# Table of Contents

# 1     A poem of the *Uiama*: '*Paruktfui mbo*'

The first line of the famous poem is: '*Paruktfui mbo*', whose meaning can be analysed as follows:

| Morpheme | Meaning |
| --- | --- |
| *pa* | pair |
| *ru* | spread, grow, extend |
| *kt* | past marker for incorporated verbs |
| *rukt* | spread (past), grown, extended |
| *parukt* | moth, bivalve (lit. pair-spread) |
| *fu* | food |
| *i* | bearer, she |
| *fui* | fruit-tree (lit. food-bearer) |
| *mb* | be essentially |
| *o* | agent (I) |

Thus, '*Paruktfui mbo*' means 'Moth-fruit-tree am I'.

See **About the paruktfui tree; its uses and growth** for more information on this tree.

The poem continues:

> '*Pakpo, e pa tlo ktapa o a;*
> *tlopa o fu a a;*
> *ntopa o ntu e a.*'

> 'Pair-plucker, your two suckers stretch toward me;
> they will suck the food from me;
> they will leave the nuts with me.'

The noun '*ntu*'='seed, nut' derives from the verb '*nt*'='leave', and means more literally 'that masculine (or 'making') thing that was left behind'. Other senses of the word include 'footprint', 'track', 'stroke' and 'musical beat'.

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

Here is the whole poem.

| | |
|---|---|
| 'Paruktfui mbo. | 'Moth-fruit-tree am I. |
| Pakpo, e pa tlo ktapa o a; | Pair-plucker, your two suckers stretch toward me; |
| tlopa o fu a a; | They will suck the food from me; |
| ntopa o ntu e a. | They will leave the nuts with me. |
| We ntu rwo o oe, | Then nuts will I rain down, |
| ha sru, oi dri fukta. | Like tears, upon the grateful ground. |
| We lei mpo o. | Then barren will I be. |
| Paruktfui mpo o a.' | Moth fruit-tree will I have been.' |

'*fukta*', here translated 'grateful', more literally means 'made to have borne fruit'. It foreshadows that the nuts themselves, being seeds, may make the ground bear fruit again.

For a fuller understanding of how I translated the words of the poem, please read on. To learn more about the Uiama, and their home world, check out **Exploring the Uiama planet with Ktw, exobiologist** first.

# 2   Phonemics and phonetics

## 2.1     Transcription

- The phonemic transcription used here is based on <u>Conlang X-Sampa</u>, or CXS.

- The alphabet used in the orthography is:
  *a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p r s t u w x @.*

- In this document, we mostly use italics for words and utterances in *Uiama*.

## 2.2     Phonemic inventory

- *Uiama* sounds are vowels, semivowels and consonants.

- The vowels are [a] [e] [i] [o] [u] [@].

- The semivowels are [l] [r] [w].

- Consonants include nasals, spirants, affricates and stops.

- The nasals are [m] [n].

- The spirants are [f] [h] [s] [x].

- The affricates are [j] [c].

- The stops are [b] [p] [d] [t] [g] [k].

## 2.3     Pronunciation

- Consonants are usually inaspirate or only lightly aspirated; however, aspiration is not phonemic.

- The stops [b] [p] are bilabial /b/ /p/.

- The stops [d] [t] are interdental, not apical.

- The stops [g] [k] are velar, not palatal.

- The affricates [j] [c] are retroflex, not apical.

- [h] is pronounced /x/.

- [x] is pronounced /S/.

- [w] is usually tense and breathy.

- The phoneme [n] has the allophone /N/ in the context of a following [k], [g] or [h], and the allophone /n/ elsewhere.

- Although [f] is unvoiced /f/, [s] is unvoiced /s/, and [x] is unvoiced /S/, no voiced consonants /v/, /z/ or /Z/ from the same points of articulation are known to occur.

## 2.4     Syllabification

- Separately, each vowel [a] [e] [i] [o] [u] [@] suffices to make a syllable.

- Two successive vowels usually form a single syllable, though they may form two.

- Three or more successive vowels usually form two syllables, though they may form one.

- Syllables generally have one of the structures: V[V]*, CV[V]*, CV[V]*C[C].

- Both modern speech and popular music tend to form fewer syllables from the same sequence of phonemes; formal or *public speech* forms more.

## 2.5     Consonant pairs and schwa

Consonant pairs in written '*Uiama makpo*' are not usually considered as clusters, except where the first consonant is a nasal.  What is not always written is the vowel schwa or /@/, which precedes a nasal and which succeeds any other consonant in first position.  Thus '*mbo*' --> /@mbo/ and  '*kpo*' --> /k@po/

In compounds, such as '*makpo*', the schwa need not be pronounced, but it may be.  This leads to two distinct syllabifications of such words; for example, '*makpo*' --> /mak-po/ | /ma-k@-po/, where the dash /-/ indicates an end-of-syllable pause.  Each pronunciation is correct, though the second may be preferred in public speech or formal music.  Introducing a schwa does not alter meaning.

The schwa, when pronounced, is usually *lenis* (weak), except in the public speech register, when it is usually *fortis* (strong).

## 2.6     Consonant triples

A consonant triple, such as '*ktf*' in the name '*paruktfui*', is usually pronounced in all registers with schwa after the second consonant; eg this '*ktf*' is pronounced /kt@f/.  Thus, the syllables of '*paruktfui*' are /pa-ruk-t@-fui/.

However, it is not a mistake to pronounce such combinations without schwa, giving one less syllable, thus: /pa-rukt-fui/.  Also, final schwa is rarely pronounced except in the public speech register, so '*parukt*' is usually heard pronounced as /pa-rukt/.

## 2.7     Consonant quadruples

A consonant quadruple, such as '*nktf*' in the name '*manktfui*'=honeycomb (literally 'many-shaped food-bearer'), is usually pronounced in all registers as two syllables, with schwa after the first and third consonants; eg this '*nktf*' is pronounced /N@kt@f/.  Thus, the syllables of '*manktfui*' are /ma-N@k-t@-fui/.

The '*n*' of '*manktfui*' is a verb that means 'shape, form'.

# 3   Particles, simple and compound

The verbal, pronominal, nominal and prepositional meanings of the five simple, monovocalic particles are:

| Particle | Verb | Noun | Pronoun | Preposition |
|----------|-------|---------|---------|-------------|
| *o* | act | agent | I | toward |
| *a* | stay | patient | it | from |
| *e* | touch | affected | you | by |
| *u* | make | maker | he | cause |
| *i* | bear | bearer | she | with |

Compound particles are made of sequences of the simple particles.  For example, '*oe*' appears in the poem '*Paruktfui mbo*', translated as 'down'; its meaning deriving from the sense of '*o*' as 'toward' and the sense of '*e*' as 'affected, touched'.

Again, '*oi*' appears in the same poem, translated as 'upon'; its meaning deriving from the sense of '*o*' as 'toward' and the sense of '*i*' as 'bearer', in this case the whole Earth or Gaia, named in apposition as '*dri*'.  A more literal translation of '*oi*' would be 'bearer-ward'.

Another example is '*aui*', literally meaning 'from (the) maker (and the) bearer', best translated as '(descended) from', which is more or less equivalent to naming one's clan by naming one or more ancestors.  Related terms are '*au*', 'child of (the father)' and '*ai*', 'child of (the mother)'.

# 4    The *Uiama* verb '*mb*'

The '*Uiama makpo*' ('The Dextrous People') decline most verb stems in the present indicative by suffixing –

- One or more morphemes for **Uia – Person or Gender**,
- One morpheme for **Oe – Semantic Role** and
- One morpheme for **Pakalama – Numbers**,

The table below shows this process for the verb '*mb*' ('to be [essentially]'):

| Role: Gender | Singular | | Dual | | Trial | | Paucal | | Plural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | **Number** | | | | |
| 1:0 | *mbo* | I am | *mbopa* | we two are | *mboka* | we three are | *mbola* | we few are | *mboma* | we many are |
| 1:M | *mbuo* | I + M am | *mbuopa* | we two + M are | *mbuoka* | we three + M are | *mbuola* | we few + M are | *mbuoma* | we many + M are |
| 1:F | *mbio* | I + F am | *mbiopa* | we two + F are | *mbioka* | we three + F are | *mbiola* | we few + F are | *mbioma* | we many + F are |
| 1:N | *mbao* | I + N am | *mbaopa* | we two + N are | *mbaoka* | we three + N are | *mbaola* | we few + N are | *mbaoma* | we many + N are |
| 1:M+F | *mbuio*[1] | I + MF am | *mbuiopa* | we two + MF are | *mbuioka* | we three + MF are | *mbuiola* | we few + MF are | *mbuioma* | we many + MF are |
| 1:M+N | *mbuao* | I + MN am | *mbuaopa* | we two + MN are | *mbuaoka* | we three + MN are | *mbuaola* | we few + MN are | *mbuaoma* | we many + MN are |
| 1:F+N | *mbiao* | I + FN am | *mbiaopa* | we two + FN are | *mbiaoka* | we three + FN are | *mbiaola* | we few + FN are | *mbiaoma* | we many + FN are |
| 1:M+F+N | *mbuiao* | I + MFN am | *mbuiaopa* | we two + MFN are | *mbuiaoka* | we three + MFN are | *mbuiaola* | we few + MFN are | *mbuiaoma* | we many + MFN are |
| 2:0 | *mbe* | thou art | *mbepa* | you two are | *mbeka* | you three are | *mbela* | you few are | *mbema* | You many are |
| 2:M | *mbue* | thou + M art | *mbuepa* | you two + M are | *mbueka* | you three + M are | *mbuela* | you few + M are | *mbuema* | you many + M are |
| 2:F | *mbie* | thou + F art | *mbiepa* | you two + F are | *mbieka* | you three + F are | *mbiela* | you few + F are | *mbiema* | you many + F are |

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[1] These forms – prefixed in this table by an asterisk * – should not exist, if each person had only one fixed gender.  However, they have been observed at times, and seem to represent either a transitional state between genders, such as adolescence or senescence, or a state of incomplete gender identification.

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| Role: Gender | Singular | | Dual | | Trial | | Paucal | | Plural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | **Number** | | | | |
| | *mbae* | thou + N art | *mbaepa* | you two + N are | *mbaeka* | you three + N are | *mbaela* | you few + N are | *mbaema* | you many + N are |
| 2:N | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2:M+F | *\*mbuie*[2] | thou + MF art | *mbuiepa* | you two + MF are | *mbuieka* | you three + MF are | *mbuiela* | you few + MF are | *mbuiema* | you many + MF are |
| 2:M+N | *\*mbuae* | thou + MN art | *mbuaepa* | you two + MN are | *mbuaeka* | you three + MN are | *mbuaela* | you few + MN are | *mbuaema* | you many + MN are |
| 2:F+N | *\*mbiae* | thou + FN art | *mbiaepa* | you two + FN are | *mbiaeka* | you three + FN are | *mbiaela* | you few + FN are | *mbiaema* | you many + FN are |
| 2:M+F+N | *\*mbuiae* | thou + MFN art | *\*mbuiaepa* | you two + MFN are | *mbuiaeka* | you three + MFN are | *mbuiaela* | you few + MFN are | *mbuiaema* | you many + MFN are |
| 3:0 | *mb* | that is | *mbpa* | they two are | *mbka* | they three are | *mbla* | they few are | *mbma* | they many are |
| 3:M | *mbu* | he + M is | *mbupa* | they two + M are | *mbuka* | they three + M are | *mbula* | they few + M are | *mbuma* | they many + M are |
| 3:F | *mbi* | she + F is | *mbipa* | they two + F are | *mbika* | they three + F are | *mbila* | they few + F are | *mbima* | they many + F are |
| 3:N | *mba* | it + N is | *mbapa* | they two + N are | *mbaka* | they three + N are | *mbala* | they few + N are | *mbama* | they many + N are |
| 3:M+F | *\*mbui* | they + MF are | *mbuipa* | they two + MF are | *mbuika* | they three + MF are | *mbuila* | they few + MF are | *mbuima* | they many + MF are |
| 3:M+N | *\*mbua* | they + MN are | *mbuapa* | they two + MN are | *mbuaka* | they three + MN are | *mbuala* | they few + MN are | *mbuama* | they many + MN are |
| 3:F+N | *\*mbia* | they + FN are | *mbiapa* | they two + FN are | *mbiaka* | they three + FN are | *mbiala* | they few + FN are | *mbiama* | they many + FN are |
| 3:M+F+N | *\*mbuia* | they + MFN are | *\*mbuiapa* | they two + MFN are | *mbuiaka* | they three + MFN are | *mbuiala* | they few + MFN are | *mbuiama* | they many + MFN are |

Following sections describe **Oe – Semantic Role, Pakalama – Numbers** and finally the more complex **Uia – Person or Gender**.

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[2] These forms – prefixed in this table by an asterisk \* – should not exist, if each person had only one fixed gender.  However, they have been observed at times, and seem to represent either a transitional state between genders, such as adolescence or senescence, or a state of incomplete gender identification.

# 5 *Oe* – Semantic Role

The *Uiama* suffix one of the semantic roles '-*o*'=Agent, '-*e*'=Patient and '-*@*'=Affected, whenever they choose to mark role ('*oe*').  Such marking is not obligatory, where context makes the semantic roles clear enough, except in Public speech.

The 'Affected' role is that of the "innocent bystander".  Being a witness to an event over which one has no control makes one an "Affected", also called "Touched".  The particle '*e*' has the same form as the verb '*e*'="touch, affect".

Please note that the choice of vowel for the semantic role morpheme (-o | -e | -@) is not identical to that for the particle that acts as a free-standing preposition for the person or thing in the same role.  Refer to the section **Particles, simple and compound** for details.

| Particle | Role | oe (role suffix) |
|---|---|---|
| o | agent | -o |
| a | patient | -e |
| e | affected | -@ |
| u | maker | (not applicable)[3] |
| i | bearer | (not applicable) |

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[3] There has been some debate whether to analyse an affix *-u* marking the maker role, or -i marking the bearer role.  The preponderance of evidence is against such an interpretation.

# 6 *Pakalama* – Numbers

## 6.1 General

The general term for 'number', both for counting and grammar, is '*pakalama*', which literally means '2 [or] 3 [or] few [or] many'.

There are also two special kinds of 'many':

- '*mama*' = 'majority' – literally '[the] many [which is] many'
- '*mala*' = 'minority' – literally '[the] many [which is] few'

## 6.2 Grammatical number

The '*Uiama makpo*' suffix the numbers '*pa*'=2, '*ka*'=3, '*la*'=few and '*ma*'=many to distinguish dual, trial, paucal and plural from singular, which is unmarked.

## 6.3 Counting numbers

The first few numbers are:

| Number | Digit |
|--------|-------|
| *sa* | 1 |
| *pa* | 2 |
| *ka* | 3 |
| *la* | 4 or few |
| *xa* | 5 |
| *ta* | 6 – only used in compound numbers |
| *ma* | 7 or many |

'*Ma*' literally means 'seven', but is used also and more often to mean 'many'. Since the '*Uiama makpo*' have six digits on each hand and foot, the outer two, called '*kro*' – thumbs or 'grippers', being completely opposable to the central four, called '*lkro*' – non-thumbs or 'non-grippers', and to each other, they could be quite accurately called '*takpo*' – six-fingered or 'six-plucker'. *Kgu* hypothesises[4] that the *Uiama* used '*ma*' to mean 'many', long before they had need of a specific number for six. The evidence for this is that the name '*Uiama makpo*' persists at a time when '*ma*'

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[4] See eg Kgu NL, *Internal evidence for semantic shift in the Uiama numerary lexicon, Actae Ling. Procyon IV, Vol. 32145, Fol. D.*

also means 'seven'; the '*ma*' of '*makpo*' perhaps referring to the totality of digits on all four hands and feet.

A similar ambiguity is found in the use of '*la*' for both 'four' and 'few'; which meaning is the older seems impossible to determine.

Counting is, naturally enough, in sixes. Compound numbers proceed from the largest component to the smallest, stating the multiplier before the multiplicand. For example:

- 6 is *tasa* (six-one, six times one)

- 8 is *tasa pa* (six-one two, six times one plus two)

- 11 is *tasa xa* (six-one five, six times one plus five)

- 12 is *tapa* (six-two, six times two)

- 27 is *tala ka* (six-four three, six times four plus three)

- 35 is *taxa xa* (six-five five, six times five plus five)

- 36 is *tatasa* (six-six-one, six times six times one)

- 99 is *tatapa tala ka* (six-six-two six-four three, six times six plus six times four plus three)

- 216 is *tatatasa* (six-six-six-one, six times six times six times one)

After the three '*ta*'s of '*tatatasa*', the pattern changes to a count of sixes, thus:

- 1296 is *latasa* (four-six-one, the product of four sixes and one, or 6^4)

- 7776 is *talatasa* (six-four-six-one, six times *latasa*)

- 46656 is *tatalatasa* (six-six-four-six-one, six times *talatasa*)

- 279936 is *tatatalatasa* (six-six-six-four-six-one, six times *tatalatasa*)

- 1679616 is *palatasa* (two-four-six-one, the product of two *latasa*s, or 6^8)

– and so on.

## 6.4    Special numbers

13, *tapa sa*, is a special number; the *Uiama makpo* count the primes ('*ru*') starting at 1, thus:

| *ru* | prime | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 13 | 17 | 19 | 23 | … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *pakalama* | count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | … |
| *ruru* | difference | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 13 | … |
| *pakalama* | count | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 7 | … |

So 13 is the first prime that exceeds its count by a positive number that is not a prime. The excess, or difference is '*ruru*' (literally meaning 'reach reach', perhaps 'over-reach'). 17 and 19 are also members of this special set of numbers, but 13 is the first of them.

For purely practical reasons, *latasa*, "a four of sixes", or six to the power four, is also special, being the highest that an Uia can count on his, her or its digits.

## 6.5 Number in music

Art music is performed in a tonal gamut consisting of 13 equally spaced notes in each octave. The octave is called '*patu*' (literally 'two-sound'). The gamut is called '*tapasatu*' (literally 'six-two-one-sound', ie '13 sound'). Perhaps it will be easier for humans to understand the tonal system if we stick to our usual notation using letters A to G and the sign # sharp for notes one degree higher. Then we can consider the '*tapasatu*' to have the usual 12 notes and an extra note B#, thus:

F – F# – G – G# – A – A# – B – B# – C – C# – D – D# – E (– F).

This gamut of 13 notes is usually divided into two scales:
- '*ru ma*' = 'scale of many', F – G – A – B – C – D – E (– F), a quasi-diatonic scale; and
- '*ru la*' = 'scale of few', F# – G# – A# – B# – C# – D# (– F#), a quasi-wholetone scale.

The '*ru ma*' has steps: 2 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 1 and permits leading tone effects, rising or falling.

The '*ru la*' has steps: 2 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 3 and does not permit leading tone effects.

Each scale has 6 or 7 distinct <u>rotations</u> (which some people call 'modes'), characterised by the position of the unique step (1 or 3) within the scale. However, each rotation may have several <u>modes</u>, or performance tropes, which are additionally characterised by their <u>reciting tone</u>, their <u>final tone</u>, their typical melodic <u>ornaments</u>, and sometimes by a <u>mediant tone</u>.

The chief instruments are the voice, *paruktfui* flute, the *fuitu*, and a small hand drum or tabor, the *ntuntun*.

Note the many meanings of the stem '*ru*': spread, reach, ladder, whole, prime, scale.

## 6.6 Number in geometry

The *Uiama* regularly add the root "*n*" – meaning "form" – to each counting number, to create words for various polygons. Some examples follow:

| Number | Meaning | Polygon | Meaning |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| *sa* | 1 | *san* | line, arc, or curve |
| *pa* | 2 | *pan* | segment of circle |
| *ka* | 3 | *kan* | triangle |
| *la* | 4 or few | *lan* | quadrilateral |
| *xa* | 5 | *xan* | pentagon |

**Discovering Uiama through its Poetry**

| Number | Meaning | Polygon | Meaning |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| *tasa* | 6 | *tasan* | hexagon |
| *ma* | 7 or many | *man* | heptagon; polygon |
| *tapa* | 12 | *tapan* | duodecagon |
| *tapasa* | 13 | *tapasan* | tridecagon |

The names of polygons apply equally to regular and irregular forms, with and without crossings. The word '*tapasan*', for example, usually refers to an equilateral star with thirteen points, which is used for a symbol of the exogamous extended family unit, or skin; in fact, '*tapasan*' has become the common word for "skin".  However, it is equally correct to use '*tapasan*' to refer to a regular tridecagon.

# 7   *Uia* – Person or Gender

The *Uiama* suffix the genders '*u*'=Masculine, '*i*'=Feminine and '*a*'=Neuter - always in that order - whenever they mark gender.

Certain combinations of gender cannot occur in certain numbers, at least on the assumption that each individual person has one of the three possible genders.  See the footnotes to **The *Uiama* verb '*mb*'** for other possibilities.

A child before puberty, a senile adult, a sentient being of a different species to the *Uiama makpo*, (eg humans) and animals and plants in general, are neuter.  Rather than a denial that they are capable of or need sex, it is an observation that they are not currently in a sexual relationship of significance to the *Uiama*.

However, animals in rut or in heat are masculine or feminine, as are certain flowers, if sexual dimorphism is apparent.

## 7.1     The null gender morpheme Ø

Geneder is not always marked.  There are contexts in which no *Uiama* speaker thinks it appropriate to distinguish gender – for example, in expressing brotherly, parental or filial love: *bro e*; and other contexts in which they feel they must – for example, in expressing sexual love: *bruo ie*, *brio ue*, *bruo ue*, *brio ie*.  The first example *bro e* means love-Agent Patient: I love you, and does not mark the gender of either the Agent or the Patient.  The second example *bruo ie* means love-M.-Agent F.-Patient: I(masculine) love you(feminine).

## 7.2     Single gender morphemes *u, i, a*

There are three of these, one for each gender.  They are:

* '*u*'=male only (person, animal or other 'maker'), unmarked number
* '*i*'=female only (person, animal or other 'bearer'), unmarked number
* '*a*'=neuter only (person, animal or other 'patient'), unmarked number

These combine with each other in various ways to form morphemes for other genders.  However the sequence *u – i – a* is always observed.

They also combine with number morphemes as follows.

### 7.2.1     Dual number

* '*upa*'=two males; '*ipa*'=two females; '*apa*'=two neuters

### 7.2.2        Trial number

- '*uka*'=three males; '*ika*'= three females; '*aka*'= three neuters

### 7.2.3        Paucal number

- '*ula*'=a few males; '*ila*'= a few females; '*ala*'= a few neuters

### 7.2.4        Plural number

- '*uma*'=many males; '*ima*'= many females; '*ama*'= many neuters

## 7.3        The all-gender morpheme *uia*

This is:

- '*uia*'=one person (unmarked gender, unmarked number)

This may combine with number morphemes as follows:
- '*uiapa*'=two people (unmarked gender)
- '*uiaka*'=three people (unmarked gender)
- '*uiala*'=a few people (unmarked gender)
- '*uiama*'=many people (unmarked gender); crowd; also, 'The People'.  This may refer to the speakers of this language, or, depending on context, to other peoples, including various kinds of significant animals and plants, in which case it may be modified by an adjective.  In particular, the speakers of this language refer to themselves as '*Uiama makpo*' - 'the many-plucker people', referring to the fact they have more than three fingers on each hand.

It also combines to create words for particular classes of person.  Eg:
- '*mbouia*'=God (literally 'be.essentially-I-person')
- '*rumuia*'=climber (literally 'spread-person')

## 7.4        The dual-gender morphemes *ui*, *ua*, *ia*

These are:
- '*ui*'=male-female combination, unmarked number
- '*ua*'=male-neuter combination, unmarked number
- '*ia*'=female-neuter combination, unmarked number

They may combine with number morphemes as follows:

## 7.4.1      Dual number

- '*uipa*'=one male-female pair (person, animal or other 'maker'+'bearer'); eg sexual mates or couple
- '*uapa*'=one male-neuter pair (person, animal or other 'maker'+'patient'); eg father and child
- '*iapa*'=one female-neuter pair (person, animal or other 'bearer'+'patient'); eg mother and child

## 7.4.2      Trial number

- '*uika*'=one male-female triple (person, animal or other 'maker'+'bearer'); eg sexual mates or triple
- '*uaka*'=one male-neuter triple (person, animal or other 'maker'+'patient'); eg father and two children or father with a brother or male friend and a child
- '*iaka*'=one female-neuter triple (person, animal or other 'bearer'+'patient'); eg mother and two children or mother with a sister or female friend and a child

## 7.4.3      Paucal number

- '*uila*', '*uala*', and '*iala*' have analogous meanings for small groups of more than three persons.

## 7.4.4      Plural number

- '*uima*', '*uama*', and '*iama*' have analogous meanings for large groups of persons.

# 7.5      The trial-gender morpheme *uiae*

This is:

'*uiae*'= male-female-neuter combination, unmarked number.  The '*uia*' lists the three possible genders, whilst the '*e*' marks the combination '*uia*' as 'affected' by those genders.  Contrast with '*uia*' above, in which the combination is unmarked.

This may combine with number morphemes as follows:

## 7.5.1      Trial number

'*uiaeka*'=one male-female-neuter triple (person, animal or other 'maker'+'bearer'+'patient'); eg sexual mates or couple and a child.  Contrast with '*uiaka*' above, in which the combination is unmarked for gender.

## 7.5.2      Paucal number

'*uiaela*' has the analogous meaning for small groups of more than three persons.

### 7.5.3      Plural number

'*uiaema*' has the analogous meaning for large groups of persons.

# 8    Indicative tenses

A simple example willl suffice to show how to use the tense markers '*o*' (future) and '*a*' (past) to change a verb – in this case '*nt*'='leave' – from present to future, past simple or perfect tenses.

| Example | Meaning | Tense | |
|---------|---------|-------|--------|
| | | Time | Aspect |
| *nto* | I leave. | Present | Simple |
| *nto o* | I will leave. | Future | Simple |
| *nto a* | I left. | Past | Simple |
| *nto o a* | I will have left. | Future | Perfect |
| *nto a a* | I had left. | Past | Perfect |

<u>Further examples, with glosses</u>:

*nto o a a a*

*nto a a ema*

| Uiama | English | Gloss[5] |
|-------|---------|----------|
| *nt-o-Ø o a a a-Ø* | I will have left it | leave-AGT.1.Ø-S FUT PERF from PAT.3.N-S |
| *nt-o-Ø a a e-ma* | I had left you all | leave-AGT.1.Ø-S PAS PERF from AFF.2.Ø-P |

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[5] Key:   1=first-person; 2=second-person; 3=third-person; S=singular; P=plural; FUT=future; PAS=past;
        PERF=perfect; AGT=agent; PAT=patient; AFF=affected; Ø=no-gender; N=neuter

# 9 Causative and instrumentative verb forms

## 9.1 Causative verbs

Prefixing '*u*' = 'maker' turns any verb into a causative verb.

<u>Example</u>:

*nto o a a*          ➔          *unto o a a*

| Uiama | English | Gloss[6] |
|---|---|---|
| *nt-o-Ø o a a-Ø* | I will leave it | leave-AGT.1.Ø-S FUT from PAT.3.N-S |
| *u-nt-o-Ø o a a-Ø* | I will make it leave | MAK-leave-AGT.1.Ø-S FUT from PAT.3.N-S |

## 9.2 Instrumentative verbs

Prefixing '*i*' = 'bearer' turns any verb into an instrumentative verb.

<u>Example</u>:

*nto a a ema*     ➔          *into a a ema*

| Uiama | English | Gloss[7] |
|---|---|---|
| *nt-o-Ø a a e-ma* | I left you all | leave-AGT.1.Ø-S PAS from AFF.2.Ø-P |
| *i-nt-o-Ø a i e-ma* | I left with you all | BER-leave-AGT.1.Ø-S PAS with AFF.2.Ø-P |

Please note that to say 'I left it with you all' (eg for safe-keeping), one needs to say, in effect, 'I left you all <u>with it</u>', thus: 'nto a a ema <u>i a</u>'.  Alternatively, one might paraphrase this as 'I caused you all to keep it'.

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[6] Key:   1=first-person; 2=second-person; 3=third-person; S=singular; P=plural; FUT=future; PAS=past; PERF=perfect; AGT=agent; PAT=patient; AFF=affected; Ø=no-gender; N=neuter; MAK=maker

[7] Key:   1=first-person; 2=second-person; 3=third-person; S=singular; P=plural; FUT=future; PAS=past; PERF=perfect; AGT=agent; PAT=patient; AFF=affected; Ø=no-gender; N=neuter; BER=bearer

# 10  About the *paruktfui* tree; its uses and growth

The '*paruktfui*' is so named since its fruits ('*fu*'), the '*paruktfu*', which form as flattened orange drupes on a large grey-brown nut, resemble in shape a '*parukt*'=moth.  Because of the regular but densely tangled branches, people cannot pick the fruit by hand; they have made special tools to help pluck the fruit.  The tools are modelled on the hands and feet of an endemic animal, the '*pakpo*'=pair-plucker, a primate-analogue that has co-evolved with the tree.  The animal has a pair ('*pa*') of fingers ('*kpo*', literally 'plucker') which flex like tentacles, each consisting of 21 phalanges and ending in a suction pad ('*tlo*', literally 'sucker'), on the end of each of its four limbs ('*kto*', literally 'reacher', 'stretcher'), specialised for picking the '*paruktfu*', the fruit of the '*paruktfui*'.  The first four phalanges of each pair of '*kpo*' cannot move independently, as both flesh and tendons join to form the hands and feet of the animal.  Both the animal and the tools modelled on it are called '*pakpo*', and the tree regards them both as its enemies.  At least, so the *Uiama* say.

The flowers of the *paruktfui* vary from white to pale pink, neighbouring flowers being similar in colour, so that the whole tree in bloom appears to be covered in white, with a pale pink wash in places.  The pinkish colour appears as the flowers age; they last for up to three hands (of days).  The single, bluish-white moon has four phases, each of one hand (of days)[8].

The tree grows in four-fold forks, each fork appearing on top of a short vertical branch.  Each branch of the fork slopes at 45° to the vertical; the four branches together form a small inverted pyramid on an imaginary square base.  Two of the angled branches, which lie opposite each other in the same vertical plane through the apex of the pyramid, bear flowers and fruit only in their first year.  In their second year, they instead sprout the short vertical branch upon which another pyramid can form.  The new pyramid is rotated clockwise by one-seventh of a circle with respect to the one beneath it.  The other pair of angled branches flower and fruit for several more years, until eventually the blocking of light by the flowers forming above deprives the lower flower buds of enough light to flourish.  The characteristic appearance of the paruktfui in bloom and in fruit thus has a clear 'fruit line', below which the branches remain bare.

The tree has no apparent leaves.  Like an earthly casuarina, its modified leaves cover every branch with what appears to be a greenish blue bark.

When the tree eventually dies, the Uiama cut sections of its upper limbs to use as back-scratchers.  A single year's branching – a '*lakpo*' – also forms a useful framework for making hats, either cones or pyramids, depending on the covering material.  They have also been used in geometry lessons.  The timber of this tree is hard, stiff and durable, but never attains any great girth.  Lower angled branches, of several years' growth, are also useful for making flutes, as they are entirely straight and free of knots.  It is perhaps unsurprising that the Uiama, having observed the utility of this design, use the same general plan to make both their smaller and their larger buildings, in particular their homes, storehouses and the ceremonial lodge.  The framework, like the four-branched section, is called a '*lakpo*', being 'four-fingered'.  A larger building may comprise several of these '*lakpo*' frameworks, connected together and sharing common walls, but each with its individual conical or pyramidal roof.

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[8] A '*takpo*', literally 'six digits', means a hand or foot or a 'week' of six days.

# 11 Registers of speech

## 11.1 The registers

The *Uiama makpo* distinguish public, private and intimate speech registers.

- Private speech is speech between two or more persons that may be conducted in the presence of others who are thereby excluded from the conversation.

- Public speech includes oratory, poetry and song. It also includes speech between two or more persons that may be conducted in the presence of others who are permitted to join in the conversation.

- Intimate speech is speech between two, or rarely more, persons, which is never conducted in the presence of others.

## 11.2 Use of the registers

- Using public speech in a public place is a tacit invitation for others to join in.

- Using private speech is a tacit request to any other hearers not to listen to the conversation.

- Using intimate speech is a tacit request not to repeat anything said or learned in the conversation to any other person. If the speaker later repeats anything, that was first said in the intimate register, in any other register, the original listener is thereby released from the obligation and tacit promise not to repeat the utterance. Listening to intimate speech has the force of oath, and there are sanctions against breaking that oath, even when undertaken involuntarily. Thus, a clever politician may obligate and coöpt others by divulging secrets; the forced ally cannot testify against the speaker. The *Uiama* thus use certain speech formulas to declare that 'my ears are closed' ie 'I cannot hear you', or 'my ears are open' ie 'I can hear you', when receiving an offer to start intimate speech, usually in the question form 'Are your ears open?' The question actually has the structure 'I wish that your ears may open'.

- There is little (if any) difference between the vocabularies of the different registers. However, the enunciation of most sounds is exaggeratedly clear in public speech. This exaggeration extends to the point of making extra syllables appear, with schwa /@/, where before there were none.

## 11.3 Questions and suppositions: what? and what if?

- The Uiama have no interrogative forms; they phrase any question as a wish. For example, to ask 'Are your ears open?', to initiate intimate speech, they say instead, 'I wish that your ears may open'.

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

- The Uiama have no conditional or subjunctive forms. Instead, and quite obliquely, they phrase any conditional as a supposition. For example, to say, 'If the wind blows, the fruit will fall', they say instead, 'The wind blew and the fruit fell'. This often has the effect of requiring the telling of a long, roundabout and totally fabricated story. For example, suppose a clan's matriarch suspects that a young person seeks to join her clan, and needs to find out what that person will bring to the clan, in goods, skills or other satisfactions. She will not ask the suspected suitor anything directly, but will instead express several wishes for those things she feels the clan lacks. Because such information is privileged, her first wish will be, of course, for intimate speech. Once this has been agreed to, suitors are also free to state whatever wishes are uppermost in their minds. To make certain conditions clear, the matriarch will not say 'If you beat my child, I will punish you', but will instead relate a tale of how, after So-and-So, formerly a clan member by contract, beat her child, she declared the contract void and expelled So-and-So. The wicked So-and-So, naturally enough, does not and did not ever exist in the flesh. To ensure that no harm is done to any living person by the repetition of a false tale about them, only the names of imaginary people may be used, such as the Man in the Moon and the Woman who dwells in Water.

# 12  The song of the poem

The poem has a traditional tune, in a metre called '*mantu*'=seven beats/strokes/footprints that we would recognise as 7/4.

The noun '*ntu*'='seed, nut' derives from the verb '*nt*'='leave', and means more literally 'that masculine (or 'making') thing that was left behind'.  Other senses of the word include 'footprint', 'track', 'stroke' and 'musical beat'.

The scale is in the diatonic genus, Dorian mode, equivalent to the sequence of white notes on the piano that run from E to e, with reciting note A, the fourth above E, and final note E.  The accompanying transcription is a whole-tone higher; its reciting note is B and its final note is F#.

Please note that the tuning of this song may be in either popular or sacred intonation.  The popular intonation is just intonation, where the frequencies of the notes bear simple whole-number ratios to each other.  This is the popular music version of the song, and is often sung by children at play and by adults and children alike during the *paruktfu* harvest season.

The art music or sacred version of the song is still much sung in the ceremonial lodge.  The words are the same; however, the tuning is not.  Instead, the tuning of the sacred version is in 13-EDO (13 equal divisions of the octave).  The singing of this tuning is usually doubled by the *paruktfui* flute, which plays exactly the same notes as the singers, presumably as a guide to the singers to achieve this difficult intonation.  The sacred version is usually sung a little slower as well.

As a rite of passage to adulthood, adolescents sing the sacred version solo, with only flute (*fuitu*) and drum (*ntuntun*) accompaniment, but no other singers, in front of a full lodge meeting.  Such renditions are usually flawless in intonation, which is rather surprising, for two reasons.  Firstly, children are forbidden to sing the sacred version, even though they attend lodge.  Secondly, there is apparently no attempt to help them practise the sacred version before the occasion of their solo performance.

# Paruktfui mbo

Yahya Abdal-Aziz

## 13 Thunder-eggs – the story of thunder and lightning

The *Uiama* call thunder "*oturu luia*" "Tell nobody", an ellipsis for "Tell nobody (that) He (Sky, Maker) fell" under the universal attraction towards She (Earth, Bearer), and fell so hard that He struck Her. Lightning – "He struck Her" – "*untui*" – is a pale reflection, and a reminder, of this primal Fall. This secret knowledge can only be mentioned in Private or Intimate speech. In Public speech, thunder is "His drum" – "*untuntun*", just as rain is "His tears" – "*usru*", while lightning cannot be mentioned.

When lightning strikes the Earth, say the Uiama, sometimes it crystallises the rain in rocks, which they call "*untusru*" – "He struck tears". Humans popularly call these "thunder eggs", and human geologists classify them as agate geodes. The thunder eggs are kept for use as ritual objects, being tangible reminders of the *Uiama* faith in the overwhelming power of the Bearer. Ironically, although all hold this belief, they can only speak of it privately.

Learned speculations, as to the thinking behind the *tabu* on public mention of belief in the Bearer, abound. Perhaps the most appealing is the notion that for a male of the *Uiama* to strike a female, or *vice versa*, is quite unthinkable. If this is so, it would partly account for the fact that all observed violence is between adult members of the same gender, which automatically means of the same sex. No adult has ever been observed to strike a child or an elder, and children at play take pains not to strike any other child. And the wars of the old tales were a matter of ritual combat, between chosen champions, both being of the same gender[9]. Presumably, should the need for war ever arise again, the same rules would apply. However, even children at play do not fight mock battles; rather, they engage in mock barter and judicial negotiations. Instead of "cops and robbers" they play at "community court"; instead of "war", they play at "shopping".

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[9] It is worth observing that as males and females are of remarkably similar stature – the females being, if anything, slightly larger on average than the males – both are equally adept at any task demanding physical strength. Some scholars suppose that this is the primary cause of the lack of any marked inequality between the sexes, and a total absence among them of any kind of *machismo* or *q'ngrtrélat*.

## 14  *Uiama* – English glossary

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| @ | 3rd person (marked) | @ = 3rd person (marked) |
| *a* | stay; from, it, Patient marker | *a* = stay |
| *amo* | receive (lit. "from-act") | *a* + *m* + *o* |
| *aokt* | turn (lit. "from-to-go") | *a* + *o* + *kt* |
| *br* | love; feel affection for | *br* = love |
| *bro* | lover; = love-Agent | *br* + *o* |
| *dr* | all, everything, the universe | *dr* = all |
| *dri* | the world, planet, earth, Gaia, Gé | *dr* + *i* |
| *e* | touch, affect; by, you, Affected marker; 2nd person | *e* = touch |
| *ei* | fertile, fecund | *e* + *i* |
| *eo* | toucher; = touch-Agent | *e* + *o* |
| *fu* | food; fruit | *fu* = food |
| *fui* | fruit-tree; bee-hive | *fu* + *l* = food + bearer |
| *fuintu* | fruit-wood (lit. fruit-tree-remains) | *fui* + *ntu* |
| *fuintutu* | flute of fruit-wood, usually *paruktfui* wood [Pub.]; see *fuitu* | *fui* + *ntu* + *tu* |
| *fuintutumuia* | flautist [Pub.]; see *fuituia* | *fuintutu* + *m* + *uia* |
| *fuitu* | flute of fruit[-wood], usually *paruktfui* wood [Priv.]; see *fuintutu* | *fui* + *tu* |
| *fuituia* | flautist [Priv.]; see *fuintutumuia* | *fuitu* + [*u*]*ia* |
| *fukta* | fruitful, made to have borne fruit | *fu* + *kt* + *a* |
| *fulkta* | fruitless, not made to have borne fruit | *fu* + *l* + *kt* + *a* |
| *ha* | face; like, similar to | *ha* = face |
| *i* | bear, carry, hold, keep; bearer; she, with, Bearer marker; feminine; female | *i* = bear |
| *io* | bearer, carrier, holder, keeper; = bear-Agent | *i* + *o* |
| *k* | hypothetical root for 'three' | *k* = three? |
| *ka* | three | *ka* = three; possibly from *k* + *a* |
| *kan* | triangle | *ka* + *n* |
| *Kgu* | an historian of the *Uiama makpo* | *kgu* = ?; possibly from *k* + *k* + *u*, which suggests a meaning like "third son of a third son"; cf *Mimi* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| *kp* | pluck | *kp* = pluck |
| *kpo* | plucker; finger; = pluck-Agent | *kp + o* |
| *kr* | grip | *kr* = grip |
| *kro* | gripper; thumb; = grip-Agent | *kr + o* |
| *kt* | go; past marker for incorporated verbs | *kt* = go |
| *ktapa* | they (N, dual) stretch; = go-it-pair | *kt + a + pa* |
| *kto* | traveller, walker; = go-Agent | *kt + o* |
| *l* | not, no, none | *l* = not, no, none |
| *la* | few; four | *la* = few; possibly from *l + a* |
| *lakpo* | fourfold branching, back-scratcher, building frame, skeleton | *la + kpo* |
| *lan* | quadrilateral | *la + n* |
| *latasa* | 1296, 'four sixes (times) one' or six to the fourth power | *la + ta + sa* |
| *lei* | barren | *l + ei* |
| *lkro* | non-thumb fingers | *l + kro* |
| *lo* | ascetic, monk, nun; = no-Agent | *l + o* |
| *loi* | nun; = no-Agent-F | *l + o + i* |
| *lou* | monk; = no-Agent-M | *l + o + u* |
| *lturuo* | mute (noun); = no-speak-Agent | *l + turu + o* |
| *luia* | nobody | *l + uia* |
| *m* | meaningless epenthetic consonant inserted between repetitions of the same vowel, as in eg *rumuia* | *m* = Ø |
| *m* | hypothetical root for 'many' | *m* = many? |
| *ma* | many; seven | *ma* = many; seven; possibly from *m + a* |
| *makpo* | many-fingered; dextrous; *Uiama makpo* – The Dextrous People | *ma + kpo* |
| *mala* | minority (literally '[the] many [which is] few') | *ma + la* |
| *mama* | majority (literally '[the] many [which is] many') | *ma + ma* |
| *manktfui* | honey-comb; = many-shape-food-bearer | *ma + n + kt + fui* |
| *mb* | be essentially | *mb* = be essentially |
| *mbo* | I am essentially | *mb + o* |
| *mbouia* | God = be.essentially-I-person | *mb + o + uia* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| *Mimi* | Famous personage of the *Uiama makpo*; honorific title for a clan chief; literally 'seventh daughter of a seventh daughter' | *m + i + m + i* = 'seventh daughter of a seventh daughter'; cf *Kgu* |
| *mp* | be in the state of | *mp* = be in the state of |
| *mpo* | I am now | *mp + o* |
| *n* | shape, form | *n* = shape |
| *no* | shaper, artisan; = shape-Agent | *n + o* |
| *nt* | leave | *nt* = leave |
| *nto* | leaver (one who leaves); = leave-Agent | *nt + o* |
| *ntopa* | they both (N) leave | *nt* = leave |
| *ntu* | nut; footprint; track, trace; = leave-M | *nt + u* |
| *ntu* | stroke; musical beat; = shape-sound AND leave-M | *n + tu* AND *nt + u* – The *Uiama* themselves agree that the word *ntu* harmonises <u>both</u> origins. |
| *ntuia* | drummer | *nt + uia* AND possibly *n + tu + [u]ia* – with elision of [u] |
| *ntumuia* | drummer | *ntu + m + uia* |
| *ntuntun* | small handheld drum or tabor | *ntu + ntu + n* |
| Ø | 3rd person (unmarked); unmarked gender | Ø = 3rd person (unmarked); unmarked gender |
| *o* | act; I, toward, agent marker; first person | *o* = act |
| *oe* | down; role (grammatical) | *o + e* |
| *oi* | upon, bearer-ward | *o + i* |
| *omo* | give; = towards-act; actor,agent; = act-Agent | *o + m + o* |
| *oturu* | tell | *o + turu* |
| *oturu luia* | thunder [Pub.] (lit. "tell nobody") | *o + turu + l + uia* |
| *p* | hypothetical root for 'two' | *p* = two? |
| *pa* | pair, two | *pa* = pair, two; possibly from *p + a* |
| *pakalama* | number; counting number, count; grammatical number | *pa + ka + la + ma* |
| *pakpo* | pair-plucker, animal | *pa + kpo* |
| *palatasa* | 1679616, '(the product of) two *latasa*s' or six to the eighth power | *ta + la + ta + sa* |
| *pan* | two-lined figure; segment of circle | *pa + n* |
| *parukt* | moth, bivalve (lit. pair-spread) | *pa + rukt* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| *paruktfui* | moth-fruit tree | *parukt + fui* |
| *patu* | octave ('two-sound') | *pa + tu* |
| *ru* | spread, grow, extend, reach; prime; scale; ladder; whole | *ru* = spread, grow, extend, reach |
| *ru la* | scale of few, quasi-wholetone musical scale with steps 2, 2, 2, 2, 2 and 3 equal units of one-thirteenth of an octave | *ru + la* |
| *ru ma* | scale of many, quasi-diatonic musical scale with steps 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2 and 1 equal units of one-thirteenth of an octave | *ru + ma* |
| *rukt* | spread (past), grown, extended | *ru+kt* |
| *rumuia* | climber = spread-person | *ru + m + uia* |
| *ruo* | voice; = reach-Agent | *ru + o* |
| *ruru* | difference, excess | *ru + ru* |
| *rutu* | hear, listen [to] (lit. 'reach-sound') | *ru + tu* |
| *rutuo* | hearer, listener; = hear-Agent | *rutu + o* |
| *rw* | rain (verb), (bring) water | *rw* = rain, (bring) water |
| *rwo* | rain (noun), flowing water; = (bring) water-Agent | *rw + o* |
| *s* | hypothetical root for 'one' | *s* = one? |
| *sa* | one | *sa* = one; possibly from *s + a* |
| *san* | line, curve, arc | *sa + n* |
| *sr* | sorrow, lament | *sr* = sorrow, lament |
| *sro* | sorrower, lamenter; = sorrow-Agent | *sr + o* |
| *sru* | tears; = {sorrow, lament}-M. | *sr + u* |
| *t* | hypothetical root for 'six' | *t* = six? |
| *ta* | six; used only in compunds, eg *tasa* = 6 (six-one) *tapa xa* = 17 (six-two five) *tatasa tapa xa* = 53 (six-six-one six-two five) | *ta* = six; possibly from *t + a* |
| *takpo* | hand, foot, 'week' of six days | *ta + kpo* = six digits |
| *talatasa* | 7776, 'six (times) four sixes (times) one' or six times *latasa* or six to the fifth power | *ta + la + ta + sa* |
| *tapasa* | 13; first special number | *ta + pa + sa* |

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| *tapasan* | any 13-sided figure, whether regular, irregular or star-shaped; exogamous extended family unit; skin | *tapasa + n* |
| *tapasatu* | gamut of art music, '13-sound' | *tapasa + tu* |
| *tasa* | 6, 'six (times) one' or six to the power one | *ta + sa* |
| *tasan* | hexagon | *ta + sa + n* |
| *tatasa* | 36, 'six (times) six (times) one' or six squared | *ta + ta + sa* |
| *tatalatasa* | 46656, 'six (times) six (times) four sixes (times) one' or six times *talatasa* or six to the sixth power | *ta + ta + la + ta + sa* |
| *tatatalatasa* | 279936, 'six (times) six (times) six (times) four sixes (times) one' or six times *tatalatasa* or six to the seventh power | *ta + ta + ta + la + ta + sa* |
| *tatatasa* | 216, 'six (times) six (times) six (times) one' or six cubed | *ta + ta + ta + sa* |
| *tl* | suck | *tl* = suck |
| *tlo* | sucker; = suck-Agent | *tl + o* |
| *tlopa* | they both suck; = suck-Agent-both | *tl + o + pa* |
| *tu* | sound | *tu* = sound |
| *tuo* | musical instrument, "sounder"; = sound-Agent | *tu + o* |
| *turu* | speak, say, sing, play [music]; language, speech, song; speaking, singing, [musical] playing (lit. 'sound-reach') | *tu + ru* |
| *turuo* | speaker; = speak-Agent | *turu + o* |
| *tutu* | music | *tu + tu* |
| *tutulru* | instrumental (non-vocal) music (lit. 'music-not-reach') | *tutu + l + ru* |
| *tutuo* | musical instrumentalist; = music-Agent | *tutu + o* |
| *tuturu* | accompanied vocal music (lit. 'music-reach') | *tutu + ru* |
| *u* | make, create; he, cause, maker marker; masculine; male | *u* = he; masculine; male |
| *uia* | person; gender = he-she-it | *u + i + a* |
| *uiaka* | three people = person-three | *uia + ka* |
| *uiala* | some people = person-few | *uia + la* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| Uiama | Meaning | Morphology |
|---|---|---|
| *uiama* | people; a people; crowd = person-many | *uia + ma* |
| *uiama makpo* | The (Dextrous) People | *uiama + makpo* |
| *uiapa* | two people = person-pair | *uia + pa* |
| *untui* | lightning (lit. "He struck Her"); Private or Intimate speech | *u + ntu + i* |
| *untuntun* | thunder (Private) (lit. "His drum") | *u + ntuntun* |
| *untusru* | agate geodes, thunder eggs (lit. "He struck tears") | *u + ntu + sru* |
| *uo* | maker; = make-Agent | *u + o* |
| *usru* | rain (lit. "His tears") | *u + sru* |
| *we* | then | *we* = after; possibly from *oe* = down |
| *xa* | five | *xa* = five |
| *xan* | pentagon | *xa + n* |

## 15 *Uiama* lexical roots

| Uiama | Meaning | Notes | Part of speech | Syllabic structure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| @ | 3rd person (marked) | Used to mark 3rd person, which is usually unmarked | | V |
| *a* | stay; it, from, Patient marker | also neuter gender | | V |
| *br* | love | also feel affection for | | KS |
| *dr* | all | also everything, the universe | | KS |
| *e* | touch, affect; you, by, Affected marker | also 2nd person | | V |
| *fu* | food | also fruit | | KV |
| *ha* | face | also like, similar to | | KV |
| *i* | bear, carry, hold, keep; she, with, Bearer marker | also she; feminine; female | | V |
| *k* | hypothetical root for 'three' | | | K |
| *ka* | three | possibly from *k* + *a* | | KV |
| *kp* | pluck | | | KK |
| *kr* | grip | | | KS |
| *kt* | go | also past marker for incorporated verbs | | KK |
| *l* | not | also no, none | | K |
| *la* | few | also four; possibly from *l* + *a* | | SV |
| *m* | meaningless epenthetic consonant inserted between repetitions of the same vowel in a word, as in eg *rumuia* | *m* = Ø | | N |
| *m* | hypothetical root for 'many' | | | N |
| *ma* | many | also seven; possibly from *m* + *a* | | NV |
| *mb* | be essentially | | | NK |
| *mp* | be in the state of | | | NK |
| *n* | shape | also form | | K |
| *nt* | leave | *nt* = leave | | NK |

**Discovering Uiama through its Poetry**

| Uiama | Meaning | Notes | Part of speech | Syllabic structure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *o* | act; I, toward, agent marker | also first person | | V |
| Ø | 3rd person (unmarked); unmarked gender | | | Ø |
| *p* | hypothetical root for 'two' | | | K |
| *pa* | pair | also two; possibly from *p* + *a* | | KV |
| *ru* | spread | also grow, extend, reach; prime; scale; ladder; whole | | KV |
| *rw* | rain, (bring) water | | | KS |
| *s* | hypothetical root for 'one' | | | K |
| *sa* | one | possibly from *s* + *a* | | KV |
| *sr* | sorrow | also lament | | KS |
| *t* | hypothetical root for 'six' | | | K |
| *ta* | six | possibly from *t* + *a* | | KV |
| *tl* | suck | | | KS |
| *tu* | sound | | | KV |
| *u* | make, create; he, cause, maker | also masculine; male | | V |
| *we* | after | also then; possibly from *oe* = down | | SV |
| *xa* | five | | | KV |

# 16 English – *Uiama* glossary

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| accompanied vocal music | *tuturu* | *tuturu* |
| act | *o* | *o* |
| actor | *omo* | *omo* |
| agent | *omo* | *omo* |
| agent (grammatical) | *o* | *o* |
| all | *dr* | *dr* |
| arc | *san* | *san* |
| artisan | *no* | *no* |
| ascetic (noun) | *lo* | *lo* |
| back-scratcher | *lakpo* | *lakpo* |
| barren | *lei* | *lei* |
| be essentially | *mb* | *mb* |
| be in the state of | *mp* | *mp* |
| bear (verb) | *i* | *i* |
| bearer | *i* | *i* |
| bearer | *io* | *io* |
| beat (musical) | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| bee-hive | *fui* | *fui* |
| bivalve | *parukt* | *parukt* |
| branching, four-way | *lakpo* | *lakpo* |
| by | *e* | *e* |
| carrier | *io* | *io* |
| carry (verb) | *i* | *i* |
| cause | *u* | *u* |
| chief | *Mimi* | *Mimi* |
| climber | *rumuia* | *rumuia* |
| count | *pakalama* | *pakalama* |
| create | *u* | *u* |
| creator | *u* | *u* |
| crowd | *uiama* | *uiama* |
| curve | *san* | *san* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| dextrous | *makpo* | *makpo* |
| difference | *ruru* | *ruru* |
| down | *oe* | *oe* |
| drum | *ntuntun* | *ntuntun* |
| drummer | *ntumuia* | *ntuia* |
| Earth (the whole planet) | *dri* | *dri* |
| everything | *dr* | *dr* |
| excess | *ruru* | *ruru* |
| extend | *ru* | *ru* |
| extended | *rukt* | *rukt* |
| face | *ha* | *ha* |
| fecund | *ei* | *ei* |
| female | *i* | *i* |
| feminine | *i* | *i* |
| fertile | *ei* | *ei* |
| few | *la* | *la* |
| finger, including thumb | *kpo* | *kpo* |
| finger, not being a thumb | *lkro* | *lkro* |
| first person marker | *o* | *o* |
| five | *xa* | *xa* |
| flautist | *fuintutumia* | *fuituia* |
| flute of fruit-wood, usually *paruktfui* | *fuintutu* | *fuitu* |
| food | *fu* | *fu* |
| foot | *takpo* | *takpo* |
| footprint | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| form | *n* | *n* |
| four | *la* | *la* |
| frame (of a building) | *lakpo* | *lakpo* |
| from | *a* | *a* |
| fruit | *fu* | *fu* |
| fruitful | *fukta* | *fukta* |
| fruitless | *fulkta* | *fulkta* |
| fruit-tree | *fui* | *fui* |
| fruit-wood | *fuintu* | *fuintu* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| Gaia | *dri* | *dri* |
| gamut | *tapasatu* | *tapasatu* |
| Gé | *dri* | *dri* |
| gender | *uia* | *uia* |
| give | *omo* | *omo* |
| give | *omo* | *omo* |
| give | *omo* | *omo* |
| go | *kt* | *kt* |
| God | *mbouia* | *mbouia* |
| grow | *ru* | *ru* |
| grown | *rukt* | *rukt* |
| hand | *takpo* | *takpo* |
| he | *u* | *u* |
| hear | *rutu* | *rutu* |
| hearer | *rutuo* | *rutuo* |
| heptagon | *man* | *man* |
| hexagon | *tasan* | *tasan* |
| hold (verb) | *i* | *i* |
| holder | *io* | *io* |
| honey-comb | *manktfui* | *manktfui* |
| I | *o* | *o* |
| instrumental (non-vocal) music | *tutulru* | *tutulru* |
| it | *a* | *a* |
| keep (verb) | *i* | *i* |
| keeper | *io* | *io* |
| ladder | *ru* | *ru* |
| lament | *sr* | *sr* |
| lamenter | *sro* | *sro* |
| language | *turu* | *turu* |
| leave | *nt* | *nt* |
| leaver (one who leaves) | *nto* | *nto* |
| lightning | – | *untui* |
| like | *ha* | *ha* |
| line | *san* | *san* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| listen [to] | *rutu* | *rutu* |
| listener | *rutuo* | *rutuo* |
| love | *br* | *br* |
| lover | *bro* | *bro* |
| majority | *mama* | *mama* |
| make | *u* | *u* |
| maker | *u* | *u* |
| maker | *uo* | *uo* |
| male | *u* | *u* |
| many | *ma* | *ma* |
| many-fingered | *makpo* | *makpo* |
| masculine | *u* | *u* |
| minority | *mala* | *mala* |
| monk | *lo, lou* | *lo, lou* |
| moth | *parukt* | *parukt* |
| moth-fruit tree | *paruktfui* | *paruktfui* |
| music | *tutu* | *tutu* |
| musical instrument | *tuo* | *tuo* |
| musical instrumentalist | *tutuo* | *tutuo* |
| mute (noun) | *lturuo* | *lturuo* |
| neuter | *a* | *a* |
| no | *l* | *l* |
| nobody | *luia* | *luia* |
| none | *l* | *l* |
| not | *l* | *l* |
| number (grammatical or counting) | *pakalama* | *pakalama* |
| nun | *lo, loi* | *lo, loi* |
| nut | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| octave | *patu* | *patu* |
| one | *sa* | *sa* |
| pair | *pa* | *pa* |
| pair-plucker (animal) | *pakpo* | *pakpo* |
| past marker | *kt* | *kt* |
| patient (grammatical) | *e* | *e* |

# Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| pentagon | *xan* | *xan* |
| pentagon | *xan* | *xan* |
| people | *uiama* | *uiama* |
| person | *uia* | *uia* |
| planet | *dri* | *dri* |
| play (music) | *turu* | *turu* |
| playing (musical) | *turu* | *turu* |
| pluck | *kp* | *kp* |
| plucker | *kpo* | *kpo* |
| polygon | *man* | *man* |
| prime | *ru* | *ru* |
| quadrilateral | *lan* | *lan* |
| rain (noun) | *rwo* | *rwo* |
| rain (noun) | *usru* | *usru* |
| rain (verb) | *rw* | *rw* |
| reach | *ru* | *ru* |
| receive | *amo* | *amo* |
| receive | *amo* | *amo* |
| role (grammatical) | *oe* | *oe* |
| say | *turu* | *turu* |
| scale | *ru* | *ru* |
| scale (musical) | *ru* | *ru* |
| scale (musical) of few | *ru la* | *ru la* |
| scale (musical) of many | *ru ma* | *ru ma* |
| second person | *e* | *e* |
| seed | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| segment (of circle) | *pan* | *pan* |
| seven | *ma* | *ma* |
| shape | *n* | *n* |
| shaper | *no* | *no* |
| she | *i* | *i* |
| similar to | *ha* | *ha* |
| sing | *turu* | *turu* |
| singer | *turuo* | *turuo* |

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| singing | *turu* | *turu* |
| six (a six, used as counting base) | *ta-* | *ta-* |
| six (one six, one more than five) | *tasa* | *tasa* |
| skeleton | *lakpo* | *lakpo* |
| skin; exogamous extended family unit | *tapasan* | *tapasan* |
| song | *turu* | *turu* |
| sorrow | *sr* | *sr* |
| sorrower | *sro* | *sro* |
| sound | *tu* | *tu* |
| speak | *turu* | *turu* |
| speaker | *turuo* | *turuo* |
| speaking | *turu* | *turu* |
| speech | *turu* | *turu* |
| spread | *ru* | *ru* |
| spread (past) | *rukt* | *rukt* |
| stay | *a* | *a* |
| stroke | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| suck | *tl* | *tl* |
| sucker | *tlo* | *tlo* |
| tabor | *ntuntun* | *ntuntun* |
| tears | *sru* | *sru* |
| tell | *oturu* | *oturu* |
| then | *we* | *we* |
| third person marker | *@* | *@* |
| thirteen | *tapasa* | *tapasa* |
| three | *ka* | *ka* |
| thumb | *kro* | *kro* |
| thunder | *oturu luia* | *untuntun* |
| thunder eggs, agate geodes | *untusru* | *untusru* |
| touch | *e* | *e* |
| toucher | *eo* | *eo* |
| toward | *o* | *o* |
| trace | *ntu* | *ntu* |
| track | *ntu* | *ntu* |

**Discovering Uiama through its Poetry**

| English | *Uiama* Public | *Uiama* Private |
|---|---|---|
| traveller | *kto* | *kto* |
| tridecagon,13-sided figure, whether regular, irregular or star-shaped | *tapasan* | *tapasan* |
| turn | *aokt* | *aokt* |
| two | *pa* | *pa* |
| universe | *dr* | *dr* |
| upon | *oi* | *oi* |
| voice | *ruo* | *ruo* |
| walker | *kto* | *kto* |
| water (noun = flowing water) | *rwo* | *rwo* |
| water (verb = bring water) | *rw* | *rw* |
| week (of six days) | *takpo* | *takpo* |
| whole | *ru* | *ru* |
| with | *i* | *l* |
| world | *dri* | *dri* |

# 17 Exploring the *Uiama* planet with Ktw, exobiologist

**Transcript of IM conversation, 1-2 Feb 2006, with ktw, exobiologist:**

Ktw says:

ru working on anything?

Yo says:

Yeah, a conlang (constructed language) called Uiama which started from a weird dream I had ...

Ktw says:

explain explain

Yo says:

There are only mental pictures of the language's speakers and environment yet ... it's all rather sci-fi, in a UK LeGuinn kinda way.

Ktw says:

are we talking about a painting or a story or what?

Yo says:

a language, which came as a dream in which these creatures were gathering fruit from a tree, singing a song, as it were, on behalf of the tree, complaining about the animal that came and robbed it of its fruit.

Yo says:

as i said, i have mental pictures, for the tree, its fruit, the animal and the "people", but only some quick sketches yet.

Ktw says:

 have started writing the language down?  Grammar, sounds??

Yo says:

yep.  got an 11-page document on the language so far. still incomplete.

Yo says:

the song has words and music.

Ktw says:

that is the strangest thing i've heard all week - how fascinating

Ktw says:

so gimme some description:  asian, european, tropical, what

Yo says:

yeah, has me tickled too ... I've thought about 'going back' there in a dream (I used to practice lucid dreaming quite frequently, but I'm a bit out of practice now)

Yo says:

another world.  not  glacial, not over hot

Ktw says:

so, temperate

Yo says:

but the scenery is a bit bleak.  i've been trying to work out what they live on when the 'paruktfui' tree is

not in fruit.

Ktw says:

bleak? how? desert? mountain? dry?

Yo says:

mostly flattish or undulating rocky surfaces, from what I saw

Yo says:

no forests as such. no obvious surface water

Yo says:

dim cool sun

Ktw says:

did the tree have leaves & flowers as well as fruit

Yo says:

flowers yes, but no apparent leaves - only ones like the casuarina's, modified to look like a bluish-green bark

Yo says:

flowers open white and age to a medium pink

Yo says:

tree's branching is peculiar - short vertical stem has four branches coming out of it in an inverted pyramid

Yo says:

each branch bears flowers & fruit one year.

Ktw says:

upright or sloped?

Yo says:

next year only two of them do, while the other two put out another short vertical stem and pyramid of fruiting branches

Yo says:

whole structure very symmetrical and upright; pyramid sides slope out at 45°

Ktw says:

ok

Ktw says:

lemme think

Ktw says:

hmm

Yo says:

(wave)

Ktw says:

ok first off, rocky terrain, modified leaves: underground water, very lowlying ground, maybe even below sea level. No strong winds

Yo says:

could be

Ktw says:

symmetrical structure also hints at "succulent" type plant ie dry usual conditions, but has to cope with occ. flooding

Ktw says:

needs to store

Yo says:

maybe no seas at all

Ktw says:

also flowers & fruit together: indicates long, maybe even year round fruiting

Ktw says:

one crop trees have flowers, then fruit

Yo says:

no, not together

Ktw says:

long cropping overlaps - plus tree growth "specialised" also like many cacti & succulent

Yo says:

flowers first, then fruit.  totally seasonal

Ktw says:

can u see the soil?

Yo says:

no, it seemed to be coming almost from bare hard ground

Ktw says:

color of ground?

Yo says:

dark grey

Yo says:

(maybe lateritic?)

Ktw says:

low in iron

Yo says:

some iron oxides are blackish rather than red

Ktw says:

did you get a good look at the fruit?

Yo says:

yep.  large hard nut with two flattened orange coloured orbs of flesh attached - something like a nutmeg, I think

Ktw says:

damn, wish i could see it

Yo says:

don't tell me i got a quandong!

Ktw says:

i wouldnt dream of it!

Yo says:

the flesh is dryish, almost like a dried apricot - and that's when it's fresh.

Yo says:

suggest very little water

Ktw says:

well, u can be sure that it's an area that has to cope with long dry periods, maybe years of drought

Ktw says:

but the specialised growth pattern implies an ability to respond to sudden supply of water - also rocky ground usually has cistern type reservoirs, if lowlying

Ktw says:

what did the people look like?

Yo says:

yeah, i get the impression it doesn't rain much

Yo says:

unfrotunately, they were the hardest to see!

Ktw says:

?

Yo says:

i don't always see everything clearly in a dream, do u?

Ktw says:

no

Yo says:

they were not tall

Ktw says:

many of em

Yo says:

had six digits on each of four limbs,

Ktw says:

?

Yo says:

walked upright

Yo says:

sang, played flutes, danced

Ktw says:

sorry, meant were there many people?

Yo says:

they lived in smallish villages of several huts

Yo says:

maybe twenty or thirty in a band

Yo says:

i don't know how permanent their villages were

Ktw says:

so the impression was more of a group rather than individuals?

Yo says:

yes.  they knew this particular tree as a place they always collected fruit in season.  maybe they were nomads.  adults & kids together, even a couple of oldies.

Ktw says:

tribe

Yo says:

yeahhhhhhh ... tho that word often connotes hunters as well as gatherers - i had no impressions of any kind of hunting or huntsmanlike skills

Yo says:

or tools eg weapons

Ktw says:

hunting depends on the place - you dont need to hunt if there;'s enough protein to gather

Yo says:

the only tools they had i was aware of were specialised for plucking the fruit from this very tangled seeming tree

Yo says:

u r right

Ktw says:

still, tools at all of any sort implies skills, continuity:  civilisation

Ktw says:

& language, of course

Yo says:

O/w they would have to process vast quantities of vegetable food, right?

Ktw says:

some vegetable is very nutrient rich esp. in dry areas

Ktw says:

look at dates

Yo says:

yes -as i said the fruit surrounded a very large nut

Ktw says:

dates+water can maintain life indefinitely - if a little boringly

Yo says:

i can see scurvy or beri-beri coming on - Vit. deficiencies!

Ktw says:

& dates can be dried - bet this fruit would dry well too

Yo says:

not much water to lose, i think ...

Discovering Uiama through its Poetry

Ktw says:

that means a year round supply if there's enough

Yo says:

u r right again! how DO you do it?

Ktw says:

im a genius.  /AND im modest

Yo says:

anyway, i really must go to bed so i can get up in the morning and make some more $$$

Yo says:

goodnight genius!

Ktw says:

ok check into planet x & sweet dreams

Ktw says:

nightnight

Yo says:

hope to see u there!

---

**Yahya Abdal-Aziz, Wheelers Hill, 16-20 November 2005**

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