

Problem 1. Abawiri (15 marks)

Abawiri, sometimes also called Foau, is a Lakes Plain language spoken by several hundred people in Western New Guinea.

Below are several Abawiri phrases and their English translations. Note that **β** is pronounced like *b* but with the lips only lightly touching; **g^w** is a single consonant pronounced like *gw*; **ε, ɔ** are vowels. A mark above a vowel indicates its tone, i.e. the pitch it is pronounced at. Specifically, ` (e.g. à) indicates low tone, ˘ (e.g. ā) indicates mid tone, and ˆ (e.g. á) indicates high tone.



[dúké sòrì]	<i>the bird's earth</i>
[dèβí wùtù]	<i>the child's car</i>
[dèβí sòrì]	<i>the child's earth</i>
[bògèi dúkè]	<i>the frog's bird</i>
[sòkré dèβì]	<i>the rat's child</i>
[dèβì sòkrè]	<i>the child's rat</i>
[bórú g ^w ákù]	<i>the fish's ear</i>
[dèβì g ^w ákù]	<i>the child's ear</i>
[sòkrè g ^w ákù]	<i>the rat's ear</i>
[sòrì βórù]	<i>the earth's fish</i>
[àjá wùtù]	<i>the chicken's car</i>
[àjà βórù]	(a)
[dúké sòkrè]	(b)
[àjà βògèi]	(c)

Q 1.1 Write the missing English translations (a)-(c).

Below are some more phrases in Abawiri together with their English translations. However, each of the Abawiri phrases below contains one mistake.

[wùtù bògèi]	<i>the car's frog</i>
[bògèi sòkrè]	<i>the frog's rat</i>
[bórù dèβì]	<i>the fish's child</i>

Q 1.2 Write the correct form of each of the Abawiri phrases on your answer sheets.

Q 1.3 Translate into Abawiri:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) <i>the frog's fish</i> | (f) <i>the ear's ear</i> |
| (b) <i>the earth's child</i> | (g) <i>the chicken's earth</i> |
| (c) <i>the fish's chicken</i> | (h) <i>the rat's bird</i> |
| (d) <i>the earth's rat</i> | (i) <i>the car's bird</i> |
| (e) <i>the rat's chicken</i> | (j) <i>the car's child</i> |

Problem 1. Abawiri Explanation (2/2)

Explanation

- Word order is possessor-possessed
- **b > β** after a vowel

The most accurate general analysis is as follows:

- Words have a lexical tone, either high (H), low (L) or toneless (0)
 - H = {bɔru, g^waku, duke}, L = {deβi, sɔri, wutu}, 0 = {bɔgei, aja, sɔkre}
 - H words take high tone on their first syllable; L and 0 take low tone on their first syllable
 - The final syllable of a phrase is low
- The tone of the second syllable is established as follows:
 - Before L, the previous syllable is high (*anticipatory tonal polarity*)
 - Before H, the final syllable of a 0 word becomes mid (*gradual updrift*)
 - If neither of the previous apply, then the word's first syllable tone spreads to its second syllable tone (toneless taking a default low-low).

An alternative analysis of the tone that works for this problem is as follows:

- There are three classes of word – call them H, L, 0 as before.
 - H has tone pattern $\acute{V}\acute{V}$ when the first word, and $\acute{V}\grave{V}$ when second.
 - L has pattern $\grave{V}\acute{V}$ before another L, and else is $\grave{V}\grave{V}$.
 - 0 has pattern $\acute{V}\acute{V}$ before L, $\grave{V}\acute{V}$ before H, and else is $\grave{V}\grave{V}$.

Notes:

- This problem demonstrates only a very small piece of the Abawiri tone system. In Abawiri, there are many more lexical tone categories than these three, and words with different numbers of syllables fall into each one. There are also grammatical tone rules in some limited contexts. The rule that the last syllable in a phrase/utterance is low always applies, as does gradual updrift. Anticipatory tonal polarity applies except in some specific syntactic contexts.
- None of the tone rules shown in this problem are specific to the genitive construction, which is a simple juxtaposition of possessor-possessed

Source: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4mj571tr>

Yoder, Brendon Eugene. A grammar of Abawiri, a Lakes Plain language of Papua, Indonesia. 2020. Especially, pp. 65 ff. for tone analysis/data and p. 111 for genitive construction.