

Internal reconstruction: Examples

A. Huli (Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea) — IHL Ch 7, ex 3

Reconstruct the original ‘ordinal’ suffix, and say what changes have taken place.

tebo	tebone	‘three’
ma	mane	‘four’
dau	dauni	‘five’
waraga	waragane	‘six’
ka	kane	‘seven’
hali	halini	‘eight’
di	dini	‘nine’
pi	pini	‘ten’
hombe	hombene	‘eleven’

B. The vowels of Pre-Old Japanese

Martin, Samuel E. 1987. *The Japanese Language Through Time*. New Haven: Yale U. Press.

(1) The vowel /e/ had a restricted distribution in Old Japanese

- (a) Approximately 42,000 syllables are written with ‘phonograms’ (Chinese characters used for their sound value, not their meaning value) in the poetry collection

Man’yōshū (万葉集), from 712_{CE}

If we look at which vowels these syllables have, we see the following:

/i/	23%	/u/	15%
/e/	9%	/o/	24%
/a/		29%	

- (b) Very few non-borrowed words have /e/ in the first syllable

(2) There are Old Japanese morphemes that show an alternation between final /e/ and some other vowel (note: there are also morphemes with final /e/ that does not alternate, and final /a/ that does not alternate, so this is a *third* pattern)

me	‘eye’	ma-buta	‘eyelid’
ame	‘rain’	ama-do	‘shutters’
ame	‘gluten’	ama-...	‘sweet...’
tume	‘claw’	tuma-sake	‘claw tips’
kowe	‘voice’	kowa-iro	‘tone of voice’
nafe	‘seedling’	nafa-siro	‘seedbed’
sake	‘rice wine’	saka-duki	‘wine cup’
take	‘bamboo’	taka-mura	‘bamboo grove’

Proposal: There was a suffix /-i/ that attached to the root when it was otherwise final in the word, and then /a+i/ > /e/

- There is supporting evidence for this /-i/ suffix, and for other alternating vowels