

XXIV. Introduction

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The Tairora-Binumarien-Waffa subfamily of the Eastern Family of the East New Guinea Highland Stock is the last to be described in this monograph. The Binumarien is spoken by 117 people living in three small villages on the northeastern boundary of the Kainantu subdistrict. Waffa is spoken by approximately 940 people living in five villages located at the headwaters of the Waffa River. This area is in the Morobe District south of the Markham River in the Kaiapit subdistrict, and is the only one separated from the rest of the Eastern Family. Tairora is the largest of the three named members of this subfamily and may be divided into a number of dialects. It is spoken by some eight thousand people who live in the mountainous country south of Kainantu in the Kainantu and Okapa subdistricts.

The following chapters describe the phonology of Binumarien and Waffa; give descriptions of the noun systems of Tairora, Binumarien, and Waffa and the verb morphology and syntax of Tairora; discuss sequences of clauses in Tairora; and finally treat the subject morphemes in the Tairora verb complex. Vincents' article on the verb system presented here replaces an earlier study entitled 'Introductory Notes on Tairora Verb Morphology and Syntax' (1962a). Chapter XXVII brings this study up to date, with more data available and a better grasp of the materials than was possible earlier.

The Vincents, in an unpublished manuscript (1962c), list the consonants of Tairora as *p*, *t*, *k*, *q*, *b*, *r*, *h*, *m*, and *n*, and also prenasalized stops *mp*, *nt*, *nk*. Vowels include *i*, *a*, *u*, *e*, *aa*, *o*. Word prosodemes of stress are postulated rather than tones as in the other languages, though Stringer and

Hotz describe stress for Waffa too. The relation between stress and tone in these languages is intimate.

Binumarien and Waffa have an alveolar grooved fricative *s* not appearing in Tairora (found in Awa and Auyana). Tairora has a distinctive glottal aspirate *h* which also occurs in Waffa, but not in Binumarien. Both Binumarien and Waffa have five vowels instead of the six of Tairora—less than any of the others of this family. Binumarien and Waffa also have vowel length indicated by gemination of the vowels. This is not the case for Tairora.

The noun structures for Binumarien, Waffa, and Tairora are covered in Chapters XXVII-XXIX. Noun bases for all three may be divided into two classes on the basis of the occurrence of a subject marker suffix. The morphemes in the three languages are cognate: Class I in Tairora takes *-ba*, in Binumarien this class takes *-fa*, and in Waffa it takes *-va*. The class is made up of all personal names and certain listed kinship terms. Class II in each of the three is made up of all other nouns and others of the kinship terms. In addition to the subject marker, Vincent describes some twenty-five noun suffixes for Tairora. As in other languages of the Eastern Family, locatives occupy an important place in the system.

Tairora verbs have suffixed fusions to indicate mode-person-number combinations or tense-person-number portmanteaus. Special sets of these affixes are used with final verbs in independent clauses, and with nonfinal verbs in dependent clauses. Relationships between clauses are outlined in the paper on sequences in Tairora which follows the verb description. The relationships depend on the relative times of the action of the verbs and on the subject of the clause or clauses following, whether they are the same or different.

Harland Kerr discusses possible morpheme cuts to indicate subject pronouns in the Tairora verb complex as seen in the Obura dialect. He concludes that there are morpheme cuts and that basically the morphemes that are so cut are subject person indicators.

The Tairora texts following the descriptive articles were recorded by Alex Vincent. They extend the linguistic material available, permitting further research for interested readers. We look forward to additional material on the Tairora as well as on the Binumarien and Waffa.

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