PHONOLOGY OF GUHU-SAMANE

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0. Introduction

The Guhu-Samane people, or Mid-Warias, are an agrarian people living in scattered villages along the central Waria River Valley in the Morobe District of the Territory of New Guinea. The language family to which Guhu-Samane belongs has not yet been established. It appears to be unrelated to the Kunimaipa group to the west, and to the coastal groups to the east.[1]

1. Phoneme Inventory

The phonemes of Guhu-Samane include fifteen consonants and five vowels.[2] The consonants all occur in word initial and medial positions, whereas the vowels occur in initial, medial and final positions as

1. Since this paper was written a more thorough comparison of Guhu-Samane with the languages of the Binandere Family has been made (Hooley and McElhanon, 1970) in which the conclusion was that "Guhu-Samane would therefore appear to be a separate branch of what we now propose to call the Binandere Stock. It still appears to be an isolated language with no close linguistic neighbours, but its linguistic status is at least tentatively established." (op. cit.:1076).

2. A sixth vowel, voiceless mid central /ah/, occurs only with the repeat quotation suffix /-ʔah/: e.g. /tuuma?a/ having gone; /tuuma?ah/ "Go ...."

illustrated below.

CHART 1

Consonants

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless Stops	p	t̲	t	k	ʔ
Voiced Obstruents	b		r	g	
Affricates			dz	kx	
Fricatives			s		h
Nasals	m		n	ŋ	

CHART 2

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

1.1 The Consonants

The unaspirated voiceless stops are /p t̲ t k ʔ/ (bilabial, dental, alveolar, velar and glottal respectively): /pobi/ right, /hapa/ hill, /paru/ throat; /t̲oba/ cloth, /tat̲ara/ dew, /t̲uu/ lake; /tooba/ shoot, /taatara/ didn't fall, /ʔaatare/ cease; /koko/ nose, /noke/ him, /kiki/ small insect, /kara/ whoever; /ʔoʔo/ slow, /noʔe/ he alone, /ʔaa/ war, /ʔee/ beyond, /ʔasa/ question. Syllables having /ʔ/ onset contrast with syllables having vowel onset: /iri/ bridge, /ʔiri/ search; /eetare/ do, /ʔeetare/ write; /uumare/ pump, pour, /uʔumare/ draw out.

The voiced obstruents are /b r g/ (bilabial, alveolar and velar respectively). In word initial position /b/ occurs as a stop and in medial

position it occurs as a fricative: /baru/ sorcery, /boobi/ [bo:bi] about to, /haba/ false. The /r/ usually occurs as a retroflex flap, but following /u/ it occurs as a retroflexed lateral: /kuraumare/ [kulaumaɽe] clear out, /ruu/ snore, /ʔaararo/ continue. In all of its occurrences /g/ is a stop: /gee/ leaf, /garuba/ conference; /gigi/ thin.

Of the two affricates /dz/ and /kx/ (alveolar and velar respectively), the former is voiced and the latter voiceless: /dzauna/ bee, /ʔidza/ good; /kxara/ long, /hakxa/ pass, /kxooba/ cause, /kxii/ buzzing.

The voiceless fricatives are grooved alveolar /s/ and glottal /h/: /hasa/ praise, /eeho/ stick; /sasa/ skin, /iisu/ corner.

The nasals are /m n ŋ/ (bilabial, alveolar, and velar respectively): /mutu/ interior, /oomaro/ fold; /nana/ we (exclusive), /iina/ fire making; /ŋoru/ dried, /iiŋa/ play. When followed by a high vowel in an unaccented syllable the nasals tend to be somewhat lengthened and the high vowel correspondingly shortened: /tomu/ ['tom·u] salt; /maŋi/ ['maŋ·i] bamboo; /kuni/ ['kun·i] stake.

1.2 The Vowels

The front unrounded vowels /i/ and /e/ are high and mid respectively: /ima/ thorn, /ʔiba/ head, /poti/ detour; /ebe/ eel, /ʔeba/ side, /mage/ left. The central unrounded vowel /a/ is low open: /apa/ upstream, /pata/ food, /oba/ water. The back vowels /o/ and /u/ are laxly rounded: /oto/ pandanus, /ʔosu/ crookedness, /ato/ downstream; /ube/ nut, /ʔusu/ sky, /pomu/ dust.

1.3 Stress

Primary stress is normally initial, but occurs on the second syllable of words having three or more syllables when the initial syllable is short, i.e. V or CV. A word is an isolatable syllable or group of syllables with one primary stress as defined above. Secondary stress is very light and varies freely.

2. Syllable Patterns

The syllable types in the language are V, VV, CV, and CVV.[3] Of a possible 480 phoneme combinations within syllables just half occur.

All of the possible V syllables occur in word initial position, but only /a/ occurs in medial position in the enclitic /-ama/ without, and only /i/ occurs in final position in the enclitic /-i/ subject indicator.

All possible 25 vowel combinations occur in VV or CVV syllables, but of these /ea ia ie io oa ua ue uo/ only occur at morpheme boundaries in compound or reduplicated words.

All of the possible CV syllables occur in initial, medial, and final positions.

More than two thirds of the possible CVV syllables have been observed. The missing combinations seem to be quite random.

3. Intonational Pause Groups

Beyond the word level the language is divided into intonational pause groups, each consisting of a word or group of words ending in a distinctive intonational pattern followed by a pause. The intonational patterns of these pause groups primarily affect the final syllable or syllables, whereas the non-final syllables have a somewhat neutral phonetic pitch affected by only a slight rise in pitch on the stressed syllables. The intonational patterns exhibit high, neutral, mid and low pitches.

There are three tentative intonational pause groups which occur in medial position in a sentence. These have conjunctive, sustained and exclamatory significance respectively. There are also two sustained final intonational pause groups having interrogative and declarative significance respectively. There are some phonetic variations of these intonational pause groups, but the norms are given below.

3. One other syllable type, CVVV, has been observed only with the words /paii/ a tree and /pouu/ head prop.

The conjunctive intonation, occurring simultaneously with certain grammatically defined connectives, rises sharply from neutral pitch on the penultimate syllable to high on the ultimate.

The sustained intonation, indicating there is more to follow, is the neutral pitch continuing on the optionally lengthened final syllable.

The exclamatory intonation occurs with utterances containing exclamatory words. It varies in intensity, descending from neutral or high pitch on the penultimate syllable to mid on the ultimate. However, exclamatory words with only one syllable may occur as isolated utterances.

The interrogative intonation rises to high pitch on the penultimate syllable and drops to low on the ultimate. However, if the penultimate is long, the pitch drops from high on the first mora of the syllable to mid on the second mora and to low on the ultimate syllable. Single-syllable words receive the entire intonational down-glide. When the interrogative particle /mae/ occurs in final position, the intonation transfers to the next to last word and the only difference is that the pitch remains mid on the ultimate syllable and drops to low on /mae/.

The declarative intonation glides down from neutral pitch on the antepenultimate to mid on the penultimate to low on the ultimate syllable. In the case of a two-syllable word the penultimate syllable is optionally neutral or mid pitch and drops to low on the ultimate; however, if the penultimate syllable is long the pitch is neutral on the first mora, mid on the second mora and low on the ultimate syllable. If the final word has only one syllable, the glide is from neutral or mid pitch to low.

4. Dialectal Differences

The Kipu dialect of the Guhu-Samane language is the most central and widely used throughout the tribe. Although there are several dialects, the phonological differences are not great. Chart 3 shows how the various dialects differ phonologically from the Kipu dialect.

CHART 3

Example of Guhu-Samane Dialects

	Kipu Dialect	Name of Dialect		Distinguishing Feature
/bisi/ jealousy	[bísi]	Bapi	[mbísi]	Prenasalisation
/baruna/ chest	[baŕúna]	Bapi	[mbaŕúna]	Prenasalisation
/gama/ all	[gáma]	Bapi	[ŋgáma]	Prenasalisation
/pomati/ star	[pomáti]	Garaina	[pomási]	[t] > [s]
/saipa/ bow	[saípa]	Garaina	[t^haípa]	[s] > [t^h]
/sagi/ arrow	[sági]	Garaina	[sáŋi]	[g] > [ŋ]
/naga/ house	[nága]	Garaina	[náŋa]	[g] > [ŋ]
/ʔaatare/ cease	[ʔá:taŕe]	Sekare	[ʔá:daŕe]	[t] > [d]
/dzootata/ snake	[d^zó:tata]	Sekare	[yó:dada]	and [d^z] > [y]
/ŋiŋi/ abhor	[ŋíŋi]	Sekare	[ŋ́ŋ́i]	Contiguous to a nasal the vowel is nasal.
/nona/ brother	[nóma]	Sekare	[nóma]	
/dzoobe/ hello	[d^zó:be]	Sinaba	[d^yó:be]	[d^z] > [d^y]
/midza/ shame	[míd^za]	Sinaba	[míd^ya]	[d^z] > [d^y]
/ʔidza/ good	[ʔíd^za]	Sinaba	[íd^ya]	Loss of glottal stop.
/ʔooʔa/ down	[ʔó:ʔa]	Sinaba	[ó:a]	Loss of glottal stop.

5. Orthography

Printed literature in the Kipu dialect employs an orthography which differs from the phonemic symbols used in this paper in the following respects: /kx/ is written as "kh", /ŋ/ as "ng", /ʔ/ as "q" and /t/ as "tt".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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