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**Book review : G. Holton, Tobelo (Languages of the World/
Materials 328)**

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languages have recently appeared, in particular, grammars of Ternate and Tidore by F. S. Watuseke ('The Ternate language', *Papers in Papuan linguistics 1*, ed. by Tom Dutton, 223–44, Canberra: Australian National University, 1991) and Miriam van Staden (Leiden University dissertation, 2000).

The grammar under review follows the traditional scheme adopted in the LINCOM series. The short introductory chapter (1–4) is followed by four descriptive chapters, beginning with 'Phonology' (4–12).

Ch. 2, 'Lexical categories' (12–30), opens with a detailed classification of nouns, which include, apart from nouns proper, pronouns, personal and place names, vocatives, and the category the author calls 'relational nouns' (which consists mainly of kinship terms and nouns referring to body parts). Two other major categories are verbs and 'property concept words'. The latter class roughly corresponds to adjectives in other languages; in Tobelo, they 'may be expressed as either nouns or verbs depending on the discourse context' (22).

Ch. 3, 'Morphology' (30–48), deals with the inventory of morphemes used with nouns and verbs. The nominal morphemes include, in particular, two prefixal 'noun markers' (roughly corresponding to articles), possessive prefixes, and several spatial suffixes (locative, ablative, allative, and four directional suffixes). There is also a discussion of nominalizing morphemes (reduplication, prefix *hi-*, and voicing of the initial consonant), which, in fact, should be placed in the next section, dealing with verbal morphology. The inventory of verbal morphemes (mostly prefixes) includes, in particular, personal agreement markers for subject and object, aspects and actionalities (intensifier, distributive, etc.), and prefixes of three valency-changing categories: reflexive (*ma-*), reciprocal (*maka-*), and causative-applicative (*hi-*). Another function of this latter morpheme, which the author quite infelicitously terms 'instrumental nominalization', is 'to derive a verb [from a noun] which refers to the action carried out using that noun or an action which results in the creation of that noun' (34).

Among the syntactic issues dealt with in Ch. 4, 'Syntax' (48–71), is the elaborate system of expressing spatial relations—probably one of the most interesting peculiarities of Tobelo; unfortunately, the presentation lacks clarity in some respects. The author further discusses the distinction between two types of constructions with intransitive verbs: (i) constructions with subject person marking (attested mainly with dynamic verbs) vs. (ii) constructions with object person marking and the third person 'dummy' subject prefix *i-*, as in *i-mi-gogama* 'she is shivering' (lit. 'it-her-shivers'). The interpretation of this distinction as an instance of split intransitivity does not seem convincing, however; rather it appears

Tobelo. By GARY HOLTON. (Languages of the world/materials 328.) Munich: LINCOM Europa, 2003. Pp. vi, 99. ISBN 3895867063. €29.80.

This book is a short grammatical sketch of Tobelo, a language spoken on the Moluccan islands in Indonesia, mainly in the northeastern part of the island Halmahera. Together with a dozen languages, including Ternate/Tidore, Galela, Tabaru, Modole, Loloda, Pagu, Sahu, West Makian, and Ibu (nearly extinct), it forms the North Halmaheran language family, genetically related to West Papuan, not to Austronesian. Until the 1930s, these languages were studied by Dutch linguists and missionaries; then there came a break in North Halmaheran linguistics. Fortunately, a number of studies on some of the North Halmaheran

we are dealing in the latter case with noncanonical subject marking.

The concluding chapter (Ch. 5, 71–97) contains Tobelo texts with interlinear glossing, followed by a bibliography.

The book marks another contribution to the welcome renewal of interest in one of the relatively little-studied languages of Indonesia. It will be of great interest to scholars of Papuan linguistics, to general linguists, and to typologists. [LEONID KULIKOV, *Leiden University*.]