Topics in the grammar of

KUOT

a non-Austronesian language of
New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

Eva Lindström

PhD dissertation

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Abstract

This thesis describes certain areas in the grammar of the little-known Kuot language, spoken by some 1,500 people in New Ireland Province in Papua New Guinea. Kuot is an isolate, and is the only non-Austronesian (Papuan) language of that province. The analyses presented here are based on original data from 18 months of linguistic fieldwork.

The first chapter provides an overview of Kuot grammar, and gives details of earlier mentions of the language, and of data collection and the fieldwork situation. The second chapter presents information about the prehistory and history of the area, the social system, kinship system and culture of Kuot speakers, as well as dialectal variation and prognosis of survival of the language. Chapter three treats Kuot phonology, with particular emphasis on the factors that govern allophonic variation, and on the expression of word stress and the functions of intonation. Word classes and the criteria used to define them are presented in Chapter four, which also contains a discussion of types of morphemes in Kuot. The last chapter describes in some detail the class of nouns in Kuot, their declensions, non-singular formation, and the properties of grammatical gender.

Appendices give the full set of person-marking forms in Kuot, a transcription of a recorded text with interlinear glossing and translation, the Swadesh 100-word list for Kuot, and diagrams of kin relations and terminology.
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# Abbreviations and Principles of Glossing

### Abbreviations used in glosses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>1st person singular</td>
<td>morpheme; comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>2nd person singular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s</td>
<td>3rd person singular</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1st person plural inclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1px</td>
<td>1st person plural exclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2p</td>
<td>2nd person plural</td>
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<td>nsg</td>
<td>non-singular</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>plural</td>
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<td>dl</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANAPH</td>
<td>strongly anaphoric demonstrative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IMM,FUT</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ORD</td>
<td>ordinal number marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>PossI</td>
<td>possessive, type I (inalienable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PossII</td>
<td>possessive, type II (alienable)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PROHIB</td>
<td>prohibitive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ORIG</td>
<td>origin (provenance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>reciprocal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RECIP</td>
<td>recipient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>reduplicated syllable</td>
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<tr>
<td>REFL</td>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RELR</td>
<td>relator</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>north-west</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e/eba</td>
<td>morphological changes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>tåle/tola, karuk</td>
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<td>buat</td>
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<td>dɔŋ</td>
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<td>etc.</td>
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Tok Pisin words used in translations are *mumu* ‘cooking stones; stone oven’, and *laplap* ‘loin cloth, sarong’, a piece of fabric of about one by two metres worn as a sarong or loin cloth by both men and women.

**Principles of glossing**

In this book, a phonemic system is used, with neither phonological nor morpho-phonological processes applied.

Each example that gives stretches longer than a single word has three lines: the Kuot data line; a morpheme-by-morpheme translation of the Kuot in the inter-linear gloss line, and the free translation line. Free translations are aimed at giving as exact as possible an idea of the meaning of the entire utterance. Sometimes this means that the words used in the interlinear gloss are not the same as those used in the translation; for example if a lexeme *kuplip* meaning ‘dry leaves from cooking’ is used in the gloss it may be judged that ‘rubbish’ is the equivalent sense in the particular context, and ‘rubbish’ will be used in the free translation.

Everywhere in this work, Kuot words, morphemes and sentences are given in *italics*, as are occasional words from other languages in the area. English translations are given in single quotes (‘ ’), and it was decided to give Tok Pisin words in the same way.

Most of the data reproduced in examples are from texts. Capitalisation, commas and stops are used to indicate intonational units as follows:

- A capitalised initial letter indicates the beginning of a sentence (and also proper names)
- A comma (,) indicates the end of an intonation unit with a continuation (rising) contour
- A stop (.) indicates the end of an intonation unit with final (falling) contour
Stops, hyphens and equal signs indicate different types of morph and morpheme boundaries. The graphic distance they create is iconic to the degree of integration of the morphemes thus combined. Stops (.) only occur in the inter-linear gloss in this function, as it is used to separate the two glosses belonging to an indivisible morph, and also to connect the words of a multi-word gloss (e.g. ‘coconut.palm’ and ‘get.up’). A hyphen (-) indicates an affix boundary, while an equal sign (=) indicates a clitic boundary. For some morphemes, apparent inconsistencies result from irregularities in the language; for instance the non-singular morpheme on nouns (‘nsg’) is sometimes given in the gloss with a stop and sometimes with a hyphen. This is because although the plural form always ends in -p, segmenting it off the non-singular form often does not leave an acceptable form of the lexeme. Compare:

(1)  singular  gloss   non-singular  gloss
    kit      fire    kit-ip      fire-nsg
    kiban    leg     kibap      leg-nsg
    kikinǝm  ear     kikip      ear-nsg

Affix and clitic boundaries are marked on the line giving the Kuot data as well, and it should be noted that it is represented without phonological and morphological processes applied. For example, *kit* in (1) is pronounced [kit], but *kit-ip* is pronounced [kirip].

Forward slashes are sometimes used in glosses and occasionally in translations to indicate alternative translation possibilities for a morpheme (e.g. -onǝma sit/live/stay) or a phrase.

Angle brackets (< >) are used on all three lines to indicate hesitation and repair. If empty, it means that there is an unfilled hesitation pause. If there is a repair sequence it is given within the angle brackets (and glossed). In yet other cases the repaired sequence has been omitted in the interest of space or to make the example easier to follow; this is represented as <…>.

Square brackets ([ ]) and regular brackets (( )) are used in translations in the following way: Square brackets indicate words which are part of the Kuot data given, but which are very unidiomatic in English, as in the use of demonstratives together with possessives, which will give translations such as ‘[this] his brother’. Regular brackets indicate words in the English translation which are required by the grammar of English, but which are not present in the Kuot data given. In some cases this is done also where the English is very much more specific than the Kuot, in particular for the relator ǝr, which is in itself very vague in meaning. It is simply glossed RELR, but for instance in its clause joining function it may have one of several meanings such as ‘when’ and ‘because’; when introducing relative clauses it can mean ‘who’, ‘which’ and so forth. Any such English word in the translation is given in regular brackets to indicate that that meaning is not part of the Kuot data – or at any rate not with that degree of specificity.

The covert category of gender is given for a noun ((m) or (f)) only where another constituent shows agreement with it.
The title on the cover of this dissertation, Topics in the grammar of Kuot, is designed to allow for a less than unitary collection of subjects within. It makes it possible to shamelessly lump together such diverse topics as phonology, kinship, and nouns in the same volume, as long as they pertain to the Kuot language, or its speakers. The background to this is that the original PhD project was a full descriptive grammar of Kuot. Somehow the draft manuscript kept growing and growing, but the end of the project remained elusively at a constant distance of “about six months”, while evermore pages were being added. When graduation was long overdue, all respectable funding possibilities had been exhausted for over a year, and exciting linguistic projects requiring a PhD appeared on the horizon, my supervisors Kari and Östen stepped in. They wisely suggested that I present some sections of the work for the degree, so that I could move on to greener linguistic pastures while continuing to revise additional chapters with a view to eventually publishing the full grammar.

Two main criteria were used to select the chapters to go into the dissertation: autonomy and overview. The socio-cultural chapter and the chapters about nouns and phonology were judged to be relatively free from cross-reference to chapters omitted in this version. To compensate in some degree for missing chapters, overviews of Kuot grammar are provided in the introduction and word classes chapters.

There are many people without whom I could never had carried out this work. First of all, it would not have happened at all if Bob Dixon and Sasha Aikhenvald had not invited me to Australia to do linguistic fieldwork. Their Research Centre for Linguistic Typology not only provided an enormously stimulating working environment, but also paid for fieldwork expenses (even from Australia, the cost of airfares to Papua New Guinea is excruciating). Bob has read and commented on all drafts, some of them in several versions, and by appointment undertook the boring but sadly necessary task of nagging me about overdue chapters. Both Bob and Sasha were always supportive and happy to discuss any matter linguistic, and I feel that being able to share their extensive experience and that of other members of the centre has contributed a lot to my development as a linguist and a member of the linguistic community.

The Linguistics department in Stockholm let me make a radical change of topic and move to a different hemisphere for years without severing my affiliation or, even more amazing, discontinuing my salaried graduate position. Not only that, but my primary supervisor Kari Fraurud carefully read drafts posted, faxed or emailed from remote places throughout the entire period, even when she took up a job outside Stockholm University. She always sent back lots of useful and well-considered feedback, and her enthusiasm and belief in my ability to carry out this project never wavered.
Angela Terrill has contributed massively to improving local and global qualities of the present text. Even before she was officially appointed “language scrutinizer” during the last few months, she had enthusiastically read everything I wrote about Kuot for a long time, and commented on every level (typos, text organisation, grammatical analysis, and points of comparison with Lavukaleve, her own dissertation language). In the best of all possible worlds, every graduate student would have a friend like that.

Östen Dahl read the whole text in the last frenzied weeks, saving me from several gaffes, and bringing up lots of interesting points of discussion which I hope to be able to develop and incorporate in the future version. Others who have read parts of the manuscript and/or provided valuable discussion of particular matters in Kuot grammar are Robert Eklund, Bert Remijsen, Gerrit Dimmen-daal and Bob Rankin (all Phonology), Glenn Summerhayes (Kuot & its speakers; Previous sources in Introduction), Fritz Serzisko (tense and aspect matters and many other bits and pieces; he also helped with German sources and translations). In Melbourne, Tim Curnow was always on hand to discuss any urgent upcoming matters of analysis.

The input of all of the above has contributed enormously to making this volume a much better piece of work than it would otherwise have been. Needless to say, any remaining faulty analyses, flaws and inconsistencies exist in spite of their best efforts and are entirely my own responsibility.

Pétur Helgason let me use his font (with IPA characters) and especially made italicised versions of some characters, making the dissertation much more pleasing to the eye.

Tom Dutton did his best to teach me Tok Pisin before I went into the field.

Moving to a new continent where you have almost no connections is supposed to be hard, but I really enjoyed my time Australia, and in the end leaving was incredibly much harder than ever arriving. So many people became part of my life, and it is sad indeed to have a whole part of your life 17,000 kilometres away. Some of the most important people are Tim Curnow & Tony Liddicoat, Angela Terrill & Michael Dunn, Sinclair Dinnen, Luisa Miceli, Fritz Serzisko, Anna & Andrew Margetts, Jim Grundy & Sandi Bone, John Bowden, Tonya Stebbins, and Glenn Summerhayes. Tim in particular would have his name in gold if I could afford the extra printing cost.

In Sweden, my sister Anne Gailit pulled a heavy load while I was away, taking care of all manner of boring and time-consuming practicalities like income tax forms, renewing my student ID card, emailing me bank statements and all those things that one is only too happy to outsource but which are not so much fun to find on one’s table. She also sent wonderful parcels of sweets and other necessities to the field, and not least, she visited me every year, twice in Australia and twice in New Guinea. In the last week before printing this thesis, she spent several days, evenings and nights with fiddly processing of maps, making the cover background and turning my fuzzy cover layout idea into a file the printers would accept. Acres of gold print are certainly due.
My parents Aia Gailit-Lindström and Pär Lindström also visited, once in Australia and once in New Guinea, and I am particularly happy that they could share my Bimun life for a few weeks. Generally, they have a lot to answer for in my choice of career, in that they fostered inquisitiveness at an early age by resolving to always answer our questions. (But it always seemed to me that they were somehow inexplicably un-enthralled by language). Big thanks to my father also for producing all the basic maps in this book, and for scanning and processing the photos.

Robert Eklund also visited in Australia and twice in New Guinea, and kept sending things to brighten my days; everything from fun articles to a full ring binder of guitar tabulature with a CD when I took up playing the guitar.

My first visitor in the field was my aunt, Sara Lindström, who met up with me in Kavieng the first time I went there. As my ‘anti’ she helped give me social context to the villagers of Bimun, to whom a person without social ties is incomprehensible, and it was nice to share that first experience of Papua New Guinea with her. After I ran out of funding, she suggested a big loan from her pension fund – an offer too good to refuse – which kept me alive for several months.

Ulrika Kvist Darnell has been a friend since my first week of linguistics more than ten years ago, through countless cups of coffee, late nights of studying and singing, and party-fixing galore.

Gunnel Källgren (†) was a source of fun and of social cohesion in the department, of tiding-over loans to poor students and campari-sodas for all. She is sorely missed. Her 386 laptop served me well in New Guinea (though it had to have ice packs to cope with the heat of Kavieng).

In Papua New Guinea, Kevin Ford looked after me with friendly hospitality and kindness in scary Port Moresby. The Chungs were always kind to me when I saw them in New Ireland or Ukarumpa. Thanks are due to Michael Laki at the National Research Institute in Port Moresby and Cnl. Dataona in Kavieng for arranging assorted paperwork for my research permit in an efficient and friendly manner. I wish I could have spent more time at the Department of Language and Literature at the University of Papua New Guinea, where Otto Nekitel (†) and Dicks Thomas received me so well the few times I visited.

I want to thank the sisters of the Sacred Heart in Kavieng, Srs Friederika, Catherine and Celine, for opening their home to me, renting me a spacious room in the convent, which I used whenever I came to town during my first longer stay in the field, and where I could leave my computer and other things when I went to the village.

In my second long fieldtrip, I stayed with Ulrike, Steffen and Rebekka Mitz, a family of German volunteer aid workers in Kavieng. I had my own room in their house, and Steffen even built me a desk. No matter how much I enjoyed life in Bimun, it was always lovely to join in a meal of spaghetti bolognese or pizza and have a glass of wine with friends, listen to Steffen playing the guitar, or go and visit the Villeneuves on the boat while they were there.
I have saved for last the people that have added most to my life in this entire project: the people of Bimun. Suddenly, this white woman arrived in their village, apparently intending to stay for quite a while and presumably requiring food and somewhere to sleep. She said she wanted to do something language-related, but since it was not translation nobody was quite sure what. In this situation, not only did the villagers accept my presence, but everyone did all they could to get my life to function optimally (including building Bimun’s first pit latrine!) and make me feel at home. And I did. I will always carry with me the beauty of life in Bimun, the acceptance, kindness, humour and care of the people, our mutual curiosity about each other and our shared laughs.

Some people became especially important. A very close relationship developed with Roslyn, my sister in Bimun; an undemanding, completely accepting closeness. She is the main reason why coming to Bimun will always be coming home for me. Her husband Abraham not only built my much-loved little house and carried the responsibility for my well-being and safety, but was also a fantastic host to my visitors, especially my parents, putting lots of effort into organising picnics and other activities for their enjoyment, with a keen sense of what would be interesting to the foreign guests. I also want to mention their children, Haybie, Maylyn, Elisa, and my namesake Eva, always fun and always cute.

I owe perhaps the biggest debt of gratitude to Robert Sipa, who was my main informant. His linguistic sensibility and his help in analysing the finer points of grammar have contributed immeasurably to my understanding of Kuot. He spent hours and hours working with me on my veranda and our discussions meandered across many topics linguistic and non-linguistic in the course of my months in Bimun, and made my time there even more enjoyable. Thanks must go also to his family, Baumat, Gensen Oliver and Eskol, for not grudging me the time he spent with me.

I also want to thank the following people for recording stories for me to analyse: Abraham Towil, Adam Mode, Anton Taipan, Avagi Philip, Benson Tomaliu, Bernard Puskin, David Jotham, Desi Bais, Eliaser Peter, Veronica Galeng, John Sikama, Jonathan, Kristina Dalap, Lakin, Lomlom, Lopap Uasita, Lukas, Martin Kada, Michael Akisman, Rebecka Minamo (†), Molongas, Pauline Kotete, Penga Kapelis, Penias Kotlik, Petrus Anis, Robert Sipa, Roslyn Ngas, Sabuen Esau Lali, Sialis, and Siteon. Big thanks also to Tasen for recording lots of traditional songs. And thanks too to Selina and Monica for food and friendship. I wish I could fit everyone’s name on these pages.

_Temaieng ula kakanu meun mirier inamaniap onim Bimun, ga Kuorup na mirier navup, me nunamap tung ula mumurut mi ga tara buang iat. Miot na dalap tuo geba busit miakatang._
Map 1: Language map of New Ireland and north New Britain.
Map 2: The geographic extent of Papuan languages, with the names and locations of east Papuan languages.
ADMIRALTY ISLANDS

1 Kuot
2 Baining
3 Taulili, Butam
4 Sulka
5 Kol
6 Ata (Wasi)
7 Anêm

SOLOMON ISLANDS

8 Konua
9 Keriaka
10 Rotokas
11 Eivo
12 Nagovisi
13 Motuna (Siwai)
14 Nasiol
15 Buin
16 Bilua
17 Kazukuru
18 Touo (Bariata)
19 Lavukaleve
20 Savosavo
21 Nanggu, Santa Cruz
22 Aiwo
23 Yela
1 INTRODUCTION

Kuot is a non-Austronesian (Papuan) language spoken by some 1,500 people in north-central New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. It is the only non-Austronesian language in New Ireland Province, but is structurally quite different both from its Austronesian neighbours and from non-Austronesian languages in other areas of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. It is spoken in many situations of daily life, but is losing ground to the English-based creole Tok Pisin, in which all Kuot speakers are fluent. Sadly, Kuot is for the most part not being transmitted to children, and is likely to disappear within the next few decades.

At the time when white people first arrived in the region, there were Kuot speakers on the west coast of New Ireland and in the mountains, but not on the east coast. After the establishment of a German government post in Nusa in 1900 (later moved to the site of the present provincial capital, Kavieng), warfare ceased and roads were built along the coasts. In the following decades, the inland population gradually moved to the coasts, either taking up residence in existing villages or establishing new ones. Today, there are Kuot villages on both coasts but none in the mountains.

The analyses presented in this work are based on original data collected during some 18 months of fieldwork in Papua New Guinea between 1997 and 2000. Most of this time was spent in Bimun village on the west coast of New Ireland, in the south of the Kuot-speaking area.

The present volume covers the following topics. This chapter provides a grammatical overview and discusses Kuot as a linguistic type, names used for Kuot in previous sources, and data and the fieldwork situation. Chapter 2 gives socio-cultural information about the Kuot speakers, in terms of prehistory, history, ethnography, kinship and beliefs, and also discusses dialects and the prognosis of survival of Kuot. Phonology is the subject of Chapter 3. The criteria for word class membership are set out in Chapter 4, which also contains a discussion of the difficulties involved in defining morpheme types. Chapter 5 deals with nouns.1

1.1 Grammatical overview

This section provides a summary of some of the main features of Kuot grammar with particular attention to areas not treated in separate chapters in this dissertation. A brief discussion of Kuot from a typological point of view is also given.

1 Lindström (forthc.) is a full descriptive grammar of Kuot.
1.1.1 Nominals

Nouns have the inherent and covert category of gender (masculine or feminine) in the singular, and the context-dependent and overt category of number (singular, dual, plural), where dual and plural but not singular are marked by suffixes. On the nouns themselves, the plural form is referred to as non-singular (nsg), as this form is also the base for the dual.

In most parts of the grammar, there is no singular marking independent of gender, and no gender marking independent of singular, giving the following overall marking system:2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns fall into several declensions. About half the nouns in the language simply have the non-singular ending -(i)p suffixed to the end of the word. I call this the plain declension. Most of the rest have the last syllable or last segment subtracted before the non-singular is added (the special declensions). Mostly, the special declensions are associated with a particular gender. The declensions are not productive, and all loans go into the plain declension. Many kin terms and a few person words form dual and plural/non-singular on a different pattern (cf. 5.4.1).

Gender is covert on nouns in the plain declension, but is expressed on verbs (marking subject and object), adjectives (marking subject), possessives (marking possessor and, for some, possessee), prepositions (indexing the nominal) and demonstratives (indexing the nominal).

Agreement and cross-referencing morphology have forms for twelve pronominal categories. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Pronominal categories.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 masc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 fem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is thus no gender distinction in the first or second person. First person dual and plural distinguish inclusive and exclusive (i.e., there are different

2 The exceptions are: (i) the third person singular future object marker of verb class II, -ŋ, which does not differentiate m/f; (ii) several forms in the paradigm of alienable possession markers (PossII) do not distinguish gender in a singular possessee. There is also the case of adjectives (iii), which in non-third person subjects are doubly marked for number: once through the portmanteau number/person prefix, and once through a suffix indicating number.
forms for ‘we’ depending on whether the addressee is included or not). The forms for first and second person are recognisable across the system, while third person forms vary a lot; this is particularly true of the singular forms. (All pronominal forms are given in Appendix I.)

There are independent **personal pronouns** only in the first and second person. In the third person, (complex) demonstratives are used in pronominal functions.

**Demonstratives** are of two types: simple and complex. There are only four simple forms: Singular masculine (*i*), singular feminine (*u*), dual (*lì*) and plural (*mì*). There is no proximity distinction in these forms, which mostly occur together with complex demonstratives. They also function as prefixes within complex demonstrative forms.

Among complex demonstratives there are two types of stems: locationals/directionals (see 1.1.5 below), and some stems which are bound and are only used within the demonstrative paradigm (e.g. *-sik* ‘DEM’). All demonstratives can be used anaphorically, and some are used only in this way and never exophorically (i.e., for deixis in physical space). Person prefixation is obligatory when these forms are used as demonstratives. Demonstratives can be determiners or heads of noun phrases, and are often used also with new referents (similar to the first-mention use of ‘this’ in English).

In the **noun phrase**, demonstratives and cardinal numerals precede a noun head (in that order), while attribute construction and relative clauses follow. Ordinal numerals may precede or follow the head. There are also two particles with complex functions related to the specificity of a referent: *non* and *ba*. The **attribute construction** here refers to a particular way of expressing attributes, marked by the relator *lə* prefixed with the same third person prefixes that are used on demonstratives, followed by the attributive expression. The construction is common with predicates such as verbs or adjectives (and is in fact the only way of having an attributive adjective), but can also be used with nouns, quantifiers, or entire clauses. (1) shows an adjective in the attribute construction (cf. also 1.1.8.1 below):

(1) *makabun u-lə mukə-u*

  woman 3f-RELR pregnant-3f

  ‘pregnant woman’

### 1.1.2 Predicates and verb phrases

This section deals with verbs and adjectives, and the structure of the verb phrase.

#### 1.1.2.1 Verbs and adjectives

A salient feature of Kuot verbs is the the differential ordering of cross-referencing affixes and clitics on verbs, which is lexically governed as has no synchronic function. Different verb stems require subject affixes or enclitics and object affixes to appear in different orders, producing three intransitive classes (I, II and III), paired with four transitive classes (I, Ia, Ib and III). Many stems can be either transitive or intransitive; among these ambitransitives there are
both S=O and S=A types in all verb classes (i.e., those where the subject of the intransitive corresponds to the object of the transitive, as with pak ‘break’ (class I), and those where the subject of the intransitive corresponds to the subject when an object is added, such as uan-ła ‘wait’ (class III)).

Class I has subject enclitics and object prefixes. Class II has subject prefixes, but is split in the transitive; in IIa, third person objects are suffixes, and non-third person objects are prefixes; in IIb all objects are prefixes. Class III has subject “infixes” and object prefixes. In adjectives, third person is marked by suffixes alone, while in the first and second person the subject is marked by prefixes. With first/second person prefixes, the suffixes still are retained, now marking number.

(2) | Intransitive | Transitive |
--- | --- | ---
I. | subj. enclitic | pasei=ōŋ | a-pasei=ōŋ |
| obj. prefix | talk=3mS | 3mO-talk=3mS |
| ‘he talks’ | ‘he talks of him/it(m)’ or ‘he tells him’ |
IIa. | subj. prefix | u-libɔ | u-alibɔ-o |
| obj. suffix in 3 | 3mS-cry | 3mS-cry.for-3fO |
| ‘he cries’ | ‘he cries for it(f)/her [mourns]’ |
| obj. prefix in 1/2 | to-u-alibɔ | 1sO-3mS-cry.for |
| ‘he cries for me’ |
IIb. | subj. prefix | u-lo | a-u-lo |
| obj. prefix | 3mS-talk | 3mO-3mS-talk |
| ‘he talks’ | ‘he tells him’ |
III. | subj. “infix” | uan-u-lɔ | a-uan-u-lɔ |
| obj. prefix | wait-3mS-stm₂ | 3mO-wait-3mS-stm₂ |
| ‘he waits’ | ‘he waits for him(it.m)’ |
adj. | subj. suffix in 3 | kan-i | – |
| big-3m | ‘he (it.m) is big’ |
| subj. prefix in 1/2 | to-kan-i | – |
| 1s-big-sg | ‘I (m/f) am big’ |

Only Class I is productive.

The object prefixes have evolved out of the set of forms that mark inalienable possession (except for the future object forms in class IIa), and the subject en-

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3 The quotes around “infixes” are because a more useful approach is probably to say that they are prefixes to the second part of the stem, the whole form being the result of compounding or similar in the past. The subject affixes are identical to those of class II and have the same morpho-phonological interactions with the second part of the stem, and it seems likely that class III is historically derived from class II.
clitics of class I appear to have grammaticalised from the forms that mark alienable possession (see 1.1.3 below).

The subject prefixes for first and second person on adjectives have the same form as the object prefixes on verbs, and it is possible that an earlier stage of the language had some form of split S marking, where the same forms marked objects of transitive verbs and subjects of stative verbs (now adjectives).

Several factors combine to suggest that class II is the oldest in the language, followed by class III and adjectives (see below), with class I the most recent one. The most important factors are summarised in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stems have no /s/ or /f/</th>
<th>Subj. affix interacts with stem</th>
<th>Nominalisation is morphological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two factors are discussed in 3.2.3 and 3.3.3. Regarding nominalisation, class I has zero derivation between verb and noun. For example, class I *ibir* ‘run’ can be used as a verb (‘to run’) or a noun (‘a run’), and *kudat* ‘fence’ likewise can be ‘a fence’ or ‘the action of erecting a fence’. The class has probably developed from a noun+possessive combination although synchronically not all class I verbs can be used as nouns and vice versa. Verb classes II and III have morphological derivation for action nominalisation, whereby an ending -(i)ap is added, and the obligatorily filled subject slot takes the second person singular subject affix. For adjectives -nim is added to the stem:

(3) cl. II *num* ‘walk’ cl. III *aga-lie* ‘rest’
2sS *nu-num* ‘you walk’ 2sS *aga-nu-lie* ‘you rest’
NOM *nunumiap* ‘walking’ NOM *aganuliap* ‘resting’
adj. *mur-* ‘good’
NOM *murinim* ‘goodness’

A transitive verb stem will take the ‘dummy object’ prefix *u-* in the pre-verbal object slot when nominalised (e.g. class I *u-fir* scraping; see further below).

Verbs have no other non-finite forms.

Adjective stems can form causatives by addition of a suffix -ra and then belong to verb class I (e.g., *kan-* ‘big’ (adjective), *kanira* ‘enlarge; honour’ (verb class I)).

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4 Nouns which also have uses as verb stems are with few exceptions feminine. This tallies with the fact that the subject enclitics are identical or similar to the PossII forms used with feminine possessees.
Parts of the verbal system show a future vs. non-future distinction (see also 1.1.8.3 below). Some stems in verb classes II and III have stem alternations and / or stress shift for future; subject markers in the first and second person singular and third masculine singular change their vowel from /u/ to /a/; and the subject suffixes of verb class IIa also have different forms for future. Some forms may thus be severally marked, while others are not marked at all, depending on the particular combination of stem and affixes.

One of four non-pronominal prefixes can replace object prefixes in the pre-verbal slot, causing the verb to be syntactically intransitive. They are te- ‘reflexive’, ne- ‘reciprocal’, u- ‘dummy object’ and da- ‘pluractional’. Reflexive is exemplified in (4) with class IIa -bulǝ ‘cut’ and reciprocal in (5) with IIa -nǝm(u) ‘kill, injure’:

(4)  
te-u-bulǝ
refl-3mS-cut
‘he cut himself’

(5)  
ne-me-nǝm
rec-3pS-kill/injure
‘they killed each other’

The reflexive has an interesting use as an impersonal form (which may be regarded as an incipient passive). This is available with future reference only, so that saying that ‘the clothes will wash themselves’ means that the clothes are to be washed, sometimes with an implication that someone present ought to do something about it. There is no possibility of adding an agent phrase. In the non-future, third person plural is used in impersonal senses: e.g., ‘they carried me’ translates as ‘I was born’.

The ‘dummy object’ u- is thus called because it fills the preverbal object slot of a transitive stem when it is used in an intransitive construction. The stem is still semantically transitive, but is rendered syntactically intransitive in a particular instance of use. As mentioned above, u- is used in the nominalisation of transitive stems. It is also used when a non-specific object is expressed as an oblique, marked by an inalienable possessive (Poss I) rather than cross-referenced. This is shown in (6) a., contrasted with b. which has the full core argument cross-referencing (cf. 1.1.8 below on core vs. oblique arguments):

(6)  
a. me-la=r  mǝn  u-pit=meŋ  ma  lap
‘they went (and) cut firewood’; ‘they went firewood-cutting’

b. me-la  ma-pit=meŋ  lap
3pS-go  3pO-cut.firewood=3pS  firewood.nsg
‘they went (and) cut (the) firewood’

The ‘pluractional’ da- is somewhat less common. It indicates plurality associated with the action in some way. For instance, of a dog that bites a lot (7) can be used, and we also find it in the occasional nominalisation, such as the one in (8), which is based on -nǝm(u) ‘kill, injure’:
1.1.2.2 The verb phrase

In the verb phrase, only the head is obligatory. Other elements as applicable occur in the following order: the first element is the periphrastic future marker e(ba), followed by auxiliary verbs or particles, then serial verbs and last the head.

Auxiliaries encode mood and aspect senses such as habitual (particle buat, verb class II -me) and ‘want; be about to’ (particle nǝmo and verb class II -ga), while serial verbs are limited to ‘go’ and ‘come’ (-la ‘go’, mu-o and -op ‘come’). There is further a particle mǝn giving continuous (progressive) aspect which can occur either before or after auxiliaries and serial verbs and appears to be fairly new to the system. We also find an aspect enclitic =rǝ (/=arǝ/=r) which attaches to the first constituent of the phrase (unless that constituent is mǝn, in which case it attaches to the following constituent). The functions of this aspect marker include perfect-like and completive-like uses, but it is difficult to characterise fully and to label, as it has weak semantics and interacts with predicate semantics. It is therefore simply glossed as ‘ASPect’ here. (The same slot is used by adverbial enclitics; cf. 1.1.6 below.)

The only syntactic difference between verbs and adjectives is that future is marked periphrastically twice for adjectives, with e(ba) as for verbs, and with an additional ba following the head. In this, adjectives are like other non-verbal predicates.

Non-verbal predicates can be of a variety of word classes, and only a couple will be illustrated here. Among nouns, some take class I verbal morphology when used as predicates, and a handful take the same first and second person marking as adjectives. The majority, however, are not morphologically marked for predicate function. Aspect and tense marking function as in other predicate phrases. Future marking has the extra ba after the head. The following example illustrates a noun phrase (consisting of a single noun) in predicate function with future marking:

(9) Eba afǝrǝt ba.
FUT rain FUT2
‘(there) will be rain.’

1.1.3 Possessives

There are two full sets of possessive markers indexing possessor for all 12 person/number/gender categories. The first, PossI, is for inalienable possession, which in Kuot entails body parts and all other part–whole relations (but not kin). PossI also has a variety of other functions, marking e.g. material and instrument and a general associative (much like compounds in Germanic lan-
guages), as well as some types of oblique objects. The same set of forms has grammaticalised as object prefixes on verbs.

The alienable possessives (PossII) index both possessor and possessee (only third person referents can be possessed). PossII is used for alienable ownership and kin, and also has some benefactive uses. These forms are of more recent origin than PossI, and appear to have been formed from the latter plus other person-marking material present in the language. The PossII set is most likely the source of the subject enclitics of verb class I.

PossI and PossII employ the same construction:

\[
\text{POSSESSEE MARKER POSSESSOR}
\]

Since the markers index possessor, they can also be used as possessive pronouns (giving the structure POSSESSEE MARKER), and this is the default for first and second person. The choice between PossI and PossII is semantic, in the sense that the same noun can take either coding depending on whether it is a part of something or alienably possessed, in a given instance:

(10) \text{pupu a kumurot}  
\text{meat 3m.PossI pig(m)}  
\text{‘pork’}

(11) \text{pupu aŋ Abraham}  
\text{meat 3m.PossII.s A.}  
\text{‘Abraham’s (piece of) meat’}

There are also special interrogative forms (‘whose’), agreeing with the possessed in number and gender. No nouns are obligatorily possessed.\(^5\) The forms are given in Appendix I.

1.1.4 Prepositions

Kuot has ten prepositions. Two have no indexing affixes and differ syntactically from the rest: \text{ga} ‘and’, which can be used in the sense ‘with’, and \text{onim} which indicates origin in space or time. The rest index a following noun by affixes expressing number, gender and person; some do so obligatorily, others optionally. If the referent is pronominal, it is expressed as an affix:

(12) \text{to-buo *bo turuo}  
\text{1s-on on 1s}  
\text{‘on me’}

If a nominal following a preposition is relativised, the preposition is always indexed for that nominal (unless it is \text{ga} or \text{onim}), here \text{dram} (f):

\(^5\) An alienable – inalienable distinction in possessives is associated with Austronesian-speaking areas of Papua New Guinea, and it is possible that Kuot has been influenced by contact in this respect. However, the distinction in neighbouring languages is quite different: in Nalik and Madak, inalienable possession encodes both kin and body parts, and at least some inalienably possessed nouns appear to be obligatorily possessed. The structure of the morphological expression of the two categories is also different in those languages.
(13) \[ [u-sik \ dram] \ la \ buat <...> me-opel-o \ burunam \ u-na] \\
3f-DEM drum(f) RELR HAB 3pS-fill.water 3fO water(f) 3f-in \\
‘that drum (that) <...> they fill water in[it.f]’

(Unrelativised the phrase would be \[buat me-opel-o burunam na dram\])

1.1.5 Locationals and directionals

Like many languages in Oceania, Kuot has a set of deictic forms that encode not only a referent’s distance from the deictic centre, but also the direction, and to an extent elevation. The Kuot forms I call locational/directional are used in adverbial functions, and have seven basic senses (ten forms). There are locational senses such as ‘here’ (to) and ‘there’ (tie), but also more complex directional6 ones such as ‘down; seawards; northwest’ (-dǝŋ), ‘up; uphill’ (tuan), and ‘other way; southeast’ (-ma). Figure 1 illustrates the use of the three most basic terms.

![Figure 1: Birds-eye view: The basic directional terms (south-west coast).](image)

The form -dǝŋ ‘down’ is used both for northwesterly direction along the coast and for the direction towards the beach as far as the water’s edge. The form tuan ‘up’ is used for the mountains and also onto the sea from the beach, but some way from the coast the sea goes down again, as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Section: Up and down at sea.](image)

To the basic forms other morphemes can be added, indicating relative distance etc. The morphology in this area is rather irregular and no examples will be given here.

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6 “Directional” here refers to the fact that they indicate the direction, rather than just distance, from the deictic centre, but the term does not necessarily imply movement.
All the stems in this set (in their simple or complex form) can be affixed with third person prefixes and used as demonstratives (cf. 1.1.1 above). Note the difference in use as locational/directional vs. demonstrative:

(14) **u-onama**  
ite  
3mS-sit there  
‘he sits/sat there’

(15) **u-onama**  
i-tie  
3mS-sit 3m-there  
‘he/that one sits/sat’

(16) **u-onama**  
[i-tie mikana]  
3mS-sit 3m-there man  
‘the/that man sits/sat’

### 1.1.6 Adverbs and adverbial clitics

There is a fairly rich set of adverbs in Kuot, covering categories such as time and manner. Some appear to be related to words in other word classes, and many end in /t/ which may at one stage have been an adverb-forming derivation, but there is synchronically no productive way of forming adverbs. Adverbs are invariant in form, and relatively free in syntactic terms, although there is a preference for the second position in the predicate.

There is also a set of six adverbial enclitics which attach to the first constituent in the phrase to which they belong (and thereby provide a nice criterion for phrase-hood). The continuous aspect particle  

\[ \text{m} \]  
is not counted when “first constituent” is sought. The enclitics have meanings such as ‘just’, ‘now’, ‘still; yet; first’, ‘emphatic’ (example (17)), ‘also’ and ‘a little’ (example (18)). The aspect enclitic  

\[ =r \]  
occur in the same a lot as the adverbial clitics, but is mutually incompatible with them.

### 1.1.7 Negation

There are several types of negation in Kuot, and most have an association with non-future verbal morphology, even in future temporal reference. The most general negator is **tale**, which negates any type of predicate. It occurs before the negated constituent:

(17) **Tale**=kan  
[u-me ubi]  
NEG=EMPH 3mS-HAB work=Ø  
‘He didn’t use to work’

(18) **tale** kakarat, kakkaliat=arokan.  
NEG near far=a.little(.more)  
‘it wasn’t near, it was rather far.’

There is a variant **tala** which is used in future contexts (with non-future verbal morphology).

An interesting alternative for general negation is **mani**, normally the question word ‘what’. It is particularly common in the northern Kuot-speaking area. The use as a negation appears to have developed from an ironic formulation (something like ‘you think what, he worked??’ meaning ‘he didn’t work’), and retains
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traces of question intonation. It also differs from tole in that tole is part of the phrase it negates, as evidenced by the placement of adverbial clitics like =kan ‘EMPH’ (as in (17)), while mani is not:

(19) mani u-la=kan u-ɔnɔma
what 3mS-go=EMPH 3mS-sit
‘he didn’t go and sit down’

The negative existential karuk ‘is.not’ or ‘there isn’t’ is also used as ‘no’. In the negative existential use, the thing which is not is sometimes expressed with the preposition me ‘to, for’, but more often with a PossI possessive, as in this example:

(20) Karuk=kan ma lop tiro
is.not=EMPH 3p.PossI child.nsg here
‘There are no children here’

The types of negation so far mentioned are associated with a particular intonation contour (see 3.6).

Prohibitive (i.e. negative imperative) is expressed by the particle buat?, which is also used with non-future forms (while imperative in positive polarity is expressed only by future forms of the verbal morphology, where available):

(21) Buat ma-mi-lo! but Ma-mi-loa!
PROHIB 3pO-2pS-tell 3pO-2pS-tell.fut
‘Don’t tell them!’ ‘Tell them!’

The apprehensive marker bun (and related forms), sometimes translated ‘lest’, is also used with non-future verbal morphology:

(22) U-rau, nɔmo bun me-ŋmu-a ga me-o.
3mS-be.afraid COMPL APPR 3pS-kill-3mO and 3pS-eat.3sO
‘He was afraid lest they kill and eat him.’

(The future forms of the verbs here would be me-ŋmu-ŋ and me-ŋŋ.)

1.1.8 Clauses

A clause can minimally consist of a verb (or adjective) with cross-referencing morphology. Clauses with two full noun phrases do occur but not very often, one or zero being more common.

The unmarked constituent order in Kuot is predicate-initial with optional noun phrases for core arguments: V (S) (O). Subject and object are cross-referenced by affixes/enclitics on the verb:

(23) o-ikat=ŋŋ Adam [muabari aŋ]
3fO-check=3mS A. sun/clock(f) 3m.PossII.s
‘Adam checked his watch’

(24) [nɔmo o-u-uluan] [i-tie non kuraima] nirobu
want 3fO-3mS-follow 3m-there ‘some’ bush.spirit(m) coconut.palm(f)
‘this bush spirit wanted to follow the coconut palm (up)’

Buat is homonymously with and possibly related to the particle marking habitual.
Only noun phrases which are coreferent with cross-referencing morphemes can occur bare in the clause, and are understood to be in a core argument function. All other roles of noun phrases must be marked by prepositions or possessives. Core arguments are thus identified by the presence of cross-referencing and the absence of prepositions or possessives with any coreferent noun phrases.

The subject of a non-verbal/non-adjectival predicate can be said to have defective subject properties: while it is bare in the clause, there is no possibility of cross-referencing. Here kurai bun ‘spirit woman’ is predicated of the phrase u-sik makabun ‘that woman’:

(25) [kurai bun] [u-sik makabun].
spirit.woman 3f-DEM woman
‘that woman (was) a spirit woman.’

A common permutation to clause structure involves topicalisation through fronting. Either a subject or an object noun phrase may be fronted, but not both. The construction is marked by the relator (RELR) ǝ, or by ga (otherwise ‘and’), with no difference in meaning. In the following example, the subject of an intransitive verb has been topicalised:

(26) Samǝtmǝrun ǝ tøle [u-me ubi].
S. RELR NEG 3mS-HAB work=Ø.
‘Samǝtmǝrun didn’t use to work.’

Adverbials, in particular time adverbials, are frequently topicalised too, and may or may not be marked by ǝ or ga. If both an argument noun phrase and an adverbial are fronted, the adverbial comes first and the argument before the predicate. Here there is a time adverbial and a topicalised object:

(27) Na ǝtø ǝtinan, [u-to gas]
in time before 3f-here story(f)
ǝ [møn pa-me-lo] [eia-p pam].
REL R CONT 1pxO-3pS-tell grand.relation-nsg 1px.PossII.pl
‘Before, our forefathers were telling us this story.’

Possessee can be topicalised out of possessive constructions too. In the following example, the topicalisation and marking with the relator creates a copulative construction from the otherwise similar complex noun phrase [[U-tie ubi] anj [tata anj]] ‘that garden of his uncle’s’:

(28) [U-tie ubi] ǝ anj [tata anj],
3f-there garden RELR 3m.PossII.3s maternal.uncle 3m.PossII.3s
‘That garden (was) his maternal uncle.’

In one example, there appears to be recursive topicalisation, where the possessor has been topicalised out of a possessive construction (naga anj i-sik mikana) which is in itself fronted:

---

8 The exceptions are inherently locative nouns (which include place names), and locative complements of the inherently directional verbs -la ‘go’ and ma-o ‘come from’.
I NTRODUCTION: GRAMMATICAL OVERVIEW

(29) [l-sik mikana] lə [naga aŋ]
     3m-DEM man RELR mother 3m.PossII.s
lə [i-me=kan i-onōma] na [non nəp].
     RELR 3fS-HAB=EMPH 3fS-live in ‘some’ place
‘That man, his mother lived in (another) place.’

There is no formal subordination of clauses in Kuot. With the possible exception of temporal adverbial clauses, all clauses can have aspectual and temporal marking in the same way. Clauses are conjoined with ga ‘and’, pa ‘but’, lə ‘relator (RELR)’, o ‘or’. Temporal adverbial clauses can be coded by the relator lə or the word tərə ‘time’. Purpose clauses are indicated by the preposition me ‘to, for’. Prepositions generally require nominal complements (as do possessives), and would normally have to be followed by nominalisations, but the nominal restriction can be circumvented with me by using the future marker e(ba), which allows for the use of a full clause following me:

(30) me-la na [i-tie nəp] me [eba o-kosar=meŋ] ubi.
     3pS-go at 3m-there place(m) for FUT 3fO-make=3pS garden(f)
‘they went to that place to make a garden.’

1.1.8.1 Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow their heads, and are marked with the relator lə. Here the relative clause modifies the possessor (ləmot ‘python’) in the complex object noun phrase:

(31) o-i-op [u-sik səgar aŋ i-sik ləmot
     3fO-3fS-find 3f-DEM egg(f) 3m.PossII.s 3m-DEM python(m)
     [lə u-abu-o]].
     RELR 3mS-put-3fO
‘she found this egg of this python (who) had put (=laid) it.’

The relative clause is very similar to two other constructions: topicalisation and the attribute construction. It differs from topicalisation only in that there is another clause which is interpreted as the main clause, while the relative clause is understood to modify a nominal constituent. The only structural difference between a relative clause and a clause in the attribute construction is that the relator takes person prefixes in the latter function (cf. 1.1.1 above). Semantically, attributes tend to express properties perceived of as somehow integral to the referent, while relative clauses tend to be more general in this regard.

Nominals in many types of roles can be relativised: subjects (transitive or intransitive), objects, possessors and obliques marked with possessive markers, and noun phrases out of prepositional phrases.

1.1.8.2 Questions

Kuot has question words for ‘who’ (aka, noun (m)), ‘what’ (mani, noun (m)), ‘do what’ (-amani, verb (class II)), ‘whose’ (auaŋ etc., possessive), ‘where’ (la-
kum, adverb), ‘be where’ (lak-, adjective), ‘when; how many’ (namuk, adverb). Mani ‘what’ has the form man when used together with a noun (man kukuom? ‘what/which tree?’). ‘How’ is expressed by ‘like what’, are mani, and ‘why’ by ‘for what’, me mani.

Aka ‘who’ and mani ‘what’ tend to be topicalised (fronted), but can be left in the normal position of the item asked about; the interrogative adverbs lakum and namuk can be topicalised too (namuk is usually topicalised in the sense ‘when’). When fronted, question words are treated the same as other constituents and the construction is marked with the relator lǝ. Question-word questions have their own intonation contour (see 3.6.).

The interrogative nouns and adverbs have indefinite uses corresponding to ‘whoever’, ‘whatever’, ‘wherever’, ‘whenever/however-many’. Mani can further be used as a negator as described in 1.1.7 above.

Yes/no questions are marked only by intonation; primarily a sharp rise on the last syllable (see 3.6). If an affirmative answer is expected a tag a can be added to the end of the sentence – this then carries the high pitch. In replying, aa ‘yes’ to a question in negative polarity confirms the proposition including the negation (i.e., ‘yes’ to the question ‘Won’t you come tomorrow?’ means that the person will not come).

1.1.8.3 Tense/irrealis

The only temporal distinction that is consistently marked in Kuot is future vs. non-future. The category called future here could also be analysed as irrealis, but each analysis has some problems and I have chosen to use the label “future” for this grammatical category. There are two expressions of future: the particle e(ba), and some verbal morphology (see 1.1.2 above).

The future morphological alternations are the only marking of imperative (in positive polarity). They are sometimes also the only expression of immediate future. They are further triggered by the use of the future particles e (immediate future) or eba (future), and are optionally used after the auxiliary verb -ga ‘want; be about to’.

Eba in turn has several contexts of use. It always conditions future verbal morphology. In addition to plain future temporal reference, it is used to mark a kind of procedural habitual; in clause complements of the preposition me as mentioned above; in clause complements of the verb puo ‘be able to’ (with the relator lǝ); and optionally in if–then constructions (more often in the ‘then’ clause but possible in either or both).

Future morphology and eba do not co-occur with several types of negation: the future negator tǝla, the prohibitive marker buat, and the apprehensive marker bun (and related forms).

1.2 Kuot as a linguistic type

Predicate-initial languages are rare in the region, and Kuot is possibly unique among non-Austronesian (Papuan) languages in this respect.
The Polynesian outlier languages of Takuu (Mortlock) and Nukuria (Fead) in Bougainville Province (Papua New Guinea) are probably VSO since this is the dominant structure in Polynesian languages, but I have no specific information on these. The nearest other VSO language would be Austronesian Roviana in the New Georgia island group in the Solomon Islands. Surrounding Austronesian languages on New Ireland are all SVO. As regards other non-Austronesian languages in the region, most seem to be SVO (Baining, Taulil and Butam, Sulka, Kol, Ata and Anêm in New Britain, and Bilua in the Solomon Islands; Taulil seems to have the option VS for some stative clauses), or SOV (Rotokas, Nasioi, Buin and Motuna on Bougainville, and Lavukaleve, Savosavo and Touo (Baniata) in the Solomon Islands). Non-Austronesian (Papuan) languages on New Guinea island are predominantly verb-final.

Although word order may not always be the best indicator of other structures in a language, it may be interesting to look at how various features in Kuot pattern together.

In Greenberg’s first formulation of word order universals (Greenberg 1990 [1963]), a harmonic VSO language should have the features given in the left-hand column in Table 3 (which is not exhaustive – only the major and most often quoted features are included). In terms of these features, Kuot shows up as a harmonic language, matching all the major features, as indicated by pluses in the second column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenberg’s typical VSO features</th>
<th>Kuot</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepositions (Pr)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessor follows possessee (NG)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>concomitant with prepositions according to G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attributive Adj follows N (NA)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>attributive use is non-basic for Kuot adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause follows N (N-Rel)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflected auxiliary precedes verb</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that Greenberg’s parameters are essentially statistical, recording only the tendency for certain features to co-occur (in a sample of only

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10 A web page giving samples of the Takuu language suggests that it is verb-initial but the data is inconclusive (http://members.tripod.com/~Lakoa_Fitina/Takuulan.htm, 18 April 2002).

11 Unfortunately, most of these languages are as yet very incompletely described. In most cases I have gleaned the information from a few reproduced sentences, so it is not certain that these are representative of a larger sample. Only for Bilua and Lavukaleve did I have access to full grammars: Terrill (1999) for Lavukaleve and Obata (2000) for Bilua.
30 languages). Others have proposed various explanations for these tendencies.\(^\text{12}\)

On another approach we may look at Kuot in terms of headedness, where a less consistent picture emerges. While the clause is left-headed, the noun phrase has the head (normally the noun) in the middle somewhere to the right, and predicate phrases have the head (normally the verb) as the last constituent.

Kuot is similarly split if we look at head–dependent marking (roughly following Nichols (1986)). Kuot is head-marking on the clause level, i.e., grammatical roles are indicated by cross-referencing affixes on the verb for up to two arguments (word order too indicates grammatical role where two argument noun phrases are present), and there is no case marking. Within a noun phrase, on the other hand, it is the dependents of the noun that are marked for agreement, and in the singular, gender is marked on dependents only and not on the noun (while non-singular number is explicitly marked on the noun as well as on dependents). As prepositions often agree with the following noun, prepositional phrases would have to be seen as head-marking as well. Relativisation is unmarked in this respect.

1.3 Language name and previous sources

It appears that most of the language names in New Ireland were applied by the Australian administration some time in the 1940’s or later. In 1962, Capell wrote:

“There is much confusion in the naming of languages in the northern half of New Ireland. In earlier periods, village names were generally used, e.g., Lugagun. In recent years the custom has grown up and has been followed in Australian Government circles of using a word which means ‘my child’ as a language name, so that Lugagun becomes Natik [sic!] and Kanalu becomes Barok.”
(Capell 1962a: 101) [“Natik” here should be “Nalik”.

Most of the early administration records were destroyed by the Japanese during the second world war, but from 1945–1975 there are reports from government officers in the Australian administration, who carried out yearly or twice-yearly patrols through the territory (see 2.3). I have not come across any information as to the origins of the naming practice, although similar practices were used to name languages in Australia. Any official comments on the topic in documents of the administration for the Mandated territory of New Guinea are likely to have been destroyed during the Japanese occupation of Rabaul during the War in the Pacific (WWII).

There was clearly no principle of language naming before 1930. Both Chinnery ([1930?]) and Powdermaker (1971 [1933]), carried out their respective fieldwork in 1929 (in Powdermaker’s case until 1930), and neither makes any mention of such a principle, but continue using village names. Powdermaker even

\(^{12}\) For a critique of the underlying assumptions and discussion of alternative approaches, see Dryer (1995).
makes the observation that the linguistic units had no names (p. 31). Lewis reports that the Nochi speakers in 1954 simply used an expression meaning ‘Interior People’ for the Kuots (Lewis 1969: 27 and map on p. 29).

When language names were introduced, languages on offshore islands remained called by the name of the island or island group. Madak (Mandak) to the south of the Kuot area refers to a group of languages rather than a single language, and they were presumably grouped under the same label as a consequence of sharing the word for ‘boy, child; young man’. The Madak language spoken next to the Kuot area is known as Lamasong (or Lamusong; Lavatbura-Lamusong) after prominent villages. Although it is linguistically incorrect, I will refer to any (or all) of these languages as Madak, since this is the name that people use locally today, and I was normally not able to verify what precise area was referred to. In most instances it would have been the area adjacent to Kuot.

As regards Kuot, there is a discrepancy between the name Kuot and the word for ‘boy; young man’, which is *kulot*. In patrol reports from the 1950’s, Kulot is indeed used. A report from 1948/49 notes that the “Kulot” language is used from Bimun to Naiama on the west coast. Patrols at this time generally fail to notice the existence of Kuot-speaking villages on the east coast – since those villages are interspersed with Nalik and Nochi villages it is likely that Kuot speakers were bilingual and used the more established languages of the area. During this time it also appears that attempts were made to align administrative divisions with language boundaries. “Kulot” became a census division and was still referred to by the administration by that name in 1972/73 (report 5). The name Kulot remains as the name of the community school near Lamou village (in the Madak-speaking area just south of Bimun).

In the 1960’s and 70’s, linguists start using the term Kuot, as can be seen in Table 4 below. None of the sources makes reference to the origin of this name, nor indeed any comment at all concerning its introduction despite the administration’s continued use of Kulot. The only clue to it being an indigenous name is an intriguing mention in a patrol report from as early as 1949/50 (report 13) of a “mountain tribe ‘Guat’”. ‘Guat’ is almost certainly the officer’s interpretation of “Kuot”. The relevant section of the report concerns the relocation of Liedan village on the east coast, whose inhabitants apparently wanted to change from one coastal site to another. The report says: “... village of LIANDAN. These people, of the mountain tribe ‘Guat’ were induced to come down to the coast years ago, and have now decided to abandon their old village site on an exposed headland...”

The occurrence of Kuot (as ‘Guat’) in the patrol report suggests that it was around fairly early as a name for some grouping of Kuot-speaking people, although it is by now impossible to establish precisely what meaning or domain

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13 By 1973–74 the census divisions had changed and the Kuot area became part of the Central West Coast and Central East Coast divisions, possibly as part of the preparations for independence.
of usage it had. Unlike *kulot*, Kuot does not have a meaning known to present-day speakers. The only explanation for this name that I was able to get from speakers came from one elderly man who suggested it might be because of the use of *kuot!* as an exclamation expressing surprise or incredulity. Madak speakers use *madak!* (and in Tok Pisin ‘man!’ is used). This is a possibility, but it is equally possible that these uses are in fact derived from the now established names in use for the languages and peoples. It also seems likely that if such usage was salient enough for passing government officers to pick up, it would have been found in some older sources by anthropologists, and would perhaps have been noted as something used jokingly of neighbouring peoples and so forth. I have not come across any such reference, even for the better-studied Madak, Nalik and Nochi populations.

Another name identifying the Kuot language and perhaps also its speakers among the Kuots themselves is that of *Kun*, a former bush village near the present site of Liedan on the east coast, to which all higher-level clans trace their origins. We thus get expressions such as the following, with Kun taking the slot otherwise occupied by Kuot:

(32) ties onim Kun
language ORIG K.
‘the Kun language’

Village names are still used, especially among elderly people, who will say for example ‘the language of Lesu’ for Nochi, although it is known that it is spoken in more than one village. The use of Kun is a little different: in my understanding there is something defining about the village of Kun because of the clans originating from there. In contrast, I believe that the use of Lesu in the example with Nochi is simply a case of using a name of a part to designate the whole.

The fact that languages traditionally had no names is likely to be associated with their low identificational value in this area; cf. 2.7.5.

Table 4 is an overview of early mentions and sources on the Kuot people and language, with the names used. It is followed by brief comment on each. Secondary sources are included as they are frequently based on notes by earlier researchers rather than published work, and therefore sometimes include material not previously published.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>name(s) used for Kuot</th>
<th>year of data coll.</th>
<th>year of publ.</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walden</td>
<td>Paneras, Nayama, Laurup</td>
<td>1907–09</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
<td>Notes/Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinnery</td>
<td>Limalaua, Letatan</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>“...bush languages which appear in purest form in the Limalaua group of people who live in the bush and on the coast near Fatmilak. [...] Limalaua (a bush language) is said to extend to Yendat and possibly to Lemo, Bimun, Panaras, Patlinger and other villages to the west.” 15 (p. 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer</td>
<td>Panaras</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>using Walden’s(??) and Friederici’s notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kluge</td>
<td>Kul, Letátan, Nayáma</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>(MS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loukotka</td>
<td>Nayáma, Letátan</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>citing Kluge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capell</td>
<td>Panaras</td>
<td>1950’s?</td>
<td>uses his own notes on Kuot (never published in full)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capell</td>
<td>Panaras</td>
<td>1962a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loukotka</td>
<td>Panaras (dialects: Kul, Nayáma, Letátan)</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laufer</td>
<td>Ungana-Panaras (Meyer) = Nayama, Panaras, Letatan (Friederici); Panaras (Lakaff, Peekel)</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>quoting Meyer and Friederici</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithgow &amp; Claassen</td>
<td>Kuot (Panaras)</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>“KUOT – only one language, which is known by this name or Panaras. There are 712 speakers.” 16 (p. 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capell</td>
<td>Panaras</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capell</td>
<td>Panaras</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>Kuot (incl. on maps); Panaras in quoting</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Bibliography and survey of language work done in New Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 I am not familiar with the names Baubun, Nárum, Niáre, Naime, Lágimo, Lauéra, or Panabírat. If the notes are correct, it is likely that the majority of these were bush villages and no longer exist. Note however that Kul/Kun, which is a known site, is not included in Friederici’s published material, although Kluge, using Friederici’s notes, does include that location.

15 I am not familiar with the name Yendat. Lemo is Lemau/Lamou, which is Madak-speaking and included as such, called Lamau (p. 12). Patlinger should be Patlangat.
Further place names given me by Kuot speakers for olden-day settlements in the mountains (no longer, if ever, found on maps) are: Taula, Ti, Nakadi, Louara-nak (Bolouaranak), Bouoraba, Boderi, Tumauna, Buada, and Ilum Kumberun. These were all in the southern part of the Kuot area, subsumed under the name Taula by the administration (who had a hut there). The populations from there established the coastal villages Bimun and Kabil in the south; Nakasalakap somewhat further north; Malua near Lesu (Powdermaker 1971 [1933]: 38); and Lakkuanip not far from Liedan in the northern part of the Kuot-speaking territory. On the west coast, the administration also used the name Neiruara for a portion of the coast between Panaras and Patlangat.

Walden’s 1911 report on Kuot is only 18 lines long, but is an impressively accurate and relevant description of the language, given that Walden’s task was to collect all he could on all the languages and the ethnography of all of northern New Ireland including New Hanover in two years. It is worth translating the paragraph in its entirety here:

“The interior, the mountains between Hamba and Kafkaf, and the stretch of the west coast between Lemau and Lamassaleng is of particular linguistic interest since here, in the villages Paneras, Nayama, Laurup etc., a language has survived which does not belong to the family of Melanesian or Malayo-Polynesian languages, but according to the conventional terminology is to be counted among Papuan languages. The verb has several different classes according to the prefixing, suffixing, or infixing of pronouns. Two grammatical genders which, apart from the pronouns, are marked in formatives to do with nouns and verbs, indicate that the language is more closely related to that of the Baining in Neu-Pommern [New Britain], of the Monumbo of Neu-Guinea etc.” (Walden 1911: 30)

Friederici notes (p. 280) that Kuot does not go across the island (as at that time there were no Kuot villages on the east coast). He contrasts it with another linguistic group at Muliama, saying that their language area does not stretch across as they are clearly recently immigrated (the language is shared with the Tanga

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16 Unfortunately, Walden was killed in the first world war, and does not seem to have published more than the four pages from which the Kuot information is taken. Nevermann later published some of his ethnographic notes (Walden & Nevermann 1941).
and Feni (Anir) island groups), while by contrast “the Papuan-speaking Pána-
ras–Nayama people have evidently been pushed back from one coast by
younger Melanesian elements”. He gives a short word list mainly consisting of
terms to do with outrigger canoes.¹⁷

Chinnery ([1930?]) conducted an anthropological survey along the island, with
the purpose of investigating the causes and circumstances of the falling popula-
tion figures. He took down a number of lists of kin terms, including two Kuot
ones in the given locations.

Meyer (1932) talks of the linguistic endeavours of the catholic missionaries in
northern New Britain, whose territory also included New Ireland. He discusses
the study of the Baining in New Britain, and relates how further Papuan lan-
guages were found, such as Sulka, and writes “vielleicht auch bei den Panaras-
leuten auf Neuirland” (p. 189). His map distinguishes Papuan, Papuan-Melane-
sian, and Melanesian languages, also marking languages with Polynesian ele-
ments. Kuot (Panaras) is classified as Papuan-Melanesian. Meyer also gives the
beginning of the Lord’s Prayer (p. 196) – it is not clear who provided the data
for it.

Kluge collected a very large number of numerical systems. The Kuot data is
from the Deutsche Marine-Expedition 1907 for Kul (Kun), probably Walden’s
data, supplied to him by Nevermann, and from Friederici’s unpublished notes
for Letatan and Naiama. The source gives the numbers 1–10 for each location
(and also 11, 30, 100 for Kul).

Loukotka (1957: 59) writes that according to Kluge there are three non-Melane-
sian languages of New Ireland: Nusa, Naiyama and Letatan. Loukotka’s 14
lines on New Ireland contain numerous mistakes, and are probably best igno-
red.¹⁸

Capell (1962a) uses only his own unpublished notes as a source on Kuot (Pana-
ras; p. 103); the list of first lines of the Lord’s prayer (including Kuot) is taken
from Meyer (without acknowledgement; p. 93).

Capell’s long article in Current Anthropology (1962b) cites Loukotka citing
Kluge, but says the author himself has only been able to locate one non-Aus-
tronesian language, Panaras, “which is spoken in a small area of the central

¹⁷ Friederici collected much more extensive materials on the languages encountered
during his explorations than were ever published (first in 1904 with Dr Karl Sapper,
then as leader of the Hanseatische Südsee-Expedition in 1908); however funds did not
allow the publication of more than a fraction of the materials from the second expedi-
tion (Friederici 1912: 318–319). Loukotka (1962) reports that he and Kluge worked on
Friederici’s very extensive linguistic notes during the second world war, but that the
notes were lost following Friederici’s death (which was in 1947).

¹⁸ Apart from smaller mistakes, Loukotka gives the wrong number of non-Austrone-
sian languages, includes a number series for Nusa which is not reported by the authors
whose materials he uses, and credits himself with the first report of a non-Melanesian
language in New Ireland.
west coast of the island” (p. 375; Panaras is also shown on the map on p. 374, and mentioned on p. 381). Other scholars comment (e.g. Loukotka; see below) and in his reply, Capell makes the observation that the non-Austronesian languages of New Britain, the Solomon Islands and New Ireland are very different (“bearing little resemblance to each other in vocabulary or in structure”), and remarks that there was quite probably great linguistic diversity in the region prior to Austronesian arrival (“That the same state of affairs existed very probably in pre-AN Melanesia does not seem to be at all an extraordinary theory – albeit it is admitted to be a theory...”; p. 423). He further notes (p. 424) that “the four characteristics of [non-Austronesian] languages can only be regarded as typological. Whether they contain anything of historical value has yet to be determined [...] The four points mentioned contrast with the [Austronesian] morphological structure and thus serve as a line of demarcation between [Austronesian] and [non-Austronesian] – nothing more.”

Loukotka (1962: 415), commenting on Capell (1962b), amends his 1957 statement to say that the non-Austronesian language in New Ireland is indeed Panaras, with three special dialects: Kul, Naiyama, and Letátan. Choosing these as dialects is simply an effect of sampling – these were the places where Friederici and Walden collected the data that Loukotka used.

Laufer (1966: 125–128) reviews literature on New Ireland, mainly that produced by missionaries of the Herz-Jesu mission. On Kuot (with the names given in the table) he cites the references by Meyer and Friederici given above, but also two unpublished sources which I have not seen references to elsewhere. One is a lost manuscript: P.J. Lakaff Wörteransammlung der Panaras-Sprache. The other is also a manuscript: P.G. Peekel Grammatik und Wörterbuch der Panaras-Sprache. There is no indication where the latter may be held, and it is possible that it is also lost by now.

Lithgow and Claassen (1968) conducted a one-month survey of New Ireland in 1966, using the first 120 words from the survey word list given in Bee & Pence (1962). They then computed cognacy rates between the different languages, arriving at the conclusion that Kuot makes up a family of its own, the Madak languages another one, and all the rest a third one which they call Patpatar after

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19 The four features are listed on p. 371; briefly they are 1. noun classes involving concord of some kind; 2. a tendency to mark number as well as class in nouns ... or with a demonstrative particle; 3. complex verbal systems unless there is noun classification; if so, the noun class of subject and object is often marked by affixes; 4. SOV preferred word order and postpositions. Since Kuot has gender, 1 is applicable, as is 3 (although the value of the generalisation is perhaps not obvious). Kuot gender is not marked on nouns, and it has VSO word order and prepositions.

20 Peekel was transferred to a district including the Kuot-speaking west coast in 1930, so it is likely that his writings would be from after that year. Neither manuscript is mentioned in Hüskes (1932), which has a bibliography of works by Catholic missionaries including manuscripts until 1932, so probably both documents date from after that time.
one of the languages. This more or less reflects a view of the situation that most linguists would subscribe to. However, the small size and selection of items on the word list has given some surprising results, such as a 16% cognacy rate between the Patpatar language and Kuot (but 10% between Madak and Kuot, and 22% between Patpatar and Madak). The authors list the following village names on the west coast: Naiama, Panaras, Neiruaran, Patlangat and Bimun; and on the east coast: Kama, Lomaloa, Liadan and Kabil.

Capell (1969: 95) uses Kuot data to support his division of New Guinea languages in various structural types and subtypes (which will not be reviewed here), giving one verb paradigm and three sentences (which are incorrectly segmented).

Capell (1971) is a treatise on the Austronesian languages of New Guinea, but does include Kuot (Panaras) in word lists (p. 256–259), on the map (p. 255) and briefly in the text (p. 263).

Beaumont (1972) is a bibliography of linguistic work in New Ireland. Apart from some of the works indicated here, a few more mention Kuot but are either maps or mentions that give no comment (e.g. Wurm (1971) which just reports that it is established as a Papuan language).

Wurm (1975) attempts to classify all non-Austronesian languages in island Melanesia into families, stocks and phyla. The so called “East Papuan Phylum” in his view includes languages of New Britain, Bougainville Province, the Solomon Islands, Kuot, and Yele of Rossel Island in Milne Bay province. The classification is made on grounds of similarities in morphological systems (but often not shared morphemes; p. 786–787), such as the presence of gender/noun classes, and cross-referenced subjects (and objects) on verbs. This classification is based on very little data, and the absence of shared morphological items makes it at best hypothetical. Kuot is classified as a family-level isolate (p. 789).

Ross (1994) discusses the phonologies of several languages in New Ireland and groups the Austronesian languages into language/dialect networks. He identifies a phonological alliance, made up by certain phonological processes and restrictions that are shared by Kuot and its nearest neighbours but not further afield, and concludes that the Madak phonology is the result of a language shift by an adult population (cf. 3.10). With respect to Kuot, Ross (1997) is mainly a summary (p. 246) of the (1994) paper.

Chung & Chung’s 75-page Kuot Grammar Essentials is the first attempt (1996) at a description of the grammatical structure of Kuot, and as such was very useful to me to get an idea of the language before going to the field. They have

21 Once in the field, I decided not to use it, so as to arrive at my own conclusions based on the data I was collecting. As is wont to happen when several people work on a language, many of our analyses differ; it is also possible that the Chungs have revised some of their ideas during the seven or eight years that they have continued to work on the language after writing the grammar sketch.
also led the work on a Kuot hymnbook, two gospels and a nearly-finished full bible translation, produced by various committees led by the Chungs, as well as some literacy materials.

Ross (2001) is a reconstruction of systems of pronominal proto-forms for 19 of the 25 Papuan languages that Wurm grouped into the East Papuan Phylum. He finds evidence for some subgrouping within this set, giving a total of five language groups and three isolates, with Kuot as an isolate (p. 309t, 311). He does not find support for Wurm’s phylum, but introduces the use of “east Papuan” as a geographical designation.

Dunn, Reesink & Terrill (in press) is a preliminary typological survey of the Papuan languages of island Melanesia, with a view to investigating structural relationships between them. Clause and phrase syntax, pronominal systems and verbal morphology are compared, and do suggest lower-level groupings. Of Kuot it is said that “Kuot stands on its own with respect to the languages of New Britain, as indeed with respect to all the other East Papuan languages”.23

Terrill (in press) compares gender and similar systems of nominal classification in the East Papuan languages. The presence of such systems has been taken as evidence for genetic relatedness among these languages, but Terrill concludes that the systems are so divergent that there is no suggestion of higher-level relationships.

Another work that should be mentioned here, which has been very useful to me, is Wassmann (1995), an historical atlas from the University of Basel which has maps for various segments of time since white contact, giving the names applied to peoples mentioned in published sources, together with an extensive bibliography.

Although Kuot was largely overlooked in the early sources, recent years have seen a renewed interest in the Papuan languages of this area, both as regards linguistic description and contact phenomena, and with respect to the light they may shed on the earliest migrations and settlement at the eastern boundary of human dispersal prior to 5000 years ago. We may expect to see more attention given to these languages and Kuot in the years to come.

1.4 Data

The bulk of the data on which the present analysis is based consists of recorded narratives of various kinds. I have some eleven hours of recorded speech, mostly short texts of three to ten minutes; a few are of about 30 minutes. Al-

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22 Ross (forthc.) extends the investigation to all Papuan language families.

23 The Pioneers of Island Melanesia project (to commence in 2002, within the programme The Origin of Man, Language and Languages of the European Science Foundation) aims to bring forth a more detailed picture of the interrelations between the languages and peoples in the region, pulling together linguistic, genetic and archaeological data, as well as collecting new data within these and related fields.
though there is an over-representation of middle-aged and old men, the data has a fair spread of speakers of different age and sex. Several genres are represented, such as traditional narratives, stories of the type “when I went to town last week”, and procedural texts (“how we prepare sago”). I have no recorded conversational data, but did often make notes of things people said in various situations.24

The contact language was the English-lexified creole Tok Pisin, in which all Kuot speakers are bilingual. I had learnt the basics of Tok Pisin in Canberra before coming to Papua New Guinea, and became increasingly fluent during my time in New Ireland.

After some weeks in the field I would try to transcribe a recorded text myself, and then go through it with the recorded speaker, or anyone else on hand. I would also try to get vocabularies and paradigms. As everywhere, different speakers have different talents, so that the people who are inspired storytellers are not always the same as those who can explain the meaning and use of words or grammatical intricacies of the language to the linguist. It soon transpired that the best results in analysis were obtained working with a speaker in his early to mid-thirties, Robert Sipa, who proved to have an outstanding talent for the sort of abstractions about language that linguists are after. He became my main informant and worked with me several times a week throughout my time in Bimun. Working consistently with one person also impacted on method, in that we developed conventions for talking about all aspects of the language, which made work more efficient.25 Further, he was up-to-date with what I knew and didn’t know about Kuot, and this too helped efficiency. I would of course work with other speakers too, and would sometimes crosscheck Robert’s information, which I almost always found to be borne out. Although I recorded as many different speakers as I could, most of the analytic work where native-speaker intuitions and judgments were needed was carried out with his help.

It took me quite a long time to start speaking Kuot. Part of the reason was that much of the social life in the village takes place in Tok Pisin, so that there were few conversations in Kuot within earshot most of the time to help develop fluent understanding of it, and also few conversations to join into. There are quite a few people who do not speak Kuot in the village, so speakers switch to Tok Pisin very readily, and indeed code-mix a fair bit even without non-speakers present. This meant that I would have to tell people to speak Kuot. I sometimes did, and in particular asked Roslyn and Abraham, my host family, to try and use Kuot to me, but this only worked part of the time.

24 I was simply never game to just turn on the tape recorder without people knowing, and felt it would not be a very relaxed or natural conversation if I did tell them.

25 I think there were no areas of Kuot that were impossible to discuss even in the somewhat crude medium of Tok Pisin, with the exception of some phonological matters (in particular stress).
Another factor is to do with the structure of Kuot itself, where agreement and cross-referencing make the production of a sentence into a jigsaw puzzle. It takes time to learn to do it fast. My own unfortunate personality trait of not liking to make mistakes meant that I did not venture to speak much in the first trip, and I never achieved full speed in utterances of more than a few words. But my interactions were increasingly in Kuot, and people found it entertaining to come and talk with me, which was always useful practice.

1.5 Fieldwork situation

I had decided that it would be socially difficult to check out several villages and have to reject all but one, and had selected Bimun after reading an unpublished report by the Summer Institute of Linguistics Bible translator Chul-Hwa Chung to the effect that the language was strongest in villages belonging to the protestant United Church (rather than the Roman Catholic Church), and stronger on the west coast than on the east coast. This still left a choice, so I studied the map and found that Bimun had several streams nearby and so I opted for Bimun.

It may have been useful to have chosen a village further from the boundary of another language area, but at the time I was not sure of the exact location of the boundary. I also found out later that Bimun village resettled from the mountains around 1930, which surely caused disruption to life in general and perhaps in some ways also to language use.

Much later it came to my attention that people in Panaras, in the northern Kuot-speaking area, were a little disgruntled that so much linguistic attention was being given to the southern area, with the Chungs (SIL bible translators) in Kabil on the east coast and me in Bimun on the west coast, as the people of Panaras consider their dialect the more original one. They will tell you that their village has been there for so long that there was never a time when it was not there (although they say it was called Naunabun; however Panaras is the name used by explorers at the beginning of the 20th century). Given the fact that all clans are said to originate from Kun in the northern area, there may be something to their claim that theirs is a very old Kuot location, and it may or may not be the case that the dialect is more archaic; the dialectal differences are at any rate fairly small (see 2.6; 2.10). None of this was known to me when making my choice of fieldwork location, and I might have chosen differently had I known. But I have had no reason to regret my choice and apart from the considerations just given everything worked out in the best way possible in Bimun.

I first arrived in New Ireland in July 1997, on a tourist visa to select a village for fieldwork and see if I could do anything about speeding up the processing of my application for a research visa. Officials in Kavieng were very helpful, and (unsuccessfully) tried to locate Kuot speakers in Kavieng who could introduce me to a village, and even provided transport to Bimun. On the way to Bimun, we had to stop and ask where it was. The couple we asked turned out to be from Bimun, and they became my host family: Roslyn and Abraham, and their children Haybie, Maylyn and Elisa, and later my namesake Eva. Roslyn’s father
Jonathan Laromeng is a respected bigman in the area, which may have contributed to general approval of the arrangement.

In the first short trip, I spent two separate weeks in Bimun. It was only days before people started telling Roslyn that she had a new sister, and over time we developed a very close relationship. In many areas of Papua New Guinea, kinship defines the types of relations a person may have to other people (cf. 2.6.4). Through Roslyn, my relations to most other people were defined too, so that I had parents and aunts and brothers-in-law, and so forth. The kinship incorporation did not apply to me fully as a white person and obvious outsider. Some people appreciated my efforts to observe name taboos and other aspects of kin-based behaviour, while others seemed to find it rather silly.

Abraham soon decided I needed a house of my own, and built one while I was back in Australia waiting for the research permit to come through. The house was made from bush materials and had a room where I slept and where I could lock up equipment and belongings, and an open veranda where I worked and where people could come and visit. In an unfamiliar environment, private space was a blessing, and also meant that I could be sure I was not in anybody’s way.

I had no cooking facilities beyond a small kerosene cooker, and had all meals with Roslyn and family, which provided a natural way of being part of everyday family life. It was socially impossible to pay for food and housing, but when I went to town I would buy rice, tinned fish, sugar, onions and other items that were in demand, and also things such as thongs and clothes for the children, batteries, occasional items of clothing and so forth. I also brought somewhat more expensive gifts when coming from Australia.

Similarly, I could not pay my main informant Robert Sipa in money, but bought clothes for his children, cigarettes, fishing line and other things that he wanted or seemed to need, as well as bigger presents from Australia.

In the village, I would spend most of the time on my veranda, looking through notes and transcriptions of stories, trying to make sense of the language, preparing questions or working with Robert Sipa (or others who might come and offer to help with my work). Sometimes people would just come and visit for a while. Occasionally I would go to the gardens with Roslyn, which was interesting although I think I got in her way more than I helped. There were of course also chores, such as washing clothes in the river (always pleasant), or weeding and sweeping around the house. I also attended any ceremonies, and on Sundays I went to church. A few times I visited other villages, like Panaras and Kabil, to record stories there. I would have liked to travel the Kuot area more, and also to visit the former site of the village in the mountains, but there was never a suitable companion for such a trip.

I stayed in the village for about three weeks at a time, and then went to the provincial capital of Kavieng for about a week, to collect mail, do shopping, and write reports on various areas of Kuot grammar. I kept a computer in Kavieng (there was no electricity in Bimun) and used it to type up the field reports, which I sent to supervisors in Australia and Sweden. Report writing helped to
make data collection more systematic, and it was very useful to get feedback and further queries while still in the field.

Fieldwork periods were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>July–August</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997–1998</td>
<td>September–July</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999–2000</td>
<td>August–March</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Kuot and its speakers

This chapter provides mainly non-linguistic information about the speakers of Kuot, in terms of geography, history, social organisation, kinship and culture, as well as dialects of Kuot.

2.1 Geographic location

Kuot is spoken in some ten villages on the east and west coasts of North Central New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. When explorers first arrived in the area, there were Kuot villages on the west coast and in the mountains, but not on the east coast; the mountain population has since moved down to settle on the coasts. On the east coast, Kuot villages are interspersed and sometimes mixed with Nalik- and Nochi-speaking villages.

The main Kuot villages from north to south on the east coast (in fact north-east coast) are:

- Kama
- Bol (village shared with Nalik speakers)
- Fanafiliuo
- Liedan
- Kabil

and on the west (south-west) coast:

- Naiama
- Panaras
- Naliut
- Nakalakalap (Neiruaran)
- Patlangat
- Bimun

The villages range in size from around 80 people to some 500, with smaller hamlets besides. Since there is quite a number of people from other linguistic districts outside and within New Ireland living in the area, and since many children do not speak the language at all, determining how many people actually
speak Kuot is a difficult task. My tentative estimate is around 1,500 people who are reasonably fluent.¹

New Ireland Province extends from the equator to the 5th parallel south, and from the 149th to the 154th longitude east. The Kuot area is just south of the 3rd parallel, and the climate is tropical, with annual rainfall figures around 3,500 mm (138 inches). There is no very pronounced division of the year into dry and wet seasons in New Ireland.² Temperatures on the coast range between about 33°C (92°F) in the daytime and about 25°C (77°F) at night all year round.

The Schleinitz mountain range runs along all of central New Ireland, reaching heights of well over 800 metres (2600 feet) in the Kuot area. The mountains are steep on the west coast and start rising just a few tens of metres from the coast in many places, the highest peaks being only some 4 kilometres from the coast line (as measured on the map). The landscape then slopes gradually towards the east coast, where there is more flat ground with mangrove swamps near the coast.

New Ireland is a narrow island, and all major languages run across it from coast to coast (though at present the only villages in the mountains are in the Lelet plateau south of the Kuot area). Kuot borders in the south on Madak (more precisely the Lavatbura–Lamusong language within the Madak family), and in the north on Nalik. On the east coast, Kuot villages are interspersed with Nalik villages in the north and Nochi (Notsi) villages along the rest of the coast. (The Nalik territory does not reach across the island.)

2.2 Prehistory

Australia and New Guinea formed a single continent, Sahul, until about 8,000 years before present (BP). This continent appears to have been settled by about 55,000 years BP. However, New Ireland was never joined to other landmasses, even during glacial maximum some 18,000 years BP when sea levels were about 130 meters below their present levels. The first settlers must thus have had some sea-faring skills: even if there is two-way visibility between New Guinea and New Britain, the crossing has always been more than 50 km. Hu-

¹ I have not been able to get data from the 2000 census. I am told that the census questionnaire does not contain questions about language and thus can only provide population information as a basis for an estimate of the number of speakers. In the 1990 information I have access to, the census data also was not fine-grained enough in terms of village names to give a good idea of the situation on the east coast where the territory is shared with other languages. In 1968, Lithgow & Claassen (1968: 3) give the number of speakers as 712. Chung & Chung (1996: 1) give the number as approximately 2,000. I believe both figures are based on censuses for the area, and although there is a general population increase, the dramatic growth indicated by these numbers may be partly an artefact of changing census division boundaries.

² For the first several months of my first long stay in the field, there was no rain at all, due to the occurrence in 1997 of the cyclical climatological disturbance known as el Niño.
man habitation in New Ireland is evidenced in the archaeological record from more than 35,000 years BP.

Sea levels stabilised near today’s levels around 6,000 years BP. Some 3,500 years ago the Austronesians arrived from the west, leaving traces in the form of pottery – hitherto unknown in the area – in particular the decorated Lapita pottery associated with the Austronesian cultural complex in Melanesia and large parts of Polynesia. They also brought pigs, dogs, chickens and rats (rattus exulans), and certain plants. From that time, village structures are clearly evidenced, and agriculture is indicated in pollen analyses and clay sedimentation in marches, pointing to more extensive uphill forest clearing.

Several factors make it difficult to form a picture of the life of the earliest inhabitants. First, not very much archaeological work has been carried out in the area, and much of it has centered on coastal sites which typically show early Austronesian settlement. The changing sea levels make it difficult to identify promising sites for pre-Austronesian inhabitants, and it is not even clear whether they lived in permanent settlements such as villages. Further, only stone artefacts were fully durable, since pottery disappeared for unknown reasons some 2,000–1,500 years ago, and there was no metal. In the ground, things have been preserved to an extent; mainly shell and bone scraps in middens. Until recently it has only been possible to get a picture of protein subsistence as evidenced by bone and shell materials at the rock shelters, but new microscopic techniques are being developed for identifying very fine residues of plant material on tools (Spriggs 1997: 37–38). This is exciting, because knowing what the main carbohydrate sources were is likely to tell us much more about the lifestyle of these people. That is, if it can be shown that the species eaten are species which grow in the wild, the people are likely to have been hunters and gatherers. If, on the other hand, such species of e.g. taro were grown that are known to require a lot of tending, we can infer that the people probably kept gardens of some description, and that the population density could have been higher. The population density projected for the time of Austronesian arrival is important too for the contact scenarios we may want to propose.

The sites that have given the oldest dates are caves and rock shelters; the oldest being Matenkupkum in southern New Ireland with a date of 35,400 years BP, giving evidence of the exploitation of marine resources, and the use of simple stone tools. A similar pattern was found at Buang Merabak where the oldest date is 31,990 BP. Caves are useful because they are sheltered, but the deposits are often difficult to interpret, partly because it must be assumed that the caves were cleaned out from time to time, leaving very little evidence. Many caves also appear to have been used as temporary shelters for much of the time, perhaps on overnight hunting expeditions. Such use means that traces do not necessarily reflect everyday life. In some cases, however, there are cultural depos-

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3 Matenkupkum results are from Gosden and Robertson (1991) and Buang Merabak from (Rosenfeld n.d.), both reported in Spriggs (1997: 35–37).
its, suggesting at least periodical use as primary habitation. Not far north of the present-day Kuot-speaking area, an overhanging rock shelter, Balof 2, gives a date of 14,240 BP, and further north Panakiwuk was dated at 15,140 BP. Not very much has been published about either site (Spriggs 1997: 48).

Some development over time is shown in the archaeological record between initial settlement and Austronesian arrival. Around 20,000 years ago, the possum (Phalanger orientalis) and wallaby (Thylogale browni) and probably a rat (Rattus praetor) were introduced from New Guinea, the profile of species in shell middens changes, and the Canarium nut tree (Tok Pisin ‘galip’) was introduced. Obsidian (a volcanic glass-like stone that can produce very sharp edges when flaked) from New Britain circulated in the area, indicating the existence of trade routes. Manus and New Ireland were not in contact during this period, as evidenced by the distribution of introduced animals and the absence of Manus obsidian during this time, so any links to the New Guinea mainland would have been via New Britain.

It has been argued that agriculture was introduced into island Melanesia by the Austronesian arrivals (although independent early development of agriculture is attested for New Guinea island; e.g. Kirch (2000: 79–80)). There is evidence of pre-Austronesian arboriculture, the cultivation of trees such as Canarium, coconut, pandanus and others, but it remains unclear at present whether root crops such as taro were also cultivated (Kirch 2000: 80–82). In this part of the world, there is not necessarily a very sharp threshold between hunting and gathering and agriculture. Hunter-gatherers in all parts of the world engage in some crop-enhancing activities, encouraging the growth of particular plants by clearing, or replanting seeds in convenient locations, thereby also potentially causing genetic selection of plants with particular features. It should also be noted in this context that the kind of agriculture practiced in New Ireland is of the type known as swidden horticulture (or slash-and-burn), whereby an area is felled, left for regrowth to develop, burnt, planted, tended and harvested. At any time, several such areas are maintained, each at a different stage of the cycle, and the long fallow periods make for low population density. The climate allows for harvesting going on all year round. Crops are supplemented in some degree by gathering of wild nuts and vegetable leaves and the like. It is not difficult to imagine some fluidity in the proportions of such subsistence activities.

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4 Two coastal sites on the New Ireland mainland very close to the present-day Kuot area have been excavated: Lesu (Lossu) and Lamou, but neither gives evidence of pre-Austronesian settlement (for Lesu, see White and Downie (1980); for Lemau see White (1992); preliminary excavations have also been carried out at Pinikindu but no dates were obtained (R. B. Clay 1974); there are also other Lapita sites further from the Kuot area).

5 This is in contrast to agriculture in a temperate zone such as Europe, where a reliance on cultivated crops for staple foods entails long-term storage of food and seed, and where soil types allow near-constant cultivation and therefore significantly higher population densities. This type of agriculture involves a much sharper break with non-
2.3 History

The New Guinea area was sighted a number of times by various seafarers, but New Ireland, New Hanover (Lavongai) and New Britain were thought to be one single landmass with New Guinea until 1700 when Dampier discovered the passage between New Britain and New Guinea now known as Dampier Strait (Norris 1994). He named the islands to his east Nova Britannia (New Britain), still thinking they were one. In 1767, Carteret noticed that New Ireland and New Hanover were separate from each other and from New Britain, and gave them their present names (or rather Nova Hibernia and New Hanover). He seems to have been the first explorer to sail along the west coast of New Ireland, but did not land between Lamassa Bay and Dyaul.

Other explorers followed, and during the second half of the 19th century, traffic increased in the area, with traders of many nationalities, missionaries, planters of coconuts for copra, prospectors for gold, and so forth. There was also a trade in native labour, known as blackbirding, for plantations in distant places such as Queensland, Fiji and Samoa. New Ireland was one major source of such labour. Something of a race ensued as different nations rushed to claim some of the territory for themselves. In 1884, Germany claimed approximately the northeastern quarter of New Guinea island, along with the Bismarck archipelago as far as Bougainville island (changing the name of New Ireland to Neu-Mecklenburg). The German government initially gave the trading company agricultural subsistence, in terms of settlement patterns, and of culture. Spriggs (1997: 31ff, 61ff and various places) has a similar argumentation. He draws a line between horticultural activities on the one hand, and agriculture on the other, where the latter impacts on the surrounding habitat to a point where naturally occurring resources are seriously depleted (p. 31). Presumably, the degree to which such impact is so destructive that it precludes further reliance on “bush food” as a primary source of livelihood must be bound up crucially with population density.

6 Presumably after the House of Hanover, the lineage of King George III who ruled England at the time.


8 Strauch remarks in 1875 of the natives of Lamassa in the south of New Ireland that they were clearly used to ships and that some of them even spoke English; this was a popular watering point already for early explorers (known e.g. as Carteret Bay and Port Sulphur). Although such familiarity with white sailors was clearly an exception, it seems likely that most people would at least have seen ships from a distance and perhaps some of their trade goods, and heard stories of the people on board those ships, and gradually themselves interact with the newcomers. From the same travels Strauch also records that the natives of the northern Madak-speaking area brought masks to sell on sighting the ship (Strauch 1877: 90). By 1909 Krämer-Bannow reports with surprise that the children of Konogogo on the west coast had never seen a white woman before she arrived there (Krämer-Bannow 1916: 169).

9 The south-eastern quarter of New Guinea was claimed by Britain, and the western half of New Guinea island was part of the Dutch East Indies. The northern parts of the Solomon Islands were initially claimed by Germany but gradually given over to Brit-
Neu-Guinea-Compagnie the task of administering the new colony, but later took over control and established government stations.

Early sources give a picture of endemic warfare between rival groups of natives, and of rampant cannibalism.10 The archaeological record shows that cannibalism was common in the area for a very long time, but it appears that the massive scale of warfare may have been an indirect result of white contact. The brief visits of the earliest explorers had led to the spread of diseases to which there was no resistance among local people, who died in large numbers; this in turn would have fired up accusations of witchcraft between different groups, with warring as a result (Spriggs 1997: 260).

The administration, the traders, and the missionaries all set about pacification, each in their own fashion, some of which involved demonstrations of the power of firearms. The German administrative centre moved from the north coast of New Guinea to New Britain around 1890, first to Kokopo (Herbertshöhe), and on to Rabaul (Simpsonhafen) in 1910. The territory had a governor from 1896–1914, named Albert Hahl, who was surprisingly pro-native given his time and his task. He endeavoured to make the natives trust and want the administration (mainly because this would make it so much more effective), stuck to his deals, and had no particular wish to suppress traditional customs or beliefs as long as peace was kept and there was no cannibalism. From his memoirs (Hahl 1980 [1937]), it is clear that the population welcomed the abolition of warfare, in that it gave them very much increased mobility and probably also because it encouraged traders and their goods, although they clearly did not appreciate all aspects of European dominance.

Several exploration expeditions were launched, in particular the Deutsche Marine-Expedition 1907–1909, the Hanseatische Südsee-Expedition in 1908, and...
the Hamburger Südsee-Expedition in 1908–1910, whose purpose was to document as much as possible about the region and its people.

The first government station in New Ireland (then Neu-Mecklenburg) was established in 1900 on the island of Nusa, and moved across the harbour to the present site of Kavieng (Käwieng) a few years later. Franz Boluminski was in charge and had a road built down the east coast. It has since been extended, is still called the Boluminski Highway, and remains one of the best roads in Papua New Guinea. Villagers along the coast were required to build and maintain sections of the road. Although traders, planters and missionaries had been present in various locations before then, the road meant that the villagers along it were in more constant contact with Western influences than people elsewhere, except for the west coast across from Kokopo/Rabaul which had quite a few Chinese traders and some missions.

In 1914, the first world war broke out in Europe, and Germany was ousted from the New Guinea territory. German property was expropriated and German missionaries deported. Because of the war, there was hardly any white presence left in New Ireland, and hence no written records, when el Niño caused a serious drought in 1914. Chinnery ([1930?]: 45) summarises natives’ descriptions of a situation of severe famine with great loss of life and dispersal of people, and writes: “…there was practically no food procurable. The period of drought and famine culminated in a series of destructive bush fires along the whole line of coast, bush and mountain ranges, and, from the descriptions given to me, everything perished – wallabies, in fact, have scarcely been seen since.” It seems likely that similar events in the past have constituted repeated bottleneck events for human and animal populations alike.11

After the war Australia administered New Guinea as a mandated territory from 1921–1942, with Rabaul as headquarters. In 1942, Japan invaded Rabaul and the rest of the territory. The time of the Japanese occupation was very hard on the natives in many areas.12

At the end of the second world war in 1945, almost all documentation from both the German and the Australian administrations was found to have been de-

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11 In an online text providing background information to the occurrence of el Niño in Papua New Guinea in 1997, Bryant Allen writes: “In historical times, severe droughts have occurred in PNG in 1885, 1896, 1902, 1910, 1914, 1940-41, 1955-56, 1961, 1965, 1972, 1982, 1987 and now again in 1997. These droughts are reported in the colonial and mission literature as being associated with forest fires, ‘scarcity of food’, ‘semi-starvation’ and in isolated places ‘famine’. In 1914 it is believed that New Ireland was particularly badly affected, with many deaths occurring as a result.” (http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/PNG/htmls/ELNINO97.html, 20 April 2002)

12 An accessible account of the occupation in New Ireland from the point of view of the Australian plantation owner and business man Harry Murray is given in Murray (1995 [1967], 1995 [1965]; written by his wife).
stroyed. After the war there was a provisional administration until 1949, when present-day Papua New Guinea was combined into the single administrative unit of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, which remained in place until independence in September 1975. The Australians continued to carry out patrols, took censuses, tried to improve housing and crops and wrote reports. These were kept in Australia, but were returned to Papua New Guinea following independence.

2.3.1 Abandoning the mountains
Some time during the German period, inland settlements started being depopulated or even abandoned, their inhabitants taking up residence in existing coastal villages or establishing new ones. It is often suggested that this movement was forced by the German administration. I have not come across any official statement of such a policy. This does not mean that it did not exist, but it is difficult to see why a colonial power would want large tracts of the area to be uninhabited, except perhaps to have access to labour for plantations. Further, if the administration had really made up its mind to have everyone on the coast, one would expect the process to have been much quicker.

Instead, the relocation seems to have been a gradual affair, terminating some time after 1930. Acting District officer I.F.G. Down’s cover letter to patrol report No. 14 of 1949/50 mentions mountain peoples moving down between 1910 and 1930, i.e. well into the Australian administration. This tallies with the evidence of the oldest lady in Bimun, the only person still alive who was born in the old village in the mountains. She says that she was old enough to walk, but had to be carried for parts of the descent. She further said that she was about the age of a young woman who I estimated to be 18, when the second world war came to the Pacific in 1942. Roughly then, she would have been born in 1924 and perhaps three years old when the mountain village was finally abandoned, which means this would have happened around 1927. Powdermaker, writing of Nochi-speaking Lesu in 1929–1930 mentions bush villages, which are fairly certain to have been Kuot villages (Powdermaker 1971 [1933]), and says that most of the inhabitants had moved to the coast but that some still remained in

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13 An investigation in 1946 reported that “enquiries in New Britain and New Ireland revealed that the only property of the Civil Administration found since reoccupation were some library books in Rabaul. No other official documents were found.” (Hilary Rowell: Appendix 4 “A history of the PNG records” in Research Guide 4: Papua New Guinea Records 1883–1942, Microfilm collections, note 14; online publication by the National Archives of Australia (http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research_guides/guides/png/appendix4.htm, 20 April 2002)).

14 The records were photographed and are kept on microfiche in the National Archives of Australia, together with what remains of earlier documentation.

15 E.g. Capell 1971: 264. Spriggs also refers to the “colonial practices of forcing inland populations to move down to coastal areas where they could be more easily controlled” (Spriggs 1997: 263).
the hills. The government anthropologist Chinnery, travelling through the island in 1929 also visited a number of bush villages (Chinnery [1930?]).

By this time, the population was quite dependent on metal tools, and had also taken up wearing clothes. Contributing reasons for the move were probably better access to trade goods and employment possibilities at the plantations, and perhaps some measure of health care.

I also recorded an elder in Bimun giving the reasons for the move, and according to him the people had had enough of having to walk down to the coast at night a few times a year when the government patrol officer (‘kiap’) came by to take the census. The kiap would send a native police officer into the hills and summon the inhabitants to the coast. The bigmen of several villages in the mountains eventually got together and decided to give up the old site. The land for the new village of Bimun was bought from the neighbouring Madak clan Panus with whom trading and warring had variously been kept up in the past. To the best of my knowledge, Bimun is the only village on the west coast that was established in a new location at that time; on the east coast there were previously no Kuot villages so all those that are not mixed were founded then. Some families or groups of families will have taken up residence in already established locations on both coasts.

2.3.2 Population decline and increase

The German administrators and researchers soon noticed a population decline, and this remained a worry through decades of Australian administration, and occasioned several anthropological investigations. Many different explanations were advanced: too large a part of the fertile population (especially men) were away to work on plantations in other countries; mission-induced fears of having children out of wedlock led to frequent use of abortive herbs; mission-introduced bans on divorce and remarriage meant that unhappy unions could not be dissolved and happier ones formed; there was disease (especially among former mountain dwellers); and over and above all a general apathy among the population. Chinnery, summing up the evidence, adds as a cause for apathy the banning of promiscuous sexual unions, in particular those associated with the traditional nightly dances (bot), and he sympathetically quotes an elder complaining that the Missions tells married people that they must have more children, and asking how there can be children without sex life – there is no romance and adventure anymore, the young people feel shame and have no desire.17

16 Meyer (1932: 196) gives the total population of New Ireland and offshore islands as 44,600, 5,900 of whom were away working; i.e., some 13%, most of whom would be men of reproductive age. Blackbirding had been abolished since a few decades by then, but contract labour schemes still existed.

17 Parkinson (1999 [1907]: 120) makes the more general observation that “the South Sea tribes possess a certain weariness of life that robs them of the energy essential for living”. Acting District Officer Down’s short cover letter cited above also says, not without exasperation, of the former mountain people: “They do not swim, do not make canoes. They refuse to go back to the hills.”
Today the trend seems to have been turned, and fears of overpopulation are developing instead. The density of population is not high in absolute terms, but slash-and-burn agriculture requires a plot to lie fallow for 15–20 years for the bush to grow back, meaning that a rather large tract can only support a rather small number of people. The fallow periods are being shortened to 12 and 15 years in some areas, resulting in smaller yields.

Rural New Irelanders today live in a mixed economy with cash income mainly from cash crops such as copra, and quite a large component of subsistence farming. They own the land on which they live and from which they make their livelihood, and there is a large measure of self-determination in day-to-day activities. Food supplies appear to be sufficient and quite well balanced (cf. 2.8 below). People have access to schooling and health care, although these and other areas of infrastructure do leave some scope for improvement.

2.4 Ethnographic background and linguistic contact

Although the first white contact was relatively recent in New Ireland, it is hard to get a reliable picture of pre-contact life.\textsuperscript{18} Christianisation and pacification have had a large impact on the life and stated values of the Kuots. While speakers will not hesitate to tell you that their grandfathers were cannibals, pre-Christian life and many of the customs and traditions associated with it are regarded as bad today. The majority of the population are now devout Christians, former times are not much talked about, and many people have rather hazy ideas of what it was like. Most major rites, such as the malagan traditions for which central New Ireland is known (see 2.7.1 below), are gone today, as are most kinds of magic concerned with influencing the environment, like magic to make gardens grow (in particular taro gardens for ritual occasions), magic for hunting and fishing, rain magic and so forth. Other traditions are still carried out, such as the payment of bride price and a mourning period for the dead and burning of their personal belongings. There is also a widespread belief in sorcery, and a few people still have divination skills and knowledge of spells and counter-spells.

Some of these things will be described in a little more detail further on in this chapter, but first it will be useful to look at the basics of the social structure.

No anthropologist has made a long-term study of the Kuot, but some idea can be gained from sources on neighbouring peoples. The most relevant anthropo-

\textsuperscript{18} Even a hundred years ago, aspects of Western material culture had penetrated quite far. Parkinson (1999 [1907]) writes that “[t]here are still, as much on New Britain as on New Ireland and Bougainville, tribes of whose language we do not know a single word, with whom we have never come into contact.” (p. xxxiii). Nonetheless, quite substantial changes had already taken place, as shown in the following observation from New Ireland: “[t]he stone axe has now completely disappeared and it is difficult to obtain blades” (p. 128). On the following pages he comments on the simplification of personal and artefact ornamentation stemming at least in part from the change in tools.
logical work from this area is by Hortense Powdermaker (Powdermaker 1971 [1933]), who did fieldwork in Nochi-speaking Lesu (Lossu) village on the east coast in 1929–1930. It appears that Kuot speakers had quite close contacts with Nochi speakers, and Powdermaker reports marriages between Lesu people and people from “bush villages”. There are also a number of lexical items shared between the two languages, and it appears that the Kuots have borrowed at least one entire ritual, namely that of girimisi, which is held to celebrate a woman’s first pregnancy. Given the readiness with which dances, songs and other cultural items are borrowed between groups according to Powdermaker, it is likely that there are many more things shared between Nochi and Kuot, and it seems to me that her account of the Nochi matches in most major aspects with what I have been able to glean on Kuot traditional life. It is also the case that Nochi villages separated the Kuots from the east coast, and it is highly probable that frequent swapping markets took place between the two populations occupying the different niches (see also 2.8 below).

In more recent times, work has been carried out with the Madak speakers of Pinikindu (B. J. Clay 1977, 1986), and the Madak-speaking people of the Lelet plateau (Eves 1998). Pinikindu is closer to the Kuot area than Lelet, but Lelet is interesting because its four villages are the only remaining mountain settlements in New Ireland. Unfortunately there is no space here to compare these analyses with my Kuot data. It would be interesting to do so, as there is evidence of contact between Madak and Kuot speakers going back quite some time. For instance, an elderly lady named Galeng grew up in Konos on the Madak-speaking east coast, and through kin contacts between Bimun and Konos her marriage to a Bimun man was arranged (probably around 1960). Her clan is a Kuot clan, Napagur, whose ancestral clan land is in Kun in the northern Kuot area. The multiple kin ties between these villages may be a recent development, but it should be noted that they are presently on both coasts and that Konos was previously a mountain village, as was Bimun (then Taula). Konobin was another Madak village in the mountains with which there seems to have been contacts (after moving to the coast its name changed to Sominim).

Ties with Nalik speakers to the north are also indicated by shared clans in the border regions. Jenny Xomerang of Nalik-speaking Madina village on the east coast told me that in her childhood in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s her late father, an important leader called Michael a Xomerang, sometimes met with Kuot leaders on the west coast, with whom he had kin ties, for ceremonial purposes, and that the Madina bigmen used to know some Kuot. There is further an oral tradition among the Nalik, to the effect that they originated further north, but displaced and assimilated the Kuot speakers. It is worth quoting Volker’s two paragraphs on the topic here:

Oral history states that the ancestors of the Naliks came from northern New Ireland, either Kavieng or Lavongai (New Hanover), moving ‘up’ towards central and southern New Ireland, and that as they moved, they encountered, and to some extent assimilated, the indigenous Kuots (a vun a bina, literally ‘the essence of the land’) of the interior, (p.c. Matthias Tovat and Maimai Michael a Xomerang). Legend relates that as these northern New Ireland groups moved,
they fell under the spell of the spirits (Tok Pisin *masalai*) of the different areas which they settled, so that their speech separated into the related, but different languages of northern New Ireland today.

Oral history also relates that originally most Naliks lived near Laefu, but as a result of the breaking of a customary incest taboo, there was civil war and division between different groups. This resulted in different groups moving out into new areas and assimilating the original Kuots through intermarriage. Even today the relatively small Laefu dialect is regarded as the oldest, if not most prestigious, dialect of Nalik (Volker 1998: 20).

This account is reconcilable with the fact that Kuots trace their ancestry to Kun in the north of their territory. Kuot shares quite a few items of general vocabulary with Nalik to the north and Nochi on the east coast, but hardly any with Madak to the south. This would indicate that ties were primarily to the north and east. But, intriguingly, there is more shared kinship terminology with Madak than with the other languages (see 2.6.2 below), suggesting intermarriage with Madak speakers. It is possible that the shared kin terminology represents a later development.

Nalik is part of a language network extending to the north, and Madak is part of a group to the south Ross (1994: 554). Nochi is believed to be a later arrival in the area as it is closely related to the language of the Tabar Islands, and because it does not share most of the areal phonological features (cf. 3.10). There is thus reason to believe that linguistic contact with speakers of Nalik and the Madak languages extends further back in time. On the other hand, contact with Nochi speakers may have been more intense as the populations occupied different niches on the east coast and would have been engaged in trade relations.

It is very difficult to say what the levels of interaction may have been in the past (and they may well have fluctuated over the centuries). If there was very intense contact, we might perhaps expect Kuot to be heavily influenced by neighbouring languages. We do find a fair amount of loan words but there is remarkably little structural similarity. However, many factors weigh into the actual result of a particular linguistic contact situation, such as the levels and extent of bilingualism, and the degree of confluence between linguistic boundaries and intergroup perceptions of cultural sameness or difference (see also 2.7.5 below).

More recently, Tok Pisin has spread through the area, and its influence is growing. Maps 49 and 50 in Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon (1996), detail the spread of Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea, and show sporadic contact with Tok Pisin along the east coast and off-shore islands pre-1880. In most of the rest of the island, it is marked as having spread in the period 1920–1940.

2.5 Social organisation

Kuot society has very little inherent hierarchy, working largely on the same principles as societies described as ‘bigman’ societies elsewhere in Papua New Guinea and Melanesia. Such societies are characterized by the absence of royal or chiefly lineages with hereditary power. At any one time there is normally more than one bigman. A bigman comes into a leadership position through per-
sonal characteristics, such as wisdom in decisions as perceived by others, the ability to create and maintain relationships through distribution and exchange of wealth, and proving himself capable of organising ceremonial events. Once a leader, others follow his word but also expect to be looked after by him. We could say that prestige is gained by considered deployment of wealth, rather than its accumulation.19

The dominant units of social organisation are the clan and the village. There are always several clans in a village, and the concepts of clan and village are interlinked since all land is clan-owned. Clans own different sections of the land on which a village is built, and each clan also has sections of gardening land in the bush. Yet, determining to which village a person belongs is complex. This is because primary access to land is mediated through matrilineal descent, while post-marital settlement is virilocal (patrilocal). If a woman grows up on her own clan’s land, she is thus likely to move away on marriage, and her children will grow up on their father’s clan’s land, to which they have only secondary rights. Quite often, a person identifies both with the village where they grew up, and the village where their clan land is, and will give either as their place of origin (see also 2.7.5 below). Sometimes, of course, a person grows up on their own clan land or on another clan’s land in the same village, in which case the conflict does not arise.

The virilocal settlement pattern gives a different social structure to the village from the uxorilocal pattern described by Powdermaker for Nochi-speaking Lesu. In the Nochi case, there is in principle a lineage of women residing in the same area for generations, and men moving in on marriage. In the Kuot case, it gets more complicated, as there is no corresponding constant male kin group over the generations. The complexities resulting from the combination of virilocal settlement with land rights transmitted in the female line, and the responses in terms of actual settlement relative to the stated principle were not investigated but may make an interesting topic for an anthropological study.

In former times, all villages had men’s houses, which were also important social units (see 2.9 below).

The household, normally each consisting of one nuclear family, is the smallest unit of social organisation.

19 There was little durable wealth in the past. As far as I can make out, the only wealth was shell money (Kuot tanop, Tok Pisin ‘mis’), which in New Ireland are thin strands of tiny shell discs threaded onto a line, about 1.50m long, and magic spells and formulae of various kinds, and to an extent perhaps also living nut and fruit trees. All of these were inheritable either through mother’s brother or own father, so in that sense there was some hereditary basis for wealth, but a person’s position would still have to be consolidated through his actions. (Shell money would probably be obtained in other ways more often, its main use being in transactions between clans, as well as fines for breaking taboos, and payment for spells etc. Spells could thus be bought and sold, and constituted an asset also in that people would pay to have a spell performed.)
2.6 Kinship

Both the structure of kinship itself and the way in which it structures social interaction are different in New Ireland from what Western readers are likely to be familiar with. The structure of kin terminology is also quite different.

2.6.1 The structure of kinship

Kinship is matrilineal in all of New Ireland. That means that you belong to the same clan (butamat) as your mother, and since clans are by definition exogamous, your father is necessarily of a different clan. In all of Melanesia, matrilinearity is associated with areas of Austronesian settlement, i.e. coastal and island areas, while inland New Guinea is dominated by patrilineal descent reckoning. It is interesting to note that while Kuot speakers and their neighbours share the matrilineal kin system, Kuot differs from Nochi and Madak speakers in having preferred virilocal settlement upon marriage (I have no corresponding information on Nalik). The term for clansman or clanswoman is pǝǝnǝ (cf. 5.7.3).

In most of New Ireland, from the Nalik area and southwards, including the Kuot-speaking area, the clans are in turn grouped into two moieties which are also exogamous. That is, a person must choose a spouse not only from a different clan but from a clan of the other moiety. There is no word in Kuot corresponding to ‘moiety’, but the two moieties are referred to as ‘the big clan’ (butamat u-lǝ kan-u) and ‘the little clan’ (butamat u-lǝ kapp-io), respectively. The terms referring to size are simply conventional appellations, and do not bear any relation to actual size in membership or relative importance.

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20 The exception to the rule of matrilinearity is found in some patrilineal areas in the Solomon Islands, see e.g. Codrington (1969 [1891]: 22), who reports it with a great amount of bafflement.

21 Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) makes clear in several places that the Lesu people (Nochi) have uxorilocal (matrilocal) settlement upon marriage. Writing about the Madak (Mandak) in Pinikindu, Clay (1977: 21–22) says there is no stated residence rule, although couples would often prefer to live in the woman’s hamlet for a few years, and that it is almost impossible for a man to achieve a position of authority anywhere but in the village of his own clan or sub clan so the couple often move to the husband’s village at a later stage. It is not clear whether the virilocal preference of the Kuots can be taken as an indication that there was a patrilineal system of descent reckoning in pre-Austronesian times.

22 Another way of putting it is to say that butamat is ambiguous between ‘clan’ and ‘moiety’. The fact that there is no term for an important unit like moiety could be an indication that the Kuot speakers did not have this organisational unit in the past.

23 Moiety names to do with size are probably present elsewhere on the island as well, as the Tok Pisin names for the two moieties are ‘bikpisin’ (big bird) and ‘liklik pisin’ (little bird); on the other hand this could be because of the association with the eagle and fish hawk (see below).
As in other areas in New Ireland that have moieties, they are associated with the
eagle (kɔkkɔŋ) and fish hawk (laragam) respectively. However, these terms
are not the names of the moieties, nor could you refer to a person of ‘the little
clan’ as a “fish hawk”. It is not clear to me what role these symbols may have
had among the Kuots; it could be that they were used in traditional malagan
carvings (see 2.7.12.7). The moieties of the Kuots’ immediate neighbours
(Madak, Nalik and Nochi speakers) are perceived as being the same so that a
person marrying in from those areas must follow the moiety lines, while some-
one from further afield simply gets associated with the opposite moiety from
that of their intended spouse.

The moiety is the largest unit that an individual can call upon for help, for in-
stance in collecting wealth to pay bride price (see 2.7.1 below). These are occa-
sions which typically serve to show the strength of the moiety. The moiety is
also the largest unit within which extension of kinship terms operates (see fur-
ther 2.6.3 below).

To return to clans, first, the clan is the unit where extension of kinship terms is
automatic (see 2.6.3). There is also a measure of equivalence between members
of a clan, in that revenge for ill-doing could be taken out on the ill-doer or one
of his clansmen or clanswomen. In the past, if bigmen meted out punishment
for crimes against taboos etc., this too could be paid by anyone in the clan –
even if the punishment was death (see further 2.7.1 below).

It is also the case that some clans within the moiety have closer associations
with each other than others, and are perceived as being more closely related.

All of the higher-level clans trace their origins to the grounds near the former
bush village Kun in the northern Kuot-speaking area (near present-day Liedan
on the East Coast). They each have a small piece of ancestral land there, and it
appears that there is frequently an association with snakes, that (at least in some
cases) dwell in a hole on the clan land. Bimun is far from this area and on the
other coast, and it was difficult to get a clear idea of the import of this informa-
tion, as most people have not visited their clan land and young people do not
have a good idea of its former ritual or cultural significance. I was able to col-
lect only two myths of clan origins, for two different clans, both of which in-
volved a woman finding the female child of a snake and rearing it, and the child
then starting a new clan or subclan.

\footnote{The eagle moiety is called *kong kong* in Nochi, clearly related, but the hawk is
called *telenga*.}

\footnote{Powdermaker shows many Nochi clans having associations with snakes too
(Powdermaker 1971 [1933]: 36–39). She was able to record only one story indicating
descent from a clan animal; this in fact concerns a Kuot clan called Kaba, and appears
to be one of the ones I also recorded (p. 39).}
The clans divide into subclans (*ima*). Each clan and subclan has associations with particular land areas, and it appears that a new subclan is formed when a woman settles in a new area and her female descendants carry on the lineage. The name of the area is the name of the subclan. The establishment of subclans does not entail snakes or other non-human creatures (the text Boilei in the text appendix gives the story of the establishment of the subclan Boilei).

With the higher-level clans all having their ancestral ground in the bush around Kun, and branchings of clans being associated with the occupation of new territory, it seems that it should be possible to lay out a tree diagram of clan relatedness on the landscape and trace the dispersal of the Kuot people towards the south.

While clan and moiety membership are inflexible, in the sense that you are born into them and belong to them forever, other aspects of kinship can be manipulated to an extent. Two factors are at play: first, the Kuots do not keep track of genealogies going back more than a few generations, and second, in this small-scale society, any person is highly likely to have multiple kin ties to any other person, which can be stressed at different times.

The point about genealogies deserves elaboration. Access to resources is through clan membership; for instance the primary model for land ownership is that it is owned jointly by the matriclan. As clan membership is not contestable, and as long as there is consensus as to what areas of land belong to what clan, there is no need to “prove” your birthright through tracing your exact relationship to the initial settler of that land. Naturally, if there is disagreement about the rights to land, some proof needs to be presented, but it appears that this is in the form of stories detailing the settling of that land by ancestors. No such disputes occurred while I was there (probably since the land around Bimun has been cultivated by the Kuots for several generations and it is clear whose land is whose).

At any one time, at least one woman in each clan must bear the name of the clan (but not always of subclans as far as I am aware). I was not able to get any ideas around reasons for this. Most people have more than one name, and the woman bearing the clan name is sometimes known by that name, and sometimes by another name.

Clans or subclans facing extinction traditionally sometimes adopted a female child from another lineage so as to regrow the threatened branch. Adopting someone into a clan is a ceremonial event sometimes also performed for some-

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26 This word also means ‘river’, of the flat slow type of river found on the east coast rather than the cascading variety of the west coast which is called by the general term for ‘river’, *danuot*.

27 One elderly speaker expressed worries about the loss of stories in that they would not know what lands they had rights to e.g. if a forestry company would want to fell timber in the mountains. Normally, money would go to the owner clan jointly, but establishing ownership in lesser-used areas could be problematic today.
one marrying into the community from far away (for instance a Sepik woman married in Bimun was taken up into a Bimun clan) and involves the exchange of shell money.

Adoption is quite common also in the sense that a relative might take over a child, often just because they like that child, if the child and the parents agree. There is no formal ceremony marking long-term or permanent change of primary caretaker, and the birth parents remain recognized as such. Interestingly, there is a verb *-paraŋe*, which means either giving birth or taking care of a child in the long term. It is also common for a child to go and live with relatives for a short while, but this is perceived as different and is not covered by *-paraŋe*.

### 2.6.2 Kinship terminology

The kin terminology is also structured differently from what we are used to. In a European system, the term applied to a person is typically determined by that person’s gender, and it is typically unidirectional, so that your uncle does not call you ‘uncle’. Although a few kin terms in Kuot do have those properties, the majority are reciprocal, and many are not gendered. If we imagine a tree diagram of the kinship structure, we may say that the Kuot terms typically apply to the connecting lines, rather than to nodes. A single term applies to the relation as such, e.g. *tata* ‘maternal uncle – sister’s child’. A further difference comes from the unilaterality of kinship reckoning, so that for instance a maternal aunt and a paternal aunt are called by different terms and have very different roles. See also the kinship diagrams in Appendix IV.

Table 1 lists kin terms which are not reciprocal. I am not aware of any non-reciprocal terms for relations acquired through marriage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuot</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>moiety</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>naga</em></td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>m/f → f</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>cf <em>kakka</em> ‘mum’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ira</em></td>
<td>father</td>
<td>m → m/f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>cf <em>mama, mamo, momo</em> ‘dad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lou</em></td>
<td>man’s sister</td>
<td>m → f</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>cf <em>pappa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>talou</em></td>
<td>man’s sister’s child</td>
<td>m → f/m</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>cf <em>tata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>poi, pe</em></td>
<td>son or daughter</td>
<td>any combination</td>
<td>s/d</td>
<td>(diff. moiety from father)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the most important reciprocal terms are shown in Table 2, divided into consanguineal (by blood) and affinal (by marriage) reciprocal terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuot</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>moiety</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kakka</em></td>
<td>mum</td>
<td>m/f → f, f → m/f</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>limited reciprocity, see below; cf also <em>naga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mama, mamo, momo</em></td>
<td>dad</td>
<td>m/f → m, m → m/f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>limited reciprocity, see below; cf also <em>ira</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Topics in the Grammar of Kuot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender Variations</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>tata</strong></td>
<td>mat. uncle</td>
<td>m/f→m, m→m/f</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>the older member of the relation can use talou to/of the younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nabar</strong></td>
<td>pat. aunt; also wife of tata</td>
<td>m/f→f, f→m/f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>joking relationship (esp for male nephew)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pappa</strong></td>
<td>sibling</td>
<td>f→f, f→m</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>cf lou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>kokup</strong></td>
<td>same-sex cross-cousin</td>
<td>m–m, f–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>joking relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>kokole</strong></td>
<td>diff.-sex cross-cousin</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>strong taboo, address used to be in plural; also man’s mother-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)aia, (i)eia</td>
<td>grand-relation</td>
<td>any combination</td>
<td>s/d</td>
<td>also siblings of grandparents, also great grandchildren; also woman’s parents-in-law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Affinal, Female Ego**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender Variations</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>lai</strong></td>
<td>husband</td>
<td>f→m</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)aia, (i)eia</td>
<td>h’s parents</td>
<td>m/f→f, f→m/f</td>
<td>s/d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>papa</strong></td>
<td>h’s brother</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>louaga</strong></td>
<td>h’s brother’s wife; h’s father’s sister, h’s mother’s brother’s wife, h’s sister’s son’s wife</td>
<td>f–f</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>~other woman who has married close male relative of my husband (his brother, or tata; see notes about nabar in 2.6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nemula</strong></td>
<td>h’s sister</td>
<td>f–f</td>
<td>same(d)</td>
<td>also wife of h’s same-sex cross-cousin. Address: makapien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(lei)mason</strong></td>
<td>h’s mother’s brother</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>big taboo (Bimun)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Affinal, Male Ego**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender Variations</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>kuala</strong></td>
<td>wife</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>kokole</strong></td>
<td>w’s mother</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>big taboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>anmula</strong></td>
<td>w’s father</td>
<td>m–m</td>
<td>same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mela</strong></td>
<td>w’s brother</td>
<td>m–m</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>address: makapien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>papa</strong></td>
<td>w’s sister</td>
<td>m–f</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>luop</strong></td>
<td>w’s sister’s husband</td>
<td>m–m</td>
<td>same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tinɔmai</strong></td>
<td>w’s mother’s brother</td>
<td>m–m</td>
<td>diff</td>
<td>also (own) sister’s daughter’s husband; “tata-in-law”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The terms *kakka* ‘mum’ and *mama* (etc.) ‘dad’ (but not *naga* ‘mother’ and *ira* ‘father’) have a degree of reciprocity in that parents sometimes use them to their children. This happens when cuddling the child or speaking nicely to it. It is also used to children through extension of terms, e.g. children of same-sex siblings. It is not considered acceptable to order these around with full parental authority, so a request for the child to go and get something would be spoken...
quite softly (e.g. ‘kakka, go and ask tata John for a betel nut for me and bring it here’). You do not get the reciprocal use in scolding (‘how many times have I told you to go get water!’?). A child never uses poi ‘child’ to a parent.\(^{28}\)

A point to be drawn from the reciprocal use of kakka is that the presence of a reciprocal kin term does not mean that there is a reciprocal kin relation: there is no question of a child having authority over a parent. Some other relations which are asymmetrical in spite of full reciprocity of terms are mentioned in 2.6.4 below.

Both in male and female terms for parents-in-law, there is a collapse with consanguineal terms. For the male, this is kokole ‘mother-in-law/female cross-cousin’, and for the female it is aia ‘parent-in-law/grand-relation’. The explanation would seem to be that traditionally, the preferred marriage for a male was with the daughter of his cross-cousin. His cross-cousin would then be his mother-in-law, and his parents would be of his wife’s grandparents’ generation. This principle was never actually stated to me in spite of efforts to establish principles of betrothal and marriage, but Chung (n.d.) mentions it, and Powdermaker (1971 [1933]: 147) does the same for the Nochi. (Cf. also remarks on marriage in 2.7.12.7 below.)

It should also be noted that the terms used for many relationships mediated by marriage depend on what relation existed between the two parties before the marriage, in particular perhaps within ego’s own moiety. In these situations speakers sometimes have a choice of terms, and different speakers choose differently, with a tendency to follow the marriage-based terms for close kin of the spouse, and the pre-marriage terms in other cases.

Some terms are best defined via other terms. For example, leinasoŋ is the wife of tata, and this specification does not take into account whether the tata in question is nephew or uncle to ego.

Many of the reciprocal terms have special dual and plural forms used for third person reference. The special duals and plurals contrast with regular duals and plurals (non-singulars), in that the special forms refer to pairs or groups of individuals connected to each other by the kin term, while the regular forms refer to pairs or groups connected to an anchor\(^ {29}\) who is not part of the group referred to. See 5.4.1 for the terms and forms.

The principles of the Kuot kin system become very much clearer when attention is paid to the moiety of each of the persons; the moieties are represented in different types of lines in Appendix IV. However, several terms are not limited to the same or to the opposite moiety from that of ego. This is not so surprising in the case of ‘grand-relation’; it seems to denote a relation two or more genera-

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\(^{28}\) This asymmetry appears to be quite common in languages where parents can use ‘mommy’ or ‘daddy’ to a child, see e.g. Rieschild (1998).

\(^{29}\) See Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001) on using “anchor” rather than “ego” when the speaker and ego are not the same.
tions distant, and can apply to persons of either sex, and also of either moiety. What is more interesting is that a few terms primarily applied to specific relations of either the same or the different moiety can be used also of persons of the other moiety from the relation that is the more central to the term (such as *nemula* in Table 2).

As mentioned, kin terminology is an area of lexical diffusion in the area, presumably as a result of intermarriage between Kuot speakers and their neighbours. I have not had access to very extensive terminologies for the other languages, but some of the shared terms I have come across are given in Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Areal kinterms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kuot</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *mama, mamo, momo*<sup>30</sup> | dad | Nalik: *mama* (Chinnery; Volker has *dama*)  
Nochi: *mom* |
| *naga (num-)*<sup>31</sup> | mother | Kara: *nang*  
Nalik: *naga, nang* (Chinnery; Volker: *naang*)  
Nochi: *nagaa*  
Madak: *naga* (’my mother’) |
| *kakka* | mum | Madak: *kaka* |
| *(i)aiha, (i)eia* | grand-relation | Nalik: *yaya*  
Nochi: *yiya* |
| *kokup* | same-sex cross-cousin | Madak: *kokup* |
| *tata* | mother’s brother; sister’s child | Madak: *tata* |
| *(lei)nason* | wife of tata | Madak: *(i)nason*  
Barok: *lenasong* |
| *kuala* | wife, old woman | Nochi: *kuala/koala* (old woman) |

It is interesting to note that there are several terms shared to the south (Madak, Barok), as other parts of the vocabulary have loans almost exclusively from Nalik to the north and Nochi on the east coast.

**2.6.3 Extension of kin terms**

As mentioned above, kin terms are automatically extended within the clan, so that mother’s sister is also ‘mother’. It follows that the children of mother’s sister (parallel cousins) are also siblings, and you may hear a mother say of her daughter that ‘she went to stay with another mother of hers’. In fact, it is more inclusive than that, so that all members of my clan and my generation are siblings, as well as the children of anyone that my mother calls ‘sister’, whatever the exact kin relation of the two women may be.

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<sup>30</sup> Similar terms are found in some Papuan languages of New Britain as well: Butam: *mamu*, Baining: *mam(òk)*, Ata: *mam-, mòm-*.  
<sup>31</sup> The special dual and plural forms for ‘mother’ use a stem *num-* which is likely to be an older form (see 5.4.1).
Father’s brother is also father, his wife is also ‘mother’ and his children are siblings too. That mother and those siblings will be of the same moiety as ego, but not necessarily of the same clan. In the next generation, the children of all the people who are ego’s same-sex siblings by birth or extension are ego’s children.

A person thus has a large array of persons called by the terms for mother, father, siblings, and children, and all other relations mediated through these, such as mother’s brother, grandparents and so forth. But there is not equivalence between e.g. the biological mother and any other person referred to by the same term. Rather, a definite core – periphery principle is at work. Although a child is fed and looked after by many people on a casual basis, he or she sleeps in the house of the biological parents, and they are the only ones that may punish the child (although if another person functions as the primary care-taker at a particular time they take over those functions too). Further, mother’s sister is more mother-like than someone who is less closely related, although here it should be said that such relations are also pragmatically influenced by actual interaction so that a more “distant” mother living close by may develop a closer relation with the child than a mother’s sister who lives far away.

The core – periphery principle can also be seen in the level of strictness with which taboos pertaining to particular relationships are observed, going from strictest at the core to less strict in the periphery. This will be discussed further in 2.6.4.

The adverb puputira (possibly related to pupup- ‘straight’) has the sense ‘actual, real’ with kin terms, and is used to distinguish core from extended relations. For instance tata aŋ puputira (mother’s.brother 3m.PossII.3s actual) means that the referent is not any brother of any mother of the person but his actual mother’s actual brother. To distinguish an actual sibling from a sibling by extension, expressions like ‘just one mother’ are also often used.

It seems clear to me that we really are looking at a system of extended terms, rather than at terms which are group appellations. That is, if they were group appellations, the definition of mother would be something like ‘a set of females of ego’s moiety, previous generation, including the one who gave birth to ego’. Given expressions like puputira and the relaxing of prescribed behaviour with “distant” instantiations of a relation, it is evident that the core relations are defining and others are extensions thereof. The definition of naga ‘mother’ is then something like ‘1. the woman who gave birth to and raised ego; 2. other women of the same generation and clan or moiety as naga’.33

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32 Mead (1934: 219–220) also argues that extension rather than classification (although she does not use the terms) is the principle behind the use of kinship terms in Manus (Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea).

33 This is just a first tentative formulation to illustrate the principle of extension; a final dictionary definition would have to include other women who may also enter the picture.
2.6.4 Kin-based prescribed behaviour

As set out above, Kuot society is non-hierarchical in structure, but that does not mean that there are no rules specifying different types of social interaction with different people; there are, and they are mostly defined by kinship.

Kuot kin relationships can be divided into three main categories, avoidance relationships, close and unrestrained relationships, and joking relationships. The system obviously deviates from those described in the standard anthropological literature on the matter, where avoidance relationships are usually contrasted with joking relationships, but without a third category explicitly described.

The strongest avoidance relations obtain between siblings of different sex, between cross-cousins of different sex, between a man and his mother-in-law, and between a woman and her husband’s maternal uncle. Close relations are the most clearly observed between siblings of the same sex, and also between e.g. a mother and her daughter. The joking relationship is found in two relations: that between a male child and his father’s sister (nabar) and that between cross-cousins of the same sex.

The types of relationships are expressed (or not expressed) in terms of behaviour such as pronouncing the name of a person, sitting (etc.) close to a person, joking with a person, touching a person’s skin and hair, and in some cases restrictions to do with a person’s property (house, clothes). Each type of relation will be characterised here, followed by a description of one of the most salient aspects of these relations, the name taboo.

Close relations are very relaxed. Children enjoy close relations with everyone for quite a number of years, and taboos and restrictions are only gradually introduced and appear not to be enforced until puberty. Close relations are same-sex sibling relations, parent – child relations, grandparent – grandchild relations and husband – wife relations; also, in the Bimun area, ego’s spouse’s same-sex sibling. When interacting, these people use each other’s names; they may sit, stand or lie much as they wish (and even fall asleep on the floor when visiting each other); they may touch each other (only within close relations will you see one looking for lice in the other’s hair) and look into each other’s eyes; they may joke with each other and speak freely on any topic; and they may share pieces of food or eat off the same plate, share betel nuts, take things from the other’s basket, etc. They may not deny the other anything asked of them (and often an item can be seen moving through the community along these lines, for instance a new cap or string bag). These interactions can be restricted if someone is nearby whose presence demands more decorous behaviour (see below).

Avoidance relations are talked about in terms of respect by speakers (the Kuot term for showing respect in this way is the class I verb gogo\(^{34}\)). In contrast to

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\(^{34}\) This word may be a loan, as it is mentioned by Parkinson (1999 [1907]: 121); there however it is given as the word for the pandanus hood that married New Ireland
the close relations just described, in e.g. a brother – sister relationship the two may not use each other’s names, touch skin or hair or pass close enough to smell each other, they should not talk together unless necessary and must never mention anything to do with sex in each other’s presence (even directed at someone else). A woman can give her brother food but they may never share the same pieces or eat off the same plate, nor share the same piece of betel nut or betel pepper. A man may not touch his sister’s clothes and must not pass under the line where she dries her washing, or indeed under anything of hers, such as her house. This part is not reciprocal; a woman can wash her brother’s clothes and can pass under things belonging to him, but may not go onto his house, nor sit on anything he has built, such as a bench. This restriction recurs for a man’s mother-in-law, female cross-cousin and mother’s brother’s wife, and it was often said in this connection that the man would have cut the wood in the forest and carried it on his shoulders. A secondary reason (so ranked by my informant on the topic) is that the man who built the house may want to walk under it. The restrictions on houses and benches (etc.) can be temporarily removed if the woman pays a little bit of money (ranging from perhaps 20 toea to a few kina), for instance if a woman is caught out by rain on her way home or for any other reason wants to use the house or, more commonly, the bench. It can also be permanently eliminated ritually if for instance a man wants to “clear the way” for his sister to go onto a house that he has built or use a bench: he will put on a feast, she will also pay some money, and a clan leader will make an announcement.

In the case of a man and his mother-in-law, which is the strongest taboo of all for a married man, they are not supposed to have any contact. A man does not enter a house where his mother-in-law is and vice versa. In a roundabout way they can sometimes take part in the same conversation, for example if some people are in a house and some sitting outside, both the son-in-law and the mother-in-law may contribute to the conversation in a general way but never address each other. A son-in-law is expected not to be loud or make any crude comments in her presence, nor to laugh. If she is outside, he should spend as little time as possible in her field of vision, and she equally avoids him in these ways. As mentioned, the mother-in-law is not to go up into a house or sit on a bench that her son-in-law has built.

A cooking house is exempt from the house taboo (possibly because it is not on posts but directly on the ground), so the older woman is able to work with her daughter in her daughter’s kitchen even if the daughter’s husband has built it.

Women used to wear in the presence of married men. The hood is no longer used, but is known in Tok Pisin as ‘karuka’ (Kuot kapot).

35 The exact significance of this expression is not quite clear. I attempted the reformulation that he had built it with his strength; this however was neither refuted nor particularly enthusiastically received.

36 The taboos to do with going onto houses is interesting as all available evidence indicates that houses were built directly on the ground in former times. It seems that the
The strongest taboo for a married woman in Bimun is that concerning her husband’s mother’s brother (his *tata*).\(^{37}\) She may not go into a house where he is, and is expected to stay away from him for example in a crowd at a feast. She will not go into a house or onto the veranda of a house that the uncle has built. The same relation applies to the wife of the uncle vis-a-vis his sister’s son; since the two men are in an uncle – nephew relationship, the wife of each has to show respect for her husband’s maternal uncle/sister’s son in this way. (Two women married to men in a *tata* relationship, however, have a close relation and can call each other sister, or *louaga*.)

Other relations, although characterised as respect relations, only show some of the features associated with the strongest avoidance relations. Thus a woman can sit down near her brother’s wife (*nemula*) and talk with her, but may not joke, or touch her hair and skin. She is not supposed to go onto the house because of her brother, but there is also the consideration that the brother’s wife might like to go under the house. This particular relationship is not fully reciprocal, in that the man’s sister can use the name of his wife, and tell her to get things etc., but not vice versa.

There are two relationships defined by *joking*, *kokup* ‘same-sex cross-cousin’ and *nabar* ‘father’s sister’. With the first, it is not ordinary kidding, but teasing and playing tricks sometimes bordering on the nasty. The victim is not allowed to be upset. Teasing is often rude, and definitely respectless (like when one woman talked to her cross-cousin about a mat the latter had made which was not very straight: “This mat is like you, little on top [meaning the head] and big down below [meaning the behind]”). A *kokup* will sometimes steal his *kokup*’s copra, representing quite a lot of work, and sell it in town for his own benefit, and there is nothing the wronged party can do (except steal something else another time).

With *nabar*, the joking is sexual, in particular of course if the nephew is male. The jokes centre around the idea that the aunt and the nephew are married. The boy calls her husband *luop*, the term used for men who have married into the same matriline as ego. When the boy grows up and is married, his *nabar* and his wife will call each other *louaga*, the term for a woman who has married a close male relative of ego’s husband, and they will joke that they are both married to him. The boy’s *nabar* gives him food, and there appears to have been a whole house taboo is essentially an extension of the bench (etc.) taboo, and that the aspect of walking under/over the other has been added to that. There is not otherwise any emphasis on relative position in the vertical dimension. When I tried to look into that aspect by asking some women about it, the only result was the information that it is not considered seemly for a woman to climb betel palms when here brother is nearby. The explanation was volunteered that he might see under her laplap.

\(^{37}\) I am told this is different moving north within the Kuot area even only as far as Patlangat, where it would be a close relationship, allowing for jokes, and the two calling each other *eia* (grand-relation). The Bimun custom appears to be shared with the Madak to the south.
category of songs used primarily for the paternal aunties to sing while carrying parcels of food to the nephew (or indeed niece); the songs were called *sopda* and their purpose was to celebrate the nephew or niece.

It is interesting that both joking relations, the *nabar* and *kokup* relations, are close-kin cross-moiety relations. They can both be said to express dangerous forces: sexuality vis-a-vis a close relative (albeit of the opposite moiety), and rudeness and stealing and so forth on levels that are not acceptable anywhere else within the system; both forces that normally have to be contained.

The behavioural requirements of these different types of relationships lead to what superficially seems like inconsistent behaviour, as an individual may vary between easy-going, subdued and rude depending on who else is present.

Breeches of taboos in the past were punished differently depending on the nature of the crime. It was always the bigmen who determined the sentence. Smaller crimes, perhaps touching a distant sister’s hair, were fined, shell money and or pigs to be given to the injured party or his or her (male) relatives. Any sexual relations within the same clan were considered serious cases of incest and were sometimes punished by death, whereby the convicted person had to commit suicide (usually by hanging; see further 2.7 for comments on death).

There are some categories of people who are largely exempt from kin-based rules. Children were mentioned above. Crazy people also cannot be expected to always follow the established rules of society, nor foreigners from faraway places such as Australia or Sweden. Modern times have also brought situations in which many rules have to be suspended, such as the crowded transports to Kavieng. This has contributed to a general weakening of the rules, which have also been undermined by the acceptance of Christianity by the population, whereby the force of much everything related to custom has been diminished. The system operates and is very salient, but the force is lesser and the only punishment of breeches that I am aware of is social disapproval (which is of course not the least of motivations in human life).

A large number of relationships stem from birth, and more are added through marriage. Even given the prescribed behaviour concomitant with particular kin relations, personality and personal preferences are of course essential to the nature of the relationship that any individual actually has with another. As mentioned, locality also factors in, so that actual relationships are built and maintained through interaction, for which the persons need to be in the same place.

### 2.6.5 Name taboos and alternative forms of address

A component common to all relationships characterized by respect is the name taboo. Two people in such a relation are not to say the each other’s name, and if a woman’s brother’s name is John, she is not to use the name John of any other man by that name either. Instead appellations such as ‘the husband of Lin’ or ‘the father of Joel’ are used. A man can refer to his sister as ‘the mother of the children’, for instance when inquiring at her homestead of her whereabouts. Even in public addresses at village meetings, the announcer will use descrip-
tions such as ‘the in-law in Okoiok’ rather than reading out the name of a taboo relative from a list.

In the community, of course everybody knows what the relationships of others are, and that makes it easier to work out who is meant (as you will know who cannot be mentioned by a speaker), but there are still frequent misunderstandings, and it is common for an interlocutor to fill in the name if it is one that they are allowed to say. Sometimes a third party is called upon to pronounce the name of ‘the auntie in Kabil’ and so forth. Taking down a genealogy tends to involve a whole group of people and a fair amount of yelling across the village so that all names can be said.

The name taboos are mostly reciprocal, and mostly cover both address and third person mention, but there are a few exceptions. A woman can say the name of her brother’s wife (both to and about her), but not vice versa. A man may only say the name of a man married to his sister when that man is out of earshot.

Other alternative forms of address or mention for people whom one is allowed to address at all are by kin term (though not all terms appear to be used in this way), physical characteristics (e.g. *piek* ‘bald person’) or other properties (e.g. *ŋoŋ* ‘crazy person’), or function. Given the extremely low degree of professional specialisation in this society, function may have come in only in fairly recent times (e.g. *komiti* for the chairman of the village council, or *pasta* for the pastor).

Nicknames also exist, and are exempt from the taboo. For instance, one man has been known as *Sikarama* ‘dry twig’ ever since he was a child because he was so skinny, and people who are not allowed to pronounce his name quite happily use the nickname.

Name taboos are not entirely defining of the nature of the relationship, in several ways. First, the core – periphery principle set out in 2.6.3 means that more respectful behaviour is accorded a “real” brother than a “distant” brother (by a woman), but the name taboo still applies to both. While a woman avoids many types of interaction with her real brother, she may be heard telling a distant brother to stop telling lies and get on with the job, in direct address. Second, names are avoided (but not taboo) in several relationships which are not avoidance relationships, as a sign of respect. This applies from children to parents in most families, and from niece or nephew to maternal uncle. I have also heard a woman ask for her husband and a mother for her grown son in roundabout ways; these are just personal choices and subject to inter- and intra-speaker variation. A further feature of name taboos is that they apply more strictly to indigenous names than to so called Christian names (i.e. names having come in through Western mediation, ranging from Ezekiel to Benny, and from Ruth to Roslyn), but still speakers are very unwilling to use either.

A special relationship also holds between two persons called by the same name, and they are not to refuse each other anything. The namesake relation is called *bekula* and this term is often used in address between the two, stressing the bond.
A very interesting aspect of some of the respect relationships is non-singular address for singular referents. A man and his brother-in-law, and a woman and her sister-in-law generally address each other with the term *makapien*. This has the form of a regular dual, but there is no corresponding singular or non-singular (plural) form. Address traditionally was with dual cross-referencing on verbs, and this is still heard in some cases, or even with mixed second person singular and dual forms. Similarly, if a man had to address his female cross-cousin, he would use a plural form of the term *kokole*:* kokolaip*. The expression ‘mother of the children’ mentioned above was also frequently in the plural (*nagap meiam lop* ‘mothers of the children’, or using the name of a child e.g. *nagap iam Ruth* ‘mothers of Ruth’); correspondingly the woman could refer to her brother as *irap am Eskol* ‘fathers of Eskol’. It is possible that there were more such usages in the past. The ones given here are remembered and used occasionally, but are disappearing.

### 2.7 Other ethnographic notes

It is quite difficult to get a reliable picture of anything from the past, and accounts of almost any aspect of life often vary wildly between different speakers. What is presented here has been pieced together with the aid of accounts from different speakers, sometimes evaluated in the light of some of the historical and current information on neighbouring peoples (while trying not to be too influenced by these, as it is likely that there were differences), and also using plausibility as a criterion.

#### 2.7.1 Rituals in life and death

*Malagan* (/malangan/malanggan) is the term both for a cycle of ritual feasts and for dance masks and other carvings associated with them. It appears that this ritual complex is only a few centuries old, and that it may have originated in the Tabar island group (off the east coast of New Ireland). I showed some photos of masks and carvings in German collections, and they were identified by elderly speakers as Tabar or Madak style. It was claimed that Kuot had a style of its own, but I was not able to establish what characterised it. Given the low level of identification according to language it is likely that the spread of particular styles did not follow language boundaries. One speaker said that the Kuot carvings were like those of Amba (Aba, Hamba) village, which is a Nochispeaking village on the east coast. Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) also describes how the rights to make particular malagan designs (each with its own name) were bought and sold between clans, and any particular design seems to have been able to move around quite a bit.

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38 For instance, one speaker claimed that women were secluded for a period of several years during puberty, and that they each ate one pig a day. This has to be rejected on grounds of implausibility, and other accounts by the same speaker were similarly fanciful and so had to be treated with some caution.

39 Similarly, dances (with songs) passed between different groups, and Krämer-Bannow reports one dance all the way from Rabaul having been performed in Madak-
As for the ceremonial cycle, this is described in some detail by Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) and Lewis (1969) for the Nochi, and since the ceremonies may be taken to have been very similar in all important respects, and since they are no longer practiced among the Kuots, I will only give the briefest summary here.\footnote{More general works on the malagan traditions in north-central New Ireland include Gunn (1997), Hallinan (1990) Helfrich (1973), and Krämer (1925), all of which also have very good pictures of the associated artwork.}

Malagan feasts had multiple functions. They were the final ceremony in a sequence of mortuary rites, and at the same time the biggest feast associated with the initiation of adolescent boys. Various other outstanding matters for clans would be settled too. For a man, arranging a malagan feast was one of the most important ways of gaining prestige.

After death, bigmen and possibly any old people were cremated, but it is not clear what happened to ordinary people; in the mountains there appear to have been burials in the ground, and near the coast it is possible that some corpses were sunk at sea but I have no statement of the latter from the Kuots.\footnote{The sinking of corpses at sea in former times is mentioned by Jensen (1999: 125) writing about Madak speakers, by Krämer-Bannow (1916: 39) writing of an incident in Baranat near Muliami in the south of New Ireland, and by Parkinson (1999 [1907]: 136) writing of Anir and Nissan islands off southern New Ireland.} In the case of important bigmen it appears that the skull was often kept in the men’s house and used in magic (taro and rain magic?) and perhaps other practices.

Preparations for the feast would start not long after the death. At a meeting various people would indicate how many pigs they intended to contribute by sticking the hard midrib (sokopit) of the coconut leaf in the ground. These people could be children, in-laws, uncles or others with a relation to the dead person. Failing to deliver when the time came caused social shame and derision of the worst degree. Piglets then had to be acquired and raised, and about six months before the ceremony, taro gardens would be cleared and planted, and magic made to ensure the growth. Malagan carvings were ordered and the carver began to carve them. At each stage of preparation, a small feast would be held. Weather magicians were paid to ensure good weather for the day or days of the feast.

After death, a person’s spirit roams around, and particularly in the first days or weeks may appear as a ghost, make noises such as knocking on the walls and bothering the living in general, visiting the places that the person used to visit in life. Various tests were carried out to check if the spirit was still around, such as throwing small pieces of food in the fire; if it crackled it meant that the spirit was present, “eating” the food. The mortuary feast finally removes the dead person’s spirit from among the living. According to Kuot informants, several speaking Lamasong as the emperor’s birthday was celebrated in 1909 (Krämer-Bannow 1916: 96–97).
deaths would often be covered by the same feast, including deaths in various clans, but different moieties would hold separate feasts.42

One particular person would be in charge of the organisation. Accepting the pig’s head at a feast meant a promise to organise another feast within a few years time – again, failing to do so meant never being taken seriously again, and sometimes having nasty tricks played on one.43

At the same time, the young initiates are let out of their confinement. Information on their age varies; I was told that it concerned boys between the ages of perhaps seven and fifteen, who would be in seclusion together for a period of several weeks, perhaps up to a few months. During this period women would not be allowed to see them, and when they had to leave the specially built compound, they had to play a kind of flute. The Kuots also practiced circumcision, as did the Nochi (cf. (1971 [1933])).44 The word kasou covers the period of seclusion as well as circumcision itself. The boys would come out and “replace” the dead men in the society.45

A few more notes on death may be made here. It is possible to inherit acquired physical characteristics; for instance one man has a sort of dimple on his lower ribcage to the side, which is said to be from one of his forefathers who died of a spear wound in that spot. This is considered to be on a par with other character-

42 I am not sure whether the separate feasts were held at the same time or on entirely separate occasions.

43 An analogy to accepting the pig’s head is found in turn-taking in the story telling that used to take place in the men’s houses. I was told that all stories had to end with a big feast (many of them still do), and the narrator would finish by saying “and the pig’s head goes to...”, naming the person to tell the next story. Although this context was more playful, the person named had better come up with something.

44 An informant said that only the Nochi and the Kuots used to practice circumcision. However, Friederici notes it in many areas in 1908 (especially in the south since many areas further north were already missionised and the natives were wearing laplaps). Friederici preferred to call the practice incisio since it was a case of slitting the foreskin open in one place, rather than cutting around it and removing it altogether (1912: 44). Krämer (1925: 30) on the other hand describes how a ring is cut off. Strauch also noted some degree of circumcision in the Madak area in 1875, describing it as the foreskin being worn “pulled back” (1877: 91–92).

45 I have had conflicting information on the topic of female seclusion. This is practiced among some peoples to the south (in the briefest terms, a young woman is kept indoors for some months to become pale and beautiful and fattened up, then ceremonially comes out, and betel nuts are offered to her father by prospective grooms). Some speakers say that this was practiced among the Kuots as well, others that it was not. It is conceivable that there was some variation but in the absence of strong indications to the contrary, I am inclined to believe the oldest woman in Bimun, Tasen, who says women were not secluded. I was not able to find out if there were any other ritual practices celebrated in association with a woman’s first menses – there quite possibly could have been without them necessarily involving seclusion.
istics which are inherited, such as skin hue. To some extent, temperament may be included here, and one little girl was sometimes playfully called by the name of her great grandmother when she was being vain, as that grandmother was known for always carrying a mirror. None of these matters are taken very seriously by those I discussed them with, and I do not know what of it relates to actual beliefs on the matter of inheritance, and what is just idle observation of similarities (or whether these can be pried apart).

It does appear that death was not very much feared, as suicide was and is fairly common (usually by hanging, or these days by overdosing on Chloroquine antimalarial tablets). As mentioned, suicide could also be ordered by the bigmen of a village as the strongest form of punishment for breaking taboos. Interestingly, the person whose death had been ordered in this manner could opt to kill a close member of their clan, and this would be accepted as equivalent.46

There is no taboo on talking of dead people, although whatever name taboos existed before the death are still observed. After the death of an old man in Bimun, his grandchildren were heard threatening each other that he would come and haunt them at night, and even speculating as to how far his body would have rotted after a week.

Some traditional customs are still carried out following a death. On discovery of the body, the women rush to wail over it, sometimes throwing themselves onto it. Each woman wails for perhaps half an hour, and as people arrive from other villages through the day they sometimes wail a bit more. Men are less demonstratively sorrowful, but often cry silently, sometimes in private, sometimes quite openly, if the death is that of a close relative. The body is washed, and these days dressed and put in a coffin, and buried within one or two days. The first night after the death there is a wake, and most of the people connected with the dead person and many others stay up all night, singing.47

For about a week after the death, there is “sitting on the ashes”, meaning that people of the same moiety as the dead person and others closely associated with him or her eat and sleep in or near the dead person’s homestead, cooking and eating communally. When this first period of mourning is broken it is referred to as “scattering the ashes”. I tried to find out whether this was in reference to the funeral pyre that used to be made, but was told that it was to do rather with

46 I have a short and purportedly true narrative about a woman named Bunmaun who inadvertently saw the men carving malagans, and was ordered to go and kill herself since there is a very strong taboo on women seeing the preparation of these carvings. Instead she hanged her daughter. The person on whose ground the girl was hanged then gave the woman that piece of land, as it is customary that land is given to the clan of someone who dies on it.

47 Traditionally there were songs for the wake (lakobumas for an important bigman, other songs for a younger or less important person), songs for carrying the body around the village, and songs for carrying it to the graveyard and possibly even more categories to do with stages of death and burial (see also 2.10 below).
the hearth and home of the person. (There may be a connection also with the custom of burning possessions of the dead person, in particular clothes and such items that have been in close contact with the person’s skin.)

One of the children of the dead person will let his or her hair grow and not cut it until after a final ceremony.

In talking of ceremonies after the death of a person, frequent mention is also made of a separate occasion when a headstone (Tok Pisin ‘simen’ from English ‘cement’) is put on the grave. This seems not to have taken place in the past, even where there were graves. I have not been able to clarify whether this occasion has replaced aspects of the traditional malagan feast, but it seems that it is given a lot of importance, and also that a custom known as “paying off the father” (see below) takes place at this time. This would fit with the idea of “finishing off a person”, an expression sometimes used in connection with the final mortuary rites in other areas on the island (although I did not hear it from the Kuots).

**Paying the father** relates to the matrilineal clan structure whereby a person is of the same clan as their mother but the father is of a different clan. Anything that a father puts into the raising of his children is paid back to his clansmen by his children and their clansmen. I believe that this was traditionally done at the mortuary feast, but other notes say it would take place at the cement ceremony. At present, the custom persists but takes place while the father is still alive; in the one instance I witnessed it was an old lady who had brought up her two grandsons Sǝkot and Eremas after their parents (the old woman’s son and his wife) had died. She thus took the place of the father in the ceremony. The grown or adolescent children put in a lot of work to get the necessary wealth together, and members of their moiety contributed a little money too, members of the same clan probably a bit more. Pig and taro or sweet potato is prepared, and people gather together. When the money is going to be handed over, a chain of people is formed across the open space in front of the house, money is handed across, and an announcer shouts out expressions such as “Sǝkot paying for care”, “Eremas paying for sweat”, “Sǝkot paying for hard work” and so forth, as kina notes and shell money pass across. Then the money is counted, and the value of shell money and pigs added, and the total announced. Any coconut palms and other trees that the father may have planted for the children are to be paid for in the same way. A man who had not paid his father’s clan for coconuts was constantly finding his copra stolen and sold by the father’s clansmen and clanswomen; this was considered fair, and of his own doing.

Inherent in this practice seems to be a notion that a clan should be self-sufficient in vital force. A father is of a different clan, clearly indispensable for the propagation of his spouse’s clan but the energy and material resources that he takes to it have to be reimbursed, from her clan to his.

Perhaps following a similar logic, husband and wife pay each other off by staging a small feast. The wife’s and the husband’s feast are separate events, and
years may pass between them, and there are no rules governing the timing, but each will set the time as he or she sees fit.

**Marriage** is an area where it has been surprisingly difficult to get consistent information on traditional practices. It appears that there was infant betrothal, but my impression is that this was more in the nature of the parents and others talking about two babies born around the same time as future spouses, and that it was not binding. Some informants said that an exchange of small amounts of shell money took place to mark it. This would fit with other information to the effect that spouses were generally of much the same age. Marriage took place at a relatively late age, as I understand it perhaps 22 or even 25. The ages were defined for the man by him having fully developed beard growth, and for the woman by her breasts having “fallen down”.

It was also mentioned that a woman should know all the jobs that women need to do, in terms of gardening and cooking and so forth.

There appears to have been considerable sexual freedom both before and during marriage, and Powdermaker describes a system where a married woman’s lover(s) would give her husband one strand of shell money when they had met. Some husbands were jealous, but many not. Unmarried women would keep the shell money themselves and some made quite a bit. From the same source, as from Chinnery and Krämer-Bannow and others, it is also evident that there was widespread knowledge of abortive plants among the women. While children by unmarried and sometimes quite young women today are not a cause of social stigma, the medical knowledge appears to be largely lost, and abortion is very heavily frowned upon by the church.

Some time before or within a few years after marriage **bride price** is paid to the woman’s lineage. The groom’s clansmen and other members of his moiety contribute to the total, which consists of cash, shell money and the value of pigs; occasionally also rented transport and other expenses that may have been incurred. In the two cases that I witnessed, the total came to around 1,200 kina and 1,300 kina respectively. The set-up is very similar to that described for children paying the father above, with groups from each lineage on either side of an open space, and money handed across from one to the other along a chain of people (who appear to have no particular role but just happen to be handy for the job).

In the Kuot area (unlike some parts of Papua New Guinea), the bride’s parents do not name a price. Rather, it is an occasion for the groom and his people to show their strength, and they collect the money and hand it over all in one go. These days, the woman also often pays the man, but this is said to be a recent

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48 This is a neutral way of giving a woman’s age; a young woman is one whose breasts “stand up”, while her maturation is expressed by the breasts “falling down”.

49 That a relatively late age is and was considered proper is supported by the indignation expressed by some Kuot women when shown a postcard picture of a Lavongai (New Hanover) bridal couple of around 15–16 years of age.
custom in this area. On the occasions I saw, at least once the woman handed over her assembled money (some 300 kina) following the paying of the bride price.

All these ritual exchanges are clan- and moiety-defining, and have the effect of showing the clan’s strength in numbers as well as wealth and ability to meet obligations. On each such occasion, there is a contact point between the two moieties through a small number of individuals, such as two spouses or a father and his children. On each, assets flow from many individuals within one moiety towards the contact person, proportionately to the distance of relation. After the transfer of the collected wealth to the other moiety, the assets are distributed through it, similarly in proportion to relatedness.50

Personal exchange relationships are quite different. I did not attempt an analysis of giving into open and controlled, but others have noted among neighbouring peoples that some kin relations entail symmetrical giving, where each item has to be returned in kind, while in others there is a more or less constant flow from each side, but without a repayment structure (e.g. Jensen (1999)).

Another custom used to be practiced at a woman’s first pregnancy. Girimisi (as mentioned in 2.4) seems to have been borrowed from the Nochi, as there are no associated songs in Kuot, but a variety of songs in Tok Pisin and Nochi.51 This celebration had two stages: one when the pregnancy became publicly known (after about three months), and one when the child had been born, and involved women of opposite moieties pouring buckets of water over each other and throwing each other into the sea.

Another ceremonial occasion which is often forgotten is that of peace-making. I know very little about the nature of war, but it is my impression that it was largely in the nature of repeated raids and ambushes. Eventually one group decided that it had lost too many people to sustain the war, and sent out a request for peace to the other group.52 As part of the peace process, settlements were made for all persons killed on each side, and compensation paid in shell money

50 Oddly, given the logic of this type of transaction, the bride’s father receives a fairly large proportion of the bride price, in spite of being of the same moiety as the groom.

51 A closely related ceremony is found among the Madak as well, called egirimis; cf. Clay (1977: 108ff).

52 I have an account of a false request, which is said to have occurred between an enormous mountain village called Nalamaŋa somewhat south of the present Kuot area but possibly belonging to it. Nalamaŋa was at war with Panus (near Lemau), and Panus said that they were too few to fight this enormous village, and asked for peace, inviting the Nalamaŋa to a huge feast. All who could walk came, and ate pig and taro and filled their baskets with food to take back. However, the food had been poisoned with magically treated lime powder, and within weeks every man woman and child in Nalamaŋa had died. (I have no other mentions of this village and it may be altogether mythical, but the story tells us something about the customs around peace-making.)
and pigs. Warfare and peace-making are cyclical, and are likely to alternate as relations between any two localised groups through history.

2.7.2 Spirits
There is definitely a belief in spiritual beings of various kinds, but it is in many ways not articulated and systematic. There are human-like bush spirits, spirits of dead humans, spiritual doubles of humans, spirits of certain animals, spirits belonging to particular features of the landscape such as rock outcrops, and probably many other spirits.

The bush spirits, *gas*, are very much like humans in appearance, motifs and so forth, but unkempt with long hair and beards, and supernaturally strong, and they can make themselves invisible or turn into animals such as birds and bats, or take the shape of particular humans. They live in holes in the ground or under rocks in the bush, and apart from the term *gas*, they are described as ‘man/woman from under the rocks’. There are many stories of interactions of *gas* with humans (I have recorded at least three purportedly true stories, one of which involved a male *gas* living and working in Panaras village for years within the last century). Marriage and interbreeding with humans are also sometimes reported, and *gas* frequently become attracted to humans of the opposite sex and follow them around, and sometimes have to be banished from the village by magic means, in other cases simply tolerated. If they trick a human into sexual intercourse, death mostly follows. In a way, the *gas* symbolise the untamed powers of the bush, opposed to the structured and controlled world of the village.53

Spirits of dead humans (*muramǝma*) roam for some time after death as mentioned above. I was told of the site of the old mountain village (Taula etc.) that whenever a new person comes and spends the night there, the ancestral spirits scream and shout and make lots of noise through the first night, to welcome the new arrival. It is not quite clear to me whether these are seen as the spirits of actual people who lived there in the past, as there is also a Tok Pisin expression ‘bigmen of the land’ which does not appear to apply to particular human spirits, but are rather something in the nature of the spiritual essence of the land.

There is further a category of human spirits called *nema* (Tok Pisin ‘birua’), comprising the spirits of people who died violently and prematurely. These are more likely to haunt the living and for a longer time, and resemble our Western concept of ghosts quite well. They also have associations with certain red fish, which are part of food taboos of required for certain ventures. There are probably many other associations of which I am not aware.

53 Creatures called *gas* exist among the Madak and Nochi too. The Madak version (*lagas*) seems very similar to the Kuot one (Eves 1998: 155ff, passim), whereas the Nochi (*gas*) appears to map onto the spiritual double of the Kuots (see below; Powdermaker 1971 [1933]: 39), but is also a type of malagan (Lewis 1969). *Gas* seem to have been depicted in Kuot malagan carvings as well.
Each person further has a spiritual double. If you get a sudden stomach pain, it may be because your double was stabbed in the stomach, and if your double dies you die. I do not know of a name for this category.

*Murale* (m) and *murulaibun* (f) are terms for spirit places (Tok Pisin ‘ples masalai’) such as stones, typically outcrops of the raised reef bed (*barst*), some swampy areas and so forth. The word *murale* can also mean earth quake. I was not able to get a clear idea of the application of the male vs. female terms. The spirits inhabit these types of places and may affect humans that visit them. Thus a child’s nightmare was explained by his having played near such a place in the day, and the parents kept asking him who he had seen in his dream. Miscarriage and physical and mental handicaps are also often explained by the pregnant mother frequenting such a place, or leaving a very young baby there e.g. while working nearby. Dangerous and often deadly diseases can also be caused by these spirits, which on the whole appear to be rather malicious.

Coastal dwellers in most of New Ireland traditionally practiced the shark (*bioma*) fishing known as **shark calling**, using a rattle made from coconut shells (*girgir*) and a bait fish to attract the shark, then passing a noose (*kinen/kiner*) with a wooden “propeller” (*lakaseman*) over its head as it comes close to the canoe. In preparation for shark calling, a variety of taboos must be observed, such as sexual abstinence and avoidance of particular foods. It is still practiced in this way in some areas, famously so in Kontu a few kilometres south of Bimun. Spiritual connections with the shark are a part of this practice, but I am not aware of its exact nature as it was not practiced in Bimun (where shark was fished like other fish).

Snakes are thought to turn into humans sometimes – the skin of a snake is a sign that the snake has turned human and will return to its skin later. Pythons (*lamot, amora*) in particular were associated with mythical properties. As mentioned, there are also snakes associated with the clans (see 2.6.1 above).

Eagles are feared to an extent, as they are frequently the vehicles of spells sent out to find a target.

There are also numerous lesser spirits, only some of which were explained to me, and only two examples will be given here. When it rains after a long dry spell, people are advised to stay inside and not go walking around for a few hours. This is because the rain brings out the spirits of the ground, which can make you sick (this perception is probably connected with the smell of the earth which is brought out at such times). If a person wakes up with a stiff neck, it is because he or she has been out walking at night and got punched by a spirit.

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54 A canoe with this equipment was depicted by Abel Tasman as early as 1643, and is reproduced in many places, e.g. Parkinson (1999 [1907]: 356).

55 The 1982 film The Shark Callers of Kontu by Dennis O’Rourke depicts the custom of shark-calling and highlights the tensions between life today and pre-Christian traditions.
The spirit of some living humans can leave the body, normally during sleep. Such sleep is very deep and very still. A sleeping person, even a child, is always awakened very gently, mostly by repeatedly calling the person’s name, as a person can die if he or she is awakened while the spirit is out. The more powerful of such spirits can take the form of a bird and travel long distances (for instance, eagles are a specialty of the Namatanai area further south, which is known for strong magic and sorcery).

### 2.7.3 Magic

“Magic” is used here to refer loosely to various ways of influencing the elements and other people by spells and so forth, including sorcery. The Kuot terms are the synonymous ǝŋa and taraŋ (both ‘poisen’ in Tok Pisin). There is also pupulu ‘black(f)’ which is primarily with women’s magic, although women have access to some other types of magic too.

Many types of magic were performed in the past; magic to make taro grow for a ritual feast (performed on round stones at the men’s house), magic to make or stop rain, magic to ensure the success of hunting (influencing the dogs), fishing, and war, love magic, magic to cause sickness, magic to cause sickness to anyone stealing from a magically protected (pase) betel palm, as well as counter-magic to the latter two, and probably many more kinds. Taro and rain magic were primarily associated with ritual feasts and have disappeared with the feasts and the men’s houses (although it was alleged that rain magic was attempted during the drought in 1997). I do not think that fishing and hunting magic is performed any longer. Crops of betel nuts and betel pepper are still protected in this way, causing a thief to suffer illness, usually severe internal pain at some time after the theft. The trees are normally marked with coconut leaves to warn people off. It is considered very irresponsible to perform this magic without having the counter-spell ready, and one father in a nearby village was said to have caused his son’s death by failing to mark a magically protected tree and then failing to have the counter-spell. Love magic is still carried out, and the belief in magic as the cause of severe sickness and death is still very strong. Only the death of a very old and weak person is considered natural.

A spell could be sent in different ways. Something personal would be obtained from a person against whom one has a grudge, such as hair, worn clothing, cigarette ends or food scraps (disposing of such items in water or fire prevents risk). Spells are said, and often fire is made over the object which will cause pain or death. I was told that this type of magic is not performed in the Kuot area nowadays.

A spell could be directed to a specific but indefinite person, if you are sure that someone has made magic against you but you do not know who. Divination uses hair too; hair (or other items like clothing) is taken from a dead person in suspicious cases, and brought to a diviner who can sometimes name a particular person, sometimes give a description, or otherwise confirm suspicion. A curse can then be dispatched to find and kill that person, often carried by an eagle, even if the identity of the person is not known by those who order the spell and pay for it being performed.
Another way of influencing other people was by reciting spells over the white lime powder which is used in betel chewing. The powder was blown onto food which was offered to the person, and a similar procedure was used to strengthen the dogs before hunting. Betel nuts and betel pepper can be tampered with as well.

A further method of transmitting a spell is by making tiny bundles with magically treated objects, and placing them where the intended victim is expected to step over them, such as at a doorway or under the ladder to a house, or on a path. It takes effect when stepped over. The drawback with this method is that it can catch the wrong person.

Other magic was used for protection against spells, such as a magically treated special type of red earth applied to the vagina against spells that you catch by stepping over them. Ginger had a variety of uses too, and there were doubtless many more.

Magic in all these forms is not a bounded system, distinct from other cultural practices. On the contrary, if it is known who caused a death by magic, that person (or one of his kinsmen) can be stabbed to death in revenge. Similarly, divination can be used to find out who committed non-magical crimes.

Individuals own magic, as hinted above. It can be inherited; in that case the stated preference is from maternal uncle to a man, keeping it in the family, but fathers also often pass it on to their sons. It can also be bought and sold, and an owner is paid to perform the magic on other people’s behalf (it would not work if given freely). Different kinds of magic may follow different patterns of ownership transfer.

2.7.4 Church and administration: today’s social arena

The first mission in the region was established by Wesleyan Rev. George Brown in the Duke of York islands in 1875 (and George Brown Day is now celebrated yearly in United Church parishes), and the Catholics established Vunapope near Kokopo in 1882. Mission stations were gradually established throughout the Bismarck Archipelago, and today there is hardly a village of more than 50 or 100 people that does not have a church. The main denominations are United Church (previously mainly Methodist), Roman Catholic, and in some districts also Seventh Day Adventists. Various smaller churches attract some followers too, such as the PNG Bible Church, but these do not have the established status of the major churches. There is further a stronghold of the Baha’i faith in Madina village (Nalik-speaking).

I think it is fair to say that the church has usurped the public arena to a very high degree. While the ceremonial feasts used to be the prime way for a man to gain prestige, the main forum is now the church, and being a church leader gives an amount of prestige to a person. The church is also the ceremonial focus of today, with opportunities for feasting at Christmas, Easter, George Brown Day and so on. Mother’s day, Father’s day and Children’s day have also been introduced as church events. There are further Youth fellowships and Women’s fellowships and other groupings which organise celebrations and fundraising.
events, and many of these bear some resemblance to traditional feasts at least in terms of masses of food being prepared and eaten, and songs sung (although these are not traditional songs). Marriages and baptism also occasion celebrations. Catholic parishes have more traditional elements in their church celebrations, such as traditional body decoration and the decking out of sculptures of Jesus with shell money – this is frowned upon by members of the United Church where only a minimum of traditional attributes are permitted.

Traditional ritual occasions drew people from wide and far. Church feasts also see several villages get together, but mostly within organised units such as Kontu Circuit which includes five villages, for example at New Years Eve in 2000, and at the ordination of a new pastor in Kontu in 1998. The inauguration of a new church building has people travelling wide and far, contributing songs and food to the occasion.

Friday is mission day, and people meet at the mission in the morning and are sent off to do work such as weeding the church compound, build a new house for the Sunday school or mend the roof of the pastor’s house, or work in gardens dedicated to church events, depending on what needs to be done.

Another forum for leadership is the local levels of government. Each village elects a member to the next level consisting of about seven villages, which in turn sends a representative to the local level government (which for Bimun is in Konos). A man who did not enjoy some respect would not be elected, but it does not seem to be a position with very high prestige.

There are also some national feasts not organised by the church or independently in the village: Independence Day on 16th September and the Queen’s Birthday (as Papua New Guinea is part of the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II is head of state, and her birthday is celebrated).

Every Monday morning (except sometimes when it is raining), village meetings are held all over Papua New Guinea, and attendance is compulsory. These are led by the chairman of the village committee. Mondays are dedicated to government work, and after general announcements, the day’s jobs are announced, and people are divided into work groups and dispatched to cut the grass at the school or repair the teacher’s house, or build a new cooking house at the hospital, etc.

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56 Powdermaker notes people coming to a major feast from 25 to 30 miles away in 1930, and Lewis makes the same observation in 1954, noting also that the presence of the road and pacification probably meant participation from further away than in ancient times (Lewis 1969: 45)

57 It is also the case that any election procedure in Papua New Guinea involves more than the perceived competence of the candidate, due to the role of kin ties and other obligations.

58 Other tasks regarded as community responsibility can be handed out on these occasions too. To my embarrassment, the young lads were sent to dig a very big hole for a
Metal tools such as bush knives and metal fishhooks have made much work easier and faster (perhaps especially men’s work), while it can be argued that the modern-day commitments to church and community take time from the individual. Although both mission work and community work normally take up only half the day, and people are usually free to do their own work from around noon, it is often felt that it is too late in the day to go to the gardens by then. Sundays are days of rest in United Church villages (while Catholics often work after mass).

Neither of the new structures of church and local-level government accords the same prestige as bigmanship of days of yore. Elders sometimes explain that all the real bigmen are dead, and that they themselves are nothing. This perception is probably the result of a combination of factors, but it is central that traditional ritual life has largely gone, and with it the contexts that defined social entities.

2.7.5 Identity

The past couple of centuries have meant dramatically expanded horizons for the people of Melanesia. Still, villagers often have a very sketchy idea of the world outside of New Ireland and Papua New Guinea, largely because most people have not travelled far from their place of origin. Of the people now living in Bimun, all have been to the provincial capital Kavieng (only a handful of Kuots live there), and have visited other villages along the west coast, north within the Kuot area (not the least to visit the sub-health centre in Panaras) and south into the Madak area. Most have also visited other villages on the east coast but perhaps less often due to the structure of transport. Many young people have boarded at so called top-up schools for grades 6–8, and some have gone on to do grades 8–10 at one of the five provincial high schools. A number, mostly men, have studied or worked in other areas of Papua New Guinea. For example, my main informant Robert Sipa did one year of clerical (secretarial) studies in Lae in Morobe Province, and also toured in Sepik Province with a band for a short time. Others have worked in mining operations and other jobs (in particular perhaps Clemendy Towil who worked for years in the prospecting division at Ok Tedi mine, and then at the Lihir gold mine off New Ireland – he was quite happy to make conversation about the Mir space station).

There has also been an influx of people from other areas moving into New Ireland and into the Kuot area. Early on, the plantation managers imported labour from the Sepik region and elsewhere on New Guinea island (all subsumed under the local Tok Pisin expression ‘bikples’), and a number stayed on and married locally. Chinese traders also have a long history in the region, but I am not aware of any that live or have lived within the Kuot area.

Although most people’s life is village-based, there is thus by now a history of awareness of different ways and values. People know that the Madak call their grandparents by sibling terms, that New Guinea highlanders have patrilineal de-

toilet for me not long after my arrival, and when I returned for my second long stay in the field, the women had been set to weave mats for my house.
scent reckoning, that male highlanders wail at funerals, and so forth. Western life is less well understood, probably partly because many of the whites who have lived in the area, e.g. as plantation managers, led quite secluded lives. But although various differences were observed and commented upon, I never had the impression that they were used as defining for an us – them divide. This could be to do with relations being essentially peaceful and non-competitive at the present time.

Nor is language an identifying factor, and I have not come across any references to names for people or areas based on language (with the possible exception of the mysterious reference to “Guat” reported in 1.3). From all indications, contacts were not geographically extensive a hundred or so years ago, and it is quite possible that people did not even know the far boundary of their language area (then again, it seems that ceremonies were sometimes carried out on the ancestral clan land at Kun). A history of inter-language marriage as evidenced by shared clans and kin terms across language boundaries, is perhaps an indicator that language did not serve as a marker of identity; at least not to the exclusion of speakers of other languages. Powdermaker put the situation in 1930 like this:

New Ireland is divided into nine main linguistic units, which are further subdivided into smaller units based on differences in dialect. People who live twenty miles distant do not understand each other. There is no tribal, political, or other social relationship between these linguistic units. Even the villages of one linguistic section do not act as a unit. [...] there was fighting between the villages of the same linguistic unit. [...] It is merely a geographical area, separated from other areas by its language, but other than that it has no cohesion and does not even have a name. (Powdermaker 1971 [1933]: 31).59

Language is defining for ethnicity in many parts of the world, but it is also a relation that Europeans with their nation-state ideology are prone to expect and to encourage. In New Ireland there appears to have been little basis for such an equation of language with ethnic group, and it seems that such ideas were largely created when the languages were named by the administration (cf. 1.3), their speakers called by the name of their language, and administrative units then aligned with these boundaries, schools named after them and so forth.

It could be argued that the lack of emblematic functions of language is a recent effect of the spread of Tok Pisin. However, it seems to me that languages would have names if they were important for identification, or that there would at least be perceptions of speakers of different language as culturally different. I heard no echoes of such notions.

Those speakers of other languages who know anything at all about Kuot consider it very very difficult. It is likely that few outsiders in the past learnt it well,

59 The situation of the Nochi speakers among whom she worked was somewhat special, as it is a small language group of only five villages all on the east coast. She does note relations with interior people who would have been Kuot speakers but makes no comment on their language.
and that it was up to the Kuot speakers to maintain necessary levels of multilingualism to maintain relations. It remains to be explained how Kuot has survived during the centuries if that was the situation. One explanation would be that my conclusions about the low emblematicity of language are simply wrong, or that the situation has changed quite recently. Another possibility is that Kuots saw their language as usefully secret, since Austronesian speakers do not understand it. Further, if the languages of the area were all of a roughly similar size, and the groups of similar strength, there would be no reason to shift to a different language. It could also be the case that multi-lingualism carried high social prestige, a factor which may well contribute crucially to languages being kept alive and kept apart.

The units that do appear to be identifying are the clan, moiety and the village, as outlined above in 2.5 and 2.6. When there were still villages in the mountains, there also seems to have been some identification according to bush/mountain vs. coast. There is a word for coastal people, *tubiebip* (only in the plural, and not widely known now), but no word was known for mountain people.

### 2.8 Subsistence

The cash economy in New Ireland is not very strong, but is certainly present. Cash comes primarily from copra production (the plantation at Patlangat has reverted to the traditional land owners and many families have access to coconuts there, and there are many other small areas of coconuts too), supplemented to a small degree by cocoa. The women also sell betel nuts, betel peppers, root crops and vegetables locally and on the market in Kavieng. The money is spent on rice which complements garden-produced sweet potatoes as a staple, and tinned meat and fish, biscuits and instant noodles, salt and sugar, clothes and thongs, soap, tools (in particular bush knives, fish hooks and lines), cigarettes, batteries for torches and the odd radio. The men sometimes spend quite a lot on beer when they go to town to sell copra, but there was no alcohol on sale in Bimun. I did not study cash spending in particular, but it seemed that a family might sometimes spend only about 10 or 15 kina (approximately US$3–5) per week for quite long periods, then perhaps more if going to town to get clothes or saucepans etc. Money is also used in various ceremonial exchanges (see 2.7.1 above) and then sometimes appears in surprisingly large quantities, such as 1,300 kina. People are also expected to pay tithe (a tenth of all earnings) and other fees to the church, as well as school fees for school-age children.

Perhaps half of all meals have rice as the carbohydrate source, but other than that there is quite a strong reliance on garden produce. In terms of protein, there are pigs and poultry raised in the village and pigs hunted in the bush; and fish, octopus, lobsters and other seafood.

As mentioned, the agricultural method is swidden (slash-and-burn) horticulture. A plot is felled, left to get a little regrowth, burnt, fenced, planted, tended and harvested. Men do the first stages, until the garden is divided into plots and fenced against bush pigs (which often destroy gardens). The women plant, weed and harvest, and carry the produce back to the village. Land areas are owned by
clans, and quite a large contiguous area is gardened by many members and associates of a clan at the same time. The next garden would then be prepared in a different part of the bush.\textsuperscript{60} At any one time, several such areas are in various stages of development, and the women take sweet potato creepers and taro suckers from a ripening garden to one that is being planted.

Traditionally, taro (bulalam, ua) was the staple food, and is still regarded as “real food”, about which you may hear lyrical descriptions of how wonderful it smells when cooking and so forth. Taro is clearly an ancient plant in the region,\textsuperscript{61} and with the Kuots, and it is associated with an extensive vocabulary for the different species, and for the different parts of the plant and ways of cooking it.

Yam is also a traditional crop, but interestingly, yam has a low cultural value with the Kuots, and is just considered “food”, in contra-distinction to taro. It grows wild in the area in both edible and non-edible species which are distinct from the cultivated ones, and so has probably been there for a very long time too; it also has an indigenous Kuot name (kamin). Wild yam (k̄emes) was used as famine food in the past.\textsuperscript{62}

Taro is a very nutritious food, but is labour-intensive and gives a fairly low yield. Yam also requires quite a lot of tending. Today, therefore, few people grow them, in favour of the new staple crop: sweet potato. Sweet potato is a South American plant, and appears to have followed two routes into Papua New Guinea. Archaeological evidence in Polynesia suggests that the Austronesians travelled all the way to South America and brought back the sweet potato from there. It was present in Hawai’i, the Cook Islands and New Zealand nearly 1000 BP. But the pre-historic introduction did not make its way as far west as the Bismarck Archipelago. Instead, it appears to have come from southeast Asia where it had been brought by Portuguese and Spanish sea-farers, via the Indo-

\textsuperscript{60} This is in contrast to the pattern described by Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) for the Nochi on the east coast, where a nuclear family would have a plot away from others, circulating contiguous plots so that the woman would be tending one plot while her husband prepared an adjacent plot for the next garden and so forth.

\textsuperscript{61} Looking at the distribution of species and genera within the family to which taro belongs, aroids (or Aracea), Hay (1990: 18) finds that at least one genus, that of Cyrtosperma, was present before the break-up of Gondwanaland (which eventually formed the continents of Africa, Antarctica, Australia (with New Guinea), India, Madagascar and South America).

\textsuperscript{62} The yam plant has extremely high cultural significance among many Austronesian speakers in the wider region (famously so in the Trobriand islands of Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea), but it does not register much interest with the Kuots. One of the vocabulary items that Austronesianists use for comparative purposes is the word for the stick that the yam creeper is trimmed along. I thus inquired as to the term for it in Kuot. It was just called ‘stick’ (pas).

The time of introduction of sweet potato in New Ireland is a difficult question, but it appears not to have a very long history there. It was clearly there 100 years ago, as it is mentioned by Krämer-Bannow (1916) who travelled there in 1908–1909, and also by Parkinson (1999 [1907]: 341). Yet, taro seems to have remained the main crop into the 1930’s, as Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) does not even mention sweet potato in the account of her stay in 1929–1930. It is hard to see why it would not have reached its present prominence earlier if it had been there for a long time. Another pointer to recent introduction is the fact that there is no Kuot name for it, and it is simply known by the Tok Pisin name ‘kaukau’. The fact that there is a multitude of species would suggest a longer history, but Parkinson mentions only two kinds, and the most likely explanation seems to be that people from New Guinea island who have settled in New Ireland have brought more and more varieties over the years.

Another recently introduced root crop is cassava (tapioca, manioc).

Bread fruit (gun, tree: ovliobu) is eaten when in season. Sago (Kuot and Tok Pisin ‘saksak’) is processed and eaten primarily when there are shortages of other crops.

Various leaves are used as vegetables. Some of these are cultivated, such as the ‘aibika’ and the ‘aupa’ which are common all over Papua New Guinea, and pumpkin, of which the leaves are used as food more often than the fruits. Another is ‘kankong’. These appear to be recently introduced species. A type of fern (Kuot sagu) is collected along some riverbeds. Taro leaves were also an important vegetable when taro was more commonly grown. All are eaten cooked. I know of one indigenous type of cucumber (Kuot kaplo); now other cucumbers and squash are often planted, as well as several kinds of beans. Onions are popular but do not grow well on lower altitudes in the tropics; they are sometimes bought in the stores in Kavieng.

Ginger (lizarana) and chilli are sometimes used for seasoning, but the food is usually very mild, and most people do not like even slightly hot food. In the past, ginger also had many magical uses.

Nut trees are often planted near the villages but nuts are collected from the bush as well, the main species being ‘galip’ (Canarium, tree: nareobu, nut: kabo), ‘pau’ (Barringtonia, tree: laga, nut: loganam) and ‘talis’ (the Java almond, Terminalia catappa, tree: tālinom, nut: tālimunom). The coconut palm is very old in the Pacific and was of high value. My impression is that its cultural importance was much bigger in the old days – I was told that cutting down somebody’s coconut palm would be avenged with death. It is almost certainly a lar-

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63 The evidence is somewhat circumstantial, but the main indication is the increase in pig bone in middens in the New Guinea highlands around that time, marking the emergence of the pig-centred culture still present in that region. It is believed that this development was made possible by the high-yielding sweet potato.
ger part of the diet now that plantations have made it a very common tree. Again there is a large vocabulary, detailing the various stages of the fruit and its parts, as well as the parts of the leaves which also have many uses.

Bananas of many species grow near the houses and in the gardens. Some are used primarily for cooking, while others are eaten as fruit. They also play a part in food distributions at feasts, and are then collected by the stock, wrapped and buried in the sand on the beach for controlled maturing; in that way large quantities can be ready at the same time. There are many Kuot words for different kinds of bananas, as for the parts of the plant.

Sugarcane (nobam, sobuk) is an old plant, grown in the gardens. Pawpaw (papaya) is common both in gardens and around houses. I was told that the Kuot name tabekka is also the name in Lavongai in the north of the province, so this may be a loan. Other fruits are the ‘laulau’ (Malay apple, Eugenia, tree: kabio-bu, fruit: kabonam) and ‘ton’ (Pometia pinnata, tree: tamut, fruit: tanonam). Obviously introduced fruits are citrus (lemon, pomelo), guava, watermelon, and pineapple. The latter was probably introduced by the Germans, as the Kuots use the name nanas (from German ‘Ananas’; this has led some Kuot speakers to believe that it is a genuine Kuot word, since it is different from the English-derived ‘painap’ used in Tok Pisin).

In the gardens and around the villages, plants with big leaves for wrapping the food for cooking are also cultivated.

One type of food not matching one of our major food groups is clay. It appears that a particular kind of clay was cooked in the mumu and eaten in the past, and I was told that the people living near the Fangalawa road crossing still get it from a source high up on the mountain and eat it. Strauch also reports, with great incredulity, coming across people in the north of New Ireland who were eating yellowish clay64 (Strauch 1877: 89–90); Krämer (1925: 23) mentions hard red clay e.g. from Konobin, cooked with taro, as a favourite food of pregnant women.

Another non-negligible crop, though not food, is betel nuts (areca), of which there are many kinds, named in Kuot (the cover term for the fruit is karǝt and the tree bualǝma), and the betel pepper (muan).

Fruit and nut trees are individually owned by the person who planted them, or a person named by the planter. Trees growing wild may be harvested by those to whom the land belongs.

As for proteins, pig is the most esteemed food, but not actually consumed very often. Pigs can be raised in the village (they roam in the daytime and get fed in the village morning and night), and these are only slaughtered for very important feasts (the owner may not eat of his or her pig). Pigs can also be trapped or hunted with dogs and speared in the bush, in which case the meat is eaten over

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64 The German sources use the word Erde ‘earth’ rather than Ton ‘clay’, and in Tok Pisin ‘graun’ (ground) is used, but most likely it is in fact a type of clay.
the next one or two days. There is no differentiation in species between bush pigs and village pigs, and small bush pigs when caught are often brought to the village and raised there. The general name for pig is *kumurot* (a sow is *kumebun*); a feral pig can also be called *duama*, and there are various other terms to do with the markings and colour of the skin and bristles. The various administrations have attempted to improve the local pig population through cross-breeding with introduced breeds, and any pig found in New Ireland today is bound to have a rather mixed genetic makeup.65

For a smaller feast, a hen (*puraibun*) or rooster (*pura*) will do. Only once in my time in New Ireland did we have poultry for a regular meal. The species used today are every bit as mixed as the pig species, for the same reason (in particular there have been attempts at cross-breeding the local poultry with Australorp). I did not see any effort directed at getting eggs from hens, although I was told that people sometimes seclude them to get the eggs (*sǝgǝr, dǝyǝr*); otherwise eggs are eaten when found.

Dogs are kept for hunting, but are not eaten (Kuot *kapuna* (m), *laibun* (f)). Cats are a recent introduction, much appreciated since they keep the mice and rat populations down, but they are also a nuisance as they steal food, and sometimes they are eaten themselves (there is a Kuot word *olǝma* which people say applied to a wild cat which is no longer there).

Other animals that were eaten in former days were possums (*gǝs*), fruit bats (flying foxes, *maua*), and many kinds of birds only some of which are still eaten, but only rarely. I have no information on the large rat species, so well loved by the Austronesians that they introduced it all over the Pacific (along with pigs and dogs). Hunting possum required special powers to make it easy to spot them, and one elderly speaker says his father performed magic on him and gave him the gift. To catch fruit bats, sometimes entire trees were felled, while the nocturnal bats were sleeping in it. Birds were caught in nets, but both birds and bats, and maybe possums were also shot with slingshots.68 I am told that snakes were also sometimes eaten. Wallabies (generic: *arigariga*, baby: *kotarau*, old: *ainabun*) appear to be extinct in New Ireland (possibly since the drought in 1914, see 2.3 above) and it is not clear how they were hunted.

65 The people of the Bismarck Archipelago particularly appreciate the fat on the pig, and Hahl (1980 [1937]) reports great disappointment from locals when a nice-looking big pig of an introduced breed was slaughtered and was found to be all meat and hardly any fat.

66 This word is shared with Nochi.

67 This word is shared with Nochi, which however does not have the lenition of voiceless stops, so that it is pronounced [kapuna] there, rather than [kaBuna] as in Kuot.

68 There were never bows and arrows in New Ireland.
There is no doubt that human meat was also eaten in the past (cooked in the same way that pigs are cooked; in the case of women the grilled breasts appear to have been considered a delicacy).

The sea also provides many sources of protein. There are many kinds of fish at the reef drop-off, which are speared by the men with multi-pronged spears, and in some places driven into nets (depending on the underwater topography), and night fishing with coconut-frond torches or nowadays with underwater flashlights also takes place on moonless nights. Lobsters and crayfish are often also caught at night. Shark and other big fish are sometimes caught further out to sea. Women use small spears to catch a particular fish that burrows into the sand, as well as octopus and squid on the reef, and collect various kinds of crabs, mussels and molluscs. Children often catch small fish on the reef or fresh-water crayfish in the river and grill them over fires on the beach. There were no crocodiles where I was.

Tinned fish and meat are common today, and are sold in the village store.

The gardens are about one to one and a half hours from the village, and most of the way is hillside, especially on the west coast. Each woman will go to work in the garden a few times a week and then return carrying some 20 kilos of garden produce (mainly sweet potatoes) in a basket suspended from her head. Often there is firewood as well, in a bundle on top of the basket, sometimes shoots to be planted in a different garden, leaves for cooking, and occasionally a toddler on top of it all. It is not surprising that sore necks and knees are a common problem. People often like going to the gardens as it is higher up and therefore cooler, and they can treat themselves to sugarcane and fruits without having to carry them back to the village. There is also more privacy than in the village. Some families even have small houses or shelters at the main garden area for the year, and sometimes stay up there for a few days to work.

The main gardening tools are bush knives, and for the women a digging stick (maibu) used in planting and when harvesting root crops. Men use axes as well as the knives when preparing a garden. It is obvious that garden preparation was a much harder job before metal tools, and it took a long time. Vines were severed with shell knives, and trees ringbarked and left until the roots rotted.

In cooking, three methods were traditionally used: steaming in lengths of bamboo, grilling or roasting over fire, and mumu (Kuot iouna). Mumu is the Tok Pisin word for stone oven, which in island Melanesia is above ground. It con-

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69 Powdermaker reports that it was the men’s job to collect firewood in Lesu (Powdermaker 1971 [1933] passim) but in Bimun either men or women could do it, and the women did it more often, or sent children to collect it in nearby locations. Dry coconut husks are also used for fires.

70 A systematic overview of agricultural patterns in New Ireland (defined by types, combinations and proportions of crops, as well as cultivation intensity, length of fallow period, etc.) is provided by (Hide, Bourke, Allen, Akus, Fritsch, Grau, Hobsbawn, Igua, Kameata, Lyon & Miskaram 1996).
sists of a ring of round riverbed stones, inside of which the ground is covered with smaller stones. Firewood is heaped on these and fire made, and another set of stones is piled on top. When these are very hot, they are taken off, the fire put out, food wrapped in leaves put inside, and then the hot stones are put back. The whole thing is then covered with leaves and sacking. For very big mumus for feasts, which may contain entire pigs and about half a cubic metre of sweet potato and taro, sand is also heaped over the mumu. Depending on the size of the food parcels, cooking may take between 20 minutes (for a thin one with sago pudding for instance) to two or three hours, and probably longer. Sometimes the mumu is prepared in the evening and left overnight. This method of cooking is clearly very ancient, and Kuot has a large vocabulary dealing with it: the different types of stones, the sticks to move the hot stones, the stick to put out the fire, cooking things badly by using too many leaves etc. With the introduction of saucepans, boiling has also become a common way of cooking, often with coconut milk.

Two main meals a day are eaten, in the morning and in the afternoon. If people stay in the village in the daytime they may cook in the day or eat leftovers from the morning; if they go to the gardens they often eat fruits and sugar cane and such there. The daily eating is not a highly structured event, and the family unit often do not eat at the same time, although the mother usually tries to get all children fed at the same time.

In the past, swapping markets between mountain dwellers and coastal dwellers were common. The mountain people would bring taro and game such as possum, while the coastal people would contribute fish and shellfish, shells, seaweed, and saltwater which was transported in lengths of bamboo and used for cooking.71

### 2.9 Housing

Households consist of nuclear families, and normally even a single elderly parent will have their own house. Sleeping houses are on posts, but this appears to have been introduced by the Australian administration. There is frequent comment on the progress of that reform in government patrol reports. All depictions of New Ireland houses in Friederici (1912) and Krämer-Bannow (1916) show houses standing directly on the ground. Further indication is that there is no word for floor (nor for windows, also an introduced feature), while there is a word for the beams that form the rectangle on the ground which form the base of the walls if the house is not on posts.

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71 Krämer-Bannow (1916: 92–94) describes such a market in Lamasong in the Madak-speaking area on the east coast, where the women from coastal Lamasong and Pini-kindu (Panagundu) and people from the (then) inland villages of Konos (Kanos) and Konobin would meet and trade. From her description, there seemed to be fairly fixed exchange rates, where for instance a bundle of four taros would buy a biggish bundle of seaweed, or four or five crayfish, while a medium sized fish would fetch ten taros.
The house inside is often partitioned into rooms, and usually has a spacious veranda on the outside. Visitors may go onto the veranda unbidden but not enter the house. On the whole, not a very large part of life is lived inside the house, and the word that corresponds to ‘home’ in a cultural sense is the word that also means ‘homestead’ or ‘village’ (*lakkuan*). The ‘home’ is the whole little compound including cooking house and the space in front of the house where many everyday activities take place; e.g. tubers are peeled and mats are woven; toddlers play, and if there is no work, men and women (together or separately) often socialise in that space.

Cooking houses are still made directly on the ground, often with beach sand covering the ground as this is considered cleaner. There is normally a cooking house for each family. It is not certain that there used to be separate cooking houses in the days when sleeping houses were not built on posts, and particularly in the mountains where nights get cool, people would have wanted to sleep near the fire. In the Lelet plateau, this remains the pattern, and I have also seen that some elderly Kuot people on the coast make beds in the kitchen and sleep near the fire; most cooking houses have benches to sit on and to put things on, and these are often used by temporary visitors to sleep on.

The most common building materials are bamboo for the walls, cracked lengthways so as to form flat strips which are then applied to a frame, with an inner horizontal layer and an outer vertical layer. Internal partition walls are often woven from strips of the outer layer of the sago leaf stalk. Floors are made in the same way as bamboo walls, but from betel-palm trunks which are tougher, and only in one layer; alternatively the trunk of a related palm tree (*'libung, limbum' in Tok Pisin*) is made into strips of about 6 cm and laid parallel to form the floor. Roofing consists of sago leaves folded across strips of bamboo, sewn into place with vines. Houses from “bush materials” have a life expectancy of about five years.

Gradually, so called permanent houses are appearing, on steel posts and with corrugated iron roofs, plank floors, and plasterboard walls; even louvre windows. These are still not very common away from Kavieng, as they represent a great deal of money; more commonly various hybrids are seen, in particular corrugated iron roofs on bamboo-walled houses. Iron roofs are appreciated because the sago leaves get eaten by insects and require some maintenance not to leak, but sago roofs are appreciated as they keep the house cooler. There are also many other combinations of building styles, such as one house all in bush materials but with louvre windows.

The houses follow a general ground plan in being rectangular, but beyond that there is a great deal of individual variation in terms of proportions, placement of steps, and decorative elements, and sometimes even two-storey houses are found.

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72 These are the windows made from parallel glass slats that can be opened like Venetian blinds, common in Australian-style building in the tropics.
The layout of the village is centred around a main square or open space, often with satellite smaller groupings adjacent to it. There are also some tiny settlements of only a few houses, and some people build their house in a solitary spot away from everyone else.

In the past a village had several men’s houses, usually belonging to a particular clan, possibly simply as a result of being build on clan-owned land – as far as I can make out access was open to men of other clans at least most of the time. Today, the houses of unmarried or widowed men are sometimes referred to as men’s houses, and it may be that it was traditionally not always a very imposing or large building. It has been difficult to get a reliable picture of the men’s houses, but it seems clear that they were generally surrounded by a low stone fence, that there may have been some graves within the fence, and that the words that translate as ‘men’s house’ (puoranǝma, lǝpuo, Tok Pisin ‘haus boi’) refer to the whole compound including the house, rather than the house itself. Within the fence, stones for taro magic, and skulls (?) and other implements for magic were kept, carvings for rituals were made there (or sometimes in special enclosures), and it was the centre of most of the male-dominated ceremonial activities (women had their own ceremonies but no “women’s houses”). The men would sleep in the men’s house or at least sometimes in their wives’ houses if married, and boys would spend increasing amounts of time there as well. A fire was kept there and the men did some of their own cooking; women also brought food to their sons, husbands or brothers in the men’s house. The restructuring of village life connected with the disappearance of men’s houses must have been quite extensive.

2.10 Dialects and other sub-types within the language

This study does not include detailed work on dialectal differences. I am aware only of a tendency for villages towards the north to differ in certain aspects from villages towards the south along the island. My own work was done in Bimun in the south and most of my material is from there, although material was collected also in Panaras in the north (and to some extent in Kabil which is in the south but on the opposite coast from Bimun).

The dialectal differences are fairly small, and there is no problem with mutual intelligibility between dialects (in the rest of this section I will use NK for northern Kuot and SK for southern Kuot). Some of the most salient differences of which I am aware are: The phonology differs in that NK does not allow /r/ in final position, while SK does (see 3.2.2.2). In terms of grammatical subsystems, the biggest difference is probably in the locationals and directionals, where more distinctions are made in NK; also some forms frequently have a final /s/ (NK tiros, takos ‘here’ = SK tiro, tako). NK extensively uses mani ‘what’ as a negation but SK only occasionally (cf. 1.1.7). There are also lexical differences:

73 Krämer (1925) gives a plan of the Madak-speaking village of Lamasong on the east coast (p. 21), and remarks that the men’s houses are small and nothing like the architectural wonders of New Guinea (p. 20).
sometimes an entirely different stem is used (e.g. NK **golai** ‘sick’ = SK **tafa**); in other cases there is a partial difference of meaning between the two dialects (e.g. **popori** NK ‘story’, SK ‘riddle’).

There does not appear to be a distinct boundary between these dialects. A bundle of features show some overlap in geographical extent, but isoglosses (or isophones) vary quite significantly, with Bimun as a centre for SK and Panaras as a centre for NK.

Speakers tell me that Kabil to the south on the east coast has the same dialect as Bimun to the south on the west coast. Differences are on a north-south axis (or rather NW–SE, along the island). There may have been a third factor in the past, namely mountain vs. coast (both Bimun and Kabil were originally bush villages). However, the number series from three villages reproduced by Kluge (1941; based on Friederici’s 1908 notes; cf. 1.3), show that numbers from the bush village Letatan in the southern area correspond quite well to those from Naiama, the northern-most Kuot village on the west coast, while those from the bush village Kun (Kul) in the north but on the east coast side of the mountains are somewhat different. This could be because the Kun people will have traded with non-Kuot coast dwellers on the east coast. Chinnery ([1930?]) travelled along the east coast with excursions inland, and recorded kin terms from the northern bush village Limalaua, and the southern bush village Letatan, and these overlap to a very large degree. Since he did not visit any west-coast villages, we do not know what the differences may have been on that dimension, but the data is consistent with the notion that mountain villages with coastal access to the east formed a partly separate continuum from those that traded with the west coast (which was also a Kuot area).

It is possible that there has been some dialect levelling because of people moving from the hills to the coast, and also through increased north–south mobility in modern times.

There are no distinct speech styles associated with the relative rank of the interlocutors (which is not surprising given that there is no inherent structure of rank in Kuot society). There is polite speech, such as is spoken in front of people with whom the speaker is in an avoidance relationship (see 2.6 above), but it does not have specialised vocabulary or other features making it a distinct form of the language. It is characterised simply by absence of frivolous topics and words, by a soft and subdued voice quality, and a respectful demeanour in general.

There is also no specialised language for hunting or fishing or other particular activities (such as exist in many languages of Papua New Guinea), and as far as

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74 This is in contrast to the quite elaborated systems that exist in some other languages whose speakers (like the Kuots) have kin-based avoidance relations, e.g., the Dyirbal “mother-in-law language”, which has a vocabulary entirely distinct from the everyday language (Dixon 1972: 32ff); nor is there anything like the Samoan respect vocabulary (e.g. Milner 1961).
I could establish there was none in the past. There are indeed notions of spirits in the bush or spirits of animals hunted, and there are practices to do with what one says and does not say when out on such activities – but there is no separate linguistic code.  

**Child-directed speech** has some particular phonological and morphological features (see 3.8), as well as some specialised vocabulary, some of which is regional and some of which belongs to Kuot.

We may also touch briefly on **songs** here. We can identify three main categories of songs in Kuot culture. First, there is a great variety of named types of songs that were used in ritual activities of various sorts and usually had dances with them; second, a large number of stories have little songs in them; and third, there were everyday songs that people made up to comment on the day’s events or just to amuse themselves in general. Only the last category tends to be entirely in Kuot. 

In ceremonial songs, there are very frequently formulaic stretches, similar across songs of a particular category, that are not meaningful in Kuot but function as a genre marker. For instance, in songs of the type *lakobuma*, sung at the wake for a dead bigman, the first line almost always begins with something like *tiŋalenagarevuŋ* (I do not segment this stretch, for lack of morphological information) or parts of it. I was told that the same sequence occurs in songs in other languages in the region as well. It could be that it is meaningful in one of the other languages, or in a now extinct language of the area. This type of song was not composed in the ordinary manner, but given to people in dreams.

As for songs in narratives, a good story should have a song, and most of them do. These are frequently not in Kuot. Sometimes speakers will recognise them as Nochi or Madak, for instance, but in other cases no one seems to know. This could be because of insufficient familiarity with non-adjacent languages, or because the song is in an extinct language, or because it simply is not in an actual language. The story songs differ from the ceremonial songs in that one usually does not find the recurring formulas, and also in that all or most of the song is often in the foreign language (or non-language). It is likely that the songs in

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75 Interestingly Eves (1998: 161) mentions the existence of such a language in the Madak-speaking Lelet area, but gives no linguistic clues apart from stating that it was different from the vernacular. For an example of another such language in Papua New Guinea, see Franklin (1972), who gives more of a linguistic analysis of the “pandanus language” of the Kewa (Engan).

76 Codrington (1969 [1891]: 334ff) speaks of several Austronesian languages of Vanuatu (New Hebrides) having separate dialects for songs. This, however, is a different matter, as in Kuot ritual songs it is only a few phrases which are not transparent; the rest of the song is in Kuot, although in some cases it is archaic.

77 Powdermaker (1971 [1933]) gives a number of songs and spells, parts of which are not translatable in Nochi, hypothesising that they are in a forgotten language of the past. However, it is quite typical for spells to contain incomprehensible bits; i.e., the actual “mumbo jumbo” component. If words deriving from a different language are
stories were at one point meaningful, but that they became corrupted as the story moved away from the area where that language was spoken, through telling and retelling. This would tally with some stories having songs in Kuot, some in Nochi and so forth. The songs usually occur if somebody is about to die in the story; they sing, and others hurry to their rescue, they sing again and so forth, and the rescuing party or person arrives just as the unfortunate person dies.

Songs contain imagery which points to semantic connections not always obvious in the spoken language. The form of expression is often condensed, especially in the ritual songs, and the omissions can be telling in terms of the presuppositions present in the culture and therefore also to a degree in the language. Further, there are grammatical omissions that turn up in songs which do not tend to occur in the spoken language – this could be because of the archaic nature of some of the songs (representing earlier structures in the language), or it could simply be a form of poetic licence to do with the genre.

The everyday songs, ditties, were mainly in Kuot, and later sometimes partly or wholly in Tok Pisin.

Today, the Kuots still sing a lot, but the majority of songs are church songs; either Tok Pisin hymns or those from the Kuanua (Tolai language) hymnbook used by the United Church. Quite a number of the latter have been translated into Kuot by the Kuot Hymn Book Committee led by Chung (1994). The church singing style has impacted also on the performance of traditional songs, which used to be sung in unison, frequently to the beating of a log drum or length of bamboo, but which are now often sung (if at all) in parts, without percussion, and with a regularised rhythm and tonality.

2.11 Language health

I estimate that there will be only a few Kuot speakers in 50 years. My estimation is based mainly on the situation I was able to observe in Bimun village, but it does appear to be similar elsewhere.

Most elderly speakers are considered good speakers, and younger speakers will refer to them for some inquiries; primarily to the men but sometimes to the women if the question concerns things such as names for types of taro.

Speakers of about 30 years of age grew up with Kuot as the main language of the village; that is, there is likely to have been Tok Pisin and perhaps Madak elements, but at least on the west coast the play language of the children was Kuot as late as the 1960’s. These speakers are full speakers, although they may lack obsolete vocabulary items and are sometimes shy to record stories for fear of elders criticizing their language. Still, I believe the variation between the older generation and 30-year-olds is essentially within the natural development used, they are often much distorted (as with “hocus pocus” from the Latin mass) and this would generalise to New Ireland too.
that will occur in all languages, especially given the big changes to life style that have occurred over the last century. For example, the village has moved from the mountains to the coast, gardens are prepared using bush knives rather than stone axes and shell knives, and the main crop is sweet potato rather than taro. It is not surprising that younger people would not know specialised terminology for preparing a taro garden in the old way, etc. However, everyone in this region is also fully fluent in Tok Pisin, and this intermediary generation does mix a lot of Tok Pisin lexemes into their Kuot (and probably even more when the visiting linguist is not listening).

In the next age group down, among people of around 18 or 20 years of age, we find a reduced form of the language. These people understand Kuot without trouble, but do not speak it often themselves; when they do, it is usually primarily in order not to be understood by speakers of Austronesian languages. I was not able to study this variety in detail, but, there is a tendency to regularise forms and to use the productive verb class (class I) over other verb classes and adjectives. Occasionally other stems are regularised into class I; for instance the adjective marakkes- ‘stinging, smarting’ is used as a class I verb. There is also reduction of the lexicon on the pattern of Tok Pisin. As is typical of pidgins and creoles, Tok Pisin does not have a very large lexicon, and often several senses achieved by different lexemes in old languages are subsumed under one lexeme in the creole. Semi-speakers transfer this simpler lexical structure to Kuot. For example, I was told that people of this age typically use one and the same lexeme, class I isin, for both ‘search for’ and ‘find’, following Tok Pisin ‘painim’, whereas Kuot generally has isin for ‘search’ and class II -op for ‘find’.

Children, finally, are in general not learning Kuot. They often have a good passive knowledge and can follow the main content of other people’s conversations, but even in families with two perfectly fluent parents in the 30-year age group, the parents will speak Tok Pisin with the children. As far as I was able to make out, this does not reflect any political stance, or idea that Tok Pisin is the language of the nation or the future or suchlike.

It is interesting to compare this situation with Don Kulick’s (1992) study of language shift in Gapun village in the Sepik province of Papua New Guinea. He describes cultural conceptions where the vernacular (Taiap) is associated with the idea of ‘hed’, which is in turn associated with backwardness, lack of education, paganism and irresponsible or selfish behaviour. Tok Pisin on the other hand is connected with ‘save’, which is associated with modernity, education, Christianity and responsible and community-oriented behaviour. This only partly resonates with what I observed among the Kuots. First, although a dichotomy similar to ‘hed’ versus ‘save’ is present in some respects (and there are similarities such as women being culturally construed as irresponsible and men as responsible) behaviour is not discussed in those terms. Second, there is presently no association of Tok Pisin with progress, and only a very weak, if any, association of Kuot with backwardness. One old man of about 60 years asked me if Tok Pisin was spoken in the world generally and seemed to hope and perhaps believe that that was the case. His children grew up speaking Kuot. His
daughter was taught in English in school and knows that Tok Pisin is confined to Papua New Guinea. Yet, her children are growing up speaking Tok Pisin.

Sometimes the argument is put forward that Kuot is too difficult for the children (this echoes the generally held opinion in the region that Kuot is a very difficult language; which is presumably because it has gender, cross-references objects as well as subjects, and has quite extensive agreement morphology, making it difficult for Austronesian speakers to acquire).

Some children do grow up with Kuot as their first language, for instance in the small village Okoiok not far from Bimun. As soon as the children are big enough to come and play in Bimun, around five or six years of age, they acquire Tok Pisin, and later they go to the local school which has children from both Madak and Kuot villages, and by then Tok Pisin is established as perhaps their strongest language, and definitely the one used in most interactions outside the family. (In the particular case of Okoiok, children are encouraged to keep speaking Kuot by a man who is in favour of the language surviving, and who, I am told, will chase the children with the cane if he hears them speaking Tok Pisin. That such measures are seen as necessary also says something about the chances this language has of surviving.)

In Bimun, my main informant Robert Sipa started making his two sons speak Kuot after working with me for a while. They were around three and five years old, and could speak it after about a year. They speak it with their parents, but of course Tok Pisin is the language used amongst the children in general.

Unfortunately, efforts towards language preservation are the exception rather than the rule (although one would wish they did not involve the cane). One main reason is the lack of identifying, or emblematic, function of the language; the village and clan being the more important units. Most people are simply not concerned about the language; others sometimes express concern but no very viable initiatives have so far emerged. Further, the loss of many traditional contexts of language use surely plays a role; for example there are no feasts where oratory skills can be demonstrated; without the men’s houses there is rarely story telling; and the old songs are not often sung.

Another qualification to the rough picture concerns a gender-based difference, where it seems that women/girls in the two younger groups are often better at the language than the men/boys. For some reason it seems that mothers speak Kuot to their daughters more often than to their sons, and that fathers do not speak Kuot to their sons or daughters to any noticeable degree. However, mothers tend to speak Kuot to their young daughters primarily when scolding them, which presumably does not help to give the language positive connotations for the girl in question.

One positive factor that has come onto the scene in the last few years is the local language preschool, part of a nation-wide programme to give the first two years of schooling in the local language. Children are meant to learn to read and write in the vernacular, and then have a bridging year to English as the language of instruction. The Kuot preschool in Bimun has been in place for a couple of
years, the teachers being local women who have had a few weeks of training. The fact that the school is there may have some positive impact on the status of the language. (However, the orthography is problematic, and the mix of children having Kuot as the first language through to children not knowing it at all makes it a challenging teaching situation; further, many children do not attend regularly.)

2.12 Orthography

Most Kuot speakers are literate in the sense of knowing the alphabet and being able to read and write a little bit, but a newspaper is tough going. Younger people can often read Tok Pisin and English reasonably well, but it is not a writing culture. Information that you are told by another person is trusted over written information. Even personal names are often inconsistently spelt.

There is no very consistent orthography widely in use for Kuot. There are a few publications in Kuot, produced by the bible translators Chul-Hwa and Kyung-Ja Chung of the Summer Institute for Linguistics together with committees formed among Kuot speakers. The publications are the afore-mentioned hymnbook, and two gospels and other portions of the New Testament (*Marko ga 1, 2 Timoti 1994*) (*Bais ulu mumuru ang Ioanes, ga 1, 2, 3 Babam ang Ioanes 1996*), as well as some literacy materials. The launch of a full bible translation is imminent at the time of writing.

The Chungs’ orthography writes the central vowel /ǝ/ as ‘a’ (collapsing it with the phoneme /a/), and is somewhat inconsistent in the spelling of lenited voiceless stops, in particular as regards the variant [y] of /k/, which is written ‘g’; while /g/ in my analysis is a separate phoneme.

Most speakers have learnt to write through the medium of English, and will use ‘v’ and ‘r’ for the lenited versions of /p/ and /t/ in most positions; sometimes ‘p’ and ‘t’ will be used word-initially even if the word follows after another word ending in a vowel. [y] on the other hand does not have a symbol in English (barring ‘g’ which is used for a different sound in the language), and people use ‘k’ to write it. There is no question that people are aware of the phonological relationship between the stops and their lenited variants, but people are used to ‘v’ and ‘r’ and are not happy with the idea of using ‘p’ and ‘t’ in positions where these sounds are lenited. Designing a practical orthography that takes into account both the speakers’ preferences and linguistic generalisations is not an easy task, and is not one of the aims of the present project.

Another area of inconsistency in native writing is that of affixes and clitics, where the former are only very rarely separated from their hosts in writing, whereas clitics may appear attached or unattached and are often inconsistent even within one text.
Kuot phonology is of low to medium complexity. There are thirteen consonants and six vowels; a few of the phonemes only have full phoneme status in some contexts, but elsewhere have allophonic relations to other phonemes. Syllables can be V, CV, VC or CVC. The morphology is essentially agglutinating, but there are some phonological and morpho-phonological processes that apply across morpheme boundaries. Stress is not predictable from general principles (i.e., it is lexical), and is manifested primarily as duration. It is distinct from pitch which functions separately to signal intonational information, where several clause types have their own characteristic pattern, including one for negated clauses. This chapter also deals briefly with phonological aspects of children’s and child-directed speech, hesitation, emphasis, other speech sounds and foreign sounds. It concludes with a discussion of areal phonology, as features of Kuot phonology are shared with some unrelated neighbouring languages.

Throughout this chapter, square brackets ([ ]) indicate phones or phonetic representation, i.e. pronunciation, while forward slashes (/ /) indicate phonemes or phonemic representation, i.e. the underlying system of distinctive sounds (for other uses of square brackets and slashes, which appear in glossing; see Principles of glossing).

### 3.1 Phoneme inventory

The thirteen consonants are given in Table 1 with allophones in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>labial</th>
<th>dental/alveolar</th>
<th>velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stops, voiceless</td>
<td>p (~v/β)</td>
<td>t (~r)</td>
<td>k (~ɣ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stops, voiced</td>
<td>b (~mb)</td>
<td>d (~nd)</td>
<td>g (~ng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasals</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n (l)</td>
<td>ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fricatives</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trill</td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some contrasts are shown in the following:

1. stops, voicing  
   - *pǝsok* white  
   - *tutur* ankle bone  
   - *kamin* yam  
   - *bǝsok* lung, liver  
   - *dudur* owl  
   - *gamin* eight

2. nasals  
   - *-m* 3pO.fut, verb class IIa  
   - *-n* 3dO.fut, verb class IIa  
   - *-ŋ* 3sO.fut, verb class IIa
(3) f vs. p, b
- *fu* blow (verb class I)
- *pu* put out fire ([yu]; verb class I)
- *bu* 1st person plural inclusive

(4) n, l, r
- *panan* bird’s nest
- *palen* shell (sp.; Tok Pisin ‘paipinga’)
- *palai* big food parcel of taro for mumu
- *pare* get up (verb class I)

The last group, /n/, /l/ and /r/, are not fully distinct in all contexts; this will be discussed in 3.2.2.4 and 3.2.2.5 below.

The six vowels are given in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>front</th>
<th>central</th>
<th>back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ə</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following set illustrates the vowel contrasts:

(5) *li*- 3rd person dual subject affix (verb class II and III)
- *le-* 3rd person dual object prefix
- *la* relator
- *lo* day
- *-lo* talk, tell, make sound (cl IIa verb)
- *lu* hole

The next several sections will be devoted to the production, distribution and processes of the phonemes, starting with consonants and going on to vowels.

### 3.2 Consonants

This section describes the production and phonetic variability of consonants. Their distribution is also given. Initial and final position refer to the syllable; the term medial indicates intervocalic position.

The beginning of stems of verb class II count as medial rather than initial, as they are never bare, but are obligatorily prefixed with subject prefixes, all of which have the form V or CV. This is supported by the existence of a stem `-pto` ‘hear’ – an initial cluster /pt/ is not allowed in Kuot, but the /p/ syllabifies with the prefix, leaving /ta/ as a separate syllable.

#### 3.2.1 Production and distribution of consonants

The voiceless stops are /p/, /t/, and /k/. They are unremarkable in terms of production: /p/ is bilabial, /t/ can be apico-dental or apico-alveolar, and /k/ is dorso-velar or occasionally dorso-uvular in the environment of a back vowel.
All three are unaspirated. They are unreleased in final position. Some examples are:

(6)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kit</td>
<td>[kit̚]</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tes</td>
<td>[tes]</td>
<td>salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piek</td>
<td>[piék̚]</td>
<td>baldness; bald person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kap</td>
<td>[kap̚]</td>
<td>stick to move hot mumu stones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three can occur initially, medially and finally.

They are subject to lenition when occurring intervocally (with some restrictions for /t/); this will be described in 3.2.2.

/k/ is occasionally pronounced [x] in very emphatic pronunciation.

The voiced stops are /b/, /d/, and /g/. They are produced in the same places and using the same articulators as the voiceless stops. They are optionally prenasalised. The nasal is usually homorganic, but not necessarily so; the factors involved are unclear at this stage. Nasalisation is more common in intervocalic position, but may occur with initial as well as medial voiced stops:

(7)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kabirɔna</td>
<td>[kabirɔn̚]</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sɔpda</td>
<td>[sɔpda]</td>
<td>type of song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔkbɔk</td>
<td>[bɔkbɔk̚]</td>
<td>hip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa-la ga pa-la</td>
<td>[palangavala]</td>
<td>1px-go and 1px-go ‘we went and went’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elderly speakers prenasalise more than younger speakers, particularly in initial position.

The voiced stops do not occur in syllable-final position, but are found only initially and medially.

The nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ are bilabial, apico-dental or apico-alveolar, and dorso-velar, respectively. They occur in initial, medial and final position. Examples of words with nasals are given in (8):

(8)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nur</td>
<td>coconut (fruit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buna</td>
<td>black sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilan</td>
<td>hand, arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maua</td>
<td>fruit bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimanɔm</td>
<td>ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bəbam</td>
<td>leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñof</td>
<td>nostril</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sɔŋa</td>
<td>magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuŋ</td>
<td>heron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fricatives /s/ and /ʃ/ are apico-dental and labio-dental respectively; /ʃ/ can also be bilabial ([ϕ]). They are never voiced. They occur in all positions. There are reasons to believe that they were not part of the phonology of an earlier stage of Kuot; this will be discussed in 3.2.3 below. Words showing /ʃ/ and /s/ in the various positions are:

(9)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sobuk</td>
<td>sugar cane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bəsok</td>
<td>lung/liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ños</td>
<td>feel sticky hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fagun</td>
<td>punt, punting pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afɔrɔt</td>
<td>rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mof</td>
<td>very high tide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lateral /l/ is apico-dental or apico-alveolar and is never palatalised or velarised but always has a clear quality. It occurs initially and medially, but is re-
alised as [n] in final position; see 3.2.2.4 below. It sometimes alternates with [n] in initial position (especially in grammatical morphemes but also in some other words); this is partly dialectal and partly idiolectal and will also be discussed in 3.2.2.4 below. In other stems /l/ is stable, e.g.:

(10)  
-\textit{lum} fall (verb cl II) \hspace{1cm} falo bamboo section/joint, cup
    (vs. -\textit{num} ‘walk’, verb cl II) \hspace{1cm} kala chase (verb cl I)

The trill /r/ is apico-alveolar. It occurs in medial and final position (but only medially in northern Kuot), e.g.:

(11)  
\textit{parabira} morning \hspace{1cm} \textit{iakur} vine, rope
    -\textit{buru} roast (verb cl IIb) \hspace{1cm} \textit{ibir} run (verb, cl I)

The relationship between /r/ and /l/, and the situation in northern Kuot will be described in 3.2.2.2 below.

Consonant distributions are summarised in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>V</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p, t, k</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b, d, g</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m, n, ŋ</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f, s</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Distribution of consonant phonemes.**

3.2.2 Processes and other types of variability applying to consonants

Certain consonants are subject to phonological (/p/, /k/) and morpho-phonological (/t/) processes which are discussed here, as are the contexts for non-application of the processes. This section also deals with the variation between [n] and [l], and the variation between [n], [l] and [r].

3.2.2.1 Lenition and voicing of /p/ and /k/ intervocalically

When occurring between vowels, /p/ and /k/ are lenited and voiced, and are then pronounced as the corresponding voiced fricatives [v ~ ð] and [y]. This rule applies across all types of boundaries (affix, clitic, word). For instance, the words \textit{parip} ‘faeces’ and \textit{kakok} ‘snake’ are pronounced as in (12) a. and b. when in isolation, or when consonants precede or follow. But if preceded and followed by vowels, the result is as given in (13), from a narrative about a snake who gave birth to a human girl:

(12) a. \textit{parip} [\textit{parip}] faeces \hspace{1cm} b. \textit{kakok} [\textit{kayok}] snake

(13) [\textit{ebatejara}t\textit{aya'yok} g\textit{aba}jomirjevar\textit{ivo}]\textit{e\textit{ba} te-i-ar\textit{a} u-t\textit{ta} kakok} FUT get.up-3fS-stm₂ 3f-ANAPH snake(f)
The initial /k/ of *kakok* and the initial and final /p/s of *parip* are lenited as a result of their position between vowels. The final /k/ of *kakok* is not lenited due to the following consonant (/g/).

The process occurs whenever /p/ and /k/ are found between vowels. However, there are a number of stems where non-lenited /p/ and /k/ occur medially, e.g. *up pau* [upau] ‘(piece of) meat’ and *nak kap* [nakap] ‘up’. These are treated as double consonants phonologically, whereby the adjacent consonant blocks the lenition. This is in parallel with strings arising from syntactic combination, such as the following:

(14) a. aia-\textit{p} am \hspace{1cm} \textit{[ajav am]} am
   \hspace{1cm} \text{grand.relation/forefather-nsg 3m.PossII.3p}
   \hspace{1cm} \text{‘his grandchildren/grandparents/forefathers’}

b. aia-\textit{p} pam \hspace{1cm} \textit{[ajap am]} am
   \hspace{1cm} \text{grand.relation/forefather-nsg 1px.PossII.3p}
   \hspace{1cm} \text{‘our grandchildren/grandparents/forefathers’}

Other support for treating these occurrences as double are words such as *kkep* ‘knee-cap, ten toea, shell breast ornament’ which also has the form *kkep* (corresponding to *kap kap* in some other parts of New Ireland). This is presumably a case of assimilation of place of articulation of the /p/ to the following /k/, and other cases may have the same history, or simply be instances of two consecutive identical consonants. Intervocalic occurrences of /pp/ and /kk/ in stems are significantly less common than /p/ and /k/ (pronounced \([v~\theta]\) and \([\gamma]\)).

Note that no lengthening is associated with the doubling of consonants.

The application of the lenition rule is universal across all types of boundaries, with three exceptions: child-directed speech; some verb stems; and some types of CV reduplication. These will be discussed in 3.2.2.3 after the section on lenition of /t/, and in 3.8.

3.2.2.2 Lenition and voicing of /t/, and the status of /r/

The phoneme /t/ requires a different analysis from the other two voiceless stops (/p/ and /k/) because of its behaviour in final position where it contrasts with /r/. First, in initial position, it lenites to [r] following a vowel, e.g.:

(15) \textit{u-tie} tinin \hspace{1cm} \textit{[urjen'nm]}
   \hspace{1cm} \text{3f-there dance.group(f)}
   \hspace{1cm} \text{‘that dance group’}

So far it is parallel to /p/ and /k/, and [r] in initial position is an allophone of /t/. But in final position, /t/ does not normally lenite:

(16) \textit{kar\textordmasculine} a\textordmasculine \hspace{1cm} \textit{[kar\textordmasculine t\textordmasculine]} (*[kar\textordmasculine r\textordmasculine t\textordmasculine])
   \hspace{1cm} \text{betel.nut 3m.PossII.sg}
   \hspace{1cm} \text{‘his betel nut’}
As we saw in (14), a following possessive marker causes /p/ (or /k/) to lenite, as indeed any following vowel, but this is not the case for /t/.

Only one productive morpheme causes a final /t/ to lenite: the non-singular suffix -(i)p:

(17) kit kit-ip [kirip’]
    fire fire-nsg

There is also a non-productive ending that is now but a lexically determined alternation in future variants of some stems in verb class II and III, which also causes a final /t/ in the non-future form to become [r], e.g.:

(18) lop-i-at eba lop-i-arig
    give.birth-3fS-stm2 FUT give.birth-3fS-stm2,fut
    ‘she gives/gave birth’ ‘she will give birth’

These are the only two contexts where a final /t/ in Kuot is lenited.

An important difference from /p/ and /k/ and their allophones is that while /t/ and [r] are also in an allophonic relation in initial position, they contrast in final position:

(19) kur wall
    kut big food parcel for mumu

We thus have to treat /r/ as a separate phoneme from /t/.

Since separate phonemes are set up for the sounds [t] and [r], they are written ‘t’ and ‘r’ in medial position (e.g. butamat [butamat] ‘clan’ (not *buttamat), and buruma [boruma] ‘laplap’). However, in some stems initial /t/ does not lenite, and this is indicated orthographically by ‘tt’ (e.g. u-tta [uta] ‘3f-ANAPH – that woman (mentioned earlier)’).

As mentioned above, stem-initial position in stems of verb class II counts as medial on account of being obligatorily prefixed. Here [r] will be considered /r/, e.g. in -riva ‘run (of liquid)’.

Northern Kuot differs from southern Kuot as regards the position of [r], which is not allowed in word-final position in that dialect. The [r] then has almost the same distribution as [v~β] and [ɣ], with one qualification, namely that the distribution of final [r] makes reference to the word while the distribution of [v~β] and [ɣ] make reference to the syllable. It may be possible to treat [r] in northern Kuot as a lenited variant of /t/ (and non-lenited medial /t/ in that dialect would be treated as /tt/, parallel to /pp/ and /kk/). Note however that /t/ in northern Kuot is still not entirely parallel to /p/ and /k/, as final /t/ does not lenite before a vowel except if that vowel is part of the non-singular suffix, just as in the southern dialect.

A stem ending in /r/ in southern Kuot has two correspondence patterns with stems in northern Kuot; either the northern variant ends in /n/ instead of /r/, or it has an extra vowel:
We will leave the correspondence of /r/ and /n/ till 3.2.2.5 below. The more common pattern is that of an additional vowel. It would be tempting to conclude that the three stops were initially parallel with regard to occurrence and lenition, and that the southern dialect has then dropped the final vowel after [ɾ] in many words, resulting in a phonemic contrast between /r/ and /t/ in final position. However, if we look at the distribution of vowels following [ɾ] in the northern dialect on stems that end in /ɾ/ in the southern dialect, it appears that the northern dialect is the one that has been innovative. Consider:

Two facts emerge from the examples given. First, we get /u/ after a syllable with /u/, /i/ after a syllable with /i/, and /ǝ/ or /a/ after any other syllable, with a tendency for /a/ after /a/ and /ǝ/ after mid-vowels. Words which have a final syllable /rV/ in southern Kuot do not show this vowel distribution (e.g. buri ‘swamp’, in both southern and northern Kuot), nor is it a pattern of final vowels following lenited /p/ or /k/.

Second, the extra vowel appears only word-finally, not syllable-finally, as shown by the last word(s) in each set. That is, we do not get *buruburu or *girigiri, but burburu and girigiri, etc. This is different from all other statements about Kuot phonology that refer to boundaries; these always make reference to the syllable or to particular morphemes, not to the word (cf. also 3.2.2.4 below).

Taken together, these factors indicate that it is the northern dialect which has started adding vowels after word-final /ɾ/, using an echo vowel, rather than the southern dialect having deleted final vowels after /ɾ/.

### 3.2.2.3 Non-lenition of voiceless stops

There are three circumstances where regular stop lenition does not occur. One is morphologically defined: in reduplication of an initial syllable; one is semanti-
cally defined: with verb stems meaning ‘break’ and some others; and one is pragmatic: in child-directed speech.

Reduplication is productive with verbs of class I (with a sense of multiple or extended action). In adjectives it is not productive, but occurs in some forms of many of the stems (e.g., in some persons but not in others, or in nominalisation etc.). What concerns us here is the reduplication of an initial CV syllable beginning in a voiceless stop. A syllable /pa/, for instance, with reduplication becomes /papa/ and following the rules of lenition the second /p/ should be lenited ([pava]). However, this does normally not occur but rather the second instance of the stop remains non-lenited ([papa]), as seen in these examples:

(22)  
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
pulai & \text{roll, lie (verb cl I)} \\
kan- & \text{big (adj)} \\
talinim/talinim & \text{oldness (inanimate, from adj. total-)} \\
\end{array}
\]

Reduplication of initial CV syllables with voiceless stops can thus be formulated as CV → CVCCV (rather than CV → CVCV).

Initial voiceless stops in some stems are optionally left non-lenited even when appearing intervocally. This concerns particularly verbs meaning to ‘break’ or ‘shatter’, where it is probably sound symbolic, but it also occurs in some other stems, e.g.:

(23)  
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
ma-ppusuk=ieŋ & [mapusuyieŋ] \\
3pO-break=3FS & \text{‘she breaks them’ (used of something hard with liquid in, such as eggs; also of crushing lice with nails)} \\
ma-kkirak=meŋ & [mak'rakmen] \\
3pO-chip=3pS & \text{‘they chip/crack them’ (e.g. of stones or plates)} \\
ma-ttarat=meŋ & [mat'ratemen] \\
3pO-spread=3pS & \text{‘they spread them’ (e.g. of firewood (to reduce heat) or of bamboo (to dry in the sun))} \\
\end{array}
\]

A third context where lenition often is not applied is in child-directed speech, which also contains other simplifications (see ??child-directed speech), for example:

(24)  
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
a-ko=naŋ! & \text{normal: [aɣonəŋ] child-directed: [akənəŋ]} \\
3mO-throw=2sS.fut & \text{‘throw it (away)!’} \\
lak-i? & \text{normal: [laxi] child-directed: [ləki] } \\
\text{where.is.3m} & \text{‘where is he/it(m)?’} \\
\end{array}
\]

The loan word rais (from English ‘rice’ via Tok Pisin), is also often pronounced [tais] in child-directed speech, reflecting the Kuot phonological system where /r/ is not a possible initial speech sound, although adults will say [rais] in normal speech.
This section will discuss the variability and non-variability of /n/ and /l/ (and [n] and [l]) in their various positions. It will be seen that the distinction is stable in medial position, but has some variability in stem-final position which makes reference to the syllable, and also some variability in initial position which makes reference to other factors.

The phonemic differentiation between /l/ and /n/ is the clearest where they occur in intervocalic (medial) position in the middle of stems, e.g. in these two stems from verb class II:

(25)  -piŋ dance  
     -pilŋ be ripe, ready to eat

Verb class II is a closed class, and is thought to be the oldest verb class in the language (cf. 1.1.2.1), so the fact that it contains minimal pairs such as these is an indication that the phonemic distinction between /l/ and /n/ in intervocalic position is not recent in the language.

As noted earlier, the stem-initial position in this verb class is never word-initial, since the stems are bound forms with obligatory subject prefixes, and in this respect stem-initial segments are intervocalic rather than initial. The presence of two minimal pairs for /n/ vs. /l/ in stem-initial position in this verb class thus provides support for the statement that the differentiation between /n/ and /l/ in intervocalic position is quite clear (while the situation in word-initial position is another matter):

(26)  -num walk  -na return  
     -lum fall  -la go

For one noun, age-based variation in medial position was reported: suanɔbɔlat/ suałɔbɔlat ‘stick for putting out fire in mumu’ where the pronunciation with [n] is used by older speakers and [l] by younger speakers.

As stated above, /l/ is not possible in final position, and segments pronounced [l] intervocally are realised as [n] when final, the two sounds being in an allophonic relation in this position:

(27)  gun [gon]  gun-up [gɔlɔp]  breadfruit

It would appear that resyllabification takes place, giving the non-singular form /gu.lup/ (see also (30) below).

Many words ending in /n/ in the singular have deviant non-singular forms (e.g. sg: muan, nsg: muap; see further 5.2), but of those that do form non-singular by addition of the non-singular suffix -(i)p (which assimilates to -up in some contexts), about half were given with the [n] retained in the non-singular, and the other half with [l]. However, although there is a tendency for particular words to have either [n] or [l], both are possible for all words ending in [n] in the singular and taking the non-singular ending, for instance:

(28)  kapuɔŋ [kaɔŋɔŋ]  kapuɔŋ-up [kaɔŋɔŋup] ~ [kaɔŋɔŋlup]  goatfish
There is no clear pattern to the distribution of [n] vs. [l] in the words that do show a preference, in terms of stress or surrounding phonemes, except for a tendency for words containing /l/ elsewhere to retain a final [n] when the non-singular is added.

That the [n] to [l] variation is productive is demonstrated by Tok Pisin loan words such as the following, where the non-singular forms are typically pronounced with [l]:

(29) sippun [sipun] sippun-up [sipolup'] spoon
sospen [sospen] sospen-ip sosapelip' saucepan

The data presented thus far has shown that there is not a sharp differentiation between the phones [n] and [l] in final position, but is not sufficient to argue for either /n/ or /l/ as the underlying phoneme. A further example shows that [l] is disallowed not only word-finally but syllable-finally. The example is the word for ‘blood’ in two different pronunciations:

(30) general pronunciation: olbuan blood
archaic(?) pronunciation: onbuan blood

The variant given as archaic was reported to me as the pronunciation of a particular speaker’s grandmother and may simply represent intra-speaker variation without indicating that the form was in more general use in earlier times. My data has no syllable-final instances of [l] (although [n] does occur, e.g. kunmora ‘scorpion’ and matakinkin ‘snail (sp.)’), but what is interesting about example (30) is the equivalence of [n] and [l] in the same word when a vowel is inserted. Somewhat similarly, there is dialectal variation in the form of the following verb stem:

(31) southern Kuot: kakkǝn carry child on shoulder (V cl I)
northern Kuot: kakkale

Younger speakers make a distinction between /l/ and /n/ in final position in Tok Pisin and in loans from Tok Pisin (e.g., ‘wilwil’, ‘bicycle’) while elderly speakers frequently pronounce both as [n], and for instance the Kuot-speaking village Kabil on the east coast is usually pronounced [kabin] by the older group. (The village was established in the 20th century in Nochi-speaking territory, and the place name is presumably in the Nochi language.) Nevermann, publishing some of Walden’s notes from 1907–1909 (Walden & Nevermann 1941), uses the spelling “Kul” for the (former) village Kun in the north of the Kuot territory, suggesting that the northern dialect may have been less strict in disallowing a final [l].

A further set of words show a variation of [n] to [l] associated with the non-singular. This concerns some of the nouns in the special declensions, where the declension-identifying ending contains [n]; this is sometimes converted to [l] in the non-singular, e.g.:

(32) sg: kasɔnǝma mango tree
    nsg: kasolǝp
sg: ǝlganǝm nut (sp.)
    nsg: ǝgalup
sg: marabuna nipple
    nsg: marabulǝp
Another context triggering the variation is the future forms of some verb stems in classes II and III. This variation is not productive, but in all cases where a non-future stem ends in 
[n] and has a future form involving an addition to the non-future form, the [n] becomes [l], e.g.:

(33)  
tarak-u-ban  tarak-a-boluy
vomit-3mS-stm2  vomit-3mS.fut-stm2.fut
‘he vomits/vomited’ ‘he will vomit’

(34)  
me-in  me-iluy
3pS-stand  3pS-stand.fut
‘they stand/stood’ ‘they will stand’

Since the morphological variation here is no longer productive, these examples serve to show that the phonological variation “frozen” in the forms is likely to be quite old in the language.

It should be pointed out that not all morphemes following a final [n] trigger the alternation; only the non-singular on nouns (and the obsolete future marking on some verbs) do so.3

In initial position, there is again an amount of variability, although most words beginning in [n] or [l] are stable. The variation here is different from that found in final positions, and depends on factors such as the grammatical class of the morpheme, and the dialect and age of the speaker. There is also inter-speaker variation among speakers of the same generation and dialect, and in some cases variation in the speech of an individual.

Grammatical morphemes, and to an extent lexical morphemes from closed classes, are more likely to be changeable than open-class lexical ones. There also appears to be more variability in the northern dialect, so that [l] in the southern dialect frequently corresponds to [n] in the north. For example, while speakers in the south mainly use the form laurup for the adverb ‘down’, this is often (but not always) rendered as naurup in the north. Particular other forms are prone to variation. Thus for instance nǝmo/lǝmo ‘want, say, be about to; complementiser’ is subject to inter-speaker variation whereby one speaker of about 30 years of age in Bimun in the south consistently uses nǝmo in all functions, while another Bimun speaker of the same age consistently uses lǝmo (the first is male and the second is female, but I have found no general gender correlation of this variation). One speaker of about 30 years of age, in Panaras in the north, consistently uses the form [ni] for the third person dual subject prefix in verb classes II and III which is normally li- (and [niɔŋ] for the subject enclitic =lioŋ of verb class I).

There is also intra-speaker variation, so that one speaker may vary within his or her speech, although this is rather limited. For example in one story by an elderly Bimun speaker, lǝmo occurs once in the sense ‘want/be about to’ while the

3 In this, final [n] behaves like final /t/, whose allophone [ɾ] is triggered in precisely these contexts, but unlike /p/ and /k/ whose allophony is triggered in any intervocalic position.
same sense is expressed with nǝmo five times (in the same text, nǝmo also stands for ‘say’ ten times). The generational factor is present in the pronunciation of the place name Namatanai (further south in New Ireland), which older speakers often pronounce [lamatanaj] whereas younger speakers use an initial [n].4

The local preposition na ‘in, at’ is always pronounced as [na] ~ [nǝ], but is likely to bear a relation to the first part of several inherently locative nouns which do not take a local preposition, e.g. lǝbinim ‘beach’, lapuo ‘men’s house’, lakkuan ‘village’ and lauburien/laurien ‘shade’. Although the initial [l] in these words is stable (in my experience) it seems likely that they are historically formed by na attaching to the beginning of a stem.5

In summary, the /n/ vs. /l/ distinction is fully contrastive in medial positions, allowing us to set up separate phonemes, whose presence in phonologically medial position in verb class II indicates some antiquity in the language. The distinction is rather more fluid at boundaries, although a syllable-final instance is always realised as [n].

This raises the question of how to represent fluid or potentially fluid segments. It is assumed that there is a phonemic distinction but that there are some fluctuations in some morphemes for some speakers. For initial positions, most instances are stable and are represented by ‘n’ or ‘l’ as recorded for the particular morpheme. Note also that intra-speaker variation is rather limited, so that the system of each speaker appears to have either /n/ or /l/ in initial position for almost all morphemes. In other words, the variability in this position is smaller on the level of individual speakers than for the speech community as a whole. Variable segments are written reflecting the variation, so that for instance nǝmo/lǝmo and laurup/naurup are written as pronounced by the speaker from whom the example is taken. In the description of morphemes, one form is taken as basic for the sake of simplicity, and alternative pronunciations are indicated.

As regards [n]/[l] in final position, there is a neutralisation of the contrast, and perhaps the best representation would be as an archiphoneme /L/. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the same principle as for initial position is followed, writing ‘n’ or ‘l’. Mostly it is ‘n’, but there are some effects for non-singular forms of nouns. Where the non-singular ending is segmentable, the stem will be written with final ‘n’ regardless of pronunciation (tiin-iap ‘dance group-nsg’ [tiniliap]). In non-segmentable forms, such as those given in (32) above, the non-singular will be written with ‘l’ if that is how it was recorded.

4 Younger speakers are more literate and may be influenced by the spelling in this case.

5 There is also another word for ‘men’s house’, puoranǝma, where the first part is likely to be the same as /puo/ in lapuo.
3.2.2.5 [n], [l] and [r]

As mentioned in 3.2.2.2 above, the northern dialect of Kuot does not allow word-final [r], and sometimes has [n] where the southern dialect has [r], e.g.:

(35) southern Kuot northern Kuot
    kiner kinen    climbing rope; noose for catching shark
    namur namun    early (used only with parabira ‘morning’)
    dudur dudun    shake something rickety (verb cl I)
    ker ken    to husk (coconut or betel nut; verb cl I)
    suar suan    fill a bag or basket (verb cl I)
    kosar kosan    build, make (verb cl I)

As reflected in the proportions of examples, this variation is the most common in verbs, but occurs in words of other classes as well.\(^6\)

In another case, a medial [l] in the southern dialect corresponds to [r] in the north, namely the negator tǝle/tǝre. Given the relation between [n] and [l], [r] ~ [n] and [r] ~ [l] can be seen as the same variation, rather than two separate relations of [r] to other phones. However, it may be pointed out that in the first case, [r] is in the southern dialect and [n] in the north, while for tǝle the pronunciation with [l] is the southern one and [r] is from the northern dialect.

Within and across dialects, it has been established that the dental consonants are somewhat unstable, although there are patterns to most of the variation. Thus /t/ goes to [r] in particular environments, and /l/ goes to [n]. In interdialectal variation a final /r/ in the south corresponds to /n/ or /rV/ in the north – this variation however is not predictable.\(^7\) These variations are taken as dialectal, and words will be written as pronounced in the instance transcribed.

One further process concerns consonants, namely the labialisation harmony of the non-singular morpheme triggered in part by final /p/ and /f/. This will be described in 3.3.4 below.

3.2.3 /f/ and /s/: newer phonemes in the language

Although not infrequent, /f/ is the least common of all consonants in a count of wordlist tokens, and is likely to be a late addition to the system. In some cases, the words appear to be loans, e.g.:

---

\(^6\) The last item, kosar~kosan, was taken down by Ross as kosera (which he writes koseta), indicating that there may be some variability in the correspondences for particular words. His informant was from Kama in the northern Kuot-speaking area (Ross 1994: 565).

\(^7\) I am aware only of one variation involving /d/, namely in the directional stem -dǝŋ ‘down; northwest’, which in some morphological contexts has the form -rǝŋ.
In other cases I have not been able to find cognate forms in neighbouring languages (although available materials are scarce so there may still be related forms to be uncovered for some of these), e.g.:

(37)  afǝrǝt rain
  fǝlo bamboo section/joint, cup
  lifur palm tree (sp.; Tok Pisin limbum/libung)
  fikanǝm coal, ember
  mof very high tide
  kuf smell nice (verb cl I)
  tǝfa be sick (southern Kuot; verb cl I)
  fǝfut come out; pull out (verb cl I; of hair or feathers)
  faka make fire (verb cl I)

These examples are all from the open word classes (nouns and verb class I). Interestingly, there are no instances of /f/ in the closed word classes: verb classes II and III, adjectives, adverbs, locationals and directionals, nor in bound morphology such as pronominal forms.

As for /s/, it is a very common phoneme in the language, but similarly absent or infrequent in most of the closed word classes. There is no instance of /s/ in verb class II (the oldest in the language); only four instances in verb class III (all in the first part of the stem: siŋ-ǝlǝ ‘show’, sǝp-irǝ ‘flick sand or ground into someone’s eyes’, sip-op ‘come loose’ and sirip-ǝɾǝ ‘remove smaller leaves from midrib of frond; remove thorns from pandanus leaf etc.’). In these classes, there is clearly an under-representation of the phoneme, given its frequency generally in the language. There are eight stems with /s/ among adjectives (kiris- ‘fatty of nuts’, tes- ‘salty’ (from Austronesian), sasarap- ‘wet’, is-ǝ ‘rotten’, marakkes- ‘stinging’, sikǝ ‘worm-eaten’, susukǝl ‘never stops quarreling’, and musey- ‘makes skin itch’) – this is only a little lower than among nouns, but is within the limits of probability given the size of the class. Only two of 44 adverbs have /s/: maset ‘well’, and busit ‘always’. Among demonstratives, there is one bound stem -sik ‘DEM’ with /s/ – this stem has quite a different form from the rest of the paradigm. In the northern dialect, /s/ is also sometimes added to the end of locationals (e.g. takos = tako, ‘here’), but the stems as such contain no instances of /s/. Further, there is no /s/ in the pronominal morphology, nor in the possessive paradigm. Among numerals, aras ‘two’ has an /s/; this word is used in counting, but none of the words used as numeral determiners have /s/ (‘two’ in this series is narain). Some of this information is

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8 For this word it may be noted that -ma signals one of the special declensions, and is likely to have been added to the stem (the non-singular is kifǝp, and there is also a feminine variant kifebun). The Madak and Lakuramau terms appear to go back to the same protoform *kusupe (Malcolm Ross, pers. comm.).
The table gives the number of stems containing one or more instances of /s/ in each class. Nouns and verb class I are the only open classes and are shown both separately and added together.

Table 4: The frequency of /s/ in some Kuot word classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>nouns</th>
<th>V I</th>
<th>N+V I</th>
<th>V II</th>
<th>V III</th>
<th>adj.</th>
<th>adv.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of class</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># stems w. /s/</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of class</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of /s/ and /ʃ/ suggests that they came into the language at a stage when many parts of the grammar already had much the form we see today: pronominal forms and locatives were established, and verb class II closed but class III and adjectives still open (although the latter are both closed today).

Swadesh’s 100-word basic vocabulary list for Kuot gives nine words with /s/ (five nouns, three verbs of class I and one numeral), and one word with /ʃ/ (noun).

It may also be mentioned that neither /s/ nor /ʃ/ is voiced in intervocalic position, unlike the voiceless stops (which are the only other voiceless consonants in the language), and in contrast to /s/ and /ʃ/ in neighbouring languages.

3.2.4 The roles of consonants in the grammar

Some of the consonants of Kuot, while appearing in many kinds of words, also have particular associations. Thus /t/ is common in the paradigm of locatives and directionals (from which demonstratives are also formed); and bilabials are associated with plural – /p/ for non-singular on nouns, and /m/ for third person plural verb agreement and adjective suffixes. /b/ signals non-singular inclusive in the cross-referencing morphology. Both /n/ and /l/ stand for dual on nouns and in verbal and adjectival cross-referencing, and /ŋ/ is part of the third person singular marking in cross-referencing (in other cases marked by vowels) and possessor marking. Of the remaining phonemes, /k/, /d/, /g/ and /r/ do not have systematic associations of this kind, and /s/ and /ʃ/ do not participate in grammatical morphology.

3.3 Vowels

The six vowels of Kuot were set out in Table 2 above, and will be described here, as will the processes that apply to them.

/a/ This vowel has full phonemic status on the evidence of minimal pairs such as:

(38) 
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{gas} & \quad \text{possum} \\
\text{gas} & \quad 1. \text{bush spirit}; 2. \text{story}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{marola} & \quad \text{star} \\
\text{marola} & \quad \text{yawn (verb cl I)}; \text{yawning}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^9\) This column is based on an incomplete corpus.
However, /ǝ/ is also a common allophone of /a/, and sometimes of /e/ and /o/, particularly in unstressed syllables. It has therefore often been difficult to establish whether a phone [ǝ] represents the phoneme /a/, or the phoneme /ǝ/, and this is an area where some inconsistencies remain in the analysis of Kuot phonology, as it has not been possible to check every single lexical item. Further, /ǝ/ has a low level of salience to many of the speakers (possibly in part because it has no separate written representation, instead being written with ‘a’), which makes it difficult to investigate. In other cases /ǝ/ vs. /a/ is a matter of analysis.

Although /ǝ/ may be stressed it is never long, for instance in:

(39)  sǝ'gar  egg
      'tarǝnǝm  opening in fence, stile

I have no examples of it in V or VC syllables.

/a/ is frequently realised as /ǝ/ in unstressed syllables. Many words also have variable pronunciation, where either /a/ or /ǝ/ is acceptable, e.g. in:

(40)  ga ~ gǝ  and
      ulaj ~ ulǝj  moon

/a/ is the vowel that shows the clearest phonetic lengthening in stressed syllables, particularly in a non-final stressed syllable, mostly before /r/ but also before other continuants, for example in words like these:

(41)  'barǝnim  reef at low tide; year
      'lasup  stick for husking coconuts

That stress alone is not enough to cause lengthening is clear from the fact that /a/ in following words is not long, and is also a little more open in quality than in the words in (41):

(42)  ku'dat  wooden fence
      ki'lan  arm

/e/ is realised as [e] ~ [ɛ]. There appears to be free variation between these, but with a tendency for [e] to appear in a final open syllable, and perhaps a tendency for [ɛ] in a non-final syllable, for instance:

(43)  sige  [sɪ'ge:]  spoon
      epǝ  [ɛpə]  mumu (northern dialect)
      maset  [ma'sɛt] ~ [ma'sɛt]  well (adv.)

/e/ almost never occurs in an unstressed syllable. Only in a very few words does there appear to be an unstressed /e/, for example:

(44)  lekke  [le'ke]  front (adv.)
      udebnǝn  [ude'bǝn]  banana plant (generic for species of feminine gender)
      espa'n  [es'pan]  sun

Some nouns have inherent reduplication (i.e., appear to be the result of reduplication although it is not productive for the word in question). It is interesting to note that the syllable that bears the stress has /e/, while the other syllable does not:
Historically, it may be the case that /ǝ/ was in an allophonic relation not only with /a/ but also with /e/ and possibly /o/, but note that there is, at least synchronically, a phonemic opposition, as in mola ‘crowd’ vs. mela ‘in-law’. (Native speakers’ spelling of e.g. dadema as ‘dadema’ may be taken as support for the suggestion that /e/ is phonemically ruled out in this position, and not simply pronounced at less than cardinal value.)

/i/ is pronounced [i] or [i]. The variation is largely free, and depends on factors such as speed of speech, although there is some correlation with stress, e.g.:

(46)  

\[ ka'di \] bamboo \[ kadi'bp \] bamboo plants

When adjacent to another vowel, /i/ normally functions as a glide (see also 3.3.2 below), e.g.:

(47)  

\[ i'onɔma \] ['jɔnɔma] 3fs-sit/live/stay – she sits (/lives/stays; sat/lived/stayed)  
\[ afaii \] [a'faji] raintree  
\[ kei \] [kejn] type of basket

/u/, where syllabic, varies from [u] ~ [ʊ] ~ [y], in some lexemes even to [i]:

(48)  

\[ duri \] [duri] ~ [dyri] ~ [diri]  
\[ dus \] [dus] ~ [dys]  
\[ nuna'map \] [nuna'map] ~ [nynəmap]  
\[ musgiu \] [mos'gju]  
\[ pisguma \] [pis'guma]

A contrast possibly analysable as length has been found in a very few monosyllables with /u/; see 3.3.1 below.

When adjacent to another vowel, /u/, like /i/, is usually realised as a glide (see also 3.3.2 below), e.g.:

(49)  

\[ u-abɔ \] ['waba] 3mS-climb – he climbs/climbed (verb cl II)  
\[ uwa \] [u'wau] cloud

/o/ is realised as [o] ~ [ɔ]. It is uncommon in unstressed syllables but not as rare as the other mid vowel, /e/. Like /a/, it is phonetically lengthened in a non-final stressed syllable before /r/ and in a stressed final open syllable, e.g. in:

(50)  

\[ 'korɔŋ, frɔlo \] end  
\[ bamboo section/joint, cup \]

Examples of /o/ in unstressed syllables include:

(51)  

\[ o'binəm \] canoe  
\[ niro'bu \] coconut palm  
\[ 'kobon \] idiot, crazy person  
\[ 'kabo \] seed

According to my informant (Robert Sipa), /o/ is increasing in the pronunciation of younger speakers, with many forms that used to be pronounced with /ǝ/ now occurring with /o/, e.g. pukɔma [puɣɔma] ~ [puɣəma] ‘hill, mountain’.
3.3.1 Length?

Only two minimal pairs have been found in the language whose contrast could perhaps be described as length, and only in one vowel. But instrumental analysis gives only weak support for this interpretation, and another possibility would be to say that the difference lies in one member of each pair having inherent stress (cf. 3.5 below). It has not been possible to explore all conceivable analyses for this distinction here.

All four lexemes concerned are from verb class I. In extremely clear pronunciation, they may be transcribed as follows:

(52)  
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{duk} & \text{[du:k']} \\
\text{d}uk & \text{[d}ʊk'] \\
\text{ut} & \text{[u:t]} \\
\text{ut} & \text{[u't']}
\end{array}
\]

\text{thunder}  \\
\text{break (of rope)}  \\
\text{be like (constr. with prep. bo 'on')}  \\
\text{be full (from food)}

However, the length and quality differentiation is not strongly supported, and the forms will be differentiated only through their meanings in the following.

The contrast has a very low functional load, occurring only in these pairs, and is also not perceptually very salient. In fact, the pairs were only discovered on inquiring about the apparent homonymy, but the difference was borne out by different speakers at different times and was consistent. Attempts to elicit more pairs were fruitless, as were attempts to find other minimal pairs in the data contrasting on this parameter, with /u/ or with other vowels.

The pair for \text{duk} was recorded with two different speakers in controlled syntactic contexts to investigate the nature of the difference. This was done as part of a recording session investigating stress, and in order to avoid exaggerated differentiation by the speakers the two sentences were not adjacent in the recording. The result for each with the third person singular feminine subject enclitic (referring to \text{iakur 'rope' which is feminine for the sense 'break', and functioning as the Ø subject marker for 'thunder', i.e. 'it is thundering'}) is given Figure 1.10

\[\text{Figure 1.10}\]

\[\text{All recordings presented in this chapter were digitised with Speech Analyzer 1.5 (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Acoustic Speech Analysis Project), which was also used to produce the graphs. The pitch extractions shown in Figure 7, 10 and 13 were double checked in Waves™ (Entropic/Microsoft) and found to be stable.}\]
Figure 1a: Intensity and pitch of a minimal length (?) pair (speaker: RS). Raw waveform, F₀ pitch and spectrogram.

Figure 1b: Intensity and pitch of a minimal length (?) pair (speaker: AT). Raw waveform, F₀ pitch and spectrogram.
The recording conditions were not optimal for phonetic analysis (on an open veranda in Bimun village) and pitch extraction has not worked in the first syllable in Figure 1b.

From the graphs, it seems clear that the length of each stem is equivalent relative to the following ending. However, for both speakers, it is the case that both syllables are longer in absolute time in the second word in each pair, that meaning ‘thunder’. This opens up the possibility that we are dealing with stress, as there is good reason to believe that stress in Kuot is manifested primarily through duration, and that high pitch is not a criterion for a stressed syllable (see 3.5 below), although we do also find greater pitch movement in the second member of the pair for both speakers. The subject enclitics of verb class I also frequently attract stress, and it could be the case that a situation with two stressed morphemes causes the whole grammatical word to be longer. A prosodic feature “tense” over the entire syllable could be another possibility, but has not been investigated.

3.3.2 Vowel sequences and sub-phonemic glides

Two identical adjacent vowels across a morpheme boundary merge and do not result in a long vowel, e.g.:

(53) na-ar-a-ŋ! [naran]
     2sS.fut-take-3sO.fut
     ‘take it!'

The following vowel sequences involving high vowels pronounced as glides are attested in stems (i.e. excluding combinations arising from affixation):

(54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>off-glides</th>
<th>on-glides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td>/ie/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kein</td>
<td>ukiem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basket</td>
<td>knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beima</td>
<td>ubiem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dove (sp.)</td>
<td>sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td>/ia/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aïnabun</td>
<td>iakur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old wallaby</td>
<td>sokikiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saïk</td>
<td>pianm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be lost (of things; V cl I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laï</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>husband; grow/old man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/oi/</td>
<td>/io/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokkoin</td>
<td>ionim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whistle (V cl I)</td>
<td>deep sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boboïma</td>
<td>bioma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crab (sp.)</td>
<td>shark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/iu/</td>
<td>/iunm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boboïma</td>
<td>leparabiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crab (sp.)</td>
<td>musgiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/au/</td>
<td>/ua/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auru</td>
<td>uan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eel (sp.)</td>
<td>muan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaus</td>
<td>muaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alpinia (ginger sp.)</td>
<td>betel pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kauma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bee (? sp.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ou/</td>
<td>/uo/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lou</td>
<td>uon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man’s sister</td>
<td>married couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kouma</td>
<td>danuot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taro leaf as vegetable</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lopo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men’s house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only one diphthong containing /ə/ has been found: in the word *nǝi* ‘scorpion fish’ (although /ou/ is often pronounced [ɔu]), and only one case of /ui/ with /u/ as an on-glide: *tuin* [twiŋ]; these are marginal enough not to have been included in (54). Of the remaining logical possibilities, /eu/, /iu/ and /ui/ are not attested among the off-glides, and /ue/ is not attested among the on-glides.

/au/ and /ou/ are given in parentheses because there is very little constriction, so that the last segment is [o] rather than [w].

Wherever possible, the sequence is given in three positions in the example: syllable-initial, in a closed syllable, and following a consonantal onset. It can be seen that off-glides do not make up syllables on their own, with the exception of /ai/.

Of the attested sequences, /ua/ is the most frequent, followed by /ai/ and /au/, while /oi/, /ou/, /io/ and /ua/ are the least common.

In arriving at the analysis that the vowel sequences in example (54) are not diphthongs or vowels + glides, the following definitions have been used (adapted from Clark & Yallop (1995: 74)):

**DIPHTHONG:** a single vowel phonemically but with two articulatory targets, making up the nucleus of a syllable in the same way a single vowel in the language would

**VOWEL + GLIDE (or GLIDE + VOWEL):** one of the sounds constitutes the peak of the nucleus, while the other, usually a high vowel, has less prominence (and in some cases also consonantal features)

The main argument against a vowel + glide analysis is the fact that vowel sequences produced through affixation are also pronounced as vowel + glide combinations, e.g.:

\[(55)\]  
\[i-abo \quad [ˈjabo] \quad \text{she climbs} \quad \text{(but} \quad i-la \quad [ˈila] \quad \text{she walks)}\]
\[u-abo \quad [ˈwabo] \quad \text{he climbs} \quad \text{(but} \quad u-la \quad [ˈula] \quad \text{he walks)}\]

The underlying forms of the subject prefixes here are /i/ and /u/, but before another vowel they are pronounced as the glides [j] and [w].

Syllabification is both an argument against diphthongs and a potential argument for a glide analysis, in particular for the on-glides. Where a syllable is made up of a segment pronounced as a glide plus a vowel, the syllable is equivalent to one with a consonant and a vowel, and the following pairs are rhythmically very similar:

\[(56)\]  
\[ionim \quad 	ext{deep sea} \quad maua \quad 	ext{fruit bat}\]
\[bonim \quad 	ext{name} \quad məlo \quad 	ext{crowd}\]

In sequences of more than two vowels, no more than three belong to the same syllable, but only one per syllable has full syllabic value:
Syllable structure is the only respect in which these segments resemble consonants. In all other aspects, they behave as vowels, as we shall see. I will argue that they are phonemically vowels, and that the glide qualities observed in some contexts are sub-phonemic.

It was mentioned above that two identical vowels merge when adjacent, without resulting in length (example (53)). The same is true of the segments under consideration here, as shown in the following example with the class III verb u-i, ‘see’:

(58) $u-u-i\
\quad \quad \quad [wi] \quad and \quad u-i-i\
\quad \quad \quad see-3mS-stm_2 \quad see-3fS-stm_2$
‘he sees/saw’ ‘she sees/saw’

Segments pronounced as glides further behave as vowels in terms of conditioning lenition. In the following example, the possessive (1st person possessor-3rd person feminine possessee) tuŋ is pronounced with [r] following a “glide” in poi ‘child’, and after a vowel, while after a consonant lenition is blocked giving [t]:

(59) $poi\quad tuŋ\quad [pojrŋ]
\quad child(m/f) \quad 1s.PossII.3f
\quad \quad \quad ‘my daughter’$
$ie\quad tuŋ\quad [jerŋ]
\quad knife(f) \quad 1s.PossII.3f
\quad \quad \quad ‘my knife’$
$naip\quad tuŋ\quad [najptŋ]
\quad knife(f) \quad 1s.PossII.3f
\quad \quad \quad ‘my knife’$

Similarly, a final /k/ is pronounced [ɣ] before a “glide” and a vowel alike, but as [k] before a consonant:

(60) $tətak\quad iakur\quad [tətay'jyor]
\quad little \quad rope/vine
\quad \quad \quad ‘a little rope’$
$tətak\quad ikunəm\quad [tətay'i'yunəm]
\quad little \quad root
\quad \quad \quad ‘a little root’$
$tətak\quad kimuom\quad [tətə'kimwəm]
\quad little \quad stick.of.firewood
\quad \quad \quad ‘a little stick of firewood’$

Moreover, a sequence ending in /u/ in a closed syllable triggers labialisation harmony in a following non-singular suffix just like it normally does (see further 3.3.4 below):
To further investigate the nature of the vowel sequences, a speaker was asked to pronounce some words very slowly. The results are somewhat ambiguous, but do seem to establish two things. The first is that at least some sequences are not diphthongs, since they can be split up, e.g.:

(62) careful pron. normal pron.

danuot /da.nu.ot/  [danwot] river
muabarì /mu.a.ba.ri/  [mwabarì] sun
lèilòm /lè.i.lom/  [lɛjɔm] dolphin

The second result is that some of the closed syllables containing vowel sequences (CVVC) may indeed be regarded as single syllables rather than two separate syllables (CV+VC), as they were often not split up, even when consisting of more than one morpheme:

(63) lakabuon  [lɔ.kə.bwon] stick of firewood
me-abu-am  [mə.jə.bwa.m] 3pS-put-3pO – they put them
me-api-am  [mə.jə.vja.m] 3pS-carry-3pO – they carry/carryed them

(The process whereby a me-+a becomes [moja] is discussed in 3.3.3 below.) It is possible that the number of syllables is also relevant here.

The pronunciations given in (55) were acceptable to speakers in slow tempo, but I was told that for instance the adjective kukku- ‘angry’ with the third person masculine suffix is properly [ku'kʊ], rather than [ku'kʊ] as it is heard in connected speech. This suggests that the process is less universal for off-glide.

Two adjacent vowels sometimes belong to different syllables, and if one of them has the word stress they are produced separately (this will be represented with a stop (·)), e.g.:

(64) pakkù.o  [pa'ku.ɔ] taro leaf
favù.o  [fa'nu.ɔ] short side of house
lèle.uma  [lɛ'lɛ.uma] termite

Some of the sequences of two vowels have particular associations with simple vowels, e.g.:

(65) /iɛ/ – /i/  kier ~ kir  sharpened stick
/iɛ/ – /e/  -lien ~ -len  (irregular) dual on some person nouns
/ou/ – /o/  kouma ~ koma  taro leaf as vegetable
/aʊ/ – /o/  maun ~ mon  (ma-un, 3p-RECIP) to them

3.3.3 Processes applying to vowels

As stated above, two adjacent identical vowels merge without resulting in length, as in (53). All other regular processes applying to vowels are morphophonological, that is, particular morphemes such as “subject prefix” or “non-singular” are a necessary part of the specification of the conditions for the process to apply. For instance, the process whereby /a/ and a following /i/ merge to
[e] applies if the /a/ is (part of) a subject prefix, but not if it is (part of) an object prefix:

(66)  
edba  a-imuŋ  
FUT  3mS.fut-wake.up.fut  
‘he will wake up’

a-i-lo  
3mO-3fS-tell  
‘she tells/told him’

There are a number of morpho-phonological processes of vowel merger and one of glide insertion between the subject affixes of verb classes II and III (which are all of the form V- or CV-) and following stems beginning in vowels.

(67)  
a + i  →  e  
ex.  pa-ipɔ  [pevɔ]  [pejvɔ]  but  me-ipɔ  [mejvɔ]  
1pxS-come.ashore  ‘we come ashore’  
3pS-come.ashore  ‘they come ashore’

(68)  
u + i  →  i  
ex.  u-ipɔ  [iv]  and  i-ipɔ  [iva]  
3mS-come.ashore  ‘he comes ashore’  
3fS-come.ashore  ‘she comes ashore’

(69)  
u + o  →  u  
ex.  u-ot  [ut]  but  i-ot  [jot]  
3mS-lie  ‘he/it.m lies’  
3fS-lie  ‘she/it.f lies’

(70)  
a + o  →  o  
ex.  a-ot  [ot]  but  i-ot  [jot]  
3mS.fut-lie  ‘he/it.m will lie’  
3fS-lie  ‘she/it.f will lie’

(71)  
me + o/a  →  majo  
ex.  me-ot  [majot]  
3pS-lie  ‘they lie’  
me-abɔ  [majabɔ]  but  nu-abɔ  [nuabɔ]  
3pS-climb.up  ‘they climb up’  
2sS-climb.up  ‘you climb up’

These processes apply universally among class II and III verbs, with some exceptions for /u/ + /o/ (69) and /u/ + /i/ (68). For the former, a few stems do not allow for the process to apply; in the case of /u/ + /i/, there is variability among the different subject prefixes, and in one case the /i/ of the stem appears unstable (as evidenced by the rule of /a/ + /i/ → [e]); examples will be presented in the following.

For /u/ + /o/ → [u], for five out of eighteen verb stems beginning in /o/ in my sample, the process does not take place, so that it does apply in the first stem but not in the second of the following two pairs (with class II verbs on the first line and class III verbs on the second line):

(72)  
u-onɔma  [unɔma]  he sits/lives/stays  but  u-onɔ  [wona]  he defecates  
tap-u-o  [tawu]  he drinks  but  ma-u-o  [mawo]  he comes  
tap-nu-o  [tapnu]  you drink
One stem, -olu ‘open; be open’, has optional application of the process in the transitive, but it is blocked in the intransitive, for instance:

(73) \( u-olu-a \) [ulwa] \( \sim [wolwa] \) he opens it(m)
but \( u-olu \) [wolu] (*ulu) it(m) is open

In the case of /u/ + /i/ \( \rightarrow \) [i], for most of the 24 stems beginning in /i/ the rule applies generally, so that the /u/ disappears in all person markers that have it (1sS tu-, 2sS nu-, 3mS u-, and 1pS bu-), e.g.:

(74) \( kəm-tu-i \) [kəmti] I give
\( kəm-nu-i \) [kəmni] you (sg) give
\( kəm-u-i \) [kəmi] he gives
\( kəm-bu-i \) [kəmbi] we (incl) give

In some cases it applies to the singular persons but not to the first person plural inclusive, for instance:

(75) \( tu-inie \) [tinje] I go down but \( bu-inie \) [bujnje] ‘we go down’

In one case, the application of the rule is optional in the singular but blocked in the plural form:

(76) \( tu-ia-am \) [tijam] or [tujam] I upset them
\( nu-ia-am \) [nijam] or [nujam] I upset them
\( u-ia-am \) [ijam] or [ujam] I upset them
but \( bu-ia-am \) [bujam] (*[bijam])

Similar processes apply among the adjectives, when the third person ending is added to the stem; this is an obligatory ending (signalling number if non-third person markers are present), obscuring the stem form. On surface form, there are two groups of adjectives (apart from some irregular ones), those that end in /i/ for masculine and /u/ for feminine, and those that end in /e/ for masculine and /o/ for feminine, e.g.:

(77) [muri] he/it(m) is good [ise] it(m) is rotten
[muru] she/it(f) is good [iso] it(f) is rotten

Since \( i \) and \( u \) are demonstrative forms for masculine and feminine respectively, we can say that these are the basic forms of the endings, and that the [e] and [o] of the second set are produced from an underlying stem that ends in /a/ (isa-) by application of rules. We have already seen /a/ + /i/ \( \rightarrow \) [e] in verb class II, and we would have to add a rule /a/ + /u/ \( \rightarrow \) [o] for the feminine form. Both /au/ and /o/ are variations found in other places too. But rather than an underlying stem-final /a/ it has been decided to postulate an underlying /ə/ for adjectives like isə-, because of the non-singular forms and nominalisations. For the words in (77), they are:

\( 11 \) I do not have full paradigms for all stems, and there may be a few more where bu-deviates. For (75) information on second singular and and third singular masculine is missing.
(78) [murun] they 2 are good  
[isän] they 2 are rotten
[murum] they (pl) are good  
[isäm] they (pl) are rotten
[murinim] goodness  
[isänim] rot

The dual and plural endings in the first group are variously [in], [im] and [un], [um], and it is not possible to formulate rules for this variation (and the demonstrative forms li and mi do not provide support for one vowel over the other as basic). There is similar variation in the vowel preceding the nominalising suffix -nim. The fact that the second group is far more homogenous in terms of the vowels in these contexts ([än], [äm], [anim]) supports the idea that the vowel in this group is part of the stem. It was said above that [ə] is in allophonic variation with [a] in some positions. However, there is one adjective where there is consistently a clear [a] (while the other forms have [ə]):

(79) [gigine] he/it(m) is heavy  
[giginan] they 2 are heavy
[gigino] she/it(f) is heavy  
[giginam] they (pl) are heavy

It seems reasonable therefore to say that the stems used in this section are:

(80) mur-  good

isə-  rotten

gigina-  heavy

The first two represent larger categories, while the last is unique.

Our additional rules, then, will be:

(81) ə + i → e
     ə + u → o

For the endings, we have -i and -u in the singular, but allomorphy in the dual and plural: -in, -un and -n in the dual and -im, -um and -m in the plural.

3.3.4 Labialisation harmony

Labialisation harmony is a morpho-phonemic process conditioned by the non-singular suffix -(i)p in conjunction with rounded vowels or labial consonants. A large proportion of nouns have irregular non-singular forms, but within the regular non-singular formation, the system is as follows: After a stem ending in a vowel the non-singular suffix takes the form -p. After a stem ending in a consonant, it is -ip, except where the vowel of the last syllable is rounded (/o, u/) and/or the final consonant is labial (/p, m, f/); the suffix then takes the form -up, with a rounded high vowel instead of the unrounded one. For example:

---

12 van der Hulst and van de Weijer (1995) cite several cases of labial vowel harmony (p. 522–524) and one of labial consonants conditioning roundness, from Warlpiri (although other cases are said to exist; p. 529), but no mixed cases such as Kuot, where vowels and consonants combine to condition allomorphy, are mentioned.
3.4 Syllables

Kuot syllables have the following forms, where a ‘V’ can be a simple vowel or a vowel sequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(83)</th>
<th>simple vowel</th>
<th>vowel + off-glide</th>
<th>on-glide + vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>o 3f.PossI</td>
<td>a-i 3m-near</td>
<td>ua taro tuber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>ut be swollen (V cl I)</td>
<td>aip go past (V cl I)</td>
<td>=iŋ 3fS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>ga and</td>
<td>koi coconut shell</td>
<td>bie shell, peeler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>kit fire</td>
<td>kaun weed</td>
<td>ties speech, language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VC is a less common structure than the others. Consonant clusters are permitted only as a result of a consonant-initial syllable following a consonant-final one: CVC.CV.

The syllable types can be combined in any order to form a vast number of structures, the longest stem encountered having six syllables. Lexical stems are most often of CVCV or CVCVC form, but all of the following represent common types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(84)</th>
<th>CVCV</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kuma</td>
<td>tear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kuada</td>
<td>buttock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kɔɗi</td>
<td>bamboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCVC</td>
<td>dikkam</td>
<td>fruit (sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>danuot</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kudat</td>
<td>fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCVCV</td>
<td>karabo</td>
<td>coconut shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kapuna</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kualappik</td>
<td>old woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCVCVC</td>
<td>barasos</td>
<td>mat (type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>butamat</td>
<td>clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lakabuon</td>
<td>stick of firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCVCVC</td>
<td>kabirɔna</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kasonɔma</td>
<td>mango tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parɔbira</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCCVC</td>
<td>sakmes</td>
<td>spear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kɔrkɔr</td>
<td>crow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>binbam</td>
<td>rib</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is not the space here to exemplify every type of syllable combination, but this example shows some of the range of variation in syllable structure:
The longest words are found among nouns. The open verb class, class I, has overall longer stems than class II which is closed. I have not found any stems with more than one vowel sequence, although a grammatical word may have two:

(86) \text{kaun}=i\text{en}\\ \text{weed}=3\text{fS}\\ ‘she weeds/weeded’

## 3.5 Stress

Kuot stress is lexically determined, i.e., there are no general stress rules that make reference to syllables or moras, but the position of stress has to be known for each lexeme.\textsuperscript{13} Some endings frequently attract stress in combination with lexical stems, but particular stems retain stress even when such an ending is present.

Preliminary analysis yields the following generalization: Lexical stress in Kuot is manifested chiefly through duration, but is not associated with pitch.\textsuperscript{14} Rather, pitch appears to be used mainly to signal information about the clause. I will attempt to demonstrate this functional separation in the following, dealing with the expression of lexical stress in this section and clause intonation in the next (3.6).\textsuperscript{15}

To investigate the variation between stressed and unstressed syllables, some minimal and near-minimal stress pairs were recorded in controlled syntactic environments. A few of these will be illustrated here. They are given with raw

\textsuperscript{13} Ideally, stress should therefore be marked on all Kuot words given here. However, since the realisation of stress in Kuot is so different from that to which I was accustomed, it took me a long time to perceive stress correctly, and I am unwilling to trust my notes in this respect for all vocabulary collected during all but the last few months of fieldwork. It was therefore decided to omit stress marking altogether.

\textsuperscript{14} Another possible exponent of stress, namely greater approximation of the cardinal value for the syllabic vowel, is not unambiguously associated with stressed syllables in Kuot.

\textsuperscript{15} Interpreting the phonetic correlates of the perceptual category of stress is a notoriously controversial area (see for example Ladd (1996) for an introduction to the intricacies of this field). Instrumental analysis has been carried out in order to support and graphically illustrate the perceptual (auditory) analysis, and is not to be mistaken for phonetic analysis (which is beyond the scope of this thesis).
waveform (amplitude/intensity), raw pitch (F<sub>0</sub> frequency in Hz), and spectrogram. Words to be compared were recorded in the same session but not in adjacent blocks: pairs were broken up so as not to invite over-differentiation. As a result there are sometimes differences in volume between the two words, giving a slender waveform in some cases and a very black one in others. A further effect is that the overall speed of speech has sometimes changed, and therefore words to be compared have been adjusted to be graphically equal in length. The pairs were recorded with two speakers, both men in their thirties, but any two words compared below are by a single speaker.

The first word in Figure 2 is the noun ŋa'ne ‘meat or vegetable to go with tubers or rice’, and the second is the adjective ‘ŋane ‘strong-3m’. Both instances were recorded in utterance-final position, where the intonation pattern is the same as for words in isolation.

![Figure 2: ŋa'ne vs. ŋane. Raw waveform, F<sub>0</sub> pitch and spectrogram.](image)

The figure shows that while the pitch movement (the middle graph) is similar between the two words, relative intensity (waveform in top graph) varies considerably, and there is also some difference in relative duration.

In the following three figures, we will see two near-homonyms in three syntactic contexts. The words are ka'ranim ‘reef, low tide; year’ and 'baranim ‘store; net for catching birds’. Figure 3 shows the two words in sentence-final position, taken out of a prepositional phrase, where it is again clear that the stressed syllable has relatively greater duration and intensity. The pitch extraction is not very clear for the first syllable of karanim, but the overall movement is still similar between the two words.
While the length of the last syllable is the same for the two words, the difference in duration of the stressed and the non-stressed syllable out of the first two is quite obvious, and there is some difference also in loudness. Pitch falls across both words, as in the previous example which was also sentence-final.

In the next figure, we see the two words in non-initial, non-final position. They occur in the syntactically unmarked position for a nominal functioning as an argument of the verb, namely following it. In Figure 4, the (constructed) environments were:

(87) \[ \text{dak} = \text{ie} \eta \text{ karanim} o \text{ urir} \]
\[ \text{be.full=3fS reef(f) 3f.PossI octopus(f)} \]
\[ \text{‘the reef is full of octopus’} \]

\[ \text{dak} = \text{o} \eta \text{ baranim} a \text{ tinpis} \]
\[ \text{be.full=3mS store(m) 3m.PossI can.of.fish(m)} \]
\[ \text{‘the store is full of cans of fish’} \]
Figure 4: ka’ranim and 'baranim in sentence-medial position.

The relative length of the two first syllables in each of the words is maintained. It is striking how similar the pitch contour is between the two words, and how different from that in Figure 3.

In the last figures of this set, Figure 5a and Figure 5b, the words are shown as recorded in a topicalised (fronted) phrase. The whole phrase is given for each, as the phrase forms a constituent with one single intonation pattern, with the following demonstrative u-sik for karanim which is feminine and i-sik for baranim which is masculine.
Figure 5a: *ka’ranim* in a fronted phrase.

Intonation is high across the phrase, and there is a rise on the last syllable (although the /i/ in *sik* is very short in the second instance), a common way of signalling topicalisation in Kuot (cf. 3.6 below). The relative difference in dura-
tion in the first two syllables of the words remains although the intonational prominence is on -sik.

In summary, pitch is used primarily for intonation (the topic of the next section), while word stress is achieved primarily through duration.

Stress shift is occasionally an exponent of a grammatical category. This is the case for future forms of some class II verbs (the future particle e(ba) would normally have to be present too), e.g.:

(88)  
\(\text{i-abo} \ [\text{jab}a] \ 3\text{fS-climb} - \text{she climbs/climbed} \)  
\(\text{i-aba} \ [\text{ja'ba}] \ 3\text{fS-climb.fut} - \text{she (will) climb}\)

A further factor concerning stress is that some grammatical morphemes often, but not always, attract stress. In particular, this concerns the non-singular suffix -(i)p on nouns, and the subject enclitics of verb class I. As mentioned in 3.3.1, a possible analysis for the contrasting pairs duk ‘1. break (of rope), 2. thunder’, and ut ‘1. be full, 2. be like’ could be that one member in each pair carries inherent stress. It was shown for duk that the sense ‘thunder’ gave a longer word when carrying the subject enclitic than the sense ‘break’ (at least in the two instances recorded); this could be due to the combination of two stressed syllables. Interactions of these kinds are complex, and detailed analysis is beyond the scope of the present study.

3.6 Intonation

In many languages, yes/no questions and non-finality are signalled by pitch (typically by a rise at the end of the utterance). Kuot does this, but goes further, and has specific intonation patterns for several more clause types, where each of the specialised pitch contours, or tunes, pertains to a particular function or clause type. The most salient intonation patterns in Kuot are

- declarative, non-final (rising; including topicalised constituents)
- declarative, final (falling)
- negated clause
- question-word question
- yes/no question

Each of these will be illustrated by pitch curves generated from recorded narrative speech (including cited speech for questions). The genre imposes some limitations on data; for example I think that clarification questions and echo questions would differ from those reported below (but unfortunately I have no recorded conversational material). Within the genre, however, the observations appear quite stable. Pitch extractions were performed in response to the auditory impression that “there was something going on with intonation in negated clauses” (etc.), and the impression was borne out in the first few examples that
were analysed instrumentally. The results remained stable when checked against equivalent constructions from other speakers.\footnote{16}{It was only possible to check a small number of utterances and only three to four examples were investigated for each type. Care was taken to vary speakers within each of the types to avoid any idiosyncratic use of intonation.}

The transcription in figures is phonemic but with lenition applied, as this can influence pitch.

The pitch of a non-final clause rises, often quite sharply, on the last syllable of the intonation unit, while final clause intonation usually consists in a fall over the last few syllables, as seen in Figure 6, which shows the pitch extraction for example (89) with a rise on $\text{tod}\text{ŋ}$ and a fall over the clitics $=\text{iey}=\text{ar}\text{ŋ}$:

\begin{verbatim}
(89) [Li-la=r̥a dus=liŋŋ] todŋ, kale=iey=arŋ.
3dS-go=ASP stand=3dS down sing.out=3fS=ASP
‘They went (and) stood below, she called out.’
\end{verbatim}

Figure 6: Non-final and final intonation (female speaker: KD).

The next example and figure show first a topicalised constituent ($u\text{-tie, }u\text{-titmat }u$), then several non-final clauses and followed by a final clause, shown across three graphs (Figure 7). At this point in his story of how the Bimun people came to relocate from the mountains to the coast, the speaker has extremely sharp rises on the final syllables of the non-final intonation units. He has just explained about the police fetching the mountain dwellers to the coast (“here”), and then repeats the gist of it:

\begin{verbatim}
(90) U-tie, [u-titmat u] lɔ me-rau inɔmɔniap u-mè
3f-there 3f-ANAPH DEM.3f RELR 3pS-afraid people.nsg 3f-about
lɔ [mɔn busit me-me me-num] apmaidŋ na arubu
RELR CONT always 3pS-HAB 3pS-walk downwards in night
[u-me u-la ma-lagi] polis, ga mu-me-o tako.
3mS-HAB 3mS-go 3pO-fetch=Ø police and come-3pS-stm2 here
‘Alright, that’s it, (why) people were afraid of it, (that) they were always walking down at night, a policeman used to go get them, and they came here.’
\end{verbatim}
Figure 7: Non-final and final intonation (male speaker: JL).

(A pause of 0.9 seconds has been cut out between the first and the second graph, and one of 0.05 between the second and the third.) It is interesting to note the “downstep” over the sequence of clauses, where from the middle of the first graph each clause maintains a fairly constant pitch; i.e., there is no declination within the intonation unit, but each has a somewhat lower mean frequency than the previous one, separated by pitch peaks.

The following example illustrates both fronting and negation. The first word, the name Samatmarun, has been topicalised, and there is a clear pitch peak on the last syllable. As for the negated clause following, it has a dip on the next to last syllable, followed by a rise on the last syllable – this is the characteristic pattern for negated clauses. The negator is tale, the most general negator in Kuot, but note that the intonation contour is not associated with the negator but with the negated clause as a whole:

(91) Samatmarun ǝ·t [tale u-me ubi].
    S. RELR NEG 3mS-HAB work=Ø.
    ‘Samatmarun didn’t work.’
Figure 8: Negated clause intonation (female speaker: KD).

Another example from the same speaker in the same text, this time as quoted speech, shows the same pitch contour (towards the end of the example), but here we have a combination of negators, namely karuk, the negative existential, also meaning ‘no’, and a clause with tale negating the adjective mur- ‘good’:

(92) *Nomo “Karuk, tale=ka mu-mur-um.”*

    say no NEG=yet RED-good-3p

    ‘He said “No, they’re not good yet.”’

Figure 9: Negated clause intonation (female speaker: KD).

From the speaker responsible for Figure 7, we also have an example of a negated verbless clause. The first part (*u-to pianom Bimun*) is topicalised (here marked by *ga*) and has non-final intonation with a peak on the last syllable. After that the pitch falls to the penultimate syllable of the utterance, to rise again on the last syllable:

(93) *U-to pianom Bimun ga tale pianom pay.*

    3f-here village/place(f) B. ‘and’ NEG village 1px.PossII.3s

    ‘This place Bimun is not our place.’

Figure 10: Negated clause intonation in a verbless clause (male speaker: JL).
Question-word questions (content questions or WH questions) too have their special intonation pattern, rising on the first syllable, flattening out and then falling again on the last syllable. The following two examples show how this pattern remains constant in spite of the different position of the question word itself in each of the utterances:

(94) “*Mimi aka tie?*”.
2p who there
“*Who are you(pl) there?*”

(95) “*Mani lǝ i-alibǝ-a u?*”.
what(m) RELR 3fS-cry-3mO DEM.3f
“What is she crying for/about?”

Figure 11: Question-word question intonation (female speaker: KD).

Both the above are by the same speaker, in the same narrative. The following example, by a different speaker, contains a question-word question with a similar contour to the previous two examples, as well as a yes/no question. Yes/no questions have a very distinctive sharp pitch rise on the last syllable (or, when present, on a final particle *a* which can be added when a positive answer is expected). The example is from a story of a man who finds an unknown boy at his homestead and tries to find out who he is:

(96) “*Nunuo mani tuaŋ? Nunuo poi tuaŋ?*”
2s what 1s.PossII.3m 2s child 1s.PossII.3m
“What are you of mine? Are you my son?”
On the limited data presented here, the use of pitch in Kuot only partly conforms to the concept of “intonation language”; in Trask’s (1996) definition:

A language which is neither a tone language nor a pitch language; a language in which the universally present intonation constitutes the only linguistic use of pitch.

Part of his definition of intonation is

… Intonation is used for a variety of purposes: for marking grammatical boundaries (phrases and clauses), for signalling sentence types (e.g., statements and questions), and for conveying the speaker’s attitude (surprise, irony, anger, etc.).

From the examples given above, it would appear that pitch in Kuot is tied up with expressing clause type to the extent that other uses are largely blocked; in particular, as we have seen, stress is expressed by duration rather than pitch. Regarding paralinguistic meanings such as surprise and anger, the absence of observations may be a direct effect of the type of data: narrative monologue is likely to have significantly less emotive expression than dialogue. Cruttenden expresses doubt about the type of association between sentence type and tune that I have tried to demonstrate for Kuot:

In some languages (not English) […] the use of particular tunes is closely tied to functional sentence-types, e.g. where statement, yes/no question, and command regularly involve certain tunes. From most of the descriptions of intonation in languages other than English, one might imagine that this was the principal use of various tunes in intonation languages. It may indeed be true that many languages do use intonation less for attitudinal purposes than English, but the suspicion exists that an alignment of tunes with sentence-types is merely the easy way to investigate intonation and often more sophisticated attitudinal and discoursal uses remain undocumented. (Cruttenden 1986: 10)

I would argue that the patterns found in Kuot are valid at least for the narrative genre, but agree that more detailed analysis is needed, in several areas. It is likely that more patterns can be found, associated with other clause types (for example, imperative, prohibitive and relative clauses are areas yet to be investigated). Ladd (2001: 1383) makes the observation that languages may use the same tune in several functions (as in Kuot’s use of rising pitch for both topicalisation and other kinds of non-finality), and also points out that languages appear to vary in the number of tunes that they make use of. What seems extraordinary about Kuot is the degree of specialisation of tunes, perhaps especially in func-
tions that are also expressed lexically, such as question-word questions and ne-
gation. Investigation into further clause types and functions may show some re-
currence of tunes, or it may expand the inventory of tunes even further.

Other related areas for further research include: the expression of prominence
on particular constituents, such as new information and contrastive focus, and
the interaction of such features with clause intonation; the expression of atti-
tude; genre-related variation; and meta-linguistic parameters such as politeness
(which, impressionistically, is expressed by speaking softly).

3.7 Other speech sounds, hesitation and emphasis

There are a number of phenomena that are not part of the phonology as such,
but which nevertheless deserve mention here. They are brought together in this
section.

An alternative but relatively infrequent way of expressing ‘yes’ (normally aa) is
on an ingressive pulmonic airstream. There are two variants. First, it can be
done with pursed lips; this produces a faintly whistling sound. Secondly, it can
be done with relaxed lips and vocal tract and mid-open jaw position, with voic-
ing from about halfway through (like saying /ha/ or /hǝ/ while breathing in).

A further sound that is not part of the phonological system is a bilabial trill
([B]). This is produced by pulling the corners of the mouth to the sides and a
little bit down, and briefly emitting air between the lips. It has only one use:
‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’ between people who know each other, and is particularly
favoured by children.

Glottal stops occur in some exclamations and in hesitation, without being part
of the phonological system. Both the word for ‘yes’, aa, and a general exclama-
tion of surprise or consternation, e (or eh), are frequently produced with glottal
stops, either at the beginning or the end or both. An eʔ with a glottal stop also
often signals self-repair – the speaker breaks off his or her utterance with eʔ!
and then starts the repair. Repairs have not yet been the subject of close study,
but one common strategy in conversation is breaking off the utterance with eʔ,
then repeating the inappropriate lexeme often followed by got ‘again’ with
question intonation, then filling in the correct word.

There are several patterns of hesitation. Most speakers have frequent brief
pauses, sometimes between clauses, but also in between elements of the same
clause or phrase (such as in the third graph of Figure 7). Some but not all speak-
ers recorded have filled pauses, using vowels such as [ə] or [ɛ]. Longer pauses
are very frequently filled by filler words while the speaker searches for the right
lexeme; typically any phrase-initial grammatical material will be produced first,
and then the filler takes the place of the lexical item, while the speaker searches
for the correct word. The fillers are: an ambitransitive class III verb mat-bǝ for
verbs and adjectives, with full agreement marking; and a noun mare/maro
(masc./fem; dl: marǝpien, nsg: mari) for nominals, i.e., nouns and personal
names. This noun is sometimes used as a normal noun with the sense ‘thing’,
and is unique among Kuot nouns in having separate forms for masculine and
feminine singular, and there is even a special form *marǝn* for place names. Both
the filler predicate and the filler nominal are then usually replaced by the right
form, often with a copy of the intonation used with the filler. Sometimes the
filler is left in place without correction or specification; in other cases the right
word is filled in directly or after several intervening syllables.

**Emphasis** is a complex phenomenon, and no typology will be attempted here.
Without further analysis, I will simply point to two salient expressions of it in
Kuot: lengthening and articulatory energy. Emphasis is often expressed through
lengthening of a segment. Usually, this is the segment with the most relevant
semantic content for the context, but occasionally other segments in the struc-
ture receive lengthening. In the following example and figure, the speaker is
telling of his grandfather who was a phenomenal bird catcher, and at this point
comes to find his net full of birds. The elongated segment is the second syllable
of *kukuom* ‘tree’ (possibly because it is phrase-final), which has a duration of
0.6 seconds. It is also spoken at quite a high pitch for a male speaker, around
220 Hz:

(97)  

(Dak=ieŋ kukuom ga [nǝmo kkof=meg] muareip
be.full=3fS tree(f) and be.about.to break=3pS branch.nsg
‘The tree was full and the branches were about to break’

Figure 14: Emphasis by lengthening (male speaker: SEL).

The segmental pronunciation too is generally emphatic in this part of the text;
/k/ in *kof* ‘break’ is not lenited, and e.g. *muareip* at the end is spoken with very
clearly pronounced consonants and much energy on the vowels, but without the
high pitch and increased duration. This type of “tense” pronunciation is another
way of emphasising particular words and syllables.)
3.8 Child-directed speech, children’s speech

There are several phonological aspects to speech directed to small children. As mentioned above there is frequent non-lenition of voiceless stops in environments where they would normally be lenited. This to some extent reflects children’s speech, as children sometimes do not master the relation between the phones [p] and [v] ~ [b], [t] and [r], and [k] and [ɣ] until they are several years old. However, children’s own speech shows both non-lenition (as in (98) from a child of about four years), and lenited phones where there would normally be stops (as in (99) from a child of about six years; ‘pul’ is Tok Pisin for ‘paddle’ and represents an extended phonology as Kuot words do not end in /l/):17

(98) word child normal
    tafa=tunŋ  [tafatunŋ]  [tafarunŋ]
    be.sick=1sS ‘I’m sick’

(99) word child normal
    eba pul=paiŋ  [pulvaŋ]  [pulpaiŋ]
    FUT paddle=1pxS ‘We’ll paddle’

Adults’ child-directed speech thus reflects the first of these types but not the second.

It is interesting that both the morphemes in (24) in section 3.2.2.3 above are treated by adults as non-lenited when addressing children, as only the first example is in a position where there is regular variation in many stems (if they are ambitransitives and occur without object prefixes so that the segment occurs at a syllable boundary). In the second case, the /k/ is always pronounced as [ɣ] when not directed to children, as there is an obligatorily filled suffix slot.

Other typical pronunciations by children are not regularly reflected in speech directed to children, such as [j] for [r] (although it may be imitated for amusement).

There is also phonological/morphological simplification, whereby an initial /n/ in a /na/ sequence is omitted when speaking to small children, e.g.:

(100) word child-directed
    na-abuŋ → [abuŋ]  put it! (2sS.fut-put-3sO.fut)
    na-munŋ → [amunŋ]  walk! (2sS.fut-walk.fut)
    nabar → [abar]  paternal aunt
    naurup → [aurup]  down

The change from na- to a- in the first two words here would normally be morphologically significant, since a- is the 3mS.fut subject prefix, but the second two words suggest that it is a phonological simplification rather than a mor-

---

17 Both children are the sons of my main informant, Robert Sipa, and spoke only Tok Pisin for the first years of life (although they heard Kuot spoken) so their acquisition of the system may be delayed. The pronunciations given in examples (98) and (99) were observed when they had been speaking Kuot for some two or three years.
However, the use of forms that sound like 3mS.fut appears to have spread from verb class II, where the subject markers are prefixes, to verb class III where they occur medially, in particular in the verb ‘come’:

(101) \(mu-na-o\)ŋ [muonŋ] → [muonŋ] come! (come-2S.fut-stm₂)

Another interpretation of the same data is of course that third person address has been used to children, and that the initial /n/ of some other words has been dropped either independently or by phonological analogy with the class II verbs. Third person address is otherwise not used in Kuot.

A further area where adults often adapt their speech when speaking to small children is in intonation, particularly in yes/no questions, where the rise on the final syllable can often be as much as a musical fifth or even more.

### 3.9 Phonological treatment of foreign words

The vast majority of foreign words to enter Kuot come in via Tok Pisin. Those that are English-derived have already undergone a large measure of adaptation to local phonologies.

Consonant clusters are dealt with in terms of epenthesis (e.g. school → sikul; spear → supia), or reduction (e.g. trousers → rausis; needle → nil). Diphthongs are frequently simplified too (e.g. boat → bot; day → de). Tok Pisin has fewer phonemes than English, and there is regular mapping as follows:

(102) $z$ → $s$ kerosene → kerosin  
$f$ → $s$ dish → dis  
$fr̩$ → $s(i)$ matches → masis  
$θ$ → $t$ German → Siaman  
$ð$ → $t$ brother → brata

Kuot phonological restrictions and processes then apply (somewhat variously as we shall see) to the words used in Kuot. Although all speech sounds needed for Tok Pisin are present in Kuot, their phonemic status is different. As we have seen, Kuot does not allow initial [r], final [l], initial or final [v], or final voiced stops. The local Tok Pisin does not have final voiced stops, but particularly /r/ and /l/ are common in positions not allowed in Kuot. The treatment of these varies with several factors: the level of integration of the word into Kuot, the age of the speaker, and the speaker’s perception of the listener. The more integrated the word and the older the speaker, the more likely it is that the adaptation to Kuot phonology will take place. On the other hand, speakers are more likely to retain features of the original pronunciation when speaking to people who do not know the language well. Examples of adaptation are:

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18 Morphological simplification does occur for some verbs of classes I and (to some extent) III, mainly through omission of the subject marker; there is also some special vocabulary in both verbs and nouns used when addressing children.
Retaining the Tok Pisin phonology (or speaking Tok Pisin with a less localised accent) thus involves expanding the phonotactics rather than the phoneme inventory.\footnote{Eklund & Lindström (1998) introduced the term “xenophone” to cover what has been variously known as “loan phonemes”, “foreign sounds” or “anomalous segments” (cf. Eklund & Lindström 2001: 82-87). The term covers items such as [tʃ]/[ʦ]/[s] for English /tʃ/ when used in Kuot; [tʃ] and [ʦ] are not part of the phonology of Kuot, but occur in a restricted set of loan words, foreign proper names etc., and would constitute an extension of the phone set of Kuot itself. As the majority of recently borrowed words in Kuot do not result in an expanded phone set but rather in expanded positional possibilities for existing speech sounds, we may perhaps speak of “xenophonotactics” here.}

A few words from Tok Pisin appear to have entered Kuot via other languages in the area with phonologies different from that of Kuot. One is \textit{naf}, Tok Pisin ‘inap’, English ‘enough’, from Nalik which often has /f/ for /p/, and uses \textit{naaf} in this sense (Volker 1998: 32); this form is used in northern Kuot which borders on the Nalik-speaking area (while an indigenous stem \textit{puo} is used in southern Kuot). Another is \textit{[tɛjɔn]} for ‘table’ (Tok Pisin ‘tebol’); I am unaware of its path, but it could have entered New Ireland Tok Pisin through a language that has a [b] ~ [v] alternation, such as Lavongai (Stamm 1988) (presumably final [l] \rightarrow [n] is the Kuot alternation seen above in 3.2.2.4).

Due to English being the language of instruction from grade three in schools, some English words make their way straight into Kuot, and younger speakers have no trouble with clusters such as the initial ones in ‘clay’ and ‘string’. Some English phones also have deviant pronunciation in some words; in particular [z] \rightarrow [dʒ] (so that ‘New Zealand’ is pronounced [nju dʒilan]). It is not clear to me whether this is a matter of “hyperadaption” on the level of individual speakers, or whether it is more widespread and perhaps even taught in schools.

### 3.10 Areal phonology

Several of the features typical of Kuot phonology are shared with the languages to the north (Nalik, Kara), south (Lamasong, Madak, Barok) and, to a lesser extent, east (Nochi) of Kuot. The features concerned are: the lenition of voiceless stops in intervocalic position; the non-occurrence of voiced stops in final position; final [l] to [n]; and a weak (partial) phonological opposition between...
/a/ and /a/ (or /a/ and /aa/). These features are not equally distributed, so that Nochi shares very few, while Kuot’s nearest neighbours (Nalik and Lama-song/Madak) share more features, those further away share fewer properties (and languages still further north or south are not part of the phonological area at all). Malcolm Ross (1994) discusses the distribution of some of these features in terms of a spread from Kuot, and perhaps extinct relatives of Kuot, into its Austronesian neighbour languages, and proposes that ancestors of today’s speakers of Madak languages (Lamasong, Madak and Barok) shifted from a non-Austronesian language to an Austronesian communalect. As more data has come to light in the last few years, it has become possible to put together a more complex picture, and one which indicates that different features have moved in different directions, creating the pattern we see today. This pattern is more suggestive of feature spreading through ordinary processes of extended contact and multi-lingualism, than dramatic language shifts, but nonetheless provides a window on the past.20

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20 The data and conclusions are discussed in more detail in Lindström (in prep.).
4 Word Classes and Overview of Morphology

This chapter has three parts. The first summarises the characteristics of each word class (form class) identified for Kuot, in terms of semantics, morphology and syntax, with mention of sub-classes where appropriate, and the approximate size of the class for closed classes. The second part of the chapter is an overview of the morphology, discussing stems, affixes, clitics, and particles, their prototypical definitions for Kuot, and cases that do not fit the definitions. Properties of cohesion, form variance and distribution are discussed. The last part concerns the unit “word” in Kuot.

The terms “agreement”, “indexing” and “cross-referencing” refer to the same categories in terms of person, gender and number marking in the grammar, but with the following differences: agreement is used for relations within the noun phrase, so that for instance a demonstrative in attribute use agrees with a head noun; indexing is used for cases where the item showing the category is not syntactically within the scope of the noun, as for prepositions and possessives, which thus index the category of the noun (as well as referents not expressed as nouns); cross-referencing is used for the pronominal markers on a predicate (verb or adjective) which cross-reference a noun (or referent not expressed as a noun) in an argument role.

4.1 Word classes

There are only two open classes in Kuot: nouns and verb class I. All other classes are closed. Four classes can be identified as lexical: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These are presented first, followed by: numerals, pronouns, possessives, prepositions, locationals and directionals, and demonstratives. The

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1 Numbers for the closed word classes represent the numbers of stems in my data. I am certain that there are more members than I have been able to collect, in particular in the larger of the classes (verb classes II and III, adjectives, and perhaps also adverbs), as it proved impossible to elicit lexemes according to morphological patterning. A further complication in giving numbers for verbs is that some stems are “semi-ambitransitive”, so that relations between transitive and intransitive variants are not straightforward in terms of semantics and/or form, making it somewhat arbitrary whether one or two stems should be counted.
last subsection is shared by several small classes: particles, adverbial and aspectual enclitics, conjunctions, and interjections.

This section summarises the criteria on which the classes and sub-classes are based. More information about the behaviour of particular groups of morphemes is given in 4.2 below; a detailed description of nouns is found in Chapter 5; other classes are briefly described and exemplified in 1.1.

4.1.1 Nouns

_Semantics:_ Prototypically denote entities in the world; also abstract concepts.

_Morphology:_ Inherent gender (masculine and feminine) in the singular (reflected in agreement, indexing and cross-referencing morphology on other constituents within and outside the noun phrase). The semantics of gender is opaque for inanimate referents.

Inflect for non-singular and dual number (reflected in the same way as gender). Much irregularity in the non-singular (plural) formation; dual mostly regular (based on non-singular). Deviant dual and plural formation for many kin terms in reference to pairings/groupings denoted by the term, in contrast to regular forms.

One “plain” and ten “special” declensions based on singular form; in the special declensions the last part of the stem is in most cases subtracted before the non-singular suffix is added.

Many nouns (but not all) can also function as stems in verb class I, without morphological derivation.

There is no productive reduplication among nouns.

_Syntax:_ Typically head of the noun phrase (also limited appositional use). The gender/number category of the noun governs agreement within the noun phrase, person indexing in possessives and on prepositions, and the form of cross-referencing morphemes on verbs and adjectives.

_Sub-classes:_ Declensions (see morphology just above).

Inherently locative nouns (do not take locative preposition na ‘in, at’).

Relational nouns (‘behind’, ‘in the middle (of)’ etc.; can only be used in relation to an entity, never for parts (*‘back’)), construed with inalienable possessive forms.

Three quantifiers: _poppot_ and _poppauliap_, both meaning ‘much, many’, and _namarip_ ‘few’.

One filler noun used when searching for a lexeme has separate feminine and masculine forms (m. _maro_, f. _maro_), as well as a special form for place names (_maro_), and a few terms for pigs of particular colouring also have gendered forms.

4.1.2 Verbs

_Semantics:_ Prototypically denote actions and states.
**Morphology:** Take affixes and enclitics cross-referencing one to two arguments. Stems are monotransitive, ambitransitive (S=A or S=O: a few stems can be either) or transitive. A few stems in class II are suppletive between intransitive and transitive; sometimes part of one paradigm is suppletive.

The order of cross-referencing affixes and clitics in relation to the stem give three classes (I, II and III) in the intransitive, which are paired with four classes (I, IIa, IIb and III) in the transitive. There is also a handful of irregular verbs that do not fit into the classes.

Some stems in classes II and III have stem changes for future.

A dummy object marker *u*- or the pluractional *da-* in the object prefix slot renders the stem syntactically intransitive, as do the prefixes *te-* ‘REFLexive’ and *ne-* ‘RECiprocal’.

Action nominalisation is a morphological process in verb classes II and III; stems in verb class I are used as nouns without morphological derivation.

There is some productive reduplication in verb class I.

**Syntax:** Typically head of the verb phrase; can also occur in the attribute construction.

**Sub-classes:** Classes I, II (a, b) and III, based on argument cross-referencers (see Morphology above).

There are three auxiliary verbs (habitual *-me, -ga* ‘want; be about to’, and *-ma* ‘try’; see also particles).

There are three verbs that serialise with other verbs (*-la* ‘go’, *mu-o* ‘come’ and *-op* ‘come’).

**Size:** Verb class I is open. Verb class II is closed and has 110 members; verb class III is also closed and has 71 members.

### 4.1.3 Adjectives

**Semantics:** Typically denote states, qualities or properties.

**Morphology:** Take subject cross-referencing affixes; some irregularity.

Action nominalisation by derivational suffix.

Opaque and unpredictable reduplication patterns.

Causative through derivation, then used as verb (class I).

**Syntax:** As for verbs, but future marking with an extra *ba* (as for other non-verbal predicates).

**Sub-classes:** (interrogative *lak-* ‘be where’ is blocked from the attribute construction).

**Size:** 76 (closed).
4.1.4 Adverbs

**Semantics**: Specify place, time, degree, value, or manner of the action or situation described in the predicate; also sentence adverbs such as ‘perhaps’ and ‘again’.

**Morphology**: Very limited reduplication. (Possibly obsolete -t was used to derive adverbs from other classes).

**Syntax**: Preferred position after first constituent of clause or phrase, but relatively free. Time adverbs in particular are often topicalised.

**Sub-classes**: Only as indicated by semantics; a few forms can take class I verbal morphology.

**Size**: 44.

4.1.5 Numerals

**Semantics**: Numbers 1–10.

**Morphology**: ‘10’ takes dual and non-singular suffixes in the formation of higher numbers.

**Syntax**: Prenominal.

Numbers from 3 and up are construed with the inalienable possessive markers (‘four “of” pigs’).

Numbers over 10 are formed from the lower numbers (e.g. ‘six “of” tens and four’ is 64, ‘ten “of” tens’ is 100).

Blocked from the attribute construction.

Preposed particle lǝma forms ordinals.

**Sub-classes**: (Special forms for 1 and 2 in counting.)

**Size**: 12.

4.1.6 Personal pronouns

**Semantics**: Emphatic or contrastive reference to speech-act participants (no pronouns for third person).

**Morphology**: None.

**Syntax**: Normally constitute NP, sometimes in appositive constructions. Cannot form complements of most prepositions (the prepositions take indexing affixes instead). Rarely if ever in subject or object function; typically topicalised.

**Sub-classes**: None.

**Size**: 8.

4.1.7 Possessives

**Semantics**: Alienable (PossII): alienable ownership, kinship, some benefactive uses. Inalienable (PossI): part-whole relations, material and a general associa-
tive (between noun phrases); oblique arguments (of verbs), including instrumental.

**Morphology:** PossI forms index possessor in 12 categories. PossII forms index possessor as well as possessee, some making a gender distinction in the third person singular, giving 42 forms. There are also four interrogative forms. The forms as such are invariant.

**Syntax:** In the possessive phrase, the possessee noun phrase comes first, followed by the possessive marker, followed by the possessor noun phrase. The noun phrases are not otherwise marked. The marker functions pronominally if there is no possessor noun phrase (this is the main strategy for first and second person possessors).

**Sub-classes:** PossI, PossII, interrogative.

**Size:** 58 forms.

### 4.1.8 Prepositions

**Semantics:** Typically indicate location, goal, or function (oblique argument role) of referents (which are usually coded in noun phrases).

**Morphology:** For all but two prepositions, person/number/gender affixes index the referent, always for some; for others obligatorily in some syntactic contexts and for first and second person, and optionally elsewhere.

**Syntax:** Precede the noun phrase, forming a prepositional phrase. *Me* ‘to, for’ can combine with other prepositions.

**Sub-classes:** Indexing vs. non-indexing.

**Size:** 10.

### 4.1.9 Locationals and directionals

**Semantics:** Encode location, proximity, or direction of an event or situation with respect to the deictic centre.

**Morphology:** Prefixes of several kinds indicate categories such as proximity; some forms are obligatorily prefixed. Some stem alternation depending on prefixes.

A stem augment *t- (p-)* with low semantic impact can be used with all stems, and selects for the prefix *ta- in locational/directional use.*

Simple or complex locational and directional forms constitute the base of demonstratives derived by demonstrative prefixes (these are a different class, see below).

**Syntax:** As for adverbs.

**Sub-classes:** None.

**Size:** 7 basic senses, 10 forms.
4.1.10 Demonstratives

Semantics: Exophoric deixis (pointing in physical space); encode location, proximity, or direction, of an entity with respect to the deictic centre. Also many anaphoric uses; some stems are restricted to this function, and some stems have temporal meaning. Third person only; also function as third person pronouns.


2. Composite demonstratives consisting of: the simple demonstratives prefixed to A) simple or complex forms from the paradigm of locationals and directionals; or B) to stems only used in the demonstrative paradigm.

Syntax: Head of noun phrase; or determiner, normally preceding the head.

Sub-classes: 1. Simple stems, indexing third person categories; 2. Stems used only in composite forms (making up the second part of the form).

4.1.11 Particles, adverbal and aspectual clitics, conjunctions, and interjections

This heading subsumes a varied group of forms, which are brought together here by virtue of being short and invariant and having mainly grammatical functions, although on other criteria they form multiple classes. The headings in the following indicate the categorisations.

Particles in the predicate:
- tense (e, eba, ba FUTURE; procedural habitual; ‘if’, ‘then’)
- aspect (ma CONTINuous, buat HABitual)
- mood (lama ‘if’)
- for NEGation, negative existential, PROHIBitive, and APPRehensive.

Particles in the noun phrase: Specificity (non, ba).

Other particles: ORDinal numeral.

There are six adverbial clitics and one aspectual clitic (=ar), all of which attach to the first constituent of their phrase.

Conjunctions: ga ‘and’, pa ‘but’, o ‘or’, lo RELator, me ‘for, to (prep.)’.

Interjections: karuk ‘no’, aa ‘yes’; also words such as mikat (adv.) ‘true!’, kuot ‘what, really?!’, me (prep. ‘for, to’) ‘why?!’.

The language further has pronominal enclitics and pronominal and other affixes. The interrelations of the various types of forms in Kuot will be discussed in terms of cohesion and dependency in the following section.

4.2 Morphology

Kuot morphology is mainly agglutinative, with some morphologically conditioned phonological processes across morpheme boundaries. Affixes and enclit-
tics mark subject on verbs and adjectives; and affixes mark object, reciprocal and reflexive on verbs, as well as agreement on demonstratives and prepositions. Suffixes indicate non-singular and dual on nouns. Enclitics further express aspect and several adverbial meanings; these cliticize to the first constituent in a phrase. There are also particles with various grammatical functions. Reduplication is partly productive in verb class I. Synchronously, there is no compounding of stems. Three morphological categories are expressed (at least in part) through stem-internal changes: future stem forms in verb classes II and III; plural formation of nouns, and nominalisation of verbs of classes II and III and of adjectives.

The bulk of productive affixal morphological marking is thus concerned with the categories of number, gender and the person. Derivation is not prominent in Kuot, and the only productive derivational morphology in the language derives action nominals from verbs of classes II and III (e.g., nulibap ‘crying’ from class II -liba ‘cry’) and adjectives (e.g., sasarapunim ‘wetness, moisture’ from sasarap- ‘wet’); and class I verbs from adjectives.

This section discusses the types of morphemes that can be distinguished in Kuot: stems, affixes, clitics and particles, and possessives (which fall outside these categories). They are investigated in terms of phonological and morphological dependency and form variability. It will be seen that although the traditional morphological categories provide a framework for categorising the types of morphemes, they do not give a sufficiently detailed grid to capture the full variation found in Kuot morphology.

It was found that applying criteria of morphological dependency to all morphemes in the language would give results that are not very useful for characterising the morphemes in question. Ranging the morphemes from most independent to most dependent would give something like the following (selected morphemes):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{INDEPENDENT} \\
\text{adverbs, particles} \\
\text{nouns (singular)} \\
\text{verb class I} \\
\text{clitics} \\
\text{verb classes II and III, adjectives, affixes.}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DEPENDENT}
\end{array}
\]

It is particularly unsatisfactory to have lexical stems with the affixes. This situation arises because stems of verb classes II and III and adjectives are bound forms, requiring affixes (and incomprehensible to native speakers in un-affixed form). Morphologically, they are as bound as the affixes themselves. It was therefore decided to investigate stems separately from other morphemes. The

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2 One type of morphology that will not be discussed here is reduplication, and the stem augment in the locational/directional paradigm will also not be considered here.
following sections will deal first with stems, and then show how affixes, clitics and particles form a continuum, rather than discrete categories. The possessives are discussed last.

Sometimes in the following, the same information will be given several times. This is because of items such as verb class II stems and their obligatory subject prefixes, which to some extent define each other in being mutually dependent as morphological forms. These relations will be investigated first from the point of view of stems, then from the point of view of affixes etc., at the risk of being somewhat repetitive.

4.2.1 Stems

The term “stem” is used loosely here for a morpheme in Kuot that

- is part of a paradigm (or form-class), and
- can be used on its own or be host to affixes or clitics.

Kuot has four word classes which can be called lexical on account of the meanings they encode: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. As said above, only two are open, namely nouns and verb class I. Further stems are the sets of locationals, demonstratives, prepositions, numerals, and pronouns.

The stems differ, as types of morphemes, in two ways that concern us here: in the amount of variation in form that they display in different contexts, and in their degree of morphological autonomy. By variance is meant the degree to which the stem type occurs in the same phonological form in all contexts where it appears. Autonomy is whether the stems are bound (−) or are able to appear without the presence of associated morphology (+). Table 1 lists the stem types and their properties as regards variance and autonomy (the properties given for each category hold for the majority of members in a class, but not necessarily all).
Table 1: Variance and autonomy of Kuot lexical stems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word class (/sub-class)</th>
<th>Stem variance</th>
<th>Aut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns, plain declension</td>
<td>invariant, non-singular just added</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns, special decl.</td>
<td>last part of stem subtracted before addition of non-singular</td>
<td>+?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbs, class I</td>
<td>some reduplication</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbs, class II &amp; III</td>
<td>phonol. processes with subject affixes; some stems change for future; some suppletion in class II</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectives</td>
<td>phonol. processes with subject suffixes; some reduplication (irreg.)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbs</td>
<td>very limited reduplication</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locationals/directionals</td>
<td>some limited compounding</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstratives, 3 m, f, d, p</td>
<td>invariant</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstratives, non-loc</td>
<td>invariant</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositions</td>
<td>invariant (except bo ‘on’ → -buo when prefixed)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerals</td>
<td>invariant (except ‘ten’ which takes dual and non-singular forms)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns</td>
<td>invariant</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns of the plain declension have the non-singular and dual endings added to the unmodified stem, while nouns of the ten special declensions have the last part of the stem subtracted:

(1) **plain declension:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun stem</th>
<th>Singular form</th>
<th>Non-singular form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gǝs</td>
<td>gǝs-ip</td>
<td>gǝs-ip-ien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possum</td>
<td>possum-nsg</td>
<td>possum-nsg-dl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘possum’</td>
<td>‘possums’</td>
<td>‘2 possums’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**special declension (nǝm):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun stem</th>
<th>Singular form</th>
<th>Non-singular form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kubunǝm</td>
<td>kubup</td>
<td>kubup-ien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young.coconut</td>
<td>young.coconut.nsg</td>
<td>young.coconut.nsg-dl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘young coconut’</td>
<td>‘young coconuts’</td>
<td>‘2 young coconuts’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**special declension (ma):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun stem</th>
<th>Singular form</th>
<th>Non-singular form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kuma</td>
<td>kup</td>
<td>kup-ien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tear</td>
<td>tear.nsg</td>
<td>tear.nsg-dl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘tear’</td>
<td>‘tears’</td>
<td>‘2 tears’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun stems in the plain declension are thus invariant in the sense that the non-singular is simply added to the stem without modification; and also autonomous in that they can be used “as is”. In the special declensions, however, there is a problem with identifying the stem. The constant stem parts in the last two examples above are *kubu* and *ku* but since the endings -nǝm and -ma are not predictable from any general principles, and since the starred forms are not attested as phonological forms, we would not want to postulate them as stems. These nouns may perhaps be said to have two related stem variants, one singular and one non-singular. The question of stem autonomy in the special declensions depends on the analysis of stem-hood for the singular forms – if an underlying stem like the starred forms were postulated, that underlying stem
would of course require morphological processing even to form the singular, i.e., it would be variable and non-autonomous. If, on the other hand, we accept singular and plural stem variants, each is autonomous in the sense that it can be used without such processing, and at least the singular stem would be autonomous. Dual forms are simply suffixed to the end of the non-singular form in most cases.

Among the verbs, class I stems are largely invariant (apart from a final /a/ or /ǝ/ often being deleted before the third person singular masculine subject enclitic). There is some reduplication, with effects such as iterative, distributive, duration and intensity. Class I stems are autonomous in that they are used bare in citation, as action nominals, and in active form following the habitual auxiliary -me; elsewhere in active use a subject enclitic is obligatory. Stems which are transitive only require the object slot to be filled by the dummy object prefix u-in citation and nominalisation.

Verb classes II and III differ quite markedly from class I. The stems show a fair amount of morpho-phonological interaction with subject affixes, and some stems also have alternate forms for future. In class II there are a few suppletive stems (e.g. -num ‘walk’; -muŋ ‘walk.fut’). There is no reduplication in class II or in the second part of the stem in class III, but the first part of the stem in class III is occasionally reduplicated. These stems are not autonomous, but require the subject affix slot to be filled at all times (in nominalisation, the second person singular affix is used).

Adjectives show morpho-phonological interaction with subject suffixes. There is reduplication but it is non-productive and irregular, and has no discernible semantic impact. The suffixes that cross-reference third person are obligatory, and remain as number markers in first and second person forms, which are marked by prefixes, e.g.:

(2)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kak-kan-i} & \quad \text{nu-kak-kan-i} \\
\text{RED-big-3m} & \quad \text{2s-RED-big-sg} \\
\text{‘he/it(m) is big’} & \quad \text{‘you(sg) are big’} \\
\text{kak-kan-in} & \quad \text{ma-kak-kan-in} \\
\text{RED-big-3d} & \quad \text{2d-RED-big-dl} \\
\text{‘they(2) are big’} & \quad \text{‘you(2) are big’}
\end{align*}
\]

A few manner adverbs have reduplication (the semantic impact is not clear). The forms are autonomous.

Locationals and directionals are invariant, but have certain compounding tendencies, whereby several items can be strung together. A few members in this class are autonomous, while the majority require prefixation with a small set of prefixes that have some proximity distinctions, but whose main function appears to be to form viable words. There is also the augment mentioned in 4.1.9 which causes stems to take slightly different affixes.

Demonstratives (4.1.10 above and 1.1.1) are of two types, simple and composite. The simple forms, which may function independently or as prefixes to loca-
tional/directional forms or demonstrative stems, are invariant. In independent use they are autonomous. The stems to which they are prefixed to form complex demonstratives are invariant but all the demonstrative stems (i.e. those which are not in the paradigm of locational/directionals) are bound and can only occur prefixed.

**Prepositions** are invariant, except for *bo* ‘on’ which has the form *buo* when it takes person-indexing prefixes. One further preposition, *ir* ‘at (etc.)’ has some phonological interaction with person suffixes. Some prepositions are autonomous while others require person affixes.

**Numerals** are invariant with the exception of the word for ‘ten’, *mǝnburuan*, which takes non-singular and dual forms in the formation of higher numbers (nsg: *mǝnburalap*, dl: *mǝnburalapien*). The forms are autonomous.

Finally, **pronouns** are also invariable forms, although historically they appear to be reduplicated forms of the morphemes which cross-reference and index the same pronominal categories (there are no third person pronouns). They are autonomous.

### 4.2.2 Affix – clitic – particle, a dependency cline

We will now turn to non-stems, i.e. affixes, clitics and particles. Kuot grammatical morphemes show varying degrees of cohesion with or dependency on other material, ranging from tightly integrated affixes via clitics to particles that make up independent words. This section will discuss the properties of each type, as well as some problems that arise in categorising the morphemes.

First, I will propose definitions of prototypical affixes, clitics and particles for Kuot.

For Kuot, a prototypical **affix** is defined as a morpheme

- with grammatical meaning
- adhering to particular classes of morphemes (e.g. verb or sub-class of verb)
- forming a close unit with the morpheme to which it adheres (in terms of being obligatorily selected, not allowing for pausing, often having morpho-phonological alterations at the boundary, etc.)

For Kuot, a prototypical **clitic** is defined as a morpheme

- with grammatical or lexical meaning
- adhering to the first constituent in a phrase

For Kuot, a prototypical **particle** is defined as a morpheme

- with grammatical meaning
- not attaching to another constituent

As will be seen in the following, even these rather minimal definitions cause conflicts in some cases, and several morphemes straddle the categories. Instead of discrete categories, it is therefore useful to think of these categorisations as prototypes along a continuum, or cline, as schematised in Figure 1.
Each category can be seen as a prototype in the sense of a bundle of features that makes up the canonical instance, allowing for typical and less typical members. If several prototypes are lined up next to each other, morphemes can be expected to cluster around the canonical points, but items that have only a few features of a type, or features belonging to more than one type, can be ranged in between.

Table 2 gives all Kuot grammatical morphemes, (except for those treated among stems), and interjections, conjunctions and the demonstrative stem augment), ranged from the most cohesive and dependent to the most independent. The criteria used are

- phonological integration with other material, and
- distribution (selectivity), in terms of what considerations govern the placement of the morpheme.

Row numbers have been inserted to facilitate reference to and from the text following the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category</th>
<th>form</th>
<th>processes</th>
<th>remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &lt;a future stem alternation in verb classes II &amp; III</td>
<td>-(i)y</td>
<td>stem-final t, n → r, l</td>
<td>fossilised; only on some verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a non-singular marking on nouns</td>
<td>-(i)p</td>
<td>stem-final t → r (n → l); labialisation harmony</td>
<td>productive; t→r process not prod. anywhere else in Kuot; also, many stems have ending subtracted before adding of non-sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. a subject marker in verb classes II &amp; III</td>
<td>misc. V- or CV-</td>
<td>u+o → u u+i → i a+i → e a+o → o e+a/o → aia/o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. a 3rd person subject marker on adjective</td>
<td>-l, -u, -in, -im</td>
<td>a+u → o a+i → e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. a 3rd person object marker in verb class IIa, non-fut</td>
<td>-a, -o, -an, -am</td>
<td>u+o → u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. a derivation of adj. to transitive verb, cl I</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>varying applicability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. a person markers on some prepositions</td>
<td>misc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>varying obligatoriness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To examine the forms, and the criteria for their positions in the table, each morpheme or group of morphemes will be discussed briefly. In particular, we are
concerned with the forms which are transitional between the categories affix, clitic and particle.

1. At the very top we have something which is no longer a productive morpheme, giving future forms of some stems in verb classes II and III. Since this former suffix is fossilised and not productive, it does not really have a rightful position among the affixes of the language. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that it shares processes with one of the productive morphemes in a different part of the grammar, namely 2. below: the non-singular suffix on nouns. The shared process is the conditioning of the allophone [r] from the stem-final /t/ of the stem to which the suffix adheres. The future forms also have final [n] going to [l] in the future forms; this is found with the non-singular forms of nouns too, but less consistently (see 3.2.2.4 and Chapter 5).

2. Apart from the processes shared with 1. above, noun non-singular forms have a labialisation harmony process whereby the vowel of the non-singular suffix becomes /u/ (rather than /i/) following a labial consonant (/p/, /f/, /m/) or a closed syllable containing a rounded vowel (/u/ or /o/). This process is unique to the non-singular morpheme (see 3.3.4; 5.2.1). Nouns in the special declensions almost always have the last part of the stem subtracted before the non-singular ending is added. Although non-singular forms consistently end in /p/, there is quite a lot of irregularity and unpredictability in the non-singular formation of nouns.

3. Subject markers are prefixes in verb class II and “infixes” in verb class III which has bipartite stems with the subject affixes in the middle. They are tightly integrated with the stem, and have several processes of morpho-phonological interaction with vowel-initial stems (in verb class III this concerns the second part of the stem; see 3.3.3 for details of the processes). The affixes are obligatory: stems of II and III cannot appear without the subject slot filled (even in nominalised forms).

4. The third person singular suffixes on adjectives interact phonologically with stems ending in /ǝ/ (or in one case /a/; see 3.3.3). The suffixes are obligatory (but replace non-predictable single vowels when the nominalisation suffix is added).

5. The third person object markers in verb class IIa are suffixes, with different forms for future and non-future (cf. 10.). The feminine singular non-future suffix -o is deleted after a stem-final /u/ (e.g. i-alu-o ‘3fS-cover-3fO – she covers it’ [jalu]).

6. Many adjectives allow a derivation to verb class I, with a causative sense (e.g. ‘make heavy’). The derived stems usually have a suffix -ra.

7. The pronominal indexing affixes used with prepositions are listed together, in spite of there being quite a lot of variation between the different prepositions. In particular, some prepositions are obligatorily indexed in all contexts, while for others indexing is triggered by certain syntactic contexts.
8. The action nominalisation process for verbs of classes II and III consists in adding a suffix -(i)ap, but the subject slot must also be filled by the second person singular suffix (nu-). Most class II verbs can take this derivation.

9. The action nominalisation process for adjectives involves a suffix -(V)nim but without subject marking (an example was given in the introduction to this section, under 4.2). The process is not fully productive and there is some irregularity.

10. Two items are listed under this number, separated by a broken line to indicate that they are not ordered with respect to one another. The future object markers in verb class II are suffixes like the non-future ones (cf. 5. above), but involve no phonological interaction with the stem. The object prefixes used in verb class I and in the first and second person in classes II and III also do not interact with stems, but are constant in form.

11. Last among the affixes, we have the dual suffix -ien. It is added onto the non-singular form of nouns, e.g.:

(3)  
maua-p-ien  ‘two fruitbats’
fruit.bat-nsg-dl

The suffix itself is very regular, but in some cases the form to which it is added is not the non-singular form normally used. The dual suffix is optional in the sense that inanimates are usually not marked for dual, but is well integrated with the word in that pausing never occurs before it.

The forms looked at so far are analysed as affixes on account of forming tight units with the stems to which they adhere, and occurring with words of particular word classes (or sub-classes). We will now turn to forms analysed as clitics, although the first one is somewhat intermediary between clitic and affix status.

12. The subject markers of verb class I are treated as clitics in this work, but deviate from the definition of clitics given above; while all other morphemes identified as clitics have a distribution that makes reference to position within the phrase, the subject markers of verb class I always attach to verb stems of class I, being in that respect affix-like. The class I subject markers form a unit with the verb stem, to which one of the other clitics can then attach, forming a sequence of two units, as in (4), while the other clitics are mutually exclusive:

(4)  
U-tie,  pare=meŋ=arø  makauluŋ
3f-there  get.up=3pS=ASP  woman.nsg

   ga  o-kima=meŋ=arø  [u-sik  sŋɔr]…
and  3fO-see=3pS=ASP  3f-DEM  egg(f)

   ‘Alright, the women got up and saw this egg…’

These subject markers are treated as clitics because of their low level of cohesion with the stem, as compared to the affixes. They show minimal phonological interaction with the verb stem; there are contexts where the slot is not obligatorily filled; and speakers frequently pause before the subject marker in dictating, and often separate it by a space when writing. It is clear that they are in-
13. The next item is the first representative of the proper clitics, the aspect marker \( =r\). It cliticises to the first constituent of the phrase (normally the verb phrase).\(^3\) Only one clitic can go in this position, so \( =r\) is in complementary distribution with items 14. and 15. on the list, which are thus all mutually exclusive. As for all clitics with this distribution, the continuous aspect particle \( man\) is not counted when determining which is the first constituent. \( =r\) shows some phonological interaction with its host, in that it takes the form \( =ar\) following a consonant. After a vowel, both \( =r\) and \( =r\) are possible. It is presented separate from the following clitics because it is different semantically: while the adverbial clitics in 14. and 15. have fairly distinct meanings, \( =r\) is quite bleached and its meaning depends largely on context.

14. The adverbial enclitics \( =it\) ‘just’ and several ones meaning ‘a little’ (slightly different in form) also cliticise to the first constituent in the phrase to which they belong. They interact with the phonological shape of their hosts in that the initial vowel of the clitic is dropped if the host ends in a vowel, giving \( =t\), \( =rom\) etc. The meanings of these clitics and of those in 15. could be said to be lexical rather than grammatical in character; i.e., their semantics is largely isolable and corresponds to senses expressed by adverbs and similar words in most languages, and their use is determined by their semantics rather than grammatical considerations such as tense or person.

15. This set of adverbial clitics share their distribution (and mutual exclusivity) with the items given in 13. and 14. They differ from the latter in that they are invariant forms, having no phonological interaction with their hosts (other than general phonological process such as \( k\rightarrow \gamma / V_V\) which apply everywhere in the language when the conditions arise). Although the distribution is certainly that of clitics, the fact that the forms are invariant makes this set similar to particles.

16. A diverse group of forms is given here, separated by dotted lines to indicate that they are not ordered with respect to each other. They are all analysed as particles here, because they are invariant forms, and their distribution is determined by syntactic rules applying on a phrase level but to each specifically, with reference to particular other constituents (rather than simply the number of constituents as for the majority of clitics). \( Onim\) (sometimes \( anim\)) indicates origin in terms of place or time. \( Non\) ‘some’ and \( ba\) “one” belong to the noun phrase and are to do with specificity. \( Namo\) has a variety of functions and can be an auxiliary or function as a complementiser. \( Buat\) marks habitual and is an auxiliary in the verb phrase, synonymous with the auxiliary verb \( -me\); it is further homonymous with the prohibitive particle; see 18. below). \( E/eba/ba\) marks

\(^3\) This is reminiscent of the so called Wackernagel position, but in Kuot applies to the phrase rather than the clause.
future, and also a procedural past habitual, and has some irrealis-like functions. Finally, *tcele* (future form *tela*) is the general negation.

17. The prohibitive (i.e. negative imperative) marker is the particle *buat* (homonymous with the habitual auxiliary particle mentioned in 16.). It is presented on a line of its own because it can make up an utterance (‘Don’t!’), although it is usually part of a predicate.

18. Last in Table 2 we have the continuous aspect particle *man*. It has relatively free distribution in the predicate, and can even occur several times in different positions in the same predicate, or occasionally make up a predicate on its own. As mentioned, it is not counted when the first constituent is determined for the placement of a clitic.

1, 12, and 18, being on the boundaries between affix, clitic and particle, are interesting. The first is no longer a productive suffix, but shares features with the non-singular suffix which is productive. The subject enclitics of verb class I are affix-like in terms of selectivity, but clitic-like in terms of cohesion. The continuous particle *man* is an invariant grammatical morpheme like the other particles, but its position is less strictly determined by syntax, and it has the potential of being used as a predicate.

4.2.3 Paradigms without stems: possessives

One group of morphemes that has not been discussed in the above sections is the alienable (PossII) and inalienable (PossI) possessive paradigms. Each has forms indexing twelve pronominal categories of possessor, and the alienable set further index three to four categories of possessee (third person only; not all forms distinguish masculine and feminine). The reason why they have not been included is that they are only partly segmentable. For the inalienable set, each form can be said to be a portmanteau consisting of pronominal.category+possessive. There is thus no stem to segment out. In the alienable forms, the first part of each form indexes the possessor, and the second part the possessee, but again, there is no stem that remains constant in all the forms and which could be glossed ‘possessive’. There is also a small set of interrogative possessives, which do have a base (or stem) *au* to which the endings indicating 3m, 3f, 3d and 3p are added.4

4.3 Word

Criteria for a unit word can be phonological or grammatical.5 In Kuot, phonological criteria are not helpful for defining a unit word. Stress is lexical and not determined with reference to units such as syllables or moras in relation to word boundaries, and phonological rules make reference to syllables but not to words (and morpho-phonological rules apply only to certain morphology).

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4 Other question words fit quite well into other word classes (noun, adjective, adverb, verb), and have not been included in this presentation.

5 These sometimes yield different results, as in Boumaa Fijian (Dixon 1988).
There is one exception to this, namely the restriction on final [r] in the northern dialect of Kuot, giving e.g. *burburu* ‘stone wall’ where the southern dialect has *burbur*, but even here it can be argued that the restriction applies to stems rather than words, in that verb stems are subject to this restriction even when a subject enclitic is present. Prosodic contours apply to units such as phrases and clauses rather than to individual words. (See further Chapter 2, various sections.)

Morphological and syntactic criteria fare somewhat better. The order of morphemes within a word cannot be manipulated; suffixes must come after the stem and prefixes first, such as the non-singular suffixes on nouns and the object prefixes of verbs. A well-formed grammatical word can thus consist of a stem plus required grammatical morphology in the right order. A form not requiring morphological additions, such as a singular noun, an adverb or a particle can of course also make up a well-formed grammatical word.

An enclitic also forms a single word with its host, in that enclitics are never used independently. An important difference between affixes and clitics (except the subject enclitic of verb class I) is that the former remain with their host if the phrase is syntactically manipulated, while the clitics attach to any constituent which is first in the phrase at any particular time (excepting the continuous particle *mon*).

While there is no Kuot word that matches perfectly to the sense of English ‘word’, several expressions are possible in that sense. They are:

(5)  
\[ \text{dǝdema} \] (also ‘expression’, ‘utterance’, ‘behaviour, act’)  
\[ \text{nuloiap} \] (nominalisation from verb class IIb -lo ‘speak’)  
\[ \text{ties} \] (also ‘language’, ‘utterance’; also used as verb class I ‘speak’)  
\[ \text{nap} \] (‘part, piece’, also ‘behaviour, act’ and other senses)

Of these, the first three tend to be used of lexical items, while *nap* can be used of smaller parts as well. Two further items may be mentioned, which are used for ‘meaning’: \[ \text{muana} \], normally ‘reason’, and \[ \text{kudo} \] (the latter only mentioned once by one speaker).

---

6 It may be noted that the requirement to add grammatical morphemes may come from the stem (as in verb classes II and III), or from syntax (as in verb class I), or from referential considerations (as the non-singular on nouns, which normally depends on the number of referents).
Nouns have the inherent and covert property of gender – masculine and feminine, distinguished in the singular only, and the referent-determined and inflectional property of number – singular, dual, and non-singular (plural). The gender and number of the noun control agreement on demonstratives in the noun phrase, as well as the form of possessives, indexing morphology on prepositions, and cross-referencing morphology on verbs and adjectives.

The main source of loans at present, not surprisingly, is Tok Pisin.

### 5.1 Introduction to Kuot nouns

Before going into detail about the various properties of Kuot nouns, it will be useful to have an overview of the most important features of the system.

Kuot nouns are divided into eleven declensions on the basis of the shape of the singular form (and its relation to non-singular form). About half the nouns in the language belong in the “plain declension”, where the non-singular is formed by simple addition of the ending -(i)p to the singular form of the noun (with labialisation harmony causing the vowel to be /u/ in some circumstances; see below). The rest fall into the ten “special declensions”, in most of which the last part of the singular form is subtracted before the non-singular ending -(i)p is applied, e.g.:

(1)  
\[ \text{kiraima} \quad \text{kiraip} \]
\[ \text{nail/claw} \quad \text{nail/claw.nsg} \]
\[ \text{‘nail/claw’} \quad \text{‘nails/claws’} \]

The special declensions are not productive. They are presented in 5.2.

Further, there are some non-singular patterns that cut across declensions (in particular those that have a non-singular ending -bip), as well as irregular non-singular formations (5.3) including a few cases of suppletive forms (5.3.3). A number of words denoting persons form alternative non-singulars and duals on another pattern; most of these are kin terms (5.4).

A noun form referring to a plural entity is called “non-singular” rather than “plural” here, for two reasons. First, the non-singular forms the basis of dual in nouns:

(2)  
\[ \text{alay} \quad \text{alay-ip} \quad \text{alay-ip-ien} \]
\[ \text{road(sg)} \quad \text{road-nsg} \quad \text{road-nsg-dl} \]
\[ \text{‘road’} \quad \text{‘roads’} \quad \text{‘two roads’} \]

Second, the dual form in nouns is used mainly for animate referents, while the non-singular form is often used for dual as well as plural inanimate referents (see 5.5).
Note that the system of number marking in nouns differs from number marking in all other parts of the grammar. As shown, the dual form of nouns is based on the non-singular (plural); the exception to this generalisation is found in many kin terms and some other human nouns. Everywhere else (such as cross-referencing on verbs and other pronominal marking), dual and plural are in paradigmatic opposition (and there, the term “plural” is used; see Appendix I for the forms).

Kuot has two genders: masculine and feminine, where the masculine includes all nouns referring to human males, and the feminine includes all nouns referring to human females. Gender is distinguished in the singular only, giving the following system in the third person (gender is not distinguished in the first and second person):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>dl</th>
<th>pl/nsg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 1: Third person number/gender categories.

Higher animates (humans and important animals) have natural gender, and most of the special declensions are associated with a particular gender, but for the vast majority of nouns in the plain declension gender is not predictable. Loan words are frequently given different gender by different speakers. Gender is the subject of 5.6.

The class of nouns is the most variable group of words in the language in terms of phonology. There are no nouns consisting of a single vowel, but all other types and combinations of syllables occur. Three phonological processes are associated with the non-singular formation of nouns: labialisation harmony (see 3.3.4); final /t/ → [r] (3.2.2.2); and final [n]→[l] (3.2.2.4 and 3.2.2.5).

Reduplication is not a productive process with Kuot nouns, although quite a few nouns appear to have been formed by full or partial reduplication in the past; we may say that the forms under discussion have inherent reduplication. That the process (if it has indeed taken place) is not reversible is shown by pairs like the following, whose forms would seem to be related by reduplication of a type attested among verbs, but the members of these pairs have different meanings. Others show that a “non-reduplicated” version is not meaningful:

(3)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dual form</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dudur</td>
<td>owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pippin</td>
<td>banana skin, betel husk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurkur</td>
<td>stomach (organ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pɔtɔpat</td>
<td>tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kutkut</td>
<td>top of tree or mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pɔpɔpa</td>
<td>sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pɔpɔpa</td>
<td>in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipi</td>
<td>urine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liiɔliu</td>
<td>snail (sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pɔpɔri</td>
<td>story (N. Kuot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luluʁam</td>
<td>dwarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burbur</td>
<td>stone wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dur</td>
<td>crab (small white sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pin</td>
<td>betel nut (N Kuot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kur</td>
<td>wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pat</td>
<td>under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kut</td>
<td>big food parcel for cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pi</td>
<td>anus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*liiɔliu
*pɔpɔri
*luluʁam
*bur
The data for this chapter is a corpus of 892 Kuot nouns.

5.2 Declensions and non-singular form

Declensions are defined by the shape of the non-singular form. Nouns lacking a singular form thus cannot be assigned to a declension; there are 23 nouns in the data which speakers say have no singular form.¹

The special declensions are defined by the form of the last syllable or segment of the word in the singular. Nouns ending in ma, na, bun, bu, uom, bam, nǝm, nim, n (except bun) and m (except bam, nǝm and nim) each form a declension, referred to by the forms given here (i.e., I will talk of the ma declension, the bun declension and so forth). These endings relate in various ways to non-singular forms; for instance in the ma declension, the ending -ma is subtracted before the non-singular suffix is added; in some other declensions the relation of singular to non-singular form is less regular, and in some cases very variable.

The plain declension consists of all nouns which have a singular form and which do not end in one of the sequences that identify the special declensions. Within this declension, the non-singular formation is mostly regular, although there are some irregular nouns as well, and a few cases of suppletion.

Table 1 summarises information on the size and gender associations of each of the declensions (m=masculine, f=feminine, f/m=can be either, or I have conflicting information, ?=gender not known). The total is the size of the corpus (892) minus the 23 nouns without singular form (which therefore cannot be assigned to a declension, nor to a gender).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>f</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>f/m</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plain</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bun</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bam</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nǝm</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nim</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ There are also some nouns for which I simply do not have the singular form and do not know whether one exists; some of these have been excluded from this presentation.
It appears that those of the special declensions where a full syllable is taken off in the non-singular were historically formed by addition of that syllable to a prior singular form of the noun. In example (1) above, the earlier form would have been *kirai. Some of the declensions show a degree of semantic unity, which suggests that the ending once had semantic content, although this is presently obscured in many cases. Most of these endings further have relatively constant gender associations, which may be an indication that the endings were originally nouns themselves, perhaps in a compound relation to the stems of which they are now part. The exceptions to these statements are primarily the n and m declensions, identified by the final segment rather than a full syllable; these groups of words are inconsistent both in gender and in non-singular formation. Further discussion of some of these issues is given in 5.2.12 below, after the presentation of the declensions.

There is also a group of nouns sharing a non-singular suffix -bip; this is not associated with a particular singular form but cuts across declensions. A few more patterns deviate from general rules or patterns found in particular declensions; these are also discussed after the declensions have been presented.

Before presenting the data, a few comments need to be made on its reliability. As may be expected, many non-singular forms have been elicited starting from singular forms and vice versa, and this is true of dual forms to an even larger extent. This was necessary to get a respectable database size for understanding the patterns of non-singular and dual formation, and as we shall see there is indeed much variation. But although this would appear to be an area where elicitation could be quite successful, it became apparent that elicited data was not always reliable: most informants tire quickly when working from a list, and there is a danger of over-regularisation when words are presented one after the other out of context (more so for some informants than others). But there is also an amount of instability in parts of the system, so that forms acceptable to one speaker are not always acceptable to others. I suspect that a minority of the forms given below may not be the forms used by most speakers, and that in some cases non-singular forms have been produced where none are normally used. Nevertheless, it would be impossible to get a full picture of the systematic relationships between singular, non-singular and dual forms if only spontaneously produced forms were to be accepted.

Some of the declensions are very large, some very small, and some in between. Small declensions are given in full, and in the interest of space a line has been drawn at 25; declensions larger than that are only exemplified. For the latter, I have tried to include only words where I have attested both singular and non-singular forms in non-elicited situations. In spite of efforts to gather complete information on the forms for the three numbers and gender information for singular forms for as many nouns as possible, information is still lacking for some (especially with respect to dual forms).
This section deals primarily with the morphology of nouns; other sections will discuss the use of dual and non-singular. Gender information is given, but gender as such will be explored in 5.6.

5.2.1 The plain declension: regular non-singular

The plain declension is a default declension in the sense that it is defined by the absence of any of the endings identifying the special declensions, and that all new nouns go into it. The vast majority of nouns in the plain declension form regular non-singular with the ending -(i)p, and labialisation assimilation of the vowel /i/ to /u/ as follows:

(4) Regular non-singular:
   -p after a vowel;
   -up after a labial consonant (p, f, m),
     or if the vowel of a final closed syllable is rounded (o, u);
   -ip elsewhere (i.e. after any non-labial consonant
     following a non-rounded vowel)

For example:

(5) | Sg    | Nsg    |
----|-------|--------|
    | maua  | mauap  | fruit bat |
    | ie    | iep    | knife     |
    | aruruo| aruruop| croton    |
    | nǝp   | nǝpup  | part, piece|
    | ŋof   | ŋofup  | nostril   |
    | (auam)| auamup | cockroach |
    | nur   | nurup  | coconut (fruit) |
    | kakok| kakokup| snake     |
    | kaus  | kausup | Alpinia (ginger sp.) |
    | diŋ   | diŋip  | complete darkness |
    | pas   | pasip  | stick     |
    | muir  | muirip | seaweed (sp.) |

The word ŋof ‘nostril’ in the second set could be said to doubly condition the /u/ version of the non-singular suffix, as it has both a labial final consonant and /o/ in the final syllable. In the same set, auam is in parentheses because it belongs to the m declension by virtue of ending in /m/, but it takes the regular type of non-singular and is included here to illustrate the point that the effect of the bilabial nasal is the same as that of the bilabial voiceless stop and fricative. A final /a/ often changes to /ǝ/ in the non-singular.

Examples of nouns in the plain declensions are:

---

2 See also 3.2.2.4, 3.2.2.5 and 3.2.2.2 on further phonological processes in the non-singular formation.
The non-singular ending will be given in the derived form (-p, -ip, -up) in glossed examples from text, separated by hyphens where possible (for some of the words above: luaga-p bench-nsg ‘benches’ and ŋof-up nostril-nsg ‘nostrils’). The noun to which it is attached will be given with the final segment of the singular form unaltered, i.e., /t/ and /n/ will be written as such, even where the non-singular ending alters the pronunciation to [r] and [l] (e.g. kit-ip [kirip] ‘fires’). In list examples of non-singular formation in this chapter, however, the non-singular forms will be given without hyphens and with the phonological processes for /t/ and /n/ applied, as in (6).

In the column for dual forms, R (regular) means that the dual is formed on the non-singular by addition of -ien as shown in (2) above. The absence of R means that I have no information on dual for the word in question. Where I am aware of duals formed in other ways, the full form will be given.

There are two types of exceptions to the regular formation of non-singular and dual, which will be discussed after the presentation of the special declensions. First, as mentioned, some nouns form non-singular on other patterns which cut across declensions, with 20 words forming non-singular ending in bip, and a few other smaller patterns; some words are simply irregular and do not conform to any pattern (see 5.3). Second, there is a group of human nouns which often have alternative dual and plural forms which pattern differently from other irregular words, and refer to different constellations of referents from the regularly formed words (see 5.4).

Regardless of the type of formation, a Kuot non-singular noun always ends in /p/.

---

3 In the special declensions and for some irregular nouns this is often not possible since the non-singular form is not segmentable into singular+ending. The glossing in those cases will be given with a full stop (.), e.g., ‘claw.nsg’ in (1).
5.2.2  The ma declension

The ma declension is by far the largest of the special declensions, with 142 members in my data (nearly 16% of all nouns). The words in this declension are the most homogenous both with regard to gender and to non-singular formation. With two exceptions, they are masculine, the exceptions being bunima ‘last-born’ whose gender follows the sex of the referent, and arima ‘pandanus fruit (sp.)’ which is feminine. Words in the ma declension form their non-singular by subtracting -ma and adding -p, as shown in example (7).4

(7)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>Di</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ima</td>
<td>ip</td>
<td>subclan; river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natjarima</td>
<td>natjarip</td>
<td>mosquito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laukima</td>
<td>laukip</td>
<td>tooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irama</td>
<td>irap</td>
<td>R eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuirima</td>
<td>kuirip</td>
<td>blue-lined surgeonfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dodema</td>
<td>dodep</td>
<td>R word, utterance, behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipiduluma</td>
<td>pipidulup</td>
<td>bird (sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakosilima</td>
<td>kakosilip</td>
<td>R small lizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adaima</td>
<td>adai</td>
<td>R dance mask (malagan, Tok Pisin tatanua)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teima</td>
<td>teip</td>
<td>R man, male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the 142 words in this declension, there is a subgroup of 27 words ending in -nǝma. They are all masculine, but some deviate in their non-singular formation. Fifteen of them take the same type of non-singular as the bulk of ma words, and four have it as an alternative, but several patterns show up among the rest. All involve subtraction, usually of all of -nǝma, and then addition of -p or a longer form ending in -p, as exemplified in (8). It appears that non-singular formation in this subgroup is quite unstable, as sometimes several forms have been attested for the same word. Only a few examples will be given here:

(8)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>Di</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>muruna</td>
<td>murunap/murunapup</td>
<td>fire fly; torch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mabin</td>
<td>mabinap/mabilapup</td>
<td>/R    boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapin</td>
<td>kapilap</td>
<td>mountain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/R in the dual column indicates that the dual form given to me was based on the second of the non-singular forms (mabilapupien).

Interestingly, the [n]/[l] alteration observed at the very end of words in the regular non-singular formation (see 3.2.2.4, and 5.2.11 and 5.2.3 below) is here found quite far into the word (and is an option also for murulap and murulapup); this is another indication that the original stem ended with (or before) /n/, and -(ǝ)ma or -nǝma was added on at some point in time.

Another interesting point about these non-singular forms is the -pup ending. As set out above, the non-singular suffix is normally -(i)p. The form -pup looks as though the non-singular had been applied twice (the bilabial stop /p/ in the first application would cause labialisation harmony in the second application, mak-

4 Information is lacking for eight words.
ing the vowel /u/; lenition then causes it to be pronounced [βup]). There are scattered examples of -pup non-singulars in other declensions but it is repeatedly attested in the ma declension, and especially among the nǝma subgroup. In two cases a further syllable /la/ is added: irima – irilǝpup ‘Octomeles sumatran’ (tree sp., Tok Pisin ‘erima’), and piririma – piririp/piririlǝpup ‘pandanus (sp.).’

Further irregularities are a few words with unexpected vowels before the non-singular ending:

(9)  buruma  burǝp  laplap
    abuluma  abulǝp  R  fish (generic)
    uleuma/uleoma  ulep  parrotfish (sp.)

In the second word, abuluma, the non-singular used is that of abulǝ ‘school of fish’, but I have no explanation for buruma. In uleuma/uleoma the vowel preceding ma is subtracted with ma before -p is added.

The only word in the declension not to subtract -ma before the non-singular is added is the one feminine word, arǝma ‘pandanus fruit (sp.)’, which forms its non-singular by simply adding -p (arǝmap). It is probably incidental that it ends in ma.

The ma declension does not show any obvious semantic unity, although it may be noted that it is particularly well represented among words denoting species and parts of plants, insects, shells and fish, and is found also also among body parts and in some words for male humans. The -nǝma subgroup is similar, but also contains four fruit trees, where the corresponding fruits have related forms ending in nǝm (see 5.2.8 below). Words of the ma declension are sometimes in gender opposition with words of the bun declension for entities with natural gender (see 5.2.4 below).

5.2.3 The na declension

There are 36 words in the na declension. They are predominantly masculine, but three are feminine (girivǝna ‘snot’, pasina ‘pig snare’ and the homonyms buna ‘green pigeon (sp.)’ and ‘fine black sand’); for two further words I have received contradictory gender information (danmǝlina ‘lymph’ and burumuana ‘broken knife without a handle’). One more word, pasǝna ‘clansman; clanswoman’, takes either gender depending on the sex of the referent.5

As for the non-singular formation, most of these words subtract -na and then add -p (20 words, plus two which also permit another pattern), for instance:

5 I lack gender information for one word; for the two with contrasting information I am inclined to trust the speaker who said they are masculine. Information on non-singular forms is missing for two words.
Eight words add the non-singular suffix without subtraction (the two variable words mentioned have this as the alternative), e.g.:

(11) | Sg      | Nsg     | Di     |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kapuna</td>
<td>kapunap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pəsəna</td>
<td>pəsənəp</td>
<td>clansman, clanswoman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the remaining four words for which information is available, one is of the bip type (biaməna ‘shoulder’; see 5.3), one is suppletive (mikana – teip ‘man’; see 5.3.3), and the last two are:

(12) | Sg               | Nsg     | Di               |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>marabuna</td>
<td>marabulap</td>
<td>marabuvien</td>
<td>nipple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tona</td>
<td>topup</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>bathing place in river</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first of these can be seen either as a case of subtraction of -na and adding of -lap, or as a version of the [n]/[l] variation seen in forms ending in /n/ (5.2.11; cf. also above on the -n/a subgroup of the ma declension above in 5.2.2. The second word also has two possible analyses; either the stem is partly suppletive (or at least very irregular, going from tona to topu-), or it is a case of subtraction of -na and adding of the alternative non-singular -pup that we saw in 5.2.2 (tona does not accept the non-singular forms *top or *tonap).

The na declension does not show any consistent semantic pattern.

5.2.4 The bun declension

In the bun declension there are 17 words, and all are feminine. This declension has quite a strong association with referents of female sex, although inanimate nouns are also represented. Non-singular forms are varied, as are duals. All 17 words are given here:

(13) | Sg             | Nsg    | Di               |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>makabun</td>
<td>makaupa</td>
<td>makabie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kube bun</td>
<td>kuebaupa</td>
<td>kubebie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurai bun</td>
<td>kurai/kuraiupa</td>
<td>kuraistpian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kume bun</td>
<td>kumeupa</td>
<td>R/kumebie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lai bun</td>
<td>lai bunap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purai bun</td>
<td>purai Sap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukuse bun</td>
<td>mukuse/bup/mukuse bulap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kif boun</td>
<td>kif bulap/-bulap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murlaibun</td>
<td>murlaip/murlai Sap</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

6 The word kapuna ‘dog’ exists with the same meaning in neighbouring Nochi (Austronesian).
We find a variety of non-singular strategies, many involving the subtraction of -bun, and the addition of -p or -(u)lǝp. In other cases, the non-singular suffix is simply added to the singular form (sometimes causing the [n]/[l] variation; see 3.2.2.4, and 5.2.11 below). In the case of kuraibun, murǝlaibun and udebun (which also has the form utebun), the shorter non-singular form is the form used for the masculine equivalents (kuraima, murale and uduma). The last two non-singulars, alip and lalabip, are simply irregular, but lalabip together with donabip and ubulubip belong with the non-singulars ending in -bip (5.3 below).

As for the dual forms, makabie and kuebie belong to a pattern that occurs with some words for female humans (see 5.4). The duals of kuraibun and one of the possibilities for suaebulupien illustrate a common type of irregular dual in Kuot: instead of being formed on the non-singular form of the noun in question, they are formed on a non-singular pattern used with other words in the same group. Thus the non-singular base of kurailǝpien would be *kurailǝp, and of suaebulupien *suaebulup. Although the forms are unattested for these particular words, it is clear that they represent ways of forming non-singular which are attested for other nouns of a similar form.

As mentioned, bun words frequently refer to female entities. They further often contrast with words for male entities, having the same or a similar initial part of the stem. I am aware of the following pairs:

(14) feminine (bun) masculine
kubebun young woman kubǝma young man
kurabun female bush spirit kuraima male bush spirit
kumebun sow kumurot boar
purabun hen pura rooster
kifǝbun female rat/mouse kifǝma rat/mouse
murǝlaibun rock etc. where murale rock etc. where
spirits dwell, fem. spirits dwell, masc.
udebun banana plant, fem. sp. uduma banana plant, masc. species
Regarding the terms for male and female rats or mice, they are not actually used that way of rodents, for which the masculine *kifoma* is used, but instead of human children; see 5.6.3.1. Alternative forms are *kispõma* and *kispebun*.

### 5.2.5 The bu declension

There are ten words in the *bu* declension. Eight of these are feminine; six denote fruit or nut trees. One word is given different gender by different speakers, *lerabu* banana stump. The other masculine word is *kanakanotubu* ‘sorcerer’, and I was told that it could be applied to a woman too if she exhibits the behaviour associated with the word (typically standing behind other people’s houses at night); the word would then take feminine agreement.

Non-singulatrs either replace -*bu* with -*lõp* (with some vowel variation preceding the endings), or add -*p* to the end of the full singular form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ηareobu</td>
<td>ηarõlõp</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opõliobu</td>
<td>opõlõp</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arõmaiobu</td>
<td>arõmaiõp</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabiobu</td>
<td>kabelõp</td>
<td>kabiobuõp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sõbaibu</td>
<td>sõbailõp</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirobu</td>
<td>nuroõlõp</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lerabu</td>
<td>lerabup</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maibu</td>
<td>maibup</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liobu</td>
<td>liobup</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanakanotubu</td>
<td>kanakanotubup</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the fruit of *arõmaiobu* is called *arõma*, and in the case of *nirobu* – *nuroõlõp*, the similarity to the most general word for the coconut, *nur*, is obvious. The other words for trees do not have related stems for fruits or nuts. It seems possible that the -(V)*bu* ending derives from a word meaning tree or fruit tree and we may note also that it is the words with this meaning that take the non-singular ending with -*lõp*. The words taking the simple -*p* non-singular may end in -*bu* coincidently, not the least considering that *lerabu* is also singled out as different by being given masculine gender by some speakers.

### 5.2.6 The uom declension

This is another small declension, with eight members, all feminine. There is no apparent semantic unity. Non-singular is formed by subtracting -*om* and adding -*p* in all cases but one, and dual is regular (where known):

---

7 It could be that the /i/ of the singular form is a result of vowel drift. (The word *nur* for ‘coconut’ exists also in Austronesian Nalik and could be a loan).
Note that this group includes words ending in -uom but not just in -om; the words in -om belong to the m declension. This is because the non-singular formation is different.

5.2.7 The bam declension

The bam declension has 24 members, all feminine. This is the only declension that appears to have a semantic component of singulative, i.e., the words are used to refer to single items that are normally considered part of a larger mass of similar things. The non-singular is formed by taking off -am and adding -ǝp – this could be seen also as just removing -m and adding -p with the vowel changing from /a/ to /ǝ/. This occurs in the m declension too (see 5.2.11 below), but the semantic factor in many of the bam words and the fact that the non-singular formation is the same for all but three of them, motivates the postulation of a separate declension. The words are listed in (17):

(17)  Sg    Nsg        DI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bǝbam</td>
<td>bǝbǝp</td>
<td>leaf (generic); butterfly fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opǝlǝbam</td>
<td>opǝlǝbǝp</td>
<td>breadfruit leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abam</td>
<td>abǝp</td>
<td>pandanus (sp.) leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lapararebam</td>
<td>lapararebǝp</td>
<td>smaller leaves on coconut fronds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaburubam</td>
<td>kaburubǝp</td>
<td>grass shoots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purubam</td>
<td>purubǝp</td>
<td>coconut flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pagaribam</td>
<td>pagaribǝp/pagarip</td>
<td>taro stalk/flower (eaten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pibam</td>
<td>pibǝp</td>
<td>fish scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nebam</td>
<td>nebǝp</td>
<td>feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>binbam</td>
<td>binbǝp</td>
<td>R rib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pudibam</td>
<td>pudibǝp</td>
<td>white hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalilisbam</td>
<td>kalilisbǝp</td>
<td>little finger, little toe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǝfiba m</td>
<td>kǝfibǝp</td>
<td>bamboo flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ka)kǝfatubam</td>
<td>(ka)kǝfatubǝp</td>
<td>fibre of coconut shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labiǝbam</td>
<td>labiǝbǝp</td>
<td>R wood chips (in pieces, being chopped)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murukkebam</td>
<td>murukkebǝp</td>
<td>vine (sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiribam</td>
<td>kiribǝlǝp</td>
<td>R betel pepper vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaubam</td>
<td>kaubǝp</td>
<td>burnt skin of tubers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuriribam/</td>
<td>kudirǝp/kuderibip/R</td>
<td>prong of fishing spear or comb paddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leibam</td>
<td>leibǝp</td>
<td>R paddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enbam</td>
<td>enbǝp</td>
<td>tiny walking track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Gender is unknown for three words.
The words that do not follow the pattern are the alternative non-singular forms for pagaribam, where all of -bam is subtracted and only -p added; kiribam which is kiriblap rather than *kiribap, and kuriribam. The latter has been given to me in several versions both in the singular (e.g. kudiriram, kudiram, kudirimbam; some of which would not be in the bam declension) and non-singular, and they do not always match; in other words, it is quite likely that another speaker may form *kuriribap from the singular form given in (17) – there is little point in dwelling on the relations between the singular and non-singular for this word, other than to note that both are variable.

The source for the ending -bam may be the word bǝbam ‘leaf’ which in itself looks like a reduplicated form of bam. It is notable that several words in this declension denote various types of leaves (and ‘paddle’ may perhaps be considered leaf-like), and that several others are typically part of pluralities (such as ‘fish scales’ and ‘coconut fibres’ (both also leafy)). I aware of related stems for only three words. They are opolǝbam ‘breadfruit leaf’ which is related to opolibbu ‘breadfruit tree’ (see 5.2.5 above), and kofibam, which is related to another type of flute called kofi – the latter was made from several pieces of bamboo (like a pan flute), while the kofibam was a flute from a single piece of bamboo. Atlubam ‘smooth-tailed trevally’ is related to atluma, which signifies a school of atlubam.

5.2.8 The nǝm declension

The nǝm declension has 39 members and there is not the space here to give a full list. All nǝm words are feminine. Several non-singular strategies are used, and most involve subtracting -nǝm and adding either, -lup, -lǝp (/-lap) or just -p; others simply add the non-singular suffix to the full singular form, e.g.:

(18)  Sg Nsg DI
kǝsomunǝm kǝsomulup R mango fruit (12 words)
pianǝm pialap R village (3 words)
kubunǝm kubup R young coconut (fruit) (8 words)
nunǝm nunǝmp R mouth (5 words)

Several words have alternate strategies (e.g. deknǝm – deklǝpup/dekmulup), and there are also unique patterns (e.g. burunǝm – bureip ‘water, water bottles’).

Six of the words end in munǝm rather than just nǝm. Munǝm in itself means ‘kidney’ and may be the source of the ending for several of the words in this declension. We may also point to nǝnum ‘mouth’ as a possibility, parallel in form to bǝbam in the bam declension. However, the semantics of the words in this

---

9 I have no gender information for four words; two others were given as masculine but later corrected. Two words lack non-singular information.
Many other words do not fit this pattern (e.g. nonom ‘vine to lash together fence’, burunom ‘water’, pianom ‘village’, ikunom ‘root’, pakkubinom ‘intes-
(spp.)’).

Several of the words denoting fruits or nuts have related stems denoting the
trees:

(20) fruit tree
       kasomunom kasomoma mango
       talimunom talimoma talis nut
       sakoobanom sakoobulanom Malay apple
       utnom omoma fruit/seed (sp.)
       kabonom kabobu Malay apple

5.2.9 The nim declension

The nim declension has 14 words, of which 11 are feminine and one masculine
(baranim ‘bird net; store’).11 This group is semantically diverse, and the non-
singular formation is heterogenous too:

(21) Sg Nsg DI
       bonim bop name
       karanim karaip low tide; year
       baranim baranip net for catching birds; store (masc.)

---

10 Another possibility concerning the origin of the nom ending would be a lexeme
meaning ‘fruit’ (there is synchronically no generic word for ‘fruit’ in Kuot), and per-
haps ‘kidney’ was seen as fruit-like somehow. However, a large number of words in
this declension are not fruit-like at all and it does not seem useful to speculate further
on the matter.

11 I have no gender information for two words.
### Nouns: Declensions and Non-Singular Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Non-Singular Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>muaranim</td>
<td>muareip</td>
<td>tree branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buybunim</td>
<td>buybunimup</td>
<td>very early morning (still dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panbinim</td>
<td>panbinimup</td>
<td>R sky, cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sasorapunim</td>
<td>sasorapunimup</td>
<td>moisture, dew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panim</td>
<td>tonimup/-</td>
<td>heat; anger; smell of urine/faeces in sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mlonim</td>
<td>mlonimup</td>
<td>R behaviour, custom; people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uadan/uadanim</td>
<td>uadanip</td>
<td>between two things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ionim</td>
<td></td>
<td>deep sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lobenim</td>
<td></td>
<td>grass (sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tbaunim</td>
<td></td>
<td>dew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labinim</td>
<td></td>
<td>beach, coast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bonim* ‘name’ forms the non-singular by subtracting -nim and adding -p; *karanim* subtracts -nim but adds -ip. *Baranim* has -m subtracted and -p added. The non-singular of *muaranim* is in fact formed on a synonym with the same stem from the *ma* declension, *muareima* (masc.). The next five words form non-singular by adding -up to the full form of the singular, although some informants maintain that *tonim* does not have a non-singular form. *Uadan* has two possible singular forms, and the non-singular given to me is based on the form which is not in the *nim* declension. I have no information on the non-singular for *ionim*, but the last three words simply have no non-singular forms.

The ending -nim is homonymous with the ending that forms nominals from adjectives. However, only *sasorapunim* is an obvious derivation from something which is currently an adjective in the language, namely *sasorap-* ‘wet’ (it could be translated ‘wetness’). A less direct relation holds between *muaranim* ‘branch’ and the adjective *mupmuar-* (*mutmuar-*) ‘branching a lot’, and between *panim* ‘heat etc.’ and the adjective *pappamo-* ‘hot’. The fact that there are several abstract nouns in this declension, as well as the fact that feminine gender is predominant, may suggest an origin in (now obsolete) adjectives for a few more of the words; all morphological nominalisations and a majority of abstract nouns are feminine (see 5.6.3.2 below). *Mlonim* ‘behind’ and *uadan/uadanim* ‘between’ are both relational nouns, and cannot be used of parts of objects or persons (see further 5.7.1 below).

#### 5.2.10 The *m* declension

The last two declensions, *m* and *n*, are different from the eight so far presented. Their identifying endings are not full syllables, and in the *n* declension gender is mixed to a larger degree than in the other declensions. Although most of the nouns form non-singular by the rules set out for the plain declension, there are a number of cases of subtraction of the last segment. The combination of unpredictable non-singular formation and less consistent gender is the reason for treating them as special declensions.
The *m* declension has 21 members: sixteen feminine, two masculine, and two either.\textsuperscript{12}

Various non-singular types are represented. Two words lack non-singular forms,\textsuperscript{13} nine add -up to the full singular form, and two more do so as one of two possibilities. Four words replace the final -m with -p. *Bukom* ‘head’ belongs to the group of nouns with plurals in -bip, and *makasiem* ‘eaves beam’ subtracts -em and adds -p as one alternative:

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Sg} & \text{Nsg} & \text{Di} & \text{gdr} \\
ir\text{om} & & & \text{high water in river} \\
l\text{olem} & & & \text{f song and dance (type)} \\
am\text{osom} & & & \text{m champion(?)} \\
ubiem & – & & \text{f sand} \\
piron & – & & \text{f sea, salt water} \\
a\text{faum/avaum} & a\text{faumup/avaumup} & & \text{f pandanus (sp.)} \\
galaum & galaum & & \text{f slit gong, guitar} \\
uniem & u\text{niemup} & & \text{f tree (sp.; TP magas)} \\
a\text{uum} & a\text{uumup} & & \text{f cockroach} \\
demdem & demdemup & & \text{f land snail (from TP)} \\
malobiem & malobiemup & & \text{f tongue} \\
l\text{oiom} & l\text{oiomup} & & \text{f dolphin} \\
l\text{aragam} & l\text{aragamup} & & \text{m (fish?) hawk} \\
l\text{luram/lutam} & l\text{luramup/lutamup} & R & \text{m/f dwarf} \\
makasiem & m\text{aksip/makasiemup} & /R & \text{f eaves beam} \\
neim & neimup/neip & & \text{m/f edge of river or hill} \\
ipam & ip\text{ap} & ip\text{umupien} & \text{f leaves to cover mumu} \\
bul\text{olom} & bul\text{olap} & R & \text{f taro (generic)} \\
burukkam & burukkap & & \text{f knot} \\
dikkam & dikkap & R & \text{f nit; fruit (sp.)} \\
bukom & bukabip/bukobip & R & \text{f head; coconut water flask; lastborn pig} \\
\end{array}
\]

5.2.11 The *n* declension

The *n* declension has 81 members (and so will not be given in full here). Of these, 40 are feminine, 25 masculine, and ten either feminine or masculine. Of the ten words with variable gender, seven denote persons (‘firstborn/leader’, ‘friend/partner’, ‘orphan’, ‘same-sex same-generation in-law’, two words for ‘crazy person’, and ‘dead person’) and take the gender of the referent. The other three simply have variable gender (‘goatfish’, ‘sea snake (sp.)’, and ‘(kind of) basket’).\textsuperscript{14}

A feature of the non-singular formation of nouns ending in /n/ is the [n] to [l] alteration described in 3.2.2.4, whereby a final [n] is frequently realised as [l]

\textsuperscript{12} One more lacks gender information.

\textsuperscript{13} Information is missing for three more.

\textsuperscript{14} Gender is unknown to me for four words; and two relational nouns, *arakkin* ‘opposite/straight over’ and *uadan* ‘between’ do not have gender (see further 5.7.1).
when the non-singular suffix is applied to a form ending in /n/ (cf. also 5.2.4, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 above). It appears that all words can accept the variation, and it occurs also in recent loan words (e.g. suppun – suppulup ‘spoon’), although there is a tendency for words already containing /l/ to retain [n]. Here forms will be given with [n] or [l] as they were taken down.

Most nouns in the n declension form non-singular in the regular way given in (4) above (since gender is variable in this declension, gender information will be included), e.g.:

(23)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DI</th>
<th>gdr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kín</td>
<td>kilíp</td>
<td>R f</td>
<td>small amount of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n'oun</td>
<td>n'oulíp</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fish hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gun</td>
<td>gulíp</td>
<td>R f</td>
<td>breadfruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boun</td>
<td>bouluíp</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lákkuan lakkuaníp</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>káun</td>
<td>káulíp</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>weed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pánán</td>
<td>pánalíp</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>nest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sòbín</td>
<td>sòbilíp</td>
<td>m/f</td>
<td>basket from one coconut frond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six words form non-singular by subtracting the final /n/ and adding -p:

(24)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DI</th>
<th>gdr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>k'éin</td>
<td>keíp</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>basket with head strap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lúkuán</td>
<td>lukuáp</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kámin</td>
<td>kamíp</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>múan</td>
<td>muáp</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>betel pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíban</td>
<td>kíbap</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>leg/foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>míkan</td>
<td>mìkap</td>
<td>R m/f</td>
<td>friend/partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A few other scattered patterns are also found:

(25)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DI</th>
<th>gdr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>olsabuan olsabuop olsabuani-p</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>blood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nibuan nibuop nibuani-p</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>top of yam, to replant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uon uailúp</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>married couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lôkôsman lôkôsap/-manip</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>wooden “propeller” to catch shark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinin</td>
<td>tiniliap</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilan</td>
<td>kilalap</td>
<td>R m</td>
<td>arm/hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unun unulúp/unulíp unulúpi-p</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>stand of bamboo or bananas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gan galíp/galíbíp</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>garden (N Kuot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this last group of words we also find two dual forms, for olsabuan and nibuan, that do not follow the irregular non-singular exhibited by the word but are instead formed on what would be a regular non-singular form (while for unun the dual follows one of two possible non-singular forms).

The word uon ‘married couple’ takes dual agreement and thus does not have gender. From the point of view of agreement and form, it could be considered dual, and most probably has that origin. But it can in turn take non-singular and dual morphology as a singular noun would; see further 5.4.1.
Three words in the n declension lack non-singular altogether.\textsuperscript{15} They are:

\begin{tabular}{l l l l l}
(26) & \textit{laurien} & f & shadow \\
& \textit{in}m\textit{on} & f & the world; ground; sky, space \\
& \textit{lakabuon} & f & stick of firewood
\end{tabular}

For \textit{lakabuon} a suppletive non-singular is used: \textit{lap}, which in turn has no related singular form.

Both the \textit{n} and the \textit{m} declensions could be treated as part of the plain declension, in that non-singular is largely regular and they do not have an identifying syllable like the other special declensions. However, there is a higher than normal level of irregularity in the non-singular formation, and this is why they are treated as separate declensions here. For the \textit{n} declension, it is also the case that it has a lower than usual correlation between gender and declension.

\textbf{5.2.12 Origins of special declension singular endings: hypotheses}

This section summarises some facts about the eight declensions that are defined by the last syllable of the singular form (i.e., \textit{ma}, \textit{na}, \textit{bun}, \textit{bu}, \textit{uom}, \textit{ham}, \textit{nom} and \textit{nim}, ignoring \textit{m} and \textit{n}). Several facts support the idea that the endings were added to originally shorter stems at some point in history, apart from the fact that they are subtracted in the non-singular.

There are a number of words in the special declensions that have related forms (without the endings) in Austronesian languages in the region, as well as in Tok Pisin (which has some 15\% of its vocabulary from local languages, primarily Tolai/Kuanua of New Britain).\textsuperscript{16} The words have most likely been borrowed into Kuot. There are no English-based words with these endings, so presumably the word formation processes that led to the declensions had stopped being productive by the time Tok Pisin became known in the area. The related words of this type that I am aware of are given in Table 2.

\textsuperscript{15} For nine more I do not have the information.

\textsuperscript{16} Mühlhäusler (1997: 176) gives the proportions of lexifier languages in Tok Pisin as 77\% English, 16\% indigenous, and 7\% German and other.
Table 2: Old loans in the special declensions.
The language abbreviations are: TP=Tok Pisin, Kr=Kara, Lk=Lakuramau, 
Nc=Nochi, Md=Madak, POC=Proto-Oceanic.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuot</th>
<th>Decl.</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ubianama</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>TP uben</td>
<td>fishnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talinɔma,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tɔlinunɔm</td>
<td>ma,</td>
<td>TP talis,</td>
<td>Terminalia catappa (nut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hydrate</td>
<td>nam</td>
<td>POC *[kəʃ]arı</td>
<td>Canarium almond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hydrate</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>TP ŋatŋat</td>
<td>mosquito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maminɔma</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>TP mamin</td>
<td>doubleheaded maori wrasse (fish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taurima</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>TP taur</td>
<td>Triton shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kifɔma/kisɔma,</td>
<td>ma,</td>
<td>Md kisap,</td>
<td>rat, mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kifɔbun/kisɔbun</td>
<td>bun</td>
<td>Lk skif,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uduma, udebun</td>
<td>ma,</td>
<td>Kr fıt, POC *pudi</td>
<td>banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasɔnɔma,</td>
<td>ma,</td>
<td>Nc kasu</td>
<td>mango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasɔmonɔm</td>
<td>nam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kubunɔn̩m</td>
<td>nam</td>
<td>POC *kubo, *kubwa</td>
<td>young coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tananɔm</td>
<td>nəm</td>
<td>TP tɔn, POC *tɔwan</td>
<td>Pometia pinnata (fruit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sikaima</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>Kr səvəvəwə</td>
<td>grasshopper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last two sets may not be related, but the first ten items seem convincing.

There is also the fact that there are a number of related words in different de-
clensions, as we have seen above (for instance kubɔma – kubebun ‘young man –
young woman’; kasonɔma – kasonumɔm ‘mango tree – mango fruit’; opəliobu –
opəliobam ‘breadfruit tree – breadfruit leaf’; and muaɾanım – muaretimə, both
‘tree branch’.) These suggest an earlier base, to which the endings were added
(*kubə, *kəso, *opəl-, *muarə, etc.).

We have also seen that the [n] to [l] alternation that is typical at the end of
words sometimes occurs quite far into the stem in the special declensions (in
words ending in -nəma in the ma declension, and in the na declension), which
may be an indication that the /n/ was once at the end of the word. Another pos-
sibility is that the phonemic distinction between /l/ and /n/ (which is still only
partial) only developed after these words were established, and did not affect
them.

The issue of semantic unity is more difficult. One possibility is that there was at
least partial noun classification in the past (common in non-Austronesian lan-

17 The sources are: for Tok Pisin my own notes and Mihalic (1971), for Kara Schlie
and Schlie (1993), for Lakuramau (a dialect of Nalik) Robert Eklund’s and my own
notes, for Noch Erickson and Erickson (1991), for Madak unpublished materials by
Robert and Carolyn Lee, and for Proto-Oceanic Ross, Pawley and Osmond (1998), ex-
cept for ‘rat’ which is from Malcolm Ross (pers. comm.) and ‘young coconut’ from an
online source (http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/8831/poclex1.html, 15 April
2002).
guages in the region), and that the endings were once classifier morphemes. Another possibility is that the ending may at one time have been a meaningful lexical item and the construction initially something like a compound word (not presently a word formation strategy in Kuot). The compound scenario would account for the gender association of declensions, if the gender of the compound word came from the last part, the present-day ending. This would also account for the semantic unity that we see in some declensions: if for example there was a feminine noun bu (or an earlier related form) which meant fruit-bearing tree, and trees started being called ‘x fruit tree’ instead of just ‘x’, this would account quite nicely for the bu declension we see today.

One problem with these ideas is that there are exceptions in all cases, and some declensions have no discernible semantic unity at all. As Kuot is a genetic isolate, there is no comparative data against which to judge semantic drift, that is, there is no external data to help us determine whether non-typical words in some of the declensions originally meant something else, or to support the notion that some words may have the declension-defining ending coincidentally, or indeed to verify a hypothesised origin for the ending.

### 5.3 Other non-singular patterns

A few words form non-singular on other patterns; some more are irregular, and there is a small amount of suppletion.

#### 5.3.1 -bip, -iap and other smaller non-singular patterns

Some types of alternative non-singular formation cut across declensions. In particular, there is a group of 20 words that take a plural ending in -bip. The -bip ending is sometimes added to the full singular form; in other cases part of the singular stem is subtracted. For several words, other non-singular forms also exist. The words taking the bip non-singular are given here with gender and declension information (“p” stands for the plain declension):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>DiL</th>
<th>gdr</th>
<th>decl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>danuot</td>
<td>danuoribip</td>
<td>danuoripien</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>p river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ságər</td>
<td>ságərabi</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>p egg (W coast?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dákər</td>
<td>dákərabi</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>p egg (E coast?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uppaau</td>
<td>uppaubip</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>p piece of tuber food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuada</td>
<td>kuadabip</td>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>p buttock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kədə</td>
<td>kədəbip</td>
<td></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>p bamboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dəde</td>
<td>dədebib</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>p knee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tape</td>
<td>tapep/tapebip</td>
<td></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>p basket (type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bie</td>
<td>biebib</td>
<td></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>p shell, shell scraper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudat</td>
<td>kudari/ku dai</td>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>p garden fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biaməna</td>
<td>biaməbip</td>
<td></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>na shoulder blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labun</td>
<td>lalabip</td>
<td>labunupien</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>bun bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>donabun</td>
<td>donabulup/donabip</td>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>bun blue fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unbun</td>
<td>unbulubip</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>bun coconut frond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudiribam/+</td>
<td>kudirəp/kuderibip</td>
<td>/R</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>bam prongs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fikanəm</td>
<td>fikabi/bip</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nam coal, ember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinanəm</td>
<td>kimabip</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nam earth, ground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both of the irregular duals are formed on what would have been a regular non-singular; for *labun* the non-singular is suppletive (or at least involves rather far-reaching changes to the stem) while the dual goes back to the singular form. For *parabunom*, one informant also gave a dual form *parabunomupien*.

Some words get an ending with the form -bip through other mechanisms, and should not be included here. This concerns words whose singular form includes /b/, to which -ip is added after subtraction of the original ending; they are *karebima* – *karebip* ‘piece of sweet potato cooked in coconut milk’, *pakkubinom* – *pakkubip* ‘intestine’, *obinom* – *obip* ‘canoe’, *mobinom* – *mobip* ‘lip’. A couple of words which have no singular form also end in -bip: *tubiebip* ‘coastal people’ and *burabip* ‘old garden’. Since their relation to the singular form is not known, it cannot be determined whether they are bona fide bip non-singulars.\(^{18}\)

Another, albeit less common, form of non-singular marking is -iap. It is found with many time words (including recently borrowed names for weekdays), as well as with some ordinary nouns:

\[(28)\]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>Di</th>
<th>gdr decl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>təro</em></td>
<td><em>təriap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>m p time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>parabir</em></td>
<td><em>parabiraiap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nabit</em></td>
<td><em>nabiriap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>arubu</em></td>
<td><em>arubuiap/arubuap</em></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>f p night, darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>iley</em></td>
<td><em>ileyiap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p daylight, daytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ties</em></td>
<td><em>tiesiap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p language, speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tinin</em></td>
<td><em>tiniliap</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f n dance group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pəparak</em></td>
<td><em>pəparakiiap/pəparakip</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>məŋat</em></td>
<td><em>məŋariap/məŋarip</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>f p feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>unun</em></td>
<td><em>unuliiap/unulip</em></td>
<td>unulupien</td>
<td>m n stand of bamboo/banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kaure</em></td>
<td><em>kaureiap/kaurebip/kaureiap/kaurep</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>m p useless activity, trivia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further possible member is *inəməniap* ‘people’. This word has no singular form, but appears to be related to *inəmon* ‘world’ and to neighbouring Nochi *inaman* ‘people’. There is a tendency for stems which can also be used as class I

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\(^{18}\) It may be suggested that the bip forms consist of the regular non-singular -ip with a /b/ that may formerly have been part of the singular form. However, there are two reasons why this seems unlikely. First, voiced stops are not permitted as final segments (cf. 3.2.1), and nor are there any corresponding *gip* or *dip* endings to suggest that they once were; second, the vowel of the non-singular would be expected to be [u] after /b/ as after all other final bilabials but we find only bip, and there are also no *bup* forms conditioned by rounded vowels (as should be the case for e.g. *uppau* and *un-bun*).
verbs to take the -iap non-singular (if they can be pluralised). In this context we may note that papparak ‘food’ is related to parak ‘eat’ (see also 5.8.1 below).

Two more words have non-singular forms ending in -iap, namely ubi – ubiap ‘garden’ and popori – poporiap ‘story’; however, the words themselves end in /i/, and so the non-singular ending may equally be -ap, since this ending occurs in a couple of other words in the data. It is one of two possibilities for arubu ‘night’ and one of four for kaure ‘trivia’ (both given in (28)), and is used also in kilan – kilalap ‘hand, arm’. Pianǝm – pialap ‘village’ of the nǝm declension may count in this group too, with a [n] to [l] alteration in the stem.

There is also a group of words that have a non-singular ending -ip, in spite of the singular form ending in a vowel. All belong to the plain declension:

(29) | Sg | Nsg | Di | gdr |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
ua | uaiap | R | f | taro tuber |
la:sa:ba | la:sa:baip | f | leatherjacket (sp. of fish) |
sǝnǝ | sǝnǝiap | f | magic |
kala:ya | kala:yaip | f | crab (sp.) |
ụtara | ụtaraip/ụtaraip | f | ashes |
oga | ogaip | m | green parrot |
kapǝ | kapǝap/kapaip | m | food parcel; roof |

There are also a few words that end in /e/ in the singular, but where the /e/ is removed and replaced by -aip in the non-singular (sometimes optionally). It appears to be possible to form duals on either this form or a regular non-singular form (in the case of nide the non-singular *nidep is not attested but still forms a base for the dual). All are in the plain declension:

(30) | Sg | Nsg | Di | gdr |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
nide | nidaip | R/nidepien | f | sea shell (generic) |
ŋane | ŋanep/ŋanaip | | | meat or other “extra” to go with tuber food |
lǝmikaip | lǝmikaip | m | stone (type) |
murale | muralep/muralaip | m | rock etc. where spirits dwell; earthquake |
kokole | kokolep/kokolaip | R | m/f | diff.-sex cross-cousin; man’s mo-in-law |

A similar case but involving other vowels is folo – fǝlaup ‘bamboo section; cup’.

5.3.2 Irregular non-singulars

The general (masculine) word for pig, kumu:rot, has the irregular non-singular kumep. For a few more words irregular alternatives have been noted: afaii – afaiiap/afailap ‘raintree, Samanea saman’, lǝga – lǝgap/lǝgalap ‘nut tree (sp.), Barringtonia’, and kaure – kaurep/kaurebap ‘trifle, nonsense’. A further atypical non-singular is found with two words for pigs of certain colouring; see 5.6.1 below. One group of nouns with particular irregularities is kin terms and human nouns, which are discussed in 5.4 below.
5.3.3 Suppletive non-singulars

Suppletive non-singular forms are rare except among human nouns (see 5.4). I am aware of only three other words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>Dl</th>
<th>gdr</th>
<th>decl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lakabuon</td>
<td>lop</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labun</td>
<td>labip</td>
<td>labunupien</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>bun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanepunm</td>
<td>kinep</td>
<td>kanepulup</td>
<td>R/R</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second of these is not even necessarily a truly suppletive word, as the _bun_ ending is frequently removed in the non-singular, and it is possible that the remaining part of the stem, _/la/_ , has then been reduplicated (although reduplication is not a productive process with nouns). The shorter plural for ‘finger’ is also similar to the singular.

5.4 Non-singular and dual with kin terms and human nouns

A number of human nouns have special non-singular and dual forms. Kin terms are particularly interesting in that many of them have regular duals and non-singulars alongside the special dual and non-singular forms, with different meaning. Some other human nouns also have special dual forms.

5.4.1 Kin terms

A set out in 2.6, kin terms in Kuot are typically reciprocal, so that the term can be said to refer to the relation type rather than the persons connected by it. For example, the word _eia/_aia/ietsia/iaia_) means both ‘grandparent’ and ‘grandchild’. Both the grandparent and the grandchild can refer to and address each other by the term, and we could say it applies to a “grandrelation”.

Several terms of this type have special dual and non-singular forms, which contrast with regular dual and non-singular forms, and have different application. In the duals there are also sometimes particular forms for pairs of females. This is the only area of the language where gender is morphologically differentiated in forms which are not in the singular.19 For _eia_, we get the following forms (The variability in base across these forms is probably accidental, and presumably all forms could be produced on any of _aia_, _iaia_, _eia_ or _ietia_):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(32)</th>
<th>eia/aia etc.</th>
<th>grandrelation (sg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eian</td>
<td>grandparent with grandchild, minimum one male (dl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eiarie</td>
<td>grandmother with granddaughter (dl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aiaiilup</td>
<td>grandparents with grandchildren (has to have two generations; nsg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eiapien</td>
<td>2 grandparents or 2 grandchildren (regular dl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eiap</td>
<td>grandparents or grandchildren (regular nsg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forms that are unique for the kin terms, here _eian_, _eiarie_ and _aiaiilup_, refer to combinations of people connected to each other by the kin relation designated to the term, but not to people on one side of it, as it were. In other words,

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19 There is a single example among adjectives of gender being distinguished in the plural: _mago-_ ‘good’ which has masculine plural _magoim_ and feminine plural _magom_.

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if referring to a pairing of a grandfather with his grandson, _eian_ is appropriate, but this term is not used to designate two grandparents, or two grandchildren, for which the regular form _eiapien_ is instead used.

Some speakers only allow the regular dual and plural forms in possessive constructions. This is presumably a collocational restriction, in that the noun phrase with the kin term would normally denote one end of the relation, the possessor being at the other end so to speak, that is, when you say ‘his grandparents’, the grandparents will be of a single generation and therefore referred to with a regular form; the possessor being linked to them by the relation designated by the term, expressed in a different noun phrase. For example:

(33)   _pare=lion_  _paparie_  _< > ga_  [m̥n  ne-i-li-i].
   get.up=3dS  sisters.dl  and  CONT  REC-look-3dS-stm₂
   ‘the (2) sisters looked at each other.’

(34)   _li-ga=r-ma_  [pappa-p-ien  aŋan]:
   3dS-say=ASP-??  sibling-nsg-dl  3m.PossII.dl
   ‘Lak-i=rɔ_  [pappa  biu]?’
   where-3m=ASP  sibling  1dn.PossII.sg
   ‘his (2) sisters said: “Where is our brother?”’

These two examples are from the same story, and it is the same two sisters that are referred to in both. In (33), the form _paparie_ shows that they are in a sistership relation to each other. Although they are of course still sisters to each other in (34), the focus here is on their relation to the brother, and the regular dual is used instead of the feminine dual form.

It is interesting to note that the terms which have special dual and non-singular forms denote relations where the persons would typically work or spend time together.

A list of the special dual and non-singular forms known to me is given in Table 3, with the kin terms from which they appear to be derived, and with the regular forms alongside for comparison. Translations are given for the regular forms only for relations involving more than one generation, where they can be made unambiguous; for instance ‘two brothers-in-law’ is ambiguous between the readings “two men in a brother-in-law relation” (special dual) and “two men in any relation, both brothers-in-law to someone else” (regular dual).
Table 3: Special dual and non-singular forms with some kin terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dual</th>
<th>non-singular</th>
<th>regular dual</th>
<th>regular non-singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>naga</strong> ‘mother’(^{20})</td>
<td><strong>numan</strong> ‘mother + son’</td>
<td><strong>numeilup</strong> ‘family members’</td>
<td><strong>nagapien</strong> ‘2 mothers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>numarie</strong> ‘mother + daughter’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iran</strong> ‘father’</td>
<td><strong>irane</strong> ‘father + child’</td>
<td><strong>irulup</strong> ‘father + children’’</td>
<td><strong>irapien</strong> ‘2 fathers; 2 parents’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pappar</strong> ‘sibling’(^{21})</td>
<td><strong>papane</strong> ‘brother + brother/ -brother + sister’</td>
<td><strong>papailup</strong> ‘sibling group’</td>
<td><strong>pappapap</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paparie</strong> ‘sister + sister’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tara</strong> ‘maternal uncle; man’s sister’s son’(^{22})</td>
<td><strong>taran</strong> ‘mat. uncle + niece or nephew’</td>
<td><strong>tarailup</strong> ‘mat. uncle(s) + nieces and/or nephews’</td>
<td><strong>tatapien</strong> ‘2 uncles; 2 nephews or nieces’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eial</strong> ‘grandrelation’</td>
<td><strong>eian</strong> ‘grandparent + grandson’</td>
<td><strong>aialup</strong> ‘grandparents + grandchildren’</td>
<td><strong>aiapien</strong> ‘2 grandparents; 2 grandchildren’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mel</strong> ‘same-sex-in-law’</td>
<td><strong>mel</strong> ‘man + brother-in-law’</td>
<td>(??)</td>
<td><strong>melapien</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>luo</strong> ‘married couple’</td>
<td><strong>luoplup</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>luop</strong> ‘man married to wife’s sister’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{20}\) The special dual and plural forms suggest that an older stem for mother may have been *num* (cf. 2.6.2).

\(^{21}\) There is an interesting variation between /pp/ ([p]) and /p/ ([v]) in these terms, related too to the term *papa* used for spouse’s same-sex sibling (cf. 3.2.2.1).

\(^{22}\) This form exhibits an interesting variation between /t/ and /r/, similar to that between /pp/ and /p/ in *pappar*.
The dual forms for the first seven words follow the same pattern: Forms for females only end in -rie, and forms for mixed or male pairs end in -n.\(^{23}\) For the last three words, we find the dual ending -len (/lien) (also found on kulen ‘two boys’; see below). In the non-singular, available forms end in -ilup.\(^{24}\)

The word *uon* ‘married couple’ is listed among duals as it takes dual agreement and conforms to the pattern of dual kin terms ending in /n/. Remarkably, informants are willing to give dual and non-singular forms for it. My information regarding the other forms of this word is somewhat contradictory, but I was told that the regular dual would be used of two couples\(^{25}\), and that *uailup* can refer either to several couples or to a family constellation of one man with two wives, or a woman with two husbands (both sometimes occurred in the past). The form ?uolup is acceptable to some but not to others.

Another form that deserves mention here is *makapien* ‘same-sex in-law’. This is used in address (or, less often, third person mention) between two women or two men related through marriage, alongside more specific terms such as *mela* ‘brother-in-law’ and *luaga* ‘sister-in-law’. This word is used of singular referents in spite of being a dual form (ending in -p-ien), and (at least) traditionally, dual agreement was used in address to single referents in this relation as a mark of respect, which indicates that the form is not accidentally dual-like.\(^{26}\) What is remarkable about this word is the fact that it can take another dual ending to refer to two referents: *makapien-ip-ien*. There is no related singular stem *maka*.

### 5.4.2 Other human nouns

A few more nouns denoting humans, but which are not kin terms, also have deviant dual and non-singular formation. They are given in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dual</th>
<th>non-singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>makabun 'woman'</td>
<td>makabie makaulap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kubebun 'young woman'</td>
<td>kubebie kubeulap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kulomut 'girl'</td>
<td>lobie lop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kulot 'boy, child; young man'</td>
<td>kulen lop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{23}\) The -n is presumably related to the /n/ in the regular dual ending -ien, and also to the forms li- and le- etc. marking functions such as subject and object (cf. 3.2.2.4 and Appendix I). The feminine duals for kin terms (-rie) and other human nouns (-bie; see below) are the only instances where a (third person) dual suffix does not end in /n/.

\(^{24}\) This non-singular ending does not occur elsewhere in the non-singular formation in Kuot (although all non-singular nouns end in /p/).

\(^{25}\) If the form ?uailupien is genuine, it would be quite unique in using a regular dual on the kin-style non-singular.

\(^{26}\) Similarly, plural forms are used between cross-cousins of different sex; see 2.6.4, 2.6.5, and 5.5 below.
These forms differ from the kin terms we saw above in several respects. First, there are no alternative regular forms. Second, the non-regular endings themselves are different. Here, the female dual forms end in -bie rather than -rie (although the male form kulen is on the same pattern as the male kin duals ending in -n). In the non-singular, both makabun and kubebun end in -ulop (slightly different from -ilop in kin terms). Kulḥum and kulen share the suppletive non-singular lop, and kulḥum has the related dual form lobie while kulot has kulen. None of these forms represent general processes or patterns (although non-singular -ulop and -ilop are found with a few more words in the bun declension; see 5.2.4 above).

5.5 Number: usage

The form of cross-referencing, indexing and agreement morphemes always follows the number (and gender) of the noun. This section is about the factors that determine the number of nouns.

Dual number is used primarily for humans, where two referents are consistently coded with dual form. For inanimates, even obviously paired things such as legs and eyes are normally expressed with the non-singular (plural) form without the dual suffix. The dual can be used with inanimates if the fact that there are two of something is particularly stressed or salient in the context, and it is obligatory following the numeral ‘two’.

Regarding non-singular, essentially all instances of reference to more than one entity are coded as such, with the non-singular form for plural (or dual) referents. One area of exceptions concerns respectful usage in avoidance relations among certain kin, particularly between siblings and cross-cousins of different sex. The kin system, the terms and their usage are described in 2.6. This usage is not productive and is only used with the particular kin terms for which it is established, and is disappearing even there. The address term for same-sex in-law of the same generation (i.e., spouse’s same-sex sibling), makapien, traditionally required dual agreement, and is still used that way by some speakers. Remarkably, mixed singular and dual agreement is sometimes found with makapien (otherwise never allowed in Kuot):

(35) na-ga ma-la lakum?
2sS-want/be about to 2dS-go where
‘where are you going?’

This can thus also be rendered ma-ga ma-la lakum? or, less politely, na-ga na-la lakum?. Different-sex cross-cousins are addressed with non-singular forms, including the term itself: kokolep/kokolaip, rather than kokole (sg).

Other exceptions to following factual referent number, as we shall see, are similar to what is found in other languages which regularly mark number on nouns. Where singular is used for more than one referent, it is primarily to do with

---

27 I also have a note that kumebun ‘sow’ has a dual form kumebie (and also a regular one kumeulpien). It is otherwise restricted to humans.
things such as non-specific reference to a category of referents; where plural is used for singular it tends to be countable units of mass nouns and the like. In a few cases, non-singular marking can also be an expression of respect. As in most languages, there are also certain idiosyncrasies in this area.

Singular is used for non-focused and non-individuated categories of referents in the following examples:

(36)  
*to-kar*ät=öŋ  *pisguma*
1sO-bite=3mS ant(sp.;m)
‘the ant(s) bit me’

(37)  
i-*la me *bəbam*
3fS-go for leaf
‘she went for leaf’ (to wrap food for cooking)

(38)  
a-*rok=öŋ  *kierima*
3mO-cut=3mS sharpened.stick(m)
‘he cut stick(s)’ (for a fence)

(39)  
*Inmɔmiap onim Ostrelia*
people.nsg ORIG Australia
*lɔ  tɔle me-me me-na-a  buruma*
RELR NEG 3pS-HAB 3pS-wear-3mO laplap(m)
‘Australian people don’t wear a laplap’

(40)  
*dak=ieŋ  obinɔm a  losinaj*
be.full=3fS canoe(f) 3m PossI whitebait(m)
‘the canoe is full of whitebait’

(41)  
*mitàŋa na=ieŋ  kar*öt
very be.plentiful=3fS betelnut(f)
‘there is a lot of betelnut’

(42)  
*mo me-maniŋ  kar*öt
want 3pS-want.3sO.fut betelnut(f)
‘they want betelnut(s)’

The low level of individuation is clearly a factor, in that the nouns in these constructions cannot take modifiers; if they are focussed enough to have modifiers they are focussed enough to take the non-singular form. However, the last example can in fact take a quantifying expression to form *pəpɒt o kar*öt ‘lots of betelnut’ – according to my informant the result is exactly equivalent to an expression marked for non-singular: *pəpɒt ma kar*öt-ip ‘lots of betelnuts’. This may be to do with the type of modifying expression; it is not possible to have for instance *kar*öt i-*lɔ kan-u ‘big betelnut’ in (41) without marking the head for non-singular.

As the examples suggest, this usage is found mostly in noun phrases in object function, although subject function does occur too, as in (36).

In other cases, non-singular is used for pluralities, which sometimes do not even have singular form, for example in (43) where only one has a singular form at all:
The idiosyncrasy is shown for instance in that *ipup* ‘grass lying after someone walked on it’ is non-singular only, while *lobenim* ‘grass-like type of bamboo’ is singular only. There is nothing in the meaning of the words which readily explains this difference.

**Substances** of various kinds also have different default expression with regard to number. Some are singular only, some non-singular only; others are normally singular but can take non-singular, which then has a semantic effect of quantity: either that there is a lot of the substance, or that there are several units of it.

The following are examples of nouns for substances which are either singular only, or non-singular only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg only</th>
<th>Nsg only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ubiem</em></td>
<td>sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>urup</em></td>
<td>lime powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tobaunim</em></td>
<td>dew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mulukarap</em></td>
<td>ear wax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mageis</em></td>
<td>sweat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>parabop</em></td>
<td>semen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One noun which can take either singular or non-singular form is *olbuan* ‘blood’; singular is the default, but non-singular does occur. This example is from a story of a nasty road accident, at a point where the participants are washing blood off a truck:

(45) ...*u-tta obinom lɔ dak=ien=arɔ ma olbup.*

‘…that car (which) was full of blood.’

The use of the non-singular here indicates that there was lots of blood (although it is also the case that it was the blood from several different people, and perhaps also several pools of blood). Similarly, if *utarɔ* ‘ashes’ is used in the non-singular (*utrapip* or *utrap*) it can mean that there are lots of ashes, or it may refer to the ashes of several fires. When *burunam* ‘water’ is used in the non-singular (*bereip*), it is understood to mean water bottles.\(^{28}\)

Some words have particular usage patterns. This particularly concerns *ubi* ‘garden (southern Kuot)’, which is frequently cross-referenced as the direct object of a verb, even when there are other more salient candidates. In these cases, the garden itself could be seen as having the role of location or ground for the action. In this piece on how gardens are prepared, the garden is not even cleared, ...

\(^{28}\) This is not an option for *ubiem* ‘sand’, for which one would have to use the noun for a container to get a corresponding meaning, e.g. *baket-ip o ubiem* for ‘buckets of sand’. *Pirom* ‘sea water, saltwater’ has to be construed as *ubiem: kadi-bip o pirom* ‘bamboo (lengths) of saltwater’.
but still causes feminine singular cross-referencing, rather than the many trees felled and cut up in its preparation:

(46)  
\[U-tie, \ \text{tubiat}=bat \ \text{ga} \ \text{pa-bulɔ-o} \ \text{me} \ \text{laurup}\]  
3f-there later=now and 1pxS-cut-3fO to down  
\[\text{ga} \ \text{eba} \ i-lamı́ŋ=arə \ \text{laurup} \ \text{ga} \ i-ot.\]  
and FUT 3fS-fall.fut=ASP down and 3fS-lie  
\[\text{Ga} \ \text{eba} \ \text{pa-airə-ŋ}, \ \text{me} \ \text{eba} \ \text{lal-uo} \ \text{ba}.\]  
and FUT 1pxS-leave-3sO for FUT dry-3f FUT₂  
\[\text{Eba} \ \text{lal-uo} \ \text{ba} \ \text{u-tie} \ \text{ubi}.\]  
FUT dry-3f FUT₂ 3f-there garden(f)  
\[\text{ga} \ \text{u-tie}, \ \text{tubiat}=bat,\]  
and 3f-there later=now  
\[lə \ \text{e}=bat \ \text{pa-la} \ \text{o-rəlkit}=paŋ.\]  
RELR IMM.FUT=now 1pxS-go 3fO-chop.up=1pxS  
‘Alright, then we cut it [the trees] down and it will fall down and lie. And we’ll leave it, so that it will dry. This garden will dry, and alright, then, we’ll go and cut it [the trees] into little pieces.’

One verb, meaning to ‘harvest the produce from a garden and consume it’ can only take the garden as object:

(47)  
\[\text{eba} \ \text{o-ıparak}=meŋ \ \text{ubi}\]  
FUT 3fO-harvest.and.eat garden(f)  
‘they would harvest and eat (the produce from) that garden’

5.6 Gender

The two genders in Kuot are called masculine and feminine, since male humans (and male major animals) are consistently found in the masculine gender and female humans (and female major animals) are found in the feminine gender.

We have seen in the above that the special declensions except the \(n\) declension are associated with a particular gender, that is, they have morphological gender assignment (cf. Table 1 above). We will see (5.8.1) that the same can also be said of some types of action nominalisations.²⁹ For the vast majority of the remaining nouns in Kuot, approximately half of the noun vocabulary, it is the case that gender is

- semantically opaque (not predictable from general principles)
- consistent (one noun, one gender)
- covert (formally unmarked on the noun).

The main exception to gender being semantically opaque is nouns denoting persons and higher animates. Exceptions regarding consistency occur primarily between speakers, and only very rarely does a single speaker use a word with a

²⁹ Kuot has no diminutive or augmentative, categories which are subject to morphological assignment in many languages.
different genders. Aside from the special declensions presented above, there are only a handful of nouns where the form of the noun itself indicates its gender. Each of these points will be raised below.

Figure 2 is a rough representation of the gender assignment principles in Kuot. The main dividing line is between the special declensions where gender assignment is morphological, and the plain and n declensions which are open to semantic assignment. A much smaller group of words denoting humans and higher animates receive gender in accordance with the sex of the referent. There is some overlap with morphological assignment here such that those human and animal nouns that are in the special declensions are almost always in a declension of the appropriate gender; in the few cases where this is not the case, the gender association of the declension is overruled in favour of natural gender (cf. 5.6.3.1 below). The rest of the vocabulary, i.e., nouns denoting inanimates and lower animates in the plain and n declensions, is open to gender assignment by other semantic principles, but as we shall see, only a few weak tendencies can be suggested, and gender is largely opaque for this group (what Corbett (1991: 13) terms “semantic residue”).

Figure 2: Gender assignment in Kuot.

30 Dahl (1999: 105ff.) suggests a different way of characterising the source of gender, as “lexical” and “referential”. Lexical gender covers all cases where gender is a fixed property of a noun, and includes morphological and idiosyncratic gender, as well as semantically motivated but fixed gender, e.g. Russian sud’ja ‘judge’ which is masculine by association with a long line of male judges and often governs masculine agreement even when applied to a female judge. Referential gender is all instances where gender is determined by properties of the referent, in the context of a particular act of reference. In Kuot, the box with the broken line in Figure 2 would fall under referential gender, and the rest under lexical gender. Since the few potential conflicts between lexical and referential gender are resolved in favour of referential gender (i.e., there are no cases parallel to sud’ja), the analysis is in this case not greatly influenced.
The fact that gender is a property of each noun lexeme (with the exception of nouns referring to humans and higher animates), constitutes a difference from many gender systems found on New Guinea. There, even many two-term systems with female and male as the semantic core for animates, are classifying, in the sense that (inanimate) nouns take their gender from the semantic properties of the referent. In such systems, we may find that ‘house’ is masculine if it is long or big and feminine if it is round or small, and so forth (Foley 1986: 77–91).

Most non-Austronesian languages of Island Melanesia have some form of gender or noun classes, and this has been taken to indicate deep-level genetic relationships. However, Terrill’s (in press) investigation of the available data shows that there is a great deal of variation between the languages, in terms of the number of distinctions made, the semantic bases of the systems, and the forms of the morphemes that express gender in the grammars of these languages. If the languages are indeed related, it is possible that the relationships between the systems have been obscured by the long time that has elapsed since their separation. Alternatively, and on the present data perhaps more likely, the property of having gender is an areal feature predating the arrival and spread of Austronesian languages through the region.

The rest of this section will be devoted to investigating gender in the plain and the $n$ declensions, whose members do not have gender through morphological assignment.

5.6.1 Covertness of gender in the plain and $n$ declensions

Kuot gender conforms to Hockett’s statement that ‘[g]enders are classes of nouns reflected in the behaviour of associated words’ (1958: 231). In only three Kuot nouns that I am aware of is gender as such marked on the noun itself, and in all three cases the marking appears to be adjectival (see below). In the rest of the vocabulary, gender and number are reflected morphologically only in agreement, indexing and cross-referencing morphology. The form of the noun gives no indication as to what gender it belongs to.

One way to show that form is unrelated to gender would be through homonyms, but there are very few homonyms in Kuot that do not involve loan words (for which see below). I am aware of only a few homonyms and near-homonyms, some of which have different genders:

(48) | lukuan | m | house | lukkuaŋ | f | village |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bɔkbak</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>temporary fence</td>
<td>bɔkbak</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>hipbone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakkoŋ</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>eagle</td>
<td>kakkoŋ</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔŋabɔŋa</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>hornbill</td>
<td>bɔŋabɔŋa</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>beam along top of side wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I know only of three more homonyms:

31 No gender distinction is made in objects in future forms of class IIa verbs.
Some loan words happen to have the same form as indigenous Kuot words. These may have the same gender as the Kuot homonyms, or they may have different gender. Loan words are often unstable in terms of gender, but it seems clear that their gender is not determined by form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuot sense</th>
<th>Loan sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kofi m bamboo flute</td>
<td>f/m coffee (plant/beans/drink)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kap m stick for moving mumu stones</td>
<td>f/m cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kar f shell (sp.), shell scraper</td>
<td>m car, truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pin f betelnut (northern Kuot)</td>
<td>f pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fok f vagina</td>
<td>f fork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two words, *kofi* and *kap*, in the borrowed senses, are treated as feminine in Bimun but as masculine in Kabil on the east coast.

Conversely, the gender of synonyms could tell us something about the relation of form and gender. Occasionally, synonyms do have different gender, as the following:

(51) *muabari* f sun; watch  *lamaronpo* f steepheaded/ember parrotfish  *espan/efan* m sun  *beremaruon* m steepheaded/ember parrotfish

Nouns that can take either gender depending on the sex of the referent vary a lot in form, giving a further indication that form is irrelevant for gender, e.g.:

(52) *poi* child  *poppa* sibling  *bekkula* namesake  *sopsop* blind person  *karun* orphan  *natauan* firstborn  *sədək* vain person, show-off  *nən* idiot; deaf person  *dəbənot* crazy/subnormal person

A very few nouns have overt gender, with different forms for masculine and feminine referents. They are given in (53):

(53)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masc.</th>
<th>fem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maro</td>
<td>maro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lapulu</td>
<td>lapulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ləumlo</td>
<td>ləumlo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words in the first pair here are very common, and are frequently used as fillers while a speaker tries to think of a particular noun or proper name (glossed
‘whatsit’ in examples), taking the gender of the intended noun. The non-singular and dual are regular: marǝp and marǝpien. There is also a related locative form marǝn, used when trying to think of a place name. The gendered endings are adjective-like (as will become apparent in the following paragraphs).

The second pair is clearly derived from the adjective puppal- ‘black’ (which is however normally reduplicated), together with the relator lǝ which is sometimes used to form nouns (see further 5.8 for this process). The masculine and feminine forms tally with the forms used for the adjective: puppal-i for masculine and puppal-u for feminine. However, the parallel plural/non-singular form would be *lǝpulum, but is instead lapulumup, which is irregular but not adjective-like.

The last pair appears to be perfectly parallel with the second (many adjectives end in [e] and [o] through phonological processes described in 3.3.3), but there is not currently an adjective *umlǝ- as would be expected, neither with the meaning ‘brown’ or any other meaning. The non-singular form is lǝumlamup.

5.6.2 Consistency in gender assignment

With extremely few exceptions, the system is stable on the level of individual speakers, so that each speaker treats each word as either masculine or feminine all the time. Such variation as there is thus occurs mainly between speakers. With some words, this variation is idiolectal, with others dialectal or generational.

Many words are attested over and over in the data, and remain stable in terms of gender (e.g. tǝrǝ ‘time’, pirit ‘dry coconut frond’, ulanǝ ‘moon, month’ which are always masculine; and others which are always feminine, for instance karǝt ‘betelnut’ (southern Kuot), kit ‘fire’, ubi ‘garden (southern Kuot)’, alǝn ‘road’). But there are some curious exceptions. One concerns the word for ‘story’, gas (south Kuot), which occurs at the beginning and often also the end of nearly every recording from the southern Kuot-speaking area. It is treated as feminine by most speakers in Bimun, but some elderly speakers and speakers on the west coast mostly treat it as masculine (speakers of the northern dialect mostly use another word, popori, which is always feminine). In some cases, it varies in the speech of a single speaker, so that it is feminine at the beginning of the story (“I will tell a story...”) and masculine at the end (“That’s the end of my story...”), or vice versa.33

Another area where some variation occurs is (perhaps trivially) production mistakes, where speakers mistakenly give a word the wrong agreement. This is

32 This may be an interesting area for psycholinguistic research into gender and lexical organisation, since the usage of gendered fillers shows that speakers usually know the gender of a noun before they have retrieved the lexeme they wish to use.

33 It is interesting to note that a homonym (gas) meaning ‘bush spirit being’ takes gender according to the sex of the referent – however, there is no indication that the words are related.
most common where the agreement (or indexing or cross-reference) marker comes before the noun, meaning that the speaker may have had another noun in mind, as in the following, where the verb with the faulty object cross-referencer is followed by some hesitation:

(54)  $O$-$faka=on$ar\theta \quad <pi-\ mar\sigma> \quad pirit
3\text{fO-make.fire}=3\text{mS=ASP} \quad \text{whatst(m)} \quad \text{dry.coconut.frond(m)}$
‘He lit the <...> frond’

Here it is also the case that the verb used is one that is almost always used with kit ‘fire’ which is feminine, and it is not quite appropriate in the context according to the speaker who helped me transcribe it.

While production mistakes are not infrequent, they are almost universally corrected when a text is transcribed. For the issue of gender consistency it is also interesting to note that the filler words mar$\theta$ and maro (see above) almost always match the gender of the sought-for noun.

5.6.2.1 Speaker awareness of gender variability

Most speakers do not show a high level of awareness of variability, even when it comes to loan words, which are the most variable. For instance, there is the Tok Pisin loan ‘bilum’, meaning the net or string bag common on New Guinea, but not traditional in New Ireland, though now widely used. Some speakers treat this word as masculine, others as feminine. Several times I was corrected on this point, sometimes faulted for using masculine, other times for using feminine. There are two interesting points about this; first that many speakers have apparently not noticed the variation among fellow native speakers, since if they had they presumably would not correct a learner; and secondly it illustrates the principle that a word can only have one gender for most speakers. For most speakers, the most common attitude when presented with an instance of use of a word with different gender from what they would themselves use, is that the other usage is simply wrong. A few speakers (notably my main informant, Robert Sipa) had made the observation that some words vary between speakers, and could even formulate relevant generalisations for particular words, such as the generational or geographic distribution of its gender variability.

5.6.3 The semantics of gender

Three groups of nouns can be distinguished with regard to gender assignment in Kuot (this is expressed also in Figure 2 above):

- nouns referring to humans and higher animates follow the sex of the referent (natural gender)
- nouns in the special declensions where nine of ten declensions have a gender association, as do nominalisations (morphological assignment)
- the rest (no rules: opaque gender assignment)

The special declensions were given in full or exemplified in 5.2 above, with their gender distributions. It was seen that all of the special declensions except the n declension are associated with a particular gender (the association being a
little weaker for the na and m declensions). This subsection is concerned with words in the plain and n declensions, looking first at words whose grammatical gender follow the sex of the referent, and then at the rest of the vocabulary. It will be seen that very little can be concluded in terms of semantic underpinnings for nouns which do not receive gender through morphology (as in the special declensions, and to an extent nominalisations), or through the sex of the referent.

5.6.3.1 Humans and higher animates

Words denoting humans or relations of either gender almost always take the gender of the referent (some were given in (52)), and this occasionally overrules the gender associations of special declensions, such as bunima ‘lastborn’ of the ma declension and kanakanotobu ‘sorcerer’ of the bu declension. In the case of kosɔŋanima ‘twin’ speakers agreed that this word is masculine (possibly because of being in the ma declension) but no one asked could think what a female twin was called. Some words are of course only applicable to persons of a particular gender, such as unuli ‘traditional doctor; one who does war magic’, a function that can only be performed by a man.

For animals there are separate nouns for males and females, primarily for domesticated animals:

(55) kapuna dog, male dog
kumurot pig, boar
pura fowl, rooster

(All the female terms are in the bun declension.)

For possums, although they live in the wild, there are separate terms for male and female as well as a generic term:

(56) ɡǝs m possum, generic
buraba m male possum
mukusebun f female possum

There are also male and female terms for ‘rat, mouse’, given in 5.2.4. Rodents are not normally differentiated for sex by speakers, being usually referred to with the masculine term (kifɔma) – the explanation for the feminine form is that parents sometimes affectionately call small children ‘little rat’, and the feminine form is used to female children. The presence of the gender-differentiated forms for ‘rat’ thus does not constitute a violation of the animacy hierarchy. The hierarchy would lead us to expect more differentiation for animals which are salient to humans, normally big animals, domesticated animals, or animals with which humans interact in particular ways, especially those where the sex of the animal determines the nature of the interaction. Rodents do not exactly fulfil these criteria, but the fact that the difference in gender is adhered to when the terms are applied to humans neatly illustrates the relevance of the animacy hierarchy for gender-differentiated nouns in Kuot.

There are not many major mammals or big birds and fishes in New Ireland, and the words for some are found in the special declensions and thus not relevant here (e.g. ‘shark’, ‘old possum’, ‘big lizard’). The few remaining words have
only grammatical gender and do not take into account the sex of the animal, showing them as lower on an animacy hierarchy than humans, domesticates and possums, for instance:

(57)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS: GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arigariga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m wallaby (generic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kotarau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m wallaby (young)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leilom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f dolphin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To specify the sex of a wallaby or shark for example, the attribute construction is used (cf. 1.1.1).

In narratives, animals sometimes have roles which conflict with the grammatical gender. The grammatical gender usually prevails; for instance in (58) where an egg has been laid by a python – ləmət python is masculine:

(58)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS: GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...o-i-op</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fO-3fS-find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELR 3mS-put-3fO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘...she found this egg of this python (who) had laid it.’

**Mixed-gender collectives** are referred to using the non-singular of the word for the male, e.g.:

(59)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS: GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ira-p-ien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents (= father-nsg-dl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kumep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pigs; boars (sows is kumeulp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapunəp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dogs; male dogs (bitches is laibunup)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.6.3.2 Inanimates and lower animates in the plain and n declensions**

It has not been possible to find a convincing principle or set of principles to account for the gender distribution of the part of the vocabulary which does not receive gender through morphological assignment or sex, although there are a few weak tendencies. Several cross-linguistically attested principles underlying gender or noun class systems in the languages of the world were pursued and will be reported here. I looked at parameters such as shape and size, and categories like fruits, liquids, sharp instruments, fire, substances, time words, abstract nouns, nominalisations, and artefacts and culturally or ritually important items.

A problem with the semantic investigation is that such a large proportion of the nouns receive gender through membership in the special declensions. This means that many of the central members of any suggested semantic category are already “taken”, since many of the nouns denoting any class of items will be in the special declensions and therefore excluded from semantic consideration. This in turn means that the remaining nouns will be fewer in number, and sometimes not very central to the category in question, making the results difficult to interpret.

The parameter of **shape**, typically long vs. round, is exploited for gender in many Papuan languages (cf. Foley 1986: 77–91, Terrill 1999: 127). To investigate it in Kuot, we may look at words first for long things, especially sticks and stick-like objects, and then for round things:
Of the words for long things, six out of ten are masculine, which is not a convincing majority.

For round things, the numbers are clearer, with 15 feminine to three masculine nouns, but some caution is advisable. It may appear from the list that round things have a tendency to be feminine. However, it is also clear that there are many words pertaining to betelnuts and to coconuts and three for breadfruits, and it could be that it is these particular items that condition the gender (although all three masculine words in the group also denote betelnuts). If we were to go by item, so that each type of fruit counts as one, the list would have only seven units. Six of these would be feminine and one ambi-gendered. This indicates that there may still be a semantic parameter at work here, although it is hard to say whether it concerns roundness or fruits/nuts.

Turning to look at fruits more generally, we find that many are masculine; they were not given in (61) since they are less round in shape:
(62)  muan  m  betel pepper  
tabekka  m  papaya  
kamin  m  yam  
kemas  m  wild yam  
euappias  m  yam (‘mami’ sp.)  
kaplo  m  cucumber

Insofar as there is a shape parameter, it would appear, then, that it applies only to fruits.

Another interesting point in this semantic area is that there would seem to be a tendency for one type of item to have one gender, that is, it seems that coconuts are feminine regardless of the word used, and yams similarly are masculine. Betelnuts, on the other hand, go against this generalisation, and it is not a principle otherwise salient in the language.

If shape has indeed been a factor in the gender assignment of fruits, this principle has been lost. Looking at recent loan words for fruits, we see that the principle of round fruits being feminine and longish fruits masculine is not followed:

(63)  kukkaba  m  cucumber  
milen  m  melon  
panekken  m  pumpkin  
guava  f  guava  
epol  f  apple  
moli  f  citrus (spp.)  
pamelo  f  pamelo/pomelo  
lobo  f  chilli

Conspicuously long fruits like cucumbers and chillies are in both genders, and so are conspicuously round fruits like melons and guavas.

Note that there is no gender opposition between fruits and trees in the plain declension. Most fruit trees and many fruits are in the special declensions, where there is a degree of opposition along these lines, but for example nur ‘coconut palm’ is feminine as are most words to do with coconuts.

**Size** is another parameter sometimes exploited in gender systems (often in conjunction with shape). There are a few words in the data for things conceived of as big and small of “the same”, and all but one pair involve words in the special declensions. The remaining example is a triplet, where the small member is masculine, and the larger two are feminine:

(64)  kapa  m  food parcel (for cooking in mumu), normal size  
kut  f  big food parcel  
palai  f  feast-sized food parcel

Unfortunately, not much can be concluded from a single example. (Further, masculine usage for the last word, palai, has been observed.)

Similar things of the same size can also be found in different genders: oga (m) ‘green parrot’, kilikilo (f) ‘red parrot’ (same size); mareŋ (m) ‘red parrot’ (different kind).
Names of fishes were collected using a book of reef fishes of New Guinea, giving a vocabulary of some 75 nouns, with pictures and information on size. Omitting words in the special declensions, we have 47 words to look at. They are too many to include here, but examining the words and the fishes gives no indication that size matters for gender.

Among snakes, smaller snakes show a tendency to have feminine gender:

(65) kakok f snake (generic)
losisok f snake (sp; small, still, many colours, found high in bush)
nadilik f snake (sp; small, fast)
sokopira f sea snake (sp; white sometimes black spot/stripe, bites)
lararen f/m sea snake (sp; bl/wh hooped, does not bite)
lmot m python (southern Kuot)
amora m python (northern Kuot)

More names of snakes would be needed to make a valid generalisation. The python is a larger snake than the others in the list, but also has mythological properties, whereby a snake can turn into a man (leaving the skin behind).

The word for ‘stone’, adǝ/tadǝ, is interesting in that a size-based gender distinction is made: small stones are masculine and big stones are feminine. Speakers were unable to think of parallel examples.

Generally, among birds and insects, “special designs”, i.e., unusual types, or particularly large kinds are not found in the same gender; for instance ḳəngabəŋa ‘hornbill’ and kriskau ‘New Ireland bird of paradise’ are masculine while dudur ‘owl’ and kuŋ ‘heron’ are feminine; lsikiar ‘centipede’, kakoburik ‘spider’ and kunmɔra ‘scorpion’ are feminine while paskikidɔŋ ‘mayfly’ is masculine. Of three words for rays, afǝra ‘stingray (spp.)’ is feminine, while nadaila ‘stingray (sp.)’ is masculine, and lsigilu ‘manta ray, spotted eagle ray’ is feminine. Nor are small or “ordinary” species found in the same gender.

Water, sharp tools and fire are further categories which sometimes have particular gender associations (for instance in the Australian language Dyirbal (Dixon 1972: 44–47, 306–312), made famous in Lakoff’s (1987) title as “Women, fire, and dangerous things”, since these categories are all feminine in Dyirbal). In Kuot, they all show a tendency to be feminine, but several of the

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35 It is possible to imagine that fish names are to some extent secondary, in the sense that fish may be named for other items. For instance, one fish shares a name with a bird (aruku), and speakers say that the bird sense is primary. A few more terms are descriptive, such as i-lə kidi ‘slippery’ for wrasses and parrot fishes, and kǝkket la “impatient” for Janssen’s wrasse, a fish that bites very quickly. For the most part, however, the names seem to be primary, i.e. denoting the fish without relation to other parts of the vocabulary.

36 This principle was pointed out by my informant Robert Sipa while discussing gender, and is borne out by the data, which however is limited.
vocabularies are fairly small (especially after omitting words from the special declensions), which makes it difficult to say anything definite.

For water and liquids we have the following in the plain and n declensions:

(66)  

danuot f water, river  
kin f small amount of still water  
bør f puddle  
magū f/m fresh water bubbling up on beach  
kakke f/m fresh water bubbling up on beach  
papluie f/m spring, water coming out of rock or ground  
pipi f urine (also cl.I verb 'pee')  
kasup f spittle (also cl.I verb 'spit')  
mabis f sweat (also cl.I verb 'sweat')  
mage.is f sweat (also cl.I verb 'sweat')  
birǝ f under sea surface down to sea floor  
mof m very high tide  
aforat m rain  
olbuan m blood

Here the feminine tendency seems reasonably strong, but there is also varying usage for several words.

It should be noted also that words that can function as verb stems in verb class I (pipi, kasup, mabis, mage.is) are almost exclusively feminine (see discussion on nominalisations below in this section and 5.8).

If there has been a principle of assigning words for liquids to the feminine gender, it appears not to be operating any longer, as most recent Tok Pisin loans in this area receive masculine gender (at least for most speakers), e.g. ‘kerosin’ (kerosine), ‘spirit’ (spirits), ‘kodiel’ (cordial), ‘bia’ (bear); though some are feminine, e.g. ‘sup’ (soup) and ‘ti’ (tea).

Sharp instruments have a small tendency to be feminine too (but note too that some of the words for spears given in (60) were masculine):

(67)  

ie f knife  
dabula f sharpened stone to be made into axe  
amatau f axe (N. Kuot)  
lasak f small axe, stone axe; heavy ‘club’  
kubat m adze for splitting bamboo

In this group may be included also shell knives and scrapers: bie ‘peeler, scraper’, and kar/mimidu/mudǝmudǝman ‘coconut scraper’, which are all feminine. However, these are also the names for the shells from which the implements are made, so again other principles may be at work. When Tok Pisin ‘naip’ is used for knife, it is feminine, and so are the loan words nil/nin and pin (from ‘needle’ and ‘pin’).

In the category fire, we have kit ‘fire’ which is feminine; related words like bonat ‘smoke’ and utara ‘ashes’ are also feminine, but this does not necessarily indicate a principle to do with fire. Ilak ‘lightning’ and ileŋ ‘daylight’ are also feminine. ‘Dry coconut frond; torch’, pirit, is masculine, as are the Tok Pisin
loan words ‘sikar’ and ‘simuk’ for cigarette. The words for ‘coal/ember’ and ‘burning stick of firewood’ are in the special declensions.

**Substances** and mass nouns used in the singular (cf. 5.5 above) are another category that could potentially receive special treatment. Words for liquids were given in (66) above, but there are others that may be regarded as substances:

(68)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>tes</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>buna</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fine black sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bonɔt</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ailu</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>grease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>magit</em></td>
<td>m/f</td>
<td>coconut fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>utɔrɔ</em></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>ashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pɔlakkɔn/kɔn</em></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>betel paste (chewed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>peka</em></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>pus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These give no indication of a gender preference, which is perhaps not surprising, given that the count vs. mass distinction is not generally grammatically reflected in the language.

Most **time** words are feminine, excepting one word meaning ‘time’:

(69)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>la</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>day/time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>parabira</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(na)bit</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ilen</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>daylight, daytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>arubu</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>darkness, night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tɔrɔ</em></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tok Pisin loans such as the names of weekdays are feminine too, and other time words are treated as feminine by most speakers: ‘auga’ (hour), ‘minit’ (minute), ‘wik’ (week). Interestingly, when the Tok Pisin word ‘taim’ (time) is used, it is masculine like its translation equivalent *tɔrɔ*.

**Abstract nouns** have a tendency to be feminine (leaving nominalisations aside for the moment):

(70)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>abake</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>starvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lamet</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>big hunger and weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nɔmara</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>unɔ</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>customary law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pɔbas</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>big fight, war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ka</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tapuk</em></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nominalisations** are generally feminine too. There are two types of nominalisations (meaning action nominals) in Kuot: morphological and non-morphological. Among morphological nominalisations, we find nominalisations from class II and III verbs and nominalisations from adjectives. In both cases, the resulting nouns are always feminine. This may be regarded as another type of morphological gender assignment, alongside the special declensions, since this type of nouns is recognisable through the nominalisation morphology (cf. 1.1.2):
The picture is a little more complex when we turn to the relation between nouns and stems of verb class I, which is non-morphological, that is, there is no morphological marking of the transfer between classes. Stems which can be used either as nouns or in verb class I tend overwhelmingly to be feminine in their nominal use. What this means for the question of gender semantics is difficult to say. That is, is it the case that these nouns are feminine because they are also verb stems; or are they feminine for independent reasons, such as the fact that they denote liquids? In the latter case it could be that they can be recruited for verb use as a secondary effect of being feminine. In 1.1.2, I argue that verb class I is a relatively late development in the language, evolved from noun + alienable possessive marker. This would suggest that gender properties, being nominal properties, are prior to verb-forming properties, but it is also possible to imagine a degree of realignment for noun stems used as verbs. As there is no overt morphology marking their association with verbs, we would not want to call this morphological gender assignment.

**Inherently locative nouns** are feminine too; see 5.7.1.

Another semantic category sometimes utilized in gender systems is nouns for **artefacts** and/or **culturally and ritually important things** (e.g. Lavukaleve where they are in the neuter gender (Terrill 1999: 126) and Ojibwa and other Algonquian languages, reported in Corbett (1991: 20, 315). The following examples show that this is not a consistent area in Kuot:

(72)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kein</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>basket for carrying garden produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kosebulǝ</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>broken kein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sobin</td>
<td>m/f</td>
<td>basket to take things to or from market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kosebek</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bǝlǝs</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>plait to finish basket or bera mat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiribǝs</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>style or pattern of basket/mat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapǝt</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>pandanus mat or “raincoat” (also pandanus sp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behǝt</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>hat/cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bera</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>mat from one coconut frond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamiri</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>cup made from leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patǝta</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>walking frame (for infants to learn to stand/walk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kef</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>net for catching attuma fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arau</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>net for catching pig or wallaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sikko</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>comb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sige</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>spoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tojop</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>shell money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokkep</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>breast ornament (now:10 toea; money)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamǝur</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>corpse display house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lǝpuo</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>area of men’s house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14 nouns for dances and songs for various ceremonies are similarly scattered between the genders (and at least one can be either feminine or masculine).

No tendency has been noted for items concerned with male spheres of activity to follow masculine gender, or vice versa.

More generally, much traditional knowledge has been lost, and there may be mythical associations embedded in the system that are no longer known by speakers.

5.6.3.3 Loans
It has been shown in the foregoing that loanwords appear not to adhere to those weak tendencies that can be suggested on the basis of the available data. This implies that such principles are not accessible to speakers. A few more notes may be made on the topic of loan words.

First, it is interesting to ask speakers why particular words are in particular genders (although the answers should be treated with some caution). I have never heard anyone make reference to male/female-ness for inanimates, nor to properties like shape or size, or cultural importance etc. For loan words, the only principle that does get quoted is analogy with indigenous Kuot words. This is reasonable for instance with ‘taim’ (time) which is masculine like Kuot tarǝ, and ‘naip’ (knife) which is feminine like Kuot ie, since these are used in replacement of the indigenous words. Similarly, all words for boats (‘spidbot’, ‘bot’, ‘sip’ etc.) are feminine like Kuot obinǝm ‘canoe’.

But there are also many cases of mismatch. For example: bǝbam ‘leaf; book’ is feminine, but ‘buk’ is masculine; kukuom ‘tree, wood; medicine’ is feminine but ‘marasin’ (medicine) is masculine; koi ‘half hard shell of coconut, plate’ is masculine but ‘plet’ is feminine (in Bimun); paragima ‘cut or split piece of wood (plank, firewood, bamboo pole etc.)’ is masculine, but ‘pleng’ is feminine. (In all cases, the gender given is the one used by at least some speakers; others may pick a different gender.)

When it comes to words for things that have come in after white contact the analogy model is sometimes even less convincing. For example, all items of clothing are masculine, and this is said to be on analogy with buruma ‘laplap’, which is masculine. I have not been able to get a pre-laplap sense for buruma, but we may note that the two other words for items used as clothing given in (72), kapǝt ‘pandanus mat or “raincoat” (also pandanus sp.)’ and bekǝt ‘hat/cap’, are feminine.

We also saw that liquids and words to do with fire tend to be feminine; yet ‘kerosin’ (kerosine) is masculine (no analogy was presented for this word). When speakers wish to express this sense in Kuot, burunǝm ‘water’ which is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lokaseman</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>wooden ‘propeller’ on shark-catching loop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uo</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sǝŋa</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>magic (knowledge of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tǝŋa</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>magic (things used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fafaruan</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>magic (evil lime powder)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
feminine is used. Similarly, the loan word ‘kar’ (car) is masculine, but when loan words are avoided it is replaced by obinǝm ‘canoe’ (elliptic for obinǝm meioŋ mi-la toktok-im ‘the red ones’ canoe’, i.e. ‘white people’s canoe’) which is feminine.

In the case of ‘bilum’, ‘net bag’, discussed in 5.6.2.1 above, some speakers use masculine, giving kein ‘type of basket’ as the gender template (although other baskets are feminine). At least one speaker using it as feminine said it sounded feminine, which could indicate a sensitivity for the morphological assignment rules, whereby the majority of nouns ending in /m/ are feminine, although such rules are not generally known, even implicitly.

5.6.4 Gender markedness
No unequivocal answer can be given to the question of which gender is un-marked; the possible criteria point in different directions.

Masculine is used of referents whose gender is unknown, e.g.:

(73)  
aka  i-sik?  
who 3m-DEM  
‘who is that?’

mani  i-to?  
what 3m-here  
‘what is this?’

Aka ‘who’ is normally used with masculine agreement even when there is reason to believe it is a woman, for instance if you hear someone in the night and the voice is female.

The following is used to inquire of the sex of a newborn baby:

(74)  
i-ari-a  man  kulot?  
3fS-carry-3mO what child/boy  
‘what (sex) child did she (the mother) have?’

The word pǝɡǝ ‘thing’ is mostly used as masculine too:

(75)  
man  pǝɡǝ  i-tie?  
what thing(m) 3m-there  
‘what’s that?’

A possible alternative analysis here is that the nouns are simply masculine (aka ‘who’, mani ‘what’ etc.).

As mentioned in 5.6.3.1, masculine is used also for mixed-gender collectives. Since gender is not distinguished in non-singular grammatical morphology, the use of masculine for mixed groups can only be seen lexically, where the non-singular of the masculine rather than the feminine is used for mixed groups (example (59) above).

37 I discussed this possibility with my main informant, who was not convinced. Although he was by then very much used to discussing grammatical gender, his unwillingness to say that aka etc. are masculine may be due to their referential possibilities.
In contrast, feminine is used when there is no referent to agree with (i.e. no controller; zero agreement). In Kuot, each verb and adjective has an obligatory subject position, which has to be filled even when there is no referent. This is the case for instance in the expression used for ‘thank you’ – as in most languages in this part of the world there was traditionally no expression translating directly into ‘thank you’, but when the custom of using it was introduced, the expression ‘it is good’ was recruited for the purpose. There is no real-world correspondent of ‘it’, and feminine gender is used:

(76)  
\[
\text{tema=ieŋ} \\
\text{be.good=3fS} \\
\text{‘it’s good’; ‘thank you’}
\]

Similarly, the “situation in general” is cross-referenced with the feminine, as in \(i-la\) in the next example. There is also a verb meaning, among other things, ‘to reach’ or ‘to last until’. In this sense, it always takes feminine cross-referencing. The following excerpt is from a story where a pregnant woman dies in the bush, but her baby survives and feeds himself off his mother’s body and later roams and eats from gardens in the bush. The preceding sentence translates ‘Again he came, again he came next to his mother, again he suckled of her rot.’, and the story continues:

(77)  
\[
\text{I-la puo=ieŋ lǝ [u-la kak-kan-i],} \\
\text{3fS-go until=3fS RELR 3mS-go RED-big-3m} \\
\text{kak-kan-i=rʊ ga u-num...} \\
\text{RED-big-3m=ASP and 3mS-walk} \\
\text{‘It went (on like this) until he went big, he was big and he walked…’}
\]

There is no question of agreement with a concrete referent for the two feminine cross-reference markers here. (The construction with \(puo\) is a type of complementation construction.)

The feminine is used also for discourse anaphors, for instance referring back to the contents of an entire narrative (discourse deixis). In this case it is a speaker who treats \(gas\) ‘story’ as masculine, which shows that the feminine agreement in \(u-tie\) does not agree with ‘story’ but has precisely the function of referring back to the preceding context:

(78)  
\[
\text{U-tie=t <i-tma- gas> [i-tmat gas] lǝ tu-arʊmŋ-a.} \\
\text{3f-there=just 3m-- story(m) 3m-DEM story(m) RELR 1sS-tell-3mO} \\
\text{Tema=ieŋ.} \\
\text{be.good=3fS} \\
\text{‘that’s it (of) <thi-story> this story I am telling. Thank you’}
\]

This usage tallies with the prevalence of feminine gender for abstracts (5.6.3.2 above).

Often, agreement with an actual referent is preferred. This is the case with the class I1b verb –\(it\) ‘know’, which tends to cross-reference the referent about which something is or is not known, rather than the entire proposition of knowing or not knowing, for example in the following where the object agree-
ment is with the pigs rather than the idea of an unknown number of pigs (but with slight hesitation before it):

(79)  Atabo namuk ma kumep, təle=kan <…> ma-tu-it
     maybe how many 3p.Poss1 pig.nsg NEG=EMPH 3pO-1sS-know
     ‘How many pigs, I don’t know’

Looking at the distribution of nouns, the fact that such tendencies for semantic assignment principles as can be found assign nouns to feminine classes (e.g. categories like ‘water’ and ‘abstracts’) suggests that feminine is (or was) the marked gender. Masculine would have been the default gender for everything except male beings.

However, when we look at the gender distribution of words in the plain declension (Table 1 above) we can see that when there is no morphological assignment, feminine words are in the majority, although the difference is not dramatic (58% to 42% for masculine among words with known gender). Such a distribution is more consistent with a situation where masculine is the positively defined gender, and feminine a default gender. It is of course possible that there were semantic categories associated with each of the genders in the past, but that the categories defined as masculine have become even more obscured than those defined as feminine.

5.6.5  Decline of the gender system

Kuot speakers are very much aware of their language having gender. This is because it is not present in the surrounding languages, which are all Austronesian. However, their awareness does not extend to the distribution of referents across the two genders. Interestingly, neither semantic nor morphological assignment principles are accessible to most speakers. This is evident in that no speaker is willing to guess the gender of a word that they do not know, even if it is in the largest and most regular of the special declensions (i.e., the ma declension).

It seems reasonable to assume that there once were semantic principles for the assignment of inanimate nouns to masculine or feminine gender, but it is clear that these are no longer part of the competence of speakers. The inconsistencies found with loan words are one further indication. I was also told that children do not use gender correctly until quite late – about age seven according to my informant (since most children in Bimun are not learning Kuot, I was not able to make any observations on this point).38 Further, there is no creative use of gender: in many languages, gender can be manipulated for expressive purposes (e.g. using feminine gender for ‘man’ in Manambu conveys femininity (Aikhenvald in press), and in Lavukaleve, feminine can be used to convey smallness of referents, although smallness is not a property of feminine nouns in general (Terrill 1999: 129–130)); in Kuot no such usage has been observed, and none could be elicited.

38 I also asked whether children overgeneralise one of the genders when learning the language, and was told that they do not.
If the assumption is accepted that there would historically have been principles for the distribution of inanimate nouns in the plain declension into the two genders, we would like to know how the present situation came about. Perhaps the most likely explanation is semantic drift, whereby nouns gradually take on other meanings over time. If they retain their gender while changing their meaning, a semantically opaque gender system would eventually result. Again, it is a problem that Kuot is an isolate, since this means that there are no known related languages whose vocabularies can be studied in order to establish the original senses of Kuot words.

If we subscribe to the idea that a young gender system is for the most part systematic and rule-governed, and that the systematicity and rules can be obscured over time by various kinds of drift, then gender in Kuot is clearly old. The opacity seen in Kuot gender could be described as a type of decline of the gender system; not the decline of Corbett (1991: 315ff) or decay of Aikhenvald (in press), who both refer to the loss of one or more gender categories, but rather the loss of the systematic aspect of the system as such, that is, the semantic underpinnings on which inanimate gender was based. It is evident that gender as a grammatical category is alive and well: it is rigorously expressed across all categories that display concord; the concord morphology is not showing signs of collapse; and neither gender seems to be expanding at the cost of the other. The grammatical system is operating; the semantic one is not.

5.7 Sub-classes of nouns

In the above we have looked at the morphological classes of Kuot, and at the workings of gender. We also saw that many kin terms and other human nouns form particular dual and non-singular forms. This section introduces a few more categories of nouns that exhibit particular behaviour in one way or another.

5.7.1 Inherently locative nouns

A few words in Kuot are “inherent locatives”, that is, they do not take the locative preposition *na* to express location. The inherent locatives include the following nouns, and the relational nouns discussed in 5.7.2:

(80)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>lakkuan</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lopuo</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>area around men’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>labimin</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lauburien</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>laurien</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lomuaririen</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fork in branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lauuulo</em></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>above, space above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nabit/nabuit</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>parabira</em></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39 This is by no means an unproblematic notion, but it goes beyond the scope of the present thesis.
That the prepositionless use is indeed a lexical property is illustrated by the following examples, where *lakkuan* ‘village’ is used without *na* whereas the synonym *pianɔm* requires the preposition (the examples have been standardised to facilitate comparison):

(81)  
\[ u-on\omega ma \quad lakkuan \]
3mS-sit/live village
‘he sat/lived in the village’

\[ u-on\omega ma \quad na \quad pianɔm \]
3mS-sit/live in village
‘he sat/lived in the village’

Most of the inherent locatives begin with the sequence /la/, /lə/ or /na/, and it is likely that these are the result of fusion of the preposition *na* onto the beginning of the word – as was shown in 3.2.2.4, /n/ and /l/ are only partly distinct as phonemes in Kuot. Another possibility is the creation of nouns with the relator *lə* (see 5.8 below).

An interesting case supporting the idea of a prepositional origin is *nabit/nabuit*,\(^{40}\) where /na/ is only partly fused onto *bit/buit*.

(82)  
\[ U-tie, \quad bit=arə, \quad duri=meŋ, \quad\]
3f-there afternoon=ASP sleep=3pS
\[ parabira \quad te-u-arə \quad [i-sik \quad Samɔtmɔrun]... \]
morning get.up-3mS-stm\(_2\) 3m-DEM S.
‘Alright, it got afternoon, they slept, in the morning this Samɔtmɔrun got up…’

(83)  
\[ u-tie, \quad nabuit=arə, \quad mu-me-o \quad kobeq-ip... \]
3f-there afternoon=ASP come-3pS-stm\(_2\) bird-nsg
‘Alright, it got afternoon, the birds came…’

The two examples are by different speakers, so it is possible that the interpretation of the status of /na/ with *bit/buit* differs from speaker to speaker. The speaker of (82) also uses *bit* with *na* elsewhere in the same narrative:

(84)  
\[ Na \quad buit-iap, \quad Lerago \quad lə \quad [i-me \quad te-i-arə]... \]
in afternoon-nsg L. RELR 3fS-HAB get.up-3fS-stm\(_2\)
‘In the afternoons, Lerago would get up…’

(Although (82) and (83) are closely parallel in structure, it is conceivable that a more locative interpretation is intended in (83); nonetheless it is clear that usage differs between speakers, and this word appears to be in an intermediate stage, sometimes treated as an inherently locative noun (*nabit*) and sometimes as a regular one (*bit*).) Example (82) also illustrates the use of the inherently locative *parabira* ‘morning’.

Several words for times of day are used as greetings. They differ in that some are used with *na* and others are not, and cannot be:\(^{41}\)

\(^{40}\) The variation between *bit* and *buit* is partly dialectal (with *bit* mainly in the south and *buit* in the north) and partly idiolectal.
We may also note that all the inherently locative nouns in (80) for which gender information was available are feminine. I have no explanation for this, except perhaps if the theory of an origin in prepositional phrases is accepted; if so we could say that they are derived nouns, and feminine does tally with the fact that nominalisations from verbs and adjectives are feminine (cf. 5.6.3.2 above).

5.7.2 Relational nouns

There is a group of nouns in Kuot which we may call relational nouns. They express concepts such as ‘behind’ and ‘in between’. As mentioned above, they are a type of inherently locative noun. In many ways they resemble body part nouns, but there are differences. The relation of parts, including body parts, to the whole is expressed with the set of inalienable possessive markers, called PossI. These can be used to link the possessed noun phrase to another noun phrase, or they can be used pronominally, i.e. without a following noun phrase. Relational nouns are used in the same construction as nouns denoting parts, e.g.:

(86)  
\[ Pa-la \ ga \ pa-la \ ga \ pa-la \ ga \ pa-la \ [bet=pay] \]
\[ 1pxS-go \ and \ 1pxS-go \ and \ 1pxS-go \ and \ 1pxS-go \ arrive=1pxS \]
\[ na \ nəm \ o \ [u-sik \ pirom \ u-lo \ kan-u], \]
\[ at \ mouth \ 3f.PossI \ 3f-DEM \ sea(f) \ 3f-RELR \ big-3f \]
\[ kabirōna \ ma \ kuop. \]  
\[ middle \ 3p.PossI \ tree.nsg \]

‘We went and we went and we went and we (went and) arrived at the mouth of this big sea, in the middle of the trees.’

(The speaker is describing a lake, for which there is no Kuot word.) The example shows a relational noun, \( kabirōna \) ‘middle’, on the last line, and a regular noun, \( nəm \) ‘mouth’, on the second line. Note how \( nəm \) takes the preposition \( na \), while \( kabirōna \) does not.

A further difference is that body part nouns can be used with alienable possessives (PossII). PossI codes parthood, and since the body part can in principle be detached from the body and talked of as a non-part, it can also take PossII coding (cf. 1.1.3). The relational nouns, on the contrary, can only be used with
PossI. This is a consequence of their semantics rather than a lexical restriction: while there can be a leg without a pig attached, there cannot be a ‘behind’ that is not behind something. There is no possibility of using the relational nouns to denote parts (such as ‘back’ or ‘front’); they are only ever relational, and never referential.

Table 5 is a list of relational nouns in Kuot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Nsg</th>
<th>Dl</th>
<th>gdr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kabirọna</td>
<td>kabirọp</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>(m) middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arabura</td>
<td>araburọp</td>
<td>(m/f)</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uadan = uadanim</td>
<td>uadanip</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>between 2; middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lekke, leikke</td>
<td>lekkeiap</td>
<td>lekkepien</td>
<td>in front of; before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arōkkin</td>
<td>arakkinip</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>opposite; straight across or over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>molonim, ulonim</td>
<td>molonimup</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>f? behind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relational nouns differ in the degree to which non-singular and dual forms are acceptable to different speakers, and the degree to which such forms are used. The issue of gender in these words is also difficult. For almost all non-singular forms and genders given here, some speakers have at some time said that they do not exist.

Thus kabirọna and arabura were at first given the genders now in parentheses, while other speakers later said that they do not have gender (I have no examples from texts where any other constituent agrees with any of these words). Kabirọna and arabura are normally used in the singular, regardless of the number of referents of the second noun phrase, as in (86). But I was given an example of arabura in the plural, with a singular “possessor”:

(87) araburọ-p ọ iley araburọ-p ọ arubu
     middle-nsg 3f.PossI daytime(f) middle-nsg 3f.PossI night(f)
     ‘(in) the middles of the day’ ‘(in) the middles of the night’

The reference would be to repeated instances of (approximate) middays and midnights.

Molonim ‘behind’, on the other hand, itself takes dual or non-singular form depending on the number of the possessor, according to my informants (only examples with possessors in the singular occur naturally in my data, so these are examples given me when discussing these words with speakers):

(88) molonim tuo molonim-up-ien lie molonim-up ma
     behind 1s.PossI behind-nsg-dl 3d.PossI behind-nsg 3p.PossI
     ‘behind me’ ‘behind them (2)’ ‘behind them’

In the third person, it is of course also possible to have a possessor noun, e.g. molonim-up ma makaulọp ‘behind the women’. Molonim is used also of non-
oriented items, for instance expressing that something can be behind a stone or tree, which do not have inherent fronts or backs.42

Sometimes there is no possessive marking, if the object or person to which the location is being related can be understood from context. In this example, reference is made to a woman who is uphill from the place of speaking but on her way down, after the speaker, who is also on her way down, and speaking to yet a third woman. The elided possessive phrase would refer to the speaker:

(89) Eba no-du=ieŋ u-timaideŋ məlonim
FUT 2sO-push=3fS 3f-downwards behind
‘The one coming down behind will give you a push’

In terms of number inflection, lekke (/leikke) ‘before’ is at least partly similar to məlonim: it takes the dual form when the possessor is dual (but was initially said to have no non-singular form). These constructions are unique within Kuot: nowhere else does the number of the possessor govern the form of the possessed (in this case those relational nouns that have this construction).43

Uadan/uadanim ‘between’ is a little different for different speakers. Some will allow for it to be used only of a situation where something is found in between two other referents (e.g. ‘between the (2) houses’). For other speakers, predominantly speakers of northern Kuot, it can be used synonymously with kabirəna and arabura for ‘middle, midst’.

Arakkin ‘opposite’ is used for alignment in either the horizontal or the vertical dimension; above or across. In one narrative, the first coconut palm grew straight over the grave of a man, and arakkin was used. It can also be used for ‘opposite’ or ‘straight across’, as in ‘the hotel is directly opposite the bank’.

5.7.3 pəsənə‘clansman, clanswoman’, bonim ‘name’

I am aware of two exceptions to the statement that the choice between PossI and PossII possessive marking is semantic rather than lexical (cf. 1.1.3): bonim ‘name’ (which is treated as a body part in many languages), and pəsənə ‘clansman, clanswoman’, which are both used with PossI44 – this is particularly surprising for pəsənə since all other kin terms take PossII possessive marking.45 An

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42 The Kuot use of ‘behind’ is thus similar to that of English in this respect, but unlike that of Longgu (Austronesian, Solomon Islands) in which directional terms like ‘inland’ and ‘seaward side’ are used to relate locations to objects without back/front orientation, unless they are in motion (Hill 1997: 122).

43 Both lekke and məlonim also have some temporal uses, which will not be explored here.

44 There is some variation among words for pimples, sores, substances emanating from the body and the like, which may be partly lexical as well.

45 Interestingly, Volker reports from Nalik that alienable possessive marking is replacing inalienable marking, including kin terms, and the only kin term that is presently only ever used with the inalienable marking is the corresponding Nalik term tau (Volker 1998: 132).
example is given in (90), which is an expression to do with a man’s children paying his clanspeople for his contributions to their upbringing\(^ {46}\) (with PossII it would have been *\(p \dot{a}s \dot{a} \dot{p} \ am\)):

\[(90) \quad a-kirip=meq \ me \ un \ p \dot{a}s \dot{a}p \ a \]
\[\text{3mO-cut=}3\text{pS to RECIP clanspeople.nsg 3m.PossI} \]
\[\text{‘they cut him for his clanspeople’} \]

### 5.7.4 Quantifiers

Three words used as quantifiers are analysed as a sub-class of nouns, but are defective in some respects. \(p \dot{a}ppauliap\) (for some speakers \(p \dot{a}ppaluaip\)) and \(p \dot{a}ppot\) both mean ‘much’ and ‘many’. The former looks non-singular in form, while the latter looks singular, but neither has corresponding forms in other numbers. Their usage is much like that of ‘lots’ or ‘a lot’ in English, although there is no difference concomitant with number; that is, they are completely interchangeable in all contexts. The same constructions also pertain to \(namarip\) ‘few’ (often \(namarip=it\) ‘just few’), which also looks non-singular in form but has no corresponding stem in another number. All can be used with the possessive construction (this example is partly elicited, in order to get parallel structures for all the words):

\[(91) \quad \begin{array}{l}
\{ p \dot{a}ppot/p \dot{a}ppauliap \} \\
\text{many; much} \\
\{ namarip \} \\
\text{few}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{l}
\{ ma \text{ kumep} \} \\
\text{3p.PossI pig.nsg} \\
\{ o \text{ burunom} \} \\
\text{3f.PossI water(f)} \\
\{ o \text{ karot} \} \\
\text{3f.PossI betelnut(f)} \\
\{ ma \text{ karot-ip} \} \\
\text{3p.PossI betelnut-nsg}
\end{array}
\]
\[\text{‘many(much) /few pigs/water/betelnut(s)’} \]

Any cross-referencing morphology would agree with the head, not with the quantifier.

Another common construction used with quantifiers is the attribute construction (cf. 1.1.1):

\[(92) \quad biop \text{ mi-la } p \dot{a}ppauliap \]
\[\text{shark.nsg 3p-RELR many} \]
\[\text{‘many sharks’} \]

or for elderly speakers often without the prefixed relator:

\[(93) \quad biop \ p \dot{a}ppauliap \]
\[\text{shark.nsg many} \]
\[\text{‘many sharks’} \]

\(^ {46}\) See 2.7.1 on this custom.
5.7.5  Numerals

It could be argued that numerals be analysed as a sub-class of nouns. Some numerals can be analysed as compounds of the locative preposition *na* ‘in, at’ with erstwhile nouns. Numbers from ‘three’ and up are constructed with PossI possessives. The number ‘ten’ takes dual and non-singular to form the numbers ‘twenty’ and higher multiples of ‘ten’. But they are defective as nouns in that they cannot be used in the attribute construction (thereby differing from the quantifiers which we saw in the attribute construction in (92)). The numerals ‘one’ and ‘two’ deviate in further ways, and numerals were given a class of their own, separate from nouns.

5.8  Nouns and other word classes

This section is concerned with the various relations that nouns bear to other word classes.

5.8.1  Nominalisations: action nominals

There are processes for forming action nominals from predicates, i.e. verbs and adjectives. Stems of verb class II and III and of adjectives are nominalised through particular morphology (cf. 1.1.2). Noun stems cannot normally be converted into verbs of classes II or III, or into adjectives (though the first part of class III stems is sometimes derived from a noun). The relation is normally one of derivation from verb to noun (e.g. *nuloiap* ‘words, sound, talking’ from class IIb -lo/loa ‘make noise, speak’), though in rare cases we do find a noun *ie* ‘smell’ corresponding to a verb stem -*ie* ‘smell’ (class IIb).

Class I verb stems are simply used without verbal morphology, and conversely, many nouns can be used as verbs of class I (which is the other open class in the language). Not all class I verbs can be used as nouns, and not all nouns can be used as class I verbs, but for stems which may be used as either, we may talk of zero derivation; or we may say that the stems are not subcategorised for the property of verb or noun. This relation is schematised in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Nouns and verb class I: overlap of stems.](image)

It is interesting to note that the absolute majority of nouns which can function as verbs are of feminine gender (cf. 5.6.3.2 above). The group of stems that can be used as either nouns or verbs range in meaning and use from stems whose sense appears to be basically nominal (e.g. *kudat* ‘fence’) to stems that appear to be basically verbal (e.g. *ibir* ‘run’). Those stems that can be pluralised often take the non-singular ending -*iap*, rather than the regular -(i)*p*; this is true particularly of the stems which are primarily verbs.
5.8.2 Nominalisations: actor nominals

Another type of nominalisation is actor nominalisation, that is, a form derived from a verb or adjective, signifying the one who performs an action (e.g. ‘runner’ from ‘run’). Actor nominalisations do not have their own morphology in Kuot. The main strategy used is the same as for the attribute construction (cf. 1.1.1), and it is highly productive. The primary function of this construction is to make an attribute of a predicate (or other constituent) within a noun phrase. The attribute construction is marked by the relator lǝ, prefixed with the nominal (demonstrative) agreement markers, e.g.:

\[(94) \begin{array}{l}
kit u-lǝ kan-u \\
fire(f) 3f-RELR big-3f \\
\text{‘big fire’}
\end{array}\]

In actor nominalisations, we often find such constructions, but without heads, e.g.:

\[(95) \begin{array}{l}
i-lǝ kan-i \\
3m-RELR big-3m \\
\text{‘God’}
\end{array}\]

The expression in (95) is fully established in the sense ‘God’ but does sometimes still occur with the head noun ‘man’:

\[(96) \begin{array}{l}
mikana i-lǝ kan-i \\
man 3m-RELR big-3m \\
\text{‘God’}
\end{array}\]

Presumably, most of these expressions arose through ellipsis, but many are now highly conventionalised and are used mostly without the former head noun, e.g.:

\[(97) \begin{array}{l}
i-lǝ u-ari-o kier \\
3m-RELR 3mS-carry-3fO spear/stick(f) \\
\text{‘policeman’ [lit. (the one who) carries a stick (i.e. rifle)]}
\end{array}\]

\[(98) \begin{array}{l}
mi-lǝ toktok-im \\
3p-RELR red-3p \\
\text{‘white people’ [lit. the red (ones)] ‘~(the ones) whose skin is red’}
\end{array}\]

We have also seen i-lǝ kid-i ‘slippery (one)’, the name used for several species of parrotfishes and wrasses, mentioned in note 35.

Nominals formed in this way can have further modifiers, including an attribute of the same type, creating a very long noun phrase, as in the sentence from which (98) was taken:

\[(99) \begin{array}{l}
\text{obinom meion \[ mi-lǝ toktok-im \\
canoe(f) 3p.PossII.3f 3p-RELR red-3p}
\end{array}\]

\[47\] Both expressions have counterparts in Tok Pisin, and may be translations of these: ‘bikpela’ is the adjective for ‘big’ and is used for ‘God’ (without a noun head), and ‘bikman’ (from ‘big man’) is a term for the traditional leaders in these areas, applied also to God.
Another strategy for forming nominals from predicates involves the use of the relator (lə) without a prefix, corresponding to a relative clause (see 1.1.8.1), but again without a head noun. This is productive particularly in creating place names, e.g.:

(100) [lə i-lum kumebun]
relr 3fS-fall sow(f)
’(where) the sow fell’

(101) [lə bi-lə-u afun]
relr be.stuck-3f turtle
’(where) the turtle got stuck’

The latter location is known today simply as Ləbilo and not everyone knows the etymology with the turtle.

Place names can be created by conventionalisation of prepositional phrases as well:

(102) Bo kapinoma Na pɔl̄ie
on mountain at spring

This is not attested for common nouns.

The same process as in (100) and (101) is likely to have once produced the terms for brown and black pigs given under 5.6.1 above. There is also a species of banana that grows only to about 70 cms, called:

(103) lə o-pipi=ieŋ kuala
relr 3fO-urinate=3fS old.woman
’(that) the old woman pissed on’

Another set of nouns appears to have been formed from other words of various classes through the endings -sik, -ppik and -dik:

(104) noun | rel. word | cat.
--- | --- | ---
kualappik | kuala | N wife, old
woman | | |
sukuppik | suku/sugu | V cl I play
one who wants to play always | | |
pulapulasik | pula | V cl I steal
thief | | |
palalasik | palala | V cl I be tired/lazy
lazy person | | |
simasisasik | ?? simə | V cl I spy
person who spies on others | | |
pappoidik | pappo- | adj be short
short person | | |
ləbumesik | bumə- | adj be stingy
stingy person | | |
It is possible that *laippǝk* ‘old man’ belongs in the list too, in spite of having a different vowel in the ending; there is a word *lai* meaning ‘husband, old man’ which would make it exactly parallel with *kualappik*.

The ending -sik is homonymous with the most common bound demonstrative stem, which could well be the source. I do not know of possible sources for -ppik or -dik. The process is not productive.

### 5.8.3 Nouns as predicates and in the attribute construction

A noun used in the attribute construction can be required to take predicate morphology, in most cases from verb class I. It is difficult to predict which nouns are concerned, since some take no marking and others obligatorily take marking, and this often concerns semantically similar terms:

(105) poi u-lǝ makabun (*makabun=ieŋ)
child 3f-RELR woman(f) ‘female child: girl’

(106) makabun u-lǝ kualappik=ieŋ (*kualappik)
woman 3f-RELR old.woman=3fS ‘an old/ageing woman’

(107) kǝɾǝkǝt
beardless.man
‘beardless (grown) man’

(108) kulele gun-up lǝ kulele=meŋ
ripe.breadfruit breadfruit-nsg RELR ripe.breadfruit=3pS ‘ripe breadfruit’

(109) to-kubǝma (*kubǝma=øŋ)
1sS-young.man ‘I am/was a young man’

Here the predicating noun in the first example is bare, the next three have verb class I marking which is obligatory when the noun is used in predicate function. *Kubǝma* ‘young man’ in the last example belongs to a very limited class of nouns which take adjectival subject marking for first and second person.

The first two examples above show the predicating nouns in the attribute construction, with an indexing prefix to the relator, and in the third we have the possibility of actor nominalisation. The slot created by the prefixed relator for an attribute within the noun phrase has the same possibilities for predicates as those in the relative clause which is marked by the un-affixed relator (cf. 1.1.1 and 1.1.8.1).

Human nouns are an exception to the generalisation that nouns which may be used as class I verbs are feminine, since they follow the gender of the referent for the verbal marking. Borrowed terms for professions always take class I marking, e.g. *titsa=øŋ* ‘he is a teacher’, *nas=ieŋ* ‘she is a nurse.’
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The following table shows all Kuot forms for pronominal categories.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>turuo</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>tu/ta</td>
<td>tuo</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>to- -i</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>tuŋ/taŋ</td>
<td>tuŋ</td>
<td>tuŋ</td>
<td>tuŋ</td>
<td>tuan</td>
<td></td>
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¹ Non-obvious abbreviations in this table which are not included in the table at the beginning of this volume are: Vcl = verb class, and attr.aff = affix used to form the attribute construction (see 1.1.1).

² The preposition *ir- ‘at (etc.)’ is suffixed with these forms to cross-reference the head noun.

³ These are used with the indexing prepositions (except *ir-). Slight variations occur in use with with prepositions.

⁴ The forms of the PossII are listed from top to bottom according to the number/gender and person of the possessor. Each distinguishes singular, dual and plural for the possessee; some further masculine and feminine within the singular.
Gas a ima Boilei – The story of the subclan Boilei

Speaker: Christina Dalap

Recorded in Panaras village, New Ireland on April 14 1998

1. [[I-to gas] 3m-here story(m) RELR 1sS-want/be.about.to 1sS.fut-tell-3sO.fut [tu-ga ta-rɔ̃ma-ŋ] a 3m.PossI 3m-this subclan(m) 1px.PossII.s L.

‘This story (that) I will tell (is) of this subclan of ours, Ləubikkibap.’

2. /I-to/
3m-here
‘this’

3. [[Non=arɔ torɔ], 3m.time RELR 3fS-live some woman here P. i-onɔma [non makabun] tiro Panaras, some=ASP time RELR 3fS-live some woman here P. o Ləubikkibap, [i-sik ima Ləubikkibap].

‘Once (there) lived a woman here in Panaras, of Ləubikkibap, this subclan Ləubikkibap.’


‘This woman was married, and this woman, her name (was) Lərago.’

5. [Pappa iaŋ] 3f.PossII.m RELR name 3m.PossI S. lɔ [bonim a] Samtɔmrun. sibling 3f.PossII.m RELR name 3m.PossI S.

‘Her brother, his name (was) Samtɔmrun.’

6. Samtɔmrun lɔ [tœle [u-me ubi]]. S. RELR NEG 3mS-HAB work=Ø.

‘Samtɔmrun didn’t use to work.’

7. [Mɔn u-me=t gura] agarit. CONT 3mS-HAB=just ‘walk.around’=Ø without.purpose ‘He’d just idle.’

8. [Mi-tie=r la-p gana-m] [i-me te-i-arɔ] Lərago 3p-DEM=ASP day-nsg every-3p 3fS-HAB get.up-3fS-stm₂ L.

‘This story (that) I will tell (is) of this subclan of ours, Ləubikkibap.’
Every day, Lerago would go to the gardens with her husband, but that one just used to idle.

In the afternoons, Lerago would make food and she’d remember her brother.

Alright, this husband of hers used to be grumpy about this in-law of his, because he would eat.

What does that brother of yours do (so that) you want to give him food?

"What does that brother of yours do (so that) you want to give him food?"
A PPENDIX II

concerning-3m useless.thing(m)
‘He just fools around.’

14. U-tie, [inɔ=r non la].
3f-there again=ASP some day/time

[inɔ=r̆ li-la] na ubi, mu-li-o,
again=ASP 3dS-go to garden come-3dS-stm₂

[inɔ=r̆ te-i-arɔ] Lerago,
again=ASP get.up-3fS-stm₂ L.

[inɔ=r̆ i-a̱u] iouna,
again=ASP 3fS-cook.3mO stone.oven(m)

[inɔ=r̆ a-mat-i-bɔ]
again=ASP 3mO-do-3fS-stm₂

[[non kapa] aŋ [pa'ppa ian]].
some food parcel(m) 3m.PossII.s sibling 3f.PossII.m

Samɔtmɔrun
S.
‘Alright, another day again, they(2) went to the garden again, they came (back), again
Lerago got up and again she cooked, and again she made a food parcel for her
brother, Samɔtmɔrun.’

15. U-tie, i-alu-am=arɔ kapa-ip;
3f-there 3fS-cover-3pO=ASP food parcel-nsg

[lai ian] la [mɔŋ o-mat=ɔŋ=kɔŋ tikit].
husband 3f.PossII.m RELR CONT 3fO-look=3mS=EMPH secretly
‘Alright, she wrapped the food parcels; her husband was watching her secretly.’

16. I-abu-a [kapa aŋ [pa'ppa ian]] tie,
3fS-put-3mO food parcel 3m.PossII.s sibling 3f.PossII.m there

[kapa meiŋ] na [non nɔp],
food parcel 3p.PossII.m in some place

te-i-arɔ, [nɔmo=r i-la ma-ko=ieŋ]
get.up-3fS-stm₂ want/be.about.to=ASP 3fS-go 3pO-throw=3fS

[iipɔp / e / marɔ -p/ sigaup],
leaf to cover mumu nsg // what sit nsg tuber peels nsg,
i-ar=am ipɔp.
3fS-take-3pO leaf.to.cover.mumu.nsg
‘She put his food parcel in one place, theirs in another place, she got up, (and) went (to) throw away the [leaves to cover mumu /eh/ whatsit] peelings, (and) get leaves to cover the mumu.’

17. U-tie, la la i-la,
3f-there time RELR 3fS-go
me [e i-la i-ar=am] ipɔp
for IMM.FUT 3fS-go 3fS-take-3pO leaf.to.cover.mumu.nsg
ga ma-ko=ieŋ panap,
and 3pO-throw=3fS rubbish.nsg
te-u-ar=am [lai iay] kak-kalait,
get.up-3mS-stm=just husband 3f.PossII.m RED-quickly
a-pik=onŋ
3mO-loosen=3mS
[[i-tta kapa] aŋ [mela aŋ]].
3m-ANAPH food.parcel 3m.PossII.s brother-in-law 3m.PossII.s
‘Alright, when she went, to get the leaves and throw the rubbish, her husband got up quickly, he loosened this food parcel of his in-law.’

18. A-pik=onŋ, u-ar=am [parip ma [/mar=ɔ/ kumep]],
3mO-loosen=3mS 3mS-take-3pO faeces.nsg 3p.PossI whatsit-nsg pig.nsg
u-abu-am na kapa.
3mS-put-3pO in food.parcel
‘He loosened it, he got pigshit, he put it in the food parcel.’

19. Kak-kalait=it tie u-lu-a
RED-quickly=just there 3mS-cover-3mO
ga [inɔ=rɔ kak-kalait a-pis=onŋ ga u-abu-a],
and again=ASP RED-quickly 3mO-fasten=3mS and 3mS-put-3mO
are la’ta la i-abu-a [kuala aŋ].
like earlier RELR 3fS-put-3mO wife 3m.PossII.s
‘He quickly wrapped it and quickly fastened it back again and put it as his wife had put it before.’

20. Mu-i-o [kuala aŋ],
come-3fS-stm=just wife 3m.PossII.s
[mu-i-o ma-ko=ieŋ] ipɔp,
come-3fS-stm=just 3pO-throw=3fS leaf.to.cover.mumu.nsg
‘His wife came, came (and) threw down the leaves, (and) she put food parcels among the hot stones.’

21. \[i-me=r\] \[kap-i-in\].
\[3fS-HAB=ASP\] put.cooking.stones.on.food-3fS-stm\(_2\)  
‘She put the food among the stones, alright, they were sitting there.’

22. \[M\(\_\_\)n i-la=r\] \[muabari tapmaid\(\_\_\)n, te-i-\(\_\_\)\(\_\)\(\_\)r\].
\[CONT\] \[3fS-go=ASP\] sun(f) downwards get.up-3fS-stm\(_2\)  
\[in\(\_\_\)r i-me a-mat-i-b\(\_\_\)r\] iouna,  
again=ASP \[3fS-HAB\] 3mO-do.something-3fS-stm\(_2\) mumu(m)  
i-\(\_\_\)\(\_\)a.  
\[3fS-get.food.out.of.mumu-3mO\]  
‘The sun was going down, she got going, she took the food from the mumu.’  
[lit: ‘...she whatsit the food from the mumu, took it out’]

23. \[I-\(\_\_\)a\(\_\_\)a=r\] iouna, te-i-\(\_\_\)\(\_\)r\].
\[3fS-get.food.out.of.mumu-3mO=ASP\] mumu(m) get.up-3fS-stm\(_2\)  
\(/ iarai//iai iau/ i-ar-a-am \[\text{kapa-ip,}\]  
\[3fS-take-3pO\] food.parcel-nsg  
i-\(\_\_\)\(\_\)u-am na \(\text{tape-bip,}\)  
\[3fS-put-3pO\] in basket.for.kapa-nsg  
i-ar-\(\_\)a \[\text{[ay [p\(\_\)ppa iay]], Sam\(\_\)\(\_\)m\(\_\)r\(\_\)un,}\]  
\[3fS-take-3mO\] 3m.PossI.s sibling 3f.PossI.m S.  
\[\text{[i-la=r i-amu-a].}\]  
\[3fS-go=ASP\] 3fS-give-3mO  
‘She got the food out of the mumu, she got going // took the food.parcel, put them in the baskets, she took her brother’s, Sam\(\_\)\(\_\)m\(\_\)r\(\_\)un(‘s), she went (and) gave it.’

24. \[I-la i-amu-a.\] u-ar-\(\_\)a \[\text{[p\(\_\)ppa iay]}, \[te-u-ar-a,\]  
\[3fS-go\] 3fS-give-3mO 3mS-take-3mO sibling 3f.PossI.m get.up-3mS-stm\(_2\)  
n\(\_\)mo go \[\text{[e=r a-p\(\_\)pp\(\_\)a-\(\_\)\(\_\)\(\_\)\(\_\)r]}\] kapa;  
\[\text{thought and IMM.FUT=ASP 3mS.fut-open-3sO.fut food.parcel(m)}\]  
\[\text{[panim ma parip]}\]  
heat(f) 3p.PossI faeces.nsg
‘She gave it, her brother took it, he got going, and thought he’d (just) open the food parcel; the smell of the (hot) faeces was going into his nose.’

get.up-3mS-stm2 again=just quietly 3mS-cover-3mO whatsit.m

[|inə=t kakonet u-airə-a] kapa tie, u-la,
again=just quietly 3mS-leave-3mO food.parcel(m) there 3mS-go

[u-la u-amu-a=r] un [lou aŋ]
3mS-go 3mS-give-3mO=ASP 3f.RECIP man’s.sister 3m.PossII.s
gə [mən u-libə=rə].
and CONT 3mS-cry=ASP
‘He got up, /quietly refastened whatsit/ quietly left the food parcel there, he went, he went (and) gave it to his sister, and he was crying (now).’

27. *[U-la u-amu-a] o-i [lou aŋ],
3mS-go 3mS-give-3mO 3f-near man’s.sister 3m.PossII.s

[inə=r teriki=əŋ], u-arə-am pəə-p am,
again=ASP return=3mS 3mS-take-3pO thing-nsg 3m.PossII.pl

iko=ŋə=arə.
r.un.away=3mS=ASP
‘He went (and) gave it to his sister, he returned again, he took his things, he ran away.’

28. *Na arubu teasik.*
in night that
‘That was in the night.’

3mS-take-3mO=ASP dry.coconut.frond(m) 3mS-go=ASP
‘He took a torch/dry coconut frond (and) he left.’
30. O-faka=on=ar /pi/ mar/ pirir ga u-la.
3fO1-make.fire=3mS=ASP dry.coconut.fron(m) and 3mS-go
‘He lit the frond and went.’ [better verb than faka: u-alabi-a ‘light’]

31. U-la ga u-la ga u-la,
3mS-go and 3mS-go and 3mS-go

gu la toð=Na Naiama, u-la tatuan,
and 3mS-go down/NW N. 3mS-go up

na [[i-sik=ar en] la m-e-i-p=ar Boilei].
at 3m-DEM=ASP part RELR 3pS-call-3mO B.
‘He went and went, and went down to Naiama, he went up, to this place called
Boilei.’

32. U-la=r ga [u-la=r u-on=ma] tie,
3mS-go=ASP and 3mS-go=ASP 3mS-live there

[i-sik=ar Samawa ran].
3m-DEM=ASP S.
‘He went and went (and) lived there, this Samawa ran.

33. [U-la=r u-on=ma] tie, ga ubi=on ga ubi=on,
3mS-go=ASP and 3mS-go=ASP 3mS-live there and work=3mS and work=3mS

a-kosar=on [lukuan am],
3mO-make=3mS house(m) 3m.PossII.s

a-kosar=on [i-sik ubian=ma],
3mO-make=3mS 3m-DEM fish.net(m)

[u-la a-ko=on] ubian=ma, o [non la],
3mS-go 3mO-throw=3mS fish.net 3f.PossI some day(f)

la a-kosar=on ga [u-la a-ko=on],
RELR 3mO-make=3mS and 3mS-go 3mO-throw=3mS

[tale=kan mu-u-o] abuluma ba,
NEG=EMPH come-3mS-stm2 fish(m) ‘one’

ga [mu-a-om sop=am] ir=ar ubian=ma.
and come-3mS.fut-stm2.fut hang=3mS.fut at-3m fishnet(m)
‘He went (and) lived there, and worked and worked, he built himself a house, he
made this fish net, he went (and) threw the fishnet, one day, [RELR] he made this net
and went (and) threw it, no fish came (to) hang from the net.’

34. [In= non la] in= ga= te-u-ar, u-gama to:
again some day again too get.up-3mS-stm2 3mS-say here
‘Another day he set about it again and he said:’
35. “Oo, atamo pǝga i-sik lǝ tǝle tu-abu-a”.
   “Oh, maybe this (is) the thing (that) I haven’t put yet.”

36. Inǝ ga [u-la u-abu-am] [/u-s/ mi-sik kuadap],
   at-3m 3mS-go and 3mS-go 3mS-put-3mO /3m/- 3p-DEM weight.nsg
   ‘He went again and he went (and) put // these weights on this fishnet.’

37. U-tie, [inǝ=bǝt u-la], [u-la a-ko=on], /em/
   3f-there again=now 3mS-go 3mS-go 3mO-throw=3mS /TP/
   [mu-i-o=rǝ sop=ieŋ] [u-sik lǝbot],
   come-3fS-stm2=ASP hang=3fS 3f-DEM triggerfish(f)
   ‘Alright, now he went again, he went (and) threw it, this triggerfish came (and)
   hung.’

38. U-tie, u-gama to:
   3f-there 3mS-say thus
   ‘Alright, he said:’

39. “Oo, atamo i-to=rǝ, na-i=rǝ [i-to ubianǝma]”.
   “Oh, maybe 3m-here=ASP finished-3m=ASP 3m-here fishnet(m)
   “Oh, maybe this is it, this fishnet is finished.”

40. U-tie, [u-me=rǝ u-sin] ma abulǝp,
   3f-there 3mS-HAB=ASP dummy.O-hunt=Ø 3p.PossI fish.nsg
   [u-me u-la] tuan, [mǝn u-onǝma=rǝ] tie.
   3mS-HAB 3mS-go up CONT 3mS-live=ASP there
   ‘Alright, (so) he used to hunt for fish, he used to go up, he was living there.’

41. [Non=arǝ tǝrǝ]
   some=ASP time
   lǝ te-i-arǝ [u-sik lou aŋ], Lerago,
   RELR get.up-3fS-stm2 3f-DEM man’s.sister 3m.PossII.s L.
   i-arǝ-o [totak poi ieŋ]; li-la=rǝ.
   3fS-take-3fO little child 3f.PossII.f 3dS-go=ASP
   ‘Another time, this sister of his, Lerago, got up, she took her little daughter; they(2)
   went.’

42. [Li-la=rǝ dus=ieŋ] todǝŋ, kale=ieŋ=arǝ.
   3dS-go=ASP stand=3dS down sing.out=3fS=ASP
   ‘They went (and) stood below, (and) she called out.’
43. *Te-u-arǝ=rǝ i-sik, u-gama to:*  
   get.up-3mS-stm=ASP 3m-DEM 3mS-say here  
   ‘He got up (and) said:’

44. “*Mimi aka tie?*”  
   2p who there  
   “‘Who are you(pl) there?’”

45. “*Turuo=t, ga [talau nuŋ].*”  
   1s=just and sister’s.child 2s.PossII.f  
   “‘Just me, and your niece.’”

46. “*Eh, mu-ma-ŋ to.*”  
   oh come-2d-stm2.fut here  
   “‘Oh, come here.’”

47. *Li-la=rǝ tatuan na lukuan.*  
   3dS-go=ASP up in house  
   ‘They went up to the house.’

48. *Li-la, [li-la li-onǝma], u-arǝ-am sobuk-up*  
   3dS-go 3dS-go 3dS-live/sit 3mS-take-3pO sugar.cane-nsg  
   u-amu-am un [u-sik tǝtak talau aŋ],  
   3mS-give-3pO RECIP.f 3f-DEM little sister’s.child 3m.PossII.s  
   u-tie, [mǝn li-onǝma=rǝ] tie,  
   3f-there CONT 2dS-live/sit=ASP there  
   lǝ [mǝn me-lo=rǝ], popori=men, te-i-arǝ=t u-sik,  
   RELR CONT 3pS-talk=ASP tell.stories=3pS get.up-3fS-stm2=just 3f-DEM  
   [inǝ i-me o-madikk] [u-sik tǝtak kulǝmut].  
   again 3f-HAB 3fO-pinch=Ø 3f-DEM little girl  
   ‘They(2) went, they went (and) sat, he took sugar canes, gave them to [this] his little  
   niece, alright, there they sat, and were talking, telling stories, she got going, [again]  
   she was pinching this little girl.’

49. *[I-me i-liba], [inǝ u-me u-gama to] i-sik:*  
   3fS-HAB 3fS-cry again 3mS-HAB 3mS-say here 3m-DEM  
   ‘She cried, [again] he would say:’

50. “*Mani lǝ i-aliba-a u?*”.  
   what(m) RELR 3fS-cry-3mO DEM.3f  
   “‘What is she crying for/about?’”

51. “*Aa, [nǝmo i-mani-ŋ] sobuk.*”  
   oh want 3fS-want-3sO.fut sugar cane  
   “‘She wants sugar cane.’”
52. [U-me u-la ma-kof] sobuk-up, 3mS-HAB 3mS-go 3pO-break=Ø sugar.cane-nsg

[inə u-me mu-u-o u-amu-am] un, again 3mS-HAB come-3mS-stm₁ 3mS-give-3pO RECIP.f

[inə=r i-me o-madikk] [u-sik Lerago] again=ASP 3fS-HAB 3fO-pinch=Ø 3f-DEM L.

[u-sik tôtak kuləmət]. 3f-DEM little girl

‘He would go and cut sugar cane, again he would come and give them to her, again this Lerago was pinching this little girl.’

53. “Mani [ləmo /a-mani-ŋ/ i-mani-ŋ] u?” what want /3mS-want-3sO.fut/ 3fS-want-3sO.fut DEM.3f

“What does she want?”

54. “[Nəmo /a-mani-ŋ/ i-mani-ŋ] /marə/ saguru.” want /3mS-want-3sO.fut/ 3fS-want-3sO /whatsit.m/ vegetable(m)

“She wants vegetables.”

55. Popori=ieŋ=arə ma [mi-tmat pəgə-p] na ubi], talk=3fS=ASP 3p.PossI 3p-DEM thing-nsg in garden
ga [mən o-madik=ieŋ] [u-sik tôtak poi ieg]. and CONT 3fO-pinch=3fS 3f-DEM little child 3f.PossII.f

‘She mentioned all the things in the garden, and (/as?) she was pinching [this] her little daughter.’

56. U-tie, bit=arə, duri=meŋ, 3f-there afternoon= ASP sleep=3pS

parabira te-u-arə [i-sik Samətmərun], morning get.up-3mS-stm₂ 3m-DEM S.

o-u-lo=rə [lou aŋj]: 3fO-3mS-tell=ASP man’s.sister 3m.PossII.s

‘Alright, it got afternoon, they slept, in the morning this Samətmərun got up (and), told his sister:’

57. “[Eba inə teriki=maŋ] me toma, [lukkuan Panaras]. FUT again return=2dS to SE village P.

“You will go back there, to Panaras village.’

58. Ga ma-la ga a-lagi=maŋ [ira meŋ] and 2dS-go and 3mO-fetch=2dS father 2d.PossII.s

ga mu-ma-øy.” and come-2dS-stm₂.fut

‘And you will go and get your father (here=father/husband) and come.’”
   get up-3dS-stm=just morning 3dS-walk=ASP down-/NWwards
   ‘They(2) just got up in the morning, and were walking, down.’

60. *Mu-li-ǝ ga mu-li-ǝ,*
   come-3dS-stm2 and come-3dS-stm2
   [mu-li-ǝ bet=liǝŋ] tiro, Panaras,
   come-3dS-stm2 arrive=3dS here P.
   /a-li-lo=rǝ [ira liǝŋ].
   /3mO-fetch-/ 3mO-3dS-tell=ASP father 3d.PossII.m
   ‘They came (this way) and got here, to Panaras, they /fetch../ told their
   father/husband.’

61. *Le-kima=øŋ=arǝ [ira liǝŋ] ga:*
   3dO-see=3mS=ASP father 3d.PossII.m and
   ‘Their father/husband saw them and:’

62. “*Oo, ma-ma-ǝ lakum ma-un [mi-tie pǝǝŋ]?”* oh, come from-2dS-stm2 where 3p-with 3p-thing-nsg
   “Oh, where are you coming from with those things?”

63. “*Ei! Nu-ga ga sagu=øŋ=it*
   ha 2sS-think and play=3mS=just
   /[ira iǝŋ [u-to kulǝmут]] lǝ u-la eh/
   /father 3f.PossII.m 3f-here girl RELR 3mS-go /
   [tøta iǝŋ [u-to kulǝmут]]
   maternal.uncle 3f.PossII.m 3f-here girl
   lǝ u-onǝma tatuan ga ubi=øŋ?
   RELR 3mS-live up and work=3mS
   ‘Ha! Do you think that /this girl’s father.. eh/ this girl’s uncle is just playing
   (who/when he) lives up (there) and works?’

64. *Pa [nǝmo [mu-i-øŋ no-lagi=øŋ]] tiro*
   but want/say come-1dxS-stm2 fut 2sO-fetch=1dxS here
   me [eba bu-la] tatuan, Boilei, [bu-la bu-onǝŋ] tatǝŋ.”
   for FUT 1pnS-go up B. 1pnS-go 1pnS-live/stay down/NW
   ‘But he wants us(2) (to) come (and) fetch you here for us to go up (there), (to) Boilei,
   go (and) live over there.’

65. “*Tie, [eba=r bu-la].”* there FUT=ASP 1pnS-go
   “Alright, we’ll go.”
66. *U-tie, [non=arǝ la], lǝ me-la=rǝ.*
3f-there some=ASP day/time RELR 3pS-go=ASP
‘Alright, one day, they were on their way.’

67. *[Mǝn // i-onǝma ka] [u-sik makabun] tako, [mǝn me-onǝma] to, CONT // 3fS-live first 3f-DEM woman here CONT 3pS-live here
Samatma run i-tuan lǝ [mǝn kore=onǝ=arǝ].
S. 3m-up RELR CONT prepare=3mS=ASP
‘First the woman was living here, they were living here, Samatmarun was up there getting ready.’

68. *[Mǝn kore=onǝ],
CONT prepare=3mS
lǝ [eba a-nǝmu-ǝŋ] [i-sik mela aŋ],
RELR FUT 3mS.fut-kill-3sO.fut 3m-DEM brother-in-law 3m.PossII.s
‘He was getting ready (to) kill [this] his in-law.’

69. *A-kau=onǝ [i-sik lu],
3mO-dig=3mS 3m-DEM hole(m)
 u-la me [mi-sik /marǝp/ korǝp],
3mS-go for 3p-DEM /whatsit.nsg/ sharpened.sticks
[mu-u-o /ma-/ maset ma-kasim=onǝ], u-abu-am,
come-3mS-stm2 /3pO-/ well 3pO-sharpen=3mS 3mS-put-3pO
u-rǝli-am tapma insait na lu, ma-bǝkbǝk=onǝ,
3mS-erect-3pO inside inside(<TP) in hole 3pO-cover.up=3mS
 a-kosar=onǝ=bǝt luaga.
3mO-make=3mS=now bench(m)
‘He dug this hole, he went for sticks, he came (back), he sharpened them well, he put them, he erected them inside this hole, he covered them up, now he made a bench.’

70. *[I-sik luaga] lǝ mani [mǝ-marǝn-i=kǝn],
3m-DEM bench RELR NEG(what) RED-strong-m=EMPH
orait, // o-u-it=arǝ lǝ nǝmo,
alright // 3fO-3mS-know=ASP RELR that
[eba=rǝ mu-a-ǝŋ [i-sik mela aŋ],
FUT=ASP come-3mS.fut-stm2.fut 3m-DEM man’s.brother.in.law 3m.PossII.s
teiliat=arǝ u-onǝma],
quietly=ASP 3mS-sit/live/stay
u-tie, la lǝ [i-la=rǝ bet=ieŋ] [u-sik Lerago]
3mS-there time/day RELR 3fS-go=ASP arrive=3fS 3f-DEM L.
This bed wasn’t strong at all, alright, he already knew that this in-law of his would come, be subdued, alright, when this Lerago came with her husband, he went, went (and) stood about, didn’t go (and) sit down, as though he was ashamed /before him/ (because) he had done bad to [this] his in-law.

This Samātmorun got up and:

Sit here on that bench!

He got up, and thought he’d just sit down, but no.

The bench just shook with him, (and) he fell into this hole, (that) he/that one had prepared ahead of him.

The bench just shook with him, (and) he fell into this hole, (that) he/that one had prepared ahead of him.

The bench just shook with him, (and) he fell into this hole, (that) he/that one had prepared ahead of him.
me [e a-la o-ko=αŋ]
for IMM.FUT 3mS.fut-go 3fO-throw=3mS.fut

bo [u-to bukom a],
on 3f-here head(f) 3m.PossI
‘He fell, (and) that one was going to run with the axe to go (and) whack it on his head,’

76. “Ee! [Buat to-nu-νmom], mela!
oi PROHIB 1sO-2sS-kill brother-in-law
‘Oh, don’t kill me, in-law!’

77. [Tɔt-teiliat na-la na-αbu-ŋ].
red-carefully 2sS.fut-go 2sS.fut-put-3sO.fut
‘Go put it carefully.’

78. [Tɔt-teiliat=it [to-na-airaj] ga [to-na-μuaj]].
red-carefully=just 1sO-2sS-leave.fut and 1sO-2sS-bury.fut
‘Just leave me and bury me carefully’

79. [Eba a-kima=νanaj] [[pɔŋ e ba] lo [eba bet=αŋ]].”
FUT 3mO-see=2sS.fut thing(m) one RELR FUT arrive=3mS.fut
‘You will see something (which) will come.’”

80. U-tie /te-me-a./ te-u-ar=3/3 muo,
3f-there /get.up-3pS/ get.up-3mS-stm2=just there

lo [/u/- teiliat u-la u-αbu-o] [u-sik alabun],
RELR /3mS/- quietly 3mS-go 3mS-put-3fO 3f-DEM axe(f)

[maset mu-u-o a-mat-u-bɔ] una
well come-3mS-stm2 3mO-do.something-3mS-stm2 grave(m)

nakkap bo [mela αŋ],
up on brother-in-law 3m.PossII.s

u-tie, me-νomaj=arɔ.
3f-there 3pS-live/sit=ASP
‘Alright, he just got up (and) // carefully went (and) put the axe, he came properly (and) made a grave over his in-law, alright, (then) they lived (there).’

81. Me-νomaj, i-la i-la i-la;
3pS-live/sit 3fS-go 3fS-go 3fS-go

sik=ieŋ=arɔ [u-sik tabarabo] o [u-sik nirobu].
grow=3fS=ASP 3f-DEM new.shoot 3f.PossI 3f-DEM coconut.palm
‘They stayed, (time passed); the new shoot of the coconut grew’

82. Me-la=arɔ, [me-la mən /a-kimaj=meŋ/ o-kimaj=meŋ],
3pS-go=ASP 3pS-go CONT 3mO-see=3pS 3fO-see=3pS
‘They went (now), they went (and) saw it’
83. “Ei, [[i-tori pɔŋo] [la u-aramɔ-a [i-sik mikana]]]?!
   oh 3m-DEM thing(m) RELR 3mS-talk.of-3mO 3m-DEM man
   “Oh, (is) this the thing (that) that man talked about?!”

84. [Manikuot buany] i-to?"
   what 1pn.PossII.m 3m-here
   ‘What [for us] (is) this?’"

85. /U-me/ te-u-arǝ,
   /3mS-HAB/ get.up-3mS-stm2
   [u-me u-arǝ-am] [[mi-sik /marɔp/ bɔbɔp]
   3mS-HAB 3mS-take-3pO 3p-DEM whatsit.nsg leaf.nsg
   o [u-sik purun]] ga [u-me u-o-am].
   3f.PossI 3f-DEM young.coconut(f) and 3mS-HAB 3mS-eat-3pO
   ‘He got up, he’d take these leaves of this young coconut and he’d eat them.’

86. “Karuk, karuk! Tôle ka mu-mur-um.”
   no no NEG yet RED-good-3p
   “No, no! They’re not good yet.”

87. // [Inɔ=ʁ u-airɔ-o].
   // again=ASP 3mS-leave-3fO
   ‘He left it again.’

88. Inɔ i-la, ga i-la, i-la, i-la, kak-kan-u=ʁǝ,
   again 3fS-go and 3fS-go 3fS-go 3fS-go 3fS-go RED-big-3f=ASP
   // i-maniŋ=arǝ sokopit-ip. [inɔ=ʁ u-la ma-traim=ɔŋ].
   // 3fS-have=ASP midrib-nsg again=ASP 3mS-go 3pO-try(<TP)=3mS
   ‘Again a long time passed, it got big, it [already] had midribs, he went (and) tried
   them again.’

89. Nómo “Karuk, tôle ka mu-mur-um.”
   say no NEG yet RED-good-3p
   ‘He said “No, they’re not good yet.”’

90. U-airɔ-o.
   3mS-leave-3fO
   ‘He left it.’

91. I-la i-la i-la i-la,
   3fS-go 3fS-go 3fS-go 3fS-go
   /ina/ [mɔn mat-i-bɔ=ʁɔ] maro, nirobu,
   /again/ CONT do.something-3fS-stm2 whatsit.f coconut.palm(f)
   [i-abu-am marɔp o], [pagaribɔp o],
   3fS-put-3pO whatsit.nsg 3f.PossI ?? 3f.PossI
i-la, /u-gama to/ [inə=r u-la mən u-merə-am].
3fS-go /3mS-do/say here/ again=ASP 3mS-go CONT 3mS-try-3pO
‘A long time passed, /again/ the /whatsit/ coconut palm /whatsit/ put its /whatsits/, its
[??], time passed, /he did/said thus/, again he went (and) tried them.’

92. Pa “Karuk ka”.
but no yet
‘But “Not yet”’

93. I-la, [i-la=r lop-lop-i-at] nirobu,
3fS-go 3fS-go=ASP RED-bear.child/fruit-3fS-stm2 coconut.palm(f)
again 3m-go 3pO-do.something-3fS-stm2 flower.sheath.of.coconut-nsg
‘Time passed, the coconut palm [went (and)] bore fruit, [again] he tried the flower
sheaths.’ [The informant interprets u-mera-m ‘try’ for u-la ma-mat-u-bə; the tape is rather
unintelligible here.]

94. U-mera-am, “Karuk ka.”
3mS-try-3pO no yet
‘He tried them, “Not yet.”’

95. [U-la a-fuk=оŋ]** pikəka,
3mS-go 3mO-break=3mS flower.sheath(m)
[inəbun /u-arə-a/ u-arə-am=it] [purubup*]
again /3mS-take-3mO/ 3mS-take-3pO=just flower.of.coconut.nsg
/ma marə-p/ o u-sik /ma../ nirobu].
/3p.PossI whatsit.nsg/ 3f.PossI 3f-DEM /whats../ coconut.palm(f)
‘He went and broke the sheath, again /he tried it(m)/ he just tried the flowers /of the
whatsits/ of this /whats/ coconut palm.’
*normally purubap.
**Given according to informant’s interpretation; U-la fuk=оŋ ‘it(m) broke’ also
possible.

96. “Tole=ka mu-mur-um.”
NEG=yet RED-good-3p
“They’re not good yet.”

97. /U-ai../ u-airə-am=arə.
/3mS-le../ 3mS-leave-3pO=ASP
‘/He le../ he left them.’

98. [Me-la bet=meŋ] [mi-sik tətak /marə-p/]
3pS-go arrive=3pS 3p-DEM little whatsit-nsg
tutu-p ma kubup],
tiny.coconut-nsg 3p.PossI green.coconut.nsg
me-la, [kak-kan-im=arə kirə], u-gama to:
3pS-go RED-big-3p=ASP badly/little 3mS-do/say here
‘Those little /whatsits/ baby coconuts of the green coconuts developed, they went, they got quite big, he said thus:’

99. “[Mi-to=rə mi] pəgə-p!”
3p-here=ASP DEM.3p thing-nsg
“These are the things!”

100. [U-me u-merə-am], nəmo:
3mS-HAB 3mS-try-3pO say
‘He tried them, he said:’

101. “Karuk=ka.”
is.not=yet
“‘Not yet.’”

102. Ma-kimə=ɔŋ=arə [[tətak kubup]
3pO-see=3mS=ASP little green.coconut.nsg
lə [mən sop-sop=mey]], ləmo:
RELR CONT RED-hang=3pS say
‘He saw the little green coconuts (that) were hanging, he said:’

103. “Atamo [təla [gət inə sagu=tuŋ] irə-ma,
maybe NEG.fut more again play=1sS with-3p
me-ot, pəgə i-to.”
3pS-stay thing(m) 3m-here
“‘Maybe I won’t play with them any more, they’ll stay, this is something.’”

104. Me-la, [me-la=rə kak-kan-im], “Em nau”.
3pS-go 3pS-go=ASP RED-big-3p em nau(<TP)
‘They went, they went big, “That’s it”.’

105. [U-merə-am=bət],
3mS-try-3pO=now
‘He tried them then.’

106. U-tie, [u-merə-am=bət],
3f-there 3mS-try-3pO=now
/ləmo u-ga/ [u-gama=bət mə-to]:
say/want 3mS-say/do 3mS-say/do=now ??-here
‘Alright, he tried them, // he said:’

107. “Oo, [i-to=bət i]
oh, 3m-here=now DEM.3m
“Tap-me-o na [u-sik kubunǝm], drink-3pS-stm2 in 3f-DEM green.coconut

me-o, u-gama to:
3pS-eat.3sO 3mS-say here
‘They drank from this green coconut, they ate, he said thus.’

“Mikat=arǝ pǝgǝ u-to.”
true=ASP thing 3f-here
‘True, this is something.’

U-tie, [me-me=rǝ parak] bo [u-sik nirobu], i-la=rǝ,
3f-there 3pS-HAB=ASP eat=Ø on 3f-DEM coconut.palm 3fS-go=ASP

[u-ga=rǝ ma-to] [i-sik Samǝtǝmrǝn],
3mS-say=ASP 3fO-3mS-tell=ASP
‘Alright, they used to eat off this coconut palm, time passed, this Samǝtǝmrǝn said thus, he told his sister:’

Tǝla=gǝt bu-me bu-arǝ-o]
NEG.fut=longer 1pnS-HAB 1pnS-take-3fO whatsit.f one green.coconut
‘We won’t be taking any /whatsit/ any more, green coconut’

/I-ot=arǝ/ [me-ot=arǝ tǝt-teiliat],
3fS-stay/lie=ASP/ 3pS-stay/lie=ASP RED-quietly

me [eba me-lamin]
for FUT 3pS-fall.fut

gǝ /bet m/ [pǝppau liap ba] ma nur-up,
and /arrive m/ many FUT 3p.PossI dry.coconut-nsg

u-pǝt nirobu.
3f-under coconut.palm(f)
‘/It stays/ they stay in peace, so that they will fall down and /arrive m/ (there will be) many dry coconuts, under the coconut palm.’

Mǝn tiri=iey] nirobu me tie u-pǝt
CONT drop.fruits=3fS coconut.palm to there 3f-under

gǝ [mǝn tiri=iey],
and CONT drop.fruits=3fS,
[te-u-arə=bət] [i-sik Samətmərun],
get.up-3mS-stm2=now 3m-DEM S.,

[ma-susuo=onə=bət]
(and) 3pO-tie.coconuts.in.pairs=3mS=now

[susuo-p ma nur-up].
pair.of.coconuts-nsg 3p.PossI dry.coconut-nsg
'The (nuts) were falling under the coconut palm, and they were falling, this Samətmərun got up then, (and) tied together pairs of dry coconuts.'

114. Ma-susuo=onə=arə go, [non=arə la].
3pO-tie.coconuts.in.pairs=3mS=ASP and some=ASP day/time
dus=onə=arə tiatuan, bo [u-sik pɨnəm Boilei],
stand=3mS=ASP up.there on 3f-DEM place/village(f) B.

[i-sik kəpinəma Boilei],
3m-DEM mountain(m) B.

gə [mən apə-pə=onə]
and CONT throw(RED)=3mS

ma [susuo-p ma nur-up].
'He (had) tied them together and, one day he stood up there, on this place Boilei, this mountain Boilei, and he was throwing pairs of dry coconuts.'

115. Apəpə=onə me todərn Is Kos, me to, me to,
throw(RED)=3mS to down East Coast to here to here,

u-tie [u-to=t u] [tətak gas]
alright 3f-here=just DEM.3f little story(f)

o [u-sik ima Boilei],
3f-DEM subclan(m!) B.

lo te-i-arə [u-sik makabun] tiro, Lerago, tiro Panaras,
RELRR get.up-3fS-stm2 3f-DEM woman home L. here P.

gə [i-la i-onəma] tiatəŋ
and 3f-go 3f-S-live there.SE

/lo/ a-i-uluan [i-sik pəppa iŋ],
/RELRR/ 3mO-3fS-follow 3m-DEM sibling 3f.PossII.m

me tiatəŋ, tiatəŋ Naiama, tatuan na bus Boilei.
to there.SE there.SE N. up in bush(<TP) B.
'He threw downwards to the East Coast, to here, to there, alright, that’s it (of) this little story of this subclan Boilei, ( ) this woman started here, Lerago, here (in)
Panaras, and she went and lived over there, // she followed that brother of hers to(wards) over there, over there (at) Naiama, up in the bush (at) Boilei.

116. **U-tie,** \([i-sik=ar\nonima]\)
3f-there 3m-DEM=ASP some subclan

\(l\delta[ul-la=ro\uot=o\tiator]\)
RELR 3m-go=ASP arrive=3mS there.SE

\(l\delta[meme me-iparo Boilei.]
RELR 3pS-HAB 3pS-call-3mO B.
‘Alright, this subclan (that) originated over there, they call Boilei.’

117. **U-tie=t.**
3f-there=just
‘That’s it.’
# APPENDIX III

The Swadesh 100-word list for Kuot

<table>
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<th>№</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Kuot</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>turuo (tu-, tu-)</td>
<td>Pron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>nunuo (nu-)</td>
<td>Pron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | we | pl.incl: buduo (bu-)  
pl.excl: papa (pa-)  
dl.incl: bi (bi-)  
dl.excl: i (i-) | Pron |
<p>| 4 | this | [pref]-to | Loc |
| 5 | that | [pref]-tie | Loc |
| 6 | who | aka | N |
| 7 | what | mani | N |
| 8 | not | tale | N |
| 9 | all | (mi-tie=r) | Dem |
| 10 | many | pappot, pppauliap | N |
| 11 | one | ar (counting), namurit (attributive) | Num |
| 12 | two | aras (counting), narain (attributive) | Num |
| 13 | big | kan- | Adj |
| 14 | long | laklak- | Adj |
| 15 | small | kapp- | Adj |
| 16 | woman | makabun | N |
| 17 | man | mikana | N |
| 18 | person | (inmɔniap=people) | N |
| 19 | fish | abulu-ma | N |
| 20 | bird | kobeŋ, amani | N |
| 21 | dog | kapuna | N |
| 22 | louse | inei-ma | N |
| 23 | tree | kukum | N |
| 24 | seed | (kabo) | N |
| 25 | leaf | bɔbam | N |
| 26 | root | iku-nɔm | N |
| 27 | bark | pɔppɔk | N |
| 28 | skin | neip (pl) | N |
| 29 | flesh | pɔppunes | N |
| 30 | blood | olsbuan | N |
| 31 | bone | muanɔm | N |
| 32 | grease, oil, etc. | aıl | N |
| 33 | egg | sɔɡɔr, dɔkɔr | N |
| 34 | horn | — | N |
| 35 | tail | lɔpale, patpat | N |
| 36 | feather | nebam | N |
| 37 | hair | kapuru-ma | N |
| 38 | head | bukom | N |</p>
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<td>ear</td>
<td><em>kiki-nǝm</em></td>
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<td>eye</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>nose</td>
<td><em>akabuni-ma</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td>mouth</td>
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Male ego, consanguineal kin

- ▲ male
- ● female
- --- siblings
- --- married
- --- moeity A
- --- moeity B

APPENDIX IV

Kin diagrams
Female ego, consanguineal kin

* Depends on term used in parent generation
Male ego, affinal kin

* Term is independent of marriage

▲ males
● females
■ siblings
□ married
← moieties A
→ moieties B
Female ego, affinal kin

* Term is independent of marriage