FIRST THINGS FIRST IN DOBU

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0. INTRODUCTION

The Dobu language is spoken by some seven thousand people on Dobu
and Sanaroa and adjacent small islands and also on the adjacent coasts
of Fergusson and Normanby Islands. It is a lingua franca used through-
out the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, and to a smaller extent throughout the
rest of the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea.

This grammar paper is written in the hope that it will help
educated Dobu speakers to understand more of the structure of their
language, and that it will also help others who want to learn about
the Dobu language.

There seems to be a general principle in the Dobu language that
the most important things are followed by the things which are of
secondary importance.

In this paper we consider first an important group of Dobu
suffixes:

-gu	'my'
-mu/-yo	'your'
-na	'his/her/its'
-da	'our(inclusive)'
-ma	'our(exclusive)'
-mi	'your(plural)'
-di	'their'

These suffixes are found with many kinds of words in the Dobu language,
and we will see how they refer back to something which has been
mentioned before (or is known about). Then in later sections we
consider compound words, and focus in clause and discourse, and the
way in which the principle applies to them.

1. DOBU WORDS

1.1 Explanation of roots, stems, prefixes, suffixes

Most Dobu words have a central part called 'the root' or 'the
stem'. If we hear that part alone it usually means something to us.
Small particles of words may be attached to the root or stem, and these
particles have meaning only when they are attached. On the front of
a word these particles are called 'prefixes'. At the end of a word
they are called 'suffixes'.

Many common roots can be used for the name of a thing and also for an action. The names of things we call 'nouns', and actions we call 'verbs'. For example,

paisewa standing alone is a noun meaning 'work'

but 'i-paisewa means 'he-works'.

The particle 'i- is a prefix which shows which person does the action.

Roots like paisewa can also follow another noun in order to describe it or modify its meaning.

'eda-paisewa
road-work

This means 'work-road', and it is a compound noun-stem. Note how in Dobu the most important part of the compound comes first.

1.2 Subject prefixes

We have seen that the prefix 'i- attached to a verb means 'he'. Below is a list of the other prefixes which show what person does the action. The doer of the action is called the subject of the verb.

'I	work'	ya-paisewa
'You	work'	'u-paisewa
'He, she or it	works'	'i-paisewa
'We(inclusive) = all of us	work'	ta-paisewa
'We(exclusive) = we but not you	work'	'a-paisewa
'You(plural) = all of you	work'	wa-paisewa
'They	work'	si-paisewa

Note that the English word 'you' is used for 'u- and wa- in Dobu, also the English word 'we' is used for ta- and 'a- in Dobu. But 'he', 'she' and 'it' are all represented by 'i- in Dobu.

1.3 Possession particles

There are both prefixes and suffixes which show the person who owns a thing. These possessive prefixes and suffixes are used with nouns. Possession has a wider range of meaning in Dobu than in English, so we find it used much more in the Dobu language than in English. You can see this in the examples which follow, especially in section (iv).

(i)   Close possession

    A group of suffixes is used for things which are closely possessed,
such as:

              natu-na
              child-his
              'his child'

              nima-na
              hand-his
              'his hand'

(ii)   Distant possession

    Prefixes are used for things in which the possession is not close,
but distant:

              'ina-paisewa
              his-work
              'his work'

(iii)   Intermediate possession

    Prefixes are used for an intermediate group in which the possession
is not close nor distant, but intermediate; such as clothes worn,
things eaten or drunk, and feelings or experiences:

              'ana-bwasi
              his-water
              'his water to drink'

    Distant and intermediate prefixes are usually written as though
they were separate words. They should probably be written joined to
the noun, because they are pronounced that way, and must always be
followed by a noun. Chart 1 contains a list of all the possessive
suffixes and prefixes in Dobu.

    Note that the suffixes listed at the beginning of this paper are
those used for Close Possession, and that if you add 'i- or 'a- to
the suffixes for Close Possession, you get the prefixes for Distant
and Intermediate Possession.

CHART 1   Possession affixes in Dobu

Person	English	Dobu Close	Dobu Distant	Dobu Inter-mediate
first singular	'my'	-gu	'igu-	'agu-
second singular	'your'	-mu/-yo	'imu-	'amu-
third singular	'his/her/its'	-na	'ina-	'ana-
first inclusive plural	'our'	-da	'ida-	'ada-
first exclusive plural	'our'	-ma	'ima-	'ama-
second plural	'your'	-mi	'imi-	'ami-
third plural	'their'	-di	'idi-	'adi-

(iv)   Referent

     Possessive particles (suffixes or prefixes) always refer to some
person or thing, which has usually been mentioned previously. (How-
ever for 'my', 'your' and 'our' it is clear to whom it refers, so
there is no need for a previous mention of the person.) The person
or thing referred to by a possessive particle must always come before
the possessed noun. The meaning is clearest if the possessed noun
comes straight after the word to which it refers.

> bwagabwaga 'ana-mwau
> ocean   its-hardship
> 'the difficulty with the sea'
>
> mwagemwage 'ana-tuta-ya
> ignorance its-time-at
> 'at the time of ignorance'
>
> tubu-da-o   'idi-tuta-ya
> grandparent-our-plural   their-time-at
> 'in the time of our ancestors'
>
> Yaubada 'ana-mwalatoi
> God   his-knowledge
> 'knowledge about God'
>
> tomota 'idi-yaleyale
> people their-belief
> 'peoples' belief'

However, the referent may be separated from the possessed noun by
other words, or it may be a long way back in another sentence. If it
is a long way back, people may be confused about who actually is the
possessor. In the following examples the referent is separated from
the possessed noun.

<u>tubu-da</u>   <u>gete</u> <u>'ana-masula</u>
grandparent-our this her-food
'this is what grandma eats'

In this example -da 'our' is clear, so it needs no previous mention
of 'us', but <u>'ana-</u> 'her' refers back to <u>tubuda</u> 'our grandparent', and
is separated <u>by</u> the word <u>gete</u> 'this'. There are two possessive
particles in this clause in Dobu, and none in the English translation.
The use of the intermediate possessive prefix <u>'ana</u> shows that the food
is eaten regularly by the woman. If it was distributed to others it
would be <u>'ina-masula</u>.

<u>tubu-da</u>   <u>'ena</u> <u>'u-da-tauya</u>   <u>be</u> <u>'ana-bawe</u>
grandparent-our to.her you-should-go and her-pig

<u>'u-da-'ebwa'e</u>
you-should-give.her

'go to grandma and give her some pork to eat'

Here the referent <u>tubuda</u> 'our grandparent' is even further away from
<u>'ana-</u> 'her', but the meaning is still clear.

<u>to-yage</u>   <u>'ena</u> <u>si-da-emisa</u>   <u>be</u> <u>'ina-waiwai-yega</u>
what-thing in-it they-may-trust and its-strength-from

<u>'i-da-'ita'i'isi-di</u>
it-will-protect-them   ᐧ

'what could they trust that was strong enough to protect them?'

In this example <u>'ina-</u> 'its' refers back to <u>to-yage</u> 'what thing'.

1.4 <u>Suffixes of transitive verbs</u>

The doer of an action is the subject, and the receiver is the
object. When there is no receiver the verb is intransitive. There
are several verbs which seem to take two objects:

<u>'ebwa'e</u>   'give'

<u>e'ita</u>   'teach'

<u>eona</u>   'tell'

<u>sida</u>   'ask'

For example, you give a person something. The person is the first
object, and the thing given is the second object. In the same way
you teach a person something, tell a person something, and ask a
person for something.

In Dobu, the true object is the person, which is shown by the
object suffix, and there may be a free-form object as well which would
usually be placed just before the verb. The thing which is given
(or taught, or told, or asked for) is called the ditransitive object,
and may be present as a whole word, or left out if it is clearly
understood. It is not represented by any particle on the verb.

Here are examples of the three kinds of verbs:

(i)   Intransitive

      'a-sidasida
      we(excl.)-are.asking(or praying)
      'we are making requests'

(ii) Transitive

      maibo'a-da   'i-'ebwa'e-da
      all-us(incl.)   he-gave-us(incl.)
      'he gave to us all'

(iii) Ditransitive

      maibo'a-da   'i-'ebwa'e-da   'ada-udi
      all-us(incl.)   he-gave-us(incl.)   our(incl.)-bananas
      'he gave us all bananas to eat'

The following list shows that the object suffixes in Dobu are almost
the same as the suffixes for close possession.

person	close possession of noun	object of verb
first singular	-gu	-gu
second singular	-mu or -yo	-mu or -yo
third singular	-na	-na or -i (or nothing)
first inclusive pl.	-da	-da
first exclusive pl.	-ma	-ma
second plural	-mi	-mi
third plural	-di	-di

In the Dobu language there may be a free-form subject, a free-form
object, and a free-form ditransitive object, but this would be very
rare. It is not common to have more than one of these free-forms in
a single clause. They can be placed before or after the verb, but
are usually before the verb. The subject is usually placed before any
kind of object, but the order may be varied in many ways. The follow-
ing examples from a transitive, and then a ditransitive verb, show the
way in which the word-order may be varied:

(i)   Transitive

    tomota   tapwalolo si-nuwasabwale-na
    people   worship   they-understood-it

    tapwalolo tomota si-nuwasabwale-na
    worship   people they-understood-it

    tomota si-nuwasabwale-na tapwalolo
    people they-understood-it worship

(ii) Ditransitive

    maibo'a-da 'ada-udi   'i-'ebwa'e-da
    all-us   our-bananas he-gave-us

    maibo'a-da 'i-'ebwa'e-da 'ada-udi
    all-us   he-gave-us   our-bananas

    'ada-udi   'i-'ebwa'e-da maibo'a-da
    our-bananas he-gave-us   all-us

    'ada-udi   maibo'a-da 'i-'ebwa'e-da
    our-bananas all-us   he-gave-us

    'i-'ebwa'e-da 'ada-udi   maibo'a-da
    he-gave-us   our-bananas all-us

    'i-'ebwa'e-da maibo'a-da 'ada-udi
    he-gave-us   all-us   our-bananas

The first group of sentences means 'the people understood worship'.
The second group means 'he gave us all bananas to eat'. With changes
in word-order there is a change in emphasis. The word which is
emphasised comes first, and this is called 'the focus'. Usually
clauses of this kind have only one free-form noun, which usually
comes before the verb, and is the focus of the clause.

2.   OTHER GROUPS OF WORDS WITH THE COMMON DOBU SUFFIXES

Many groups of words use the common Dobu suffixes listed in the introduction, and the free-form pronouns also have similar endings. (Pronouns are words like 'he', 'she', 'they' which are used in the place of a noun.) All of these groups of words in Dobu, except the free-form pronouns, follow the word to which they refer (if it is mentioned). These different kinds of words will be described as follows:

> free-form pronouns
>
> emphatic pronouns
>
> other kinds of pronouns
>
> descriptive or modifying words
>
> demonstrative words
>
> accompaniment words
>
> location words
>
> source or agent words
>
> other words of location
>
> numerals
>
> plurals

2.1   Free-form pronouns

Dobu	English
'abo'a-gu	'I'
'o-yo⁻	'you'
tau-na	'he/she/it'
'abo'a-da	'we (inclusive)'
'abo'a-ma	'we (exclusive)'
'o-mi	'you (plural)'
tau-di	'they'

Note that the suffixes follow the usual pattern, but they are joined to three different roots: 'abo'a, 'o, and tau.

2.2 Emphatic pronouns

Dobu	English
tau-gu	'I myself'
tau-yo	'you yourself'
tau-na	'he himself'
tau-da	'we ourselves (inclusive)'
tau-ma	'we ourselves (exclusive)'
tau-mi	'you yourselves'
tau-di	'they themselves'

Here is an example of the use of an emphatic pronoun:

to-e'ita	tau-na	'ina-'eda	nugana	tau-na
the.one.who-teach	self-his	his-road	beginning	self-his

'i-da-guinuwa	tomota	'edi-ya
he-should-do	people	them-to

'a teacher himself should first work for the people'

2.3 Other kinds of pronouns

The words for 'some' have the common group of suffixes attached, except for the first and second singular persons, which do not occur.

Dobu	English
'ai-na	'some of it/them'
'ai-da	'some of us (inclusive)'
'ai-ma	'some of us (exclusive)'
'ai-mi	'some of you (plural)'
'ai-di	'some of them'

'aina breaks the rule about following its referent. It may come before its referent, and stay singular even though its referent is plural.

'ai-na	tomota
some-it	person/people

'some people'

2.4 Descriptive or modifying words

In English, words which describe a noun are called 'adjectives'.
For example, 'white' in a 'a white house' is an adjective describing
'house'. Other examples in English are 'good', 'big', 'new', etc.
In Dobu, these descriptive words take the suffixes for close possession,
just as nouns do. If they follow a noun, they describe it or modify
its meaning. They may also stand alone, just as a noun does. When a
descriptive word follows a noun, its possession affix shows the person
of the noun.

    tai to'umali-gu
    man bad-me
    'I am a bad man'

    waine kaikaiyale-na
    woman old.woman-her
    'an old woman'

    me'oloto-di
    male-them
    'the males'

    'ana-masula mesomeso-na
    her-food   cooked-it
    'her cooked food'

    bebai mesomeso-na mugumugu-na
    yam   cooked-it   scrap-it
    'a scrap of cooked yam'

    'agu-lotoona maibo'a-na
    my-feeling   all-it
    'all of my feeling'

    gulewa sinabwa-di
    stone big-them
    'big stones'
    (In this example the -di shows that gulewa 'stone' is plural.)

    natu-gu   bobo'a-na
    child-my good-him
    'my good child'

If the noun is closely possessed, it is more common for the modifying
word to join straight on to it, as in the next example.

    natu-'ai'aili-gu
    child-true-my
    'my true child'

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'asa 'ana-maibo'a-na 'ena
land its-all-it       in.it
'in the whole of the land'
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Note that although most modifying words can be used without a suffix attached, bobo'a-na (viii) and maibo'a-na (x) have not been found without a suffix.

2.5 Demonstrative words

When some person or thing has been mentioned already, it can later be referred to by one of these demonstrative words:

ni-gu	'this me'
ni-yo	'that you'
ni-na	'that one'
ni-da	'we(inclusive) those ones'
ni-ma	'we(exclusive) those ones'
ni-di	'those ones'

These are like the English words 'the', 'those', 'that' for things which have been mentioned already and are known about. However, in Dobu they follow the word to which they refer.

```
tubu-na-o               ni-di
grandchild-her-plural the-them
'those grandchildren of hers'

yaleyale ni-na  kadekadeli-na
belief   the-it old-it
'that old belief'

yaleyale kadekadeli-na ni-di
belief   old-it         the-them
'those things of the old belief'

'abo'ama         tomota ni-ma
we(exclusive) people the-us(exclusive)
'we, those people'
```

The demonstrative -ni has been found joined to tomota 'people' to form a compound noun stem, which was then made plural.

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tomote-ni-mi-yao
people-the-you(pl.)-many
'all of you, those people'
```

After a closely possessed noun, the demonstrative word <u>nina</u> can be shortened to the suffix -<u>na</u>.

<u>natu-na-na</u>
child-her-the
'that child of hers'

<u>natu-mu-na</u>
child-your-the
'that child of yours'

2.6 Accompaniment words

The prefix <u>ma</u>- when placed before a possessed noun of any kind means 'with'.

<u>ma-natu-gu</u>
with-child-my
'with my child'

However, <u>ma</u>- can be added to the particle <u>'iya</u> or <u>'e</u>, and closely possessed suffixes are then added, and this shows what person is in company with another.

<u>ma'iya-gu</u>	'one with me'
<u>ma'iya-yo</u>	'one with you'
<u>ma'iya-na</u>	'one with him/her/it'
<u>ma'e-da</u>	'one with us (inclusive)'
<u>ma'e-ma</u>	'one with us (exclusive)'
<u>ma'e-mi</u>	'one with you (plural)'
<u>ma'e-di</u>	'one with them'

If the referent to the suffix is stated, it must be placed before the accompaniment word.

<u>yagila</u> <u>sinabwa-na</u> <u>malolo</u> <u>ma'iya-na</u>
wind   big-it   current with-it
'a big wind and current'

There are also words for plural company, which are listed under 2.11 Plurals.

2.7 Location words

The common group of close possession suffixes can be joined to <u>'e</u>, and then -<u>ya</u> 'to/in/at' is joined to the end to make a group of location words:

'e-gu-ya	'at/to me'
'e-mu-ya	'at/to you'
'e-na-ya	'at/to him/her/it'
'e-da-ya	'at/to us(inclusive)'
'e-ma-ya	'at/to us(exclusive)'
'e-mi-ya	'at/to you(plural)'
'e-di-ya	'at/to them'

A shorter form of 'enaya is 'ena, and for most common nouns if just the
locative suffix -ya 'at' is added, it gives essentially the same
meaning.

anuwa 'ena-ya
house it-at
'at the house'

anuwa 'ena
house at.it
'at the house'

anuwa-ya
house-at
'at the house'

If a location word has a referent, the referent is always placed before
its location word.

tasi-na-o   'edi-ya
brother-his-pl them-to
'to his brothers'

mwagemwage 'ana-tuta-ya
ignorance   its-time-at
'at the time of ignorance'

tuta ni-na   'ena
time the-it at.it
'at that time'

tuta gete 'ena
time here at.it
'now'

'asa 'ebweu-na 'ebweu-na 'edi-ya
place one-it   one-it   them-at
'at every place'

2.8 Source or agent words

These words are formed in the same way as location words, except that -ega or -yega 'from' takes the place of the final suffix -ya 'at', and if the preceding vowel is e, that vowel is lost.

'e-gu-yega	'from me'
'e-mu-yega	'from you'
'e-n-ega	'from it/him/her'
'e-d-ega	'from us (inclusive)'
'e-m-ega	'from us (exclusive)'
'e-mi-yega	'from you (plural)'
'e-di-yega	'from them'

If the suffix -ega or -yega is added to a common noun, the meaning is essentially the same as 'enega 'from it'.

anuwa 'en-ega
house it-from
'from the house'

anuw-ega
house-from
'from the house'

If the referent is mentioned, it is always placed before the source or agent word. The referent may be a word, phrase, clause or a whole sentence.

'ina-bubuna ni-na   'en-ega
her-custom   the-it it-from
'by this custom of hers'

waga 'edi-yega
boat them-by
'by boats'

In this example 'ediyega 'by them' shows that waga 'boat' is plural and not singular.

yage   'eluwa 'edi-yega
thing two   them-from
'by means of two things'

'idi-miya-dumaduma   be 'idi-miya-besobeso   'edi-yega
their-situation-different and their-situation-haphazard them-from
'from their varying and haphazard situations'

<u>yagila</u> <u>be</u> <u>malolo</u> <u>'en-ega</u>
wind   and current it-from
'because of the wind and current'

In this example, 'wind and current' is thought of as one thing, so the
third person singular <u>'enega</u> is used, and not the third person plural
<u>'ediyega</u>.

<u>'imi-sidasida</u>   <u>'en-ega</u>
your(pl.)-prayers it-from
'by your prayers'

Sometimes <u>'enega</u> is used to start a new clause or a new sentence,
and means 'from this(the things which have been mentioned)' or 'be-
cause of this' or 'therefore'.

<u>tokwalui</u> <u>si-bubu-di</u>,   <u>'en-ega</u> <u>gete</u> <u>yage</u> <u>ni-di</u>
carvings they-made-them, it-from   this thing the-them

<u>si-yale-di</u>
they-trusted-them

'they carved idols, therefore they trusted those things'

2.9 <u>Other words of location</u>

The suffixes -<u>ya</u> 'at' and -<u>ega</u> 'from' can follow close possession
suffixes, which are joined to certain nouns that show different posi-
tions such as 'inside' and 'near'.

<u>sola-na-ya</u>
inside-its-at
'inside it'

<u>sola-gu-ya</u>
inside-my-at
'inside me'

<u>sola-n-ega</u>
inside-its-from
'from inside of it'

<u>sola-gu-yega</u>
inside-my-from
'from inside of me'

<u>selabe-na-ya</u>
near-its-at
'near it'

selabe-mi-ya
near-you(plural)-at
'near you(plural)'

selabe-mi-yega
near-you(plural)-from
'from near you (plural)'

Here are some examples of other words in this group:

'ubuni-na-ya	'beneath it'
etani-na-ya	'above it'
tupitupi-na-ya	'at the edge of it'

When the referent is stated, it always precedes these words.

waga gote sola-na-ya
boat there inside-its-at
'inside that boat'

2.10 Numerals

Dobu has separate words for numbers 'one' to 'five', and also 'ten'
and some of the multiples of ten. Numbers like 'six' and 'seven' are
expressed as 'five and one' and 'five and two'. Words like 'first' and
'second' are formed by adding the suffix -na to the appropriate number
(with other changes for some numbers, such as the addition of 'e at
the beginning if it is not there already).

'ebweu	'one'	'ebweu-na	'one/first'
'eluwa	'two'	'eluwe-na	'second'
'etoi	'three'	'etoni-na	'third'
ata	'four'	'eata-na	'fourth'
nima	'five'	'enima-na	'fifth'

The general rule is for all of these words to follow the noun to
which they refer. The exception is 'ebweu 'one', which usually goes
before the noun; but 'ebweu-na follows the noun.

'ebweu waga
one   boat
'a boat'

waga 'ebweu-na
boat one-it
'one boat, or the first boat'

<u>waga</u> <u>'eluwa</u>
boat two
'two boats'

<u>waga</u> <u>'eluwe-na</u>
boat two-it
'the second boat'

2.11 <u>Plurals</u>

There is no single way of showing plural number in Dobu. In fact a noun is often used in the same form for singular and plural, especially if the prefix or suffix on another word shows that the noun must be plural. The commonest way to form a plural is with the suffix -<u>yao</u> or -<u>ao</u> or -<u>o</u>, and these suffixes probably come from the word <u>yau</u> 'many'. In fact, to show plurality you can use <u>yau</u> and other words derived from it, such as:

<u>tomota</u> <u>yau-na</u>
person many-it
'many people'

<u>tomota</u> <u>yau-di</u>
person many-them
'many people'

<u>yau-mi</u>
many-you(plural)
'a lot of you'

<u>tomota</u> <u>yau-wawasae</u>
people many-very
'very many people'

For a few descriptive words, the first part of the root may be said twice (reduplicated) to make it clear that there are many. Examples in the list below are <u>gidali-na</u> 'small' and <u>sinabwa-na</u> 'big'.

English word or phrase	Singular in Dobu	Plural in Dobu
my child	<u>natu-gu</u>	<u>natu-gw-ao</u>
your child	<u>natu-yo</u>	<u>natu-mw-ao</u>
his child	<u>natu-na</u>	<u>natu-na-o</u>
our(inclusive) child	<u>natu-da</u>	<u>natu-da-o</u>
our(exclusive) child	<u>natu-ma</u>	<u>natu-ma-o</u>
your(plural) child	<u>natu-mi</u>	<u>natu-mi-yao</u>
their child	<u>natu-di</u>	<u>natu-di-yao</u>

English word or phrase	Singular in Dobu	Plural in Dobu
my companion	ma-'iya-gu	ma-'e-gw-ao
your companion	ma-'iya-yo	ma-'e-mw-ao
his companion	ma-'iya-na	ma-'e-na-o
our(inclusive) companion	ma-'e-da	ma-'e-da-o
our(exclusive) companion	ma-'e-ma	ma-'e-ma-o
your(plural) companion	ma-'e-mi	ma-'e-mi-yao
their companion	ma-'e-di	ma-'e-di-yao
work	paisewa	paisewa yauna
road	'eda	'eda yauna
dog	kedewa	kedewa-o
work-road(road to place of work)	'eda-paisewa	'eda-paisewa-o
his work	'ina-paisewa	'ina-paisewa-o
his hand	nima-na	nima-na-o
his water to drink	'ana-bwasi	'ana-bwasi-yao
the peoples' belief	tomota 'idi-yaleyale	tomota 'idi-yaleyale-yao
what thing?	to-yage	to-yage-yao
old woman	kaiyale	kaiyale-yao
my true child	natu-'ai'aili-gu	natu-'ai'aili-gw-ao
my good child	natu-gu bobo'a-na	natu-gw-ao bobo'a-di
good one	bobo'a-na	bobo'a-di
a male	me'oloto-na	me'oloto-di
woman who is old	waine kaikaiyale-na	iine kaikaiyale-di
small one	gidali-na	gidagidali-di
big one	sinabwa-na	sinasinabwa-di
at the time	tuta ni-na 'e-na	tuta ni-di 'e-di-ya
inside that boat	waga gote sola-na-ya	waga gote-di sola-di-ya

(Note: gote-di is probably contracted from gote nidi)

3.   COMPOUND WORDS

3.1 Compound nouns

When a noun stem is formed by joining two roots, the first is the
main one, and the second one describes or modifies it in some way.

anuwa-masula
house-food
'food-house'

'idi-miya-dumaduma
their-situation-different
'their varying situations'

'ina-miya-mwau
his-situation-heavy
'his hardship'

'idi-miya-bobo'a-na
their-situation-good-it
'their good situation'

'awe-'ala'alata
wood-flame
'burning wood'

3.2 Compound verbs

When a verb stem is formed by joining two or more roots, the first
is the main one, and those which follow it modify it. Suffixes which
show the object come at the end of the stem.

'i-guiguinuwa-'ese-di
she-kept.doing-exactly-them
'she kept doing it to them in exactly that way'

'i-siyasiyayowa-'ai'aili
she-was.sweeping-properly
'she was sweeping properly'

'i-'ita-mwa'uta
he-see-descend
'he looked down'

ta-pili-sine-di
we(incl.)-run-exceed-them
'we ran away from them'

'i-sinaba-toitoila
it-big-very
'it became very big'

'i-e-tai-sinabwa
he-became-man-big
'he became a big man'

'i-lobwene-'ai'aili-na
it-suits-true-it
'it suits it well'

si-da-miya-bobo'a-na
they-may-stay-good-it
'they may stay well'

'i-e-iyana-sinabwa-na
he-became-fish-bit-it
'he became a big fish'

'i-'awa-yage-besobeso-edi
he-mouth(talk)-thing-useless-them
'he called them useless'

4. FOCUS IN CLAUSE AND DISCOURSE

In clauses and paragraphs, the most important thing comes first
(after the linking-word, or conjunction, if one is present). The most
important thing is called 'the focus'. It may be the subject, or the
object, or the ditransitive object, or the verb, or part of a phrase
which describes the method or location of the action. Note the focus
in the following clauses, which come from a story:

1. ta   tubu-na-o   ši-ila-ma
    but grandchildren-her-plural   they-returned-here
    'And her grandchildren came back'

2. ga   'ebweu tai si-etune-na,
    and one   man they-sent-him,
    'and sent one boy off,'

3. si-ona,
    they-said,
    'saying,'

4. "Tubu-da   'e-na 'u-da-tauya
     grandparent-our   to-her you-may-go
    '"Go to Grandma'

5. be   'ana-bawe 'u-da-'ebwa'e."
    and her-pig   you-may-give.her
    'and give her some pork."'

In the first clause the focus is the grandchildren (the subject
of the clause).

In the second clause it is the boy (the object of the clause).

The third clause consists only of an action (the verb).

In the fourth clause the focus is the grandmother (part of a
location phrase).

In the fifth clause it is the pork (the ditransitive object).

Paragraphs often begin with a short summary or by mentioning the
topic of the paragraph.

salu   'ebweu-na 'ebweu-na 'idi-miya-dumaduma.
island one-it   one-it   their-situation-different
'The situation in every island is different.'

This introduces a paragraph which describes the situations in the
different islands.

'adi-lema   yage 'eluwa 'edi-yega.
their-help thing two   them-from
'There are two things to help them.'

This introduces a paragraph which tells about the two methods of
helping them.

A discourse usually begins with a general statement about the
topic, or a summary of the whole subject.

tetela 'awe-'ala'alata manu-na: 'awe-'ala'alata
story wood-flame   reason-its: wood-flame

'ina-'ebe-apwesa.
its-instrument-appear

'The story about fire - the way that fire appeared.'

This is the beginning of a Dobu folk-tale, and the next example comes
from a report in a church paper.

gose-gw-ao   iye, 'omi   Tapwalolo Teteli-na
friend-my-plural oh   you(pl.) Church   Story-its

'ana-to-sawa-o,   'emi-ya   ya-da-emwasala
its-one.who-read-pl, you(pl.)-to I-may-tell

'ima-egogona   Bunama 'ena-ya manu-na.
our(excl.)-gathering Bunama it-at   reason-its

'Oh my friends, readers of the Church Paper, I will tell you about
our gathering at Bunama.'

Note, however, that sentences have a different structure. They
usually contain a number of clauses, and often begin with a noun or
verb or a phrase which was in the sentence just ended. This repetition
provides a link between sentences, but the thing which is repeated
is not usually the most important part of the sentence.

5. CONCLUSION

From the examples given in this article it can be seen that in
Dobu the first position is given to the more important part in dis-
courses, paragraphs, clauses, phrases and compound word-stems.

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