Let’s ‘kakokako’ about Motu
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Introduction
Motu is an Oceanic language spoken along the coast of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea [1]. The last comprehensive survey of Motu was completed in 1896 [2] which was followed by a revised grammar of Hiri Motu in 1974 [3]. Hiri Motu is a major dialect of Motu and was historically utilized as a trade language among the many tribes located in Papua [4]. The data was elicited from a language consultant and assistance was sought from the language consultant's parents to gloss unfamiliar vocabulary and clarify ambiguous grammatical constructions.

Phonetic Processes
There are five consonantal and five vowel phonemes in Motu. The consonantal phonemes in Motu are /p, b, t, k, s, d, g, k/, /h, b, m, n, l, r/ and the vowel phonemes are /a, e, i, u, o/. Motu (and Police Motu) has a CV syllable structure.

- the glottal stop [ʔ] only occurs in the initial position of a word preceding a vowel (e.g. 'tama'): the glottal stop is not phonetic.
- the labialized palatal approximant [d] in free variation with /l/ and only occurs in the final position of a word (e.g. sinesu 'river, lake')
- the palatal approximant [l] is an allomorph of /l/ when it is realised intervocically (e.g. halda 'they' and bingemu 'you')
- the labio-velar approximate [w] is an allophone of /w/ when it is realised intervocically (e.g. law-e- 'my'
- the bilabial nasal /m/ and alveolar nasal /n/ can occur word-finally following variable word final /l-/deletion (e.g. godoru-ma → godoru-m 'compare')
- variable intervocalic /-i- deletion (e.g. dahoko → do-ka 'what')
- the alveolar approximant [l] is in free variation with the alveolar tap [ɾ]

Adjectives
The typology of the adjective class in Motu is consistent with other Oceanic languages.

(1) Clifford be fijiaja kokolako-na bona moole-na. Clifford is dog red-35G.POSS and happy-35G.POSS
Clifford is a [happy red dog].

As sentence (1) illustrates,
- Adjective words such as kokolako 'red' and moole 'happy' are more noun-like
- Adjectives can appear with the nominal case third person possessive case markers -na (SG) and -pla (PL)
- Multiple adjectives can be coordinated with the conjunction bona 'and'

The above features can be observed in attributive and predicative position.

Furthermore, adjectives are not inflected for degree (i.e. they do not have comparative or superlative forms), but degree can be expressed with the adverb herija 'very'. Comparison can also be expressed as shown in sentence (2). Sentence (2) is a good example where the word moole 'happy' is nominalised.

(2) oj-emu moole be boda law-e-wa be maragi You-3SG.POSS happy is big my-1SG.POSS is small
You are happier than me. (lit. 'your happiness is big, mine is small')

Adpositions
Compound postpositions are typically formed using a (locative) noun, a personal suffix and the basic postposition ai: noun + personal suffix (-gu, -mu, -na, -da, etc.) + ai
heunu-la 'under' = heunu + -na + ai

Sometimes no personal suffix is used:
murimurim 'outside' = murimurim ai (no personal suffix)

There are also some postpositions such as kohihki 'near' that contain neither a personal suffix nor ai. Postpositions in a sentence come after the noun, usually at the end of the sentence (1)

(1) kito na [muava kohihkhi] cat is box near
"The cat is near the box."

Sentence (1) can be said in another way as well. Rather than the position of a noun in relation to another noun, there can be a description of whether the two objects are close/far from each other, as seen in (2):

(2) kito bona muava be kohihkhi cat and box is near
"The cat and the box are near each other"

Motu, being a SOV language, nearly always postpositions rather than prepositions. However, there were a few instances where the adposition seems to come before rather than after the noun, making it a postposition (e.g. ba be oti guroro wau is sought above for the *+= play thing*) was elicited instead of the expected kito be godoro guroro oti. This is not a very common phenomenon.

References