

Organised Phonology Data

Melpa (Meldpa) Language [MED] Mt. Hagen – Western Highlands Province

Trans New Guinea Phylum; *East New Guinea Highlands Stock;* Central (Chimbu) Family; Hagen Subfamily

Population census: 128,000 [69,000+59,000] (1981)

Major villages: Ogelbang, Kumba, Avi, Tega, Mt Hagen

Linguistic work done by: Lutheran, SIL

Data checked by: Al Stucky (1994)

Phonemic and Orthographic Inventory

a ^mb ⁿd ⁿd̥ e ^ŋg r i j k l̥ l L m n ŋ ŋ
 a mb,mp nd,nt nd,nt eg,ngg,ngi i y k lt,ldl † m n n ng
 A Mb Nd Nd E G,Ng I I Y K Ld L Ē M N N Ng

 o p r t t̥ u u u w
 o p r t t̥ u u u w
 O P R T T̥ U U U W

Consonants

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

^mb/ voiced prenasalised bilabial plosive

ⁿd/ voiced prenasalised alveolar plosive

^ŋg/ voiced prenasalised velar plosive

ⁿd̥/ voiced prenasalised dental plosive

/w/ voiced labial-velar approximant

/dl / alveolar - dental cluster

p	pa kupa op	'you go!' 'cloud' 'yams'	n	nun ana nun	'you gave' 'brother' 'you gave'
^m b	mba kumba omp	'he will go' 'door' 'sugar cane'	r	rapa ara kur	'men's house' 'name' 'spirit'
m	ma koma om	'mother' 'cool' 'he is coming'	l	lala pɔla mil	'to sob' 'you two go' 'trap'
w	wu ruwa	'man' 'banana'	ɮ	ɬawa paɬa muɬ	'wrong' 'fence' 'egg'
t̪	tin keta ɯt	'you took it' 'mouth' 'cold'	ld	ldapa ɯldɯ mɯld	'torn' 'other side' 'to dance singsing'
ⁿ d̪	ndi manda ant	'hair' 'close to' 'sun'	k	kaʒa paka ak	'you cook' 'posts' 'person's name'
ɲ	nɯk mana kɯn	'they talked' 'down' 'and'	ⁿ g	ngu mang panga	'teeth' 'insect ruined sweet potatoe' 'inside of pandanus'
t	towa wuta ekit omba	'big' 'father' 'he will come outside'	ŋ	nun kanim kan	'gave' 'son' 'boy'
ⁿ d̪	nde nonda punt	'tree' 'mushroom' 'I am going'	j	ya uiyo	'here' 'you come!'

Vowels

i	ɯ	u			
ɪ	ʊ				
e		o			
	ɑ				
i	ip kitum ki	'salt' 'intestine' 'hand'	e	elim petum nde	'he,she' 'it's staying' 'tree'
ɪ	- pipil	'shame'	ɑ	and kanapa namba	'sun' 'corn' 'what?'

u	utuma	'tomorrow'	ai	aiya	'sister,brother'
	kumb	'young'		kraipa	'lightning'
	ku	'stones'		kai	'good'
ʉ	ʉt enim	'it's cold'	ui	uiyo	'you come!'
	mura	'good smell'		puiyo	'all the people'
	mbu	'plural'		ui	'time'
o	owa	'dog'	ʉi	ʉi	'tail'
	mon	'fruit'		pʉiyo	'you all go!'
	mbo	'seed'		kʉ i	'bird'
ʊ	und	'before'	oi	oi.enim	'laugh'
	wuta	'father'		goimba	'grasshopper'
	-			boi ninim	'something falls down'
ei	ei	'this'	ou	oundpa	'plenty'
	wei	'very'		krou	'empty'

/ei/

/ai/

/oi/ /ou/

/ui/

/ʉi/

Suprasegmentals (tone, stress, length)

In verbs the stress falls on the first /a/ or first syllable of singular person number of the present and past tenses. In the future tense and dual and plural person number of the present and past tenses the stress falls on the final syllable.

In all other words, the stress falls on the first /a/ or diphthong or first syllable if there is none of these.

Syllable Patterns

V	i 'like this'	o .ka 'sweet potato'		
VV	ei 'this'	ai .ya 'sister/brother'		
VC	op 'yam'	el .pa 'different'	ki ud 'finger nail'	
VVC	aim 'milk'			
CV	ku 'stone'	ne .ma 'louse'	e . pi .nda.ma 'afternoon'	ka .na. pa 'corn'
CVV	rui 'axe'	ngoi .mba 'grasshopper'	mu . lui 'you all stay'	
CVC	kun 'straight'	mor .mun 'we are staying'	na . nim 'myself'	
CVVC	koip 'obedient'		ru . laip 'line of people'	
CCVV	krai .pa 'lightning'			
CC	kng 'pig'			

Conventions: Phonological

The vowel [a] is pronounced [ʌ] in unstressed syllables.

The prenasalized phonemes /^mb/, /ⁿd/, /ⁿḑ/ and /^ŋg/ are voiceless when they occur word finally.

Conventions: Orthographic

The phonemes /i/ and /ɪ / are both written <i>, and the phonemes /u/ and /ʊ/ are both written <u>.

The allophones of the phoneme /^mb/ are written <mb> and <mp> respectively.

The phonemes alveolar /t/ and dental /t̪/ are both written <t>.

The allophones of the phoneme /ⁿd/ are written <nd> and <nt> respectively.

The dental phoneme /ⁿḑ/ is written <nd>.

The allophones of the phoneme /^ŋg/ are written <g>, <ngg> and <ngk>.

The phonemes alveolar /n/ dental /n̪/ and velar /ŋ/ are all written <n>.

The allophones of /ld/ are written <ld> and <lt> respectively.

Transcription of a recorded passage

/
 ama uⁿd kor ŋa kaŋ wu kat a^mb kiŋaŋ niŋ pikil puruŋ || puk a^mb kiŋaŋ maŋŋa ila moruŋ || puk molk kən
 a^mb kiŋaŋ nətəŋ || kiŋaŋ nək mo^lina al kona ei ja noⁿda raŋ^mba pilpa itim || i eliŋa kən | kaŋ wu ^mbə eni
^mb ro^luŋa kən | mana maŋa rukina ^mbila elpa elpa ur petəŋ || kaŋ wu mat a^mb kiŋaŋ nək moruŋ i eliŋina
 ro^lim puⁿdi ni wa^mb ei ja | o^mba a^mbu^la ti ŋa wur ila mo^lpa | a^mb ei ja kiŋaŋ nitim || i eliŋa elim ^mbo k
 aŋ wu mel ra^lpa kən | kiŋaŋ ni^mba murum || kaŋ wu ti ndi kur ei ja kaⁿdpa ^mbi ⁿdupa kən ni^mba mel | ni
 m ila na^mbu^l itin un | nitim || kur ei ja ni^mba mel | na a^mb kiŋaŋ ni^mb nə^mb unt | ei ka || wote ^mbo kaŋ w
 u ei ja ⁿdi ni^mba mel | nim maⁿda kel kən pi || nitim || ro^lim puⁿdi ni wa^mb ei ja o^mba ^mba etpa mel a^mbu
 la ti roⁿdpa tepa purum || ei ja mel maⁿda /

< Ama unt kor nga kang wu kat amp kinan ning pikil purung. Puk amp kinan manga ila morung. Puk molk kən
 amp kinan nətəŋ. Kinan nək, mo^lina al kona ei ya nondpa rangmba pilpa itim. I elinga kən, kang wu
 mbə enimp ro^luŋa kən, mana manga rukina mbila elpa elpa ur petəŋ. Kang wu mat amp kinan nək
 morung i elingina Ro^lim Pundi ni wamp ei ya, omba ambu^la ti nga wur ila mo^lpa, amp ei ya kinan nitim.
 I elinga elim mbo kang wu mel ra^lpa kən, kinan nimba murum. Kang wu ti ndi kur ei ya kandpa mbi
 Ndupa kən nimba mel, "Nim ila nambu^l itin un?" nitim. Kur ei ya nimba mel, "Na amp kinan nimp
 nəmp unt, ei ka!" Wote mbo kang wu ei ya ndi nimba mel, "Nim manda kel kən pi." nitim. Ro^lim Pundi
 ni wamp ei ya omba mba etpa mel ambu^la ti roⁿdpa tepa purum. Ei ya mel manda.>

'Long time ago some men from my village went in order to turn head with some girls. They kept turning head
 until midnight. The kept on staying and the women sang turning head. Singing, some men were still half asleep
 on the floor. But some of them kept on turning head with some girls. Right at that time, a devil called Pundi was
 there sitting near a girl and started to turn head with her. They did not know it was a devil because he pretended
 to be a real man and stayed. There was one man who watching him realized who he was, and said to him, "Why
 did you come here?" The spirit then said, "I came to turn head with those girls." So the real man told Ro^lim
 Pundi that he could leave now. So he got up and came outside and he killed on girl and then went away. That's
 the story.'

Bibliography

Stucky, Al. 1990. Manuscripts. SIL, Ukarumpa.