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**A grammar of Barupu:  
a language of Papua New Guinea**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Linguistics  
University of Sydney

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This is to certify that:

1. except where otherwise indicated this thesis is my own work.
2. the study complied with the requirements of the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.



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Miriam Corris

# Abstract

This thesis is a descriptive grammar of Barupu, the easternmost member of the Skou family of languages. Barupu is spoken by around 3000 people on the north coast of New Guinea; its grammar has not previously been described.

Barupu is a tone language in which words belong to one of five tone classes and it exemplifies a type of pitch-accent system where for the most part tone is attracted to penultimate stressed syllables and spreads one syllable to the right. Some words, however, have tones lexically specified to one of the final two syllables of the word.

A key feature of Barupu grammar is that there is no oblique marking on NPs — no particles, adpositions or case markers provide information about a nominal's role in the clause. Instead, Barupu is head-marking. Underived verbs show multiple exponence of subject, which can take the form of double prefixing or prefixing and infixing.

There is a set of suffixing morphemes that function like applicatives in adding participants to the clause, but which are very atypical in appearing outside verbal inflection and showing extra agreement for subject. Barupu also has a prefixing Benefactive paradigm that replaces regular subject agreement and can be extended to mark external possession. Finally, Barupu is a polysynthetic language and, as such, makes almost no use of formal subordination.

Appendices to this thesis include a set of interlinearised texts and a draft of a Barupu-English dictionary with an English-Barupu finderlist.

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# Glossing conventions and abbreviations

In this thesis I have mostly followed The Leipzig Glossing Rules (See <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/files/morpheme.html> - Version accessed September 2004). The only exception is that I have not represented reduplication with a tilde, I have used a hyphen. The rules I have used are as follows:

## Glossing conventions

- A hyphen (-) indicates a morpheme break (including reduplication);
- (=) represents cliticisation;
- infixes are enclosed in angle brackets (<>);
- when one word in Barupu requires glossing with two elements, these are separated by full stops, e.g. Barupu *-kôe* is glossed as ‘go.up’;
- person and number labels are not separated by fullstops, e.g. 1SG, not 1.SG;
- gender is separated with a full stop, e.g. 1SG.F;
- an asterisk (\*) before an example sentence indicates that the sentence is ungrammatical;
- a hash (#) before an example sentence indicates that the sentence is grammatical but not with the intended meaning;
- a question mark (?) before an example sentence indicates that the sentence is borderline grammatical — that is, somewhat accepted in elicitation but not naturally attested;
- Tok Pisin and English words in example sentences are represented in roman font and glossed in upper case.

Where words have different meanings, the meaning that pertains for that example sentence will be the gloss it is given. For example, the word *pê* can be used to mean

'hair', 'fur' and 'leaf' and by extension it is used in compounds to express extremities of body parts — for example, fingers and nipples. If, for example, it is being used to mean 'hair', it will be glossed as 'hair'.

Where the orthographic representations are segmentable into morphemic glosses, they will appear in three-line glosses. If, however, the surface form is not segmentable example sentences will have four-line glosses; the second line will be a morphophonemic underlying representation.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the glossing of example sentences:

1	first person	PURP <sub>1</sub>	purpose
2	second person	PURP <sub>2</sub>	purpose
3	third person	REAS	reason
AT	address term	REDUP	reduplication
ADV	adversative	REFL	reflexive
AG	agreement	REG	regarding
AMID	amid, among, through	RL	realis
APPL	applicative	SEP	separation
AWAY	thither, short while	SHORT	short distance, time
BEN	beneficiary	SG	singular
CONC	concessive	SIMUL	simultaneous
CQ	content question	SRND	surround
DDIST	distal deictic	TOWARD	hither, towards
DIRR	hypothetical deictic	TVF	truth value focus
DMID	middle deictic	UNDER	underneath
DOWN	downward	UP	upward
DPROX	proximal deictic	VAL	valency
DREF	discourse deictic	WITH	with, to, dative of interest
DU	dual	WITHOUT	without
EXCL	exclamation		
EXTV	exhaustive		
F	feminine		
FROM	from, detrimental		
FRUS	frustrative		
GIVE	dative		
HID	hidden		
INTS	intensifier		
IPQ	irrealis polar question		
IRR	irrealis		
M	masculine		
NEAR	near		
NEG	negative		
OBLG	obligation		
ON	on		
PL	plural		
PLN	place name		
PRM	prominence		
PN	proper name		
POL	polarity		
PQ	polar question		

## Glossing complex verb agreement

Barupu verbs show multiple, and in some cases discontinuous, exponence of subject. There are four conjugation classes as described in full in Chapter 3 that take prefixes or infixes indexing most of the features of the subject.

For example, Class III Barupu verbs have prefixing and infixing agreement. The infix is a consonant which always appears between two final vowels, but the consonant by itself does not distinguish all the inflectional features — some of the information is located in at least a prefixed vowel, and in some cases by a longer prefix. The examples in Table 1 are shown with the realis prefix *k-*.

Table 1 Class III verbs

SG	1	M	<i>k-a-kô-n-e</i>
		F	<i>k-e-kô-n-e</i>
	2	M	<i>k-a-kô-m-e</i>
		F	<i>k-o-kô-m-e</i>
	3	M	<i>k-a-kôe</i>
		F	<i>k-o-kôe</i>
DU	1		<i>k-epi-kô-p-e</i>
	2		<i>k-oropu-kô-p-e</i>
	3		<i>k-ere-kô-p-e</i>
PL	1		<i>k-e-kô-m-e</i>
	2	M	<i>k-o-kô-p-e</i>
		F	<i>k-eve-kô-r-e</i>
	3	M	<i>k-e-kô-p-e</i>
		F	<i>k-ere-kô-r-e</i>
			<i>-kôe</i> 'go.up'

As shown in the table and discussed in Chapter 3, it is not possible to divide the features consistently between the prefixes and the infix. Both affixes are thus glossed as marking the whole category. An infix will be indicated by angle brackets ( $\langle \rangle$ ) in the Barupu examples and the gloss, and the gloss for the infix will appear before the gloss of the verb. Realis is glossed as RL.

- (1) *k-e-kô⟨n⟩e*  
RL-1SG.F-⟨1SG.F⟩go.up  
'I<sub>F</sub> went up.'
- (2) *k-a-kô⟨n⟩e*  
RL-1SG.M-⟨1SG.M⟩go.up  
'I<sub>M</sub> went up.'
- (3) *k-o-kô⟨p⟩e*  
RL-2PL.M-⟨2PL.M⟩go.up  
'You<sub>M</sub> went up.'

- (4) *k-e-kô(p)e*  
 RL-3PL.M-(3PL.M)go.up  
 ‘They<sub>M</sub> went up.’
- (5) *k-a-kôe*  
 RL-3SG.M-go.up  
 ‘He went up.’
- (6) *k-o-kôe*  
 RL-3SG.F-go.up  
 ‘She went up.’
- (7) *k-epi-kô(p)e*  
 RL-1DU-(1DU)go.up  
 ‘We two went up.’
- (8) *k-ere-kô(r)e*  
 RL-3PL.F-(3PL.F)go.up  
 ‘They<sub>F</sub> went up.’
- (9) *k-oropu-kô(p)e*  
 RL-2DU-(2DU)go.up  
 ‘You two went up.’

A non-low vowel after a nasal can be omitted, in this case the word will be glossed as follows:

- (10) *k-e-kô(n)*.  
 RL-1SG.F-(1SG.F)go.up  
 ‘I<sub>F</sub> went up.’

## Phonological representations

In Chapter 2, phonemic representations will be enclosed within forward slashes (/ /) and phonetic representations will be enclosed in square brackets ([ ]). In the orthography discussion, graphemes are enclosed in angle brackets (< >). Elsewhere, unless specifically stated, examples will all be given in current orthography, represented in italics. The orthographic conventions are described in §2.5.

The exception is the representation of tone. Barupu has five tones: L, H, LH, HL and HLH and in the current Barupu orthography, tone is not consistently marked. In this thesis I use the following conventions:

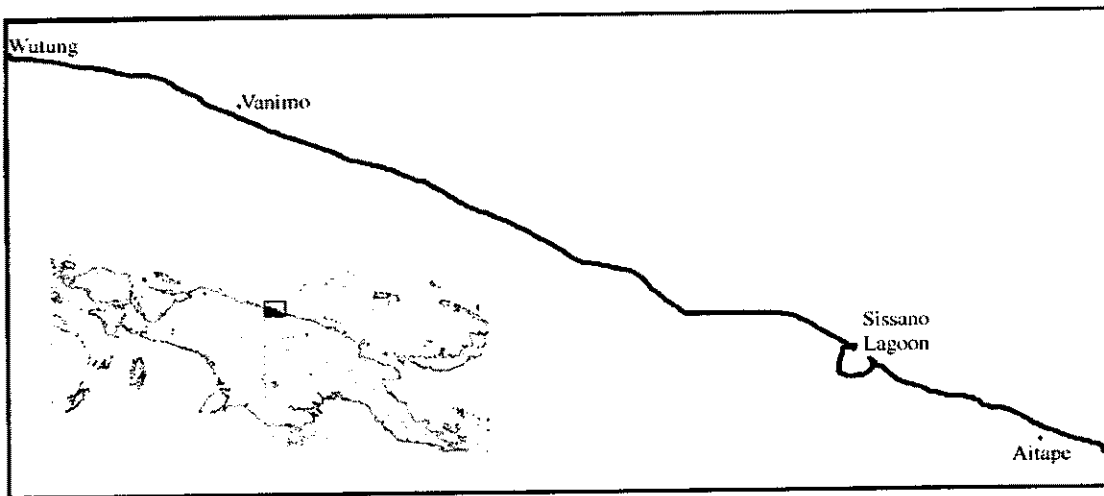
- In surface realisations presented in phonetic square brackets, low-pitch is marked with a grave: [à] and mid-pitch is marked with a macron: [ā]. In orthographic representations these pitches are unmarked.

- In both phonetic and orthographic representations, falling pitch is represented by a circumflex: [â], rising pitch is represented by a wedge: [ǎ] and high pitch is represented by an acute: [á].
- In phonemic representations words with predictable tone assignment are represented between phonemic brackets with the tone in uppercase following the word: e.g. /neni/-LH 1SG.F — this word has rising tone and the predictable surface form [nění]. Words with tones lexically assigned to particular syllables are represented between phonemic brackets with the tone marked on the lexically specified syllable with a diacritic: e.g. /-méntan/ ‘small’, this word has an H tone lexically specified on the penultimate syllable and has the surface form [méntàn].

## **Sources**

Many of the monoclausal examples in this grammar were gathered in personal elicitation sessions. Where possible, however, I have tried to use natural examples from narrative texts collected in Barupu village. Some data also comes from songs, written dictionary definitions as well as elicitations carried out by Donald Laycock. The source of an example sentence will be indicated in square brackets. The list of sources and abbreviations can be found in Appendix C. Where an example has no source, it should be taken as elicited.

# Maps



**Figure 1** North coast of Papua New Guinea

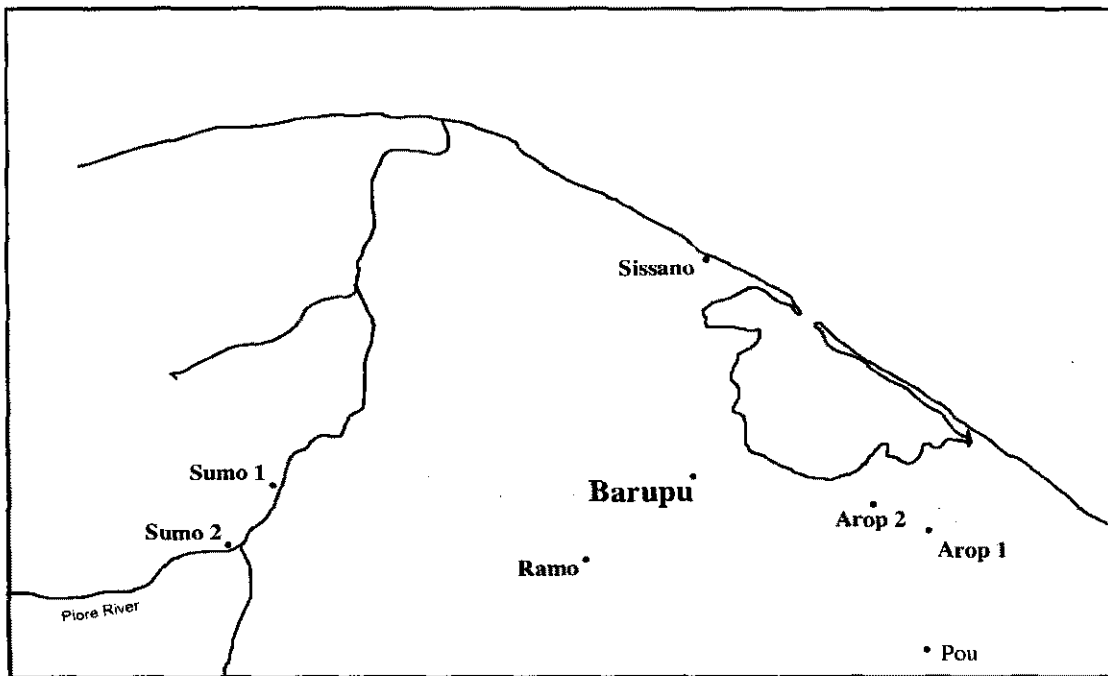


Figure 2 Barupu and surrounding villages. Approximate scale 1cm = 2.5kms