

A distinctive feature of the language is a word-final labio-velar consonant, written as *gb*, as in the name of the language. This is analyzed as a velar stop, whose rounding is caused by the preceding high back vowel.

Verbs and inalienable nouns, the latter include items with initial *i* or *u*, are prefixed to indicate person and number of subject and possessor, respectively. Third person singular is zero on verbs and *m(E)-* on nouns, lowering high stem vowels: *ind-ums* '1SG-ear', *m-oms* '3SG-ear'; *ab-ir* '2SG-voice', *m-er* '3SG-voice'. There is an inclusive-exclusive opposition for first person plural and dual. The dual is marked by

the vowel *a*, for all persons. Verbs can further be prefixed by *em-* for irrealis (IRR), and *a-* for instrument. The irrealis is obligatory on verbs in negated clauses, as in (1). Main verbs in clauses which are introduced by a sequential conjunction appear to prefer the irrealis marking, as in (107)-(109) of the text.

- (1) *Em-em-es ugwodi ingn(a) ero*  
 1EXC-IRR-shoot cuscus some not

We did not shoot any cuscus.

Instruments cannot be expressed as clausal constituents. They are given in a preceding clause or extra-clausal constituent, and then marked by the verbal prefix *a-* which substitutes the stem vowel *e* of the verb *etkwa* 'cut up' in (2) or the initial *o* of the vowel sequence *ou* in the verb *ouma* 'buy' in (3).

- (2) *En eic kepta a-(e)tkwa hweij*  
 3SG take machete INS-cut.up pig

He takes a machete (to) cut up the pig.

- (3) *Len l-oho besa l-a(o)uma minc*  
 they 3PL-carry bird.of.paradise 3PL-INS-buy cloth

They carry birds-of-paradise (to) buy (ceremonial) cloths with them.

A few physiological states are expressed through experiential verbs, in which some noun functions as a third person subject and the experiencer is marked by an object suffix to the generic verb *eb(a)* 'do'. Some examples are: *dukurij-ebe-d* 'I am cold'; *mus-ebe-b* 'you have a cold (are coughing)'; *cicir-ebe-m* 'we are sleepy'; *s(I)r-ebe-r* 'they are hungry'. The irrealis marking is placed between the subject noun and the verb, as in (4).

- (4) *Dani ar-em-ebe-d-ero*  
 I thing-IRR-do-1SG-not

I am not sick

The nominalizing clitic *g-* is used to make nouns out of verbs or adjectives, as in the title of the New Testament *Allah m-en g-os dou menau* 'God 3SG-possess NOM-hold for new' in which the verb + preposition *os dou* 'hold for' means 'to promise' is nominalized. It can also be encliticized to words like the generic noun *ara* '(some)thing, what' or free pronouns *len* 'they' and *yen* 'you.PL': *areg* is used to introduce relative clauses, as in (5), while the pronouns convey 'those who', 'you who', as exemplified in (158) of the text.

- (5) *Minc are-g dan ind-ina eic dou dan*  
 cloth what-REL I 1SG-father take to me  
*kaba dan d-a(o)ufo dan in-sowa*  
 then I 1SG-INS-pay I 1SG-wife

The cloth which my father gave me I used to buy my wife.

Quite a number of verbs appear to contain a nominalized element, as in *acegic* 'to request', in which *g-eic* 'NOM-take' seems to be a grammaticalized incorporated form of the verb 'to take', which means 'give'

when occurring with the preposition *dou* 'to', as in (5). The form *ac* could be the Instrument prefix *a-* plus *ec*, which seems to have a very generic meaning 'movement forwards', as it has the following specific meanings: with high tone: 'sneeze, peel (banana), open (door), light (a fire), shoot'; with a low tone: 'walk, pick (fruit). Obviously, this is still rather speculative.

Less speculative is the presence of this nominalizing clitic on the demonstratives, which seem to specify the cardinal directions, two of which have clearly elevational meanings: *gada* 'that up, west', *gaih* 'that down, east', *gaba* 'that.north', and *gac* 'that.south'. These four are in complementary distribution with *gini* 'this' and *ingga* 'that'.

As has become clear from the examples, Sougb, just as most other Papuan languages of the Bird's Head has a rather strict SVO word order in the clause. The negative adverb is always sentence-finally, requiring the verbs in its scope to be marked by the prefix *em-* for irrealis. For further details, the reader is referred to Reesink (2000a).

ISSN 0126 – 2874

**NUSA**

LINGUISTIC STUDIES OF INDONESIAN  
AND OTHER LANGUAGES IN INDONESIA  
VOLUME 47, 2000

---

**STUDIES IN IRIAN LANGUAGES**  
**PART II**

Edited by  
**GER P. REESINK**