

Abui (Alor-Pantar)

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Features of Abui morphology:

- (i) agglutinative morphological structure, elaborate verbal morphology
- (ii) developed inflectional morphology (aspect, person)
- (iii) prefixes for person inflection, suffixes for aspect inflection
- (iv) nouns inflect only for possessor
- (v) no case inflection of NPs, no gender
- (vi) no agreement for subject/actor
- (vii) verbs may combine with up to three bound aspectual markers (two suffixes, one clitic)



Morphological properties of the noun and pronoun

Evaluation: Abui nouns do not inflect for number nor are they classified for gender, as is common in many Papuan languages. There is no case in Abui, grammatical relations are signalled with pronominal prefixes on the verb.

Possessive prefixes: Possessive prefixes express possessors. They are attached to a nominal root that denotes the possessum (=the possessed object).

- a) *he-fála*
3POSS-house
'his/her house'
- b) *ne-fála*
1SG-house
'my house'

Morphological properties of the verb

The morphological properties that identify a lexeme as a verb are:

- (i) aspectual inflection,
- (ii) person inflection,
- (iii) stem alternation

In Abui, verbs are forms that may carry aspectual inflection. This is a unique feature of the verbal

grammatical category. Aspectual markers *-a* (DUR durativ), *-i* (PFV perfective), *-e* (IPFV imperfective), *-o* (PNCT punctual), and *-u* (PRF perfect) are analysed as suffixes, because they are restricted to postverbal position and in some cases are an obligatory morpheme of a word.

- c) *na lək-I*
SG leave.for-PFV
'I have gone away'
- d) *hare na buuk-o*
so 1SG consume-PNCT
'so, I just drink'

While verbs in many Trans-New-Guinea languages typically carry subject suffixes, Abui lacks such subject suffixes. Instead, pronominal prefixes co-indexing patient/PAT are found, which are common in many Papuan languages:

- e) *na Simon ha-wel*
1SG Simon 3SG.PAT-pour
'I washed Simon'
- f) *na-riang*
1SG.PAT-raise
'raise me/bring me up'
- g) *na a-ful-o*
1SG 2SG.PAT-swallow-PNCT
'I just swallow you.'