

Organised Phonology Data

Mekeo Language [MEK]

Bereina – Central Province

Oceanic; *Peripheral Papuan Tip*; West Central Papuan Chain

Population census: 12.000 (1980)

Major villages: Ongofoina, Inauaisa

Linguistic work done by: Catholic Church, SIL

Data checked by: Chung (April 1992), updated 1995

Phonemic and Orthographic Inventory

a a: e e: ŋ f i i: k l m n o o: p s t u u:
 a aa e ee g f i ii k l m n o oo p s t u uu
 A Aa E Ee G F I Ii K L M N O Oo P S T U Uu

Consonants

	Bilab	LabDen	Dental	Alveo	Postalv	Retro	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyn	Glottal
Plosive	p		t					k			ʔ
Nasal	m		n					ŋ			
Trill											
Tap/Flap											
Fricative		f		s							
Lateral Fricative											
Approx											
Lateral Approx			l								
Ejective Stop											
Implos											

p	papea	'let him/her/it walk'		n	nao	'white skin people'
	apa	'great grand parents'			enia	'grass skirt'
m	mao	'big betel nut'		s	-	
	emia	'it happened'			isa	'he / she / it'
f	fapea	'I should walk'		l	lau	'I'
	afa	'price'			mala	'tongue'
t	tiapu	'cloth'		k	kapu	'bald'
	ita	'bat'			ake	'mouth'

ŋ	gau	'son'	ʔ	apu	'hole'
	maaga	'his eyes'		a'e	'liver'

Vowels

i	u
e	o
ɑ	

Long vowels: /ii/, /ee/, /oo/, /uu/, and /aa/ are interpreted as geminates.

i	ifo	'oneself'	ɑ	aka	'name'
	fike	'winged ant'		kaga	'similar'
	ili	'to collapse'		uma	'garden, pig'
	kiana	'small ant'		faega	'bush track'
e	efo	'to turn'	ii	iifa	'saying'
	pege	'sago'			
	ile	'mat'	ee	eeke	'broken shell pieces'
	keaga	'road'			
u	uga	'vomiting'	uu	uu	'lice'
	ekupu	'bush'			
	paigu	'to rub'	oo	oofu	'bush string'
	pua	'fruit name'		kooga	'coconut'
				ooi	'sugar cane'
o	oka	'lizard'	aa	aafu	'widower'
	molao	'you go'		faai	'yesterday'
	ako	'small boy'			
	faoga	'lime gourd'			

Suprasegmentals (tone, stress, length)

Stress is phonemic. Most poly-syllabic words carry stress on either the antepenultimate or the penultimate syllable. Stress is used to distinguish present-future tense from past tense.

<i>la'lao</i>	'I went'	<i>ala'lao</i>	'I did not go'	<i>alo'mai</i>	'you(sg) did not go'
<i>'lalao</i>	'I am going'	<i>a'lalao</i>	'I shall go'	<i>a'lomai</i>	'you will go'

Syllable Patterns

V	e 'yes'	i.pi 'tapa cloth'	o.i.so 'three'	ma.gu.a.e 'male'
VV	uu 'lise'	aa.u 'my elder brother'		
CV	lo 'fire'	fo.ga 'smell'	u.fa.ga 'crab'	ga.pi 'night'
CVV		maa.e 'tree sp.'		

Conventions: Phonological

/t/ is pronounced [t̚ ~ ts] before [i], and [t] elsewhere.

Conventions: Orthographic

Phonemic stress is not written.

The velar nasal /ŋ/ written as <g> and the glottal stop written as <'> may be a problem in that they can be confused with <g> in English and with an apostrophe. Glottal plosive occurring word initially is not written.

Transcription of a recorded passage

/ lau akau leo agu || mafe isonionina pau alaifania || lai ufumai keapamai mafe emai | puinapuai eafia a uga pau isonionina alaifaina || isa mafe auga ega keifaoma || kofio ifiao/i auni/i kinai kemiamia || ifiao i puaina auga eake feisako elao || elao auga mafe fopa emia gaagai egae eka || pau ifiao faniau eake elao feisai aisama eifaga || isa akina eifaga auga akina egae ma/o fai eka elogo || oi kapai eoma aisama ein aka | lau inamo/e lakae aloisau ma || ke lau alaisao kapa agao pitoga lakae loisau ma || o | eoma epaeal ai emai paiu emia || aga auni/i keniniani eapeape elaolao egae kai epainia einaka | ma/o pau ina/a ama /a kelo/u kepalifui/a puo | lau lamai inamo/e ina koa loisau auga pau mafe lamia /

< Lau akau Leo agu. Mafe isonionina pau alaifania. Lai ufumai keapamai mafe emai, puinapuai eafia auga pau isonionina alaifaina.

Isa mafe auga ega keifaoma. Kofio ifiao'i auni'i kinai kemiamia. Ifiao ipuaina auga eake feisako elao. Elao auga mafe fopa emia gaagai egae eka. Pau ifiao faniau eake elao feisai aisama eifaga. Isa akina eifaga auga akina egae ma'o fai eka elogo. Oi kapai eoma aisama einaka, "Lau inamo'e lakae aloisau ma? Ke lau alaisao kapa agao pitoga lakae loisau ma?" "O!", eoma epaealai emai paiu emia. Aga auni'i keniniani eapeape elaolao egae kai epainia einaka, "Ma'o pau ina'a ama'a kelo'u kepalifui'a puo, lau lamai inamo'e ina koa loisau auga pau mafe lamia."

Lau alakipo alalao kipogai egae alaagu, isa aaga eapepe eisa e'agau kae, fei eafia elao. Elaomo isa ekipo eake emai, puinapu feinai egae maofai eofau, afu aka auga pagua. Egae maofai eofau, au aka Fafuau Ai'i, egani amagai eake elao, maaga gaikua eoma aisama, mafe egae gagai eofau eisa. "Te!" Ga au pua kapa kai felo ipauma, pitoga eoma eafia. Elao isa epanipia einaka, "Lau akau mafe.", eoma. "Kapai emai auga ega isonioni maagai eifania efua." Kai epainia einaka, "Fafoko amagai alouegekae aisama alolao egae maofa papagai, fokiu foake kepo egae, lau ogau egae ekae aloafia." Amagai au apaoga eake elao aisama, oga egaina eafia eagau emai.

Isa e'a mapegai mafe egaina efaunia. Mafe egaina euki elao aagoaimo eagau. Eagau aisama isa eafia ega la'afoumo aaga akina mo epeni'i keufaisa. Emai inae Inauaisa pagua, agapuge ofuga pagau, isa ifogamo efunia elaoaina, elao Fa'afa'a umagai aisama mafe ega'ina efaunia efopa aisama, efakeisa isa agaakina Inauaisa, Efoa, inafokoa, alakainamo epeni'i, pau ma'oaimo mafe kefauga. Ega'ina auga Iseku, Inauaisa emi a'a mafe isonionina ega ekaoma.

Ke mafe lokou isonioniai keifania, afu'iai mafe euki auga, lainapa akafa mafe eu gapia auga oko. Mafe isonionina inae efua. >

Bibliography

Chung, Jesoon, and Jungok Chung. 1991. 'Mekeo tentative phonology.' Manuscript, SIL, Ukarumpa.