

# MPUR

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Mpur is a Non-Austronesian tone language with ca. 5000 speakers in Kebar and Amberbaken (North-East Bird's Head of West Papua). These geographical names are sometimes used in the literature to indicate the Mpur language. For a sketch Mpur, the reader is referred to Odé (2002a). The lexicon is of Non-Austronesian origin, but many loans entered the language from Numforese, Irianese Malay, Standard Indonesian and some also from Dutch. A Mpur Vocabulary is in press (Odé (forthcoming)). Mpur morphology and syntax show Austronesian features (Reesink 1998:603ff.), such as subject-verb-object word order and the absence of heavy verb morphology.

The following brief survey of Mpur phonology and morphology presents some features that are relevant for understanding the interlinearized text below.

Mpur phonology is described by Kalmbacher (1996). The language has five vowel phonemes /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/, /u/, and twelve consonant phonemes: plosives /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/; fricatives /f/, /s/, /j/; nasals /m/, /n/; semivowels /w/, /y/. Nasals can be syllabic. Consonant elision on morpheme boundaries, vowel elision between consonants and semivowel insertion between vowels is a frequent phenomenon.

Mpur has four lexical tone contrasts: high, midrising, mid/midfalling and low, indicated on vowels and syllabic nasals with the marks ´ ˘ ˆ ˜, respectively. Examples are: *wóp* 'masses.of.water', *wǒp* 'resin', *wôp* 'k.o.palm', *wòp* 'harden.of.sago'. A description of tones and intonation can be found in Odé (2002b), and a discussion about the experimental-phonetic analysis of tones and intonation in Mpur in Odé (1996; 1997a,b; 1998).

There are free and bound pronouns; bound pronouns are subject markers prefixed on verbs (1) and on inalienable nouns (2).

- (1) *A-jap*      *beraw*      *do-musim*      *do-f(i)-rokir*<sup>1</sup>.  
3SM-live    with      3D-woman    3D-CLF-two  
He lived together with the two women.

- (2) *Im-ber*      *n-prek*      *n-(w)om*      *ka-(a)mbram*  
1SG-tie      3SF-foot    3SF-arm      that-at.the.side  
I tied her feet and arms spread out sideways.

On verbs, subject prefixation is obligatory with human subjects, except with *(mi)nton* 'child' and *mamir* 'person', unless gender is stressed. The word order in verbal clauses is SVO. A verbaliser *bi-* can be used to change loans or words from other word classes into a verb: *bi-tutup* VB-close 'close', *bi-sik* 'VB-be.unable' from *sik* 'not.possible'. In sequences, verbs are obligatorily inflected, as in (3):

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in a number of cases classifiers are required in combination with numerals.

- (3) *De-jap de-frur de-tar bain.*  
 3PL-live 3PL-make 3PL-possess garden  
 They live and work in their garden.

Verbs are not inflected for the marking of Tense-Mood-Aspect. A general question-marking particle *-e* indicates the interrogative (4) in clauses without question word; the imperative mood is expressed by the second person, sometimes followed by the clause-final demonstrative *ka* (5); the prohibitive is expressed by *jan* ‘not’ (6).

- (4) *An-un si jan-e?*  
 2SG-go to house-QM  
 Are you going home?

- (5) *Nen-dokwa njep na nen-kapet! Jan! An-dokwa ka!*  
 2PL-carry firewood for 2PL-cut no 2SG-carry that  
 You must carry the firewood and cut it! No, you must carry (it)!

- (6) *An-wandar jan!*  
 2SG-shame not  
 Don’t be ashamed!

Alienable nouns are possessed with the possessive pronouns *-tar* and *-bi* (*de-tar jan* 3PL-POSS house ‘their house’) and inalienable nouns by means of bound pronouns (*n-prek* 3SF-foot ‘her feet’). The noun *bar* ‘thing’ occurs frequently with other nouns or as nominaliser with words from other word classes: *ba(r)-bwa* thing-leaf ‘vegetables’, *ba(r)-kotot* thing-laugh ‘funny’. Nouns referring to human beings and names are marked for gender: *nton-a* child-3SM ‘boy’, *Flora-n* Flora-3SF ‘Flora’.

Adjectives follow the noun and can be further specified with the relative marker *ma* (*iw mafun* bird beautiful ‘a beautiful bird’ vs *iw ma mafun* ‘the bird that is beautiful’). In predications, adjectives can occur as verb and take subject prefixation: *a-umfrum* 3SM-yellow ‘he looks yellow’. Adjectives such as *kwaik* ‘strong, hard’ can also be used as adverbs: *de-jap kwaik* 3PL-sit strong ‘they are firmly seated’.

Some spatial prepositions have an aspectual meaning with verbs of motion as illustrated in (7-9). *Ku* ‘to, in, at’ may be prefixed with *a-*, which I have glossed as ‘3SM’.

- (7) *In-aw si Manokwar.*  
 1SG-go.home to Manokwari  
 I go home to Manokwari.

- (8) *An-un ma Anja.*  
 3SM-go to Anjai  
 He has gone to Anjai (and is there now).

- (9) *Saji n-un ku Anja.*  
 once 1SG-go to Anjai  
 Once I have been to Anjai.

In this brief survey of Mpur morphology only a few words can be said about the deictic system, which requires extensive research since it is not very well understood yet. Spatial deictics are expressed by the basic demonstratives *ki* ‘here/this’, *ka* ‘there/that’ and *mek* ‘over there’. The demonstratives occur with the prefix morpheme *n-*, probably ‘3SF’ and, if used attributively, with relative pronoun *ma* and *n-* ‘3SF’ as shown in the following examples:

- (10) *Aka dwaw det bain ma-n-ki.*  
 and.then pig eat garden REL-3SF-this  
 And then the pig will eat up this garden.
- (11) *A-mim bapu ma Amtur a-na-mek.*  
 3SM-arrive far.away at Amtur 3SM-come-there  
 He arrived far away at (the river) Amtur there.

The anaphoric *ta* and focus/topic marking *ni* indicate textual deictics. They are shown in examples (12, 13):

- (12) *A-wot ka nton ni tut nton mafun mim.*  
 3SM-see that child FOC because child beautiful so  
 He looked after that child because it was so beautiful.
- (13) *Aka n-jat a-ta kin.*  
 and.then 3SF-wound 3SM-ANA healthy  
 And then her wound was cured.

The anaphoric elements can be prefixed by *a-* ‘3SM?’ and *ba(r?)* ‘thing?’: *a-ta*, *ba-ta*, *ba-ni*. My consultant insisted that in the forms with *a-*, initial *b-* is omitted and that it comes from *bar* ‘thing’. They may be combined with the demonstrative *ki* ‘this’ and *ka* ‘that’.

In narrative texts, the conjunctions *min-ta-ki* like-ANA-this, *min-ta-(a)re* like-ANA-so and some other combinations with *min-* ‘like-’ with the meaning ‘having arrived at this point, things were like that’ (in short: ‘like that’), occur very frequently in clause-initial as well as clause-final position.

Finally, an interesting feature in Mpur is the frequent occurrence of clitics, which function in discourse as interrogative, continuation, focus, temporal marker, vocative, and as the expression of emotive emphasis (see also Odé 1997a; 1998). Though some clitics, like interrogative clitic *-e* and clitic *-o* in enumerations, have a clear meaning of their own, it is not easy to explain differences between the clitics. I will gloss all of them as CL.

The text for this contribution is told in the coastal dialect of Saukorem, Amberbaken, in which for example Mpur *wop* ‘masses.of.water’ is realized as *op*. Notational conventions, apart from the abbreviations listed at the beginning of this volume, are the following. Semivowel insertion between vowels is indicated by Y; vowels and consonants that are not pronounced are presented in parentheses. Stem-initial /d/ preceded by a prefix ending in a vowel is pronounced

as [r]; this may also occur in connected speech if a preceding word ends in a vowel. In the text I spelled according to the actual pronunciation of /d/ as [d] or as [r]. Likewise I followed in the spelling the actual pronunciation of word-initial /n/ before bilabials as [m], of word-initial /b/ as [w, β] in for instance the deictic elements *(a)bata* and *bani* and in *bar* ‘thing’ and of word-initial /p/ which is sometimes pronounced as [w, b, β].

### *Op ti wa*

‘Masses of water washed things away’

told by Markus Wabia (ca. 40 years old) Saukorem, March 1994

- (1) *Sabon-i a-ku sor ma muk Birwaw/*  
 before-CL 3SM-at mountain REL name Birwaw  
 It was in the mountains called Birwaw (near Imbuan, Amberbaken),

*a-ku nek Abwa a-tow#*  
 3SM-at earth Abwa.river 3SM-flow  
 in the land where the river Abwa (in Biak language: Wesaoeni) flows.

- (2) *Put a-ta-k(a) mwam/ pa-pet-o jan/*  
 day 3SM-ANA-that hot.season rain-fall-CL not  
 On that day during the hot season, when there is also no rain,

*pu(t)-m(a)-tat ba(r)-(y)ep kaku#*  
 day-REL-hot thing-dry very  
 it was hot and everything was very dry.

- (3) *Are ma nkan (f)i-ti/ a-un na a-m(in)sa-wa(r)/*  
 So REL old.man CLF-other 3SM-go to 3SM-hunt-thing  
 So a certain old man went to hunt,

*a-m(in)sa-war-e min-ta-(a)re a-jik dwaw fi-tu#*  
 3SM-hunt-thing-CL like-ANA-so 3SM-kill pig CLF-one  
 he hunted till he had killed one pig.

- (4) *Dwaw a-ta-ka a-bep/ na a-a(w) si jan*  
 pig 3SM-ANA-that 3SM-carry to 3SM-go.home to house  
 He carried the pig in a cloth to return to the house

*ma de-kon ku-i#*  
 REL 3PL-live at-CL  
 they lived in.

- (5) *A-mim a-ku jan ma de-kon ku-i#*  
 3SM-arrive 3SM-at house REL 3PL-live at-CL  
 He arrived at the house where they lived.
- (6) *De-kuri yet/ na de-kep dwaw wa(r?)-ni#*  
 3PL-strike fire to 3PL-roast pig thing?-FOC  
 They made a fire to roast that pig.
- (7) *Dwaw wa-ni de-kep-e bari bwam mim a-ku fraru-i#*  
 pig thing?-FOC 3PL-roast-CL from head till 3SM-at middle-CL  
 They roasted the pig from its head to its very middle.
- (8) *Mamir a-ta ma a-jik dwaw-a keki/ a-non-a#*  
 man 3SM-ANA REL 3SM-kill pig-3SM just 3SM-child-3SM  
 The man who just killed the pig had a son.
- (9) *A-non a-ta-ki jadi minton-e#*  
 3SM-child 3SM-ANA-this so child-CL  
 His son, so the child...
- (10) *Minto(n) ba-ta-ka deka ni kubwiw#*  
 child thing?-ANA-that hold wood without.bark  
 That child held a bare stick.
- (11) *Deka ni kubwiw ku wom ba-ni#*  
 hold wood without.bark at hand thing?-FOC  
 It held a bare stick in its hand.
- (12) *Are a-wom are a-wom ku dwaw bremen*  
 and.so 3SM-stab and.so 3SM-stab in pig body  
 Then he stabbed, then he stabbed it into the body of the pig,
- dwaw ma de-kep ku yet-i#*  
 pig REL 3PL-roast in fire-CL  
 the pig that they roasted in the fire.
- (13) *A-wom min-ta mek-i a-bwa min-ta-(a)re/*  
 3SM-stab like-ANA there-CL 3SM-say like-ANA-so  
 He stabbed like that in there and said like that,
- minto(n) a-ta bwa min-ta-(a)re:*  
 child 3SM-ANA say like-ANA-so  
 that child said like that:

- (14) *Nan ba(r)-ma n-a a-y-andir-an put-(t)ot serem n-da-ka#*  
 2SG thing-REL 1SG-father 3SM-Y-look.for-2SG day-night all 3SF-ANA-that  
 You are something that my father looks for all day and night.
- (15) *A-bwasi nto(n) wa-ni bwasi bwa min-ta-ka#*  
 3SM-want child thing?-FOC want say like-ANA-that  
 He wanted, the child wanted to say all this, like that.
- (16) *Dwaw wa-ni fo parrap<sup>2</sup> bari yet-a ma/*  
 pig thing?-FOC start suddenly from fire-CL REL  
 This pig suddenly got up from the fire that
- mwak ma wor sar a-ta-ne(k)-y-a#*  
 glow REL flame tongue.of.fire 3SM-ANA-there-Y-CL  
 was burning there with glowing coals and tongues of fire.
- (17) *Dwaw parrap bari yet min-ta-ka#*  
 pig suddenly from fire like-ANA-that  
 The pig suddenly got away from the fire, like that.
- (18) *De-wa de-fon ma de-kep dwaw a-ta-ka*  
 3PL-REL 3PL-many REL 3PL-roast pig 3SM-ANA-that  
 There were many of them roasting that pig,
- de-y-(w)ok-o de-y-(w)ok-o de-y-(w)ok-o/ de-ip jan#*  
 3PL-Y-hold-CL 3PL-Y-hold-CL 3PL-Y-hold-CL 3PL-strong not  
 they tried to stop (it), (but) they were not strong (enough).
- (19) *De-bot bor na de-kwar/ de-kwar-o sik#*  
 3PL-bring lance to 3PL-stab 3PL-stab-CL no.result  
 They took long lances in order to pierce (it), they pierced without result.
- (20) *Dwaw wa-ni parrap mambere min-ta-(a)re aw si niraw#*  
 pig thing?-FOC suddenly too like-ANA-so run to forest  
 Too suddenly that pig ran off to the forest.
- (21) *Put a-ta kopem ma mwak a-ta-ka*  
 day 3SM-ANA hot.sun REL burn 3SM-ANA-that  
 That day the sun was like glowing coal.

<sup>2</sup> Literally *parrap* means ‘suddenly beginning to convulse’. Note that in Numfor the verb *sapararerer* means ‘to convulse (of a dying animal), to flounder’. It was suggested by my consultant to translate it as ‘suddenly’.

- (22) *ka-tip non jan-i bajur*<sup>3</sup>#  
 ?-while little not-CL heavy.rain.causing.flood  
 Not much later there was heavy rain causing a flood.
- (23) *Bwansan bi-tutup/ sor a-ta-k(a)#*  
 raincloud VB-close mountain 3SM-ANA-there  
 Rainclouds hid the mountains.
- (24) *Tip non pa-pet/ ti(p) no(n) kadadu<sup>4</sup>/ ti(p) no(n) ferep#*  
 while little rain-fall while little thunder while little lightning  
 Somewhat later there was rain, then thunder, then lightning.
- (25) *Bi-re min-ta-(a)re/*  
 VB-till like-ANA-so  
 Finally it was like
- (w)op<sup>5</sup> ti wa(r) ku-ta-ka#*  
 mass.of.water wash.away thing at-ANA-there  
 masses of water that washed everything away.
- (26) *Bo(t) bajar*<sup>3</sup>#  
 bring heavy.rain.causing.flood  
 (It) brought heavy rain causing a flood.
- (27) *Jadi minto(n)-(m)a (w)om dwaw-a keki dwaw (m)a*  
 so child-REL stab pig-CL earlier pig REL  
 So the child that just stabbed the pig, the pig that
- de-kep-a keki/ fo na aw/*  
 3PL-roast-CL? earlier get.up to run  
 they just roasted and that got up to run away,
- (28) *omfriw terus terus mim a-ku-a/ Birwaw bwam#*  
 run continually till 3SM-at-CL? Birwaw top  
 (the child) ran continually till it arrived at the top of the mountain Birwaw.

<sup>3</sup> The more common pronunciation of *bajur* is *bajar* from *bar-jar* ‘thing-evil.spirit’, a word also used in Amberbaken to indicate the watergod, better known as *Wop*, lit.: ‘mass.of.water, lake’ in Kebar, but also in Amberbaken (cf. Miedema 1984: 174, 233ff.). Because of the different pronunciations of initial /w/ and /b/, I am not sure whether here the word *wajar* from *war-jar* ‘water-fluid’ is meant. *Bajur* was originally translated as ‘heavy rain causing flood that washes away people’. The common word for a flood is *war-(d)at* ‘water-to.flood’. See also note 6.

<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the usual pronunciation of non-initial /d/ as [r], the speaker clearly pronounces [d]. This is said to be common in the Saukorem area, where, in contrast, initial /d/ can also be pronounced as [r].

<sup>5</sup> *Op* or *wop* means ‘mass.of.water, lake’, but is also the name of the watergod *Wop* or *Wuob* as it is spelled and described by Miedema (1984:174ff.). See also note 4.

- (29) *Mim ba-ku Sinka-y-a#*  
till thing?-at Sinka-Y-CL?  
It arrived at (mountain) Sinka (near Imbuan).
- (30) *De-wa de-jap a-ku Sinka a-ta-ka de-now-e tek#*  
3PL-REL 3PL-live 3SM-at Sinka 3SM-ANA-there 3PL-drown-CL down  
The people who lived there in Sinka drowned.
- (31) *Op ti de-now#*  
mass.of.water wash.away 3PL-drown  
Masses of water washed (them) away and they drowned.
- (32) *Nto(n) wa-ni aw fari terus#*  
child thing?-FOC run across continually  
The child ran and ran across (the mountain?).
- (33) *Aw fari terus-terus mim ba-ku-a Bukot-a#*  
run more continually arrive thing?-at-CL Bukot-CL  
It ran and ran further and arrived at Bukot (near Imbuan).
- (34) *De-wa de-jap a-ku Bukot a-ta de-now#*  
3PL-REL 3PL-live 3SM-at Bukot 3SM-ANA 3PL-drown  
The people living there in Bukot had drowned.
- (35) *Minto(n) wa-ni aw fari terus terus-e mim ku Babunar-a#*  
child thing?-FOC run more continually-CL arrive in Babunar-CL  
The child ran further continually and arrived in Babunar.
- (36) *Ey Babunar-a-o a-now/*  
CL? Babunar-CL-CL 3SM-drown  
Babunar had (also) drowned,
- karena bajar a-ta wop a-ta-ka#*  
because heavy.rain 3SM-ANA mass.of.water 3SM-ANA-there  
because of those heavy rains and the masses of water there.
- (37) *Karena aw terus minton mim ku Nuwrer#*  
because run continually child arrive in Nuwrer  
Because it ran on and on the child arrived in Nuwrer.
- (38) *Nuwrer a-ta-ki Nuwrer-o de-now#*  
Nuwrer 3SM-ANA-here Nuwrer-CL 3PL-drown  
Here in Nuwrer they had (also) drowned.



- (39) *Ma minton-o ut ku-ta-ka#*  
REL child-CL dead at-ANA-there  
The child (also) died there.
- (40) *Dwaw ma aw keki/*  
pig REL run earlier  
The pig that ran away earlier
- mwan kanik bit/ bit se bari pokram/*  
kind like stone stone fall from heaven  
fell down from heaven like a kind of stone,
- ma ut ma-ta-mum to#*  
REL stay at-ANA-inside still  
that is still there inside (the forest).
- (41) *Bit a-ta-ka koron bari bwam/ mim a-ku fraru#*  
stone 3SM-ANA-that clean from head till 3SM-at middle  
That stone is polished from top to middle.
- (42) *Un bari fraru aw si muk-i/ bot kanik mwap#*  
go from middle run to tail-CL make like grit  
From middle to tail it is like grit.
- (43) **Jadi** *bit a-ta bari put a-ta-ka mim put-a pu(t)-nuni#*  
so stone 3SM-ANA from day 3SM-ANA-that till day-CL day-this.day  
So from that day on till today the stone is there.
- (44) **Jadi** *sor a-ta-ka/ de-ron muk bi(t)-rwaw a-bwam#*  
so mountain 3SM-ANA-that 3PL-call name stone-pig 3SM-head  
So that mountain they called Birwaw, the stone-pig's head.
- (45) **Jadi** *sabon-i bajar a-ta-ki/ waktu a-ta-ka/*  
so long.ago-CL heavy.rain 3SM-ANA-here time 3SM-ANA-that  
So long ago heavy rain was here, at that time,
- atau** *put a-ta-ka/*  
or day 3SM-ANA-that  
or that day,
- injil** *unkrem ba-ku nek ma(m)-k(e)sam a-ta (j)an-to/*  
Gospel enter thing?-in land person-big.forest 3SM-ANA not-yet  
the Gospel had not yet entered Papua land,

*atau Mafun<sup>6</sup> a-kwap unkrem a-ku ma(m)-k(e)sam a-ta jan#*  
 or God(good) 3SM-voice enter 3SM-in person-big forest 3SM-ANA not  
 or the Word of God did not enter Papua.

- (46) *Jadi de-nkan de-nkan kiar wa(r)#*  
 so 3PL-old 3PL-old believe thing  
 So old people, old people believed things.

- (47) *Waktu a-ta per-o e-pin<sup>7</sup> jan#*  
 time 3SM-ANA dog-CL 1PL-disrespect not  
 At that time we also didn't disrespect dogs.

- (48) *Dwaw-o e-pin jan#*  
 pig-CL 1PL-disrespect not  
 We also didn't disrespect pigs.

- (49) *Kam ete-ma<sup>8</sup> bitur bwat*  
 meat.of.living.animal some-REL leg four  
 Four-footed animals

*ma ni-tir n-jun ek-o<sup>9</sup> jan#*  
 REL wood-tip 3SF-top there-CL not  
 that live in trees we also didn't (disrespect).

- (50) *Kam te u(t)-ma niraw be-nek ek-o jan#*  
 meat.of.living.animal that live-in forest LOC-earth there-CL not  
 Four-footed animals that live down in the forest we also didn't disrespect.

- (51) *Be femuk a-ta-ki/ kutut injil ma unkrem/*  
 but nowadays 3SM-ANA-here because Gospel REL enter  
 But nowadays here, because the Gospel has entered,

*atau Mafun a-kwap a-kwap unkrem a-ku nek a-ta-ki/*  
 or God(good) 3SM-voice 3SM-voice enter 3SM-in land 3SM-ANA-this  
 or the Word of God, the Word has entered this land,

<sup>6</sup> *Mafun* lit. means *ma-fun* REL-live 'good, beautiful'.

<sup>7</sup> The verb *pin* means 'curse, abuse'. Thus, here it implies that at that time "we still revered animals, we still worshipped them with offerings", as suggested by line (52).

<sup>8</sup> According to my consultant the form *ete-ma* or *te-ma* means 'some are' and is equivalent to *atima*, probably *a-ti-ma* 3SM-ANA-REL 'some are'.

<sup>9</sup> My consultant suggested the form *a-y-ek-o* 3SM-Y-there-CL and translated it as 'all that also'. The full form for all is *masek*. But after careful listening in both cases only *ek-o* there-CL 'there also' was perceived.

*ba(r) a-ta-k(a)-ek<sup>10</sup> srami ku jan pa#*  
 thing 3SM-ANA-that-there other at not already  
 all those things do not exist anymore.

- (52) *Ba(r) ma de-nkan kiar ya/*  
 thing REL 3PL-old believe ART  
 Things that the old people believed in,

*de-nkan te(r) wa(r) na dwaw<sup>11</sup> ya/ ku jan#*  
 3PL-old put thing for pig ART at not  
 the old people put down things for the pig, it doesn't exist anymore.

- (53) *Jadi m-bwer a-ta-ki tut/*  
 so 1SG-tell 3SM-ANA-this about  
 So I tell this about

*kekuatan/ atau/ ba(r)-tiw-a sabon-i#*  
 force or thing-taboo-CL long.ago-CL  
 the (magical) forces or taboos of long ago.

- (54) *Op-a sabon-i na ma m-bwer subwe a-ta-i#*  
 mass.of.water-CL long.ago-CL for REL 1SG-tell follow 3SM-ANA-CL  
 It is the huge flood long ago that I told about.

- (55) *Jadi injil atau mafun a-kwap mim*  
 so Gospel or God(good) 3SM-voice arrive  
 So the Gospel or the Word of God arrived

*a-ku nek a-ta-ki/ ba(r) a-ta-k(a)-ek srami ku jan#*  
 3SM-in land 3SM-ANA-this thing 3SM-ANA-that-there other at not  
 in this land and all those other things don't exist anymore.

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<sup>10</sup> In previous articles I analysed this form as *a-ta kek* 3SM-ANA all 'all that'. Since also a form *ek* 'there' was found to exist, I now suggest to analyse the form as presented in this text.

<sup>11</sup> In the recording this word is pronounced like [wuw]. In this context it makes sense to suppose that *dwaw* was meant. This particular speaker tends to swallow bilabials and fricatives.

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