

Yaweyuha Phonemes.

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1. Introduction

This paper describes the phoneme system of the Yaweyuha language of the Uggai census division of the Goroka sub-district of the Eastern Highlands District of Papua New Guinea. There are approximately 2000 speakers of Yaweyuha.

Wurml961 includes Yaweyuha in the Siane Sub-Family of the Gende - Siane - Gahuku - Kamano - Fore Family of the East New Guinea Highlands stock, but gives Yaweyuha a major separation from the rest of Siane.

This paper is based on data gathered at Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea during June, July and August, 1974, ^{under the auspices of S.I.L.} The corpus of data includes a word list of approximately 750 words plus over 50 short stories prepared by Donney Belalo, 18 years of age, and Phillip Wanopa, 19 years of age, both residents of Apoeto village.

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2. Charts of Phonemes.

| <u>Consonants</u> | Labial | Post- dental | Post-palatal |
|----------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|
| Stops-voiceless | p | t | k |
| voiced | b | d | g |
| Affricated-voiceless | | s | h |
| voiced | v | j | |
| Nasals | m | n | |
| Lateral | | l | |
| Semi-consonants | w | y | |

| <u>Vowels</u> | Front | Central | Back |
|---------------|-------|---------|------|
| Higher | i | | u |
| Lower | e | a | o |

Tone

| | |
|--------|---|
| High | / |
| Low | - |
| Rising | ✓ |

3. Contrasts

3.1. Consonants.

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|------------------------|
| p/o | <u>yoba</u> | tree type (ironwood) |
| | <u>yopala</u> | hair |
| | <u>opa</u> | sweet potato (generic) |
| | <u>epa</u> | cane |
| | <u>eba</u> | village |
| | <u>oponi</u> | wallaby |
| | <u>obohala</u> | his heart |
| | <u>tiyoko</u> | frog |
| | <u>diyopa</u> | grass type |
| t/d | <u>atani</u> | spear |
| | <u>menadaya</u> | his wife |
| | <u>kileko</u> | come out |
| k/g/h | <u>gita</u> | guitar |
| | <u>hiliko</u> | bend down |
| | <u>nenako</u> | since |
| k/g | <u>asago</u> | olsem (historical) |
| | <u>eseka</u> | thus |
| | <u>hiyega</u> | story, history |
| k/h | <u>mika</u> | earth |
| | <u>oliha</u> | flying fox |
| | <u>ohugo</u> | green |
| g/h | <u>oluho</u> | Children, youth |

3. Contrasts continued.....consonants.

| | | |
|-------|----------------|----------------------------|
| j/y/s | <u>ja</u> | pig |
| | <u>ya</u> | tree |
| | <u>sako</u> | olsem (non-historical) |
| | <u>mi,ja</u> | garden |
| | <u>apiya</u> | yam type |
| | <u>niseko</u> | I come |
| | <u>nesa</u> | thing |
| j/d | <u>jowe</u> | fireman |
| | <u>dowa</u> | good |
| | <u>mi,ja</u> | garden |
| | <u>jatida</u> | the pig |
| l/d | <u>lowe</u> | two |
| | <u>dowa</u> | good |
| | <u>elamobo</u> | not knowing |
| | <u>eda</u> | heavy |
| b/v/w | <u>bode</u> | banana type |
| | <u>voe</u> | I cook in a ground oven |
| | <u>wo</u> | Go! |
| | <u>obohala</u> | his heart |
| | <u>uvoha</u> | bird type |
| | <u>owo</u> | string bag |
| | <u>baka</u> | ? |
| | <u>wanopa</u> | snake type |
| | <u>vae</u> | They cook in a ground oven |

3. Contrasts continued.....consonants.

b/v/w cont.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>bisinisi</u> | business |
| <u>viki</u> | cook in a ground oven |
| <u>wisilida</u> | tree type |
| <u>bebe</u> | yam type |
| <u>olopaveda</u> | bird type |
| <u>salopaweda</u> | snake type |

3. 2. Vowels

i/e/a/o/u

| | | |
|-----|--------------|------------------------|
| | <u>ila</u> | his leg |
| | <u>ela</u> | shell |
| | <u>ala</u> | his words |
| | <u>olu</u> | girl |
| | <u>ula</u> | dog |
| | <u>ibola</u> | his knee |
| | <u>epala</u> | his mouth |
| | <u>apiya</u> | yam type |
| | <u>opa</u> | sweet potato (generic) |
| | <u>upala</u> | his body |
| i/e | <u>ipa</u> | boy |
| | <u>eba</u> | village |
| e/a | <u>uve</u> | banana (generic) |
| | <u>uva</u> | yam (generic) |
| | <u>ile</u> | arrow |
| | <u>ila</u> | his leg |
| | <u>ebe</u> | belt |
| | <u>eba</u> | village |

3. Contrasts continued

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|
| o/a | <u>j^ho</u> | fire |
| | <u>j^ha</u> | pig |
| u/o | <u>ukāda</u> | moon |
| | <u>okāna</u> | wing |
| | <u>ilumolo</u> | village name |
| | <u>olu</u> | girl |

3.3. Tone

high vs low

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| <u>nāná</u> | bird |
| <u>nāna</u> | louse |
| <u>ula</u> | mushroom |
| <u>ula</u> | dog |
| <u>wāno</u> | dream |
| <u>wāno</u> | don't go!. |
| <u>omada</u> | egg |
| <u>omada</u> | his eye |

low vs rising

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| <u>no</u> | water |
| <u>no</u> | you eat! |

High vs rising

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| <u>j^ha</u> | pig |
| <u>j^ha</u> | tree |

There has not been time to do an analysis of the tone system of Yaweyuha, and the conclusions contained herein and even the tones marked on examples are highly tentative. Rising tone has been noted on very few words, most of them monosyllabic, but it seems to contrast with both high and low.

4. Description - Variants.

In general, very few variants have been noted in the data thus far, and a more detailed phonetic description would be expected and more satisfactory if such could be obtained. The main reason for the lack of phonetic detail to date is that Leibler and James did a tentative phonemic analysis, *initially* on a thorough knowledge of the phonemic systems of closely related Ichuku and Siane languages respectively, in the first few days of work with the Yaweyuha men, in order to provide a workable orthographic framework for the preparation of reading materials as speedily as possible. We have tended to hear subsequently through this grid, and have been less aware of finer detail. No problems have arisen thus far in the writing of any materials, nor in reading with understanding when some materials were tested with Yaweyuha speakers already literate in English.

The phonetic detail noted to date is as follows:

- 4.1. The phonemes /t/, /d/, /s/ and /j/, and occasionally /n/, have fronted allophones which occur in free fluctuation with the phonetic norm. /s/ and /j/ also have allophones with slightly greater friction intervocalically.
- 4.2. A lenis allophone of /g/ occurs intervocalically, and on one occasion at least has been heard as /g/ */sogotiye/* [sogotiye] ~ [sogotiye] *its light (weight)*

Description- variants cont.

4.3. The phoneme /l/ is retroflexed medially and tends to be unretroflexed or only slightly retroflexed initially. In contrast to related languages, it does not have a flapped lateral or vibrant allophone.

4.4. The phoneme /w/ has a lenis [b̥] allophone which occurs following /a/ in fluctuation with [w].

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|---|------------|----------------|
| /Yaweyuha/ | [ʔaḃeguha] | ~ | [ʔaweyuha] | language name. |
| /lawaha/ | [laḃaha] | ~ | [lawaha] | fish |

4.5. High tone /' / has a down glide allotone [˨] which occurs on the final syllable of final verbs.

All tonemes have higher allotones at the beginning of a stream of speech, which become progressively lower as speech continues due to a general lowering of the entire voice register during the course of normal speech events.

5. Distribution.

5.1. General.

There are no closed syllables, and no consonant clusters. Vowel clusters of two vowels occur within the same syllable, and clusters of up to three vowels have been observed across syllable boundaries (see section 5.2. for examples.)

The following syllable types occur:

| | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------------|
| v | <u>úlá</u> | dog |
| cv | <u>nāma</u> | bird |
| vv | <u>aijō</u> | yesterday, tomorrow |
| cvv | <u>naiyē</u> | he eats. |

5. 2. Specific.

5.2.1. The following vowel combinations have been observed within the syllable:

5. Distribution continued.

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----------|----|----------------|--------------------|
| ai | <u>naiye</u> | he eats | au | <u>auvala</u> | grease |
| ci | <u>meina</u> | payment | ao | <u>yuhao</u> | plant it (imp. sg) |
| oi | <u>oia</u> | greens | ae | <u>wae</u> | they went |
| ui | <u>oluia</u> | children | ou | <u>pou-pou</u> | explosion |
| | | | oo | <u>Anoeto</u> | village name |

It is expected that the vowel combinations ou and iu may also be found within the syllable with further data.

5.2.2. The following vowel combinations have been observed across syllable boundaries:

| | | |
|------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| o.e | <u>loc</u> | I say |
| e.o | <u>leowojiye</u> | he filled it |
| o.ai | <u>aitoaito</u> | each different(lit other-other) |

Many more such combinations would be created if predictable intervocalic /y/'s and /w/'s were omitted. Language helpers and those who helped to test the reading materials have varied in their reaction to writing transitional /y/ and /w/. In some cases they are inconsistent and say that it could be written either way, particularly with /y/. But in other cases they feel strongly that it should either be there or be omitted and have produced at least one possible contrast between the presence vs absence of intervocalic /w/ across syllable boundaries:

| | |
|------------|-------|
| <u>lōw</u> | two |
| <u>lōē</u> | I say |

It is possible that tone contrast would influence the feeling for the presence or absence of /w/ in both these words. It would seem to be an advantage both in teaching and in producing written materials if transitional /y/'s and /w/'s could be either consistently written or consistently omitted.

5. Distribution continued.

The feature of reduplication for compounding or intensifying will also create many vowel clusters across syllable boundaries and possibly cause difficulty in reading. The orthographic use of hyphen between such clusters may be advisable.

ie aito-aito each different (see example 3 above).

6. Orthography

6.1. Previous orthographies -- none that we know of.

6.2. Proposed orthography.

As phonemic norms, except that we propose not to write tone. To date only 11 minimal pairs have been noted, and Yaweyuha lacks the phonemic downglide contrast which makes it necessary to write tone in Siane. The tone system of Yaweyuha appears to follow more the pattern of Gahuku where it has been found to be unnecessary to write tone for clear understanding of written material.

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