

9. Orthography

9.1 Proposed orthography

The following is a listing of Hewa phonemes and allophones with a suggested orthographic symbol following.

| Phoneme | Allophones | Orthographic Symbol |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| /p/ | [p p ^h p' b] | p |
| /t/ | [t t ^h t'] | t |
| /k/ | [k k ^h k' g k ɣ] | k |
| /p̥/ | [p̥ b] | f |
| /s/ | [s z] | s |
| /x/ | [x ɣ x] | x |
| /m/ | [m] | m |
| /n/ | [n] | n |
| /l/ | [l l̥ r] | l |
| /w/ | [w] | w |
| /y/ | [y] | y |
| /i/ | [i ɪ] | i |
| /e/ | [e] | ē |
| /ɛ/ | [ɛ] | e |
| /ʌ/ | [ʌ] | ā |
| /a/ | [a] | a |
| /u/ | [u u] | u |
| /o/ | [o] | ō |
| /ɔ/ | [ɔ] | o |
| /'/ | ['] | ' |

Regarding the symbolisation of /x/, my preference is to have "x" in the orthography since it causes no conflict with Duna (Cochrane, 1966) or Tok Pisin. Conflict with English is minimal in that there is no school with English instruction within the entire Hewa language area. Five or less children from Hewa-speaking homes have received any English instruction and that is found at a minimum of one full-day's walking outside the Hewa language area. The phoneme has a very low occurrence and a restricted co-occurrence pattern as well, therefore to use "x" should not cause much difficulty.

Healey and Taylor (1977:315) indicate frequent use of "h" as the representation in PNG orthographies. My objection to the use of "h" here is that the languages of contact, Duna and Tok Pisin, as well as the other languages of the Sepik Hill Stock with orthographies (Saniyo-Hiowe, Bahinemo, Alamblak) all use "h" to represent the back velar fricative /h/. The letter shows up in the language name "Hewa" /'hewə/, now the name used by the government and missions in both the Southern Highlands Province and in the Enga Province. I would rather avoid the confusion in pronunciation by not using "h" for /x/.

Both Healey and Taylor, and Cochran (1977:44) mention successful use of "q", although Cochran sees transfer problems to English. This would not apply in Hewa for five years or more. I feel that the Hewa /x/ is a combination historically of the glottal stop and the /h/ found in the three Sepik Hill Stock languages with phonologies recorded. Dye and Dye (1965)

use "q" for the glottal stop in Bahinemo. I would put it as my second choice for the Hewa velar fricative. Initial literacy efforts with some people literate in Tok Pisin has shown ready acceptance and use of "x" to this point.

Cochran (1977:44) sees "a preferable alternative...in the digraph gg, or the symbol ,g, with a diacritic." I would strongly prefer to stick with a symbol not used by the nearby languages for something else, as "x" or "q". I see it as having the fewest problems.

Regarding the distinction between symbolising /e/ and /ɛ/, /o/ and /ɔ/, and /ɑ/ and /ʌ/, Cochran only suggests that /ɔ/ be an adaptation of "o", such as "ø". However, Smalley (1959:49), Healey (1975:60-61) and Lynch (1979:101-102) recommend that the less common vowel be the marked variation. In thirty pages of text material, the frequency of /ɛ/ to /e/ was approximately five to one, /ɔ/ to /o/ approximately five to four, and /ɑ/ to /ʌ/ approximately five to one. Therefore /e/, /o/ and /ʌ/ will be the marked forms as "ë", "ö", and "ä", respectively.

Regarding stress, being phonemic it will be indicated in the orthography when it falls on a syllable other than the first syllable. It will be indicated by placing the acute accent over the stressed vowel. Should subsequent testing of the orthography show that the minimal stress pairs cause very few ambiguities, as has frequently happened in P.N.G. (Healey and Taylor, 1977), it will be eliminated for practicality's sake (Cochran, p. 80).

Workpapers in Papua New Guinea Languages

Volume 31

Five Phonological Studies

**Summer Institute of Linguistics
Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea**