

# 4 *Defining speech communities on Buru Island: a look at both linguistic and non-linguistic factors*

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## 1 Introduction

Buru is one of the largest islands in the eastern Indonesian province of Maluku.<sup>1</sup> The size of the island, all 9,800 square kilometers of it, is overwhelming when the primary means of transportation on the island is by foot. But size, distance, and rugged terrain, rising to 9,000 feet in elevation, are only some of the factors that make pinning down the language picture a challenge. On the one hand, both people indigenous to the island and the *Language atlas of the Pacific area* (Wurm & Hattori 1981–83) claim there is only one language on the island (in addition to Ambelau and Kayeli). On the other hand, the picture is complicated by language taboos, overlapping dialect names, old and recent migrations, lack of correlation between political entities and speech varieties, ignorance of other areas by most of the inhabitants, complex marriage alliance networks, hard-to-obtain origin myths, power tied to place, the politics of modernisation, the influx of immigrants from other parts of Maluku and elsewhere, and historical geo-political forces. All these factors work together to make the language picture, in fact, extremely elusive. It is furthermore intriguing as to why people all over the island of Buru insist that two speech varieties which show only 61%–64% lexical similarity are intelligible with each other and are the same language.

It should come as no surprise to those who are familiar with the realities of complex language situations that it has taken months of mobile residence spread over a period of years, and a degree of proficiency in several speech varieties along with an intensive study

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<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork was carried out over nineteen months of residence in various coastal and interior areas of Buru Island from 1983–90 under the auspices of a co-operative program between Pattimura University and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Fieldwork in 1988–89 was additionally supported by The Australian National University. My thanks to Barbara Dix Grimes, Barbara F. Grimes, Bryan Hinton and John Wimbish for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

of the grammar, lexicon and culture to begin to know what questions are significant and to be able to appropriately interpret the information received.<sup>2</sup>

A summary of current conclusions on the language picture is presented below with detailed discussion following. In Figure 1, capitals represent language names, lower case letters represent dialect names, and italics represent sub-dialects. Alternate names and alternate spellings are in parentheses. Li Garan is a special taboo register spoken by the Rana subdialect and will be discussed separately.

<b>AMBELAU</b>	-dialects unknown
<b>BURU</b>	
Masarete	
Wae Sama	
Rana	
<i>Rana</i>	
[Li Garan]	
<i>Wae Geren</i>	
<i>Wae Kabo</i>	
<i>Wae Tina</i>	
Lisela (Li Enyorot)	
<i>Lisela</i> (Licella)	
<i>Tagalisa</i>	
<i>Wae Geren</i>	
<i>Leliali</i> (Liliali)	
<i>Kayeli</i> (Wae Apo, Unit-unit, Mako)	
Fogi (Li Emteban)	
<i>Fogi</i> (Vogi, Bobo)	
<i>Tomahu</i>	-extinct
<b>HUKUMINA</b> (Bambaa)	
Bara	-extinct
Hukumina	-1 speaker in 1989
Palumata (Palamata, Balamata, Pala Mada)	-extinct
<b>KAYELI</b> (Cajeli, Gaeli)	
Leliali (Liliali, Marulat)	-extinct (as of March 1989)
Kayeli	-4 speakers in 1989
Moksela (Maksela, Opselan)	-extinct (1974)
Ilat	-extinct
Lumaete (Lumaiti, Lumaite, Lumara)	-extinct

**Figure 1:** Status of speech communities of Buru Island

<sup>2</sup> It should further come as no surprise that this will not be the last update; the language picture on Buru is complex enough that it continues to warrant further investigation and testing.

## 2 Influences on language from history

When one strips away the superficial veneer of a hierarchical political structure that has a *raja* with intermediate-level heads ruling over ten clans in seventy villages giving the illusion of a state, or incipient state, one is brought up short with the reality that Buru society traditionally focused around local kin groups living in scattered houses or small clusters of houses. Survival is dependant on continuous hunting and foraging in the jungle (sometimes for 3-5 months at a time) combined with shifting agriculture focused around the cultivation of tuber crops and sago. Marriage is exogamous and is the basis for symmetric alliances between local kin groups (B.D. Grimes 1990). Traditional leadership is informal, focusing around the authority of elders within the kin group. Persons of equal rank in the kin structure have no authority over each other either within the kin group or across kin groups. Leadership is dependent upon both lineage and charisma — one without the other doesn't work. Headhunting and revenge killing (of people in other kin groups) were tied with territory, lack of alliances, and kin.<sup>3</sup>

Both oral history and the historical record combine to present a fascinating picture. Each kin group has an ancestral stream and many have an ancestral mountain. Each kin group is charged with guarding the spiritual power of their territory against all comers — whether from Buru or elsewhere. The *epkitan* 'fighting champion' of each kin group who were charged with guarding areas along the coast from raiding parties frequently inhabited caves in high cliffs overlooking the sea, from which place they would descend and attack any boats that landed. Stories of this era abound about *epkitan* attacking the *geba lano* who are variously interpreted in different parts of the Buru to be Papuan, from Seram, or from Tobelo and Galela (Halmahera, north Maluku).<sup>4</sup>

This traditional picture is obscured in the more accessible and acculturated parts of the island by external political hierarchies imposed first by Ternate, then the Dutch, and now the Indonesian government systems, and by the Islam and Christian religions.

### 2.1 Ternate and Islam

Against first the Portuguese in the 16th century and later the Dutch, Ternate used Islam as the unifying focus for resistance in the spice trade (van Fraasen 1983). By the middle 1600s most places that afforded favourable anchorages along the Buru coastline had small settlements of immigrants adhering to Islam. What seems to have escaped the notice of Ternate, and subsequently the Portuguese and the Dutch, is that with minor exceptions these coastal populations were settled by Muslim immigrants from other parts of the archipelago, most notably from Buton, Sula and Makassar and not by people indigenous to Buru.

It was the leadership of these non-Buru Muslim communities with whom Ternate, the Portuguese, and the Dutch interacted, punished and transported elsewhere, and tried to use to coerce the cooperation of the indigenous mountain population to little avail.

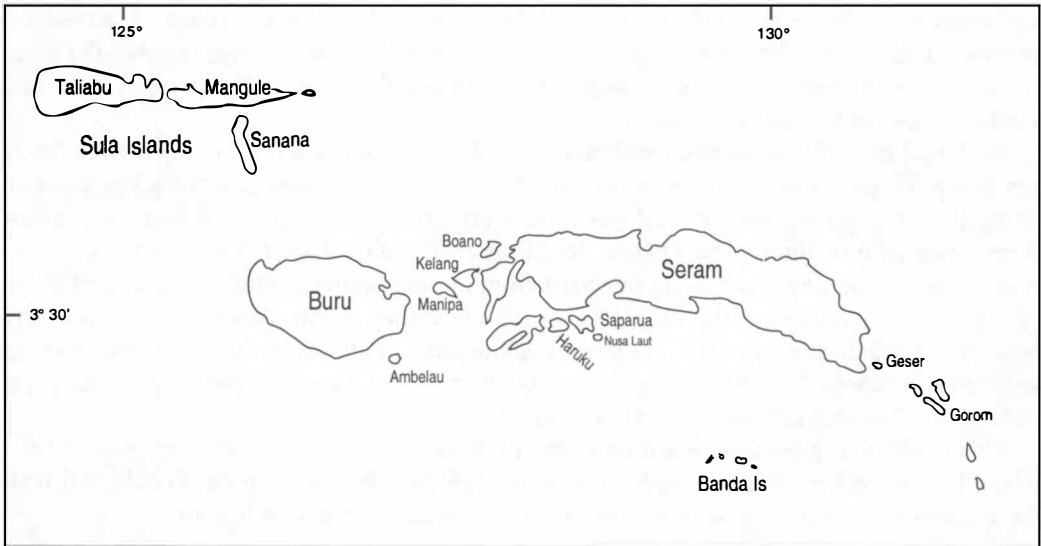
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<sup>3</sup> All of the above activities (except headhunting) continue into the present.

<sup>4</sup> *Epkitan* is a loan word via Malay *kapitan* from Portuguese *capitão* or Spanish *capitan* 'ship captain, military officer'.

In the 1600s, the Sultan of Ternate, through his 'governors' on Buru had set up the position of four *Mat.gugul*<sup>5</sup> who were responsible to extract 'tribute' (*enati* lit.'that which is set down') from the populace on behalf of the Sultan. The notion of power, authority and decision-making being concentrated in a single individual rather than in a group of elders was a concept foreign to Buru culture.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the 'mountain people' (*geb.fuka*) or interior population of Buru were left almost untouched by Ternate, while the 'coastal people' (*geb.masi*) who were mostly not indigenous to Buru became involved on the periphery of Ternate's struggle with European powers over the spice trade.



Map 1: Central Maluku, eastern Indonesia

Sometime between 1558 and 1650 the Sultan of Ternate set up at least two Ternatan governors on Buru, bringing Islam to the north and east coast as the organising force in the resistance to the Portuguese and later the Dutch (van Fraassen 1983:7). The Ternatan governors set up a hierarchical government structure to try and control both the coastal and

<sup>5</sup> *Gugul* is a Ternate loan associated with the position of a ruler. The convention of a word-internal full stop indicates phonological elision in compounding. Thus *geb.haa* is reduced from /geba haa/, *Mat.gugul* reduced from /mate gugul/, etc. See C. Grimes 1991:69ff.).

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, most positions of authority focused in an individual on Buru are traceable to Ternate, the Dutch, or the Indonesian political structures. Thus, not only *Matgugul*, but also *Porwisi*, *Portelo*, *Raja*, *Kawasan*, *Emrimo*, *Kepala Kampung*, are all outside terms and concepts.

interior populations and to exact tribute from them. The governorships organised clusters of kin groups under a single leader — a concept foreign to the traditional political structure.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 The consequences of Dutch economic policy

The demise of the Ternatan power structure and the escalation of Dutch power is described by van Fraassen (1983:17):

The war ignited by the 1651 rebellion continued until 1656. The rebels received Macassarese support, and the war was in no way restricted to Hoamoal [west Seram]. Arnold de Vlamingh van Oudtshoorn, the Dutch commander-in-chief in this war, was also launching attacks on the VOC's opponents elsewhere, among other places in Buru and east Seram...The Ambonese region was formally removed from Ternatan control and the institution of the Ternatan governorship was abolished. Hoamoal...was completely depopulated...The chiefs of Hoamoal had a place of residence assigned to them in Batu Merah, in the vicinity of the VOC's chief fortress in Ambon. The population of the islands of Boano, Kelang and Ambelau was transferred to the island of Manipa, where the Company had a small fort. *All the Muslim chiefs of the coastal areas of Buru were obliged to settle in the neighbourhood of the Company's fort at Kayeli...The evacuated areas were systematically destroyed and rendered unfit for reoccupation.* Contracts were concluded with the chiefs of Buru and North and East Seram in which the latter conceded themselves to be subordinate to the VOC; promised to entertain no relations with other nations or rulers, to keep out all Macassarese, Malays, and Javanese...[emphasis mine, CEG].

The significance of the above event on the language picture is that the Dutch gathered 12 (according to oral history) hostage-puppets around them at the fort at Kayeli on the southern shore of Namlea bay. They are still referred to in Kayeli as the "12 Raja Patti" or the "12 Latu Patti". Each *raja* or *latu* set up his own village, his own mosque, wells, etc, and built up a community around him of people from his own area speaking whatever variety of speech was distinctive to their area.<sup>8</sup> Six of these mosque-village complexes were clustered west of the Kayeli river, including Kayeli, Lisela, Tagalisa, and Fogi. Six others were clustered on the east side of the Lumaiti river nearby, including Masarete, Hukumina, Lumaiti, and Palumata. The Dutch fort was in the middle, between the two rivers along with a 'Chinese Village' (*Kampung Cina*) and a 'Christian Kayeli' (*Kayeli Kristen*). Willer (1858:138) lists the additional villages in 1847 as Wae Sama, Marulat, Leliali and Tomahu. In the early 20th century the Dutch government, the Chinese, and the Christian village moved out of the swamp at Kayeli to a dry area across the bay which became the present-

<sup>7</sup> Abbreviations used in this paper:

6ICAL	Sixth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics	PAn	Proto Austronesian
KITLV	Royal Netherlands Institute of Language and Culture	s.t.	something
k.o.	kind of	tr	transitive
LEKNAS	National Co-ordinating Body for Economic Development (Indonesia)	VCV	vowel, consonant, vowel
		VICAL	Fifth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics
		VOC	Dutch

<sup>8</sup> The written record uses Ternate and Malay terms for the "chiefs" clustered around the fort at Kayeli. Willer (1858:138) lists a *sengaji* for Lumaete; *raja* for Kayeli, Lisela, Tagalisa and Leliali; *patti* for Marulat, Hukumina and Fogi; *orang kaya* for Wae Sama, Palumata and Masarete; and an *orang tua* for Tomahu. Rumphius (1910) says 13 leaders were removed to Kayeli, and includes Hukumina and Ilat, but not Fogi.

day town of Namlea. By the time of a detailed Dutch map in 1915, the two groupings of six villages had assimilated into just two villages – Masarete and Kayeli.

At the time of writing, the village of Kayeli is using the Lisela mosque (the Kayeli mosque being in ruins) and the locations of the former villages of Tagalisa and Fogi are still known. The village of Masarete stands seaward from the site of the former village of Hukumina whose foundations are still to be found hidden under water in a nearby sago swamp. Remnants of the inhabitants of the extinct villages are still identifiable by their kin group affiliations. And some of the older people still remember bits and pieces of the different speech varieties as either first language or second language speakers. Details of this are presented later.

### 3 Territorial divisions of Buru

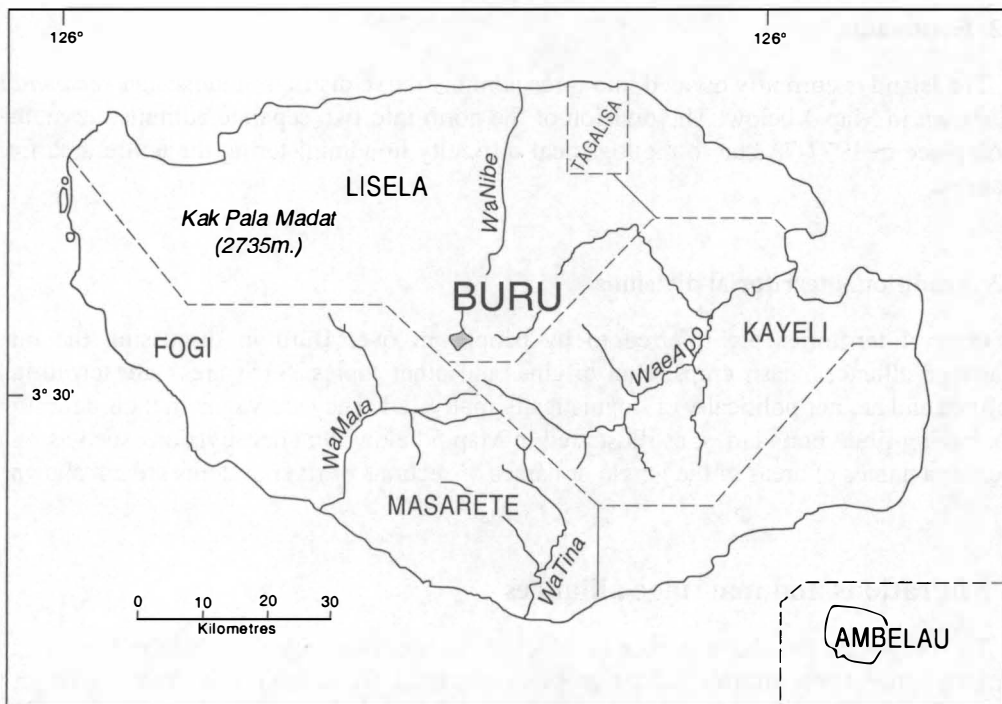
A sometimes frustrating exercise is to try and make sense of the virtual plethora of names of different types of territorial areas, political entities such as “kingships” or clan alliance networks, village names, river names, river valley systems, distinct speech varieties, and so forth. For example, the term “Masarete” may variously refer to (a) a village in east Buru, (b) a “kingship” in south Buru, (c) an alliance of ten kin groups, (d) a territory defined by two river systems, (e) a distinct speech variety, and several variations on each of these. The picture is further clouded in that 1. the range defined by the political boundaries has changed many times over the course of several different administrations, and 2. there may be only vague correlation between the boundaries of the political, territorial, and linguistic uses of the same term, each being different in scope, and in some cases, location.

Various versions of origin myths divide the island into either two or three ‘divisions’ (*petak*, a Malay loan). The dual division variously names Masarete and Lisela, or Masarete and Kayeli, but basically identifies a north-south division from the north-west to the south-east. The three-way division variously names Masarete, Lisela and Wae Sama, or Masarete, Lisela and Kayeli.

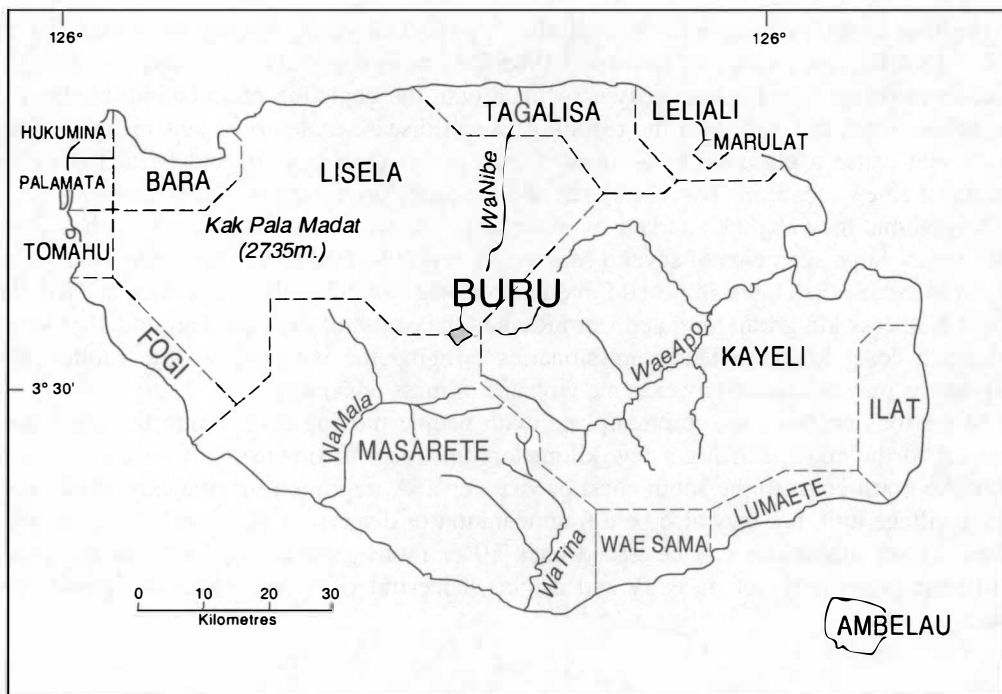
#### 3.1 Regentschap

The Dutch divided the island into ‘regencies’ (*regentschap*) for control of the population. The *rajallatu* was charged with being the ruling power’s liaison with the populace, communicating edicts and collecting tribute (*enati*). At various times there have been anywhere from 4-15 *regentschap* (Malay *petuanan*). There is no indigenous term for this division. There are currently eight recognised regentschaps as shown in Map 2 below.

To understand the locations of speech varieties discussed later in the paper, the figure below presents the *Regentschaps* as they were in 1840. Maps obtained after that year no longer record the locations of the *Regentschaps* of Hukumina, Palamata, Tomahu, Marulat, Ilat, or Lumaete.



Map 2: Regentschaps still recognised on Buru Island in 1991



Map 3: Regentschaps on Buru Island in 1840

### 3.2 Kecamatan

The island is currently divided into three administrative districts (Indonesian *kecamatan*) as shown in Map 4 below. The division of the north into two separate administrative units took place in 1977-78 due to the logistical difficulty in administering the entire area from Namlea.

### 3.3 Traditional territorial divisions

General territories are referred to by people all over Buru in discussing the hunt, marriage alliances, cash crops, clan origins, and other topics. Such areas are territorially defined and are not politically or linguistically motivated. They are vague in their definition, not having finite boundaries, as illustrated in Map 5 below. Smaller divisions such as more localised names of areas of the jungle or names of sections of river systems are not shown.

## 4 Migrations and marriage alliances

To complicate the above picture in which there is only a vague correlation between the various names for territories and the scope to which the terms refer, one must also begin to grapple with migrations and marriage alliances on the island.

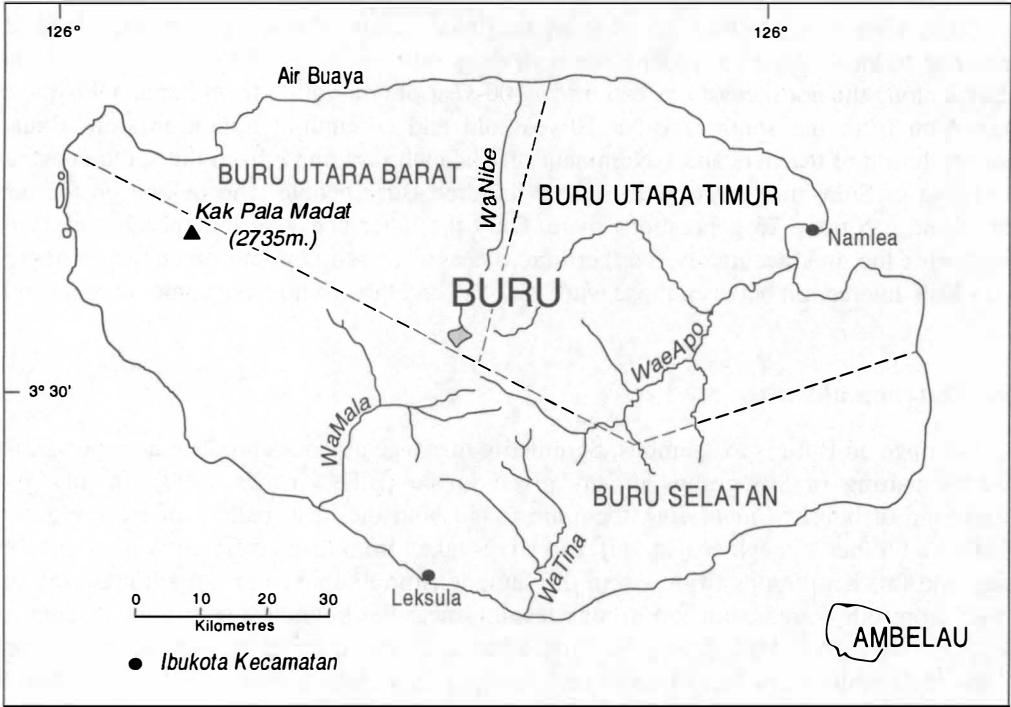
### 4.1 Migrations

Shifting agriculture depletes the soil after a period of years, forcing those working the soil to look for new fields (see Bellwood 1985 for a more detailed discussion). On Buru, the need to move on is not consciously associated with the depletion of soils and its effect on the tuber crops, but rather on the resulting rise in disease and subsequent in-fighting and death that cause a place to be declared a 'bad place' (*neten boho*) and be abandoned in favour of a new location where the spirits and the ancestors can again show favour.

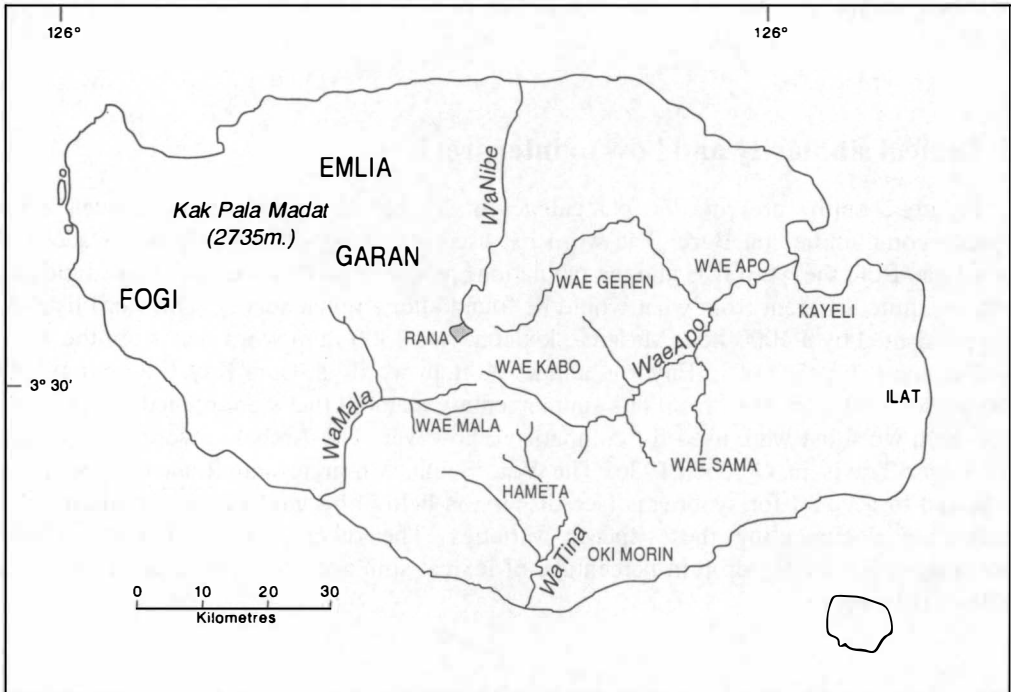
Migrations may also be sparked by external pressures. For example, before the turn of the century large segments of several Masarete kin groups fled to the north-west part of the island to escape the Dutch-imposed forced labour when building the stone dock at Tifu. Part of the Nalbessy kin group migrated from Rana in the centre of the island around 1880-90 to the north coast to evade Dutch missionaries bringing the gospel from the south. Other migrations may be sparked by extreme violence or mass poisoning.

Migrations on Buru are commonplace, with people moving further into the mountains, moving to the coast, shifting a few kilometers upstream or downstream, or even moving from the north coast to the south coast or vice versa. A migration may be carried out as an entire village unit, but may also be a fragmentation or dispersion of a local group. In some cases distant migrations can be traced back 30 or more generations, but with kin group, affiliation, knowledge of ancestry and origins, ancestral river and linguistic identity still intact.





Map 4: Kecamatan on Buru Island



Map 5: Traditional territorial divisions on Buru

Thus, when trying to find out what the language picture is in any part of the island, it is essential to know what kin groups one is dealing with and where they “belong”. In a short stretch along the north coast one can find a 100-year old migration from Rana, a 90-year old migration from the south coast, a 10-year old and continuing migration from Rana, a concentration of teachers and government officials who originate from the south coast, and a village of Sula immigrants with several hundred Buru people who belong on the north coast and can trace 26 generations there. Only the latter can give the speech variety that represents the area accurately. Furthermore, because of religion and other factors there is very little interaction between those who “belong” and those who have come more recently.

#### 4.2 Marriage alliances

Marriage on Buru is exogamous. Symmetric marriage alliances produce a preponderance toward pairing of kin groups in any given locale (B.D. Grimes 1990). In any given clustering of houses (*hum.lolin*), there are found both the ideal pattern of marrying one’s mother’s brother’s daughter (*emdaa*), and wives taken from many different kin groups, both near and far. Kin groups from within the same territorial/alliance group are preferred over those from other areas, but kin groups residing near the boundary with another area (see Map 5) marry freely both directions. Some marriages are arranged over distances of four to eight day’s walk, from the centre of the island to the coast, or from the north coast to the south coast.

Until the bridewealth is fully paid, residence tends to be uxori-local (with wife’s parent’s); after that residence is patri-local. This means that one constantly finds adult men or women out of “their” area, and this must be taken into account when going to new areas to check out speech varieties. One may find eager informants who turn out to be from other areas.

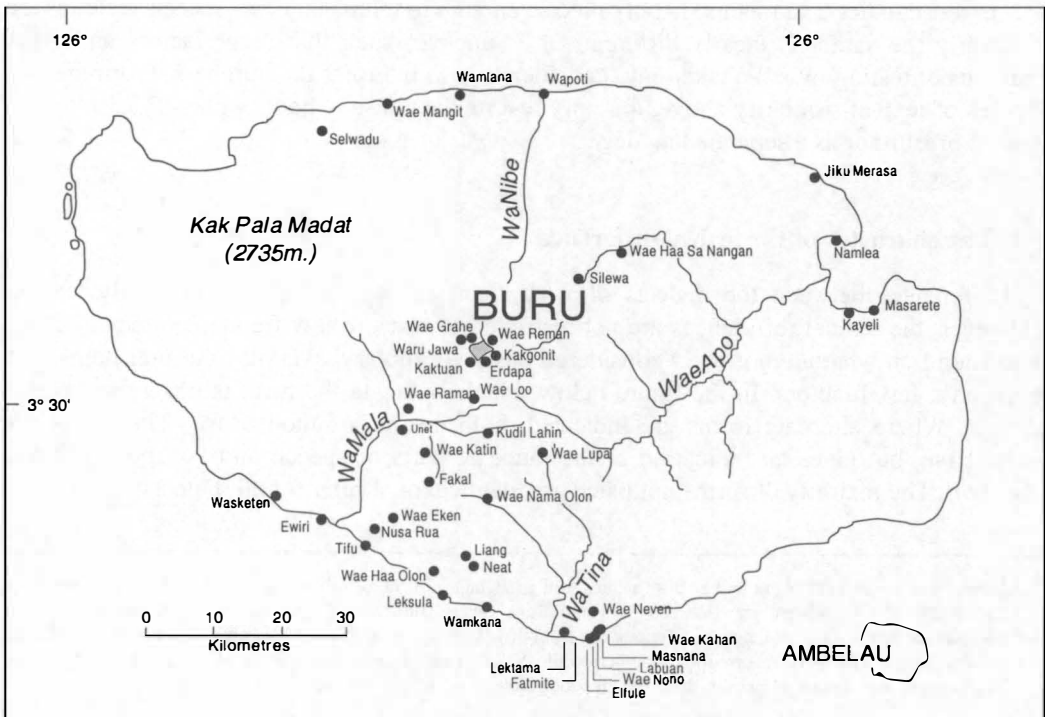
### 5 Lexical similarity and how to interpret it

Figure 2 below presents the percentages of lexical similarity found between several speech communities on Buru. The word list used was a 205-item modified Swadesh 200 word list. Both the word lists and the tabulations represent an extended period of field study and are quite different from what would be found after a quick survey. The word lists were supplemented by a 4000-item Masarete lexicon, two 1300-item word lists from the eastern and western stretches of Li Enyorot, and a 700-item word list from Kayeli all compiled by the author. Only the items from this supplementary material that were related to the original 205-item word list were used for comparison, however. The Ambelau word list was taken by Edgar Travis in October 1986. The Wae Sama, Masarete and Rana lists have been adjusted to account for synonyms (see discussion below) because of the familiarity of the author in documenting these speech varieties. The others have not been adjusted, accounting for the big drop in percentage of lexical similarity between Erdapa (Rana) and Silewa (Li Enyorot).

Wae Neven (Wae Sama)
90 Pelat Puun (Wae Sama)
93 93 Wae Nama Olon (Wae Sama/Masarete)
89 91 96 Wae Loo (Masarete)
89 91 97 99 Fakal (Masarete)
89 91 97 98 100 Wae Katin (Masarete)
81 81 87 89 89 89 Kaktuan (Rana)
79 79 85 88 87 88 94 Erdapa (Rana)
64 65 70 71 69 70 77 79 Silewa (Lisela)
63 63 68 69 69 69 77 79 89 Wamlana (Lisela)
61 61 65 66 66 66 73 74 88 92 Wae Poti (Lisela)
46 46 48 48 48 49 51 49 52 53 54 Jiku Merasa (KAYELI)
41 41 44 44 45 45 47 46 50 51 50 77 Kayeli (KAYELI)
40 42 43 43 44 44 46 45 41 44 43 52 50 Ulima-AMBELAU

Figure 2: Percentages of lexical similarity on Buru

Wae Neven and Pelat Puun are both Wae Sama dialect. Wae Nama Olon interacts vigorously with both the Wae Sama dialect and the Masarete dialect, and this is also reflected in the percentage figures. Wae Loo, Fakal, Wae Katin represent the Masarete dialect. Kaktuan and Erdapa are from the Rana subdialect of the Central dialect. Silewa, Wamlana and Wae Poti represent the Lisela dialect. Jiku Merasa is the Leliali dialect of the Kayeli language.



Map 6: Locations referred to in this paper

The percentages in the above figure of lexical similarity have been averaged in the figure below to highlight the statistically significant groupings. Note the pattern of dialect chaining (cf. Simons 1977) between Wae Sama, Masarete, Rana, and Lisela.<sup>9</sup>

Wae Sama					
90	Masarete				
80	88	Rana			
63	68	76	Lisela		
44	46	48	52	Kayeli	
41	44	46	43	51	Ambelau

**Figure 3:** Reduced matrix of major groupings

While it is generally recognised that thresholds between language and dialect, group and subgroup, need to be calibrated anew for each area and study, a significant point of this paper is that it argues for classifying Lisela as belonging to the same language as Rana, Masarete and Wae Sama even though the percentages of lexical similarity go down to 63%.

While it is generally accepted that the threshold between language and dialect (by whatever definition) falls somewhere in the neighbourhood of 70%–81% cognate, it has also been documented (J. Grimes 1988) that some cases over 90% probable cognate must be considered separate languages (when considering such factors as functors, intelligibility and socio-political identity), while other cases as low as 60% must be considered the same language. J. Grimes (1988), considering built-in methodological problems with lexicostatistics and looking at empirical data, suggests anything falling into the range of 60%–90% is in a grey area that needs further checking with other methods.<sup>10</sup>

Lexicostatistics as a method is only precise enough to tell us that two speech varieties are 1. clearly the same, 2. clearly different, or 3. unclear, such that other factors and other methods of testing must be taken into consideration to interpret the numbers. From the two figures of lexical similarity above, the only real unclear case is how to classify Lisela, as a dialect of Buru or as a separate language.

### 5.1 The character of the lexical differences

Differences between the dialects of what I am calling “Buru” are primarily lexical. However, the lexical differences are not restricted to obscure low-frequency items, but are also found on what are normally considered basic vocabulary, everyday cultural items, and even on a few functors. In the figure below, blanks indicate the form is uncertain for that dialect. Where alternate forms are indicated, both are in common usage. The list is not exhaustive, but gives an indication of the range of parts of speech and vocabulary that is *different*. The majority of forms not listed are identical or similar for all dialects.

<sup>9</sup> Grimes and Grimes (1994) note that Buru relates to the languages of Sula in the range of 27-33% lexical similarity. The statistically significant gap between Sula and Buru versus Buru and Kayeli and Ambelau suggests quite a different picture of over-all language relationships from that presented by Collins (1981) and Wurm & Hattori (1981), in which Buru and Sula are grouped together, while Kayeli and Ambelau are said to relate more closely to the languages of west Seram. However, the different conclusions were arrived at by different methods.

<sup>10</sup> J. Grimes also suggests (pers. comm.) that where language taboos are involved, 50% may be a more realistic lower threshold.

GLOSS	MASARETE	RANA	LISELA	WAE SAMA
sand	<i>ena</i>	<i>enal/sea</i>	<i>sea</i>	<i>ena</i>
mountain	<i>kakulfuka</i>	<i>kaku</i>	<i>fude</i>	<i>fuka</i>
island	<i>fuka</i>	<i>fuka</i>	<i>bual</i>	<i>pulo</i>
root	<i>lahin</i>	<i>lahin</i>	<i>laden</i>	<i>lahin</i>
ocean	<i>masi</i>	<i>olat</i>	<i>olat</i>	<i>masi</i>
fire	<i>bana</i>	<i>bana</i>	<i>bana</i>	<i>gemat</i>
dust	<i>kahit</i>	<i>kahit</i>	<i>kahit</i>	<i>lafo</i>
wave	<i>emhein</i>	<i>ahut</i>	<i>wae fatan</i>	
rock	<i>fatu</i>	<i>fatu/miat</i>	<i>miat</i>	<i>fatu</i>
hole	<i>fefan</i>	<i>fefan</i>	<i>lefat</i>	
sun	<i>lea</i>	<i>lea</i>	<i>hangat</i>	<i>lea</i>
star	<i>tolot</i>	<i>tolot</i>	<i>gae</i>	<i>tolot</i>
today	<i>lea naa</i>	<i>lea naa</i>	<i>pahi naa</i>	
big	<i>haat</i>	<i>haat</i>	<i>bagut</i>	<i>haat</i>
straight	<i>dofu</i>	<i>dofu</i>	<i>tolon</i>	
all	<i>hansiak</i>	<i>hansiak</i>	<i>haluuk</i>	<i>hansiak</i>
many	<i>edemen</i>	<i>edemen</i>	<i>waro</i>	<i>edemen</i>
quickly	<i>rabo</i>	<i>rabo</i>	<i>spati</i>	
fast	<i>friken</i>	<i>friken</i>	<i>spati</i>	
hard	<i>giwe</i>	<i>giwe</i>	<i>meit</i>	
hot	<i>lepoton</i>	<i>lepoton</i>	<i>himdunun</i>	<i>erarat</i>
black	<i>mitet</i>	<i>mitet/medet</i>	<i>medet</i>	<i>medet</i>
white	<i>botit</i>	<i>botit/gawat</i>	<i>gawat</i>	<i>botit</i>
husband	<i>gebhaa</i>	<i>gebhaa/namorit</i>	<i>mori</i>	<i>gebhaa</i>
wife	<i>finhaa</i>	<i>finhaa/gefina</i>	<i>bilea/gefina</i>	<i>finhaa</i>
companion	<i>roko</i>	<i>roko/tawe</i>	<i>tawe</i>	<i>pemnaken</i>
bird	<i>manut</i>	<i>manut</i>	<i>pani</i>	<i>manut</i>
cat	<i>mau</i>	<i>mau</i>	<i>sika</i>	
marsupial	<i>tonal</i>	<i>tonal/blafen</i>	<i>blafen</i>	<i>lemet</i>
civet cat	<i>kamyoho</i>	<i>yoho</i>	<i>ngewaet</i>	
louse	<i>koto</i>	<i>koto</i>	<i>yemin</i>	<i>koto</i>
mosquito	<i>inhadat</i>	<i>senget</i>	<i>mimaun</i>	<i>senget</i>
firefly	<i>bana lafun</i>	<i>bana lafun</i>	<i>brama</i>	<i>ebrama</i>
crocodile	<i>emhalat</i>	<i>emhalat</i>	<i>ubaa</i>	
skin	<i>okon</i>	<i>kolin</i>	<i>usan</i>	<i>okon</i>
mouth	<i>fifin</i>	<i>fifin</i>	<i>muen</i>	<i>fifin</i>
lips	<i>fifin okon</i>	<i>fifin kolin</i>	<i>biban</i>	<i>fifin okon</i>
shoulder	<i>malan</i>	<i>malan</i>	<i>fesan</i>	
abdomen	<i>fukan</i>	<i>fukan</i>	<i>tian</i>	<i>fukan</i>
knee	<i>enolon</i>	<i>enolon</i>	<i>tonen</i>	<i>enolon</i>
breast	<i>soson</i>	<i>soson</i>	<i>hono</i>	<i>soson</i>
wing	<i>panin</i>	<i>panin</i>	<i>ahin</i>	
fat	<i>minan</i>	<i>minan</i>	<i>niwae</i>	<i>emnobo</i>
yawn	<i>duba</i>	<i>duba</i>	<i>psusun</i>	<i>duba</i>
sleep	<i>bage</i>	<i>bage/ine</i>	<i>ine</i>	<i>bage</i>
awake	<i>hosak</i>	<i>hosak/fango</i>	<i>fango</i>	<i>hosak</i>
urinate	<i>stefo</i>	<i>stefo</i>	<i>thei</i>	<i>thefo</i>

GLOSS	MASARETE	RANA	LISELA	WAE SAMA
defecate	<i>stei</i>	<i>thei</i>	<i>buu</i>	
kill	<i>epmata</i>	<i>epmata</i>	<i>mdau</i>	<i>epmata</i>
see	<i>kita</i>	<i>kita</i>	<i>tine</i>	<i>kita</i>
swim	<i>uka</i>	<i>nango</i>	<i>nango</i>	<i>uka</i>
make, do	<i>puna</i>	<i>puna/loa</i>	<i>loa</i>	
slip	<i>spisa</i>	<i>prisa</i>	<i>hori</i>	
follow	<i>hai</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>taga</i>	
enter	<i>rogo/oso</i>	<i>rogo/oso</i>	<i>sii</i>	<i>oso</i>
give	<i>tuke/duwe</i>	<i>tuke/huke</i>	<i>huke</i>	<i>tuke/duwe</i>
request	<i>laha</i>	<i>laha</i>	<i>sea</i>	
forbid	<i>erei</i>	<i>erei</i>	<i>heke</i>	
play	<i>midi</i>	<i>midi</i>	<i>eptomi</i>	
speak	<i>prepa</i>	<i>prepa</i>	<i>bina</i>	<i>prepa</i>
hear	<i>caan</i>	<i>caan/prenge</i>	<i>prenge</i>	<i>caan</i>
remember	<i>nanbeta</i>	<i>nanbeta</i>	<i>halaik</i>	
hunger	<i>glada</i>	<i>emlapa</i>	<i>emlapa</i>	<i>emlapa</i>
burn(tr)	<i>pefa</i>	<i>pefa</i>	<i>sigi</i>	<i>pefa</i>
knife	<i>katanan</i>	<i>irit</i>	<i>irit</i>	<i>katanan</i>
machete	<i>katuen</i>	<i>todo</i>	<i>todo</i>	<i>todo/fae</i>
cloth	<i>wagun</i>	<i>wagun/ate</i>	<i>ate</i>	
door	<i>subu</i>	<i>sufen</i>	<i>sufen/karen</i>	
thatch	<i>atet</i>	<i>atet/abat</i>	<i>abat</i>	
citrus	<i>puhat</i>	<i>puhat</i>	<i>hosi</i>	
cassava	<i>mangkau</i>	[ <i>kasbiit</i> ]	[ <i>kasbiit</i> ]	
yam	<i>mangat</i>	[ <i>obiit</i> ]	[ <i>obiit</i> ]	
nettle	<i>pelat</i>	<i>pelat</i>	<i>saha</i>	
outside	<i>kako</i>	<i>kako/gidan</i>	<i>gawan</i>	<i>gidan</i>
Preposition	<i>gam/fi</i>	<i>fa/fi</i>	<i>fa</i>	<i>gam/fi</i>
up	<i>fī saka</i>	<i>fa saka</i>	<i>fa rete</i>	
distal	<i>fī dii</i>	<i>fa dii</i>	<i>fnii</i>	<i>fī dii</i>

Figure 4: Differences in vocabulary among Buru dialects

## 5.2 Historical-comparative evidence

Sound correspondences from Proto Austronesian (PAN) are uniform throughout the Buru dialects, with two exceptions noted below. Other non-lexical, non-phonological differences are that the Rana dialect uses a pre-posed, rather than a post-posed genitive marker in the vocative (contact-induced influence from Sula), and the Masarete dialect shows a collapse of the entire genitive system to the third person singular (C. Grimes 1991).

The first exception to uniform sound correspondences throughout the dialects of Buru is with the back vowels /u/ and /o/. Historically both /u/ and /o/ derive from PAN \*u, thus reflecting a split.

PAN	BURU	GLOSS
*inum	<i>ino</i>	drink
*ma-takut	<i>em-tako</i>	afraid
*uliq	<i>oli</i>	return home, go back
*suqan	<i>sua-n</i>	dibble stick
*qaniCu	<i>nitu</i>	*ghost, spirit of dead//dead person
*tuak	<i>tua-t</i>	*palmwine/tree yielding palmwine

Figure 5: Split of PAN \*u to Buru /u/ and /o/

However, when both vowels of a disyllabic root are back vowels and there is a consonant between them (VCV), a process of vowel harmony comes into play such that in Wae Sama, Masarete, and the dialects both vowels become /o/, whereas in Lisela both vowels appear as /u/. [NOTE: Buru (-L) means all the other dialects of Buru minus Lisela].

PAN	*tuRun 'descend'	*qulu 'head'	*pusuq'heart'	'hot (water)'
Buru (-L)	<i>toho</i>	<i>olo-n</i>	<i>poso-n fua-n</i>	(wae) <i>poto-t</i>
Lisela	<i>tuhu</i>	<i>ulu-n</i>	<i>pusu-n fua-n</i>	(wae) <i>putu-t</i>

Figure 6: Vowel harmony of back vowels

The second exception to uniform sound correspondences relates to PAN \*p.

PAN	*p	*b	*R	*t
Buru (-L.)	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>t</i>
Lisela	<i>p/h</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>t</i>
Kayeli	<i>h</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>t</i>
Ambelau	<i>f</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>r</i>

Figure 7: Reflexes of PAN \*p and other selected correspondences

Li Enyorot does not show any identifiable patterns as to which items reflect /p/ and which reflect /h/. Instead of positing a historical split, those items reflecting /h/ may be easily accounted for as borrowings from Kayeli. And in fact, the items which reflect /h/ are identical in the Kayeli language.

PAN/PMP	*pusuq 'heart'	*S-in-ipi 'dream'	*pulut 'birdlime'	
Buru (-L)	<i>poso-n</i>	<i>em-nipi</i>	<i>polo-n</i>	
Lisela	<i>pusu-n</i>	<i>em-nipi</i>	<i>pulu-n</i>	
Kayeli	<i>hosoni</i>	<i>em-nihi</i>	??	
PAN/PMP	*paRi 'stingray'	*peñu 'turtle'	*qapuR 'lime, chalk'	*pajey 'rice'
Buru (-L)	<i>pahi</i>	<i>peno</i>	<i>apu</i>	<i>pala</i>
Lisela	<i>hali</i>	<i>heno</i>	<i>ahul</i>	<i>hala</i>
Kayeli	<i>hali</i>	<i>heno</i>	<i>ahul</i>	<i>hala</i>

Figure 8: Items reflecting PAN \*p in Buru dialects

The Kayeli language was spoken along the north-eastern coastal strip of Buru in an area that is subsumed within the Lisela-speaking area. Lisela (in this broader context usually referred to as Li Enyorot) is best characterised as a *lingua franca* that developed along the

northern and eastern coastal strips for communication between speakers of Kayeli and other native inhabitants of Buru, and between Sula, Ternate, Buton and other migrants who settled along the north coast of Buru with native Buru inhabitants who had also settled along the coast. Thus, the presence of borrowings from Kayeli (or Sula, Ternate and Buton, for that matter) is not surprising.

In summary, the inherent sound correspondences of Lisela match the sound correspondences of the other dialects of Buru, but not those of Kayeli or Ambelau.

### 5.3 Figures deflated from taboos

It is well known that the impression of linguistic convergence can occur as the result of culture contact. Among the Sama-Bajau languages in the southern Philippines, Pallesen (1985) found that to obtain an appropriate indicator of linguistic similarity, scores of lexical similarity needed to be adjusted downward to weed out the great degree of convergence that resulted from culture contact — an adjustment which could only be done on an item-by-item basis.

A similar thing seems to be happening on Buru, but in the opposite way. Lexical taboos results in scores of lexical similarity that are lower than appropriate. As Pallesen could demonstrate borrowing (convergence) on a word by word basis, it can also be demonstrated on a word by word basis that taboos artificially deflate scores.

Simons (1982) presents a survey of tabooing practices found in the Austronesian world and their implications for comparative study. He notes (1982:162):

Word tabooing requires the speakers of a language to have at their disposal at least two ways of saying certain things. When all the speakers of a language control synonymous forms for the same wordlist item and the choice between them is culturally rather than semantically determined, then a lexicostatistic method which records and compares only one response for each wordlist item can grossly miscalculate the true lexical relationship between languages. *The error will be in the direction of yielding cognate percentages that are lower than the actual reality....this has the effect of overestimating linguistic divergence.* [emphasis mine, CEG]

Simons goes on to present a study of Malaitan (Solomons) speech communities giving three different figures, 1. a standard lexicostatistic score, 2. the score adjusted to account for synonyms, and 3. the score further adjusted to include cognates that have a shift in meaning. The overall effect of these adjustments to the percentage figures was to increase them by an average of 9.3% when accounting for synonyms, and an additional 8.3% when accounting for cognates with meaning change. Some individual cases were adjusted upward by as much as 27%.

On Buru there are many types of taboos. Some speakers are consciously aware that taboos (*koit*) are associated with language variation.

Affinal taboos are both behavioural and linguistic, preventing one from uttering the name of parents-in-law, children-in-law, and siblings-in-law. One may refer to the person by kin term, but not by name (such a phenomenon is actually the norm for all adult relationships, but is further associated with a lowering of the eyes and voice, among other ways of avoidance, for in-laws). In the more traditional areas where personal names continue to be the names of plants, animals, places or seasons, the taboo extends to avoiding mentioning that particular item.



There is no taboo associated with the names of dead ancestors, as is found in other areas. On the contrary, ancestors (even recent ones) are frequently addressed directly by name in various circumstances and locations.

The most common kind of taboos on Buru are territorially restricted. In a given locale while hunting, travelling or just living, there are certain words that may not be uttered. In the Wae Lupa area of Wae Tina, one may not say *menjangan* 'deer' (a borrowed substitute itself assimilated by all dialects), but one must hunt *wadun* 'deer' (normally means 'back of neck'). In many of the streams along the slopes facing the southern coast one hunts *uran* 'crayfish' (PAN \**uDang*), but in most interior areas of the island one must hunt *sehe* 'crayfish' (normally means 'to reverse, retreat, back up'). Examples of this sort are numerous, but a thorough listing is beyond the scope of this paper. In some places a topic may not be addressed at all in any language. In others cases, word substitutes or circumlocutions are listed for the newcomer before entering the taboo area (*net.koit*). Most of these territorially restricted taboos have an associated myth or legend explaining why those particular items may not be used in that particular area.

Some taboos are not so much associated with a territory as much as an activity. For example, during particularly heavy east monsoons when groups of men will go hunting and foraging in the jungle for 3–5 months, there are special behavioural and linguistic taboos that must be strictly adhered to.

The taboos are not seen so much as a deception of the spirit world, but rather as a cooperative effort with the ancestors to assure themselves and their family and descendants long life and good fortune by avoiding the harm, disease and ill fate associated with breaking taboos. Failure to observe the taboos may result in a sudden and violent deterioration in the weather resulting in branches blowing down, or roofs blowing off, hurting or killing someone. Crops may be destroyed, or ill-health, miscarriage or still-birth may occur. A temporary failure to 'get s.t., obtain s.t., succeed, receive blessing' (*dufa*) on the hunt, in the fields, or while foraging can also be the result of failure to observe taboos.

Word taboos on Buru are formed by substituting a new item for the one to be avoided, rather than by altering the original form.

One type of substitution is by semantic shift. For example, while other dialects of Buru say *manut* 'bird' [PAN \**manuk* 'bird'] and *pani-n* 'wing' [PAN \**panij* 'wing'], Lisela says *pani* 'bird'. When talking about species of birds in different areas, the genera are different but the differentia are the same – *man.samal/pan.samal* 'seagull', *man.kumul/pani kumul* 'k.o. large dove'.

Similarly, a term may be retained with a shift in meaning while the original meaning is taken by a completely different item. Lisela has *nango* 'swim' [PAN \**nanguy* 'swim']. In other dialects of Buru 'swim' is *uka* while *nango* is retained meaning 'wade'.

Another common strategy on Buru is to use circumlocutions or abstractions as a substitute for a lexical item. For example, *innewet* 'snake (generic)' literally means 'the living thing'; *isaleu* 'python' literally means 'a thing that goes ahead'. Lisela *senget* 'mosquito' [PAN \**senget* 'sting'] is replaced by Masarete *inhadat* 'mosquito' (lit. 'the thing that bites'). The lexicon is full of examples of this sort.

#### 5.4 Li Garan

The extreme case of taboo is found in an uninhabited section of the jungle in the north-west quadrant of the island called Garan. Garan takes two days of walking to traverse. The

taboo is that the vernacular language of Buru may not be spoken there. Malay (or any other language) is acceptable, but Buru is not. Li Garan 'the language of Garan' has developed entirely around a strategy of taboo. It is only known by those Rana people who have reason to travel to the north-west coast. They teach it to their children, and different levels of proficiency are recognised. A secondary use of the language is as a secret language in the presence of people from other parts of Buru.

On the basis of some texts and around 400 lexical items collected by the author, a few generalisations can be made. The syntax of Li Garan is the same as Buru. Nouns, verbs and 'adjectives' are different, but functors such as pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, aspect markers and 'adverbs' are the same. Vocabulary is adequate for most domains, and there is even vulgar vocabulary. The nature and vocabulary of Li Garan seems to be fairly stable when compared with a general description by Schut (1919) and a word list from Jansen (1933). A fuller description of Li Garan is found in C. Grimes and Maryott (1994) and in C. Grimes (1991).

### 5.5 Figures deflated due to peculiarities of locale

Another phenomenon which gives the illusion of divergence in the figures of lexical similarity is that different areas of the island reflect features that are specific to the locale in which the word list is elicited.

For example, the geological forces which have shaped Buru have caused a great southern uplift with a northern tilt (see Bellwood 1985:3-8). The result of this process is that mountains along the southern coast in a band from 15-40 km inland are sharp, shattered coral protrusions that have been thrust up from the ocean bottom to heights of 1600+ metres with very little soil. In the northern part of the island, however, the mountains are great piles of soil, complete with landslides and silty streams (rare in the south). Thus, when one asks in the north what is the word for "mountain", one is given *fude*. In the south one is told *fuka*. It is only after extensive experience on the trails over a wide part of the island that it becomes clear that *fude* means 'the kind of mountain that is made out of soil' and *fuka* means 'island, with an extension to mean mountain'. *Fude* is also used in the south in the rare place where one can find a hill or mountain made of soil rather than coral. Incidentally, both north and south use *kaku* to mean 'ridge, mountain'.

Similarly, when one asks for the word for "grass", one sometimes gets *mehet* and sometimes *rei*. Further study reveals that *mehet* is the saw-toothed variety and *rei* is the smooth-edged variety, given according to which variety is dominant in the immediate area.

There are additional examples of this nature giving the illusion that elicited word lists are in fact more divergent than they really are.

### 5.6 Figures deflated due to ambiguous generic-specific relations

Word list items tend to be generic. The problem for tabulation comes in that the responses given may be either generic or specific.

For example, when asking for "snake" on Buru one is normally given *isaleu* 'reticulating python', because that is the snake most salient, i.e. the one most talked about and feared. Every once in a while, in a word list situation, one may be given *innewet* 'snake (generic)', or *karapapa* 'k.o. small snake'. Similar problems occur for other nouns, such as generic and

specifics for types of bamboo. But it isn't until the researcher gains proficiency and broad experience in the language(s) in question that problems of this sort can be weeded out.

A more difficult problem to sort out is for some areas of action that may be lexically rich in the target language. For example, I have catalogued over thirty legitimate lexical responses in Buru when asked for "cut", and seventeen for "carry", depending on manner, instrument, goal, etc. (listed in C. Grimes 1991).

## 6 Oral reports and communication

The above discussion suggests that the figures of lexical similarity between Lisela and the other dialects of Buru are artificially low. But is there corroborating evidence?

One finds on Buru both a great majority who are completely ignorant of other parts of the island, and a minority who have, through marriage alliances, migrations, pursuit of cash crops, chasing down a runaway wife, or whatever reason, become familiar enough with some or several other parts of the island enough to be conversant in the names of streams and taboo areas, and know what kin groups "belong" in those areas. Both the ignorant majority and the informed minority vigorously insist that Buru has one language and only one.

Everyone on Buru is aware of some commonly known lexical differences, but the emphasis is on the similarity. On the one hand, Wae Sama, Masarete, Rana, Lisela, and Fogi can be identified by various people (the informed minority) as having speech varieties different enough to be identifiable, while insisting that they can communicate well. Some are aware enough to be able to say that Rana, Masarete and Wae Sama are closer to each other than they are to Lisela/Li Enyorot (a claim supported by the figures of lexical similarity). On the other hand, those from the Masarete and Wae Tina area who have actually tried to communicate with speakers of Lisela also admit that they must sometimes switch to Malay so as to avoid miscommunication. On the basis of intelligibility, therefore, this indicates that Lisela is marginal as to whether it should be considered a dialect, or a separate language (also corroborated by the figures of lexical similarity).

Women who have been purchased (their term) from other areas report a period of a few days to a few weeks to adjust their speech when they arrive in their husband's area.

Being aware of lexical similarity figures around 60% – 65%, and being aware of some of the great differences in basic vocabulary (see Figure 4), initially I remained sceptical at the insistence by speakers of Buru that there is just one language on the island.

However, after studying the Masarete and Rana dialects and gaining a degree of proficiency in them, I found opportunity to then return to the Lisela area. I spent two full days in Wae Mangit in north-west Buru talking with a man from the Waemangan kin group (that belongs there on the coast and is a native speaker of the Lisela/Li Enyorot speech variety). He could trace a direct line of his ancestors who had been in the immediate area through 26 generations. We talked in the vernacular about history, marriage, alliance, brideprice, travel, food, knowledge, research, and the outside world. We had to stop every once in a while to ask each other what some words meant, but communication at a significant level was both possible and enjoyable. I had a similar experience in Jiku Merasa in north-east Buru with a man from the Toraha kin group (which belongs there and also is a native speaker of Lisela/Li Enyorot) whose ancestors had been in that area through 14 generations. In both cases, both I and the Lisela speakers adjusted our speech toward what we knew of the other's speech variety.

Simons' (1982) discussion about taboo is built around the assumption that all speakers know what all the synonyms are. Such a uniform knowledge is clearly not the case in Buru.

This leaves us with the knowledge that Lisela is marginal, and the uncertainty as to whether the ability to communicate is more a reflection of inherent intelligibility or of bilingualism. Clearly, more rigorous testing a la Casad (1974) is still required with an adequate cross-section of Buru society.

## 7 Language and demographic information

In the discussion below, one confusion that must be sorted through is the repeated appearance of the same names (e.g. Lisela, Leliali and Kayeli) under different languages. This is a necessary confusion for several reasons, 1. to keep the names tied to the names used in the literature, 2. to keep the names tied in with the names used by the people themselves, and 3. because in these areas there were two different ethnolinguistic groups interacting with each other and residing in the same area.

### 7.1 The non-indigenous populations of Buru

The non-indigenous populations of Buru may be summarised as follows:

- a. The northern coastal strip of Buru from Namlea to Bara is predominantly Muslim and is settled primarily by immigrants from Sula (Sanana). Many of these have been on Buru ten generations or more. They are the majority in most villages in this area and have the ethnic numbers to maintain their own language and not learn the vernacular language of Buru. (see Grimes & Grimes 1994 for a summary of the language picture in the Sula Islands).
- b. Interspersed among the Sula villages are small numbers of individuals who trace their origins to Ternate, Galela (both north Maluku), Bugis (generic for several groups from South Sulawesi), Buton (a generic term for the islands off of South-east Sulawesi), and merchants generally calling themselves "Arab". These immigrants have banded together with the ethnic Buru people (who are also a minority group in the Sula communities) and many of them have learned to speak Lisela/Li Enyorot.
- c. The west coast is inhabited almost exclusively by *geb.Binongko*, the Buru term for those from the Muna-Buton area off of south-east Sulawesi, most particularly from the Tukang Besi islands (See Donohue, this volume). This area provides ideal shelter for the Butonese sailing vessels plying their trade between Java and Irian Jaya. As many as 200 of these boats have been known to cluster in the area and then convoy to Java together. Many of these communities have been there for over 12 generations. With the recent exception of those who have migrated from other parts of Buru, such as Rana, and those who have made a complete shift to Malay, the west coast is devoid of indigenous inhabitants.
- d. The south coast consists of Buru villages interspersed with several Buton villages and a few villages and village segments from "Kisar" from the south-western part of Maluku near Timor. Where these immigrants are minorities within a larger Buru community they have learned the Buru language.

- e. The lower Wae Apo river valley in north-east Buru is an ethnolinguistic checkerboard. There is a large Bugis village at the mouth of the Wae Apo river entering the bay. Interspersed between the various Javanese transmigration units in the area are villages of indigenous Buru inhabitants whose kin groups "belong" in the area and indigenous Buru inhabitants who have migrated from the Masarete area since World War II to seek their fortune distilling rubbing oil (*gelan*) from the *Melaleuca kajuputi* plant. There is beginning to be some marriage between Buru people and Javanese, usually Buru men taking Javanese wives.

## 7.2 Languages of wider communication

Indonesian, the national language, is the language of government, education, and the media. Ambonese Malay (Collins 1980; C. Grimes 1985; B.D. Grimes 1991) is the language of commerce and inter-ethnic communication along the coastal areas of Buru. The Malay of much of north Buru is shifting from North Moluccan Malay (Taylor 1983; Voorhoeve 1983) to Ambonese Malay with more and more children sent to Ambon for schooling, and with more and more teachers and government officials working in the area coming from Ambonese Malay speaking areas.

## 7.3 Population estimates

Estimates of number of people belonging to each ethno-linguistic grouping are based on 1987 government statistics (Kantor Statistik Kabupaten Maluku Tengah 1987a, 1987b, 1987c) combined with the author's and informants' knowledge of ethnic composition of coastal villages and field notes on numbers of houses in many hamlets in the interior of the island not included in the government figures. The breakdown according to religion highlights the distinctive character of several of the demographic groupings. The numbers in the figure below represent best estimates on the number of members of kin groups belonging to that speech variety, rather than the number of active speakers (except for the last seven speech varieties, whose numbers represent active speakers). Observations on language use follow below. The numbers for each speech variety take into account migrations. For example, the high number of Christians in the Rana dialect is due to the large communities that have migrated closer to the coast and are found in such villages as Wae Poti, Wae Nibe, Slealale, Neat, and Liang. The range of error in the figures could be as much as 10%.

Speech Variety	TOTAL	Moslem	Christian	Traditional
AMBELAU	5,700	5,700	-----	-----
BURU (total)	44,902	17,022	21,695	6,185
Wae Sama	6,622	4,350	972	1,300
Masarete	9,600	2,550	6,650	400
Buru (Ambon)	2,000	500	1,500	-----
Rana	14,258	150	9,623	4,485
Lisela	11,922	8,472	3,450	-----
Fogi	500	500	-----	-----
HUKUMINA	1	1	-----	-----
KAYELI <sup>11</sup>	4	4	-----	-----
Kayeli	4	4	-----	-----
Leliali	0	-----	-----	-----

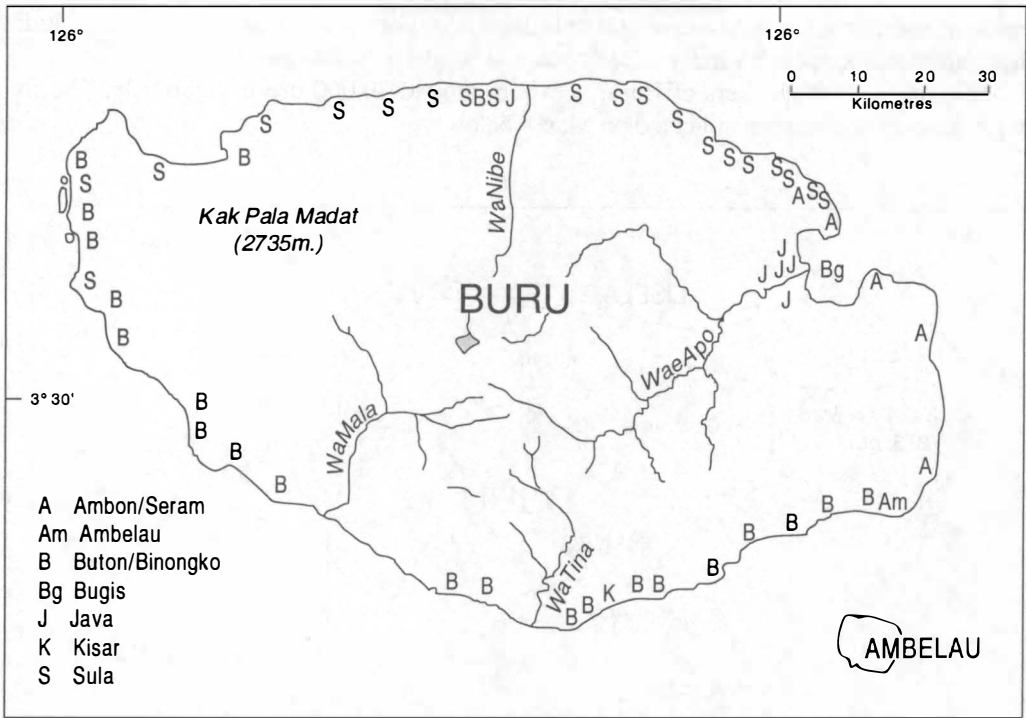
**Figure 9:** Population estimates for speech varieties of Buru

In addition to those indigenous to Buru, there are several major immigrant groups clustered in different places. There are 20,000 Javanese, mainly in the Wae Apo transmigration area, with another Javanese community around the Waenibe Wood Industry plywood factory at the mouth of the Wae Nibe river. There are 12,600 Butonese (a generic term for people from South-east Sulawesi) concentrated mostly along the west and south coasts. 12,500 people from the Sula Islands (to the north of Buru) live along the north and north-east coasts. There are an additional 10,000 people from various other parts of Maluku and Sulawesi scattered around the coastal areas of Buru, the largest subgroups of which are Bugis, Ternate, from southern Maluku (Kei, Tanimbar, Luang, Kisar — mostly Catholic), Ambon-Lease (Muslim & Christian), Seram (Christian), Chinese (mostly Buddhist and Christian), and 'Arab'. These immigrant groups adhere to Islam except where noted otherwise.

#### 7.4 Language information

Some generalisations can be made regarding language use on Buru when looking at the map above. The communities that adhere to Islam tend to be multi-ethnic, with the indigenous Buru population usually a minority. In these communities, the vernacular language is not normally the primary means of communication, even in the home. The vernacular is used with varying degrees of proficiency and success in limited domains, and in attempts to exclude outsiders during such things as negotiations. These communities may be characterised as well along in a language shift to Malay, particularly in the north, east and west coastal areas of the island. Language use in Christian communities is vigorous, except for those in the towns of Ambon, Namlea, some in Leksula, and some in the multi-ethnic checkerboard of the Wae Apo valley. For those who adhere to traditional beliefs, the vernacular is their primary, and sometimes exclusive, means of communication.

<sup>11</sup> The entire ethnic group is possibly 800 people.



Map 7: Immigrant communities on Buru

#### 7.4.1 Ambelau

The language of Ambelau is spoken in the villages of Elara, Salasi, Siwar, Kampung Baru, Ulima, Masaway and Lumoy on the island of Ambelau, and in the village of Wae Tawa across the straight on the south-east tip of Buru. There are 5,700 speakers of Ambelau, all of whom adhere to Islam. The rocky terrain and abundance of destructive wild pigs make the tilling of gardens for food crops on Ambelau a futile effort. The village of Wae Tawa on the coast of Buru is an Ambelau colony established for the purpose of supplying vegetables and tubers. Cloves and copra are the main cash crops. There is insufficient data at this point to make intelligent statements about any dialect variations on Ambelau.

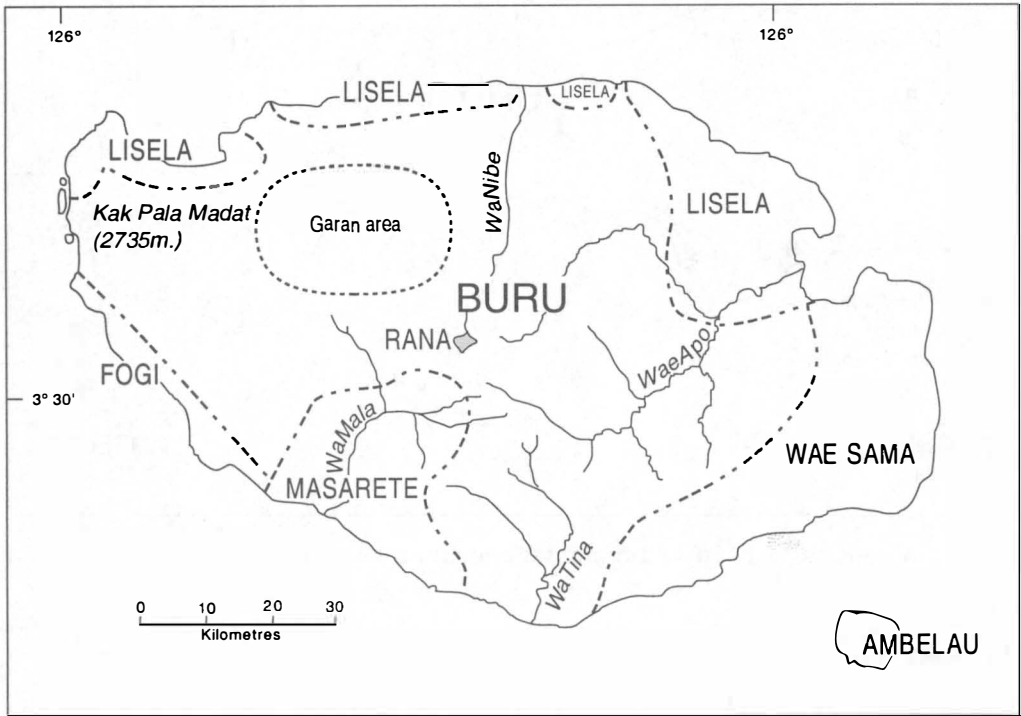
The language of Ambelau is not intelligible with Buru. Origin myths on Ambelau trace a connection with Nusa Laut in the Ambon-Lease islands.

#### 7.4.2 Buru

The language of Buru is spoken throughout the inhabited areas of the island. Those adhering to Islam are found scattered along the north and east coasts of Buru and in most coastal villages in the Wae Sama area to Namrole bay on the southern tip of the island. Traditional beliefs are held to in the inland Wae Sama area, Wae Kabo, Wae Tina, Rana, and Wae Geren, although churches are beginning to appear in some places. The Masarete area (coastal and mountain) is predominantly Christian. Migrations from one geographical

region to another are common (see previous discussion) but where migrations have included large families, the speech variety of their place of origin is maintained.

There are 45,000 speakers of Buru, of whom around 30,000 use it vigorously. The five major dialects of Buru are indicated on Map 8 below.



**Map 8:** Major dialects of the Buru language

#### 7.4.2.1 *Wae Sama dialect*

Those in the interior of the Wae Sama area adhering to traditional beliefs are commonly seen by others on the island as being the most isolated, backward, and the most violent. While these stereotypes are not without foundation, they are a reflection of an us-them distinction that has a basis in speech differences and cultural variation. Some of the better known differences of the Wae Sama dialect are intonation, saying *fiet* rather than *fuat* for ‘banana’, and saying *fae* ‘machete’, *lemet* ‘cuscus’, and having the prothetic /e/ tend toward /i/.

#### 7.4.2.2 *Masarete dialect*

Those in the Masarete area have had the longest exposure to Europeans, education and Christianity, of all the areas in the southern, central, and western parts of the island. Thus it is not surprising that most of the ethnic Buru people in Ambon, Jakarta, and the Netherlands are from Masarete.



Hendriks (1897) gives notes on the grammar, a short lexicon, and several texts for Masarete. Two Masarete Holle lists are provided by Stokhof (1982) dated 1895 and 1904, one filled out by an Ambonese, and the other by either a Dutchman or an Ambonese. Both lists must be evaluated on an item-by-item basis, as they mix Malay, give descriptive phrases rather than the appropriate lexical item, and have significant problems with transcription. Wallace's (1869, reprinted 1962) word list for 'Massaratty' is indeed a Masarete word list.

Masarete stands apart from other dialects by using *nunu* rather than *nini* for the third person plural possessive, saying *katuen* instead of *todo* 'machete', *tongi* 'also, as well' and *tirin* 'very' where other dialects use *pee* for both senses. The genitive enclitic system in Masarete has collapsed to the third person singular form for all person and number combinations (C. Grimes 1991:282ff.).

#### 7.4.2.3 Rana dialect

There are several varieties (subdialects) of the Rana dialect spoken both in their areas of origin and in the areas to which some speakers have migrated. Even in the migrations to the coast that occurred around 100 years ago language use remains vigorous by all age groups.

##### 7.4.2.3.1 Rana subdialect (Rana dialect)

Rana covers all the inhabitants of the greater Rana (Wae Kolo) valley surrounding the large lake in the centre of the island. Large groups have migrated over the last 100 years and set up communities on both the north and south coasts, as well as inland about one day's walk from the coast.

Some speakers from Rana also speak Li Garan (see discussion above). I estimate 3,000–5,000 people who would be knowledgeable in Li Garan to one degree of proficiency or another.

##### 7.4.2.3.2 Wae Geren subdialect (Rana dialect)

The upper Wae Geren area has periodic traffic and intermarriage with Rana, and the two areas have overlapping hunting grounds.<sup>12</sup>

##### 7.4.2.3.3 Wae Kabo subdialect (Rana dialect)

Those from the Wae Kabo area have also migrated into the Wae Tina and upper Wae Mala areas and so the speech variety in these areas is fairly uniform.

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<sup>12</sup> The lower Wae Geren area is part of Wae Apo and speaks Li Enyorot.

#### 7.4.2.4 *Lisela (Li Enyorot) dialect*

As mentioned above, Li Enyorot is the variety of Buru used along the north and east coasts in the areas inhabited primarily by outsiders and in the area formerly identified with the Kayeli language. It seems to have functioned as a *lingua franca* along the flat coastal strip to relate to people from other language groups.

The term 'Li Enyorot' is what speakers of the Rana dialect use to describe this divergent but often intelligible speech variety spoken along the northern and eastern coastal strips, and in the lower Wae Geren and Wae Apo valleys.<sup>13</sup>

Speakers of Li Enyorot describe their own speech variety as 'coarse', 'crude', 'mixed (adulterated)', 'not pure', 'not sweet'. They describe the Rana and Masarete dialects as 'pure' and 'pleasant sounding'.<sup>14</sup>

As a generalisation, use of Li Enyorot is not vigorous and a language shift to Malay is under way. Many people under 30 years of age know only bits and pieces of the language or can function only in a very few domains. As they have tended to fully participate in the greater Malay Islamic coastal culture, the value of their own culture and language has not been upheld. This situation is best characterised as 'language shift in process' rather than 'stable bilingualism'.

Li Enyorot has been variously referred to in the literature as Lisela (Licella) and *liet enyorot* (Schut 1919). Besides being spoken along the five kilometer wide northern coastal strip of Regentschap Lisela, it is also spoken along the coastal strip of Regentschaps Tagalisa, Leliali, and Kayeli. In relation to the literature it must be further noted that in Leliali and Kayeli, two different languages were spoken in the same area, both referred to as Leliali or Kayeli. The two languages were Li Enyorot and two dialects of Kayeli. The Kayeli region is also referred to as Wae Apo, Mako, 'transmigrasi', and 'unit-unit', the latter three focusing on the area where Javanese transmigrants are being settled in an attempt to turn the lower Wae Apo river valley into a wet-rice growing area.<sup>15</sup>

Wallace's (1869) 'Wayapo' word list is Li Enyorot. Holle list 55c (Stokhof 1982) dated 1896, that is identified as 'Kayeli', is in fact Li Enyorot.

#### 7.4.2.5 *Fogi (Li Emteban)*

Li Emteban is a term noted by Schut (1919) to refer to a variety of speech used along the south-west coast in the Fogi and Tomahu areas. (The term 'Li Emteban' means 'the language that is cut short at the end', referring to perceptions by those in other parts of the island toward the variety of Buru spoken around Fogi). The area is generally referred to as Fogi, following the name of the Regentschap. The Tomahu speech variety is extinct, and the Tomahu kin group itself is also nearly extinct. The Fogi area is completely dominated by Butonese with a few people from Sula. Reports from both the north and south coasts as well

<sup>13</sup> Li is a normal cliticisation of *liet* 'language'. *Oro* means 'sag, droop' as when a bird alights on a small branch. Thus, the term '*Li Enyorot*' gives the picture by metaphor of 'a language that droops'.

<sup>14</sup> The negative attitudes expressed toward their own dialect and the positive attitudes expressed toward the Rana dialect may be one indication that vernacular literature in the the Rana dialect might be acceptable to speakers of Li Enyorot. Further study is needed.

<sup>15</sup> The process was begun in the late 1960s using political prisoners but now is just another one of the government's nationwide transmigration projects.

as personal contact with ethnic Buru people from the Fogi area all indicate that the language shift to Malay is complete in this area among the 500 or so people in the area who are indigenous to Buru. I have talked with both adults and school children from the area who do not even have a partial knowledge of the vernacular.

### **7.4.3 *Hukumina (Bambaa)***

Hukumina was referred to by Hendriks (1897) as a dialect of Buru spoken in the districts of Hukumina, Palumata and Tomahu (these were districts in the north-west corner of Buru). He gives no other details other than his impression that one could shift easily between Hukumina and other dialects of Buru. A Hukumina word list is published in the Holle lists (Stokhof 1982) with very little information other than the date 1896.

All reports indicate the language is extinct in the Hukumina area (north-west Buru), but I was able to find one old woman from the former village of Hukumina that used to be located behind the present village of Masarete near the fort at Kayeli (north-east Buru). My data are even more divergent than the Holle list (the latter includes several items that are clear borrowings from Buru). The language of Hukumina is very distinct from Buru in intonation, lexicon and sound correspondences. For example, PAn \**k* is Buru /*k*/ and Hukumina /*c*/ intervocalically.

The language is functionally extinct, meaning that in 1989 there was only one 80-year-old toothless woman whose mind wandered that still remembered phrases and sentences, but hadn't had anyone to speak it with for two decades. The language is referred to in the villages of Kayeli and Masarete as the 'Bambaa' language, which, in Hukumina means 'there isn't any'. The informant herself calls the language Hukumina.

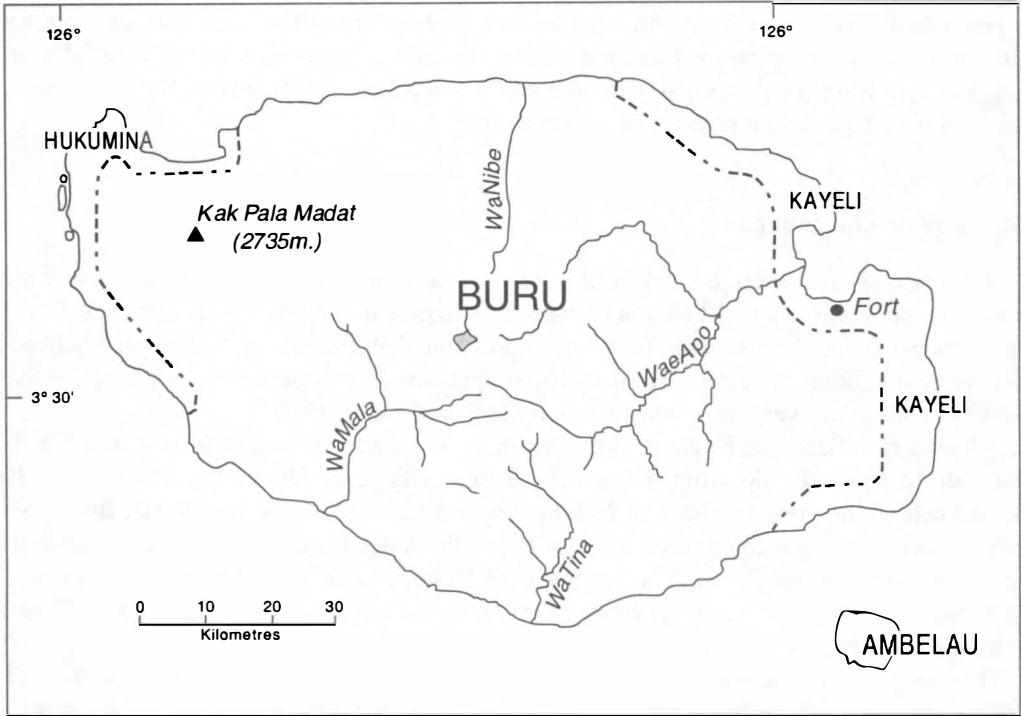
#### **7.4.3.1 *Palumata (Palamata, Balamata)***

This speech variety is also extinct, having been spoken in north-west Buru, an area that is now completely inhabited by Butonese. Although oral history in the Kayeli area remembers Palumata as distinct from Hukumina, the former Regentschaps of Palumata and Hukumina were adjacent to each other. Hendriks (1897) identifies the 'dialect' of Hukumina as being spoken in the districts of Hukumina, Palumata, and Tomahu. My assumption at this point is that Palumata and Hukumina were varieties of the same language.

### **7.4.4 *Kayeli (Cajeli, Gaeli) language***

The Kayeli language was spoken in former days around Namlea Bay in north-east Buru and along the coast as far as the Samalagi river. Except for the four remaining speakers of the Kayeli language, indigenous Buru people in this area have shifted to Malay and the Li Enyorot dialect of Buru.

The king's family of Kayeli and the king's family of Leliali continue to marry each other in cross-cousin marriage as they have for several generations. This, and several other factors indicate that the notion of a Kayeli ethnic group remains intact despite language shift and language death.



**Map 9:** Probable language picture on Buru around 1600

7.4.4.1 *Kayeli dialect*

The Kayeli dialect of Kayeli was spoken around the southern region of Namlea bay in the villages of Kayeli and Masarete, and in Namlea and Namete on the north coast of Namlea bay where villages of Kampung Cina and Kayeli Kristen moved after the turn of the century.

The four remaining speakers of this dialect live in the villages of Kayeli and Masarete and are all over 60 years old. Several people over 35 years of age know isolated words and phrases of Kayeli, but none of them control the language in any single domain. As the four remaining speakers of the language do not use it among themselves, the language is best characterised as nearly extinct, or functionally extinct.<sup>16</sup>

Two “Kayeli” word lists are given in the Holle lists (Stokhof 1982) both dated 1896. The data in list 55c is actually the Li Enyorot dialect of Buru and it is described as “the language spoken by the Alfuru from Kayeli, Licella, Tagalisa and Liliali”, the areas in which Li Enyorot is spoken. List 55a is a Kayeli word list. Wallace’s (1869) ‘Cajeli’ word list is indeed Kayeli.

<sup>16</sup> When eliciting data from the four remaining speakers of Kayeli, one could visibly see the unfolding horror and agony as it dawned on them that even basic vocabulary items that none of them could remember were, as they said, “gone forever and irrecoverable.”

#### 7.4.4.2 *Leliali (Liliali) dialect*

I was able to get a 205-item Leliali word list from an 81 year old speaker on a field trip in 1983. He died two months later. On a return trip in May 1989 I was told that the last speaker, a woman who was actually born in Kayeli, had died in March 1989, two months prior to my visit.

My word list from 1983 is sufficient to confirm that Leliali was a dialect of the Kayeli language, and not a separate language.

#### 7.4.4.3 *Lumaete (Lumaiti, Lumaite, Lumara)*

This recently extinct speech variety had speakers clustered around Kayeli in the past and there is still the memory of people who spoke something called 'Lumaiti'. There is a Lumaiti river near Kayeli, but there was also, in 1840, a Regentschap Lumaete in the south-east corner of Buru. Hendriks (1897) identifies the Kayeli 'dialect' of Buru as being spoken in the districts of Kayeli, Ilat, and Lumara, the latter being the name of a river in south-east Buru in the area of the former Regentschap Lumaete.

Although the linguistic classification of Lumaete is impossible in an absence of data, there are a couple of clues which help. One is that this variety of speech was spoken somewhere in east Buru. Another clue is from the name itself — *luma* 'house' follows the Kayeli reflex of /l/ for PAn \*R, rather than the Buru reflex, which is /h/. My assumption at this point is that Lumaete was a dialect of Kayeli.

#### 7.4.5 *Moksela (Maksela, Opselan)*

This speech variety has been extinct since 1974, when the last speaker died. No clues other than the name of a stream east of Kayeli called Moksela, give any indication as to where it was spoken or what it was like. If it was spoken from the stream by that name eastward, then chances are likely that it was also a variety of the Kayeli language. People in the Kayeli area remember nothing more than the name of the language, who in the community spoke it before they died, and that it was somehow different enough to have its own identity.

## 8 Summary

While one might expect wide linguistic variation on a mountainous island the size of Buru, the indigenous inhabitants insist there is only one language. A perusal of word lists sampling speech from around the island indicates wide diversity, with some varieties sharing as little as 61% similarity. This paper has shown that the complex language picture on Buru can be credibly unravelled only by taking into account synonym sets, lexical taboos, marriage patterns, internal migrations, local and regional history, sound correspondences, and patterns of language use in multi-ethnic societies. The status of Lisela (Li Enyorot) in relation to the other main Buru dialects was shown on a number of criteria to be marginal between a divergent dialect of Buru, and a separate language. A number of

speech varieties on Buru have become recently extinct, while others are well along a shift to Malay in a process that has been on-going for at least since 1658.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See B.D. Grimes (1994) for a more thorough discussion of the dynamics involved in this language shift.

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