

**THE PHONOLOGY  
OF LOWER GRAND VALLEY DANI**

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## **THE PHONOLOGY OF LOWER GRAND VALLEY DANI**

*A Comparative Structural Study  
of Skewed Phonemic Patterns*

BY

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## PREFACE

During four years of service as a missionary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the Baliem Valley area of central Netherlands New Guinea, the writer has had as a major responsibility the analysis of the language and the preparation of learning aids for his colleagues. Of necessity, work in an unadministered area by a party who were the first permanent western residents could not be completely specialized. Many hours were spent in preparation of housing and food and maintenance of equipment. More importantly, a great deal of time was invested in making friends with the local people and trying to understand their way of life. What periods were available for linguistic research were spent in rewarding, if at first slow, monolingual investigation. No second language was available for use as a questioning tool, and even the vocabulary lists from earlier explorers proved virtually valueless, so different was the dialect from those previously reported.

From that first term of study and work have come conversational fluency in the dialect primarily described in this thesis, a body of language lessons for other missionaries and the preliminary work for a technical description of the language, of which this thesis is the first instalment. It was earlier planned that the present study should comprise the first of three chapters of a complete report including grammar as well as phonology. When the non-congruence of phonemic patterns of related dialects appeared as a potentially valuable problem to which to devote fuller treatment, and a draft of the proposed second chapter promised to swell the total bulk of the report to unwieldy size for a single study, a suggestion was adopted to limit the thesis to the

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phonology and to highlight the skewing of the phonemic pattern of the lower Grand Valley dialect in relation to other dialects.

Warm thanks are due the staff of the Summer Institute of Linguistics of the University of Oklahoma for training received in two summers of study and one of instruction there before beginning work in New Guinea. Dr. Robert F. Spencer has given appreciated guidance to a graduate study program in anthropology and linguistics at the University of Minnesota and has, as thesis adviser, offered important suggestions for the organization and limitation of the project. Dr. William A. Smalley of the American Bible Society and Gordon F. Larson, a missionary colleague of the author, have read earlier drafts of this description and given constructive criticism. From other missionaries on the field and now from his wife the author has received the very real contribution of interest, tolerance of his preoccupation with things linguistic, and assumption of much of his share of routine work. To G. Linwood Barney is owed a debt of appreciation for the not inconsiderable contribution of assembling and submitting the manuscript and attending to the final time-consuming details and travels involved. Particular acknowledgment is made of Apsalek, 'Man-surrounded,' whose intelligent responsiveness and almost inexhaustible patience guided the author into the knowledge of lower Grand Valley Dani. Many other friends joined him as helpful tutors in the school of life and talk together. To our Lord, in whose name this work has been done, thanks is given with a prayer that it may have speeded communication of the Good News of Christ to the Dani speaking peoples of central Netherlands New Guinea.

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### PREFACE TO THE PUBLISHED EDITION

Publication of this thesis has been made possible by a generous financial subsidy provided by the government of Netherlands New Guinea and the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. Warm thanks are also due Dr. J. C. Anceaux of the Kantoor voor Bevolkingszaken, Hollandia, for the recommendation and active encouragement he has given.

In January, 1959, the writer returned to the Baliem Valley, and during two and a half years of further work in the area the general accuracy and validity of the analysis have been confirmed. The most significant new development was a conference in February, 1961, of Doctor Anceaux, representing the administration, Father van der Stap, representing the Roman Catholic mission, and the writer, representing the Protestant missions, to agree upon an orthography for Dani. At that time the recommendations presented in Chapter IV were adopted except that: (1) The symbols 'y' and 'v' were chosen for the high open vowels, instead of 'i' and 'u.' Ready availability on typewriters and distinctive shape are advantages offered by these symbols. The latter factor is significant in the light of the five vowel dialect now reported from the upper Hablifoeri area, in which /i/ and /u/ correspond to the high close vowels, and /e/ and /o/ correspond to both the high open vowels and the mid vowels of seven vowel systems. Readers from that area would only be confused by materials in a seven vowel dialect using similarly shaped symbols for what are for them contrasting phonemes and contrastively shaped symbols for what are for them allophones of single

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phonemes. Reader response to the new symbols has been excellent.

(2) The digraphs 'bp' and 'dl' were chosen for the implosive stops, instead of 'β' and 'δ.' Note that no sequence of phonemes /bp/ or /dl/ occurs in any known dialect and that the second letter in each digraph is used in dialects which do not have implosive stops to represent the commonest correspondences of these phonemes. (3) The attempt to represent intonational contrasts fairly closely by use of two punctuation marks in sequence was abandoned. Periods were chosen to symbolize sentence terminal with downgliding intonation, question marks to symbolize upgliding intonation in questions, exclamation points to symbolize sentence terminal with intonation contours marking surprise by inclusion of level one, and commas to symbolize any sentence medial plus contour terminal.

### CORRIGENDA

P. 1, next to the last line of text, and p. 8, sec. 2.2, line 3: **Tinak** is now commonly spelled **Sinak**.

P. 2, footnotes, line 1: this pronunciation was earlier reported in the literature, but Gordon F. Larson in a personal communication states that normally the Monis pronounce this name with an implosive [δ].

P. 3, footnote 7, line 3, and p. 10, sec. 2.3 heading, line 2, footnote 2: **Wodo** is now spelled **Wodlo**.

P. 12, last complete sentence: further check of upper Bele materials indicates that /s/ is there already a separate phoneme in contrast with /t/ in a limited number of cases, and this may prove true in BV also.

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- P. 14, last line: one uncommon case of initial velar nasal has now been recorded in LGV.
- P. 18, line 2: for 'extant' read 'described.'
- P. 21, footnote 2: for '3.1215' read '3.1214.'
- P. 29, footnote 12: insert 'in nearly all cases' at the end of line 2.
- P. 30, footnote 14, line 14: for '/luppuet/' read '/luppuwet/.'
- P. 31, line 3: for '/β/' read '\*/β/.'
- P. 34, line 3: insert 'the allophones of' following the comma.
- P. 37, next to last line of text: for '/huoŋ, huon/' read '/huwoŋ, huwon/.'
- P. 38, line 5: for '/ʒl+/' read '/el+.'
- P. 38, fourth line from bottom: for 'turn it over' read 'dump it out.'
- P. 39, last paragraph, line 1: delete 'in all environments where it occurs' and add to this paragraph the following sentence: 'Before /i/, /j/ is represented by a voiced lamino-gingival allophone of lenis sibilant articulation [ʒ]: /ji/ [ʒi] 'syllable used in weeping.''
- P. 40, footnote 24, line 20: for '/uʋV/' read '/uʋV/.'
- P. 46, section 3.12221, line 4: after 'occurring' insert 'with a consonant following and this whole sequence.'
- P. 46, footnote 34: add, 'One recorded unit /seei-tek/ [sʒii-rʒk] 'prevaricating' contains the sequence /ei/ with full syllabicity for each vowel. This necessitates the preceding correction of section 3.12221.'
- P. 51, footnote 45: add, 'Further check of the data indicates that in several of the examples given secondary stress is a freely varying

phenomenon, but a completely valid statement of predictability has yet to be made.

P. 54, line 7: after 'Glottal' insert 'stop.'

P. 56, line 12: after 'excitedly' insert closing parenthesis mark.

P. 57, line 3: after 'utterance' insert closing parenthesis mark.

P. 62, footnote 57: add, 'During later investigation one unit with initial velar nasal has been recorded: /ŋauwa/ 'incantation word.' This specialized term may be an obsolete form or an unassimilated loan word from GD; it is unknown to most younger speakers. Other morphemes occurring in GD with initial /ŋ/ occur in LGV with initial /n/. It is suggested that morpheme initial occurrence of velar nasal may be considered extra-systematic like initial /ts/ in English 'tsetse.'

P. 63, line 5: for '/uok/' read '/uwok/.'

P. 63, last paragraph, line 1: after '/j/' insert comma.

P. 63, last paragraph, line 3: for '/omo/' read '/oumo/.'

P. 63, footnote 58: revise to read, 'This last form is not a single morpheme,...'

P. 65, line 5: change gloss of /took-hoko/ to read 'separating (man's name).'

P. 65, section 3.2122, line 6: delete the rest of the sentence after 'vowel.'

P. 65, footnote 65: change gloss of /ouwak/ to 'side of the hip.'

P. 75, line two: add, 'Note the adoption of the symbols 'y' and 'v' as described in the preface to the published edition.'

P. 75, line 15: add, 'Note the adoption of the digraphs 'bp' and 'dl' as described in the preface to the published edition.'

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- P. 80, end of first paragraph: add, 'Note the abandonment of the use of two consecutive punctuation marks, as described in the preface to the published edition.'
- P. 83, line 9 of text: for 'of' read 'by.'
- P. 95, line 6: for 'pakke' read '(-pakke.' For 'wukha-hupt' read 'wukka-hupt.' For 'hoto' read 'notok.'
- P. 95, line 15: for 'hupik-kiak' read 'hupik-kijak' in both places.
- P. 95, line 17: for 'hinakèn' read 'hinakèn.'
- P. 95, line 18: for 'wattilik-he' read 'wat-hilik-he.'
- P. 95, line 21: for 'akeikhén-en-he' read 'akeikhé-nen-he.'
- P. 96, line 3: for 'pukima' read 'puki-ma.'
- P. 96, line 4: for 'wukha-hupt' read 'wukka-hupt.'
- P. 96, section II, line 2: for 'hinaken' read 'hinaken.' For 'Wathilik-he;' read 'Wat-hilik-he;.'
- P. 96, section II, line 3: for 'NUkhUnem-en' read 'NUgUnem-en.'
- P. 96, section II, line 4: for 'wathilik-he' read 'wat-hilik-he.'
- P. 96, next to last line of section II: for 'Eilelekhwe-lak' read 'Eilelegwe-lak.'
- P. 96, end of section II: add, 'Note that in the practical orthography adopted as described in the preface to the published edition the punctuation of this section would be much simpler, and upper case 'I' and 'U' would be replaced by 'y' and 'v.'

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