

TOBATI

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Tobati is spoken in the villages of Tobati and Enggros at the western end of Yotefa Bay, to the east of Jayapura in Irian Jaya, Indonesia. No earlier description of Tobati exists; only notes on the language, initiated by Cowan (1952), have appeared. Linguistically, the language poses some interesting challenges both phonologically, in terms of the organisation of the contrastive sounds, and syntactically, as it displays a very unusual OSV word order.

In Tobati there is extensive contact with modern Indonesian society (which exists on the mainland about five minutes by outboard motor away): many (if not most) people have jobs in shops or offices on the mainland, and there is considerable erosion of the language. On Enggros, on the other hand, only ten minutes away by canoe, the main occupation is still fishing, and the amount of cultural degradation is much lower; still, children are learning to speak Indonesian earlier than they learn Tobati, and so the language must be regarded as endangered. Much traditional activity, the planting of sago gardens and hunting on the mainland, has ceased, since all the traditional land is now occupied by the city to produce the urban residential areas of Entrop and Abepura. The two villages have a social system of seven clans that dictate land and fishing rights and responsibilities, as well as marriage possibilities. The information here is based on the Enggros dialect. The name Tobati has been used since it is a proper name, not etymologisable, unlike Enggros which means 'second place' (*inyjros* in Tobati), referring to the move from Tobati to establish a new village site.

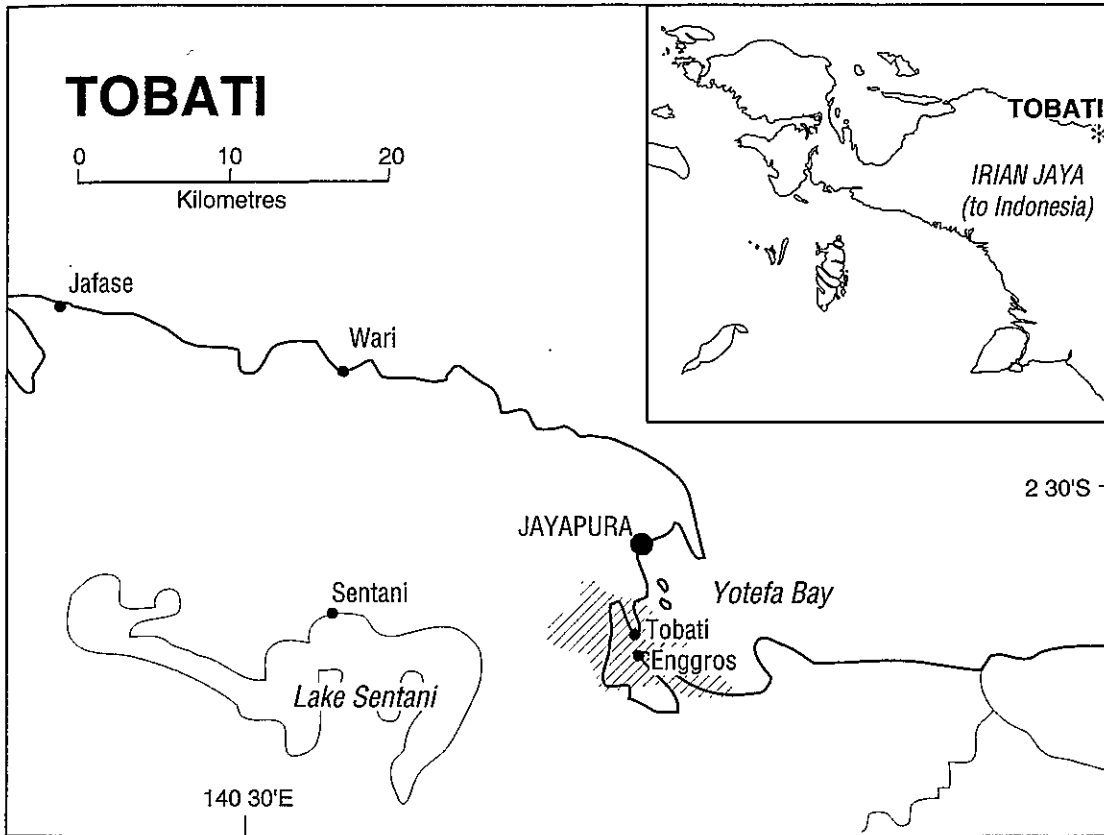
1 PHONOLOGY

Tobati phonology is interesting for the asymmetries it displays, but is not particularly complicated. The phenomenon of epenthetic vowel insertion provides empirical evidence for the functioning of a sonority hierarchy in Tobati, and the process of prenasalisation shows that phonetic categories are at least as important in the language as are phonological classes.

1.1 Phonemes

The system is somewhat skewed phonemically, and shows considerable variation phonetically. The underlying consonant phonemes are:

		t	c	k
b		d	j	
ϕ	f	s	ʃ	h
				ʎ
m		n	ñ	~
		r		
w			y	



The voiced stop /d/ is dental, while the other apicals are alveolar. /b/ and /d/ have fricative allophones [β] and [ð] between continuants; the name of the language is phonemically /tobwadic/, phonetically [tɔβwɑðɪc]. When the velar stop occurs after a homorganic nasal and before a vowel, as in /ŋka/ 'where?', the realisation can be either [ŋga] with a voiced stop, or [ŋya], with a voiced fricative. The palatal stops /c/ and /j/ are remarkable in the lack of any perceptible affrication. Some younger, more acculturated speakers substitute a Malay-style palato-alveolar affricate, but more traditional speakers produce a clear stop with no fricative component. Stops in final position are pronounced without voicing, and are strictly unreleased; a sonorant in this position following a non-low vowel in a single-syllable word is often accompanied by a final vowel, /o/, implying that there is a greater degree of syllable weight associated with /a/ than with the other vowels. The velar stop has different realisations word-finally; the /k/ is usually realised as a fricative [x] in this position when following a non-rounded vowel, and as [k] when following a rounded vowel. Following /u/ in this position it is additionally rounded, [k^w]: [wax] /wak/ 'canoe', [-rok] /-rok/ '1SG.OBJECT', and [nuk^w] /nuk/ 'village'.

The distinction between /s/ and /ʃ/ appears to be a recent one. We can assume that in the recent past [ʃ] was an allophone of /s/; all occurrences of [ʃ] are in the environment of the high front vowel /i/ or semivowel /y/, and that is an obvious conditioning environment. Examples of this include [wɪʃ] 'louse, forest', [wɪʃ] 'sand, rice', [ʃyaw] 'paddle', [mɛʃi] 'red'. Nonetheless, there are near-minimal pairs with [s] before an /i/, such as [sic] 'knife', [ʃip] 'all'. We cannot, therefore, predict the phonetic shape of /s/, and so must regard instances of [ʃ] as a separate phoneme /ʃ/, despite its restricted range of environments for occurrence. Evidence that the development of [ʃ] might be recent can be found in the allophonic variation of certain words; for 'forest', we hear both [uʃ]

and [wɪʃ], indicating that the loss of the high front vocalic environment is underway, and we might expect that in the future it will appear in a wider range of vocalic environments.

The voiced velar continuant varies freely between [ɣ] and [wɫ], and in the former allophone shows overlap with /h/ (which displays free variation between [h], [x], [ɦ] and [ɣ]). The considerable overlap between the allophones of /ɣ/ and /h/ makes this pair of phonemes the most suspicious, but near-minimal pairs such as /rhor/ 'bone' and /ɾɣon/ 'flesh' make it clear that we are dealing with two phonemes here. The labial fricative /f/ has allophones [f], [ɸ] and [p] ~ [pɸ], the last most common word-finally.

The phoneme listed as /~/ above deserves comment. Reflecting Proto-Oceanic *ŋ, this is realised as either nasalisation of a vowel, or a homorganic nasal preceding a stop. Examples include [tã] 'cry', and [taβafõ] 'night', reflecting *taŋis and *boŋi respectively. Recent loanwords, such as [piri] 'plate', from Malay *piring*, also show the replacement of a velar nasal with nasalisation (the other nasals are permitted in final position: /man/ 'bird', /adam/ 'door', /hoŋ/ 'dog'). When the nasalisation phoneme appears prevocally it shows the reason for assigning it synchronically to a velar place of articulation, as it is realised as [ŋg]. An example of this can be seen in /trũ~/ [trũ] 'behind', but with the addition of /-a/ 'locative' [trũga] 'behind-LOC'.

The vowel phonemes are:

i	u
e	o
a	

They do not show any remarkable allophones, appearing with tense variants [i e a o u] when in open syllables, and as lax [ɪ ɛ a ɔ ʊ] when in closed syllables.

1.2 Phonotactics

Both phonemically and phonetically sequences of up to three consonants are permitted in the language, such as /(j)e syriahi/ 'leg'. There are also many examples of underlying clusters being broken up by epenthetic vowels, as described in the next section.

The behaviour of nasals and stops in their environment is interesting. The only clusters allowed are [mb], [nd], [nt], [ɲj] and [ŋg], in [səmbi] 'moon', [taŋt] 'man', [nti] 'he/she', [eɲj] 'place', and [ŋga] 'where'. These represent /mb/, /nd/, /nt/, /NC/ and /Nk/, where /N/ represents a nasal archiphoneme, and /C/ a palatal stop archiphoneme. Notice that there is one nasal + stop sequence possible for each *phonetic* place of articulation with a stop phoneme; for this reason the dental and alveolar columns in the consonant chart have not been collapsed, despite /t/ and /d/ apparently being voiceless and voiced members of the same paradigm, and /f/ has been treated as a fricative, despite filling the voiceless labial stop position both synchronically and historically.

Since there are no occurrences of /nj/ or /mj/, nor /mk/, /nk/ or /ŋk/, we cannot assess the identity of these nasals; similarly the absence of [ɲc] prevents us from assigning the stop in [ɲj] to the voiced or voiceless palatal stop phoneme, given that we have the example of the [ŋg] sequence representing a nasal plus /k/. We do, however, have examples of /md/, a cluster which is always broken up with a schwa, such as [mǎɖɪc] 'cold' /mdic/, and /ñd/. This means that there is differential treatment of the sequences underlyingly, with the more forward nasal + stop clusters being more highly specified than those involving the more back stops.

1.3 Syllabification and stress

Primary stress in Tobati regularly falls on the penultimate syllable.

Tobati shows a strong preference for consonants in onset position, with few complex codas. Up to three consonants have been observed initially, but no more than one in a coda.

Epenthetic consonants are found between nasals and /t/, as in /jomric/ 'I see them', which is realised as [jombrɪc]. This process is quite automatic and is not reflected in the orthography.

Epenthetic vowels are found between consonants when the left to right sequence of consonants does not show increasing sonority. The classes of consonants that are treated as belong to different 'sonority sets' are set out below; [N]- represents a homorganic nasal preceding a stop, with all other occurrences of nasals being treated as set II.

I	II	III	IV	V
[N]-	t c k b d j m n ñ	f s ʃ h y	r	w y

The rules for epenthetic vowel insertions are that a schwa must be inserted between two pre-vocalic consonants if the sequence of consonants does not move along the sonority hierarchy; thus /rwador/ 'six' is realised as [rwaðor], since /r/ is in set IV and /w/ in set V, and /fyayec/ 'sweet potato' similarly appears without an epenthetic schwa, with set III and set IV consonants in the initial coda. On the other hand /hbay/ appears as [həβay] 'faeces' since the fricatives are in set III and the stops in set II.

Sequences of consonants from the same set are only found with sets II and III; sequences from set III are allowed without epenthetic schwas, as in /shreu/ 'tortoise', [sfireu]. Two consonants from set II (the only instances found involve a stop plus a nasal) require a schwa: /tñi/ 'ear', [təñi]. This contrasts with the treatment of homorganic sequences of nasals plus stops, as seen in /fmbi/ 'arrow', [fəmbi], treating the initial cluster as class II, class I and class II, not *[fəməbi] with a class III, class II and class II analysis. A more elegant solution would treat the prenasalisation as involving a modification to the stops in set II, rather than as a wholly separate series, but the formula given above is descriptively adequate.

The following types of monosyllables have been noted, representing the maximum to which a syllable can be filled with consonants without resorting to epenthetic schwas. The difference between a nasal and a different type of consonant has been noted only when that nasal is homorganic with a following consonant in a cluster.

Syllable type

V	u	'wind'
CV	ño	'tooth'
NCV	nte	'2SG'
VN	em	'cuscus'
VC	ic	'fish'
CCV	sra	'prawn'
CVC	tut	'breast'
CVNC	tand	'man, male'
	fons	'bamboo'
CCVC	ryam	'crocodile'
NCVC	nduk	'sleep'
CCVNC	triñj	'near'
NCCVC	ntric	'3PL'

Clearly syllable complexity is in the onset, not the coda. The example of three non-nasal consonants beginning the word /syreu/ 'tortoise' has already been given; this also illustrates the possibility of sequences of vowels which, whilst rare, do occur. Another example is /ai/ 'tree, wood'; in these cases there is no tendency towards diphthongisation.

1.4 Other features

The treatment of loanwords is revealing of the distinctive features associated with the different contrastive phonemes. We have already seen how a final -N is borrowed as nasalisation on a preceding vowel. Other loan phenomena worthy of note include the borrowing of [d] as /r/, not [d̥], showing that the voiced coronal stop is specified as being dental, not alveolar. This can be seen in the word for 'money', /roy/ (< Malay *doi*).

1.5 Orthography

The orthography used reflects the stops in their unlenited forms and the palatals are written with digraphs, *ny* for /ñ/ and *sy* for /ʃ/. The voiced (post-)velar continuant is written with *gh*. in accordance with speaker preferences, though *g* alone would be sufficient.

2 NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

All nominals may head a noun phrase without any further morphemes required for grammaticality, and this NP may serve as an argument of a verb, as an oblique constituent in the clause, or even as a predicate in a non-verbal clause. Nonetheless it is possible to modify a noun (though not a pronoun), with post-nominal adjectives, relative clauses, numerals (which appear to function as verbs), or demonstratives. The only pronominal modification is a possessive phrase. The final element of a noun phrase may take a case marker, if called for by the clause structure.

2.1 Pronouns

Pronouns in Tobati are found in both free forms and bound forms. The bound forms appear on verbs, to mark the person and number of the subject and object, as prefixes and suffixes, respectively. The free forms are used either as independent pronouns heading an NP, or as possessive pronouns, though a difference between the two sets of pronouns exists only for the first person singular. The following pronouns are found in Tobati:

	1INC	1EXC	2	3
<i>Independent</i>				
SG		<i>nehu</i>	<i>nte</i>	<i>nti</i>
PL	<i>nter</i>	<i>ni(ni(a))</i>	<i>munu(a)</i>	<i>ntric(a)</i>
<i>Subject</i>				
SG		<i>j-</i>	—	—
PL	<i>ty-</i>	<i>m-</i>	<i>m-</i>	<i>ry-</i>

	1INC	1EXC	2	3
<i>Object</i>				
SG		-rok	-ho	-i
PL	-	-ni	-nu	-ric
<i>Possessive</i>				
SG		neh(u)	nte	nti
PL	nter	nini	nunu	ntric

Examples of the use and allomorphy of the bound forms are given in §3.1.

2.2 Nouns

Nouns may occur alone as a fully specified NP. When occurring in oblique functions, a noun takes case marking, as described below in §4.3.

Occasionally an object is also found with the allative case marker *-ad* used to indicate that this is the object of the sentence. This is particularly common if the object is unexpectedly found as the object, rather than the expected subject, of a verb, or when the word order is not the canonical OSV. Compare the interpretation of the following two sentences, which are crucially differentiated by the use of the allative case on *har*.

Man har-ad rom-ra yar.
 bird person-ALL see-SEQ fly
 'The bird saw the man, and then flew off.'

Man har rom-ra yar.
 bird person see-SEQ fly
 'The man saw the bird, and then it flew off.'

There does not appear to be much in the way of productive nominal morphology, though some speculations are offered in the next section as to possible historically productive morphemes.

2.3 Articles and demonstratives

There are no articles for either pragmatic or syntactic purposes; there is one case suffix, *-re*, that appears to mark pragmatic focus, rather than one of the more traditional syntactic cases, but there are no NP-initial articles. Demonstratives are final in the NP, and mark a two way set of distinctions for distance. Examples include:

<i>tand nda</i>	<i>ajari ndo</i>
man this	fire that
'this man'	'that fire'

It is possible that the kin terms in Tobati reflect an earlier article, since a disproportionate number of them begin in *a*: *ame* 'mother', *ace* 'father, father's younger brother', *aku* 'father's sister', *adi* 'mother's sister', *aha* 'elder sibling', *abu* 'grandparent'. Notably, all of these are older relatives, so we might infer that pre-Tobati had some kind of honorific *a*; synchronically, however, no segmentation is possible. Similarly, the fact that all of the personal pronouns begin with *n-* (or possibly *nt-*) might be indicative of an earlier article or prefix; again, we cannot segment this as a separate morpheme synchronically.

2.4 Numerals and number-marking

The cardinal numerals are:

1	<i>tei</i>	6	<i>rwador</i>
2	<i>ros</i>	7	<i>mandosim</i>
3	<i>tor</i>	8	<i>rughondu</i>
4	<i>aw</i>	9	<i>rwador mani</i> or <i>tei am</i>
5	<i>mnyiam</i>	10	<i>jer roj foghonjam</i>

There is no morphological distinction between cardinal and ordinal numerals. Numerals above ten are most commonly expressed in Indonesian. The numerals are found post-nominally when attributive, though the noun itself is not marked for number. Only verbs are marked for number of subject (and object, if present).

har ros
person two
'two people'

Nehu man ros j-om-ric.
1SG bird two 1SG-see-3PL
'I can see two birds.'

The numeral may stand alone in an NP without a lexical head:

Tia yar.
one fly
'One flew.'

There is not a set of classifiers associated with the numerals; they may modify any count noun in the same morphosyntactic manner.

Quantifiers may appear immediately following the head in the NP, or alternatively following the verb, in a secondary-predicate position, similar to the behaviour of functionally attributive verbs. In this position they are ambiguous in terms of their reference to subject or object.

Nter ic t-rom-ric sib.
1INC:PL fish 1INC:PL-see-3PL all
'All of us saw the fish.' or 'We saw all of the fish.'

Only when the attributive clause is immediately following one of the nominals is the reference unambiguous.

Nter ic sib t-rom-ric.
1INC:PL fish all 1INC:PL-see-3PL
'We saw all of the fish.'

Notice that even when apparently modifying in the NP, numerals and quantifiers take the same morphology as when predicative: there is no agreement, but neither is there an attributive marker, as is found for adjectives (see §2.5).

2.5 Adjectives and nominal modifiers

As with numerals, adjectival modification occurs postnominally.

Rum yan rebi-fani naha.
 house blue many-NEG here
 'There aren't many blue houses here.'

When attributive, an adjective takes the attributive marker *-i* (which is not detectable after the vowel *-i*). Compare the attributive and predicative uses of adjectives in the sentences and phrases below:

<i>Rum ndo trinj.</i>	<i>Ndo rum trinj-i.</i>
house that near	that house close-ATTR
'That house is close by.'	'That's a close-by house.'

Even when the adjective takes a complement, there is no use of the *-i* when predicative:

Tobwadic Inyjros trinj.
 Tobati Enggros close
 'Tobati is close to Enggros.'

With an adjective like *mahai* 'big', there is no difference: *rum ndo mahai* 'that house is big', *ndo rum mahai* 'that's a big house'.

2.6 Basic noun phrase structure

The maximal NP in Tobati may be summarised as follows:

[[POSSP] N ADJ/NUM RELCL DEM]-CASE -FOCUS

Although there are no reasons to assume that a noun cannot be modified by more than one adjective, this has not been found in the materials collected. A possessive phrase is a complete NP, or a (possessive) pronoun (only the 1SG pronoun has a distinctive possessive form), though modification of the possessor is rare, and demonstratives have not been observed in this position.

2.7 Possession

Unlike in many Oceanic languages, there is not a distinction in types of possession in Tobati, with all forms of what is normally referred to as inalienable possession (kin terms, body parts, etc.) being marked in the same way as obviously alienable possession is. Furthermore, there is not a distinction of possessive classes. Simple juxtaposition of the possessor and possessum is sufficient to code phrasal possession.

hony hdwec
 dog tail
 '(the) dog's tail'

Alienable possession may optionally be distinguished from inalienable possession by marking the possessor with the dative case; in this case the meaning is more 'the item that is for X'; in the example below, the translation could equally well be 'the fish that is for mother'.

ame-ni ic(a)
 mother-DAT fish
 'mother's fish'

2.8 Relative clauses

A relative clause is a contained clause that modifies a preceding noun. It does not, however, have to be contiguous with that noun, unlike an adjective, suggesting that perhaps the apparent relative clauses are in fact secondary predicates. Example:

Nehu foro j-om-i fab.
 1SG pig 1SG-see-3SG run:SG
 'I saw the pig running / the running pig.'

The reference of this secondary predicate is ambiguous between the core arguments:

Foro har ndo rom-i fab.
 pig person that see-3SG run:SG
 'That person saw the running pig.' / 'The running pig saw that person.'

Relative clauses have only been observed with a subject as head; it is not known if relative clauses headed by the object of the relative clause are allowed.

3 VERBS AND VERB PHRASES

There does not appear to be strong evidence for the existence of a verb phrase in Tobati that includes both the verb and the object to the exclusion of the subject. The canonical word order that places the object in initial position, and the subject preverbally, and the lack of any quantifier scope tests that single out one argument over the other, make a VP that includes an object NP an unnecessary construct in Tobati.

3.1 Verbal derivation and inflection

The forms of the verbal affixes were presented in §2.1. The subject prefixes show a great degree of interaction with an initial consonant in the stem of the verb, allomorphy which is not found with the object suffixes. Some examples of the range of allomorphy found with the subject prefixes can be gauged from the following examples. In particular, the complex prefixes *ty-* and *ry-* are very frequently reduced to single consonants.

	<i>unt</i> 'drink'	<i>rom</i> 'see'	<i>wi</i> 'go'	<i>wah</i> 'walk'	<i>ntā</i> 'cry'
1SG	<i>unt</i>	<i>jom-i</i>	<i>wi</i>	<i>wah</i>	<i>nydā</i>
2SG	<i>unt</i>	<i>rom-i</i>	<i>wi</i>	<i>wah</i>	<i>ntā</i>
3SG	<i>unt</i>	<i>rom-i</i>	<i>wi</i>	<i>wah</i>	<i>nā</i>
1INC:PL	<i>tyunt</i>	<i>trom-it</i>	<i>wi</i>	<i>tyah</i>	<i>ntā</i>
1EXC:PL	<i>munt</i>	<i>m(b)rom-i</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>mah</i>	<i>ntā</i>
2PL	<i>munt</i>	<i>m(b)rom-i</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>mah</i>	<i>ntā</i>
3PL	<i>ryunt</i>	<i>rrom-i</i>	<i>rwi</i>	<i>ryahr</i>	<i>ntā</i>
	<i>rmar</i> 'laugh'	<i>nos</i> 'wash'	<i>non</i> 'hear'	<i>fosat</i> 'speak'	<i>ghroh</i> 'sing'
1SG	<i>jmar</i>	<i>nyos</i>	<i>nyon-i</i>	<i>bosat</i>	<i>jroh</i>
2SG	<i>rmar</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>non-i</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>ghroh</i>
3SG	<i>rmar</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>non-i</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>ghroh</i>
1INC:PL	<i>tmar</i>	<i>tnos</i>	<i>tnon-i t</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>tghroh</i>
1EXC:PL	<i>rmar</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>non-i</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>ghroh</i>
2PL	<i>rmar</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>non-i</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>ghroh</i>
3PL	<i>rmar</i>	<i>rnos</i>	<i>rnon-ir</i>	<i>fosat</i>	<i>rghroh</i>

Compare this with the minimal allophony associated with the object suffixes in *rom* 'see': *rom(b)rok*, *romho*, *romi*, *nter rom*, *romni*, *romnu* and *rom(b)ric*. The only allophony is the epenthetic appearance of [b] between the nasal and the sonorant, predictable from normal phonological constraints on the language. (There is no bound object form for 1INC:PL, so a free form must be used; it cannot be interpreted as the subject, since the verb does not show 1INC:PL subject agreement, which is overt: *trom*.)

In addition to the regular inflection paradigms described earlier, using the subject prefixes or an allomorphic variation of them, several verbs display suppletive forms for plural subject, or one plural subject; others combine suppletive stems with subject inflection. Some examples of this sort of irregular verb are shown below; no examples of a transitive verb with a suppletive stem have yet been found (compare with the paradigms listed in the section on pronouns).

	<i>rar</i>	'fall'	<i>nduk</i>	'sleep'	<i>mab</i>	'die'	<i>tesinod</i>	'sit'
1SG	<i>jar</i>		<i>nduk</i>		<i>mab</i>		<i>tesinod</i>	
2SG	<i>rar</i>		<i>nduk</i>		<i>mab</i>		<i>tesinod</i>	
3SG	<i>rar</i>		<i>induk</i>		<i>mab</i>		<i>tesinod</i>	
1INC:PL	<i>trar</i>		<i>fataw</i>		<i>tmsyow</i>		<i>tyadkwad</i>	
1EXC:PL	<i>rar</i>		<i>fataw</i>		<i>msyow</i>		<i>wadkwad</i>	
2PL	<i>rar</i>		<i>fataw</i>		<i>msyow</i>		<i>wadkwad</i>	
3PL	<i>rrar / ihrub</i>		<i>rduktaw</i>		<i>rmsyow</i>		<i>wadkwad</i>	

Adjectives (like *osy* 'sick', *mahai* 'big') show no variation for person/number at all, and are best treated as a word class separate from verbs; the different behaviour they exhibit when attributive in an NP is also evidence for this division. The use of the subject prefixes is always compulsory on verbs. The object prefixes are used except for those circumstances when the object is postverbal; this is found when there is a heavy attributive relative clause, which appears as a postverbal secondary predicate. An example of this can be seen in

Nini rom hony nan miai tad-im.
 1EXC:PL see dog swim to.here sea-ABL
 'We saw a dog swim towards us from the sea.'

**Nini rom-i hony nan miai tad-im.*
 1EXC:PL see-3SG dog swim to.here sea-ABL

The only frequently attested derivational process is causativisation through the addition of the *mo-* prefix. Other means are available to causativise verbs, and these are discussed below. Examples of the use of *mo-* to causativise verb are:

fentē 'be wet' *mo-fentē* 'soak'

3.2 Basic verb phrase structure

A verb is marked as irrealis / intentional with the addition of *-(ac)ad* following any object inflection:

Nehu tobwadic-ad wi-acad.
 1SG Tobati-ALL go-IRR
 'I want to go to Tobati.'

This irrealis use is also found on nouns, indicating the purpose of an action:

Nehu maha hombo wobarut ic-ad.
 1SG earlier hooked.net throw fish-IRR
 'I cast my net (looking) for fish earlier.'

Verbs do not appear with a set valency; examine the following frames in which *awat* 'scare, fear, be afraid' can occur:

Ntric awat.
 3PL afraid
 'They are afraid.' (INTRANSITIVE)

Mada ntrica awat.
 snake 3PL fear
 'They fear snakes.' (TRANSITIVE)

Mada ntrica awat-ric.
 snake 3PL scare-3PL
 'Snakes scare them.' (CAUSATIVE)

There is no overt marking used to indicate the different uses of *awat* (though the causative *mo-* may be used in the last of these: *mada ntrica mo-awat-ric*). This extreme reduction in overt morphological marking is characteristic of Tobati grammar, and a reaction to it is the use of case markers (particularly *-(a)d* 'allative') in a wide range of functions, such as (in addition to the allative use) object marker, purpose marker, and irrealis marker on verbs.

Causatives

Causatives can be expressed for some verbs without the addition of any extra verbal morphology as in

Nehu nas ntric ny-ant.
 1SG sago.porridge 3PL 3PL-eat
 'I feed them sago porridge.'

Nas ntric ny-ant.
 sago.porridge 3PL 3PL-eat
 'They eat sago porridge.'

Alternatively, the prefix *mo-* is sometimes found on stative verbs/adjectives to indicate causation:

Pir nda hricud.
 plate this break
 'This plate broke.'

Nehu pir mo-hricud.
 1SG plate CAUS-break
 'I broke the plate.'

Nehu nte oric mo-mesmasi.
 1SG 2SG shirt CAUS-dry
 'I dried off your shirt.'

Syaw mahai ikor.
 paddle big snap
 'The big paddle broke.'

Syaw mahai nehu mo-ikor-i.
 paddle big 1SG CAUS-snap-3SG
 'I broke the big paddle.'

One particularly interesting formation of a causative is the verb *mab* / *msyow* 'die (SG/PL)'. When used intransitively, it agrees in number with the subject:

<i>Ic</i>	<i>tei</i>	<i>mab.</i>	<i>Ic</i>	<i>tor</i>	<i>r-msyow.</i>
fish	one	die:SG	fish	three	3PL-die:PL
'One fish died.'			'Three fish died.'		

When the causative of the verb is used, the verb agrees with the subject in terms of prefixes, but the verb stem shows agreement with the object. Notice that the verb does not take object suffixes for the plural object.

Nehu ic i-msyow.
1SG fish 1SG-die:PL
'I killed (many) fish.'

An adjective can be made causative with the use of the light verb *hat*, and the causative:

wani 'good' *wani mo-hat* 'improve'

Reciprocals

Reciprocals are formed with *fem* 'return' adjacent to the verb; it does not matter if *fem* precedes or follows the verb. Alternatively, the particle *be* may immediately precede the verb (but occurs before the subject inflection).

Wab-roc tobwadic-roc sic-om insō.
Nafri-person Tobati-person knife-INSTR stab
'The Tobati man stabbed the Nafri man with a knife.'

Tobwadic-roc-re wab-roc nde r-rkoc fem.
Tobati-person-FOC Nafri-person that 3PL-hit return
'That Nafri man and the Tobati man hit each other.'

Wab-am tobwadic-am sic-om be r-insō.
Nafri-COM Tobati-COM knife-INSTR RECIP 3PL-stab
'The Tobati and Nafri (people) stabbed each other with knives.'

3.3 Verb serialisation

There is surprisingly little evidence of valency-building verb serialisation in Tobati; the role played by serial verb constructions in many other languages of the area is fulfilled by the case markers in Tobati, described below in §4.3. Serial verbs are used to impart aspectual senses to a sentence, as illustrated in the use of *cu* 'stand' to mark continuative:

Maha racui nehu wak car cu-ad.
earlier/later afternoon 1SG canoe cut stand-IRR
'Later this afternoon I'll be chopping out the canoe.'

One instance of an instrumental serial verb construction has been noted. The instrument of an action may appear as an argument of the verb *wa* 'take'; although this sort of sentence was offered up without elicitation by Tobati speakers, they did make a point of saying that the version with only a single verb, and the instrumental case (see §4.3), is the preferred version.

Nehu adu-re wa hony-re hu.
 1SG stone-FOC take dog-FOC throw
 'I threw a stone at the dog.'

Notice how in the serial verb construction that *adu* 'stone' is case marked in accordance with its function as object of the verb *wa* 'take', not in its sentence-level function as an instrument.

4. CLAUSE STRUCTURE

Clauses are predicate final, and the position of oblique phrases is fairly free, though there is a definite preference for them not to intervene between the verb and its subject or object.

4.1 Verbless clauses

A clause may consist of simply two NPs (or less, given zero anaphora), serving an identificational function, or, given the appropriate case marking, even a verb-like function, as in:

Ace mdic-ad.
 father front-ALL
 'Father (is going) forward.'

Nehu nuk-ad.
 1SG village-ALL
 'I am (going) to the village.'

Anad rum-mi.
 roof house-above
 'A roof is on top of a house.'

Nehu australia-m.
 1SG Australia-ABL
 'I am from Australia.'

Ngga-d?
 where-ALL
 'Where (are you going) to?'

A simple identificational clause has simply two NPs:

Ace Drunyi ondoafi
 father Drunyi land.holder
 'Mr. Drunyi is the lord of the land.'

4.2 Verbal clauses: core arguments

There appears to have been a recent syntactic change in Tobati, in which the order of the constituents has changed. In earlier elicited materials, we find a preference for SOV word order, as in the following sentences from Cowan (1952):

S		O		V
<i>Mony</i>	<i>ndo</i>	<i>inti</i>	<i>hony re</i>	<i>rekoc.</i>
woman	that	her	dog RE	hit

'The woman hits her dog.'

Here we can see that, in the absence of pronominal information on the verb that would differentiate the subject and the object (the *re* morpheme is probably the 3PL subject prefix *r-*, and so could refer to either the woman (women), or the dog(s), and so does not help to identify grammatical relations), the word order is used for this purpose with the default assumption that given two NPs the subject precedes the object, giving an SOV

word order. Additionally, the real-world fact that women hit dogs but dogs do not hit women helps to disambiguate the clause.

In the modern language, however, there is a clear and unambiguous preference for OSV order; SOV (or SVO) can still be obtained when eliciting from Indonesian, but translations from Tobati to Indonesian reveal that a sentence of the form NP NP V will be interpreted as OSV:

O	S	V	
<i>Hony-o</i>	<i>for-o</i>	<i>rom-i.</i>	
dog-FV	pig-FV	see-3SG	
'The pig saw the dog.'			* 'The dog saw the pig.'

When verbal indexing makes the reference of the core arguments unambiguous, then this order is relaxed. The following sentence shows the optional use of the allative case to mark an object, and the appearance of SOV, rather than OSV, word order.

Nehu man ros(-ad) j-om-ric.
 1SG bird two-ALL 1SG-see-3PL
 'I saw two birds.'

4.3 Verbal clauses: peripheral arguments

Peripheral arguments often have case marking that marks their semantic role, and they often appear postverbally, further marking them as not being core arguments of the verb. The only major exception to this can be found in the goal of certain motion verbs, where the goal is placed preverbally, though still case-marked for allative case.

Nehu rum-a / nah-a / wak-a tesinod.
 1SG house-LOC here-LOC canoe-LOC sit:SG
 'I am sitting in the house / here / in a canoe.'

Ntric tad-i nanac.
 1SG sea-LOC swim:PL
 'They are swimming in the sea.'

The case markers are:

-re	focus
-(a)	locative
-(am)	ablative
-(a)d	allative (= accusative)
-ni	dative
-om	instrumental
-am	comitative

The focus case deserves immediate comment. It is typically found on the theme argument in a ditransitive verb, as in

Ntric ace fuk-re yan-dic.
 3PL father betelnut-FOC give-3PL
 'Father gave them betelnut.'

In this sentence *ntric* 'they' is the object of the verb, indicated by the fact that it, not the singular *sic*, controls the object agreement on the verb. The other non-oblique argument,

however, takes the non-object case; *ntric* may not appear with this case. The theme is not obligatorily marked with *-re*:

Ntia nehu roy yan-dok.
3SG 1SG money give-1SG
'He gave me some money.'

This case is also sometimes found with the subject of the verb, or even both the subject and the object together, when presenting surprising information:

Hony mahai-re for-re rom-i.
dog big-FOC pig-FOC see-3OBJ
'The pig saw a big dog.'

An additional function of *-re* is as a boundary marker. Compare the following sentences; in the first, *ngga* 'question word' is a clause-level adverbial modifier (the locative case *-a* is not overtly realised after a word ending in *-a*).

Nte foro ngga rom-i?
2SG pig Q:LOC see-3SG
'Where did you see the pig?'

In the next sentence, however, *ngga* can only be interpreted as being a modifier to *foro*:

Nte foro ngga-re rom-i?
2SG pig Q-FOC see-3SG
'Which pig did you see?'

When an NP consists only of an attribute (relative clause or adjective), the use of *-re* to delimit the NP is obligatory:

Nehu mahai-rej-om-i. **Nehu mahai jomi.*
1SG big-FOC 1SG-see-3SG
'I saw the big one.'

The focus marker is unique in that it may co-occur with other cases, as seen in the next example.

Nehu Tobwadic-am-re mai.
1SG Tobati-ABL-FOC come
'I came from Tobati.'

The locative case is used for all occurrences of inner or outer locatives. This case, as well as the allative and ablative cases, has a vowel that is usually *a*, but can appear harmonised with a preceding vowel or consonant:

Nehu maha Entrop-om-re mai Inyjros-id racuadra nasi fem.
1SG earlierEntrop-ALL-FOC come Enggros-ALL afternoon while return
'I came from Entrop earlier to Enggros, and later in the afternoon will go back.'

Nyiu tad-id rar.
coconut sea-ALL fall
'The coconut fell into the sea.'

Nehu nyiu wak-a syroce.
1SG coconut canoe-LOC load
'I loaded the coconuts into the canoe.'

Haru nehu sic-om crac.
 person 1SG knife-INSTR cut
 'I cut the person with a knife.'

Finer locational distinctions can be achieved with the use of relational nouns. These follow the head noun (arguably in a genitive construction), and take the case marking for the NP:

Rum trungg-a tad hric-a wak car cu.
 house behind-LOC sea edge-LOC canoe cut stand
 'He's chopping out the canoe behind the house, by the sea.'

The instrumental is used to show the means by which an action is carried out; it is not used for the theme of a ditransitive verb.

Nehu adu-m hony-re hu.
 1SG stone-INSTR dog-FOC throw
 'I threw a stone at the dog.'

This sentence is paraphrasable with a serial verb construction, as described in §3.3.

4.4 Negative clauses

Negation is expressed either with the predicate suffix *-fani*, the preverbal particle *mbo*, or both.

Nehu mbo wi-fani.
 1SG don't go-NEG
 'I haven't been.'

5 IMPERATIVE AND INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

The following notes provide only an introduction to some of the different constructions found in Tobati. The lack of much overt morphology means that many constructions are coded by position alone, and are potentially, and really, ambiguous in their readings.

5.1 Imperative sentences

Positive imperative sentences are coded simply with a clause that has no overt (except perhaps as a vocative) subject, as in

Tobwadic-ad wi!
 Tobati-ALL go
 'Go to Tobati!'

Optionally, the verb is marked with *-ne* 'imperative'; in such cases, the verb must be marked as irrealis with *-ad*:

Ndo-d mi-ad-ne
 there-ALL 2PL:GO-IRR-IMP
 'Go away!'

A negative imperative has a verb marked with *-mbo*:

Nua, mada awa-mbo mai
 2PL snake fear-don't come
 'Don't you lot be scared of the snake.'

5.2 Interrogative sentences

There is no special morphology associated with polar interrogative sentences; the word order is the same as for declarative sentences, but with a slight rising intonation. With content questions the questioned constituent is in place, and appears with any case marking that is required of it in the clause. Examples of the lack of word order variation in an interrogative sentence are:

<i>Nte sei rom-?i</i>	<i>Nte sei rom-ho?</i>
2SG who see-3SG	2SG who see-2SG
'Who did you see?'	'Who saw you?'

Interrogative forms include:

<i>sei</i>	'who?'
<i>usa</i>	'what?'
<i>ngga</i>	'where?'
<i>usa-d</i>	'why?'
<i>hon ngga</i>	'when?'
<i>nten</i>	'how?'

6 COMPLEX SENTENCES

6.1 Coordination

Clauses are commonly coordinated with the sequential marker *-ra* on the verb, to show that there is a temporal sequence, and not another form of opposition, between the two clauses

Nti entrop-od wi-ra fyayec want.
 3SG Entrop-ALL go-SEQ sweet.potato eat
 'He went to Entrop and then ate some sweet potato.'

Either argument of a transitive verb may display zero anaphora:

Nas ame mrec-ra neh sisis want.
 sago.porridge mother cook-SEQ 1SG:POSS younger.sister eat
 'Mother cooked some sago porridge and then my little sister ate it.'

6.2 Subordination

In addition to the relative clauses described earlier (§2.8), we find subordinate structures in the form of complements; these are, however, morphosyntactically indistinguishable from the secondary predicate form of relativisation, in which the subordinated verb follows the main verb, leading to ambiguities. Compare the two readings of the following sentence:

Man j-om-ric r-yar.
 bird 1SG-see-3PL 3PL-fly
 'I saw the flying birds.' (RELATIVE CLAUSE)
 'I saw the birds flying.' (COMPLEMENT)

In order to disambiguate these, word order must be used; an unambiguous relative clause interpretation is gained by placing the verb of the relative clause immediately following the noun it modifies:

[_{RC} *Man r-yar*] *j-om-ric.*
 bird 3PL-fly 1SG-see-3PL
 'I saw the flying birds.' (RELATIVE CLAUSE, * COMPLEMENT)

In order to unambiguously indicate a complement, the nominal object follows the verb (and the verb is NOT indexed with object suffixes):

J-om [_{COMP} *man r-yar.*]
 1SG-see bird 3PL-fly
 'I saw the birds flying.' (COMPLEMENT, * RELATIVE CLAUSE)

Temporal subordination is achieved simply by placing *meh* 'time', or a more specific time word, before the subordinated clause:

Meh car cu nadu-rah sic tad r-snos.
 time chop stand child-PL? young sea 3PL-wash
 'When I was chopping, the little children were bathing in the sea.'

Racui nan bwi sam rar-od hecaw miai.
 afternoon water descend current below-ALL rise come
 'In the afternoon when the tide had gone out, the current came up below to the village.'