's language'. German has always, been known to the Abu' as Siaman (<TP Siaman). Malay, which spoken by Malay birds-of-paradise hunters and traders, is called dika Malai or dika Parani. The term parani is unfamiliar to young Abu' people. It seems plausible that parani was derived most probably from the Malay word for "chopper".<sup>4</sup>

#### 7.1.0.4 Language Naming by associating language with artefacts

Tok Pisin is not only called dika duasimiri, as discussed above, but is also known as alibalika, a remodified form of alibal 'knife'. When asked why the Abu' refer to Tok Pisin as a "knife-language", no Abu' seemed to know why. One explanation may be that it was associated with the introduction of knives (and other western implements) in the 1920s. At that time, metal implements such as the knife and the axe were introduced and possessed by whitemen and their native servants

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. chapter 2. Further information on the spread of Malay in what was then German New Guinea can be found in Seiler (1982 and 1983).

and later by Abu' who had some form of contact with white men. Both groups not only had the metal implements but also shared knowledge of Tok Pisin, and it was quite possible and appeared logical for the Abu' to easily associate Tok Pisin as a language of those who had the knife alibal and other metal implements. Consequently, the language could have been initially named alibal dika 'knife language', which subsequently dropped the {d-} in dika 'language', thus resulting in the present form alibalika.

#### 7.1.0.5 Language Naming by associating language or dialect with topographic features

The final method of naming is by use of topographic features to designate languages or dialects. Indeed the Abu' use this to refer to dialects of their own language. These are, as noted earlier (see chapter 2), Abu' Womenika 'Upper Abu'' (which is literally translated as Abu' of the ridges) and Abu' Ounibisima 'Lower Abu' of Abu' of the lowlands. This latter variety is the dialect spoken by those who dwell in villages situated along the low banks of the Mabam (Danmap ) River.

Apparently this method is also used elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Thus, for example, the Koiari of the central Province of Papua New Guinea use terms in their language to distinguish between Koiari spoken by mountain-dwellers and that spoken by lowlanders.<sup>5</sup>

#### 7.2 Language Use

Having dealt with the Abu' attitudes to language and languages, I next go on to consider the question of Abu' linguistic repertoire, "the range of languages...available for use" (Crystal 1980:304) by the Abu' community. Gumperz and Hymes<sup>eds</sup>(1971) have accentuated the

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<sup>5</sup>Dutton, pers. com., Canberra, 1984.

collective sense of 'repertoire' to mean the range of language varieties within a speech community that enable members of that community to perform specific social roles. This broader sense of linguistic repertoire of the Abu' has been dealt with in chapter 5. In this chapter, I will be considering only the range of languages available for use by the Abu'. I will consider who among the Abu' speak what other languages, how well and how widely these languages are spoken and how these are acquired. Later I will consider the social variables that determine why, when and to whom foreign and related languages are spoken. Before turning to the question of the Abu' practical use of their linguistic repertoire, some understanding of the influential social units on the use of language and languages is necessary.

#### 7.2.0.1 Social Parameters

Influential social units which serve as parameters for an analysis of the use of many languages (multilingualism) and language mixing between Abu' and foreign languages are the nuclear family, the clan, the dialect group, and the village. Of secondary influence on the nature of language use among the Abu' are members of groups which represent the local, provincial and national government, the Catholic Mission and other Christian groups operating in the Abu' area. There is also an increasing number of English-speaking Abu'. This group of English-speaking Abu' constitutes a total of 63 people (approximately 1.12%) out of the total Abu' population of 5,700 (cf. chapt.1, p.1). Of the 63 English-speaking Abu', 40 are grade six school-leavers and this number was increased at the end of the 1984 school year when the Womsis primary school produced its first grade six school leavers. Twenty-three of the English-speaking Abu' have completed various stages of secondary education and have attended career training institutions, and they include four university graduates. This sector of the Abu' are being

absorbed in the work force of the Papua New Guinea population and are serving in numerous capacities throughout the country.

A typical Abu' clan consists of members varying from a minimum of six males to a maximum of ten. These men represent the heads of the given clan. The clans are distinguished from each other by their allegiance to their totems which are represented by natural phenomena drawn from the animal, insect and plant kingdom. The clan is patrilineal and is an exogamous social unit which serves as the basis for inter-/intra-village sociopolitical activities which foster the Abu' use of foreign languages.

#### 7.2.1 Social Reasons for Foreign Language Use

##### 7.2.1.1 Why the Abu' use foreign languages

Abu' people speak or use foreign languages for a variety of reasons. In the final analysis, however, social, cultural and political contacts are the main factors which induce the Abu' to use foreign languages. They were and still are a non-trading community. Trade is not a major factor in determining why the Abu' use foreign languages.<sup>6</sup>

Social prestige and political expediency have been cited elsewhere (cf. Sankoff(1968, 1976, 1977) and references therein) as motivating factors which obliged speakers of one language to learn and speak foreign languages. The Abu' emphasize the following two factors. They regard listening and speaking skills in languages other

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that the people of Womsak 1 make clay pots. However, owing to the meagre pottery clay they have, pots made were often insufficient to warrant intra-language trade. Those made were distributed primarily among the Abu'. To secure a pot, request must be made six to twelve months in advance to one's Womsak relatives. Some of the Womsak pots did find their way to their neighbouring language communities, especially the Miye, Aruek and Muhiang. These pots were given as gifts, rather than being traded in an organized trade contact such as that occurring between the Tumeleo islanders and the Aitape-coastal villages (Woichom 1979).

than Abu' as an added advantage to their social, political and cultural positions. Multilingual ability is both admired and valued, for it enhances the multilingual speakers' social status and aids such speakers in their inter- and intra-language sociopolitical and cultural relations in a similar manner to modern international diplomacy, where knowledge of foreign languages helps a diplomat communicate more effectively than is otherwise possible. It should be reemphasized that the Abu' value greatly the practical advantage that knowledge of foreign or related languages provides. Knowledge of other people's languages enables the Abu' to ask for food, water, betelnut, tobacco and other consumer items when they find themselves in a foreign language-speaking environment.

Knowledge of foreign languages also helps the Abu' know what other people say about them, so they are able to defend themselves. Several oral reports were also told of how a few Womsis recruiters avoided being speared by the Miye and Urat during the 1920s when they went out recruiting plantation labourers because those Womsis men knew and spoke some Miye and Urat. Several Abu' catechists who helped their white missionary colleagues spread Christianity among the Kwanga, Seim and Urat (see map 4) in the 1940s and early 1950s told anecdotes also of how it was easier for them to carry out their tasks after they acquired varying levels of speaking ability in the local vernaculars of their areas of operation.

Field observations showed that Abu' bilingual or multilingual speakers choose to speak in one or another foreign language to prevent the person at whom unfavourable comments were directed from understanding the content of what is being said. This was done if it was established that such a person did not know the foreign language used.

A personal anecdote will help clarify this. On a Saturday morning

during a vegetable market held at the Womsis community school, a woman from Welihika was selling an arboreal cuscus for eight kina. Not having had any meat for several weeks, I went straight up to the woman and pulled out some money and negotiated with the woman to reduce the cost to five kina. The woman did not want the offer, and as I was standing there waiting and hoping for her to change her mind, a paternal aunt noticed what was happening and walked across to me and whispered softly into my ears in Miye, advising me not to waste my money on such a pitiful cuscus. It would be better to wait, she said, to see if someone else came in with better meat for a better price.

What she expressed in Miye was as follows:

Munuhe fitafitai' ene moni ubahineme. Lasu' la.  
cuscus small-small yet money big-very. Forget it

'The cuscus is too small for the money being charged  
for it -- forget it.'

I took her advice and refrained from engaging in further bargaining. As I was about to leave the market area, a Wolum man arrived with a leg of pork, which he sold to me for five kina after an interchange of utterances in Tok Pisin and Abu'.

It was pointed out that the Abu' speak foreign languages for a variety of reasons, the main reasons being for social prestige, and cultural and political advantages. Other than this, the Abu' were also observed to use foreign languages in certain speech situations where they wanted to make unfavourable comments or express views about other Abu' speakers. This is done only if it was established that the persons talked about did not know the foreign languages used. It is a way of trying to prevent the prospect of being intimidated by those talked about if unfavourable comments about them are expressed in languages that they know.

### 7.2.2 Abu' Linguistic Repertoire

Languages available for use by the Abu' in various social contexts are described below. We will consider who among the Abu' speak what other languages, how well and wide these languages are spoken and how these are acquired. Later we shall consider social variables that determine when, why and to whom foreign and related languages are spoken.

#### 7.2.2.1 Alibalika 'Tok Pisin'

Bradshaw [1978:28] in his article on 'Multilingualism and Language Mixture Among the Numbami' of the Morobe Patrol Post reports that:

"..., anyone[among the Numbami ] who can speak at all can speak Tok Pisin "

just as well as Numbami. This state of affairs is a result of the Numbami having had exposure to urban centres, such as Lae, and the contacts that young Numbami students and employees in particular have with neighbouring and distant language groups with whom they live and work.

Similar observations can be made about the Abu'. Alibalika or Tok Pisin is the predominant language of communication among the Abu', especially among children and the younger generation of Womsis parents. In a general survey of the entire Womsis population of 320 people, it was found that only four mature women (two have since died) had only passive knowledge or control of Tok Pisin. These four mature women were in their mid-40s. A general survey of 50 Womsis children under 10 years of age and 30 grade six leavers showed that 75 percent of each of these two young age groups rely exclusively on Tok Pisin for daily communication, and approximately 30 percent of the children and 7 per cent of the grade six leavers were native speakers of Tok Pisin. Knowledge of Tok Pisin, unlike the situation in the past where

it used to be acquired from other Tok Pisin speakers usually in situations outside the Abu' area (such as plantations), can now be acquired from other resident Womsis or Abu'. So there is a certain amount of creolization going on in a place where once Abu' was the only language known and spoken [see Nekitel 1984]. The prevalent use of Tok Pisin in Womsis generally reflects, as it were, its predominant use in other Abu' villages especially in most of the West Sepik Abu' villages (viz. Balup, Malin, Aspesis, Wolum, Welihika and Womsis) and, to a considerable extent, Amom and the Womsak villages.

Several sociolinguistic factors contribute to Tok Pisin becoming the most important language of communication in Womsis and other Abu' villages. Some of these are discussed below.

Expatriates who visit Abu' villages never show any interest in learning Abu' because their communicative needs are well served by Tok Pisin. This was and is the language of communication between villagers and expatriates, and also with visitors from other communities. The parish priest, the kiap 'administration officer,' medical officers, and various national or expatriate government and mission personnel always use some form of Tok Pisin. For many expatriates, the "Tokmasta" variety was used. Those Abu' speakers who did not yet know Tok Pisin, were often called bus kanaka, manabus, or daluhoh,<sup>7</sup> literally a person from the interior or 'bush', but used derogatorily to mean 'idiot' or 'stupid person' by government officials and those Abu' and non-Abu' Tok Pisin speakers because of their lack of knowledge in this language that came with civilization. Thus certain social attitudes emphasized the prestige of Tok Pisin to a point where it was seen as the language of those in power or those in positions of influence. When a language is regarded by the colonized as part of the culture of the colonizing

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<sup>7</sup>This is probably an Ulau-Suain word.

power, be it a pidgin or a metropolitan language, the colonized often came to think that their vernacular is inferior. Consequently, they make efforts to use the external language to achieve upward social mobility within the social hierarchy of the ruling class. Thus prevailing social attitudes increasingly encourage the use of Tok Pisin at the expense of the local vernacular.

Interethnic marriages are now more common than in the past and a number of Abu'-speaking adults have spouses from other ethnic or linguistic groups. General indications are that parents of interethnic marriages do not attempt to teach their children either of their own mother tongues, but leave their children to acquire Tok Pisin as their mother tongue. Three of my first cousins have non-Abu' wives and their children have learnt Tok Pisin and some English, but they hardly speak the language of their fathers (Abu') or of their mothers'. The three women are from Kiwai Island, Dagua (a Buki speaker) and a New Irelander (language not known). Tok Pisin, Police Motu and English often become the mediums through which inter-ethnic communication takes place and hence generally become the spoken languages of children of inter-ethnic marriages (cf. Nekitel (1984)).

Those who leave Abu' villages to attend schools or get jobs elsewhere in the country either lose command of Abu' or else retain to varying degrees a passive knowledge, provided that some degree of communicative competence in the vernacular has been acquired prior to departure from the village. Most of the Abu' speakers who have studied at the university or who are currently studying there have virtually abandoned Abu'. One reason is that they may not be competent to speak Abu', because they had never fully developed a lasting repertoire in the vernacular, and feel uneasy and ashamed to use it, lest they become objects of ridicule for not knowing their vernacular language or for speaking it with a strange accent. Many Abu' in town or at

university use Tok Pisin or English simply because these are languages with which they feel comfortable or that are spoken within the ethnically mixed contexts in which they live and work.

When such speakers return to Womsis or other Abu' villages for holidays, they find it more convenient to use Tok Pisin. When some of them attempt to speak Abu', those claiming to be local authorities make fun of them for speaking it with a foreign accent. Given such attitudes, the only option for those unable to accept linguistic intolerance is to use the language with which they feel comfortable and which does not invite social stigmatising. Many of us long absent from Womsis have little or no opportunity to actively reinforce our knowledge of the vernacular. On return, we find it difficult to express ourselves in Abu' and therefore communicate through Tok Pisin, which only serves to give greater support to Tok Pisin at the expense of Abu'. In general therefore, there is a decrease in the knowledge of Abu' with long absence from the area where it is spoken.

There is also another social reason which contributes towards this state of affairs. Certain social norms dissuade people from using a language that visitors do not know unless one wishes to hide something from them. To ensure that relationships between visitors, guests and hosts occur without causing any feelings of suspicion, Abu' speakers try to avoid using their own vernacular, but will communicate quite freely in Tok Pisin. This action indirectly supports the rising dominance of Tok Pisin over Abu'.

Finally, parents themselves are largely responsible for the apparent decline in status of Abu', especially in Womsis village where parents were not genuinely concerned about their children acquiring it. It is usual to see and hear parents speaking to their children in Tok Pisin. Further, the establishment of the Womsis community school, which draws children from different language-speaking communities,

means that the primary language of communication among the children, teachers and parents is Tok Pisin and not Abu' or English. These are some of the social reasons which seem to encourage the growing dominance of Tok Pisin among the Abu'.

Little wonder then that Alibalika (Tok Pisin) is spoken very well among the Abu'. There are no instances of 'bush pidgin' (cf. Mühlhäusler (1975)). Many of the archaic German-based words, such as beten 'prayer', singen 'hymns', sage 'saw' and kaiser 'emperor', have been replaced by recent loans from Tok Pisin. These are pre, singsing or him, so and kin. Bradshaw (1978:28) reported that the Numbami still hang on to these German words. The Tok Pisin spoken by Womsis villagers is more like the urban variety. Recently introduced words from English such as risen 'reason', eksplen 'explain', kastam 'custom', asenda 'agenda', komplen 'complain' have increasingly become popular not only among those who have had some English education, but also among the uneducated or semi-educated resident Womsis Tok Pisin speakers. These newly introduced Tok Pisin loans are used ostentatiously at meetings or public gatherings by the councillors and other progressive Abu' to "show off" their skills in the language. In fact, the closer Tok Pisin is to English, the more it is preferred by a small but growing number of present day Abu', even if they do not know the meanings of the highly anglicised words and phrases they use. It seems that no one really bothers to check on the effectiveness of communication once new words are used. I witnessed many defective communications resulting from the growing tendency among Womsis people to use new words. On numerous occasions I was asked to read and explain a public letter or a memo addressed to the villagers from government officers in Aitape and when I came across any highly anglicised pidgin words such as those listed above, I substituted them with rural pidgin equivalents (such as as for the

urban pidgin risen; toksave for eksplen; pasin for kastam; ol poin bilong miting for asenda and belhevi for the urban pidgin word komplen). For urban pidgin words that do not have any rural pidgin basilectal equivalents, I used circumlocutions to try and convey the content of new Tok Pisin and/or English loans and seemed to have succeeded in my explanations.

Radios have also become sources from which Abu' people pick up a lot of information. Much of this is expressed in an urban variety of Tok Pisin. Once new anglicised words are heard, they are normally held onto and used for social prestige and to keep abreast with the Tok Pisin spoken by the elite and/or educated Papua New Guineans. Wider knowledge of Tok Pisin among the Abu' undermines the prestige it once had as a link with the European goods and lifestyle. It is thus no longer regarded as it once was, a language of the whiteman dika duasimiri. English, though not known and spoken by most of the resident Abu', is now regarded a language of access to the urban lifestyle and a number of pidgin-educated Abu' have, on a number of occasions, expressed the view that they wished they had been educated in English so they could fully partake in the kind of lifestyle that those of us who speak English seem to take for granted and, in their opinion, seem to enjoy.

#### 7.2.2.2 Abu'

Given that an increasing number of children and educated Abu' are now relying almost exclusively on Tok Pisin for daily communication and that Tok Pisin is predominantly used in most speech situations by Abu' speakers, the use of Abu' has declined over the years. Thus although it is sad to have to recognize this it is a fact that even though Abu' is the vernacular of the community, it is no

longer the primary language of the Abu'.<sup>8</sup>

Some Miye and Aruek also have varying speaking and/or listening skills in Abu'. These are mostly people who have ongoing social or cultural contacts or ties with the Abu'. Abu', however, is not spoken by contiguous Arapesh language groups. The tendency is for each of the speakers of genetically related Arapesh languages to be passively bilingual in each other's language. Thus when an Abu' meets a Muhiang Arapesh speaker, each would, if they knew each other on a personal level, address each other in their own language. In most situations, Tok Pisin is preferred for convenience. However, on one occasion the author, his father and a few other men from Womsis and Womsak were returning from Wewak and had to spend a night at Suparik (see map 2). Our host, who knew who we were, kept addressing us in both Tok Pisin and their dialect of Muhiang to which we responded in Abu', thus producing the kind of situation that Lincoln (1979) termed "dual-lingualism". Where we felt our host would not understand our Arapesh, we used Tok Pisin.

Another group which speaks Abu' are foreign resident women who marry Abu' men. Women of this category, though they rely on Tok Pisin for daily communication during their initial residential period, gradually learn Abu' and some of them speak it rather fluently, even a lot better than the Abu' spoken by many local-born Abu' who did not acquire the language properly before leaving the Abu'-speaking area.

Yakopa (a native Kwanga-speaker who took up permanent residence with her husband in Womsis over 25 years ago) is a good example. She has achieved a virtual near-native command of the language. Listening

<sup>8</sup>Bradshaw (1978:30-31) also reports that Tok Pisin is the primary language of communication among the Numbami of the Morobe Province and that their Vernacular--Numbami, plays a subordinate role. It would seem, therefore, that Tok Pisin is becoming the more important language of communication not only among the Abu' and Numbami, but probably other PNG communities as well. (See Nekitel (1984) for further comments).

to her talking left the author with little doubt that her mastery of Abu' phonology, vocabulary, grammar, as well as her knowledge of the sociolinguistic rules of appropriate usage, is on a par with that of native speakers. What is said of Yakopa is typical of those foreign women who have learned their husbands' language. When Yakopa was asked how and why she learnt Abu', she said it was because of her long stay in Womsis. She also felt that it was important to know the language in order to participate more meaningfully and effectively in her husband's community life. Yakopa's view typifies the sentiments of other foreign women interviewed in Womsis and Welihika.

There are also short-term non-Abu' residents who learn smatterings of Abu'. These residents include foreign catechists from Lumi and Warapu and foreign language-speaking teachers (from Tumleo, Warapu, Kwanga, Urat, Olo, Ulau-Suain), as well as children and overseer parents from Aruek villages. Much of what they learn has to do with simple requests, commands, interrogatives and terms for common consumer items and traditional addictives such as betelnut (Areca catechu), lime, pepper and tobacco, and common vocabulary items such as sago, pig, cassowary, water and so on. Most of these were usually forgotten soon after they left the area.

#### 7.2.2.3 Miye

Miye, the Papuan language spoken slightly south of the Abu', is spoken with varying degrees of proficiency by some elders of the Abu' villages of Amom and Womsak 1 and 2. It is, however, the language of Umama, a small hamlet of Amom (see map 1). Residents of Umama are descendants of Miye migrants who came to settle there probably before western contact. They have since then maintained social and cultural ties with their original homeland and continue to pay strong allegiance to their Miye ethnolinguistic identity in spite of their small number (less than 50 people in 1982) and their presence in a

predominantly Abu' speaking area. The children of Umama speak Miye (or Tok Pisin) as their first language and while some learn to speak Abu', most of them have a better passive control of Abu' than speaking ability.

However, in Womsis knowledge of Miye is restricted to those who claim ancestral descent from Wam, especially those who have on-going contact with their resident Wam relatives. The Nubat or dog clansmen and women (to which I belong) and their brother-clansmen and women of the Manduhuf clan are such cases.

Three of my paternal uncles are married to Miye-speaking wives and some of their children are bilingual in both Abu' and Miye. My spouse is also an offspring of an Abu'-Miye marriage. She only has passive knowledge of some Miye, but is a native speaker of Abu'. This resulted when she had to be sent from Hambini (see map 2) to Womsis when she was two years old in exchange for her mother.

Parents of the present Manduhuf clansmen and women migrated to Womsis from the Wam villages of Selnau and Wandegei (cf. Nekitel 1975). Most Abu' who know any Miye do so because they maintain or have close friend-type ties with the Miye. My knowledge of this language was picked up from Miye-speaking relatives or from Wam people during my occasional visits there. Unfortunately my knowledge of Miye is restricted to terms for certain food items, domestic utensils, kinship terms and simple verb phrases such as: ine ilou' 'you come'; ine rembi 'you go'; sambeni' umo sukusukule 'my sister keep quiet'; and simple requests and commands, such as: etihé umo mbelau 'give me sago'; etihé umo mahite 'give me meat'. In the end, we can see that knowledge of Miye depends, as always, on the social and cultural ties that exist between peoples. These ties are manifested by inter-language marriages, visits to relatives, friend-type visits and the cultural feasts that mark the end the third moulomu' and the fourth kwal grades of the tambaran ritual cycle. In 1983, for instance, Womsis people were

invited by the Selnau (a Wam village) people to attend the end of the kwal tambaran feast, which involved the display and subsequent distribution of pigs, yams, coconuts and other food items among participants and invited guests. On that occasion, though most of the conversations between the Miye and their guests were done in Tok Pisin, some Womsis girls were unimpressed with the behaviour of some Selnau boys who made unbefitting remarks in Miye about the Womsis girls who were there. The Womsis girls were embittered by those remarks and got angry with those cheeky Selnau boys. They felt it was unbecoming on the part of the Selnau boys to use their language when they (the Womsis girls) do not know it well enough to respond with remarks of similar vein.

Incidentally, that was not the first time that members of the Abu' community complained about the Miye for similar offences. There were instances in the past where similar views were expressed about Miye people in general, who often display a condescending attitude towards their neighbours. Claiming themselves to be founders of the infamous black magic or sorcery sanguma and having proved that their sorcery is second to none in the area, they capitalized on that reputation to build an image of cultural arrogance which has been further augmented by tambaran activities. Having established an attitude of ethnocentrism, they justify that undecorous image by showing off Miye cultural or linguistic arrogance. This cultural arrogance is manifested in the way they relate to or behave towards their neighbours and the way they literally like to impose their culture and language on others. The Womsis have thus coined in a vulgarized form of Miye the phrase: lasu lelehe 'inconsiderate idiots' to express their dissension from the Miye cultural arrogance. Historically, knowledge of Wam sanguma was confined initially to those men who spoke Miye, and that was the reason why its knowledge and practice was

limited to Wam and to Abu' and those men of other neighbouring language groups who spoke Miye. Nowadays this knowledge has been passed on to communities who do not traditionally speak or were not known to speak Miye. No information was obtainable about what language is used to pass on this Miye sanguma knowledge. Rumors have it that recent sorcery knowledge is a lot simpler from that of former times. One can only guess that Tok Pisin is probably used to transmit some or most of the knowledge, and that this knowledge is no longer as complex as it was earlier.

#### 7.2.2.4 Ulau-Suain

Varying levels of receptive and communicative skills in this Austronesian language are evident especially among a fair number of villagers from Balup, Malin, Aspeis, Walihika, Wolum and Womsis. A few have acquired near-native competence in it. Paul Maman of Womsis and Mark Melu' of Aspeis are regarded by Ulau-Suain speakers themselves as ol man i save tru long tokples Ulau-Suain. This is a Tok Pisin sentence which means 'they really know the Ulau-Suain language'. Paul acquired the language from his Suain host-family and other Suain while living with them in Suain No.1 (Adiman) to attend the Suain community school in the 1970s. Mark learnt it from his Ulau wife and his wife's family through regular contact with them.

Other Abu' who have picked up more than mere smatterings of the language are Paul Maman's schoolmates who attended the Suain community school. Unlike Paul Maman, who had the advantage of living and interacting on a much more frequent basis, the rest of the grade six leavers (mainly from Womsis and Wolum) were boarders at the Womsis camp (located at that time between Suain No.1 (Adiman) and Suain No.2 (Lelap)). Such social and geographic distancing allowed less direct regular contact with the Suain community at large. As a result, the knowledge that the rest of the Womsis and Wolum children picked up is not on a par with Paul's linguistic command of Ulau-Suain.

Most West Sepik Abu' villagers have only a shallow knowledge of Ulau-Suain. This slight knowledge is restricted to the kinds of linguistic terms or phrases similar to those described above for the Miye and these are learnt or picked up mainly through social contact. Much of these social ties were established in the 1930s when the Catholic Mission stations at Ulau and Suain were founded. The West Sepik Abu' villages of Balup, Malin, Aspeis, Welihika, Wolum and Womsis have since then been under the parochial patronage of this parish . They often require Catholics from the abovementioned Abu' villages to go down to one or the other stations (depends on which of the two is assigned a priest) for the main religious Feast Days, such as Easter and Christmas. It is a serious sin not to attend Mass on these days. These and other parochial demands foster contact between the Ulau-Suain and the West Sepik Abu', and they have allowed the latter to pick up different levels of skills in this language.

It is not only parochial contacts that foster learning of Ulau-Suain. Another fairly influential social contact is one that revolves around social networks, of friends or host-families, who can be relied on to feed and accommodate visiting friends. Generally speaking, each Abu' clan or individual family has established host-families in nearly all the villages along the coast to Aitape (the administrative centre) who feed and accommodate them when they go to Aitape. The physical location of Suain is important, being, as it were, a gateway to the sea and to the outside world. In this respect, the Abu' have seen the importance of having cordial relations with the Suain, and ensuring that friends and host-families are established for the Abu' to turn to for food and accommodation during their sojourns.

Furthermore, it was reported orally that there was meagre barter between the Abu' and Suain mainly on the friend or host-family basis. The Abu' were said to trade yams and tobacco for the Suain salted

softwood, which they used to burn to obtain the salted ashes for use in preparing their food. Seashells, which the Abu value as bridewealth, and bows and arrows were also traded off or given by the Suain to their Abu' friends.

How both parties communicated before Tok Pisin became known in the area is not known. Nor was I able to obtain a clear view on the amount of learning of both communities' languages that probably took place. Considering the friendly nature of such contacts, it was possible that some restricted exchange of words or phrases in the two languages occurred.

Interethnic marriages between the Abu' and Suain is uncommon in spite their regular parochial and friendship ties. Marriages between the Suain and Abu' are discouraged by parents from both communities for a number of reasons. The mountainous terrain of the Abu' becomes a physical barrier and obliges the Abu' to learn to survive in such a harsh environment. This requires the Abu' to work harder than the coastal people, who are generally regarded as being lazy by the Abu'. The geography of the Abu' greatly influences Abu' views and choices on the quality of wives. Abu' people in general prefer their own or other bush communities' women to coastal ones, because they think that coastal women are lazy and weak and cannot endure the tough physical labour that bush women are accustomed to. This rationalization also explains why Abu' women in general do not prefer coastal marriage partners. Less than a handful of them from Balup and Wolum have married Suain men. Children of these marriages that I met and talked to, do not appear to know any more Abu' than some Suain people (i.e. very little). This little knowledge of Abu' is attributable to these mixed Abu'-Suain children's general attempt to suppress and eliminate as much as they possibly can of their ("hillbilly") inferiority complex, and this is abetted further by irregular or lack of contact with their

mothers' speech community. Mothers of these mixed Abu'-Suain marriages do not seem to bother teaching their children Abu' because they too have the "hillbilly" inferiority complex to overcome in order to become more integrated into the mainstream Suain society. They, therefore, emphasize the learning of their husbands' language and culture at the expense of their own.

#### 7.2.2.5 Aruek

Notwithstanding the geographic propinquity of Aruek to Abu', Aruek is little known. This situation is due in part to the slight social and cultural contacts that exist between the Abu' and the Aruek. It is due also to the general negative attitude Abu' people have towards Aruek people and their language. The language is not only regarded as difficult grammatically, but is also regarded "bad" (numehelikeri) because, to Abu' ears, the language sounds like someone who attempts to talk when his or her mouth is half-filled with water. These negative attitudes are portrayed or encapsulated in the phrase: tahalimblel jelkum--aruek, an expression that is not easily translatable. It implies that the language is bad, and hence not worthwhile learning and speaking it.

In the foregoing sections we have examined in some detail languages that have been or are being learnt (in varying degrees) and used by the Abu'. Also some preliminary remarks have been made about the reasons that motivated non-Abu' people to want to acquire knowledge in Abu'. In what follows, we will be describing the way Abu' people go about learning languages in general.

### 7.2.3 Foreign Language Learning

There are two basic factors that affect foreign language learning and use amongst the Abu'. One of these is the method used to learn those languages and the second the contexts or circumstances in which foreign languages can be learnt and used.

#### 7.2.3.1 Traditional Foreign Language Learning Method

The learning of other languages by the adult Abu' in the traditional Abu' setting is a non-formal process which takes place at any time and within any social setting both outside and within the Abu' frontier. There is no evidence of formalised language learning of the sort used in the present Womsis community school for learning English. The traditional process was simply put as follows:

"Taim mipela i lainim tokples olsem Miye, mipela i save harim man i toktok o kolin samting i go pas na mipela i kolin bihainim. Olsem sopos em i kolin buai long tokples Miye--em ohumbo bai mipela i kolin bihainim na sopos em i laik tok kisim paia i kam, bai em i tok: etihé umo sutehe na mipela i toktok bihainim, olsem tasol na bihain bai mipela i kisim save long toktok."<sup>9</sup>.

When we learn vernaculars such as Miye, we usually listen to a person saying something first and then we imitate him/her. If, for instance, the tutor utters the word betelnut (Areca catechu) or ohumbo in Miye, we will imitate the word ohumbo and if he says: 'bring me a fire' [Miye = etihé umo sutehe], we imitate him or her likewise. This process is continued until we grasp what we are learning.

That is, the Abu' learn other languages by listening to and imitating the speaker of whichever language one is learning. It is a virtual rote-learning process, involving the tutor saying a few lexical items and/or phrases, and allowing the student to respond in imitation of what is being said until the linguistic items are mastered, before moving on to new phrases and words. The linguistic items may be learnt in blocks or as individual words. Since there is

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<sup>9</sup>John Naisoh, Womsis village, 1982

no written tradition, this method of course depends heavily on the willingness of language tutors, as well as on the speech situations in which learning takes place.

Speech situations which prompt and enable the Abu' to learn foreign languages are similar to or identical with those described above. Because there is no trade system as such, the main speech situations in which learning of foreign languages takes place are social, cultural or political. Social contexts encompasses a wide spectrum of activities, such as inter-tribal marriages, friend-type visits, and so on. Inter-tribal marriages create situations within which the husband and wife and their close relatives come together and thus language learning occurs. The same applies to Abu' who visit non-Abu' friends. Under these social contacts, language learning is casual.

In the more formal cultural or political contexts, learning of languages is not usual, and if done, it is restricted to learning for special purposes, such as learning of a magical formulae in another language or learning the names of herbs or vines for curing diseases. Such language learning is done along with the learning of the ritual act to be learnt. Other than that, if the speaker wants to give a speech in a foreign language in a formal cultural or political setting, he must ensure that he has knowledge of that language well under control. Formal contexts demands the use of formal speech. This of course demands that public figures or public speakers learn foreign languages to be able to effectively influence the opinions of participants or attendants.

Womsis informants emphasize that their knowledge of Miye and other neighbouring languages is attributable to personal contacts or friendly associations with native speakers of the languages they know and speak. Such contacts do not necessarily occur in the locale where these languages are spoken, but also take place away from the

homeland of the foreign languages in question. Several Womsis men, including my father, reported that their learning of Miye took place in plantations in Rabaul in the late 1940s and 1950s when they ended up with fellow Miye-speaking labourers on the same stations.

My father, in particular, informed me that his passive knowledge of Miye was learnt from his Miye workmate (Sigaihe) in the early 1950s at Makurapau plantation near Kokopo in East New Britain. Likewise his smatterings of Ulau-Suain were picked up from his fellow Ulau-Suain leper patients in the 1950s and 1960s at Raihu Leper hospital near Aitape. He was not the only Abu' who learnt foreign vernaculars at the Raihu Leper hospital. Other Abu' leper patients attributed their slight knowledge not only of Ulau-Suain and Aruek but of other distant vernaculars as well from their close friends. As a matter of fact, my presence with my parents at Raihu Leper hospital gave me the opportunity to pick up smatterings of a number of vernaculars spoken in the Aitape (e.g. Valman, Ali, Tumleo and Malol), Lumi (Olo), and Nuku (Mehek) districts. My attendance at St. Anna community school in Aitape proved beneficial in so far as learning and reinforcement of my knowledge of such languages went. Olo and Mehek were spread in Aitape by a large number of Olo and Mehek labourers who were indentured to work on the coconut and cacao plantations there since the 1940s. These labourers often came with their families and relatives, and they established homesteads or camps all over the Aitape town and its immediate surrounds. Their resident Aitape populations expanded and hence the local Aitape town and its surrounding areas' populations are outnumbered by these migrants. Being the majority, their languages were also widely spoken and hence were available for smaller communities to learn or pick up through constant contact. The Abu' are a minority group, outnumbered by other larger communities. As such their language is not spoken broadly and therefore does not become available for other

speech communities to learn it, except for those immediate neighbours, such as the Miye and the Aruek who have traditional ties with them.

The Abu' are also very conscious of other people's views and attitudes towards them. Too much indulgence in vernacular use, in the Abu' view, marks one out as a buskanaka, a Tok Pisin term for hillbilly. The negative attitude probably reflects an inferiority complex that has been nurtured by the prevalent "hillbilly" designation that coastal communities in the area have either developed themselves or adopted from Europeans (especially colonial officers) and applied to inland communities such as the Abu'. To avoid the prospect of being regarded as a buskanaka by other people, the Abu' are always wary of indicators that might lay oneself open to being identified as a hillbilly.

#### 7.2.4 When are Foreign Languages Spoken?

Theoretically, foreign languages are spoken or may be spoken at any time if or when the following considerations are met:-

- a) there are Abu' speakers who are active and/or passive bilinguals in the foreign languages available for use in a given speech situation and
- b) there are foreign language speakers (usually visiting friends) and Abu' who speak the language of the visitor.

Consideration (a) implies that the speakers can be either Abu' to other Abu' or Abu' to foreigners if both groups know the foreign language, or if some speak and others only have passive control of Abu' and the foreign language. In such instances, speakers address each other in Abu' and the given foreign language and allow for passive reception in languages used. They may opt to speak in Tok Pisin or in Abu' during a given speech act, or they may code switch among languages they know. Consideration (b) implies that the foreign language speaker speaks and/or possesses receptive skills in Abu'. In the case where the foreign language speaker-participant only

understands but does not speak Abu', and likewise if the Abu' participant(s) only understand but do(es) not speak the foreigner's language, then Tok Pisin predominates. It is also common on such occasions for the Abu' speaker-participant and the foreign language speaker-participant to engage in dual-lingualism as that alluded to above. Thus, for example, the author's uncle Joseph Ubaim and his Miye wife engage in this kind of activity. Joseph addresses his wife in Abu', which she understands, and she in turn responds in Miye, which he understands but does not appear to speak too well. What is being reported of my uncle and aunt represents in general what a fair number of Abu' and Miye marriage partners do where both understand each other's language.

The mere presence of a foreign-language visitor-friend also forms an occasion for Abu' to exercise their multilingual skills in languages other than their own and may be seen taking place in both serious and lighthearted conversations. The arrival of some Womsis girls and boys at Hambini (a Wam village) to take me and family home to Womsis in August 1981 created an occasion for my father-in-law to display his knowledge of Abu', which really surprised me because up until then he had not spoken any words of Abu'. I had taken it that he did not know Abu', so all our conversations were conducted in Tok Pisin and occasionally some Miye. His Abu' wife [my mother-in-law] had been influential in my father-in-law's knowledge of Abu'.

Similar observations were reported by Peter Sutton (1978) in his sociolinguistic study of a Wik-speaking Australian Aboriginal community of Western Cape York Peninsula in North Queensland. He reports that "visitor host status is the most salient variable determining dialect-switching" (p. 164). He further qualified that by saying that there is substantial evidence of polyglottism when foreign visitors meet with hosts of a given language, and more so among agnatic and affinal

kinsmen than with distant kinsmen where the lingua franca, Wik Munkan, is used predominantly.

The Abu' do the same in that they use or attempt to use and learn the language of the host, if the host is a friend or someone they know, but tend to resort to the use of Tok Pisin when addressing foreign-language-speaking strangers, even if they know what language the stranger speaks and have some knowledge of his/her language. Until they get to know about the host, and have established some degree of friendship, they maintain their social and linguistic distance and use Tok Pisin on such occasions.

Our discussion here shows that visitor host status is a salient determining variable in Abu' and Wik communities and the closer people are to each other by marriage or established on-going friendship, the freer they feel to engage in the use of foreign languages. This practice differs from that reported of the Hemnesberget townspeople of Norway, who in "closed network groups" switch dialects less than the "open network groups" (Gumperz 1971). This being the case, it is my emphasis that among the Abu' visitor-host status is a salient determining variable in their use of foreign languages only if there is in existence an amicable relationship between the visitor and the host.

Having discussed the social variables which engender Abu' multilingualism, we should consider the various contexts in which the Abu' use foreign, Tok Pisin and the Abu' dialects. This we will do by way of mapping on a chart the contexts and types of languages used. Again our presentation is very much influenced by our Womsis data. The technique adopted at getting at these social contexts is from Hymes (1968:110). This involves getting at the words which name a given speech event. Since Abu' language does not provide precise terms to describe the numerous speech events, we shall adopt the English terms to specify them.

#### 7.2.4.1 Recent trends in Abu' use of languages available to them

An investigation of uses of different languages in different speech situations and for different purposes showed that the pattern of usage is quite complicated. This pattern is indicated by the following chart in which the following abbreviations are used for the languages concerned: TP=Tok Pisin; MYE=Miye; ENG=English; UL-SU=Ulau-Suain and ARU=Aruek.

ORAL							WRITTEN			
CONTEXT	TP	ABU'	MYE	ENG	U1-SU	ARU	OTHER	TP	ABU'	OTHERS
S Conversations										
O at home	+++	++	+							
C										
I Greetings &	+++	++	+	+	+	+	+			
A Farewell										
L										
Jokes	+++	++	+	+	+	+	+			
String band songs	+++	++		+			+			
Sport	+++	++								
Chitchat	+++	++								
Market	+++	++	+		+					
Parties	+++	++	+	+	+					
E Religious										
D instructions	+++	+						+++		
U										
C Non-religious										
A education	++			+++				+		++
T										
I Traditional										
O education	++	+++	+							
N										
A Letter								+++	++	+ (Eng)
L writing										
Notices								++		

P Orders[oral]	+++	++									
O											
L Speeches	+++	+									
I											
T Land											
I disputes	++	+++									
C											
A Sorcery											
L accusations	++	+++									
Economic											
discussions	+++	+									
C Oral											
U tradition	++	+++									
L											
T Chants,etc.	+	+++									
U											
R suluh											
A Secret-talk	+	+++									
L											
Traditional											
worship rites	+	+++									

Chart I: LANGUAGE USE BY ABU' 1980-84.

Key: [+++: considerable use; ++: frequent use; +: occasional use].

#### 7.2.5 Code-switching

The analysis of recent trends on the language use by the Abu' will be easily considered if discussed within the framework of the four sociopolitical domains used in compiling the above chart, namely, social, educational, political and cultural. Before doing that, some general remarks must be made about the Abu' pattern of

code-switching vis-à-vis the contexts and the types of social communities which engender code-switching.

It was observed elsewhere that code-switching was determined by sociocultural communities in which an individual plays a part (e.g. Sankoff (1968:193-194) and Bradshaw (1978:34)). After studying the style-shift among the Numbami, Bradshaw concluded that:

"The languages available to each Numbami roughly correspond to the organizational communities in which she or he plays a part. The use of Numbami suggests ties to the village

community, Yabem, to the church community; Tok Pisin, to the secular, national community; English, to the urban, elite community, with international ties."

The languages available to each Abu' correspond, as it were, to the various organizational communities in which she or he plays a part. Consequently, the pattern (as shown in the chart) is roughly similar to that reported of the Numbami. The use of Abu' suggests ties to traditional ways of life; other vernacular languages to neighbouring speech communities if they know their languages; Tok Pisin, to modern organizations (e.g. church, government, business, etc.) and the national PNG community at large; and English, to both national and international English-speaking communities. Each language is also suited for whatever the concerns of each Abu' cultural community. English would be inadequate for discussion of traditional aspects of Abu' life. As shown in the above chart, none of the languages, at least to the extent that any individual knows them, covers all possibilities with equal facility. Where languages overlap in their expressional capability, switching is to some extent extemporaneously determined by the interlocutors and the nature of topics entertained in a given discourse. Where they do not overlap, the speaker is obliged to switch codes or language to communicate what s/he wants to say. These general remarks can be seen in more specific detail in the following paragraphs.

#### 7.2.5.1 Social Domains

Social domains encompass a number of speech contexts including, inter alia, domestic, recreational, entertainment, arrival and departure formulae. All of these formed speech events from which we gauged an overview of verbal behaviour at the "macrosociolinguistic" level in the social domain and the observations we made at this level enhanced our analysis of verbal behaviour at the "microsociolinguistic level". At the macrosociolinguistic level we observed the pattern of

multilingualism, language switching and so on which aided us in our detailed investigation of "microsociolinguistics" in terms of what languages were used in the different speech events, such as conversation at home, greetings and farewells, jokes, chitchat at party times, language usage during folk-dances, sport, market and so on. In all of these speech events, Tok Pisin was used predominantly. Abu', though used, is never used as much in the same situations.

Miye and Ulau-Suain were the only foreign languages used in these same situations. Even so, they were used infrequently and usually only in lighthearted conversations.

All languages listed were heard used at one time or other, especially at arrival and departure sessions of Abu' and non-Abu' visitors and were evident particularly during social functions such as parties, guitar sessions and folk-dances and so on. It should be pointed out that all folk-dance songs were in Abu', but the conversations that took place during or outside lulls were conducted in Tok Pisin or Abu' and infrequently in Miye and Ulau-Suain. The choice of these languages were felt by interlocutors to add a little flavour and variety into what was virtually a bilingual Tok Pisin-Abu' speech event.

Stringband songs were borrowed mainly from Tok Pisin and were thus sung in that language. A mere handful of them were composed and sung in Abu' by members of the Womsis Hetek (Keteh spelt in reverse) Band, which since the sixties has provided a non-traditional form of social entertainment during party times. Apart from Tok Pisin guitar songs, the Abu' borrowed Buki songs and sang them in that language or translated some of them into Abu' and sang them in Abu' to allow fuller understanding of the content of the songs. Simple English songs such as "Good night, everybody, how are you?" and "John Brown's body lies a moulding in the grave" or a few Motu songs, such as Esi emu ne<sup>10</sup>, may

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<sup>10</sup>This is not strictly a Motu song. It was probably taught to the Motuans by visiting South sea Islander pastors. (Dutton, pers. com.).

also be sung often times in their distorted form. Since the fifties, Abu' people adopted and used quite frequently the Buki Arapesh system of greetings (cf. chapt. 3).

#### 7.2.5.2 Educational Domain

This domain is of two types, the traditional and the modern. Topics whose subject-matter has to do with such things as traditional education and/or knowledge and culture are conducted usually in Abu'. Those dealing with newly introduced sociopolitical and religious institutions were and are conducted virtually exclusively in Tok Pisin. Religious instruction, both written and oral, was and is always in Tok Pisin. There were oral accounts of Abu' being used by members of the Evangelical Union (a Protestant religious sect) when conducting services with its followers since they established regular contact with some Womsak villages in the 1960s, but to what extent is not known.

Letter writing has always been in Tok Pisin. Abu' has hardly ever been used for writing. For one thing, Abu' people have not been taught a suitable alphabet. When Abu' is used, therefore, writers have difficulty representing a number of important phonemes and, in particular, the glottal stop. Consequently words whose meanings are differentiated by the presence or absence of the glottal stop are often confused. For example, a man writing to his wife and trying to express his farewell to his wife used the phrase:

afi-b-i        uwab    au ! iyei!  
good-NCE-ATR night no! my gosh! (last two words are exclamatives  
denoting refusal and fear  
respectively).

To have been correct he should have said:

afi-b-i        uwab    'a'u' iye'-i  
good-NCE-ATR night wife 1SG-GEN  
'Good night my wife.'

The word au' is a negative expression denoting unwillingness. It is important to represent glottal stop to avoid unnecessary confusion

that may arise from written expression in Abu'. For a discussion of these, see Nekitel (1984). In this study the author remarked that if the glottal stop is not pronounced or written in the Abu' words that have it, the meanings of such words are going to be confused with those do not have the glottal stop (especially with minimal pairs). The nonexistence of an Abu' writing system causes the Abu' to write public notices and letters in Tok Pisin.

With the introduction of the English medium school in Womsis in 1978, English has been used inside the classroom, while Tok Pisin is the language of the playground and the village. The author was invited once by one of the teachers to sit in and observe how he conducted his class and the following were my general observations. The teacher commenced using English to issue orders or give instructions. Where students appeared to misunderstand or showed signs of misunderstanding, the instructor switched to Tok Pisin and then paraphrased whatever was being said in Tok Pisin into English. This, he informed the observer, was done to try and get his message across to the students. Though this may have appeared to be a useful way of assisting students who hardly speak English other than 'yes sir' or 'no sir' utterances, in so far as its long term effect is concerned, it was futile. Students appeared lost in the code switching process or pretended to understand when most of the time they did not. Pretence, one of the students remarked after class, was the best way of pleasing the teacher.

Thus although this approach appeared to be successful for dealing with a concept or two, it was ineffective when longer and more complex ideas were presented.

#### 7.2.5.3 Political Domain

In the modern Abu' political domain, Tok Pisin is undoubtedly the preferred language. Political speeches or orders and discussions of economic projects were and are all expressed in Tok Pisin. Abu' plays a subordinate role when such topics are discussed. Village court proceedings are conducted also in Tok Pisin most of the time. Abu' is resorted to only if defendants misunderstood orders or penalties. I was called for a few times to help clarify some of the Tok Pisin legal language I knew to the village court magistrate and the village police before they took their turns in explaining these to some elderly people who did not fully comprehend the meanings of orders and prescribed penalties. This I did by replacing those words by their rural pidgin equivalents, and if there were no rural pidgin equivalents available, I paraphrased those new Tok Pisin version of legal concepts in Tok Pisin or in Abu', depending on which language was suitable. It was particularly interesting to note that as the process of translation was repeated from one person to another, additions or alterations to the original wordings were made, and in the end the messages became confused. Because of the apparent confused nature of the translations caused by the highly anglicised wordings of the village court act, the accused readily accepted penalties imposed by the village court magistrate without properly defending themselves.

In settling land disputes or sorcery accusations, Abu' was used a lot more than Tok Pisin. Other vernacular languages were not used within the domain of modern political life.

#### 7.2.5.4 Cultural Domain

Activities that occurred within the cultural domain showed considerable use of Abu'. For example, oral histories of how different clans acquired land were often expressed in Abu' as the following anecdote shows. One day the big men from Womsis, Womsak 1 and Amom

were called together to arbitrate and settle a long-standing feud over land located in between Womsis, Amom and Womsak No. 2. The arbitration began at about 8 o'clock at night and went on till 3 o'clock in the morning of the next day. Except for restricted interspersing of Tok Pisin phrases by some of the younger men, the entire session was conducted in Abu'. Abu' was used to keep land right claims from the Tok Pisin-speaking foreigners who were present at that time. Abu' was also used to allow the spirits of ancestors to overhear what the interlocutors said about land matters that they were directly or indirectly involved in while they were still alive. Tok Pisin was not used because it would not be understood by the non-Tok Pisin-speaking spirits. Foreigners, particularly neighbours, have no right to know about stories to do with land demarcation, distribution and ownership, lest they use the information to lay false claims over disputed land. Thus the best course of action is to keep this information secret, and the best way to do that is to speak in the local vernacular.

Highly sensitive cultural activities, such as traditional worship rites, 'secret knowledge' suluh, chants nukuh and magical expressions naburawa'asi continue to be expressed in Abu'. The vernacular is preferred to Tok Pisin because of the difficulty the ritual experts have in expressing many of the traditional concepts that Tok Pisin did not or does not have the equivalents for. Moreover, ritual activities and expressions were and are directed to spirits, who, as we have pointed out above, would not understand what is or was being said if expressed in Tok Pisin.

### 7.2.6 Language Mixing by the Abu'

Abu' has, for reasons already mentioned (e.g., contact with many languages), borrowed a lot from different languages. Most noticeably in vocabulary, but also in grammar. In this section I will focus my attention on how the Abu' borrow foreign linguistic elements (especially words) and how they make them to fit into the Abu' language, thus increasing its lexical store. Lexical borrowing by Abu' from neighbouring vernaculars is less than from Tok Pisin. However, for limitations of length and time, the integration of grammatical or syntactic elements of Tok Pisin and of other vernaculars in Abu' is less pronounced and thus was not examined in detail.

Another area in which convergence is taking place is in the "content-form" (Grace 1978:20) -- the kinds of semantic categories used and the way they are arranged in utterances. Little knowledge of past convergence of elements makes it virtually impossible to determine the source language of some of the lexical items shared between Upper Abu' and Miye. These elements (cf. 7.2.1) are totally integrated into both language vocabularies. The fairly similar grammatical structure between these two languages makes the situation much more ambiguous. Both languages are members of the Kombio-Stock of the Torricelli Language Phylum (Laycock 1973, 1975).

#### 7.2.6.1 Stages of Integration of Abu' with Other Languages

Haugen [1956:39-68] outlines three stages in the process of integrating elements of one language to another. At the switching stage, he says, language boundaries are clear and speakers switch from one language to another at the word or phrase level. At the next stage, there is an overlap such that some phonetic or semantic elements are assignable to both languages and often, he says, there is

considerable vacillation in the degree of assimilation of elements. At the third stage, he says, the borrowed elements are virtually integrated into the language system of the receiving language, usually by speakers not bilingual in the donor language.

Abu' (especially the Upper Abu' dialect), Miye and Aruek share a fair number of related words, but many of them do not form part of the most important basic vocabulary. Without sufficient knowledge of possible past convergence of the three contiguous Papuan language members of the Kombio-Stock of the Torricelli Phylum (Laycock (1973 and 1975)), it is fairly difficult to determine how many of the shared items result from direct contact among the three languages and how many result from shared ancestry. Virtual integration of shared lexical items into these languages' vocabularies confuses the picture and is assisted further by the decreasing familiarity with Miye and Aruek on the part of many young Abu' speakers. General grammatical similarity among these languages does not help either. The shared vocabulary therefore could be attributed to borrowing from one language to another, or, as suggested above, could well be attributed to shared inheritance, probably from Proto-Kombio.

There are fewer than half a dozen loans which are suspected of being borrowed into Abu' vocabulary from Ulau-Suain. Clear-cut examples are the words: bul (pl.burkuh) 'pig', probably from the Ulau-Suain bwuar, which is a possible reflex of PAN \*mpRok (cf. Lynch (1983) and afi'ab 'fire' (pl.unih) a possible reflex of PAN \*api [cf. Nekitel (1977) and references therein].

Others are cultural items which are highly susceptible to borrowing. In particular two items (luw(a/e) [<Ulau-Suain luwe 'a container made out of black palm sheath for females for carrying things' and the word for bow keina (pl.keinab) [<Ulau-Suain kein 'bow']. Whether these cultural items were borrowed from the Ulau-Suain

kein we cannot be too sure. Total integration of these items into the Abu' vocabulary makes it hard to determine the donor language. The Abu' people always associate both items with the coastal Suain, from whom they claimed to have learnt the skills of making these two items. Shown in the table below are examples of some of the vocabulary Abu' shares with its neighbouring vernacular languages.

Table 7-1: Phonologically Similar words between Upper-Abu' and its Neighbouring Language Communities.

Abu'	Miye	Aruek	Ulau-Suain	Gloss
sg. / pl.				
1. ina' / ifa'	ine	iik	i:	you
2. emi/emi	emiye	?	si	who
3. alman/almam	elmel	elme	ramat	man
4. berita/beritok	berite	hameng	tawet	bed
5. lufah/lufokwih	lufaha	rowein	rawen	calico
6. mahin/mahis	mahite	wedj	wuluot	meat
7. bul/burkuh	nubale	uruok	bwuar	pig
8. luwa/luwehes	luwe	?	luwe	female container made from black sheet
9. kul'uta/kul'utok	kukute	kurukut	luwe	male version of item no. 8.
10. keina/keinab	ke	damai	kein	bow
11. afi'ab/unih	sutehe	?	ya(h)	fire
12. buhuna/buhunab	buhi	erungel	abuwas	sugarcane
13. numab/numebis	numandil	numab	sus	breast
14. lawak/lawas	lowete	leu	ai	tree
15. naluh/nalih	nalhi	?	luwok	tooth
16. numunal/numunakuh]numoule		?	ut	louse
17. lehis/lehis	lehungule	lehum	?	sago (starch)
18. belau [baby talk]	mbelau	mbulau	rabi	stirred sago
19. belhenina/belhehim]	belhehi]	?	bum	grand father/son

20. mohun>mohulihim	mehinei	?	?	in-law	
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### 7.2.6.2 Phonological Assimilation of Foreign Words

Abu' being a noun classifying language, foreign loanwords must be made to fit into the noun class system and thus be made to fit into the open and closed Abu' syllable pattern. In this respect, loanwords into Abu' fall into two phonological categories, unassimilated and partially-assimilated. The former is manifested by the singular forms of loanwords which are borrowed (usually) wholesale and used in the language. The latter contains the pluralized forms of the foreign loanwords, taking on the plural suffixes of the noun class the foreign words become part of (see chapt. 3).

### 7.2.6.3 Tok Pisin Phonology

Tok Pisin, for example, is well integrated into Abu'. However because it is universally known, most of its loans can be readily recognized. Phonological distortion of Tok Pisin loans is slight and characterized mainly by non-phonemic distinction of the phoneme / p / of Abu' with the Tok Pisin free allophones [p] and [f] such that given a word like /pater/, it is phonetically realized as [pater ~ pater ~ fater] as noted in chapter 3. This interchangeable use of the phones concerned are not only restricted to the initial position of borrowed Tok Pisin words. They are also in free variation in the medial and final positions as well.

Mixing of /b/ and /p/ has also been noted, but such interchange is sporadic and usually the result of speech defects. For example, "pope" was heard pronounced by a few Womsis people as [bop, pof, bop or pof]. Most Tok Pisin loans fit perfectly into the Abu' open or closed syllable pattern as shown in the list below.

Table 7-2: Phonologically assimilated loans from Tok Pisin.

Abu'	Tok Pisin	Gloss
sg.      pl.		
21. kalabu'>kalabuhes	klambu(archaic)	mosquito net
22. krahу >kralhuwa	kar	plane/car
23. tamio' >tamiawa	tamiok	tomahawk/axe
24. lufah >lufokwih	laplap	calico
25. bataul >bataukuh	botoł	bottle
26. saref >saris	sarep	grass-knife
27. sufun >sufunab/	spun	spoon
>sufuhes		
28. bal >bakuh	bal	ball
29. siot >siotok	siot	shirt
30. koukou >koukouim	kongkong	Chinese

#### 7.2.6.4 Unnecessary Loanwords

Abu' people engage in a lot of borrowing from Tok Pisin not only of new cultural items but also of referentially unnecessary words. This is done when they find Abu' inadequate in its expressive capacity, or when they find it clumsy. The Abu' use Tok Pisin words even when perfectly suitable Abu' equivalents are available. Tok Pisin merely provides extra set of synonyms which become readily available for use during conversations. It is not easy, therefore, to determine what constitutes a genuine loanword. The following table gives some well-used but unnecessary loanwords from Tok Pisin.

Table 7-3: Well-used 'unnecessary' loans from Tok Pisin.

Tok Pisin	Abu' equivalent	Gloss
31. miksim	bilibilanas	'to mix'
32. helpim	ada'as (uma anen)	'to help'
33. kom	karukuh	'comb'
34. tambu	sadasufa	'taboo'
35. tambu	mohun	'male in-law'
36. tambu	mekan	'female in-law'
37. save	mekawas	'to know'
38. tintin	ru'um	'feeling/idea'
39. longlong	masese-	'insane'
40. redi	dida'	'ready'
41. sikirap	re'as	'urge/desire'

Borrowing of Tok Pisin elements beyond the word level is characterized by phrases or sentences which usually get drawn into Abu' utterances. People may begin an utterance in Abu' and then throw

in a few Tok Pisin words or phrases and revert to Abu'. Or they begin with utterances in Abu' and complete the sentence or conversation in Tok Pisin. Interspersing Tok Pisin utterances with Abu' words or phrases is not so common. The following extracts from an Abu' conversation by a Womsis man about a sick woman are meant to show the process involved. In the extract Tok Pisin loans are underlined.

m -e -hara-' m -e -k -ahe' kani hausik  
 we-IRR-take-her we-IRR-FUT-go to hospital  
 'We are taking her to the hospital'

m -a -hara- ' uma medikol m-a-ha m-a'i anen  
 we-PST-take-her to medical(orderly) we-PST-want we-PST-think he  
 n-e-da' haliv-im-a-' ma uwe'etin  
 he-PST-make help-TRANS-3sfOBJ-her but NEG  
 'We took her to the medical orderly and thought that he would help  
 her but he did not.'

orait na kaunsol a n-a-da' salim-a dikebseh uma amum  
 okay so councillor he-R -make send -ENCLTC message PREP 3MPL  
 'And so the councillor did send message to the men.'

amum m-a'i ehiehi m -a -ha'-i ma m-a -taka tem  
 3mpl 3mpl-want quickly 3mpl -PST -come -ILL so 3mpl -PST time  
 ene'i kaunsol n-a-k-ada' put-im-e-n uma uwa'  
 REL councillor 3mpl-IRR- make put-OBJ-EM-NCE for NEG  
 'They did not come quickly according to the time set down  
 by the councillor'.

esse-i e-kenih-es-i liklik wari iye'i dau' enei.  
 3PL-DEM-DSTL 1SG -PST-say-things-POSS  
 liklik wari iye'-i dau e-n-ei'  
 little worry 1SG-POSS that DEM-NCE-DEM-DSTL DTC  
mi nogat bik-pela toktok.  
 1S NEG big-fellow talk/message  
 'Regarding the little worry I have expressed that is all.  
 I do not have any important message.'

In the following extract from a conversation in Tok Pisin, Abu' words are underlined.

Em i stap long suburum.  
 3s(thing) be exist-Vb prep bamboo-grill  
 It is on the bamboo-grill.

kis-im alhu'ebis i kam na put-im dei'  
 bring-trvb-obj-suffix eggs pred.mkr bring and put-trvb-suffix aside  
 'Get the eggs, bring them here and put them separately.'

The following examples show how one of the Womsis informants tried to explain the origin of the development of one of the oratory styles alluded to in chapter 5 in Tok Pisin. (See kwianif).

Em kwianif, kwianif tu olsem fededawari lawak. 3s(that thing) kwianif(oratory), kwianif adv. 3s-real-came-down tree. That thing called kwianif (a special kind of oratory) also came down from a tree.)<sup>11</sup>

Em desela samting bilong tambaran, Tokples ol i kolin (moulesiwa). (3s(that thing) thing Poss. tambaran, vernacular 3pl.(human) press-call moulesiwa (third grade of the cult). That thing belonging to the tambaran cult is called moulesiwa or the third grade of the (tambaran cult.)

On examination of Tok Pisin loans in Abu', the pattern appears to fit perfectly with a hypothesis proposed by Bradshaw (1978:39) which states that:

"..., there is a direct correlation between degree of bilingualism and extent of borrowing. At one end of the scale, where bilingualism is restricted (to certain contexts or certain speakers), only those items for which no adequate equivalents exist in the target language are likely to be borrowed. Where bilingualism in both the source language and receiving language is universal, almost anything goes-- even grammatical words."

#### 7.2.6.5 Semantic Expansion

Influenced partly by Louis Hjelmslev's (1961) idea of the "content-form" of lexicon of language, Grace (1978) reasserts a major distinction between two components of language, namely "content-form" and its "lexification" (p.20). In Grace's view, the "content-form" comprises "everything concerned in the conceptualization of the message, while the second consists just in the pronunciation of words" (ibid.). The content-form not only includes the semantic content of words but also incorporates everything on how the lexicon is organized in the recipient language system while lexification is mainly concerned with the semantic content. Language contacts quite often result in convergence of linguistic elements from one language to another and thus create apt contexts from which the two processes are likely to be seen at work. As already mentioned, Abu' being a noun classifying

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<sup>11</sup> Tambaran is metaphorically described as coming down from trees. This is an indirect allusion to tambaran camps, which used to be built under big trees in well-hidden spots in the forest.

language, loans (especially nouns) must automatically conform with Abu' rules of noun classification and thus subject themselves to the morphosyntactic rules of the language governing the noun classes the loans become part of.

Where there were difficulties in the process of Abu'anization of certain foreign concepts, the Abu' are compelled to coin words to approximate the meaning of such loan words. In the area of transport for instance, we note the word /krahu'/ which can mean 'plane', 'car' or 'ship'. This word indicates that although the concept is foreign (probably borrowed from Buki, cf.chapt.3), the constituent elements and the rules governing their combination are genuinely native. The constituent elements comprise {kr- + hu'} 'rolling sound + 'to move away/go'. The infixated {-a-} has no meaning and is inserted merely to break up consonant clusters to lessen constraints on articulation. Thus krahu' is conceptualized as a mobile object that emits rolling sound. The Abu' being from inland, planes were the first flying objects they saw and hence named them kralhuwa 'planes' accordingly and for a while the meaning was restricted only to planes. However, when they saw cars and ships (most notably during the Second World War), they had to find ways to distinguish each one of the 'automobiles'. To do that they merely describe them by way of circumlocution, thus krahu' + iluhu'i =krahu' + sky+GEN 'plane', krahu' + itafi'i = krahu' + earth+GEN 'car' and krahu' ausu'i = sea+GEN 'ship'. The resultant compound morphemes can thus be approximated to the English 'airplane' (or 'airmobile'), 'car' ('landmobile') and 'ship' ('seamobile'). Krahu' assumes the female gender affix, probably to reflect the Abu' view that an object that has something to do with bearing or carrying people must by analogy, be a member of the female gender. At the present, most young Abu' people prefer the use of the Tok Pisin balus (or more recently

(plen), kar and sip, still take the feminine singular and plural subject prefixes, namely, k<sup>w</sup>-(sg.) and wa-(pl.).

There are also loans whose semantic contents are being superimposed, as it were, on native words that express similar functions or ideas, thus enabling the semantic range of the native terms to expand and include the meanings of the loans, alongside the meanings of existing native words. For instance, when the eating or cutting knife was introduced, the Abu' added its meaning to the native term for an improvised sharp bamboo strip called nuketefikl used in pre-contact times for shaving or cutting soft objects. Thus the bamboo knife was used rather like a razor blade, and in fact that was how razor blades were called initially. On the other hand, knives used for eating or cutting have since contact been called nuketes (sg.nuketef). The same principle applies to monetary terms. Coins that the Abu' saw for the first time must have been visualized as stones utaba (sg.utam), especially white and shiny pebbles, and the pound or dollar note(s) probably looked like leaves (suus sg.suuf) and so they were named: utam/utaba 'coin/coins' and suuf/suus '(pound) note(s)'. Moreover, the introduction of other cultural items such as knives and calico obliged the Abu' to provide referential terms for them and thus they coined alibal (pl.alibakuh) 'knife/knives' and lufah (pl.lufokwihi) 'calico/calicos'. Apart from the possibility of borrowing, these two terms do not seem to have any clear derivational history within the Abu' lexicon and are therefore regarded as post-contact creations.

Language mixing discussed above raises a question on whether or not there is evidence of loan translation or calquing, the process where the recipient language (i.e. Abu') traces forms and contents of

words onto Tok Pisin loan words. In the following short paragraph I will consider this process.

#### 7.2.7 Loan Translation

In her discussion of loan translation, Bynon (1977:232) observed that:

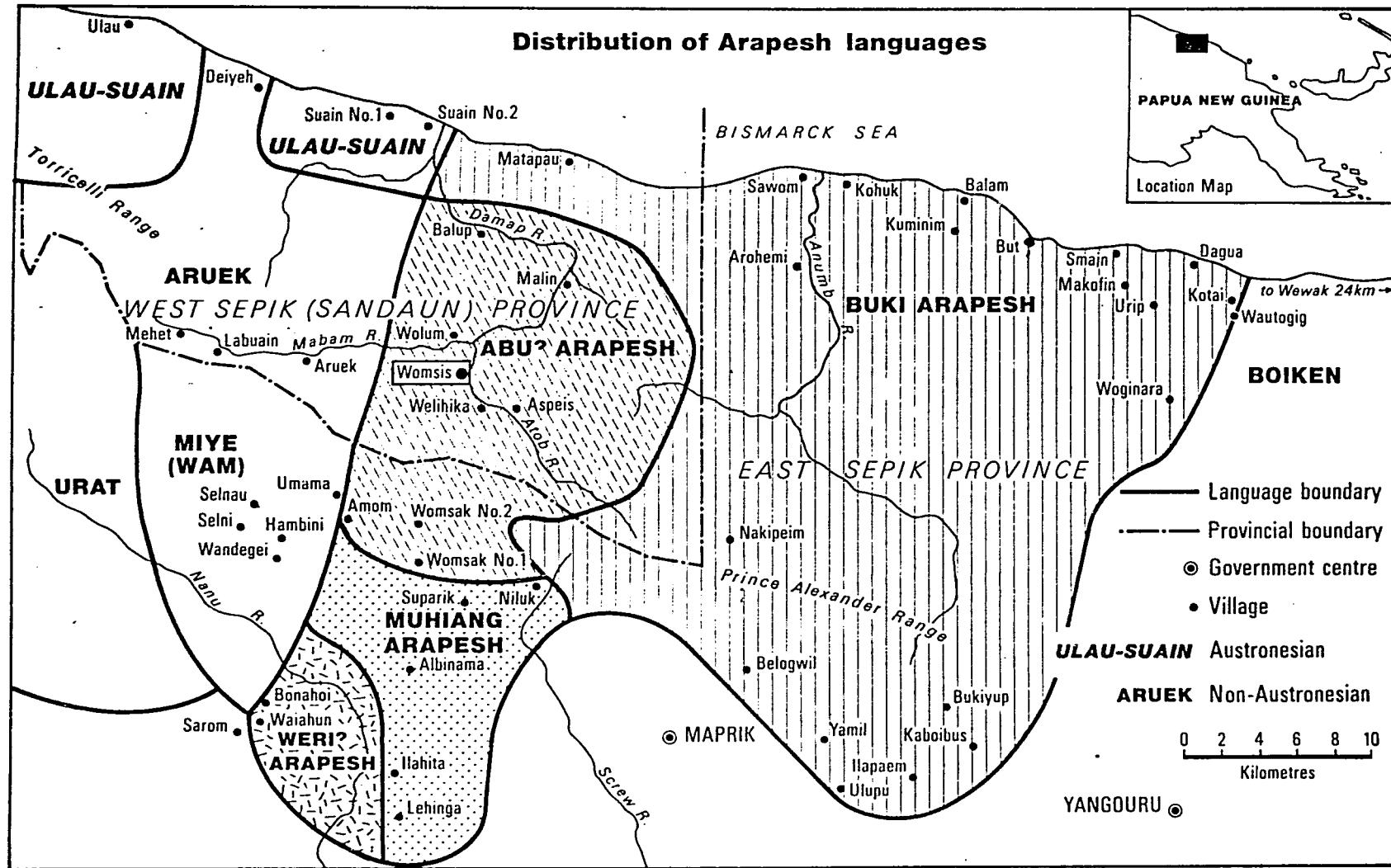
"..., the choice of constituent morphs and the overall meaning of the new constructs will be modelled on the foreign source, the constituent elements themselves and the rules governing their combination will be native."

Loan translation of Tok Pisin words are not readily evident. The one area in which calquing is apparent is in the system of greetings where the Tok Pisin form of greetings are translated phrase by phrase into equivalent morphemes in Abu'. Such calques are illustrated in Abu' afuhī numunah 'good day' and afubi uwab 'good night'.

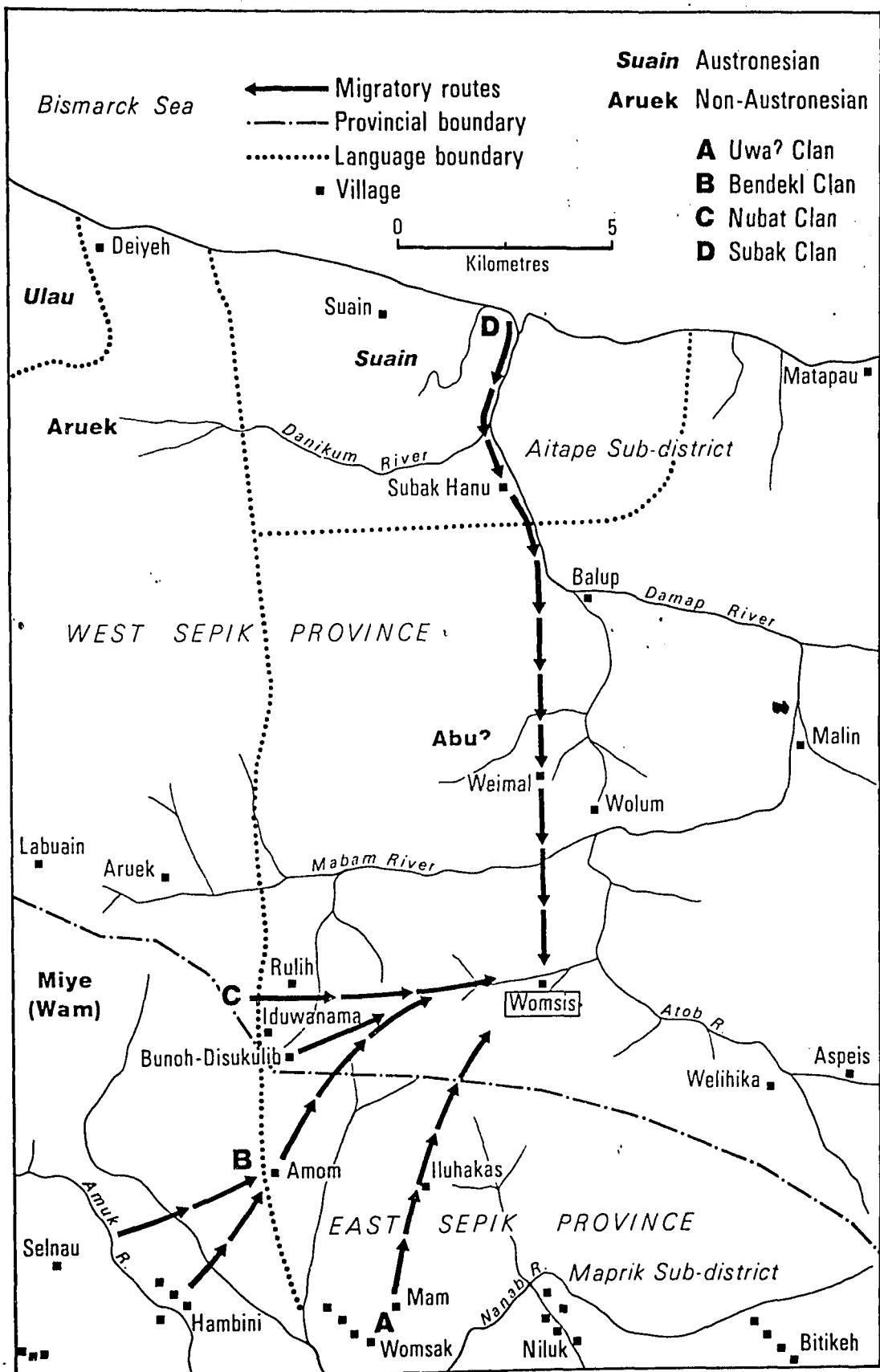
#### 7.3 Summary

The present relationships among the languages in which the Abu' are multilingual can be visualized more plausibly as a number of overlapping circles. However, in view of the increasing universal knowledge of Tok Pisin and its universal usage in most speech situations, as pointed out in (7.1.10) within and beyond the Abu' frontier, the learning of other vernacular languages is no longer felt to be a need. Tok Pisin has overcome many communicative obstacles, particularly with regard to cross-cultural or cross-linguistic communication. It seems therefore not an impossible proposition to suggest at this juncture that, in the foreseeable future, knowledge of other vernaculars will diminish, and that the Abu' multilingual situation will alter from overlapping circles to a mere concentric one where Abu' will represent the inner-circle, while Tok Pisin occupies the outer-circle. This, it is presumed, will remain for many years to come, provided that the Abu' people ensure that their vernacular is passed

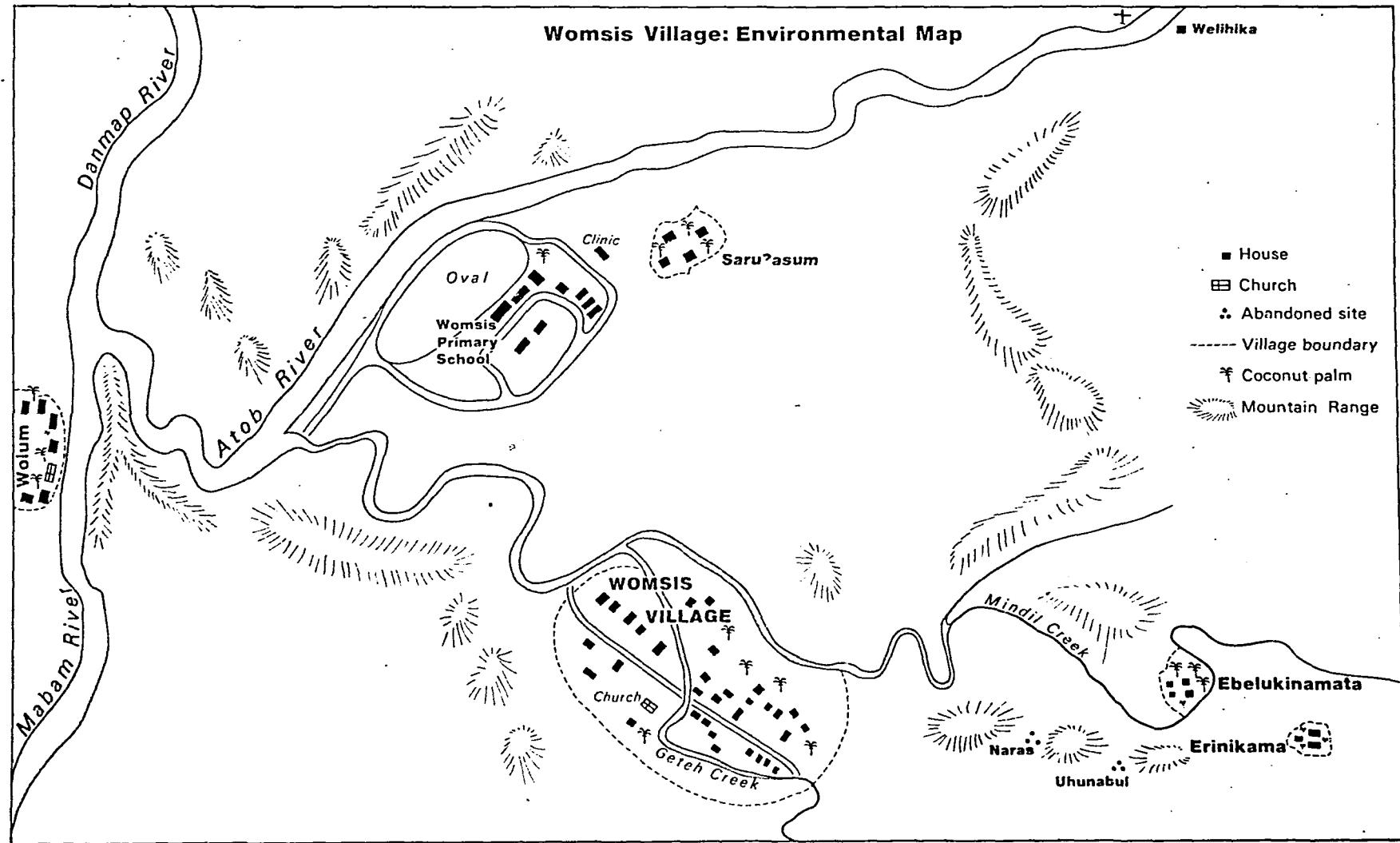
on to their children. However, considering that an increasing number of Abu' children in Womsis and other Abu'-speaking West Sepik villages only know smatterings of the vernacular, and are native speakers of Tok Pisin, the potential danger of Abu' being reduced, or worse still being replaced in its communicative role, is not an impossibility.



Source: Nekitel (1977)

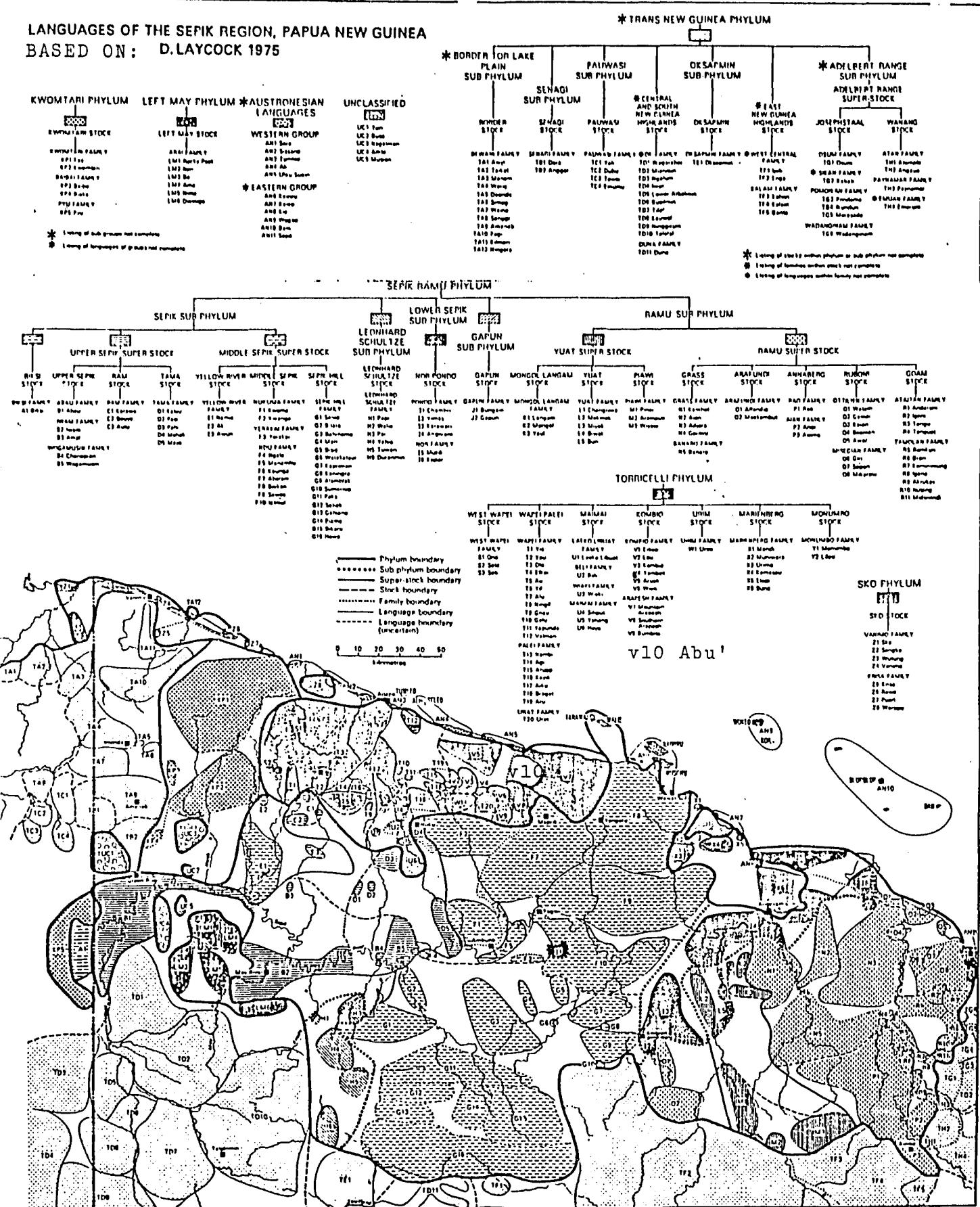


Source: Nekitel (1975)



Source: Nekitel (1982 Fieldwork)

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BASED ON: D. LAYCOCK 1975**



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