

Skou Languages

M Donohue, National University of Singapore, Singapore

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

The languages of the Skou family are spoken along the north coast of New Guinea, from the Skou villages east of Humboldt Bay in Indonesia to Barupu west of Aitape in Papua New Guinea. There are 16 known languages in the family, split fairly evenly between three family-level units and one isolate, I'saka (Krisa). Most of the languages are found along the coast, but the orientation of most groups lies inland. Tone and in most cases either unusual consonants or a high number of vowels feature prominently. Tonal contrasts range from three to six on a monosyllabic word, but in all well-investigated cases the domain of tone is the morpheme, not the syllable. Unusual segments found in the family include the palatal lateral dental affricate of Puare (Puari) and the nonback rounded vowels [ɯ] and [ø] of Skou. Contrastive nasalization on either the syllable or the rime is common. Other phonologically marked features include the lack of contrastive nasal consonants in I'saka and the lack of an /s/ phoneme in Skou or many of the Piore River languages.

Morphosyntactically the languages show a lot of variation from one to another, and only some salient features are mentioned here. The basic order is SOV, with postverbal obliques. Case marking is not used, but verbs typically show prefixal agreement for subject, and object agreement, if present, is suffixal. In the western group there is no suffixal agreement, but we do find alternations in the vowel of the verb root that indicate earlier affixation:

ke-fu
3.SING.NF-see.FEM.OBJ
'he saw her'

(where NF stands for nonfeminine) from earlier ke = fu-u. Compare this with Sumo, which has regular suffixation for object:

b-a-chara-u
MOOD-3.SING.MASC-see-3SING.FEM
'he saw her'

Often a language will employ one or more applicatives; typically a goal (beneficiary or direction) or, secondarily, an accompanier has dedicated applicative morphology, whereas instruments are not marked with applicatives but simply appear in the clause.

Many Skou languages show the frequent use of multiple exponence to mark the subject. In Puare we can see double marking for subject on the verb, once

by an infix (marked here with angled brackets) and once by a proclitic, as in the sentence:

aro n-s<h>i
firewood 1.DU-chop<1.SING/DU>
'we chopped firewood'

Similarly in Skou we can find verbs with proclitic, prefix, and vowel agreement. The verb /ø/ 'shave' is [təri] when inflected for third-person plural

te-t-lø
3.PL-3.PL-shave<(3).PL>
'they shaved'

Gender is a pervasive feature of the languages. All the languages distinguish at least two genders in the third-person singular pronominal paradigms, and in most cases gender is found elsewhere as well. In Skou, all the dual pronouns, but none of the plural, are differentiated for gender. Barupu (Warupu) and Ramo both distinguish gender in all but the dual pronouns, both free and bound forms. The Serra Hills languages typically mark gender only in the second- and third-person dual pronouns. In Skou itself, a number of nouns obligatorily mark gender. Thus, *ume* 'woman' cannot appear on its own and must take the feminine clitic *pe*, *pe-ume* 'woman', and *aku* 'child' is heard as *pe-aku* 'girl' or *ke-aku* 'boy'.

See also: Indonesia: Language Situation; Papua New Guinea: Language Situation; Tone: Phonology.

Bibliography

- Cowan H K J (1952). 'Een toon-taal in Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea.' *Tijdschrift Nieuw Guinea* 13, 55–60.
- Donohue M (2002a). 'Negation and grammatical functions in Skou.' In Collins P & Amberber M (eds.) *Proceedings of ALS2002, the 2002 conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. Sydney: University of New South Wales. Available at <http://www.arts.unsw.edu.au>.
- Donohue M (2002b). 'Which sounds change: descent and borrowing in the Skou family.' *Oceanic Linguistics* 41(1), 157–207.
- Donohue M (2003a). 'Agreement in the Skou language: a historical account.' *Oceanic Linguistics* 42(2), 479–498.
- Donohue M (2003b). 'Morphological templates, headedness, and applicatives in Barupu.' *Oceanic Linguistics* 42(1), 111–143.
- Donohue M (2003c). 'The tonal system of Skou, New Guinea.' In Kaji (ed.) *Proceedings of the symposium on cross-linguistic studies of tonal phenomena: historical development, phonetics of tone, and descriptive studies*. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Research Institute for Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa. 329–355.

- Donohue M & San Roque L (2004). *Isaka*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.
- Foley W A (1986). *The Papuan languages of New Guinea*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Laycock D C (1975). 'Sko, Kwomtari, and Left May (Arai) phyla.' In Wurm S A (ed.) *New Guinea area languages and language study 1: Papuan Languages and the New*

- Guinea linguistic scene*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics. 849–858.
- Ross M (1980). Some elements of Vanimo, a New Guinea tone language. *Papers in New Guinea Linguistics* 20, 77–109.
- Voorhoeve C L (1971). 'Miscellaneous notes on languages in West Irian.' *Papers in New Guinea linguistics* 14, 47–114.

Slang Dictionaries, English

J Green, London, UK

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

The standard dictionary, the dominant production of lexicography, deals with standard forms of language. There are, however, a wide variety of nonstandard forms – regionalisms, jargon, technical terminology – which, while excluded from the standard lexica, require specific dictionaries. Of these the most common have been those of slang, a widely popular and continually evolving 'counterlanguage,' which has been collected for nearly half a millennium.

English slang lexicography falls into three periods: the 'canting' or criminal slang dictionaries of the 16th to the 18th centuries, the 'vulgar tongue' works of the late 18th to the mid-19th centuries, and the 'modern' productions that have appeared since.

Canting

The collection of 'cant,' properly the jargon of the mendicant criminal beggars of Tudor and Stuart England, echoes the near-contemporary 'beggar-books' of Europe: designed to alert the law-abiding public to the existence of such beggars – 'the canting crew' – listing their occupational types and offering a small glossary of their language. The first such work was Robert Copland's *The hye way to the Spytell House* (c. 1535). In the form of a verse dialogue between the printer Copland and the porter of the Spytell House (a charity hospital), Copland noted and the porter described the various categories of beggars and thieves, as well as their tricks and frauds. There is no glossary as such, but some 36 terms are defined in the text. Two similar and expanded works followed. In 1561 John Awdeley, another printer, published *The fraternitie of vagabondes*. The brief (nine-page) work, offering 48 headwords, falls into three parts: the first deals with rural villains, the second with their urban cousins, and the third is Awdeley's list of "the xxv. Orders of Knaues, otherwyse called a Quartern of Knaues."

The most influential 16th-century work appeared around 1566: Thomas Harman's *Caveat for common coursetours*. Harman, a magistrate, produced a conscientiously didactic work, designed to introduce the reader to "the leud lousey language of these lewtering [loitering] luskies [idlers] and lasy lorrels [blackguards] where with they bye and sell the common people as they pas through the country. Whych language they terme Peddelars Frenche ..." There are 24 small essays, each dealing with a different rank of villain, plus a list of some 114 terms. These are very briefly defined, usually with a single synonym. The *Caveat* concludes with a list of contemporary beggars and a cant dialogue.

Harman's vocabulary would remain the core of several subsequent glossaries, with a succession of 'rogue pamphlets' appearing over the two centuries. Among these are *The bellman of London and Lanthorne and candlelight* (1608) by the playwright Thomas Dekker, and *Martin Mark-All, beadle of Bridewell* by Samuel Rowlands (or Rid), in 1610. Others include Richard Head's *The canting academy*, or *The Devil's cabinet opened* (1673) and John Shirley's *Triumph of wit* (1688).

While Harman can be seen as a sociological researcher, and Dekker *et al.* as informative reformers, the 'coney-catching' pamphlets of playwright Robert Greene are nakedly sensational. The first such pamphlet, *A notable discovery of coosnage* [cozenage, or trickery]: *now daily practised by sundry lewd persons called Connie-Catchers* [confidence tricksters] *and Cross-biters* [swindlers] ... appeared in 1591. Five sequels followed by 1592. Greene gleefully peddled his downmarket sensationalism, larded with new canting terms – the vocabularies of the various branches of confidence trickery – and supposedly firsthand anecdote, but carefully quarantined with pious horror. In one pamphlet, *The defence of connycatching* 'by Cuthbert Conny-catcher,' he even attacked himself.

With *A new dictionary of the terms ancient and modern of the canting crew*, by the anonymous B.E., Gent.[leman] (c. 1698), there emerged the first major development in slang lexicography since Harman. It