

# YELETNYE, THE LANGUAGE OF ROSSEL ISLAND

J. E. HENDERSON

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Phonology
  - 2.1 Vocalic Segments
  - 2.2 Suprasegmental Features
    - 2.21 Stress
    - 2.22 Vowel Length
    - 2.23 Nasalization of Vowels
  - 2.3 Consonantal Phonemes
  - 2.4 Labialization and Palatalization
  - 2.5 Prenasalizing
  - 2.6 Nasal Release
  - 2.7 Simultaneous Stops and Nasals
  - 2.8 Consonant-Vowel Patterns
- 3.0 Grammar
  - 3.1 Word Level
    - 3.11 Pronouns
    - 3.12 Nouns
    - 3.13 Adjectives
    - 3.14 Quantifiers
      - 3.14.1 Numerals
      - 3.14.2 Other Quantifiers
    - 3.15 Verbs
  - 3.2 Phrase Level
    - 3.21 Head-Modifier Phrases
    - 3.22 Co-ordinate Phrases
    - 3.23 Axis-relator Phrases
  - 3.3 Clause Level
  - 3.4 Sentence Level
- 4.0 A Basic Vocabulary List
- Notes
- Bibliography

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Yeletnye is the only language spoken on Rossel Island at the eastern end of the Louisiade Archipelago in the Milne Bay District of Papua New Guinea.<sup>1</sup> It is a Non-Austronesian (or Papuan) language which contrasts markedly with Melanesian languages of the same area in phonology, grammar and vocabulary. Thus whereas the Melanesian languages generally have relatively few phonemes in simple syllable patterns, Yeletnye has a complex system which includes simultaneous stops which can be prenasalized, labialized, and palatalized together with vowels which can be lengthened and nasalized. Moreover, Yeletnye has five verb tenses which make use of up to three different verb stems as against a freer system in Melanesian languages. Finally, on present evidence Yeletnye shares only 6% of its vocabulary with its nearest neighbour, Sudest, and only 3% with the language of Misima Island 110 miles away to the north-west. Only a few people who have settled on the island can use Yeletnye with any degree of fluency and the language has developed the reputation of being impossible to learn. There are approximately 2500 speakers.

The following account is a brief introduction to this language. It is based on five months field research in 1971, under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and on written data which consists of 400 words illustrative of the phonology, and transcriptions of fifteen tape-recorded spontaneous narrative texts which yielded some 380 clauses and 140 phrases.<sup>2</sup> Since the analysis is not yet completed the following remarks must be regarded as tentative only.

## 2.0 PHONOLOGY

In the following description the phonetic symbols of K. L. Pike's *Phonemics* (1947) are used. A subscript tie links simultaneous segments (t<sub>p</sub>), stress is marked with an acute (') over the vowel, and vowel length is marked by doubling the vowel symbol.

### 2.1 Vocalic Segments

The following examples illustrate the range of vowel sounds heard in Yeletnye.

[kʊʊ]	<i>unripe</i>	[kʌ]	<i>yes</i>
[koo]	<i>(his) arm</i>	[kaa]	<i>picture</i>
[kɔɔ]	<i>lime</i>	[tʃii]	<i>rain</i>
[kəə]	<i>(my) arm</i>	[pee]	<i>basket</i>
[kə-]	<i>certainty prefix</i>	[kɛɛ]	<i>to go up</i>
	[kaa]	<i>tree type</i>	

The vowel [ɔ] is often heard as the somewhat more open [ɔʷ].

## 2.2 Suprasegmental Features

## 2.21 Stress

Word stress appears to be predictable, and consists of loudness and slight rise in pitch on the stressed syllable. It falls on the first syllable of the unaffixed phonological word, which is tentatively defined as a stretch of speech containing one and only one stressed syllable.

[púʃu]	<i>star</i>		
[ŋómo]	<i>house</i>		
[kééne]	<i>fish type</i>	[a-kéé]	<i>my arm</i>
[kíʔi]	<i>she bore a child</i>	[ka-tóó]	<i>he is sitting</i>
[yúʃuto]	<i>sweet potato</i>		
[pééʔəmaa]	<i>fly</i>	[ka-ŋólo]	<i>he is weeding</i>

The stress pattern of reduplicated words is the same as for two phonological words, but with a heavier stress on the first part.

[tónatóna]	<i>difficult</i>
[kédekéde]	<i>slowly</i>

Stress patterns in longer words have not been studied fully, but no contrastive stress patterns have been observed. Similarly, no evidence has been found for contrastive pitch.

## 2.22 Vowel Length

The following words illustrate contrastive vowel length.

[ma]	<i>male</i>	[maa]	<i>tomorrow</i>
[tə]	<i>green parrot</i>	[təə]	<i>betel nut</i>
[nɿ]	<i>nose</i>	[nɿɿ]	<i>who?</i>
[kégə]	<i>orchid</i>	[kéékəə]	<i>hot</i>

## 2.23 Nasalization of Vowels

The contrast is shown as follows.

[taa]	<i>bush knife</i>	[təə]	<i>slime</i>
[kaa]	<i>picture, shadow</i>	[kəə]	<i>house stump</i>
[nuu]	<i>throat</i>	[nɿɿ]	<i>who?</i>
[maa]	<i>tomorrow</i>	[məə]	<i>low tide</i>
[pi]	<i>person</i>	[kɿ]	<i>banana</i>
[kpee]	<i>octopus</i>	[kpeə]	<i>boy</i>

### 2.3 Consonantal Phonemes

The following minimal set of consonantal phonemes is tentatively asserted. Additional prosodic features of labialization, palatalization, prenasalizing, nasal release, and simultaneous bilabial closure are described in Sections 2.4 to 2.7.

	Bilabial	Post-alveolar	Velar
Stops	p	t	k
Fricatives	ɸ		ɣ
Lateral		l	
Nasals	m	n	ŋ
Semivowels	w	y	

These are illustrated in the following paradigm.

[pee] <i>basket</i>	[te] <i>scorpion</i>	[keɛ] <i>go up</i>
[ɸyee] <i>old</i>	[lémi] <i>important man</i>	[ɸɸɸ] <i>coconut shell</i>
[mɪɪ] <i>day after tomorrow</i>	[ne] <i>grass skirt</i>	[ŋææ] <i>to listen</i>
[wɛɛ] <i>forked stick</i>	[ye] <i>he put it</i>	

All words beginning with [ɸ] encountered to date are palatalized. [ɸ] occurs unpalatalized word medially, however, as in [kéɸɛ] *paddle*.

The affricates [tʃ] and [ndʒ] are used by a majority of speakers where some use [ty] and [ndy] respectively, so the affricates will probably be interpreted as palatalized stops.

[tʃʃʃtʃʃʃ] *to cook* [ndʒʒʒndʒʒʒ] *wet*

[b], [ɸ], and [g] occur only intervocalically, and typically following a stressed vowel.

[páɸə] *millipede* [táɸə] *small* [kéɸə] *orchid*

The voiceless stops also occur intervocalically, but typically following morpheme boundaries or unstressed vowels.

[a-pá] *my village* [a-táé] *my tongue* [a-kéé] *my arm*

Intervocalic [b], [ɸ], and [g] are probably allophones of /p/, /t/, and /k/ respectively, as the more significant difference between the

[p, t, k] series and the [mb, nd, ŋg] series seems to be prenasalizing rather than voicing.

#### 2.4 Labialization and Palatalization

These contrastive features are illustrated as follows.

[kʌ]	<i>yes</i>	[kwʌ]	<i>outside</i>
[kɛ́ɛʔɛ]	<i>bush umbrella</i>	[kwɛ́ɛʔɛ]	<i>heart</i>
[ŋʂɔ]	<i>she weeded</i>	[ŋwʂɔ]	<i>eye</i>
[mbámʌ]	<i>on</i>	[mbwámʌ]	<i>pig</i>
[paa]	<i>log</i>	[pyaa]	<i>woman</i>
[támə]	<i>place name</i>	[tyámə]	<i>world, earth</i>
[lə]	<i>deep</i>	[lye]	<i>sail</i>

#### 2.5 Prenasalizing

When the stops p, t, and k are prenasalized, they become partially voiced as well.

[pɿ]	<i>person</i>	[mbɿ]	<i>sick</i>
[tɿbɿ]	<i>prawn</i>	[ndɿbɿ]	<i>lid</i>
[kúɰɛ]	<i>cat</i>	[ŋgúɰwɰɛ]	<i>mosquito</i>

#### 2.6 Nasal Release

The stops p, t, and k can be nasally released, which precludes prenasalizing and simultaneous bilabial closure discussed in the next section.

[pɿ]	<i>person</i>	[pmɿ]	<i>bundle</i>
[tɛ]	<i>fish</i>	[tnyɛ]	<i>language, word</i>
[kɛ́ɛʔɛ]	<i>bush umbrella</i>	[kŋɛ́ɛʔɿ]	<i>he missed</i>

#### 2.7 Simultaneous Stops and Nasals

These are produced by adding simultaneous bilabial closure to alveolar and velar stops and nasals. The third column shows contrast with the simple bilabial consonant.

[tʊʊ]	<i>axe, smell</i>	[tʁʊʊ]	<i>tail</i>	[pʊʊ]	<i>hole</i>
[túmu]	<i>be quiet</i>	[tʁúʔʊ]	<i>smoke</i>	[púʔʊ]	<i>star</i>
[káʔə]	<i>bird type</i>	[kʁáʔə]	<i>clothing</i>	[páʔə]	<i>millipede</i>
[ŋgáɪə]	<i>cloud</i>	[ŋgʁə]	<i>frigate bird</i>	[mbə]	<i>to cry</i>
[nuʊ]	<i>throat</i>	[ŋmɔ]	<i>bird</i>	[mɔ]	<i>husband</i>
[ŋómo]	<i>house</i>	[ŋmɔ]	<i>breast</i>	[mɔ]	<i>husband</i>

## 2.8 Consonant-Vowel Patterns

Most Yeletnye words begin with a consonant and end with a vowel, as can be seen from the examples already given. Exceptions are illustrated as follows.

[a-kʲʲ]	<i>my arm</i>
[ʌnə-tʲʲbo]	<i>I'm cutting it</i>
[a-pʲʲ]	<i>he poured</i>
[ʌ-lʲʲ]	<i>here</i>
[ánte]	<i>when?</i>
[kam]	<i>new</i>
[byam]	<i>black palm</i>
[mɛpʷʲkɨ]	<i>family</i>
[lɛɛkɨ]	<i>let's go (dual)</i>

Only [m] and [kɨ] have been found in word final position.

Syllable patterns include V and CV, their counterparts VC and CVC closed by [m] and [kɨ], and possibly others, depending on the interpretation placed upon the complex consonants. If the consonants are regarded as complex units, many phonemes will result, but few syllable patterns. If the consonants are interpreted as clusters of phonemes, more complex syllable patterns will ensue, but the number of phonemes will not be greatly increased. The solution favoured at present is to follow the approach suggested by J. Bendor-Samuel (1960) and to extract labialization, palatalization, prenasalization, nasal release, and simultaneous bilabial closure first as prosodies which can accompany the phonemes posited in Section 3.3. The resulting syllable patterns would be simple. Further work is required, of course, before the most suitable solution can be decided upon.

## 3.0 Grammar

Since many of the examples in this section are drawn from spontaneous texts quickly transcribed, some of the vowels may not be correctly symbolized. Stress has not been shown.

### 3.1 Word Level

#### 3.11 Pronouns

The following matrix shows the free pronouns. The same forms are used for Object as for Subject. There are no third person free pronouns.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person	nə	nyq	nmU
2nd person	nyli	tpU	nmyo

Possession is marked by the following prefixes.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person	ə-	nyli-	nyə-
2nd person	N-	tpə-	nyli-
3rd person	wU-	yl-	yl-

The second person singular "prefix" is expressed by changing the initial consonant of the noun to the nasal continuant at the same point of articulation.

[a-pə]	<i>my village</i>	[mə]	<i>your village</i>
[a-təə]	<i>my tongue</i>	[nəə]	<i>your tongue</i>
[a-kəə]	<i>my arm</i>	[ŋəə]	<i>your arm</i>
[a-yabotəʔə]	<i>my garden</i>	[nyabotəʔə]	<i>your garden</i>
[a-ŋeebi]	<i>my peeling shell</i>	[ŋeebi]	<i>your shell</i>

### 3.12 Nouns

The simplest noun consists of a single noun root. Compounds of up to three roots have been recorded.

[nɛɛ]	<i>canoe</i>
[paɑ]	<i>log, hull</i>
[nɛɛ-paɑ]	<i>canoe hull</i>
[nɛɛ-paɑ-nʏʏ]	<i>canoe hull's prow</i>
[nte]	<i>food</i>
[pee]	<i>basket</i>
[nte-pee]	<i>food-basket</i>

Compounds can also be formed with a verb root and a noun root.

[læŋgələ-təʔə]	<i>playing field</i>
	<i>play-place</i>

Nouns can be formed by adding the nominalizer [-ni] to adjectives, and can then be compounded with other noun roots.

[ndɔ̃-ni]	<i>big one</i>
[təʔə-ni]	<i>small one</i>
[təre-ni-paa]	<i>small one's hull</i>

The paradigm of possessive prefixes has already been given. Nouns are usually suffixed for number as well: Singular = Ø, Dual = [-tə], and Plural = [-yo].

[a-nte-pee]	<i>my food basket</i>
	<i>my-food-basket</i>
[nɛɛ-paa-tə]	<i>canoe hulls</i>
	<i>canoe-hull-dual</i>
[yi-nte-pee-tə]	<i>their food baskets</i>
	<i>their-food-basket-dual</i>
[pi-yo]	<i>people</i>
	<i>person-plural</i>

### 3.13 Adjectives

Some adjectives are reduplicated.

[mbɪɪ]	<i>sick</i>
[ndɔ̃]	<i>big</i>
[mbaamba]	<i>good</i>
[kʷikʷi]	<i>hot</i>
[təŋatəŋa]	<i>difficult, heavy</i>
[ŋŋgɓɛɛ]	<i>overripe</i>
[ŋŋgɓɛɛŋŋgɓɛɛ]	<i>lazy</i>

### 3.14 Quantifiers

#### 3.14.1 Numerals

The system is decimal, running up above 1000.

[ŋŋə]	<i>one</i>	[yɔ̃ mə ŋŋə]	11
[mɪɪyo]	<i>two</i>	[yɔ̃ mə mɪɪyo]	12
[pɪɪɛ]	<i>three</i>	[yɔ̃ mə pɪɪɛ]	13
[baadi]	<i>four</i>		
[ɪɪmi]	<i>five</i>		etc.
[wenɪ]	<i>six</i>		
[pyɪʔü]	<i>seven</i>		



[wæɬɪ]	<i>eight</i>		
[tʉʉ]	<i>nine</i>		
[yɔ]	<i>ten</i>	[yɔ mə yɔ]	20
[myo-yɔ]	20	[myo-yɔ mə ŋmɛ]	21
		[myo-yɔ mə mɪlyo]	22
[pyɔlɛ-yɔ]	30	[pyɔlɛ-yɔ mə ŋmɛ]	31
[pɔʃɔ-yɔ]	40		
[limo-yɔ]	50		
[wɔnɛ-yɔ]	60		
[pyɪʃʉ-yɔ]	70		
[wɔlɛ-yɔ]	80		
[tɔnɛ-yɔ]	90		
[yɔnɛ-yɔ]	100		
[yɔnɛ-yɔ mə ŋmɛ]	101		
[yɔnɛ-yɔ mə mɪlyo]	102		
[yɔnɛ-yɔ mə pɪlɛ]	103		
[myɔyɔnɛyɔ]	200		
[pyɔlɛyɔnɛyɔ]	300		
[yɔnɛyɔnɛyɔ]	1000		

### 3.14.2 Other Quantifiers

The following words illustrate those which have been observed to date:

[yɪlʉ]	<i>many</i>
[yɪndomʉ]	<i>all</i>
[ŋmɛ]	<i>some</i>

### 3.15 Verbs

The verb structure is complex, and has not yet been analysed. Portmanteau prefixes mark the person and number of the subject together with tense. Some of these prefixes show allomorphic variation. Dual and plural third person objects are usually marked with [-tɛ] and [-tɛ] respectively. There are five tenses: future, present, immediate past, past (yesterday), and remote past. Three different stems are used: one for remote past, one for present, and one for the other tenses. Various aspects are marked by prefixes.

## 3.2 Phrase Level

## 3.21 Head-Modifier Phrases

These consist of a head, manifested typically by a noun, which may be preceded by a possessor and followed by one or two modifiers. When the possessor is third person, its identity can be specified by a word, phrase, or clause preceding the noun possessed. (In the examples a comma marks level intonation plus pause.)

[a-nɛɛ-paa]  
*my-canoe-hull*  
*my canoe hull*

[kæmbwɔ wu-nɛɛ-paa]  
*Canice his-canoe-hull*  
*Canice's canoe hull*

[mbɔɔ, kæmbwɔ ɣi-nɛɛ-paa-tə]  
*Leo Canice their-canoe-hull-dual*  
*Leo's and Canice's canoe hulls*

[nɛɛ-paa-tə      mʊ-pmɪnɔ-nɣɣɔ-tɔɔ      wu-tɔnɔmbum]  
*canoe-hull-dual you-pl/today-bring-dual its-story*  
*the story about how you brought the canoe hulls*

The head may be followed by an adjective, a quantifier, or both.

[mbwaa lə]  
*water deep*  
*deep water*

[nɛɛ-paa ndɔɔ]  
*canoe-hull big*  
*big canoe hull*

[kɔɔ ɲgwɔnɔ]  
*taro cooked*  
*cooked taro*

[wɛɛ mɪɣo]  
*fork two*  
*two forked sticks*

[kpaa ŋmɔ]  
*fire one*  
*one fire*

[ŋəəne baadi]

*lever four*  
*four levers*

[pi yindomu]

*person all*  
*everyone*

[pi yilü]

*person many*  
*many people*

[kaʔ ɲwɔnɔ ɲmə]

*taro cooked one*  
*one cooked taro*

[pmɿɿ nyɿɿ piɿɿɿ]

*coconut green three*  
*three green coconuts*

[a-neɛ-paa tɔʔ]

*my-canoe-hull small*  
*my little canoe hull*

[kəmbwɔ wu-neɛ-paa ndɔɔ]

*Canice his-canoe-hull big*  
*Canice's big canoe hull*

### 3.22 Co-ordinate Phrases

Phrases with from two to four nouns or pronouns have been observed. The nouns are separated by pause.

[waaʔu, mwɔŋə]

*Walter Philip*  
*Walter and Philip*

[mgbaalɪm, a-benda]

*Gregory my-namesake*  
*Gregory and my namesake*

[ndʒɪmɪ, ʒaapwɛ, kaawɔ, nə]

*Jim Ken Kevin I*  
*Jim, Ken, Kevin and I*

3.23 *Axis-relator Phrases*

These consist of an axis (typically a noun) followed by a suffix which relates the axis to the clause. The following examples illustrate locative axis-relator phrases.

[maa-pʏʏ]	[kʌʔʌwa-kʌ]
<i>road-along</i>	<i>Philemina-to</i>
<i>along the road</i>	<i>to Philemina</i>
[tʃʃ-kə]	[yaapu-pa]
<i>pot-near</i>	<i>Yaapu-at</i>
<i>near the pot</i>	<i>at Yaapu</i>
[pwepe-mbəmə]	[nyɪ-paa-pe]
<i>log-on</i>	<i>our-place-at</i>
<i>on logs</i>	<i>at our place</i>

In accompaniment axis-relator phrases, the axis is manifested by a word or phrase, and the relator is [-kə], which usually carries the third person possessive prefix.

[kaawa-kə]	[ndʒɪmɪ, kaawa, ɣɪ-kə]
<i>Kevin-accompaniment</i>	<i>Jim Kevin their-</i>
<i>with Kevin</i>	<i>accompaniment</i>
	<i>with Jim and Kevin</i>

3.3 *Clause Level*

Equative clauses have no Predicate tagmeme, but consist of Topic and Comment.

[tɾɪɪ ɲmə wu-pɪɪ tʃʃ]  
*thing one its-name carving*  
*This thing's name is "carving".*

[ʌɪʌʊŋwə ndumukwəʔə]  
*now evening*  
*It's evening now.*

[a-tʌnʌmbumu wuutə]  
*my-story complete*  
*My story is finished.*

The order of tagmemes in other clauses is fairly free, though the Subject nearly always precedes the Predicate, and Subject-Object-Predicate is more common than Object-Subject-Predicate. When Subject and Object are both explicit, the Subject is usually marked with [-ŋə].

Object      Predicate  
 [nte      tə-mə-ŋmə]  
*food today-eat-they*  
*They ate food.*

Object                  Predicate  
 [wɛɛ      miiyo w-a-kaa-ŋmə]  
*fork          two fut-3rd-put-pl*  
*They will put two forked sticks*

Locative                  Predicate  
 [waaʔu wu-pɔɔ      kə-ʔə-taa]  
*Walter his-place certainty-I/today-arrive*  
*I arrived at Walter's place.*

Subject      Object                  Predicate  
 [kaawɔ-ŋə      wu-nte-pee                  tnyənɔ]  
*Kevin-Subj his-food-basket (he/yesterday)-carry*  
*Kevin carried his food-basket*

Subject                  Object                  Predicate  
 [ɔaapwɛ, kaawɔ, mɔbaalim a-nɛɛ-paa      ʔɔɔ      kwɔ-tnyaa-paapa]  
*Ken      Kevin Gregory my-canoe-hull small from/behind-they/past-pull*  
*Ken, Kevin, and Gregory pulled my small canoe hull.*

To date the tagmemes of Subject, Object, Predicate, Time, Locative, Accompaniment, Benefactive, and Indirect Object have been identified, but no more than five tagmemes occur in any one clause.

Locative                  Object                  Predicate  
 [nɛɛ-paa-tə      ʔi-tʂəʔɔ      pooʔo miiyo ɔmɔnɔ-tʂɔɔ-ŋmə]  
*canoe-hull-dual their-place rope two they/will-cut-dual*

Time                  Subject  
 [mwaandiya nɛɛ-paa-tʂɔɔtɔyo]  
*morning canoe-hull-owners*  
*Where the canoe hulls are, the owners will cut two ropes in the morning.*

### 3.4 Sentence Level

This level has not been studied, but a general statement can be made. There is not a marked distinction between dependent and independent clauses; no pattern of medial and final verbs has been observed. Sentences consist of one or more similar clauses, with few overt relators between them.

## 4.0 A BASIC VOCABULARY LIST

This list contains basic vocabulary items elicited using the Summer Institute of Linguistics' "Survey Word List". All items are written phonetically as recorded in 1970. A single quote (') is used to mark the stressed syllable.

<i>English</i>	<i>Yeletnye</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Yeletnye</i>
1. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>hair</i>	mbə'ʔlɒ	35. <i>cloud</i>	ŋɒl'tɔ.pɛ
2. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>head</i>	mbɔ'ʔɔ'	36. <i>rain</i>	ptɪ.
3. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>mouth</i>	k'hɔ'ɔ'	37. <i>water</i>	mbwɑ.
4. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>nose</i>	nɪu	38. <i>tree</i>	ʔɪ
5. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>eye</i>	'ŋwɔ'ɔ'	39. <i>root</i>	yeʔl or yəkɒ.
6. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>neck (all or nape)</i>	'mbwəmə	40. <i>leaf</i>	'yɪɑ
7. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>belly</i>	pkMmɔ'	41. <i>meat</i>	mbɪu
8. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>skin (human)</i>	'tɔ.pɛ	42. <i>fat (grease)</i>	k'hɪni
9. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>knee</i>	ʔɪmbɔ'ʔɔ'	43. <i>egg</i>	wɪ or wɔɪ
10. <i>man</i>	mɔ	44. <i>he eats</i>	'təmə
11. <i>woman</i>	p'hɪɔ	45. <i>he gives it to me</i>	l'k'hɪʔlɒkə
12. <i>bird</i>	mɪl or mɪə	46. <i>he sees</i>	təɪ.
13. <i>dog</i>	wɪ or wɔ	47. <i>he comes</i>	'kɛʔlɒwɪə.gə
14. <i>he bites (a dog)</i>	tə'kɛɪ	48. <i>louse</i>	'yəməwɛ
15. <i>he sits</i>	təɪ.	49. <i>one</i>	mə
16. <i>he stands</i>	ʔɪmɒkɔ'	50. <i>two</i>	'mɪ.yo
17. <i>he lies (reclines)</i>	ʔɛpwiɛm	51. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>back</i>	pɪʔlɒmə
18. <i>he walks</i>	lɪ'p.	52. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>shoulder</i>	ŋɒnɪŋɔ
19. <i>road (path)</i>	mə	53. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>forehead</i>	kəʔl
20. <i>stone</i>	tʃə.p	54. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>chin</i>	tʃɔbɪ
21. <i>big</i>	nɔt	55. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>elbow</i>	kəʔubɪ
22. <i>small</i>	təʔl or tɛʔl	56. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>thumb</i>	kəʔɪ.
23. <i>fire</i>	nɔɪ	57. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>leg</i>	ʔɪ
24. <i>smoke</i>	pɪʔɪ	58. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>heart</i>	'ʔɛɪtɪ
25. <i>ashes</i>	pkɔ'	59. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>liver</i>	'kɛwɛ
26. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>ear (external)</i>	'ŋwəɪ	60. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>bone</i>	't'hənɪ
27. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>tongue</i>	t'hə.	61. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>blood</i>	wə.
28. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>tooth</i>	nɪɔ	62. <i>horn (of an animal)</i>	'pənɪ
29. ( <i>her</i> ) <i>breast</i>	ŋmɔ'	63. <i>feather</i>	ʔə or ʔɑ
30. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>hand</i>	k'hə.	64. <i>wing</i>	nɔpɛ
31. ( <i>his</i> ) <i>foot</i>	ʔɪ'pkwɔ'ʔɔ'	65. <i>claw</i>	kɔndɪbɪ
32. <i>sun</i>	k'hɪʔɪ	66. <i>tail</i>	pɪʔɪ
33. <i>moon</i>	tʃɪ	67. <i>boy</i>	pɛ
34. <i>star</i>	pɪʔɪ	68. <i>girl</i>	pkMmɑɪu
		69. <i>baby</i>	mbɔbɔ

<i>English</i>	Yeletnye	<i>English</i>	Yeletnye
70. <i>old man</i>	pibyaŋ	109. <i>yesterday</i>	ma
71. <i>old woman</i>	pyabya	110. <i>tomorrow</i>	mo.
72. <i>person</i>	pi	111. <i>white</i>	'pkabə'pkab
73. <i>(his) father</i>	mæ	112. <i>black</i>	'pkoŋo'pkoŋe
74. <i>(his) mother</i>	mnia	113. <i>yellow</i>	'ndi 'nana'kw
75. <i>brother (older of man)</i>	'ambo	114. <i>red</i>	'mpyenmpye
76. <i>sister (older of man)</i>	ʌ'teʔʌ	115. <i>green</i>	'gəkuya
77. <i>name</i>	pʰi	116. <i>good</i>	'mbamba
78. <i>pig</i>	mbwəmla	117. <i>bad</i>	ʔhɔno
79. <i>cassowary</i>	---	118. <i>long</i>	ʔha.ʔhi
80. <i>wallaby</i>	---	119. <i>short</i>	ʔhikwidi
81. <i>flying fox</i>	bgɔʔm	120. <i>heavy</i>	ʔhiŋʔhiŋ
82. <i>rat</i>	'yəml	121. <i>light</i>	ŋba.ŋba.
83. <i>frog</i>	pkʰmq	122. <i>cold (water)</i>	'ŋgwɔŋ'ŋgwɔ
84. <i>snake</i>	ptəlapə	123. <i>warm, hot (water)</i>	kʰki
85. <i>fish</i>	tʰe	124. <i>old</i>	bge
86. <i>taro</i>	kq	125. <i>new</i>	kʰam
87. <i>sugarcane</i>	kwuto	126. <i>many</i>	yi lptɔptɛmptap +
88. <i>yam</i>	kʰini	127. <i>all</i>	'yɪn'domu +
89. <i>banana</i>	kʰi	128. <i>this</i>	ʌ'lʌ
90. <i>sweet potato</i>	'yɔʔʔɔʔtɔʔ	129. <i>that</i>	ŋmwe or mŋwɪɔ
91. <i>bean</i>	bin	130. <i>what?</i>	'lukwe
92. <i>axe</i>	tʰu	131. <i>who?</i>	ŋɔyŋ
93. <i>knife</i>	'pɛbʌnʌ	132. <i>when?</i>	andi
94. <i>arrow (spear)</i>	kʌtɛ	133. <i>where?</i>	əŋəŋə
95. <i>net bag (woman's)</i>	'pkɛnɛ	134. <i>round</i>	maŋəŋə
96. <i>house</i>	'ŋomo	135. <i>wet (clothing)</i>	dnidni
97. <i>earth (ground)</i>	'təbʌ	136. <i>dry (clothing)</i>	dəʔadəʔa
98. <i>sand</i>	tʰi.	137. <i>full</i>	'ndɛŋmə
99. <i>mountain</i>	mbu	138. <i>not</i>	'ʔha.ʔho
100. <i>wind</i>	'yobo	139. <i>three</i>	'pʰilɛ
101. <i>vine</i>	'yi.pə	140. <i>four</i>	'pʰɛ.di
102. <i>stick</i>	'yimbwt	141. <i>five</i>	limi
103. <i>bark (tree)</i>	ɔ	142. <i>ten</i>	gga
104. <i>seed (for planting)</i>	wɔ	143. <i>yes</i>	nya
105. <i>tobacco</i>	mbə'lɛʌ	144. <i>no</i>	'kʰələɛ
106. <i>morning</i>	mwandiʌ	145. <i>he says</i>	'ʔhɛi'vi
107. <i>afternoon</i>	domokwɔʔʔʌ	146. <i>he hears</i>	'ʔhɛinyo
108. <i>night</i>	mbəʔə	147. <i>he knows</i>	u'lʌ.maʔho
		148. <i>he drinks</i>	ʔhəndʌ

<i>English</i>	Yeletnye	<i>English</i>	Yeletnye
149. <i>he sleeps</i>	tʰipi	160. <i>he laughs</i>	aʒumtʂyene
150. <i>he kills</i>	'tʰeibya	161. <i>he dances</i>	ptʂt-lawe
151. <i>he dies</i>	tʰo'pwono	162. <i>I</i>	nnə
152. <i>it burns (fire is burning)</i>	tʰə'gigi	163. <i>thou</i>	ñe
153. <i>it flies</i>	tʰəbwi'alə	164. <i>he</i>	wu'tʂo
154. <i>he swims</i>	a'gugu or a'kuku	165. <i>we two (excl.)</i>	nyemio'tʰʌ
155. <i>he runs</i>	a'mbəbə	166. <i>you two</i>	pumio'tʰʌ
156. <i>he falls down</i>	tʰi'ʒai	167. <i>they two</i>	ʒenʌmio'tʰʌ
157. <i>he hits</i>	tʰeibya	168. <i>we (plural excl.)</i>	mmʉ or mnʉ
158. <i>he catches</i>	tʰau'kwɛɛ	169. <i>you (plural)</i>	mmʉʒ
159. <i>he coughs</i>	pkwɛnepkwɛne	170. <i>they (plural)</i>	'ʒenʌ
		171. <i>he is hungry</i>	tʰə'ɲode

\* \* \* \* \*

172. <i>he eats sugar cane</i>	a'kwukwue
173. <i>he laughs a lot</i>	aʒumʒenʌ
174. <i>one man stands</i>	pʰi.'ʒamtʰə.'ʒe
175. <i>two men stand</i>	pʰi.'mio'ʒamtʰə.'ʒe
176. <i>three men stand</i>	pʰi.'pi.le'ʒamtʰə.'ʒeɹɿ
177. <i>the man goes</i>	'pʰi. tʰə'lʌ
178. <i>the man went yesterday</i>	pʰi'mmækʰə'lʌ
179. <i>the man will go tomorrow</i>	pʰi'mmowa'lə
180. <i>the man eats the yam</i>	pʰi'ŋɔa'kʰini a'pʰə.pə
181. <i>the man ate the yam yesterday</i>	pʰi'ŋa kʰini mmə kʰə nɛ
182. <i>the man will eat the yam tomorrow</i>	'pʰi.ŋʌ kʰini mmɔ wa ma
183. <i>the man hit the dog</i>	pʰi.ŋa 'uaʃhe uʒa
184. <i>the man didn't hit the dog</i>	pʰi.ŋaʉa tʰo maŋa
185. <i>the big man hit the little dog</i>	mma. weŋʌ ua təʔʌ tʰeibya
186. <i>the man gave the dog to the boy</i>	mma. weŋʌ ua tʰeigo pkmməka
187. <i>the man hit the dog and went</i>	mma. weŋʌ ua tʰeibya tʰəmbəbə
188. <i>the man hit the dog when the boy went</i>	pʰe kweliatʰo mma. weŋa wa ʒətʰeibya
189. <i>the man hit the dog and it went</i>	mma. weŋʌ wa tʰeibya tʰə'lʌ
190. <i>the man shot and ate the pig</i>	mma. weŋʌ mbwumʌ tʰeibya tʰəmʌ

\* \* \*



NOTES

1. This language has been referred to by various names--"Yelet", "Yela", and "Yeletnye"--the last of which seems the most appropriate as it means "Rossel Island language".
2. This research has been supported in part by a grant from the Research Fund of the Papua New Guinea Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BENDOR-SAMUEL, J. T.

1960 "Some Problems of Segmentation in the Phonological Analysis of Tereno", *Word*, 16: 348-355.

PIKE, K. L.

1947 *Phonemics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

LIBRARY BOARD  
AUSTRALIA