

## 1.5 MANSAKA PHONEMES

There are 19 phonemes in Mansaka. The consonants are p, t, k, ʔ, b, d, g, l, r, m, n, ng, s, w, y. The vowels are a, i, o, u. Vowel shortness is also phonemic. Glottal stop, which is dropped everywhere except before pause, is not written in the current orthography. Vowel shortness is also not written, since it has a low functional load and the context is usually sufficient to make the meaning clear. The contrastiveness of vowel shortness may be seen in the following. ( ̣ marks shortness): bagaʔ 'lung', bágaʔ 'swelling'; butunga 'pull it', bútung 'young coconut'; arigi 'post', arigi 'shrimp fat'; tood 'purpose', tóod 'knee'. (See Abrams 1963.)

Historically [r] was an allophone of /l/, with [l] occurring utterance-initial, after consonants, and after i, and [r] occurring elsewhere: lagus 'floor', tukluʔ 'spear', ilaw 'raw', ubul 'smoke', aran 'name', urup 'bee', oro 'head'. But loanwords have now disturbed this pattern, and literate informants clearly prefer to consider r and l separate phonemes: solat 'letter', golay 'vegetables', litrato 'photograph', pala 'shovel', rilo 'watch'.

The basic syllable structure is a vowel preceded by a consonant (which may be the unmarked glottal stop), or a vowel preceded and followed by a consonant, i.e. VC and CVC. Two-consonant clusters are frequently found across syllable boundaries: tukluʔ 'spear'. The only consonant clusters within a syllable in native words occur when -y- 'actualized' is infixes in a verb: dara 'carry', dyara 'cargo', dyadara 'carried, am carrying'; tabang 'help', tyatabang 'helped, am helping'. Other consonant clusters appear in loanwords: tsa 'tea', maystro 'teacher', alambri 'wire'.