

NORTH HALMAHERA LANGUAGES:  
A PROBLEM OF INTERNAL CLASSIFICATION

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1. North Halmahera languages\* (NHL) represent a distinct family of the West Papuan Phylum, and are spoken in the northern part of the Molucca islands (Capell 1975:668-715). They consist of the following idioms: Loda (LD), Galela (GL), Tobelo (TBL), Madole, or Modole (MD), Pagu, or Isam (PG), Tololiku (TLK), Tabaru, or Tobaru (TBR), Sahu (SH), Waioli (WI), Ternate (TRN), Tidore (TDR), Makian Luar, or West Makian (ML). The idiom of Ibu (IBU), known only from a very short wordlist collected in the late 19th century, is now extinct (Fortgens 1904).

NHL are surrounded by Austronesian languages, their nearest neighbour being the so-called South Halmahera-West New Guinea language group (SHWNG): the idioms of Buli, Maba, Weda, Petani, Sawai, Gane, Makian Dalam. In course of the last several centuries the area of NHL expanded due to the ousting of the SHWNG group from the central and northern parts of Halmahera island, the spread of NHL to some depopulated parts of other Northern Molucca islands (Obi, Bacan, etc.), and the use of Tidore and especially Ternate as *lingue franche* of Eastern Indonesia and the coastal part of Western New Guinea. Now most of the speakers are NHL-Malay bilingual.

2. The comparative study of NHL practically has not yet begun, although their non-Austronesian character was first hypothesised in the end of the 19th century (Robidé van der Aa 1872), and clearly proved in the early 20th century (Veen 1915). A preliminary study anticipating the reconstruction of Proto-NHL was recently published by Y. Wada (1980), who put forward a concept of the preservation of archaic sounds in Galela. The internal classification of the NHL has not yet been worked out, although it was repeatedly suggested in studies made during the end 19th- beginning 20th centuries period, that they should be divided into two parts: TRN and TDR versus all other NHL (ML was still unknown at that time).

3. The following Table 1 shows the lexicostatistical evaluation of NHL based on the analysis of a modified 100-items Swadesh list. In the lower left part of the table are presented the percentages of shared radical cognates; in the upper right part – the K-factor of language proximity, introduced by the author elsewhere (Chlenov 1976:198-202).

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Table 1: Cognate percentages in the NHL

	LD	GL	TBL	TBR	PG	MD	SH	TRN	TDR
LD	-	122	129	124	116	122	089	084	069
GL	86	-	112	106	111	105	082	095	075
TBL	88	79	-	120	121	123	088	084	069
TBR	82	74	81	-	121	129	097	085	072
PG	82	78	84	83	-	134	100	083	068
MD	86	75	88	89	92	-	097	087	074
SH	63	59	63	69	72	69	-	094	082
TRN	60	65	61	62	59	63	67	-	122
TDR	49	51	50	51	50	53	58	78	-

3.1 This lexicostatistical presentation proves the view that NHL represent a closely related compact group of languages. According to the data it seems plausible to distinguish three subgroups:

- (a) Halmahera subgroup (HS), which include LD, GL, TBL, TBR, MD, PG, TLK (the latter differ only slightly from PG).
- (b) Jailolo subgroup (JS) includes SH and almost identical WI. The scanty data about IBU suggest that this idiom was most probably also part of this group.
- (c) Island subgroup (IS) which consists of TRN and TDR.

Using the K-factor (Chlenov 1976:207-209) we may define the NHL as a *stock* (critical K-factor 050). If we take K = 080 as the 'language limit', there will be only one language in HS (so all the idioms will constitute dialects of this language); two languages in JS - SH and IBU (the latter known too inadequately); one language in IS with TRN and TDR as its dialects. It should be noted, however, that the speakers themselves consider all the mentioned idioms as separate languages.

3.2 The recently discovered ML demonstrates more distant relations to all other NHL than they have inside the North Halmahera stock (NHS). Still the data on ML published until now are not sufficient enough for definite conclusions about the nature of its external relations.

Table 2: Lexicostatistical characteristics of ML

	TDR	TRN	SH	TBL
%	35	33	29	26
K	049	041	036	033

The percentages are much lower than those between the members of the NHS. The highest cognate rates with members of the IS may be partly accounted for borrowings from the neighbouring idiom of TDR and the lingua franca TRN, and so do not necessarily point to a closer genetical relationship. Still the relationship itself between ML and NHS is quite evident. When compared with the Austronesian idiom Makian Dalam, or East Makian, spoken on the eastern part of the same tiny islet of Makian, ML has only 5% of shared cognates (K = 006). Clearly there is no trace of genetic relationship between ML and its closest neighbour language of Makian Dalam. The given value of 5% is due to language interference and common borrowings in both Makian idioms from TRN. If we take K = 020 as the 'family limit', we may consider both NHS and ML as two members of the North Halmahera family (NHF), where ML represents a stock-level language. It should be noted that the concept of NHL as 'stock-level family' was elaborated before the discovery of ML (Capell 1975), so now this concept might be abandoned and the NHL be considered simply as a family.

4. The internal classification based on comparative methods is until now of a very preliminary character. Y. Wada has offered 27 phonological correspondences of consonants, not less than five of them occurring only in Austronesian borrowings. So we can use the following 18 correspondences: \*p-1, \*p-2, \*b, \*m, \*w, \*t, \*d, \*ð, \*n, \*l-1, \*l-2, \*r-1, \*r-2, \*s-1, \*h, \*k-1, \*g-1, \*ng (Wada 1980:503), and to add four more consonant and six vocal correspondences.

Table 3: Additional correspondences of NL

	GL	LD	TBL	TBR	PG	MD	TLK	SH	IBU	TRN	TDR	ML
*mp	p	w,h	b	b	b	b	b	b	?	b	b	p
*g-	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	k	?	k	k	?
*c	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	c	?	c	c	?
*ny	n	n,n'	n	n	n	n	n	n,n'	?	n'	n'	n,y
*a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
*o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
*u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u,i	u	u,i
*i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i,e	i	i	i	i,e
*e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
*ê	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	o	?	o	?	?

The Proto-NHL shows traces of adstratic and possibly even substratic influence of Austronesian languages, and phonologically it resembles very much the Proto-Austronesian. The notion of HS might be conformed by a number of specific lexical items and common phonological innovations. Particularly all HS-idioms have merged \*c with \*t, \*g-1 with \*g-2, and \*ny with \*n.

\*(g-21) cipir *fingernail*

GL	gitipi	PG	gitiwil	TLK	gitiwi
LD	gitiwiri	MD	gitiwili	SH	kiciwidi
TBL	gitihiri	TBR	gitiwiri	TRN	kicifi/kulcifi

\*ngutuk *root*

GL	ngutu	PG	ngutuk	TLK	ngutuku
LD	ngutuku	MD	ngutu'u	TRN	utu
TBL	ngutuku	TBR	ngutuku	TDR	utu
				ML	utu

\*(g-1) umin *rope*

GL	gumi	PG	gumin	TLK	gumin
LD	gumini	TBR	gumini	TRN	gumi
TBL	gumini	SH	gumi	TDR	gumi

\*nyawok *fish*

GL	nawo	PG	naok	IBU	nauo
LD	naoko	TBR	naoko	TRN	n'au
TBL	nauoko	TLK	nauk	TDR	n'au
MD	nao'o	SH	n'ao'o	ML	yao

Common innovations for other subgroups, namely JS and IS are not so obvious. One characteristic feature is their common reflex of  $\hat{e}$ .

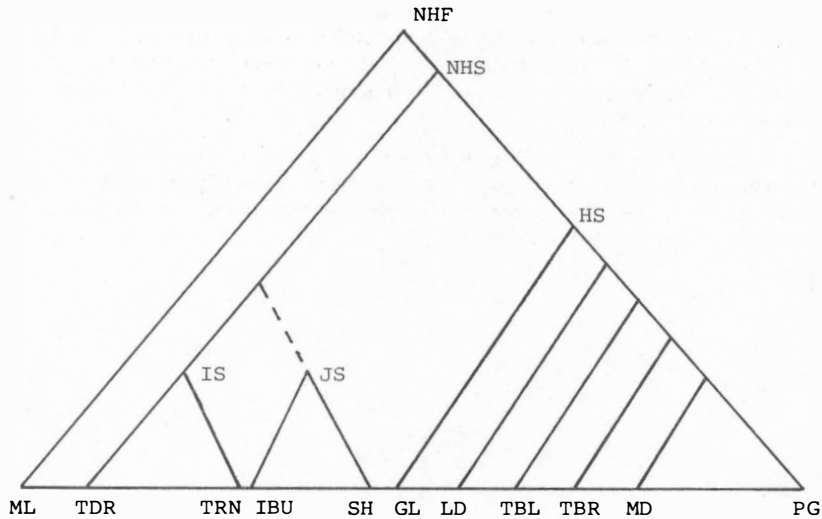
\*ngêkom *way*

GL	ngeko	PG	ngekom	TLK	ngekom
LD	ngekomo	MD	nge'omo	SH	ngo'omo
TBL	ngekomo	TBR	ngekomo	TRN	ngoko

Another feature is the layer of specific lexical items. But still it cannot be stated yet that comparative linguistic analysis does confirm the distinguishing of JS and IS as separate subgroups.

5. Combining the results of both lexicostatistical and comparativistic evaluations the internal classification of NHL may be represented in the following way (see Table 4).

Table 4: The internal classification of NHL



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\*EDITORIAL NOTE

Dr Chlenov submitted this paper for presentation at the 15th Pacific Science Congress in Dunedin, in mid 1982; thus he had no opportunity to consult beforehand C.L. Voorhoeve's *The Makian languages and their neighbours* (PL, D-46), which was not published until late that year. It has been decided to publish Dr Chlenov's paper in its original form, as a record of its presentation at the 15th Pacific Science Congress.

A slightly different version of this paper has been published (as S'everoxal'max'erskiye yazyki, probl'emy vnutrenn'ey klassifikatsii) in the proceedings of the conference 'Linguistic reconstruction and the ancient history of the East', Moscow, October 1-5, 1984.