

2. Grammatical Sketch

2.1 Pronunciation

2.1.1 Vowels

The examples for the pronunciation of the vowels and consonants given below are only of a guiding principle. Due to the fact that the same words are stressed and pronounced differently according to the different regions and clans, a distinctly marked and homogenous system of symbols would be superfluous. For instance, the word for amulet is pronounced in the South as *ekeriou* and in the North of the country as *ekeriau*. The word “marriage” can be pronounced *akuuta*, *akuutar*, *akoota* or *akootar*. For “wives/women” one may hear *ngaber* and *ngaberu*. For “elder/old man” the pronunciation can be *ekasekout*, *ekasikout* and *ekasukout*. The pronunciation merely indicates the speaker’s origin. On the other hand, each of the few different pronunciations can be understood in the whole of Turkanaland.

The following examples are given as a guiding principle:

- a* as in French *mal*
- e* as in *end*
- i* as in *invest*
- o* as in *molest*
- u* as in *pull*

2.1.2 Consonants

- ch* as in *much*
- ng* as in *long*
- j* as in *jug*
- s* as in *sin*
- y* as in *yes*

All the remaining consonants are similarly pronounced as in English.

2.1.3 Diphthong

The only form of a diphthong pronounced as such is *ai*, as for example in *akai* (hut) or *aite* (cow); all others are pronounced as two different vowels, i.e. *ei* as in *apei* (one) is pronounced *a-p-e-i*, *ao* (honey) is pronounced *a-o*, and *abobou* (generosity) is pronounced *a-bob-o-u*.

GÜNTER BEST

Culture and Language of the Turkana
NW Kenya

HEIDELBERG 1983

CARL WINTER · UNIVERSITÄTSVERLAG