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## **The languages of East Nusantara: An introduction**

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# 1 *The languages of East Nusantara: an introduction*

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MARIAN KLAMER AND MICHAEL C. EWING

## 1 Introduction

‘East Nusantara’, the name used in the title of this book, refers to the islands of eastern Indonesia and East Timor. ‘Nusantara’ is a term that has come to refer to the Indo-Malaysian archipelago generally, without reference to national borders.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this volume, we define East Nusantara as a geographical area that extends from Sumbawa to the west, across the islands of East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku<sup>2</sup> including Halmahera, and to the Bird’s Head of New Guinea in the east (see Map 1). In the northwest, the area is bounded by Sulawesi.<sup>3</sup>

In East Nusantara, some 400 languages are spoken (see Gordon 2005), most of which are endangered in terms of numbers of speakers, and the majority of which have not yet been described (Florey 2005). Linguistically, this geographic region displays great genetic diversity, being the meeting ground of languages belonging to the Austronesian and Papuan language families. Yet, similarities cut across many of these languages, giving rise to the notion of a linguistic area or *Sprachbund*. In this introduction chapter, we first present a brief history of the region and an overview of recent research that has had East Nusantara in its scope. This will serve as a general background for the chapters on individual languages that constitute the rest of this volume, summarised in the second section of this introduction.

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<sup>1</sup> An illustration of this use of the term in a recent publication is Jones (2007: x).

<sup>2</sup> Nusa Tenggara (West and East) and Maluku are the contemporary term for what have been called the Lesser Sundas and the Moluccas in earlier research. The Lesser Sundas comprise Bali, West Nusa Tenggara (Lombok and Sumbawa) and East Nusa Tenggara (Komodo, Flores, Solor islands, Alor-Pantar islands, Sumba, Timor).

<sup>3</sup> In the literature, there is no consensus on the exact geographic delimitations of the East Nusantara region. While East Nusa Tenggara and Maluku (including Halmahera) are generally included, the precise topic of study determines whether (parts of) New Guinea are also considered to be part of it. Ross (2005: 15, footnote 2), in a study on the genetic subgrouping of Papuan languages, treats mainland New Guinea separate from East Nusantara. In contrast, Donohue (2007), in a study on word order in Austronesian, defines the area of ‘east Nusantara’, or the area where ‘eastern ‘Indonesian’ languages are spoken, as including New Guinea (2007: 350, 352).

## **2 Introduction to the study of East Nusantara and its languages**

### **2.1 Prehistory of East Nusantara**

The earliest evidence of humans in what is now the Indonesian archipelago dates from about 40,000 years ago (BP). These people are most probably the ancestors of modern Melanesians, Australian Aborigines and the Negrito communities of the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines.<sup>4</sup> Due to climatic changes, human settlement became concentrated in the drier eastern part of the archipelago.

During the Pleistocene period, which lasted until approximately 11,000 BP, the landmasses of Australia and New Guinea were joined in a single continent that geologists and others refer to as Sahul. The islands of western Indonesia then formed a sub-continental peninsula, called Sunda or Sundaland. The islands between these two prehistoric land masses are referred to as Wallacea. Birdsell (1977) hypothesises that Sahul was populated by at least three groups of different people, at times when sea levels allowed relatively easy crossing between Sunda and Sahul. The scenarios that make up his proposal all include the possibility of a connection between populations in Wallacea (including East Nusantara) and New Guinea.

In the highlands of New Guinea, around 9,000 BP, the Melanesians made a major technological breakthrough when they developed agriculture, which sustained much more densely settled communities than their previous hunting and gathering had done. This strengthened the Melanesian presence in the east of the archipelago, while the western and central regions, remained relatively sparsely populated (Cribb 2000:29-30).

The expansion of the Austronesians started around 5,000 BP, who were moving southwards from Taiwan (Blust 1985, 1995, 1999) to the northern Philippines. In the late fifth and fourth millennia BP, a wave of migrants went west into Borneo and Sulawesi, and later toward Java, Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia, and Vietnam. Other founders moved east and south into Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara. Austronesian speakers arrived in the Timor-Alor-Pantar area some 3,500 years BP. Additional movements occurred between 4,000-3,500 BP, via Halmahera to the east, skimming the coasts of New Guinea, to the Bismarck Archipelago, into Oceania, arriving in Melanesia around 3,500-3,300 BP (Bellwood 1997:105, Cribb 2000:30, Pawley 2005:95-96, among others).

Despite this Austronesian expansion, there is evidence that non-Austronesian peoples have remained in many of these areas, including the Timor-Alor-Pantar region, Maluku including Halmahera, and mainland New Guinea. Preliminary research shows a genetic connection between people living in these areas. For example, Reesink (2005:203) refers to a study by Capelli et al. (2001) which included a population sample from the Bird's Head. Its results identified a haplogroup of the Y chromosome that is mainly restricted to Melanesia. Outside Melanesia it has a high frequency in Alor, and Capelli et al. (2001) relate this to the presence of Papuan languages in the region of Timor and the smaller islands of Alor and Pantar. Further, Kayser et al. (2003) found four haplogroups on the Y-chromosome that most likely arose in Melanesia, before the Austronesian expansion. They have a distribution of high frequencies in the Highlands of New Guinea, while three of them are also found in East Nusa Tenggara and Maluku, with higher frequencies in Papuan speaking populations than in Austronesian speaking groups. Therefore human genetic

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<sup>4</sup> Although the date for initial occupation of New Guinea and Australia is still unresolved (Veth et al. 1998: 162), it is generally agreed that the first humans arrived no later than 40,000 BP, possibly going back to 50,000 BP.

studies support an old connection between the non-Austronesian languages spoken on the islands of East Nusantara and those of the Papuan mainland.

From a linguistic perspective, there is general consensus that the non-Austronesian populations found in Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara must have predated the arrival of the Austronesian speaking populations.<sup>5</sup> In fact, ‘the first meeting of Austronesian and Papuan speakers was thus perhaps in the Timor area’ (Ross 2005:18). Ross (2005) presents evidence that the homeland of the Trans New Guinea family is located somewhere in the eastern highlands of New Guinea. If the outlier languages in Pantar-Alor belong to the Trans New Guinea family, as he hypothesises, then they must have spread (as a result of language shift, or by means of peoples’ migrations starting about 6,000 years BP, Ross 2005:41) from east to west, from the eastern part of the New Guinea mainland, all the way to Pantar, Alor, and Timor, reaching the area perhaps 4,500-4,000 BP (Bellwood 1997:123, Pawley 1998:684-5, Ross 2005:42). While the non-Austronesian languages that are spoken in Halmahera and Alor-Pantar today may point to an old (probably ancient) connection between East Nusantara and the New Guinea mainland, no Papuan languages are spoken in Central Maluku. However, these islands are located directly between the Papuan languages of North Halmahera in the north, those of the Timor region in the south, and those of the Bomberai peninsula in the east. Given the presence of Papuan languages around it, it is not unreasonable to posit an earlier Papuan presence in Maluku as well (see Donohue and Grimes 2008).

We should add that there is no reason to assume that the present-day Papuan languages in East Nusantara are the descendants of a single group of prehistoric populations or are the result of a single wave of migrations. Rather, it is far more plausible that they constitute a complex mix of prehistoric populations and various east-west migrations. Moreover, within historic times, there have also been numerous migrations between the various islands of East Nusantara.

As one illustration of this latter point, consider Makasai, Oirata, and Fataluku – the Papuan languages in the eastern part of East Timor. There is clear evidence that these languages post-date the arrival of the Austronesians, and were probably the result of a back-migration from the Bomberai peninsula. One type of evidence is archaeological, and comes from rock art motifs found in various archaeological sites in East Timor. Most of these sites are found on the eastern part of East Timor (see O’Connor 2003, Figure 1, p. 97), in areas that are currently populated by communities speaking a Papuan language. However, the rock art motifs found in these sites show significant stylistic affinities with painted art elsewhere in the Western Pacific. In the Pacific sites, the art co-occurs with Austronesian settlements that postdate the Austronesian expansion (O’Connor 2003:109). What this suggests is that the eastern part of East Timor was previously occupied by speakers of (an) Austronesian language(s), and that non-Austronesian speakers moved into that area in historic times (2,000 years ago, or later, O’Connor 2003:118). Anthropological evidence presented in McWilliam (2007) confirms this: Fataluku, a Papuan language on the eastern tip of East Timor, was adopted into an Austronesian speaking culture that already existed there before.

A much more recent migration of Papuan speakers is presented in Bouman (1943:484), who reports the oral tradition according to which the Tanglapui (Papuan) in east Alor descend from immigrants from Timor, and (in 1943) had come to Alor about 15

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<sup>5</sup> However Pawley is cautious enough to say that careful study of the internal diversity of the languages of Timor-Alor-Pantar is needed to settle the issue (Pawley 2005: 102).



demarcation, running between Sumba and Timor, across Flores, and between Sulawesi and Maluku, would be more appropriate. In later years, Dyen (1965), Haudricourt (1965) and Dahl (1976) seemed to group the languages of Maluku with the languages of the west rather than with those of Melanesia (see also Ross (1995a) and Grimes (2000), who present additional details and references on the history of Austronesian studies).

Through the 1970s and 1980s, linguistic studies in East Nusantara were mainly concerned with subgrouping the languages of Maluku.<sup>9</sup> However, the overall linguistic situation of East Nusantara with its approximately 400 languages remained rather understudied until well into the 1990s. This led to Darrell Tryon's observation that '[Eastern Indonesia] remains perhaps the least known area in the Austronesian world today' (Tryon 1995:6).

Since the beginning of the 1990's, this situation has started to change with the publication of several grammars of East Nusantara languages, including Grimes (1991), van Minde (1997), Klamer (1998), van Klinken (1999), Dol (1999), van Staden (2000), Bowden (2001), Williams-van Klinken et. al. (2001), Baird (2002, 2008), De Vries (2007), van Engelenhoven (2005), van den Heuvel (2006), Kratochvíl (2007), Klamer, (forthcoming). An additional 15 languages are currently being described and/or documented by scholars in various research projects, including the following (moving roughly west to east): Rongga (Arka) and Palu'e (Donohue) in Flores, Helong (Bowden) and Bahasa Kupang (Jacob) in West Timor; Western Pantar (Holton) and Kaera (Klamer) in East Pantar; Sawila (Kratochvíl) in East Alor; Waima'a (Bowden, Hajek, Himmelman), Makalero (Huber), Bunak (Schapper) and Fataluku (Stoel, van Engelenhoven) in East Timor; and Allang (Ewing), Haruku (Florey) and Sou Amana Teru (Musgrave) in Central Maluku.

## **2.3 Genetic divisions in East Nusantara**

### **2.3.1 Grouping the Austronesian languages of East Nusantara**

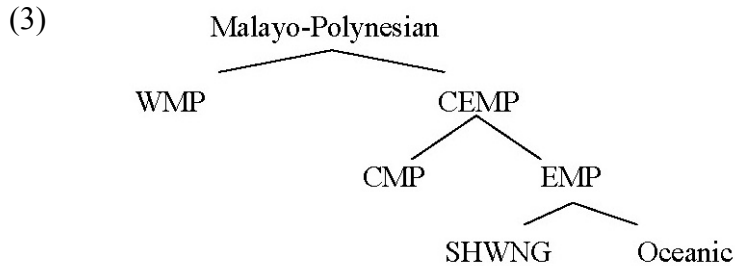
The history of the Austronesian family (in particular the Oceanic subgroup) is now quite well understood, and an acceptable correlation of archaeological and linguistic events has been achieved for much of its history (see Blust 1995b, Ross 1995, Bellwood 1997, Kirch 1997, Pawley 2002, Ross 2005, Reesink 2005 for overviews and references). In this section we focus on what is currently known about the genetic (or genealogical) divisions in East Nusantara.

Blust (1993) was the first attempt to study the overall relationships of the Austronesian (AN) languages spoken in the Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara. This led to the classification of the members of the subgroup of Central Malayo-Polynesian (CMP) languages as part of the genetic tree of the Austronesian languages spoken in Indonesia and East Timor, represented in (3).<sup>10</sup>

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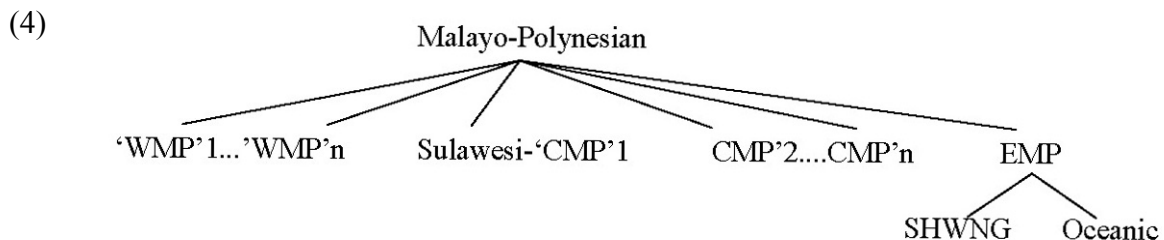
<sup>9</sup> This may have been due to the existence of a body of grammatical descriptions of a variety of Halmaheran and Central/South Moluccan languages written by (mainly) Dutch missionaries in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> C and the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> C; see for example the literature overview in van Staden (2000), Holton (2003).

<sup>10</sup> WMP=Western Malayo-Polynesian, CEMP=Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, CMP = Central Malayo-Polynesian, SHWNG= South Halmahera-West New Guinea.



From its conception, the *CMP* subgroup has been considered problematic, because innovations that convincingly group the the *CMP* languages together to the exclusion of others, are lacking (Blust 1993, Ross 1995). Blust (1993) assumes that the patchy distribution of innovations is due to the fact that the *CMP* or *CEMP* languages are descendants of a chain of distinct dialects. For more than a decade, the existence of *CMP* or *CEMP* languages have been quietly accepted, although scholars working on individual languages of the area (for example Bowden 2001:12) have questioned its validity, pointing to the paucity of data available to Blust at the time.

In a recent paper, Donohue and Grimes (2008) take issue with the view that there has been a ‘*CMP*’ or ‘*CEMP*’ linkage. After a careful re-examination of the phonological and semantic features that Blust (1993) proposed as innovations defining *CEMP* and *CMP*, they conclude that these innovations are not exclusive to the languages in the *CMP*- or *CEMP*-area. While they agree with Blust that a linkage explains the patched distributions of the innovations, they suggest that this linkage is much larger than the one proposed in Blust (1993) and also includes a large number of Austronesian languages in the *WMP* area (in particular some languages of Sulawesi), as well as languages from Formosan areas. In other words, they advocate a subgrouping as in (4) (Donohue and Grimes 2008:116).



Their conclusion is that the linguistic macro-history of eastern Indonesia, where Blust’s *WMP/CEMP* border is said to be found, requires much more detailed investigation – a conclusion that most people working in the area will subscribe to. In fact, any further discussion of the status of *CMP* or *CEMP* may be impossible until more detailed bottom-up subgroupings have been proposed, using the detailed materials on the (putative) *CMP* and *EMP*-languages that have become available during recent years. Such subgroupings would also have to take into account the complex role of diffusion through language contact between non-Austronesian and Austronesian speaking people in East Nusantara (see §2 above).

### **2.3.2 Grouping the Papuan languages of East Nusantara**

The term ‘Papuan’ is generally used as a cover term for the perhaps 800 languages spoken in New Guinea and its vicinity that are not Austronesian (Ross 2005:15), and it is considered synonymous with ‘non-Austronesian’ (NAN). The label ‘Papuan’ says nothing about the genealogical ties between the languages.

Papuan languages are both lexically and morphosyntactically a highly heterogeneous group, and, due to lack of shared vocabularies, the familiar methods of lexical comparison are hard or impossible to apply in comparative studies of these languages (for discussion and references, see Foley 1986, 2000). This in itself is not a surprise, since most successful reconstructions in other language families go back only as far as approximately 6,000 to maximally 10,000 years (Nichols 1998:128), and have benefited from both archaeological and historical linguistic evidence. By contrast, the language(s) from which the present-day Papuan languages descend may have been present in East Nusantara for some 40,000 years. This is far too long ago to apply the comparative method.

The location, diversity and associated archaeology of the Papuan languages suggest that they have generally been *in situ* much longer than the Austronesian languages (see Bellwood 1997, Pawley 2005, Ross 2005 and the discussion in §1). Within the heterogeneous group of Papuan languages, various genealogical units have been suggested. Wurm (1982) proposed five major phyla of ‘Papuan’ languages, as well as six minor ones and a number of isolates. More conservative estimates (for example Foley 1986) suggest that there are at least 60 different families (some consisting of only a few members or even isolates) for which genealogical ties cannot be established yet. The largest family of Papuan languages for which there is general agreement is the Trans New Guinea (TNG) family, with about 300 languages (Ross 1995b, 2005). With two million speakers, this family comprises about half the Papuan speaking population (Foley 2000:363), but it represents only a tiny fraction of the genealogical variation found in Papua.

Within East Nusantara as defined for this volume, a conservative estimate gives five distinct families of Papuan languages, as follows.<sup>11</sup> The Bird’s Head has three families as well as three isolates:

1. East Bird’s Head family (Voorhoeve 1975, Reesink 2002, 2005)
2. West Bird’s Head family (Voorhoeve 1987)
3. Hatam and (extinct) Mansim (Reesink 2002, 2005)  
Isolates: Mpur (Odé 2002a,b), Maybrat (Dol 1999), Abun (Berry & Berry 1999)  
North Maluku contains one family with four subgroups/languages:
4. The North Halmahera family, with four subgroups/languages (Voorhoeve 1987, 1989): Galela, Tobelo (Holton 2003), Pagu; Sahu; Tidore (van Staden 2000), Ternate; West Makian.

And finally, languages of the Timor-Alor-Pantar area are connected with those spoken in the South Bird’s Head, and are hypothesised (Ross 2005) to belong to the Trans New Guinea family:

5. The Trans New Guinea family in East Nusantara: South Bird’s Head, with Inanwatan (Voorhoeve 1975, Wurm 1982, Berry and Berry 1987, De Vries 2004);

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<sup>11</sup> This list is from Klamer et. al. (2008), see also the discussion and references cited there.

West Trans New Guinea linkage: West Timor (=Bunak)-Alor-Pantar; East Timor; West Bomberai; Wissel Lakes; Dani

It is outside the scope of this introduction to present the motivations for all these language groupings (but see the references cited). The grouping that is perhaps the least clearly motivated is that of the Trans New Guinea family in Nusantara (Chapter 5). and we will therefore elaborate on its motivation here. The main evidence for affiliating the Trans New Guinea languages in New Guinea with those spoken in Timor-Alor-Pantar is the pronominal evidence presented in Ross (2005:35-36), summarised below. The West TNG group is labelled a ‘linkage’ (in the sense of Ross 1988:9-11) because it is assumed to have resulted from the gradual diversification of (part of) an earlier dialect chain, and not from a discrete protolanguage. A linkage is characterised by a pattern of overlapping innovations, but in the languages at hand there are extremely few such overlaps. The languages of the Dani, Wissel Lakes, West Bomberai and East Timor microgroups all reflect an innovation whereby *\*ani* ‘I’ has replaced pTNG *\*na*. But this innovation is not reflected in the West Timor-Alor-Pantar microgroup. On the other hand, the West Bomberai, East Timor and West Timor-Alor-Pantar microgroups all reflect an innovative form *\*bi* ‘we’ (Ross 2005:36). It is this overlapping pattern that might suggest the connection of a dialect chain.

A few cognates of the proto-TNG pronouns occur in Klon (West Alor, Baird 2008), Adang (West Alor, Haan 2001), Abui (Central-West Alor, Kratochvíl 2007), Teiwa (Klamer in press) and Western Pantar (Holton 2007 and this volume), but the evidence is thin.<sup>12</sup> More detailed bottom-up reconstructions of Alor-Pantar language groups are needed before any higher level affiliation can be proposed with more certainty.<sup>13</sup> In sum, if and how the non-Austronesian languages of East Nusantara are affiliated to those on the Papuan mainland is still an unsettled issue.

## 2.4 Typological divisions in East Nusantara

### 2.4.1 *The typology of Austronesian languages in East Nusantara*

In the past, typological characterisations of Austronesian languages either concerned the characteristics of Western Austronesian versus Oceanic languages (for example, Clark 1990 and Tryon 1995), or the characteristics of the Austronesian languages spoken on New Guinea in contrast to the Papuan languages in their vicinity (for example, Voorhoeve 1994, Ross 1996, Foley 1998). The main reason for not considering the typological features of East Nusantara languages as such was lack of data.<sup>14</sup>

Grammars of East Nusantara languages published in the 1990s were the main source for the initial list of typological features proposed by Klamer (2002) to characterise the

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<sup>12</sup> The lexical evidence for assigning the West Timor-Alor-Pantar languages to the TNG family is also weak (see Pawley 1998: 683; 2001; Klamer et. al., 2008). Pawley (2001, 2005) contains about 200 reconstructed proto-TNG forms.

<sup>13</sup> Some bottom-up reconstruction work is currently ongoing; Klamer, Holton and Kratochvíl (2009) is a comparative study of 17 languages of Alor and Pantar based on 200+ Swadesh lists and dictionaries compiled between 2002 and 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Other references on typological differences between Papuan and Austronesian languages include Ross (2001), who discusses the contact between Papuan and the Oceanic languages in North West Melanesia, and Dunn et. al. (2005), who contrast Oceanic languages and Papuan languages spoken in the east of mainland New Guinea and the islands extending east to the middle of the Solomons.

Austronesian languages of the Central/Eastern Indonesia.<sup>15</sup> Features proposed in that paper were scrutinised, and further debated in Donohue (2004) and Klamer (2004), or were shown to be inadequate characterisations in related, or subsequent research (for example Himmelmann 2005, Klamer et. al. 2008, Florey, this volume). Some features however survived, and are listed in an updated, cumulative list in (6) below.

Himmelmann (2005) is based on an impressive amount of data from a wide range of non-Oceanic Austronesian languages. His proposal is to divide these languages into two major typological groups: one group of ‘symmetrical voice’ languages, which include the Phillipine-type and Indonesian-type languages, and which are predominantly found in western AN languages; and another group of ‘preposed possessor’ languages (referred to as Gen-N ‘Genitive-Noun’ below), including the Austronesian languages of Timor, Maluku and West Papua as well as the Pidgin-Derived Malay varieties (Himmelmann 2005:113). His two typological groups contrast on the following features:

- (5) Two major typological groups in the non-Oceanic Austronesian languages (Himmelmann 2005:175).

<b>Symmetrical voice languages</b>	<b>Preposed possessor languages</b>
Symmetrical voice alternations	No or asymmetrical voice alternations
N-Gen in adnominal constructions	Gen-N in adnominal constructions <sup>16</sup>
No morphosyntactic distinction between alienably/inalienably possessed items	Morphosyntactic distinction between alienably/inalienably possessed items
Few/no differences between narrative and equational clauses	Clear-cut differences between narrative and equational clauses
Person marking only sporadically attested	Person marking prefixes or proclitics for S/A arguments
Numerals/quantifiers precede head	Numerals/quantifiers follow head
Negators in pre-predicate position	Clause-final negators
V-initial or SVX	V-second or -final

While Himmelmann (2005) contrasts the languages from the north-western part of the archipelago with those spoken in the south-east, Donohue (2007) distinguishes Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern groups in his typology of Austronesian word order characteristics. For present purposes we are only interested in his Eastern group (which includes the Austronesian languages as far east as eastern mainland Papua New Guinea). In this group we find the following constituent orders: Gen-N, N-Numeral, Verb-Object, and Subject-Verb. The first two of these mark the line dividing the Western from the Eastern group (Donohue 2007:381). In the Eastern group, the order of nominal modifiers/specifiers with respect to the noun shows mixed patterns: adjectives, demonstratives, relative clauses, numerals and adpositions may either precede or follow nouns. There is general agreement that this may reflect various degrees of subtratal

<sup>15</sup> That paper dealt with the geographical area east of Lombok and west of Papua, up to and including south-eastern Sulawesi.

<sup>16</sup> The Gen-N criterion refers to the most common or unmarked order found in possessive constructions. That is, it is not required that all possessive constructions in a preposed possessor language show the order Gen-N, and conversely, non-preposed possessor languages may optionally allow a Gen-N order.

influence from Papuan languages (Grimes 1991, Voorhoeve 1994, Ross 2001, Klamer et. al. 2008).

As a summary, we present a list of features that are found in many of the Austronesian languages of East Nusantara in (6):

- (6) Features characterizing Austronesian languages in East Nusantara (Klamer 2002, Himmelmann 2005, Donohue 2007, Klamer et. al. 2008).

Phonology	Prenasalised consonants Roots are generally CVCV - dispreference for homorganic consonant clusters - dispreference for closed syllables, creation of open syllables Metathesis
Morphology	No productive voice system on verbs Agent/subject indexed on verb as prefix/proclitic Morphological distinction between alienable/inalienable nouns Left-headed compounds Inclusive/exclusive distinction in pronouns
Syntax	Verb-Object order Prepositions Gen-Noun Noun-Numeral order Clause-final negators <sup>17</sup> Clause-initial indigenous complementisers Absence of a passive construction Formally marked adverbial/complement clauses
Other	Parallelisms without stylistic optionality

Note that some of these features also occur in the Papuan languages of East Nusantara, (compare (7) below), which (again) points to the complex role that diffusion – as result of contact between Austronesian and Papuan peoples and their languages in the past – has played in shaping the languages of East Nusantara. It also implies that the features in (6) should not be used to define genealogical distinctions between Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages (see Ross 2003, Klamer 2003).

#### 2.4.2. The typology of Papuan languages

The Papuan languages share a number of characteristics, of which Foley (2000) and Aikhenvald and Stebbins (2007) give recent overviews. Without intending to be exhaustive, we list only a few of the more general points here.

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<sup>17</sup> Florey (this volume) questions whether this is a characteristic typological feature of preposed possessor languages as per Himmelmann (2005). We still include the feature here because, while not all Austronesian languages of East Nusantara have clause final negation, it is a cross-linguistically uncommon, non-Austronesian feature and if found in an Austronesian language suggests the language is from East Nusantara. (Note that we do not imply to say that the feature is unique for East Nusantara: in Oceanic languages ‘We also find a large number of languages where the grammaticalised negator is clause-final...’ (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 88)).

The great majority of Papuan languages have only a single liquid phoneme (while in the Austronesian languages, by contrast, a phonemic distinction between /r/ and /l/ is virtually universal). Papuan languages exhibit sophisticated noun classification systems, and commonly mark gender (Foley 2000:371), but case marking is less common. Most Papuan languages have at least one bound pronominal for subjects, and this may be a prefix or a suffix, although it usually is a suffix (Foley 2000:377). Syntactically, Papuan languages are overwhelmingly head-final, with OV constituent order, final negations, final conjunctions, and postpositions. Also typical is clause chaining, often with some concomitant switch reference system, and a morphological contrast between ‘medial’ and ‘final’ verbs (Pawley 2005:91). Many Papuan languages make extensive use of serial verb constructions (Foley 2000:385, Aikhenvald and Stebbins 2007:252-253, and the references cited there), clause chaining, switch reference systems, and/or a formal distinction between ‘medial’ and ‘final’ clauses. These Papuan features are summarised in (7):

(7) Typical features of Papuan languages  
(Foley 1986, 2000, Pawley 2005, Aikhenvald and Stebbins 2007)

Phonology	No distinction between <i>r</i> and <i>l</i>
Morphology	Marking of gender Subject marked as suffix on verb No inclusive/exclusive distinction in the pronominal paradigm Morphological distinction between alienable and inalienable nouns
Syntax	Object-Verb Subject-Verb Postpositions Gen-Noun Clause-final negators Clause-final conjunctions Clause-chaining, switch reference, medial vs. final verbs Serial verb constructions

To what extent do the Papuan languages of the islands in East Nusantara pattern like the languages of mainland Papua? The Papuan languages of Timor, Alor and Pantar and North Halmahera (among others, Tobelo, Pagu, Galela; see Holton 2003:2-3, and the references cited there) share the general head-final character of Papuan languages: they generally have OV as the unmarked word order, have post-predicate negations, and often their indigenous conjunctions are clause-final. Other Papuan features found in the languages of East Nusantara are the Gen-N order,<sup>18</sup> and the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession – the latter is absent in some North Halmaheran languages. Finally, the East Nusantara Papuan languages also have rich arrays of serial verbs.

However, these languages differ from the Papuan features in (7) in that they have a phonemic *r/l* contrast, little derivational morphology, and no adpositions – or just one or two that are cognate to verbs in serial verb constructions (see Baird this volume, Klamer this volume). The most westerly outliers, such as Klon, Abui, Adang, Teiwa and Kaera have no clause chaining or switch-reference system and no morphological contrast between medial and final verbs. Nouns do not inflect for number, gender or case. Thus in

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<sup>18</sup> Western Pantar has both orders: Gen-N and N-Gen (Gary Holton, p.c.).

quite a number of features these outliers do not follow the Papuan characteristics listed in (7).

Sahu, Ternate, Tidore and West Makian in Halmahera have even more Austronesian features than the other Papuan languages of East Nusantara; for example, they are verb-medial, and have prepositions (see van Staden 2000:19, 22).

Most of the Papuan languages in East Nusantara have an inclusive-exclusive opposition in the first person plural. Such a pronominal distinction is a general feature of Austronesian languages, reconstructed even for Proto-Austronesian, and is not generally found in Papuan languages spoken in the interior of New Guinea. It seems that the inclusive/exclusive distinction in the pronominal paradigm of languages of East Nusantara is therefore the most noticeable Austronesian feature that diffused into these languages (Klamer et. al. 2008).

In general, we might say that the lexicon and morpho-syntax of Papuan languages in East Nusantara are rather unlike those of mainland New Guinea. Why this is so we do not know, but the following may be an explanation. Regarding time-depth, we know that many of the Papuan languages in East Nusantara have been separated from their mainland relatives for at least 6,000 years (see §1.2 and Pawley 2005). This is a period long enough to allow many autonomous developments to take place (indeed, to develop a new language family), so it is only to be expected that the separation resulted in different lexicons and typological profiles for the Papuan languages in East Nusantara and those of the mainland.

## 2.5. Is East Nusantara a linguistic area?

Given the long-standing contact between Austronesian and non-Austronesian speaking communities in East Nusantara explained in the sections above, can we say that it is a linguistic area? A linguistic area (or *Sprachbund*, Trubetzkoy 1928) is:

‘...a geographical region containing a group of three or more languages that share some structural features as a result of contact rather than as a result of accident or inheritance from a common ancestor.’ (Thomason 2001:99).

Put in a different way:

‘The term linguistic area refers to a geographical area in which, due to borrowing and language contact, languages of a region come to share certain structural features’ (Campbell 1998:299-300).

It is undoubtedly the case that many (if not all) present-day languages spoken in East Nusantara have experienced influence from other languages in the area through various contact situations, both past and present, resulting in diffused shared features. In Halmahera, for example, Tidore has a mainly non-Austronesian lexicon, and is therefore classified as such, but it has an ‘impressive’ number of Austronesian grammatical features as well (van Staden 2000:24). On the other hand, in Alor and Pantar the Austronesian language Bahasa Alor has an Austronesian lexicon, but shares an interesting set of morpho-syntactic features with (substrate) Papuan languages that today are spoken in its surroundings (Klamer forthcoming).

The Bird’s Head in Papua is another area where languages share grammatical structures but have wildly different vocabularies. This is why adequate cognate sets cannot be constructed, and applying the comparative method is virtually impossible when comparing these languages (see also Voorhoeve 1987, Foley 1998, Reesink 1996, 1998, 2002).

In East Nusantara, diffusion thus takes place across genetic boundaries, as well as within them. Some of the features that are typically found in today's Austronesian languages of East Nusantara (such as the 'preposed possessor' Gen-N construction and the distinct marking of alienable and inalienable possession), are supposed to have derived from earlier substrate Papuan languages (Reesink 2005, Klamer et. al. 2008), while there is also evidence that Austronesian languages have influenced the structure of Papuan languages, for example in marking a distinction between inclusive and exclusive pronouns. This is the type of evidence presented in Klamer et. al. (2008) to argue that East Nusantara is indeed a 'linguistic area': an area that would include Halmahera and the Bird's Head as its core, and which radiates outwards to first include the Maluku and Alor-Pantar, and then Timor. This area was formed by several waves of diffusion, taking place at different points in time and going in various directions.

However, since the research for that paper took place (roughly between 2002-2004), general research in areal typology has made it more and more clear that there are severe conceptual and methodological problems with the notion of a 'linguistic area' in the definitions of Thomason and Campbell given above. We will mention a few of these problems here, and refer to Muysken (2008) for a more complete summary. One major problem appears to be the issue of how the features that are relevant in defining an area are selected – why is one feature considered to be definitive for the area, and not another? Another problem relates to the language sample: how are the languages that are being compared sampled from the total set of languages spoken in the area? It is often the case, as in East Nusantara, that random selection is not possible due to lack of sources, so that the sample is determined on other bases, such as the availability of printed records and the experience or knowledge of the researchers doing the research. This, of course, results in a sample that will always be biased in some way. Finally, how do we know which clusters of features are significant in establishing a linguistic area, and which clusters are not? In other words, how do we evaluate or weigh the relevance of certain clusters of features? Again, this often depends on the subjective choice of the researchers involved. And finally, one would like to have historical research confirming that there was contact in the linguistic area proposed. But in the case of East Nusantara, written records of the history of the islands (especially of the period before European colonisation) are virtually absent, and records of language stages preceding those of today are often missing completely.

Because the process of defining a linguistic area is generally problematic, and because written historical records of East Nusantara islands are virtually absent, the exact characteristics as well as the boundaries of this area will probably remain elusive. Nonetheless, we believe that there is evidence that suggests that the linguistic contact zone in East Nusantara is a linguistic area – with Halmahera and the Bird's Head as its core and radiating outwards to Maluku, Alor-Pantar, and Timor. The research presented in this volume then adds to the growing data base of linguistic knowledge about languages in this region and contributes to our developing understanding of typological trends in the area.

### **3. Summary of the chapters in this volume**

The chapters in this volume cover a range of topics including phonology, alignment systems and argument encoding, serial verb constructions, and negation. Two additional chapters look at a broader range of linguistic features within individual languages, thus highlighting the systematic way that these features interact. At the same time, several

overarching themes cut across these individual contributions, making each of them relevant to issues raised in the preceding discussion of East Nusantara as a (possible) linguistic area. Among these is the recurring issue of diffusion and influence between Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages in the area. As laid out above, there is little doubt as to the long and ongoing contact between speakers of these different language groups, yet the extent to which this interaction influences language structures is not always self-evident and is often in need of closer scrutiny. Another recurring theme is the need for closer examination of the data used for making typological claims, both in terms of quantity and quality. Many of the chapters in this volume contribute to the ongoing development of typological analyses by either tapping into data from an expanded number of languages or by taking a more detailed approach to analyses of particular phenomena, or both, in order to question or refine typological claims that have been made in the past.

Chapters in this volume take up this debate by providing, in some cases, detailed analyses based on individual languages, and in other cases by providing broader comparative studies. This volume is particularly rich in previously unpublished new data from recent fieldwork, and thus expands our understanding of the typological diversity, stability and spread of linguistic features in this geographically delimited area. Indeed one of the recurrent themes across many of the chapters presented in this volume is the need for a greatly expanded database, including more detailed documentation and analysis of a much wider range of languages, in order to develop more accurate typological conclusions.

In the area of phonology, **Hajek**'s contribution presents a typology of the vowel and consonant systems of East Nusantara, based on a sample of 70 languages from four distinct families, including both Austronesian and Non-Austronesian languages. It shows that many of the typological features of East Nusantara have not been observed in Maddieson's (2005a-g) overviews, which while including a large sample covering a very wide area, nonetheless included very few languages from East Nusantara. This demonstrates the importance of a detailed sampling for a specific region in conjunction with higher-level typological investigations. As well as identifying a number of typologically unusual phenomena found in certain East Nusantara languages, Hajek also highlights the importance of language contact with Malay/Indonesian and with Portuguese in East Timor. The effect of borrowing on the segment inventories of some languages is still limited, while for others, it is already potentially enormous.

**Himmelmann** focuses on a single language, presenting new data on intonation in Waima'a, an Austronesian language spoken on the Northeast coast of Timor island. A striking feature of Waima'a intonation, compared, for example, to the better known intonational structures in European languages, is the lack of an accentual or prominence-lending tone. The lack of accentual tone is a feature which has been reported for other languages in the larger region, including Javanese and certain varieties of Malay. Similar to these languages, Waima'a also appears to lack lexical accents. Languages that lack both accentual tone and lexical accent have for some time been treated marginally, but there is growing evidence that such languages are more common in the world than previously recognised. Tadmor (2000, 2001) in fact speculates that lack of lexical accent is a widespread feature of languages in western Indonesia (extending, roughly, from Sumatra to Bali and including Kalimantan), while languages in the East Nusantara often have regular penultimate lexical accents. The case of Waima'a suggests that the western pattern may occur at least as far east as East Timor.

The first chapters to examine morpho-syntax focus on alignment systems and argument encoding. These comprises five chapters: case studies of particular languages as well as

chapters with a comparative perspective. Each chapter explores how argument-marking systems align with syntactic, semantic and/or discourse features of the language. These explorations are dynamic in that they look at changing systems and examine motivations for the patterns that are observed. **Reesink** conducts a survey of coding strategies for nominal arguments (subjects, objects and possessors) in a heterogeneous set of non-Austronesian languages of western Papua. He identifies three typologically defined subgroups, each containing both related and unrelated languages. The first group is typologically unusual in that these languages have object prefixes, while subjects can only be expressed by independent forms. In these languages object prefixes also encode the single argument of involuntary predicates and are identical with possessor prefixes. Languages of the second subgroup have both subject and object prefixes and also display a correspondence between object marking and inalienable possessor affixes. Additionally, for languages of this second subgroup that have a split-S system, there is also a correspondence between object prefixes and the marking of the single argument of uncontrolled intransitive verbs. Unlike the first two subgroups, which have SOV basic word order, the third subgroup involves SVO languages that have only subject affixation, with a tendency for these subject affixes to corresponding to affixes denoting inalienable possession. These findings suggest that the West Papuan region may not be merely geographical as first put forward, but may in fact imply the existence of a linguistic area, showing similarities with the preposed-possessor Austronesian languages in the region.

The remaining chapters on alignment and argument structure each present a detailed analysis from a particular language. Recurring issues correspond with those that arise in Reesink's comparative study, including grammatical alignment in the marking of core arguments within the clause and its implication for other aspects of the grammar, such as the presence or absence of voice alterations and the relationship with possessive paradigms. The complex pronominal affix systems of the non-Austronesian languages of Alor-Pantar can be particularly hard to characterise, and **Holton** looks specifically at the previously undescribed Western Pantar. This language has two distinct but overlapping systems of pronominals which instantiate grammatical alignment through the choice of independent pronoun and pronominal prefix on the verb. The system of full pronouns is generally motivated semantically, producing an agentive system, while the pronominal prefixes may index any argument role, with different semantic word classes exhibiting different alignment patterning. Choice of full and prefixed form is complex and the mapping of grammatical roles onto pronominal prefixes yields seven verb classes, based on complex interaction of person, transitivity, grammatical role and obligatoriness of prefixes. Holton shows that a concerted attempt to apply traditional notions of alignment – such as nominative-accusative or ergative-absolutive – proves unhelpful in these languages, and he proposes a semantic analysis in which the distribution of argument forms aligns with different semantic classes of verbs.

**Ewing** presents a discussion of agentive alignment in Allang, an Austronesian language of Central Maluku. The high number of undergoer intransitives (compared to closely related languages) and valency-changing mechanisms that produce undergoer-intransitive clauses suggests that agentive alignment is well integrated into the Allang grammatical system. This discussion is followed by a survey of agentive alignment in other Central Maluku languages. The similarities in alignment systems in the languages examined do not correspond to the genetic relationships known to hold between these languages. While agentive systems have been observed in many languages of East Nusantara (and this has been suggested as an areal feature), the evidence from languages of Central Maluku

supports recent suggestions in the literature that agentive alignment systems should not be used as diagnostic of genetic or areal relationships, as they seem to arise spontaneously and easily (Mithun 2008, Klamer 2006, 2008).

**Musgrave** investigates the use of reduced pronouns as argument markers in Sou Amana Teru, another Austronesian language of Central Maluku. These reduced forms are closely related to full pronouns, and both full and reduced forms can be used to indicate possessive and complements of prepositions, in addition to being argument markers, the function examined here. As argument markers, these reduced forms occur before the verb in the role of A or S and as an enclitic on the verb in the role of O. The use of reduced bound forms for A and S together with full forms has the appearance of a morphological cross-referencing system. However, because these reduced forms can either be procliticised on verbs or encliticised on pre-verbal material in the verb phrase, and because their realisation is phonologically determined, these constructions behave more syntactically than they do morphologically. Musgrave hypothesises that Sou Amana Teru is moving towards becoming a more analytic system. This process appears to be, at least in part, due to the ongoing process of language shift in which younger speakers are reanalysing many aspects of the grammar under the influence of Indonesian/Malay, currently their dominant language.

The interplay between alignment, grammatical relations and the presence of diathesis is central to **Williams-van Klinken's** study of contemporary Tetun Dili; an especially interesting language because it is undergoing dramatic changes due to its rapidly expanding domains of use and due to influences of other languages. This chapter examines syntactic transitivity, which can be difficult to establish in Tetun due to a lack of morphology marking changes in valency, the fact that understood arguments can be left unexpressed and the flexibility of word order. Thus, when a clause contains a verb which implies two arguments (that is semantically transitive), and one of the arguments is not explicitly expressed, should this be considered syntactically transitive or intransitive? In her data Williams-van Klinken identifies a subset of verbs that are semantically transitive, but regularly occur with only one argument. She then uses a number of tests to see whether the question of syntactic transitivity is answerable. She identifies a subset of verbs for which an intransitive analysis is appropriate, while another subset of verbs are considered transitive with a fronted O argument. Williams-van Klinken also goes on to question whether O-fronted constructions might be analysed as a type of passive construction, most likely a result of influence from Portuguese and/or Indonesian.

Two chapters on serial verb constructions (SVCs) include case studies from three Papuan languages: Klon, spoken in western Alor, Teiwa, from north-western Pantar, and Kaera, from north-east Pantar. Both chapters describe grammatical processes of reanalysis by which verbs in serial constructions become grammatical morphemes. **Baird's** chapter presents new data on SVCs in Klon, using Aikhenvald's (2006) notions of symmetrical and asymmetrical SVCs. She identifies eight classes of serial verb constructions: three symmetrical, in which both verbs are from a non-restricted open class, and five asymmetrical ones, in which one of the verbs is from a restricted class and modifies the other, non-restricted verb. The symmetrical SVCs either convey sequences of events, describing the manner in which something is done, or are a kind of lexicalised parallelism. In the discussion of Klon asymmetrical SVCs, Baird pays special attention to the grammaticalisation processes involved. Some of these are aspectual in nature, while others – involving the verb *mi* 'to be at, place' – form locative or temporal constructions. In all

cases it is the syntactic positioning and semantic structure of the verbs that have enabled a reanalysis into grammatical items.

In her chapter on Teiwa and Kaera serial verb constructions, **Klamer** discusses probable cognates of Klon *mi*: the oblique marker *mi* in Kaera, which is possibly historically derived from the transitive location verb *ming* in this language, and the transitive location verb *me* in Teiwa. After presenting a sketch of the grammatical structures and the argument-encoding properties of Kaera and Teiwa, the chapter focuses on the analysis of the multi-functional deictic verb *ma* ‘come (here)’ in these two languages. In Teiwa and Kaera, *ma* is used as a deictic verb, a change-of-state verb, and to mark intentions and imperatives. In Teiwa, but not in Kaera, it is also used as an oblique marker. Klamer argues that the different functions are all contextualised meanings rather than lexical meanings; that is, the interpretation of *ma* shifts with its grammatical context but retains a unitary semantic core. Comparing the functions of *ma* in Teiwa and Kaera, Klamer finds that in both languages *ma* functions to mark ‘movement in time’, but only in Teiwa does *ma* function as an oblique marker; Kaera marks obliques with *mi*, the cognate of Klon *mi* ‘to be at, to place’, discussed in Baird (this volume).

Negation is another linguistic domain that has been prominent in typological discussions of the languages of East Nusantara. **Florey** presents data from eight related Austronesian (CMP) languages of Maluku, which help to expand our understanding of the range of negation types in this region. Clause-final negation is an uncommon type among languages of the world, but it occurs frequently in languages of East Nusantara and Western Papua. Florey provides additional data from a cluster of languages in Maluku, examining word order and functional range of different negators. She finds that both cross-linguistically and language-internally, these Moluccan languages exhibit a number of different negative constructions, including pre-predicate negation, post-predicate and clause-final negation, and ‘embracing’ negation. This analysis suggests that an investigation of negation focused solely on primary negators is not sufficiently nuanced and that further evidence concerning clause-final negation may be found through a cross-linguistic examination of complex negatives. These data indicate that not all Moluccan languages have final negations (cf. Reesink 2002), and that it may not be a characteristic typological feature of preposed possessor languages (Himmelmann 2005) (but see our footnote 17). The interaction between negatives and other clausal operators, such as aspect and mood, is also explored. These languages discussed by Florey exhibit a preference for clause-final modifiers, similar to that noted in Magey Matbat in the contribution by Remijnsen, and the interaction between these particles and negation may be one reason that pre-verbal negation has been attracted to clause-final position in these languages.

The volume closes with two chapters that present broader descriptions of various subsystems within the grammars of three different languages in the region. **Grimes** asks whether Austronesian Hawu and Dhoa (CMP) – spoken on three small islands in the Sabu Sea to the west of Timor Island – are dialects or separate languages, using new data and new analyses, thus picking up on several features not yet described by other researchers. Earlier observers looked at similarities in phonologies and lexicon, and while some concluded these were dialects of one language, others claimed they were separate languages. Grimes goes beyond by comparing entire subsystems of the two languages – including the sound systems, the systems of personal, spatial, temporal and referential deixis, the negation systems, verbal inflection patterns, the shape and structural properties of adverbials and prepositions, basic clausal syntax, phrase structure, interclausal relations, and question words – concluding that Hawu and Dhao represent typologically quite

distinct languages. This exercise suggests that it can be necessary to compare functors and grammatical subsystems in their entirety to get a realistic picture of how great the differences are between the two languages.

**Remijsen** presents a description of the morphological and syntactic behaviour of nouns and verbs in Magey Matbat, an Austronesian (SHWNG) language of Misol Island, West Irian Jaya Province. He pays particular attention to the typological features discussed by Himmelmann (2005), including possessive marking, numerical classifiers, tense aspect mood marking, verb serialisation and verb classes. As with many languages of East Nusantara, Magey Matbat has a robust system of alienable and inalienable marking in possessive constructions. In all cases, the possessor precedes the possessum; inalienably possessed head nouns are additionally inflected with a suffix, while alienably possessed head nouns are not. In addition, various verbs with a meaning related to a physical or emotional state take subject inflections which are identical to inalienable possession markers. In closely related languages it remains controversial as to whether such constructions are best classed as verbs or nouns, but Remijsen makes the case that in Magey Matbat these forms are on a diachronic continuum towards becoming regular verbs, and seem to be further along this route than in other related languages. Similar undergoer intransitive constructions are mentioned in the contributions by Reesink, Musgrave and Ewing. All other verbs in Magey Matbat fall into four classes based on paradigms of onset consonants. As in the chapters by Baird and Klamer, Remijsen also discusses serial verb constructions in terms of function and possible grammaticalisation pathways. In Magey Matbat, SVCs take two different forms, co-lexicalised serialisations which produce a conceptual description of an event, and situations where an element in the serialisation has a more grammatical function. Some historical serialisations have fully grammaticalised as prepositions. At the clause level, it is noted that tense, aspect, modality, negation, and indeed most clause level modification – including politeness, questions, and commands – are marked with clause final particles. This preference for clause final marking is found in a number of languages in the area, and also forms part of the survey of negation in Central Maluku languages found in the chapter by Florey. Addressing the issue of genetic affiliation, Remijsen finds that the typological features of Magey Matbat have clear similarities with Austronesian languages in general, and with those of Central and Eastern Indonesia in particular. Yet similarities between Magey Matbat and the Papuan languages of the mainland of New Guinea also exist and Matbat is considered part of transitional area of shared Austronesian and Papuan characteristics.

While the overall organisation of this volume is driven by the themes outlined above, the chapters also cluster around issues of genetic and areal relationships. Chapters that deal explicitly with Non-Austronesian languages are those on Klon (Baird), Western Pantar (Holton), Teiwa and Kaera (Klamer), and additionally the survey of fifty West Papuan languages (Reesink). The remaining chapters focus on Austronesian languages, with the exception of Hajek, which is a typological survey covering both Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages. There is also an emphasis among these chapters on three regions of East Nusantara in particular. The chapters by Himmelmann and Williams-van Klinken focus on languages of Timor Island, including both Indonesian Timor and Timor Leste. Languages of East Nusa Tenggara outside of Timor Island are represented by the chapters of Baird, Holton, Klamer and Grimes. Remijsen examines a single language of Misol Island in Papua, whereas Reesink's contribution looks at West Papuan languages more widely. A number of languages from Maluku, especially Central Maluku are discussed in the contributions by Ewing, Florey and Musgrave.

Finally, a concern for comparison is apparent through many of these chapters. This appears most strongly in the contributions that are framed in terms of typological comparisons. These include the chapter on phonology by Hajek, the chapter on alignment systems by Reesink, and the chapter on negation by Florey. Klamer and Grimes each look at pairs of closely related languages, asking questions which compare the development and the distribution of particular grammatical features: serial verb constructions in the case of Klamer and a range of grammatical subsystems in the case of Grimes. Ewing examines alignment in one particular language of Maluku, but places this within a broader survey, while the remaining chapters on alignment systems are all focused on single languages.

The strong focus on presenting new data from a range of previously under-documented languages in the region also provides valuable input for further comparative work. Taken together these chapters demonstrate the significance of East Nusantara as region of linguistic enquiry. At the same time, they highlight the importance of ongoing investigations, both empirical and theoretical, in this still under-documented linguistic region in order to help us continue to refine the notion of East Nusantara as linguistic area.

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