

THE PRESENT STATUS OF SOME AUSTRONESIAN SUBGROUPING HYPOTHESES

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It has been suggested (Blust 1980:208) that the non-Formosan languages can be classified under the name Malayo-Polynesian into three co-ordinate groupings as Western Malayo-Polynesian (WMP), Central Malayo-Polynesian (CMP), and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian (EMP). The languages of the Philippines and of western Indonesia as far east as Sumbawan inclusive are assigned to WMP, and the Oceanic languages together with Bulic (the languages of South Halmahera and nearby islands closely related to Buli) and Biakic (the languages of Cenderawasih Bay closely related to Biak) are assigned to EMP. The languages in between these two linguistic groupings, i.e. those from Bima on Sumbawa, eastward at least to Kuiwai on the western coast of Irian are assigned to Central Malayo-Polynesian.

I have already dealt with some of the faults with the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian hypothesis (Dyen 1978) proposed by Blust (1978). In this paper I will treat the evidence bearing on the proposed seam between WMP and CMP said to fall between Sumbawan and Biman and compare it with the suggested seams in eastern Indonesia.

THE BALIC LANGUAGES

Balinese, Sasak, and Sumbawan show their highest lexicostatistical percentages with each other: Balinese-Sasak 39.4%, Sasak-Sumbawan 49.7%, and Balinese-Sumbawan 36.1%. Javanese, which is known to have had a sociopolitically dominant position relative to Balinese in Bali, shows 35.6% with Balinese, but 31.0% with Sasak and 30.5% with Sumbawan. Taking the relatively higher Javanese score with Balinese to be due to intimate borrowings from Javanese, we regard the Javanese-Balinese score as inflated. At the same time we infer that the scores of Balinese with Sasak and Sumbawan were probably somewhat depressed because some cognates in Balinese had been replaced by intimate borrowings from Javanese.

The finding of a Balic subgroup on a lexicostatistical basis would explain the agreement of Balinese and Sasak in being the only languages exhibiting the suffixes *-in* (roughly equivalent to Malay *-i*) and *-aŋ* (roughly equivalent to Malay *-kan*). These suffixes are perhaps absent in Sumbawan; I have only noted the verb *beaŋ* 'give' which is probably to be connected with Javanese *weh-* 'give', though both are probably in some way to be associated with **beRey*. However the

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exceedingly numerous vocabulary agreements between Sasak and Sumbawan that are difficult to explain as either cultural or intimate borrowings support the membership of Sumbawan in the Balic subgroup.

THE IMMEDIATE EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS OF BALIC

The Balic subgroup, including Sumbawan, was recognised by Esser (1938) as the 'Bali-Sasak Group'. Its percentages with Javanese might appear to suggest that the immediate relationship of Balic is to be sought to its west. The percentages of Balic with Bima, the eastern neighbour of Sumbawan, also on Sumbawa, are as follows:

Bal-Bim	25.4%
Sas-Bim	32.5%
Sbw-Bim	32.4%

If we regard the Balinese percentages as depressed by intimate borrowings, it seems to turn out that the Balic languages are about as distant from Bima as they are from Javanese, for the Balic-Bima relationship could now reasonably be estimated to be at about 30%.

If one considers the nearest relationships of Bima other than the above, we find the following percentages of Bima with its neighbours to the south and west, Waijewa (Kabhuhaka, Sumba), Waingapu (Kamera, Sumba), Sawu, and Manggarai (West Flores) as follows:

Bim-Wjw	25.4%
Bim-Wng	28.6%
Bim-Sawu	26.9%
Bim-Mng	23.8%

Curiously all of these percentages are slightly below the percentages that Bima shows with the Balic languages, if one excepts Balinese itself.

The speech types of Sumba seem to form a single linguistic grouping. Waijewa and Waingapu, probably among the most divergent pairs of Sumban speech types, show 44.1%. Sawu is favoured by the Sumban speech types but the precise relationship is indicated somewhat unclearly in the following percentages:

Sawu-Wjw	39.5%
Sawu-Wng	37.3%

If we considered only the Wjw-Wng percentage with each other, we should be unable to distinguish Sawu from another (perhaps somewhat aberrant) Sumban speech type. But the chances are that the chain of Sumban speech types has no link as low as the Wjw-Wng percentage. If that is so, then Sawu is lexicostatistically distinct from, but quite closely related to Sumban, probably more closely than are the speech types of Flores: Manggarai, Lio, Ngadha, Sika, and Lamaholot (= Solorese). The following table shows the lexicostatistical percentages shown by the relevant pairs of languages along with those with Balic and Bima:

Bal												
39.4	Sas											
36.1	49.7	Sbw										
25.4	32.5	30.7	Bim									
24.6	30.8	30.2	25.4	Wjw								
25.0	30.6	29.9	28.6	44.1	Wng							
24.5	28.7	28.8	26.9	39.6	37.3	Saw						
25.4	28.2	28.2	23.4	33.3	26.9	26.0	Wng					
22.0	24.4	25.8	25.9	31.6	27.7	27.7	41.1	Lio				
23.9	25.6	26.5	25.6	34.1	31.1	27.4	40.6	56.6	Ngdh			
26.0	30.9	32.0	27.4	36.5	33.2	30.4	36.9	42.7	39.0	Sik		
22.2	31.6	26.8	26.8	31.4	30.7	27.3	29.3	28.7	29.4	38.6	Lmh	

Table 1: Lexicostatistical percentages between languages on Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Sawu and Flores

Pau						
25.0	Buli					
23.8	24.2	Biak				
16.0	15.5	18.5	War			
19.1	16.0	17.5	14.8	Sob		
23.5	17.8	20.7	16.1	58.5	Wak	

Table 2: Lexicostatistical percentages of six languages of Eastern Indonesia

BULIC, BIAKIC AND OTHER LANGUAGES OF EASTERN INDONESIA

A similar table has been drawn up for languages at the eastern end of Indonesia. The languages of Seram are represented by the thus far best described language there, Paulohi. Buli and Biak are included, the data for the latter being taken from the Van Hasselt dictionary of Numfor and my own recording of a dialect of Biak. The Waropen data is based on Held's work whereas the Sobey work is taken from Robert and Joyce Sterner's Sobey dictionary manuscript and my own recordings. The Wakde material is from my own work.

What seems to be most striking is that Buli and Biak exhibit the same scores with Paulohi as they do with each other. Thus there is no lexicostatistical evidence for a Bulic-Biakic that does not also include Paulohi and thus other languages of Seram closely related to Paulohi. Furthermore Biak shows about the same reaction to Sobey (17.5%) as the geographically much more distant Buli (16.0%). The same appears to be true if Wakde replaces Sobey as the focus.

It is interesting to observe that Waropen does not react like a submember of the same group as Biak. It may be because the study was too conservatively handled. The procedure that was followed was essentially the same as that of Dyen 1965 with one exception. Wherever one of a pair of comparable words was known to be a borrowing, the pair was regarded as non-comparable rather than as negative (as was done in Dyen 1965). However, the difference in treatment is believed to have negligible effects.

Furthermore the overall study of the phonemics of the different languages involved is now believed to be high enough to produce reliable results. What is perhaps weakest is the study of the correspondences. Needless to say, it is my belief that the relatively obvious instances have been properly counted.

The low level of the percentages in the eastern set is in keeping with the indications of Dyen 1965. This level suggests that the seam or seams involving Bima are between linguistic subgroupings more closely related to each other than the seams involving Paulohi, Buli, and Biakic with other eastern languages in their neighbourhood.

The lexicostatistical evidence favours the association of the languages in the neighbourhood of Bima with the so-called WMP at the clearly higher level of percentages than that associating Paulohi with Buli and Biak. It follows that if both Paulohi and Bima are in CMP, then CMP is more closely related to WMP than to EMP. Furthermore the evidence continues to point to an equivalently close relationship between Paulohi, Buli, and Biak, thus militating against the EMP hypothesis.

We seem to be able to conclude that the western seams involving Bima are probably of a lower order than the one between Sobey and Biak. What lies behind the relatively high percentage between Wakde and Paulohi (23.5%) remains to be investigated.

It is worth observing at this point that only lexicostatistical percentages permit the objective comparison of heterolinal nodes. Traditionally the comparison of heterolinal nodes has been made intuitively, but generally on the basis of large and practically incontrovertible masses of evidence pointing in the same direction. The family tree of the Austronesian languages seems to differ very strongly from that of the Indo-European languages not only by the multiplicity of its linguistic groupings, but also by the multiplicity of the linguistic groupings which do not lend themselves easily to subgrouping whether by traditional procedures or by lexicostatistics. The indications are thus strengthened that is is a family of great age whose classification will not yield quickly to intuitive pronouncements and will provide a challenge for many years to come.

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