

XII. Usarufa Tone and Segmental Phonemes

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *General*

Both S. Wurm (1962a) and A. Capell (1949) have pointed out the significant occurrence of tone in New Guinea languages. It is the purpose of this paper to describe more fully the occurrence of tone in one of the languages of the East New Guinea Highland Stock.¹ After describing the phonemic status of tone in Usarufa, its distribution and perturbation, the authors will include a description of Usarufa segmental phonemes.

1.2. *Definitions*

The *syllable* is defined as a unit of tone placement. Each syllable therefore has only one mora of length, a feature of the toneme; and a single vowel as its peak. The two syllable patterns, vowel (V) and consonant-vowel (CV), are the basis for interpretation of consonant versus vowel and of contoid clusters. Vowel clusters constitute syllable clusters.

The *morphological word* is defined as the smallest meaningful unit which may be uttered in isolation. It is thus morphologically rather than phonologically determined.

¹ This paper was originally published as pp. 111-27 in *Studies in New Guinea Linguistics*, Oceania Linguistics Monographs No. 6 (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1962), and is reprinted here, in slightly revised form, by permission. The authors gathered the material for this paper over a period of eighteen months' residence in the village of Mairapaqa of the Orono district. The area occupied by Usarufa speakers lies about thirty miles south and west of Kainantu in the Eastern Highlands District of New Guinea. Although a great percentage of the adult population speaking Usarufa are bi- or even multilingual, few understand or speak Neo-Melanesian. Therefore, the material used in this paper was gathered monolingually.

The *phonological phrase* may contain one or more words and is a unit having one stress, whose placement is determined by the nucleus of falling and/or high tones as described in Section 3.1.

1.3. *Symbolization*

A single *a* will be used in both phonetic and phonemic transcription to represent the mid-central vocoid ə. Glottal stop will be represented in both cases by *q* and preglottalized consonants by apostrophe plus consonant: 'p, 't, 'k, 'm, etc. Length will be indicated by a colon following the segment: *m*; *n*; *a*; etc. High tone will be represented by an acute accent (´); over the vowel, falling tone by a caret (^) over the vowel, and low tone will be unmarked. Phonetic mid tone will be marked only in the section describing the phonetic qualities of high and low tones—in which case a macron (¯) over the vowel will be used. In phonetic transcription only, stress will be marked by double quotation marks (") preceding the stressed syllable. In phonemic transcription stress being sub-phonemic will be unmarked.

TABLE 6
SEGMENTAL PHONEMES

	Consonants			
	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Stops	'p	't t	'k	q
Fricatives and flap	b	r	g	
Liquids	w	y		
	'w	'y		
Nasals	m	n		
	m:	n:		
	'm	'n		
		Vowels		
	Front	Central	Back	
High	i		u	
Low	e	a	o	

Bee, Darlene, and Kathleen Barker Glasgow 1973. *Usarufa Tone and Segmental Phonemes*. in: McKaughan, Howard (ed.) *The Languages of the Eastern Family of the East New Guinea Highland Stock*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.