

Preface

The following lexical data are based on a matrix print-out from the early 1980-s. OCR was used to convert the print into digital data that could be inserted into Excel. Although the result was scrutinized, conversion errors may have slipped through. The lexicon mainly contained glosses in TokPisin. It seems likely that the data was collected with an eye on phonological analysis as the glosses are fairly generic and non-specific, like “diwai” for most types of “tree”. I endeavoured to add English glosses and would appreciate corrections and / or additions from more up-to-date TokPisin speakers. (wietze baron at wietze@baron.org)

Items marked wit XX were added by me and I will add more as I am working through >35 year old materials still in my possession. The distinctions in the high vowel regions of Fas-Momu, are so subtle, that correctness in that regard can not be guaranteed. The same is true for the presence / absence of aspiration / glottal stop. Notice that /b/ is used to represent the bilabial trill.

Spelling and underlying phonetics / phonemes

To avoid diacritics and enable simple usage of a qwerty keyboard, the phonemes of Fas were represented as follows:

- yi = / i / (high front vowel)
- ii = / i̠ / (slightly lowered high front vowel) *
- wu = / u / (high rounded back vowel)
- u = / u̠ / (slightly lowered rounded back vowel) *
- i = / ə / (shwa, also inserted but not represented between incompatible consonants)

* initially “i” was used for /i/ and may still be used as such in the data, especially word finally. Using “uu” for /u̠/ should also be considered.

Glottal

Words can be differentiated by the absence or presence of a glottal stop. This was definitely observed before an initial /a/ and hypothesized before /yi/ and /wu/ to differentiate between [yi] and [ʔi] and [wu] and [ʔu]. Rather than marking the glottal, absence of glottal was employed and represented by “h”. (The use of “q” may be considered to represent the glottal.)

Notice therefore that h before “yi” and “wu” i.e. “hyi” and “hwu” represents absence of an initial glottal, expressing the pronunciation of the semivowels i.e. [yi] and [wu] rather than [ʔi] and [ʔu]

“ha” = / a /

“a” = / ʔa /

“hwa” = / wa /

“wa” = / ʔwa /

“hye” = / yɛ /

Rounding

“ew” represents /ɔw/ as rounding before /w/ is general.

I am not at all sure that the afore mentioned distinctions are correctly represented in the data. I never became adept enough at hearing the distinctions and only arrived at the given conclusions on the basis of phonological and morphological analyses.

A note about the language name.

In the existing publications the language was referred to as Fas. Commonly, in earlier days, the name of a central village was used to represent the language. There is no Fas village, but there are Fas 2 and Fas 3.

These villages are referred to by the speakers as “Tufas” (Fas 2) and “Trifas” (Fas 3). There is another village that is called “Kilifas” , pronounced “Krifas”. I believe that the original name given by the patrol officers to this village was “Trifas”. /t/ → /k/ mutations are well attested in the language. So /krifas/ emerged, leaving “trifas” available for another village. /krifas/ was perceived of as /kilifas/ by later officials and got stuck with this official name.

Fiona Blake (2007) working in Mori, in a divergent dialect, met with resistance to the name Fas for their language and it was decided to call the language “Momu” /mɔmɔ/ [mɔmɔ], the word for “no”, a more frequently employed naming convention. The problem here is that the sister language Baibai, also uses “Momu” for “no”. The people may well have to come together one day to decide on the name. There is a word for “local language” (TP: “tokples”), hukwakmony (hukwak talk), that may be considered.

[The lexicon in Excel](#)