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**'Double talk': Parallel structures in Manambu songs, and their origin**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Manambu language belongs to the Ndu language family, and is spoken by over 2500 people in five villages located on the Sepik River (Ambunti district, East Sepik province), in addition to a few hundred expatriates living in other areas of PNG. The language is still in active use (see Aikhenvald 2008). However, a substantial amount of ritual and traditional religious knowledge has been lost, challenging the continuity of the Manambu heritage. The speakers' competence in composing songs of any genre is rapidly dwindling. Traditionally, the Manambu had three song types:

- mourning songs *gra-kudi* (sung by women after someone's death and during the mortuary rite *Keketep* which may take place a year later);
- laments about foiled marriages and missing or endangered relatives (*namay* and *sui*), sung by men and by women.

Each of these poetic literary forms (improvised by performers) consists of two parallel stanzas. The first one (referred to as *apEk* 'side') typically consists of a sentence interspersed with totemic address terms and names (relating to the clan of the addressee or the protagonist of the song). The second stanza restates the first one in different wording using what the Manambu speakers call the 'other side' (*agEkem* 'on the (other) side of two'). This reflects binarism, or 'parallelism', a pervasive feature of the Sepik culture (Bateson 1936/1958: 239; Harrison 1983: 20). This paper investigates the structure and the origin of the 'other side' song register. A number of forms can be shown to originate in the neighbouring Ndu languages (especially Western Iatmul and also Abelam (or Wosera), and may reflect traditional patterns of diglossia and exchange of words and spells characteristic of the Manambu culture.

**1 Background: linguistic diversity in the Sepik area**

The Sepik River Basin (which includes East Sepik and Sandaun Provinces) is, linguistically, the most complex spot within New Guinea. It contains about 200 languages in an area of just over 300km<sup>2</sup>, a density apparently unparalleled anywhere else in the world. The Sepik river basin displays cultural as well as linguistic diversity and fragmentation, perhaps more so than any other area of New Guinea. Reasons for this include geographic diversity, inaccessible terrains, warfare, and special patterns of language contact. The average size of language communities is significantly lower than in the New Guinea Highlands.

The majority of peoples who live along the Sepik River have an overwhelmingly 'importing culture', with an emphasis on exchange and value assigned to outside goods, both material and non-material (Mead 1938). In many Sepik societies, language — viewed in the form of words, totemic names and personal names — was traditionally considered on a par with

material goods, with spells, incantations and names being traded and bought (see Harrison 1990: 20-3, and further references there; Aikhenvald 2009).

Language contact between Manambu and Iatmul, two major languages spoken along the Sepik River in the Middle Sepik domain, has contributed to the creation of a Manambu ritual register, which exists in the form of parallel structures in song styles.

The Manambu language belongs to the Ndu family, the largest family in the Sepik area in terms of number of speakers. The word *ndu* means 'man' (and is a form shared by all the languages of the family). Manambu is spoken by about 2500 people in three major villages located on the Sepik River: Avatip, Malu, and Yuanab (or Yambon), East Sepik Province, Ambunti district (in addition to a few hundred expatriates living in other areas of PNG). The language is still in active use (see Aikhenvald 2008). However, a substantial amount of ritual and traditional religious knowledge has been lost, challenging the continuity of the Manambu heritage. The speakers' competence in composing songs of any genre is rapidly dwindling.

The composition of the special song register reflects the living mythology, ancestral histories and peoples' relationships to each other within the Manambu cultural world. We will briefly outline the relevant features of the Manambu and their relationships with their neighbours, before turning to the language of songs.

## **2 The Manambu people of the Middle Sepik**

Culturally, the groups of the Middle Sepik area have many features in common. These include shared totemic clan membership, which used to form the basis of traditional trade partnerships. Traditionally, each descent group had hereditary trade partners in other language groups, and these were conceived of as belonging to the same clan, or 'clan-like totemic category' (Harrison 1993: 41). Such trade partnerships were carefully maintained and, if necessary, defended (also see Bowden 1983: 14).

An additional commonality which facilitated trade and ceremonial exchange is a kinship system with Omaha-type-features (also see Whiting 1941: 5). A major feature of the kinship system throughout the middle Sepik societies is the tie between mother's brother and sister's child, whereby the mother's brother maintains a warm, solicitous and quasi-maternal relationship with the descendant (see Harrison 1993: 43, for further features, and Forge 1971). The virtual equivalence in kinship systems used to facilitate communication between different groups: in Harrison's words (1993: 44), 'a visitor in an unfamiliar village can thus be situated immediately within its system of kin ties'.

### **2.1 The Manambu and their neighbours**

In terms of their subsistence, lifestyle, and patterns of relationships the people in the Middle Sepik area (Map) divide into two groups. Those who live on the river banks ('River Dwellers') include the Manambu and the Iatmul who speak related languages. Those who live in the bush ('Jungle Dwellers') include numerous other, numerically minor groups. Of these, Abelam and

Yalaku speak languages belonging to the Ndu family. Others — such as Kwoma, Yerikai, Chambri and Yessan-Mayo — speak languages which are not demonstrably related to Ndu. All of them are traditional trade partners of various subclans of the Manambu.

The relationships between River Dwellers and Jungle Dwellers is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1 River-dwellers versus Jungle Dwellers in the Middle Sepik area**

River Dwellers	Features	Jungle Dwellers	Features
Ndu language family: Manambu Western Iatmul (or Ñaura)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means of subsistence and trade objects: fish;</li> <li>• knowledge of canoes and navigation, hence easier movements;</li> <li>• aggressive; conceive of themselves as superior</li> </ul>	Ndu language family: Yalaku (or Yelogu)  Other language families: Kwoma (Kwoma-Nukuma family) Yerikai (isolate) Chambri (Lower Sepik family) Yessan-Mayo (Tama family)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means of subsistence and trade objects: sago;</li> <li>• no traditional knowledge of canoes and travel on the Sepik river;</li> <li>• likely to be the original inhabitants;</li> <li>• some were conquered and assimilated by River Dwellers (folk stories as source)</li> <li>• do not conceive of themselves as superior</li> </ul>

The Manambu occupy a curious position, being in constant contact with related, and unrelated groups of Jungle Dwellers, and with the culturally more dominant Western Iatmul.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Manambu lore, the relationships between the Manambu and their Jungle Dweller neighbours have never been those of peaceful coexistence. The Manambu have conquered and absorbed numerous Jungle Dweller groups (this is reflected in their ethnohistory, and the stories told by other peoples: Harrison 1993; Aikhenvald 2009). The linguistic affiliation of the incorporated groups is often unclear (see an example in §4.4).

The relationship between the two groups of River-dwellers has never involved institutionalized multilingualism. There have always been hostilities between the two groups. Notably, the Iatmul is a much bigger group, and has, until nowadays, been culturally more dominant. The contact between Manambu and Iatmul involved trading spells, words, names, and incantations (see Harrison 1990). As a result, the Iatmul element in Manambu used to have special ritual significance. Nowadays, this survives only in the song style: this is what we will address below. In everyday life, the Manambu men would have little if any knowledge of Iatmul.

The Iatmul villages are now more open to Western influence and more exposed to acculturation. They are also more open to tourists than the Manambu. As a consequence, the degree of language and culture loss appears to be stronger among the River-dwelling Iatmul than

<sup>1</sup> Iatmul is a dialect continuum spoken by about 40-50,000 people in the East Sepik Province, with important minorities in towns such as Wewak and Madang. The four varieties of Iatmul include Western Iatmul (or Ñaura), Central Iatmul (Palimbei), Eastern Iatmul (Waliyakwi) and Northern Iatmul (Maligwat). Mutual intelligibility between the dialects varies.

among the more traditional Manambu, who pride themselves on 'not selling our things to tourists'. There is little contact between the two groups nowadays (except for occasional hostilities).

## 2.2 The Manambu in their cultural context

The Manambu divide into three clan groups:

- the Wulwi-Ñawi, associated with sun and moon, and everything bright. Members of this clan group 'own' as their totems everything associated with celestial bodies, times of day, and bright colours;
- the Gla:gw, associated with earth and jungle, and everything dark (from *gEl(a)-gw* (dark, darkness-plural)).
- and the Nabul-Sablap, the in-between clan group.

The clan groups are exogamous, with Gla:gw and Wulwi-Ñawi marrying each other, and each marrying the Nabul-Sablap.<sup>2</sup>

The clans and their subclans are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2 Manambu clans and subclans**

Clan group	Subclan
Wulwi-Ñawi: associated with sun and moon, east wind and everything to do with white and shining objects (also white people and eastward territories, including Australia)	Maliau
	Ñakau
	NagudEW
	Sarak
	Wagau
	Nawik
Gla:gw ('the blacks' or associated with earth and jungle, everything dark)	Yimal
	MakEM
	Gabak (or Yalaku-Gabak)
	Valik
	Wapanab
	Wargab
Nabul-Sablap: an 'in-between' clan (whose members are said to have carved the Sepik River)	Nabul Sablap

The following salient features of the Manambu tradition are important for understanding the songs and their organization:

- (i) According to Manambu lore, every item in the world can be attributed to a particular subclan, and thus be conceived of as totemic attribute.

<sup>2</sup> This paper, like all of my work, is based on about 20 years of fieldwork with speakers of the Avatip and Malu varieties. The orthographical conventions here follow those in Aikhenvald (2008, 2009). Note that *b* reflects a prenasalized <sup>m</sup>*b*, *d* reflects a prenasalized <sup>n</sup>*d*, *g* reflects a prenasalized <sup>n</sup>*g*, and *j* a prenasalized <sup>n</sup>*z*.

(ii) In other words, totems and their names are owned by each subclan, and can be used as personal names and address terms. This results in multiple synonymy especially for culturally important objects, including crocodile, dog, grass skirt, totemic haze, shield, and further culturally important items.

(iii) Manambu traditional personal names are highly valued. In the first place, a person is given one of the names of an important paternal ancestor belonging to their clan. They can be given additional names by their maternal uncle. A name would feature a totem associated with the clan. For example, a person whose mother comes from the Nabul subclan is likely to be given a name associated with *tapwuk* 'hen, chicken', or *ga:j* 'rooster', their totem.

(iv) The Manambu personal names (associated with a totem or a totemic ancestor) are 'owned' by subclans, so that every person carries names of his or her mythological forebears. If names are felt to be misused by a subclan who has no right to use them, a name-debate takes place (see, e.g. Harrison's 1990, entitled *Stealing people's names*; a brief account of a recent name debate is in Aikhenvald 2008).

Knowledge of names, and knowledge of ancestors (of different clan groups) and their exploits is highly valued. Proficiency in memorising and reciting these names forms the backbone of the special song register to which we now turn.

### 3 The 'other side': the Manambu 'song register'

Just as in many societies, traditional Manambu songs are a major literary genre. They are improvised by performers according to a traditionally set pattern. The songs reflect the singers' proficiency in the totemic names, and ancestral histories of themselves and those they are singing about.

The three song types are

- mourning songs *gra-kudi* sung by women after someone's death and during the mortuary rite *KEKETEP* which may take place a year later,
- laments about foiled marriages *namay*, and
- nostalgic songs *sui* sung by men and by women.

Each song consists of two parallel stanzas. The first stanza (usually referred to as *apEk* 'side, part') consists of a string of not very complex sentences interspersed with totemic address terms and names (often relating to the clan of the addressee or the 'character' of the song, and, in the case of *namay* and *sui*, also to those of the singer). The second stanza restates the first one in different wording using what the Manambu speakers call the 'other side' (*agEkem* 'on the (other) side of two'). The last phrase or sentence of each stanza is sung twice: the form can be represented as A B B A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>.

The principle of 'parallel stanzas' evokes the idea of binarism, or 'parallelism', a pervasive feature of the Sepik culture — in Bateson's (1936/1958: 239) words, 'the idea that everything in the world has its equal and opposite counterpart' (also see Harrison 1983: 20, on the binarism in the song styles).

The mourning songs *gra-kudi* are the prerogative of Manambu women (typically, old and knowledgeable ones). In contrast, both *namay* and *sui* can be sung by men and women. Harrison (1983) put together a collection of *namay* sung by men (commenting on the role of mythological setting and secret knowledge in the creation of *namay*). Women also compose *namay* and *sui*, and sing them — traditionally, on women-only fishing expeditions, or anywhere where men would not be able to overhear them. I recorded 20 *namay* sung by women (most of them over 50) and was told not to share them with anyone since they discuss the foiled loves, suitors and nostalgic feelings for men other than their husbands: if I had disclosed them, this would get these women into trouble. This indicates that while the 'other side' ritual register used to be seen as 'men's property' (Harrison 1983), women would also have a fair knowledge of it.

The subject matter of *namay* are 'frustrated' love affairs and foiled marriages. Typically, a *namay* describes a simple and brief scene: a meeting or parting of the composer and his or her lover, a fragment of their conversation, a relative of the woman, or the man, coming to separate them. A *sui* is a more general nostalgic song, usually depicting a scene with the character being surrounded by totemic objects. The mourning songs *grakudi* would list totemic names of the deceased, depicting him or her as moving or standing in a particular moment in time. The names listed in a song will be associated with the deceased and his or her father's and mother's totemic clan names and ancestors.

*Namay*, *sui* and *grakudi* are similar in that they are 'full of references to mythology and, typically, the events they described are placed in a mythological setting. The songs portray the actors who appear in them as totemic ancestors of their paternal subclans (and sometimes maternal subclans) – trees, mountains and so forth — referring to these by their exoteric totemic names; while natural species, topographical features and the like are all anthropomorphised and addressed and referred to by kin terms, just as they are in myth. The crown of a tree, for example, might be described as the head-dress of the ancestor who personifies it, the trunk as his torso, and the roots as his legs' (Harrison 1983: 14). A totemic mountain which is identified as belonging to someone's subclan may be referred to as the person's 'father' or 'father's father'. A totem of the maternal subclan (for instance, a crocodile) can be referred to as 'mother's brother'.

Three different verbs are used to refer to performing (and composing) each of the song styles. These are: *nayi*- 'play' with reference to a *namay* song dealing with frustrated love; *sau*- 'compose a *sui* song' with reference to *sui*, a nostalgic song; *gra*- 'cry' with reference to *grakudi*, a mourning song. The Appendix contains an example of a mourning song.

Being able to compose a *namay*, a *sui* or a *grakudi* presupposes extensive knowledge of totemic ancestry, totemic names for objects associated with the subclan of characters' mother and father, and the names of their ancestors. This knowledge was not just the prerogative of men (contrary to Harrison 1983). The women's knowledge was reflected in their capacity to sing *grakudi* as women only style, and also other songs. As the knowledge of traditional lore and totemic names dwindles, so does people's capacity to perform the songs. We turn to this in §8.

What is interesting about the language of the 'other side' register? The correlations between the choice of forms and meanings between the two stanzas show a number of consistent

principles. The 'other side' register bears an imprint of neighbouring languages absent from the 'day to day' language (in which the first stanza is cast).

My estimate is that the 'other side' register may have traditionally contained several hundred words. Not every word in the day to day language has a different counterpart in the 'other side' register. Personal names and a few kinship terms always have a different counterpart in the 'other side' register. Obsolescence may be one of the factors accounting for lexical variation in choice of a term in the 'other side'.

The principles of choosing the 'other side' counterparts are addressed in §4. Then, in §5, we discuss semantic relations between the lexicon in the day to day language and in the 'other side' register. Variation, and creativity, in choosing the 'other side' form are addressed in §6.

#### 4 How to choose a term in the 'other side' register

The 'other side' register has the same phonology and grammar as the day to day language. The members of closed classes are also the same (such as personal pronouns, demonstratives and adjectives from a closed class: *nEma* 'big', *kwasa* 'small', *yara* 'good'). The only exception to this is one pair of verbal directionals (see §4.1).

Numerous words from open classes in the day to day register are the same in the 'other side'. Kinship terms which are the same in both 'sides' are *gwa:l* 'father's father', *yæ:y* 'father's mother', and *kagrEs* 'son's wife'. Some body part terms, such as *mE1* 'eye', are the same, as is the word *as* 'dog' (see (13a-b)) and verbs such as *vækEr-* 'fall', *vE-* 'see', *wukE-* 'hear, listen', *wa-* 'speak' (see (10a-b)), *bas sE-* 'ask' (see (10a-b)).

All personal names have a full or a partial counterpart in the 'other side' register. If only a part of a word has a counterpart in the 'other side' register, and the other part does not, then only the first part will change, e.g. *wama-sEp* 'white skin', the other side register *karya-sEp* 'light skin'. Many of the names of the Maliau clan start with *Yu-a-* (shell.valuable-linker), literally, 'belonging to a shell valuable'. Their other side counterparts start with *Rama-*, e.g. the names *Yua-nEg* — the 'other side' *Rama-nEg*; *Yua-muk* — the other side *Rama-muk*. (*Yu* as an object is a totem of the Maliau clan; the origin of *Ram(a)* is unknown: see §4.4). Similarly, the 'other side' counterpart of *jigEr-ta:b* 'finger' is *jigEr-ma:n* 'toe' (see (1)). Two parts of a compound may change if there is an equivalent in the 'other side' register for both of them, e.g. *tama-kiga-du* (nose+linker-?-man), the other side *mutama-kiga-badi* (face-?-youngster) 'totemic image of a man looking like a typical Iatmul-style carving'.

The 'other side' register forms which are used consistently appear in fixed collocations as well as when the words are used independently as arguments. For instance, *da:m taka-* (nose:Iatmul put:Manambu) is used as the 'other side' equivalent of *wa:n taka-* (ear put) in the meaning of 'listen' (see §4.3 and (12)).

We have identified three ways of choosing a counterpart in the 'other side' register:

- 'Semantic reversal' — §4.1
- Semantic relative — §4.2
- Borrowing — §4.3.

In addition to this, there are a number of 'other side' register-only forms whose etymology is unknown — some examples are in §4.4.

#### 4.1 Semantic 'reversal'

The term in the 'other side' register is the opposite to that in the day to day register. This principle applies to most body parts (1) and examples (2)-(3), three verbs of motion (4) and example (5), and one directional (6) and examples in (7).

##### (1) Body part terms in the day to day and the 'other side' register: semantic reversal

DAY TO DAY REGISTER	THE 'OTHER SIDE' REGISTER
<i>ta:b</i> 'hand, arm'	<i>ma:n</i> 'foot, leg'
<i>ma:n</i> 'foot, leg'	<i>ta:b</i> 'hand, arm'
<i>jigErta:b</i> 'finger'	<i>jigErma:n</i> 'toe'
<i>jigErma:n</i> 'toe'	<i>jigErta:b</i> 'finger'
<i>ya:l</i> 'belly'	<i>bun</i> 'back'
<i>bun</i> 'back'	<i>ya:l</i> 'belly'

All the examples of 'reversal' are symmetrical: if the first one is used in the day to day language (and in the first stanza), the other one will be used in 'the other side' part, and the other way round. We will see, in (11), that some terms whose choice in the other side register is based on 'semantic relatives' principle are also used symmetrically.

The 'reversal' illustrated in (2) (from a Namay sung by a woman in 1996).<sup>3</sup> Words which differ in the two registers are underlined.

(2a) dE-ke man-magi wakran tE-ta:y asa:y 'day to day' register  
 his-poss leg-root standing stay-AS father  
 'As the father was standing with his legs (lit. leg roots)'...

(2b) dE-ke taba-magi wakran tE-tay ña:s the 'other side' register  
 his-poss hand-root standing stay-AS father  
 'As the father was standing with his hands (lit. hand roots)'...

A similar example is in (3) from a Namay sung by a man (Harrison 1983: 42) (see also a song in Harrison 1983: 57)

(3a) man-kada pEpli-al wukE-ñina 'day to day' register  
 foot-step noise-it.is hear-you.feminine  
 'What you (girl) hear is the noise of the footsteps (of your father's mother's brothers)'

<sup>3</sup> Authorship of the Namay cannot be given, due to confidentiality.

- (3b)  $dEya-kE-l$                        $taba-kada pEpli-al$      $wukE-ñina$                       *the 'other side' register*  
 they-OBLIQUE-feminine    hand-step noise-it.is hear-you.feminine  
 'What you (girl) hear is the noise of their handsteps' (as if walking with hands on the ground)

Examples (5a) and (5b) illustrate the pair 'stomach' (day to day) and 'back (the 'other side').

(4) Verbs in the day to day and the 'other side' register: semantic reversal

DAY TO DAY REGISTER	THE 'OTHER SIDE', OR SONG REGISTER
<i>vaki-</i> 'go across from speaker'	<i>væra-</i> 'go across towards speaker'
<i>væsE-</i> 'walking, stepping'	<i>wapa-</i> 'leaving'
<i>yi-</i> 'go'	<i>ya-</i> 'come'

Example (5) comes from a Namay sung by a man (Harrison 1983: 46). The channel where the two lovers may meet undisturbed is described in the day to day register as the one which the totemic crocodile 'Melibu'-man (the girl's mother's brother) put going across away from the speaker with his stomach (5a). In the 'other side' register it is described as the one the crocodile stretched out, or flattened, with his back going across towards the speaker (5b).

- (5a) Melibu-du                      awa:y                      taka-vaki-na-d                      *'day to day' register*  
 totemic.name-man    maternal.uncle                      put-go.across.away-present-3masc.sg  
yala-ka:r                      wuda                      kwa-na-d  
 stomach-with    here:close.to.you                      stay-present-3masc.sg

'Maternal uncle Melibu-man (totemic crocodile) is putting (the channel) with his stomach going across away from us (speaker), he stays here (close to you)'

- (5b) Rukwi-du                      wa:w                      lagu-vara-na-d                      *the 'other side' register*  
 crocodile-man    maternal.uncle                      stretch-go.across.towards-present-3masc.sg  
bun-ka:r                      wuda                      kwa-na-d  
 back-with                      here:close.to.you                      stay-present-3masc.sg

'Maternal uncle Crocodile-man is stretching (the channel) with his back going across towards us (speaker), he stays here (close to you)'

Manambu has nine directionals: 'up' versus 'down', 'across away from speaker' versus 'across towards speaker', 'towards inside; away from the Sepik River towards the shore' versus 'towards outside, away from the Sepik River away from the shore', 'sideways away from speaker' versus 'sideways towards speaker' and 'to and fro' (Aikhenvald 2008: 380-1). Only the pairing in (6) have been attested in the corpus. Other directionals are the same in both registers.

(6) Bound verbal directional in the day to day and the 'other side' register: semantic reversal





- (10a) agula gra-nin-al wan wa-dE-k 'day to day' register  
 why cry-you.feminine-3fem saying say-he-DS  
 basa kudi san wa-dE-k  
 ask word putting say-he-DS  
 'Why are you crying, having said, having asked, he said and...'
- (10b) agula saygra-nin-al wan the 'other side' register  
 why cry-you.feminine-3fem saying  
 basa kudi san wa-dE-k  
 ask word putting say-he-DS  
 'Why are you crying, having said, having asked, he said and...'

In one example two quasi-synonymous prohibitive markers are used in the two registers (see Song 18 in Harrison 1983: 68). The first stanza ('day to day' register) employs *-wayik* 'strong prohibitive', and the second one (the 'other side' register) employs *-tukwa* 'general prohibitive' (see Aikhenvald 2008: 317-21). However, in all other songs in Harrison (1983) both registers use the general prohibitive *-tukwa* (e.g. Song 21 in Harrison 1983: 74). It is hard to evaluate how general the principle of switching the prohibitive markers around would be. (I have no such examples in the songs I recorded.)

A few synonymous or almost synonymous terms are used symmetrically (cf. body parts in (1)). That is, if one is used in the stanza cast in the day to day register, its equivalent will be in the other side register. If the second one is used in the day to day register, the first one will be used in the other side register. Two names of one spirit (who lives in the ficus tree) can also be used symmetrically. Some examples are in (11):

(11) 'Symmetrical' use of synonyms

DAY TO DAY REGISTER (FIRST STANZA)	THE OTHER SIDE REGISTER (SECOND STANZA)
<i>sEg</i> 'enclosure, fence'	<i>dEb</i> 'ritual enclosure' (for menstruating girls)
<i>dEb</i> 'ritual enclosure' (for menstruating girls)	<i>sEg</i> 'enclosure, fence'
<i>bau</i> 'ashes, haze'	<i>mali</i> 'haze'
<i>mali</i> 'haze'	<i>bau</i> 'ashes, haze'
<i>Apiñgali</i> 'name of a spirit'	<i>Maimgawi</i> 'name of a spirit'
<i>Maimgawi</i> 'name of a spirit'	<i>Apiñgali</i> 'name of a spirit'

Such symmetrical use may point towards a certain amount of freedom in the choice of the equivalent in the 'other side' register. This is corroborated by one of the singers' comment that the 'other side has to be different from the first side, you need to use a different word'.

There is some evidence that 'semantic relatives principle' is still productively applied for the creation of forms in the 'other side' register: see §6.

### 4.3 Borrowings

The 'other side' register is the only area in Manambu where one encounters identifiable borrowings from Iatmul. The pairings of Manambu forms in the first stanza and the Iatmul forms

in the second stanza (the 'other side' register) include kinship terms, two body parts, two animal terms and one adjective.

An exhaustive list of borrowings from Iatmul into the 'other side' register in Manambu is given in (12). The last column features Iatmul forms attested in the available sources (I have kept different orthographic conventions used by different authors: *d* corresponding to *nd*, *g* to *sg*). For each form, I give only the first meaning. For instance, *ñamun* 'elder brother' has a number of other meanings, including father's brother's son (an in-depth analysis is in Silverman 1993: 278-80, Korn 1971). These further meanings are not included, for the sake of simplicity.

(12) Borrowings from Iatmul into the 'other side' register in Manambu

EVERYDAY USE	MEANING	'OTHER SIDE'	IATMUL FORM
<i>amæy</i>	mother	<i>ñamEy</i>	<i>ñime</i> (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973); <i>namei</i> (Jendraschek 2007) 'mother'
<i>asay</i>	father (2)	<i>ñas</i>	<i>ñaek</i> (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973), <i>ñaik</i> (Jendraschek 2007), <i>ñayit</i> (Silverman 1993: 278) 'father', or <i>na'sa</i> (Jendraschek 2007), <i>nasa</i> (Silverman 1993: 278) 'husband sister's child'
<i>ma:m*</i>	elder brother/sibling	<i>ñamun*</i>	<i>ñamwun</i> (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973), <i>ñamun</i> (Silverman 1973) 'elder brother', <i>nyaamun</i> 'brother' (Jendraschek 2007)
<i>ñamus</i>	younger sibling	<i>suab</i>	<i>swaabu</i> (Jendraschek 2007), <i>tschuambo</i> 'younger brother' (Silverman 1993: 278)
<i>jukwar*</i>	sister (7)	<i>ñagay</i>	<i>nyange</i> (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973), <i>nyanggae</i> (Silverman 1993: 278) 'sister', <i>nyagei</i> 'elder sister' (Jendraschek 2007),
<i>awa:y</i>	maternal uncle	<i>wau</i>	<i>wau</i> 'mother's brother' (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973; Jendraschek 2007; Silverman 1993: 278)
<i>ti:d*</i>	co-wife, second wife	<i>kiya:d</i>	<i>kiyaadi'</i> (Jendraschek 2007) 'second wife', <i>kainda</i> 'co-wife' (Silverman 1973)
<i>tapwuk*</i>	chicken	<i>ñak</i>	<i>nyaaka</i> 'chicken' (Jendraschek 2007)
<i>wa:n</i>	ear	<i>da:m</i>	<i>da'ma</i> , <i>ndaama</i> 'nose' (Jendraschek 2007, Staalsen and Staalsen 1973)
<i>kudi</i>	mouth		
<i>kuprap</i>	bad	<i>kaplEy</i>	<i>kavle</i> (Staalsen and Staalsen 1973, Jendraschek 2007) 'bad'

The day to day register terms in this list which some speakers use in the 'other side' register are marked with an asterisk (we return to this in §6). The terms which are always used as equivalents in the 'other side' register are mother', 'father' and 'maternal uncle', arguably the most important and salient relatives in Manambu culture (see Aikhenvald 2008, Harrison 1993).

The Iatmul loans in Manambu differ from their form in Iatmul in one interesting way. Manambu lost the final vowels found in the proto-language (these final vowels are present in other Ndu languages). As we can see from the last column in (12), the Iatmul borrowings have

been adapted to Manambu, and the final vowel omitted, as in Manambu 'other side' *da:m*, Iatmul *da:ma* 'nose'. That is, the loan forms have been adapted to Manambu.

The term for 'father' in the 'other side' register is puzzling. Singers identify the terms for 'mother' and 'father' as undoubtedly 'Ñyaura' (Western Iatmul) (other terms listed in (12) have not been identified as such; note that none of the speakers I work with speak Iatmul). However, the forms for 'father' in Iatmul dialects bear only a remote similarity to *ñas* 'father' (the 'other side' register (compare *ñæk*: Staalsen and Staalsen 1973, *ñaik*: Jendraschek 2007, *ñayit*: Silverman 1993: 278 'father'). There is another form, *na'sa* (Jendraschek 2007), *nasa* (Silverman 278) 'husband sister's child', which may have been a partial source for *ñas*. A further possibility is that the form for father has been deliberately altered to *ñas*.

The meaning correspondences between the original Iatmul form and the Manambu form in the 'other side' register are straightforward in most cases (all the kinship terms and the adjective 'bad'). The 'underdifferentiation' principle (see §5) applies for the correlation 'nose' versus 'ear, mouth'.

The motivation for the Iatmul terms in the 'other side' register lies in the ritual contact between the two groups of River Dwellers: we return to this in §7.

There are just a few identifiable borrowings from Jungle Dweller languages. The only clear borrowing from Abelam in the 'other side' register is the term for totemic village *ga:y* which corresponds to the day to day register *tEP*. The form in Abelam (see Kundama et al. 2006) is *ga:ye* 'village' (cognate to Iatmul *gay*, Yalaku *kay* 'house'). The absence of the final vowel in the Manambu 'other side register form' is consistent with the final vowel loss in the language. *Gay-* (with a short vowel) occurs in Manambu (outside the song register) in the two mixed-origin terms *gay-du* (village:Abelam-man:Manambu) 'a man of Abelam origin, a man from Maprik area' and *gay-ta:kw* (village:Abelam-woman:Manambu) 'a woman of Abelam origin, a woman from Maprik area'. This is the only loan from Abelam in Manambu, and the only non-native form in the 'other side' register which also occurs outside the song register (within a compound).

Two further words which occur in the 'other side' register may be of Abelam origin. A strong biting dog was referred to as (13a) in the day to day register, and as (13b) in the 'other side' register:

- |       |   |                                |                                |
|-------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (13a) | Saula-waku-n  | wa-dE                          | <i>day to day register</i>     |
|       | bark-go.out-SEQ   | this.near.to.addressee-masc.sg |                                |
|       | vætevæt   | <u>ka:w</u> as                 |                                |
|       | bite:intensive  | strength dog                   |                                |
|       | 'Having gone outside barking this strong biting dog (is there)' |                                |                                |
|       |   |                                |                                |
| (13b) | Saula-waku-n  | wa-dE                          | <i>the other side register</i> |
|       | bark-go.out-SEQ   | this.near.to.addressee-masc.sg |                                |
|       | vætevæt   | <u>wala</u> as                 |                                |
|       | bite:intensive  | strength dog                   |                                |
|       | 'Having gone outside barking this strong biting dog (is there)' |                                |                                |

The form *wala* in the 'other side' register is reminiscent of Abelam *wa:le* in combination with the word 'dog' (Abelam *wa:le waasa*) meaning 'wild dog'.

In the 'other side' register, the Sepik River can be referred to as *gubi* 'wet place' (see (8)), or as *tEmkun*. The first CVC sequence of *tEm-kun* is similar to Abelam term *tema* 'Abelam people'. The meaning of *kun* is unclear (the Manambu *kun* 'pitpit with a fluffy white top' does not seem to have anything to do with this form). Using a term for the Abelam (who do not live on the Sepik River bank) to refer to the Sepik River would be consistent with the 'reversal' principle outlined in §4.1 above.

A further, more speculative loan, is the form *ka:r*, the 'other side' register equivalent of the Manambu *gu* 'water, river'. The form is reminiscent of Yessan-Mayo *ker* 'fire' (Foreman and Marten 2004). Using a form 'fire' to refer to 'water' would be consistent with the 'reversal principle' in the choice of the 'other side' register equivalents (see §4.1).

#### 4.4 'Song-only' words in the 'other side' register

The corpus of the 'other side' register contains about two dozen nouns and verbs whose etymology cannot be established at present. These include 'day to day' *sual*, the 'other side' register *kamal* 'story, lie', 'day to day' *mu*, the 'other side' register *rukwi*; 'day to day' *yu* 'shell valuable', the 'other side' register *ram* 'shell valuable'; 'day to day' *gErgEr* 'tiny', the 'other side' register *karEgE* 'tiny'; 'day to day' *juwi*, the 'other side' register *kakErak* 'grass floating on water'. These may be borrowings from unidentified languages, or archaic Manambu words fallen into disuse. We can recall, from §2, that the complex ethnohistory of the Manambu points towards extinction and perhaps absorption of various groups whose linguistic affiliation is not known.

The term *gEñap* is a case in point. This term is used as an address term for the Yimal subclan (of the 'Dark' clan group). Its 'other side' register counterpart is *Kwalap*. From the ethnohistories of the Manambu, it is known that the *GEñap* (described to me as very small people, almost dwarf-like) were in fact a group of Jungle Dwellers defeated by the Manambu of *Avatip* (according to Harrison's 1993: 67 estimate, this must have happened at end of the nineteenth century). The exact affiliation of the *GEñap* is unknown. The group was referred to as *GEñap-Kwalap* by Yuawalup, who told me the story of their extinction. Both terms, *gEñap* and *kwalap*, may have been words that existed in the language spoken by the original extinct group.

Many of the 'song-only forms' appear in personal names, e.g.

- 'day to day' *Ñamamayra-ta:kw*, the 'other side' register *ÑamelawakEn-ta:kw*; 'day to day' *Kami-bau*, the 'other side' register *Sakuli-bau* 'female names';
- 'day to day' *Yiba-bawi*, the 'other side' register *PEr-bawi*, 'day to day' *Mou-dEban*, the 'other side' register *Agu-dEban* 'male names'.

Singers are aware of the equivalence of the conventionalized correspondences. However, for most terms other than personal names there is some choice involved: we turn to this in §6.

### 5 The 'other side' register: construal of meaning

One term in the day to day register can correspond to one term in the 'other side' stanza. So, *tEp* 'village' corresponds to *ga:y* 'village'. Alternatively, a distinction made in the day to day language

can be neutralized in the 'other side' register: then the 'other side' register displays 'under-differentiation'. An alternative to this is 'over-differentiation': then two terms will be used in the 'other side' register corresponding to one in the day to day language.

In numerous instances, a distinction in the day to day register is neutralized in the 'other side' stanza. Examples are in (14).

(14) Examples of 'under-differentiation' in the 'other side' register

DAY TO DAY REGISTER	THE 'OTHER SIDE', OR SONG REGISTER
<i>ñE</i> 'sun, day'	<i>ba:p</i> 'sun, moon'
<i>ba:p</i> 'moon'	
<i>du</i> 'man'	<i>badi</i> 'man, child, young person'
<i>ñan</i> 'child, young uninitiated person'	
<i>badi</i> 'young man'	<i>ña:k</i> 'hen, chicken, rooster'
<i>tapwuk</i> 'hen'	
<i>ga:j</i> 'rooster'	

That a distinction in the everyday terms for 'sun' and 'moon' is neutralized in the 'other side' register makes sense from a mythological, or totemic, point of view: 'sun' and 'moon' are totems of the same clan group (the Wulwi-Ñawi: see Table 1), and so can be conceived of as forming one semantic unit.

A more general term may be used to subsume a more specific one — this is the case with 'child, youngster (a term also used for uninitiated men)', 'young (person) in general', and 'man'. This is reminiscent of how a more generic term can be used in the 'other side' register, corresponding to 'the day to day' form, as in the case of *apawul* 'day to day register: a mischievous spirit' versus *kwal-mis* the 'other side register: any mischievous spirit' (see §4.2).

We can recall, from (8), that the term 'face' (*muta:m*) is used to cover 'nose'; this same term is also used as equivalent of the day to day form *muta:m* 'face'. This is another example of 'underdifferentiation'. The principle of 'underdifferentiation' can apply to borrowings: this is what we saw in (12), where the nativised Iatmul borrowing *da:m* is used to cover 'ear' and 'mouth'.

The term *wama-sEp* 'white-skin' in the day to day register is equivalent to *karya-sEp* (be.light-skin) in the 'other side' register (*Sui* by Walinum, 2013) (see (8)). The same term *karya-sEp* was used as a correspondent of the day to day register *ñiki-sEp* (Harrison 1983: 70, Song 19) in day to day register *ñigi-sEp-a tupwi-kwalami* (red-skin-linker totemic.mound-stick), the other side register *karya-sEp-a kalusamEy* 'light-skin-linker totemic-mound.stick:SONG.ONLY) 'red-skinned totemic plant of the ceremonial mound'. This can be interpreted as another example of 'underdifferentiation'.

Just occasionally, the same term in the 'other side' register can be used as a counterpart for two personal names in the day to day register: *Rama-nEg* is the 'other side' register counterpart for both *Yua-nEg* and *Yua-mali* 'female personal names'.

Having a 'one-to-many' correspondence between a special speech style and a day to day style is not uncommon. The 'mother-in-law' avoidance style in the Australian languages of North

Queensland analyzed by Dixon (2015) has numerous examples of having one term in the avoidance language corresponding to several terms in the day to day style. A similar principle operates in the Warlbiri 'antonymous' language (Hale 1971: 481) ('where the context is sufficiently clear, it is possible to abstract the feature shared by all verbs of affecting and represent it by its opposite'). The way in which 'underdifferentiation' in the 'other side' language proceeds reflects cognitive patterns of abstraction. It may also correlate with totemic classification of entities, as we have seen for 'sun' and 'moon' in Manambu.

The Manambu 'other side' register offers just one example in the opposite direction. The day to day register employs one term for 'elder sibling', *ma:m*, covering 'elder brother' and 'elder sister'. In the 'other side' register, the two can be distinguished: *ma:m* refers to 'elder sister' and the Iatmul loan *ñamun* (see (12)) refers to 'elder brother'. (The corpus does not contain such examples for 'younger sibling'). However, such usage is not consistent across singers.

### 6 Variation and creativity in the 'other side' register

Not every word from an open class in the day to day language has a counterpart in the 'other side' register. The forms vary in how conventionalized they are. Variation in 'other side' register may involve synonymy. The Sepik River (day to day register *ñab*) can be referred to as *gubi* 'wet area', or as *tEm-kun* (Abelam.people:Abelam-?). This is the only example, in the available data, of two different forms in the 'other side' register corresponding to the day to day one.

As I mentioned above, personal names and the names of totemic ancestors are always different in the two stanzas. (If a singer chances to use the same name, it is commented upon as a 'mistake'). The 'other side' terms for names, heavenly bodies, important ritual objects such as totemic village, and three kinship terms (mother, father and maternal uncle) are fully conventionalized: there is no choice involved. For other terms speakers may vary. The same person used *ñamun* for 'elder brother' in the 'other side' register in one song, and *ma:m* 'elder sibling' (same as the day to day register) in another (see also the song in the Appendix where *ma:m* refers to older brother in the 'other side' register).

We saw in (8) that an equivalent of the day to day *ka:w* 'strength' is *vi* 'spear'. In (13), Walinum used *wala* 'wild, strong' as an equivalent of *ka:w*. We saw in (8) that *patiaku-* 'turn over' can be used as the other side counterpart of *blakE-* 'turn upside down'. An alternative was to use *patiaku-* in both registers (Harrison 1983: 74, Song 21). The form *du* 'man' is usually replaced by *badi* 'youngster'; however, in the song in the Appendix the singer did not do this.

In all likelihood, the reasons for this variation are manifold. We saw in (11) that there is a certain amount of freedom in the choosing the 'other side' equivalent. The variation may be intrinsic to the register. Alternatively, it may stem from partial obsolescence of the register, or lack of concentration on the part of the singers (as suggested by Pauline Laki, in her comment to songs in Harrison 1983).

At present, it is hard to evaluate the degree of personal creativity in coming up with the 'other side' counterpart. Two examples point towards the principle of 'semantic relatives' (§4.2) used as an active tool.

According to Manambu tradition, a maternal uncle can bestow an additional name on their sister's child if they are sick or in danger, as a matter of protection. After the launch of the Manambu grammar, texts and dictionary at the Avatip Primary school, my classificatory maternal uncle came up to me and bestowed on me the name of *Ap-a-ga:j* (bone-linker-rooster), literally, bony rooster ('bony' in Manambu is equivalent to 'very thin'). This was appropriate because my classificatory mother belongs to the Nabul clan, and chickens and rooster are their totems (see §2). (I was particularly thin and exhausted at that point, and ostensibly needed protection which is the role of names bestowed by maternal relatives: compare Harrison 1985). I immediately asked my uncle — highly proficient in totemic lore despite being a devoted SDA Christian — what the 'other side' counterpart of name is. He thought for a minute and then offered the name of *REka-ga:j* (dry-rooster), literally 'dry rooster', a 'semantic relative' of 'bony chicken'.

I told this to Pauline Laki, my classificatory sister, also highly knowledgeable in totemic names and lore. She remembered that she had also been given a name by her maternal relatives (of the Nabul clan), when as a little girl she was very weak and vulnerable. The name was *Væker-ga:j* (fall-rooster), lit. falling rooster. I asked her about the 'other side' form; and after some deliberation she suggested that the form *Taka-ga:j* (put-rooster), literally, putting down-rooster, would be appropriate. (Neither my uncle nor Pauline used the specific 'other side' register Iatmul-origin form *ñak* for rooster (see (12) and (14); this may indicate either individual variation or obsolescence of this form).

This piece of anecdotal evidence points towards the existence of productive principles in creating some counterparts between the two registers. Rather than always learning the correspondents by rote and relying on one's memory, one can work out what the counterpart could be.

## 7 What does the 'other side' register tell us?

The 'other side' register is instructive in a number of ways.

Firstly, its composition reflects and corroborates the cultural significance of terms which always have to be different in the two stanzas of each song: the personal and totemic names, and three key kinship terms (mother, father and maternal uncle).

Secondly, it reflects a number of principles behind the choice of a different term in the 'other side' register. These include 'reversal' reminiscent of the Warlbiri 'antonymous' language (§4.1), 'semantic relatives' (§4.2) and 'under-differentiation' (§5). The ways in which counterparts are chosen reflect the singers' creativity and proficiency in exploiting the rich resources of the Manambu lexicon with its multiple synonymy.

And thirdly, the 'other side' register is the only part of the language where we encounter a number of loans from Iatmul. Why Iatmul?

This takes us to traditional knowledge as an object and exchange between the two River-Dweller groups.

The Manambu and the Western Iatmul (or Ñaura) — the two powerful groups of River-Dwellers — live in the same natural environment, and share means of subsistence, warfare, social structure and, to a large extent, their ritual system and values. At the same time, they are rivals; contacts between them used to be accompanied by outbursts of overt military conflict (see Harrison 1993: 38-40, and Aikhenvald 2008, 2009, on the warfare between the two groups). In times of peace, the attitude of the Manambu — a smaller group — towards the Iatmul is that of suspicion and distrust. This type of contact-conflict relationship tends to motivate divergence rather than convergence, and 'the assertion of local differences', as was demonstrated by O'Neill (2006: 226-7), for a number of indigenous groups in north-western California.

Such divergence goes together with a tendency to keep languages separate, and is reminiscent of the notion of schismogenesis (Bateson 1936/1958: 175), defined as 'a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals'. In agreement with this, the neighbouring factions of the Iatmul would take opposite sides in any debates, trying to keep themselves as different as possible from their closest neighbours. In other words, close contact may lead to accentuating the differences. The lack of Iatmul loans in the day to day Manambu can be accounted for by the same principle — maintaining the linguistic identity by keeping the lexicons separate (outside the ritual domain, for which spells, incantations, and names are traded, just like tangible sacred objects).

Despite the traditional enmities, there used to be some co-operation between the Manambu and the Western Iatmul in traditional matters. The Iatmul used to be a larger, and a ritually more sophisticated group (Harrison 1990, Moutu 2013). Long-term contact with the Iatmul involved trading spells and incantations in rituals, and also personal names. Trading ownership of names and cults is a feature of numerous Sepik cultures — including the Kwoma (Bowden 1983: 67), the Abelam, and the Iatmul (Bateson 1936/1958).<sup>4</sup>

In Harrison's (1990: 20) words, 'from an historical perspective, the circulation of ritual forms in the regional trading system seems to have been a key formative influence on Manambu society [...], because the most valued scarce resources among the Manambu, and the items of strategic prestige value in the political system of their villages, were rights in ritual property, much of which the Manambu acquired from the Iatmul. Manambu ritual and cosmology seem, in fact, to be not only a kind of patchwork of the ritual and cosmological traditions of neighbouring societies, but a largely *bought* patchwork, acquired piecemeal through trade'.

Manambu culture is an 'importing culture', similarly to many other Sepik cultures. It is centred on exchange and value assigned to outside material and non-material goods (see §2). In many Sepik societies, incantations and even names and individual words were traded and bought (see Harrison 1990: 20-3, for a general perspective). These 'acquisitions' used to surface in various ritual speech styles, many of them effectively lost in modern days. Harrison (1990: 78)

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<sup>4</sup> Incidentally, this may explain the pervasive character of Iatmul- and Manambu-sounding names among the Kwoma, the Chambri and the Yessan-Mayo.

reports that shamanic spirits used to speak 'through their human mediums in a special, arcane language, intelligible only to those with many years of experience of shamanic séances, which is actually a kind of Manambu-based jargon with exaggerated *outré* Iatmul features'. Harrison stresses that in Manambu, 'all specifically "religious" forms of speech borrow heavily from Western Iatmul'.

The presence of Iatmul loan forms in the ritualized, the 'other side' song register is the only surviving trace of 'bilingualism in ritual register' between the Manambu and the Iatmul. The 'other side' register also contains a few loans from Jungle Dweller languages, the traditional trade partners of the Manambu. They are few, and hard to interpret at present.

One thing is clear. The 'other side' register reflects multidimensional history of the Manambu language, and the imprint of its neighbours not accessible in the non-song styles. It is the last repository of layers of the language and the culture which are on their way out.

Historically, we have no information about the exact mechanisms of creation and evolution of the 'other side' register. The conventionalized words are said to have been 'handed down' from older relatives to younger ones. We can speculate that this register may have been created artificially, through individual invention. A number of special language styles in Aboriginal Australia (Dixon 2002: 91-5) and in Africa (Storch 2011: 19-40) are believed to have arisen as the result of language manipulation or engineering. How relevant this is for the evolution of the Manambu song language, we will never know for sure.

### **8 The 'other side' register: an endangered speech genre**

Due to the encroaching influence of Western culture, the traditional knowledge of names, ancestral stories and genealogies is rapidly falling into oblivion among the Manambu. This includes the virtual obsolescence of initiation, sped up by the Australian administration who strongly objected to ritual killings and all sorts of bloody performances accompanying the traditional ceremonies.

Harrison (1993: 44) reports that 'when the last full scale scarification ceremony was held in Avatip in 1936, inducting novices into the first stage of male initiation', men from Yuanab, Malu, Japandai (Western Iatmul) and Sengo came to help.

What formerly existed as bilingualism realized in an unusual kind of diglossia — with the Iatmul forms being part of a ritual register — is now almost gone. Just a few Iatmul forms are still actively used in the songs, and only some are identified by speakers themselves as being originally Iatmul.

There are no other loans from Iatmul in Manambu other than those which still survive in the 'other side' register. This reflects the nature of contact between the River Dwellers. The Iatmul elements — however many — were restricted to spheres where the interaction went on: the trading of words and other 'items' to do with exchange of spiritual valuables tantamount to monetary riches, and to the exchange of sacred objects.

Stylistic, rhetorical and expressive loss often accompanies partial language obsolescence in the situation of language shift (cf. Woodbury 1998). This obsolescence of a ritual register is

part of the on-going language reduction and culture change in Manambu, which accompanies partial shift to Tok Pisin (cf. Aikhenvald 2004).

All song genres are on their way out. The totemic knowledge and the proficiency in the 'other side' register, with its intricacies and Iatmul-style forms, are rapidly decreasing as older people pass away. Women under sixty (and even many of the older women) do not have enough knowledge to perform a mourning song. According to Kamibau (in her early sixties), they 'sing' men's fashion: emitting a high-pitched whining sound. This is referred to as *du-gEr* (man-cry) 'crying men's fashion', or *kapa-gEr* (just, for nothing-cry) 'just crying, crying for nothing'. The multidimensional tapestry of the elaborate Manambu is rapidly eroding, and with it the remainders of a multilingual society.

**Abbreviations:** DS - different subject, fem - feminine; masc - masculine, poss - possessive; SEQ - sequential, sg - singular;

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- (6) Maamee, akE-dE — *sung twice*  
 older brother:vocative where-masc.sg

AgEk the 'other side' register

- (1) ÑamEy mEn-a-kE-l  
 mother you.masc-linker-possessive-fem.sg
- (2) BadiginEbEr BadigErba Bapayalam  
 totemic names of his father's clan Vali:k
- (3) MædEvæk KategursuEn  
 totemic names of his father's clan Vali:k
- (4) warEbiyasakin warEbiyasapran  
 going.across.away going.across.towards.speaker
- (5) tE-dE bEyEbEya tEpajagwi kaovæk,  
 have-masc.sg hot yam.soup sharpness
- (6) wun-a-dE SEba:r yapi-du  
 I-linker-masc.sg name.of.mother's.clan trade-man
- (7) Maamee, akE-dE — *sung twice*  
 older brother:vocative where-masc.sg

Rough translation 'Your mother is (here), (names of the deceased man), going across going towards, you with your sharp wit, my knowledgeable man Panbwi/SEba:r, older brother, where are you?'