Organised Phonology Data

Kope Dialect of Northeast Kiwai Language [kiw]
Gulf Province

John M. Clifton
1991

Trans-New Guinea Phylum; Trans-Fly Subphylum; Kiwaian Family

Population census:
Major villages:

Linguistic work done by: John M. Clifton, SIL
Data checked by: John M. Clifton

Phonemic and Orthographic Inventory

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Consonants

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<th>Bilab</th>
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<th>Alveo</th>
<th>Postalv</th>
<th>Retro</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
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- p: pito ‘oppossum’
- t: topo ‘sweet’
- k: kehi ‘small’
- ʔ: mi’a ‘soup’
- m: modi ‘nose’
- s: sero ‘woven wall’

Vowels

I: i, u
O: o
A: a

All vowels occur as short and long. This is interpreted as a suprasegmental. For examples see ‘Suprasegmentals’.
Suprasegmentals (tone, stress, length)

There are vestiges of tone in the language, but they are not consistent. There may be stress, but it is difficult to detect and is definitely subordinate to length. Each vowel occurs as short and long:

- \( a'o \) ‘this’ vs. \( aa'o \) ‘to say’
- \( abea \) ‘father’ vs. \( abee'a \) ‘sago-squeezing bag’
- \( nimo \) ‘lice’ vs. \( niimo \) ‘we, us’
- \( obo \) ‘water’ vs. \( oobo \) ‘woman’
- \( uho \) ‘catfish’ vs. \( uuho \) ‘to eat’

Syllable Patterns

- \( V \): o.ra ‘blood’
- \( CV \): me.a ‘good’
- \( VV \): ei.dai ‘to get’
- \( CVV \): gai.ga.ru.a ‘basket’

Conventions: Phonological

/m n/ generally weaken to [β~v ɾ] intervocally (e.g. [meβe] or [meve] meimei ‘pineapple’; [nari] /nani/ nari ‘tree sp.’). There are three words which have initial [ɾ]: [ɾo] ro ‘you (sg.)’, [ɾautu] rautu ‘with’, [ɾio] rio ‘desire’. In addition, while most occurrences of intervocalic /m/ are pronounced [m] in careful speech, three words are always pronounced with [β~v]: [hiβio] or [hivio] hivio ‘sun’, [oβɛ] or [ovɛ] ove ‘moon’, [oɾɔβidio] or [oɾɔvidio] orovidio ‘to hear’.

/s/ is only found in a few borrowed words.

The diphthong /ei/ is phonetically [e].

Conventions: Orthographic

The two allophones of /n/ are written consistently: <ŋ> word-initially, <ɾ> intervocally, except for the three words noted in above in Phonological Conventions in which <ɾ> is used word-initially.
Both allophones of /m/, [m], [β~v], are written <m> in all positions except in the three words noted above in which <v> is used intervocally.

<i u> are used for syllable onsets [j w], syllable peaks [i u], and offglides.

/ʔ/ is written as < ' > following the practice of most (all?) south coast languages in which the London Missionary Society worked.

Transcription of a recorded passage


‘Then one day a Kope man climbed up after a lizard. The Kope man climbed up and dropped the lizard. It fell to the ground and was grabbed. They brought it to the village, and it was cut in the village, and a Kerewo man ate the tail. A Kope man had climbed up alone. And at first, in our parents’ day, our law already was this: the person who climbs eats the tail.’

Bibliography

Clifton, John M. 1983-87. Field notes. ms.
