"Culture is a shadow", language as a shade Fragments of a dead language, Naka'ela

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ABSTRACT

One of the distinctive languages of Central Maluku, Naka'ela, was once spoken by a remnant language community on the north coast of Seram. Relying on data collected in Seram in 1978, Naka'ela has been among the Central Maluku languages included in studies of morphophonology (Collins 1983a, 1983b), areal phonology shift (1982, 2018a), and language classification (Collins 1983a). A fallacious, mechanistic classification of Naka'ela (Mahsun et al. 2008; Mukhamdanah 2015) was also published and has been recently disproven (Collins 2019a, 2019b). This essay will review some of the aspects of the Naka'ela language system by exploring what we can discern about verbal conjugation systems and genitive paradigms in this Central Maluku language.

Based on contemporary reports from Seram (Sadrach Latue, p.c., 27-10-2018), the Naka'ela language, like so many others in Central Maluku, is no longer spoken; nor are there "rememberers" of this extinct language. In this setting of dead and forgotten languages, we recall the brutal genocides and culture murders in Australia (Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine 2000). Recently, Dianne Biritjalawuy Gondarra, a Yolngu woman from northern Australia, explained that "culture is a shadow, it's something that follows your everywhere, and part of culture is language, which connects me back to my land" (James Griffths 2020). This essay is intended to shed more light on Naka'ela and the complex setting of fading multilingualism in Central Maluku. The displaced, disregarded Naka'ela community survives in Seram, their land, but their language is only a shade, a ghostly memory.

KEYWORDS

Language death; minority languages; Maluku grammar; genitive marking; inflectional systems.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1992, Michael Krauss, a renowned scholar who studied all twenty of the indigenous languages of Alaska and founded The Alaska Native Language Center, turned his expertise to the broader global issue of language viability in a landmark essay, "The world's languages in crisis". Continent by continent, Krauss meticulously surveyed the data available at that time about the total number of languages in the world as well as information about language vitality. He concluded "I consider it a plausible calculation that – at the rate things are going – the coming century will see either the death or the doom of 90% of mankind's languages" (Krauss 1992: 7). This linguist's jeremiad had been presented as a lecture at the Linguistic Society of America conference in January 1991. The following year at the Society's annual meeting, another distinguished scholar of linguistics, Joseph E. Grimes (1992), presented a seminal paper, "The size factor in language endangerment". Like Krauss, his purview and conclusions encompassed languages across the globe. He demonstrated the logarithmic relationship between the number of speakers of a language and the outlook for that language's maintenance – indeed, the peril of language death. Grimes (1992) estimated that few languages with fifty or fewer speakers would survive another generation; moreover, in that same time frame of 25-30 years, only fifty percent of languages with 600 or fewer speakers would survive.

Thirty years have passed since these scholars voiced their warnings. We are well into "the coming century" that Krauss wrote about and we can now test Grimes's prediction of the number of languages lost in the preceding generation. Thirty years ago Nancy C. Dorian (1989: xii-xiii) could draw a map, pin-pointing more than fifty language variants which were undergoing "contraction". Now it is indisputably clear that we are facing the rapid loss, let us say, in fact, the destruction of language diversity on this planet. Today such a map would be thick with black specks, spattered across the globe. Indeed, the UNESCO World Awareness of Endangered Languages project has produced just such a map the "Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger" (UNESCO 2018), tracking the steadily increasing decline in the vitality of many of the world's languages. In this global crisis of language attrition and language extinction, Indonesia, a country of dazzling linguistic diversity faces the same challenges of shifting attitudes and societal loyalties about indigenous languages in the face of technological and educational advances. In the context of these global and regional challenges, this brief essay examines the fate of one minority language of Indonesia by describing the remaining fragments of Naka'ela, a language of Central Maluku.

In a study of the impact of colonial policies on the indigenous languages of the region, Collins (2003: 274-275) painted a dark portrait of language vitality in Central Maluku.

Maluku is a region of enormous language complexity, both historic and contemporary. The large number of languages spoken by small communities in an area with a long history of colonial exploitation and contemporary turmoil, combined with an epidemiological profile of typically low life expectancy and poor health care services, increase the chances of a researcher witnessing the death of a language she or he has worked on within her or his lifetime. Language death and language attrition are facts of a researcher's life in Maluku; even mere historical linguists cannot be unconcerned with or unaware of the fact of the relentless decline and loss of indigenous languages.

In retrospect, this sombre assessment may have even underestimated the fragility of language diversity in the region.

Probably as early as the eighteenth-century indigenous languages were no longer spoken on either side of Ambon Bay (Collins 2003: 266-267) – all had been replaced by Ambonese Malay.[1] Certainly by the nineteenth century G.W.W.C. van Hoëvell (1876: 4-5) observed that on the island of Ambon the only Christian villages where Maluku's languages were still spoken were Hatu, Lilibooi, and Allang. In the same era, language obsolescence had proceeded rapidly in many Christian villages throughout the islands near Ambon (A. van Ekris 1864-1865: 65). The historical factors and forces leading to language death in Central Maluku are well-known (see, for example, Margaret J. Florey 1990, 1991). However, beginning in the last few decades of the twentieth century, new language ideologies and increased access to education and job opportunities have influenced language choice significantly. Until the late twentieth century, language loss occurred chiefly in Christian villages; but now even in Muslim villages where hundreds of speakers of diverse local languages still live, the heritage languages are not being transmitted to the youngest generation, for example in Asilulu (Collins 2007) and Tulehu on the coast of Ambon island, as reported in Simon Musgrave and M.C. Ewing (2006) and Musgrave (2005), as well as in Latu and Sepa on the south coast of Seram (Collins 2016: 17).

In this brief essay, using a very limited corpus,[2] we will examine some of the features of one of Maluku's distinct and now extinct languages, Naka'ela – once spoken on Seram's northwest coast and its proximate interior. Perhaps by looking at fragments of what has been lost, we can discuss strategies and programs to strengthen and revive Maluku's surviving but struggling languages.

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[1] The only apparent exception was the language of Laha, a Muslim village where even today there are speakers of their indigenous language (Collins 1980a, 1980b).
[2] Writing this essay, far from most of the Maluku data now stored in Malaysia, was challenging. Fortunately, before I left Malaysia, I had packed up all the Naka'ela data in electronic and photocopy format; so I was able to continue working on this essay. I would like to thank my brother, Rev. L.E. Collins, and his colleagues at St. Mary church in Des Plaines Illinois, USA, for taking me in during the pandemic. I apologize for the inconvenience caused by my lengthy exile. I am grateful as well to Waruno Mahdi who offered me advice twenty years ago when I was first writing about language death in Maluku (Collins 2003).

2. Sociohistorical context: "The danger of dying out really does exist"

In 1678, the renowned pioneer botanist, Georg Rumphius, wrote about the political status of the Naka'ela, an ethnic group known to live in western Seram (Rumphius 2002: 197). In the following century, F. Valentyn (1724: 196, 198, 232) also included information about "*Lakaela*" in his documentation of the 1705 clove extirpation (*hongi*) expedition in Seram. However, it was only in the nineteenth century that colonial sources became more plentiful. The economic boom in the 1840s in tobacco and in the 1850s in cacao and coffee caused the rapid expansion of European-managed estate industries located on the south coast of Seram (see E. 1856 and A.R. Wallace 1869). These labour-intensive enterprises not only led to the resettlement and displacement of local populations, but also motivated the efforts of the colonial government to control and subdue Seram's interior peoples to ensure the security of those numerous plantation projects on the coast. Sachse (1907: 30) reported that in 1860 forty workers at the cacao plantations on the south coast near Waesamu were murdered. In response, a large military force was despatched into the interior to punish the suspected killers who had fled inland. On 8 November, 1860 after encamping at the Naka'ela settlement on Seram's northwest coast, a large military detachment marched inland and attacked Buria, Ruma Soal, and other Alune villages which were left in ashes (Sachse 1907: 31).[3] Indeed, the "chief" of the Naka'ela people was honoured with an award for his assistance in this 1860 Dutch expedition as recorded in the *Gouvernementsbesluit* of 1861 (Ch.F. van Fraassen and P. Jobse 1997).

We know that by the end of the nineteenth century the Naka'ela community had maintained their village on the coast (Oostpost 1861: 3) but also that there were still some members of the community living in the ancestral highlands, the rocks of Naka'ela (*rotsen van Nakaela*; Sachse 1907: 31). Van Hoëvell (1896) counted 162 inhabitants of the coastal Naka'ela ("*Lakaela*") settlement east of the mouth of the Sapalewa River and noted that there were other Naka'elans in a village in the interior by the same name; in both settlements all inhabitants were animists.

Differing in some details with twentieth century colonial accounts about Taniwel (for example, Kuik's *Memorie* of 1935 in Van Fraasen and Jobse (1997: 437)), in 1978 two Naka'ela resource persons were interviewed in Taniwel and recounted some parts of their community's oral history.[4] They recalled that before 1918, between the Kaputi and Sapalewa Rivers, there were eight villages

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[3] "*Den 8en November brak men op van Nakaela en vermeesterde met eenig gevecht op den 10en Boeria, waarna ook Roemah Soal zich onderwierp en eenige andere nog weerspannige negorijen in de asch werden gelegd*" (Sachse 1907: 31). The Surabaya newspaper, De Oostpost (11 January 1861) made it clear that this 1860 expedition was launched from the Naka'ela ("*Lakaila*") settlement on the coast. "*Op den 8sten* [*November 1860*] *werden de troepen en vivres reeds vroegtig ingescheert aan boord van prauwen tot overvoer naar Lakaila eene negorij oostwaards van Noniali aan het strand gelegen, van waar zich de kolonne,* [...] *op marsch naar het binnenland begaf*".

[4] This information was provided by Bapak Yanci Hilewe (64 years old at that time) and Ibu Esterlina Ely (then 44). These data were jotted down prior to an intensive language elicitation session; see below.

scattered near present-day Taniwel, the contemporary administrative centre (*kecamatan*) on Seram's northwest coast.[5] Four of those villages spoke Wemale, three Naka'ela, and one Noniali; the Noniali-speaking village was Taniwel. Local traditions maintained that sometime after the 1918-1919 pandemic, these eight villages agreed to consolidate and form one village, Taniwel, with a total population of approximately 300; this matches well with Sachse's (1919: 31) combined population figure of 271. Furthermore, according to the information collected in 1978, most inhabitants of Taniwel had converted to Christianity in 1920 or just before.

The Naka'ela community underwent a documented history of colonial contact and interference, beginning no later than the earliest years of the 1700s. Of critical importance is the fact that at least 180 years ago, some members of the Naka'ela community had settled on the north coast not far from the mouth of the Sapalewa River. Moreover, the formation of a multi-ethnic administrative capital in Taniwel as well as the conversion of the Naka'ela community to Christianity in the early twentieth century almost certainly placed additional stress on their traditional culture and indigenous language. In the early twentieth century, then, the continued military operations in western Seram, before and during the First World War, guaranteed some mentions of Naka'ela in colonial sources. That grand cadastral volume organized by the *Encyclopaedisch Bureau*, edited by Rutten (1922), documented the history, economy, cultural practices, and colonial achievements in Seram, including some notes about the Naka'ela community. But no matter how many extirpated clove trees were counted, how often military expeditions were conducted, and what population data and maps were printed – even with a few photos of Naka'elans, there was no mention of the Naka'ela language during the colonial era.[6] Even the German scholars E. Stresemann (1927) and O.O. Tauern (1928-1931), who worked independently in that same era, did not discuss or apparently know of the language.[7]

In 1678 Rumphius handed over his manuscript about the geography and social organization of Central Maluku, *De generale lant-beschrijvinge van het Ambonse gouvernement,* to A. Hurdt, the governor of Ambon (Buijze 2006: 102). In that manuscript Rumphius poetically described the Naka'ela homeland, the steep escarpment that rises abruptly out from plains of the Bolela Bay, "like a Roman ruin or a derelict castle".[8] He also explained the then contemporary

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[5] Five of the eight villages named by elders in Taniwel in 1978 appear in Van Hoëvell's 1896 map, namely Lasahata, Rumahelen, Hatuan, Naka'ela, and Taniwel. The other three, Samalatu, Rumauru, and Tanawa, were not included in the 1896 map; however, these three hamlets were listed in Sachse (1919: 31) as villages located on the coast since the 1860s.

[6] Most of the references, drawn from colonial sources and presented here, were sourced by my colleague Sadrach Latue who scoured the internet over the past several months to find these and other valuable references about the Naka'ela group. I am grateful for his collaboration and encouragement in reconstructing the history of Naka'ela, his ancestral homeland.

[7] Of course, there may yet be language information in sources that we have not found, though it seems unlikely.

[8] "*Hierachter ligt weer een hoge berg met een eigenaardige vorm, Laka Ela of Naka Ela genaamd, die vanuit de verte lijkt op Romeinse oudheden of vervallen kasteel*" (Rumphius 2002: 155).

indigenous Three Rivers social system, noting that Manumeten was the leader (*kapitein*) of communities of the Sapalewa River, including Hatuan, where Manumeten lived, and another village, Naka'ela (Rumphius 2002: 197). Nonetheless, neither Rumphius nor other, subsequent writers of the colonial era mentioned the Naka'ela language. Thus, the three Naka'ela-speaking villages, Tanawa, Hatuan, and Naka'ela, were known, but apparently not the existence of their distinctive, shared language.

Three hundred years after Rumphius completed his manuscript, in 1978, the Naka'ela language was documented and analysed for the first time, thanks to the devotion and enthusiasm of Bapak Yanci Hilewe and Ibu Esterlina Ely.[9] These two fluent speakers of Naka'ela worked together answering all questions and volunteering a great deal of spontaneous additional information, for example the oral history of the founding of Taniwel (see above) as well as lexical materials well beyond the questionnaires on hand. More importantly, they also affirmed that, to their knowledge, at that time (mid-1978) there were only three other persons who spoke Naka'ela.
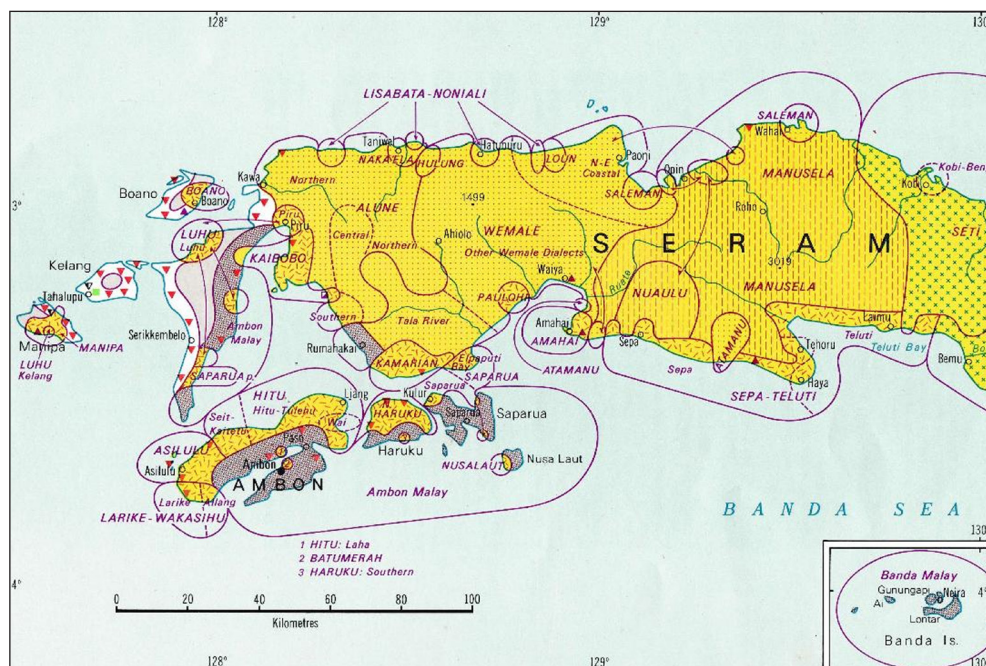
With the village consolidation one hundred years ago (Sachse 1919: 31), came the presence of government officials and other "outsiders"; and Malay became the chief language of communication. With the adoption of Christianity, at about the same time, came church schools; and Malay became the sole language of instruction. In addition to these sociological factors influencing language choice, living on the coast also had demographic effects. In a population table, Van Hoëvell (1896: 521) counted a total of 635 inhabitants in just four of the eight villages that later joined to form Taniwel, but twenty years later Sachse (1919: 31) listed a total population in *all* of Taniwel of only 271 – less than half of the 1896 total for just four of the founding villages. Commenting on this drastic population decline, Sachse (1919: 31) wrote: "*Het gevaar voor uitsterven bestaat dus wel*" (The danger of dying out really does exist). Of course, he was referring to the drastic population decline.[10] But, in hindsight, he might as well as have been talking about the Naka'ela language. Based on recent information received from Taniwel (Sadrach Latue, personal communication, 27-10-2018), today it is unlikely that there are any speakers of Naka'ela. Indeed, today the remnants of the Naka'ela community speak Ambonese Malay as their home language, although some members of the community may also speak Alune or Wemale. Today Naka'ela is an extinct language of Central Maluku. In 1978, there were perhaps five speakers of Naka'ela; now there are none.

[9] On 22 July 1978 I arrived in Taniwel, the starting point for my research in several Alune villages located in the mountains. Because it had previously never been mentioned, I was surprised to learn then that there was a language named Naka'ela and that its few remaining speakers lived in Taniwel. The next day, 23 July 1978, Bapak Yanci and Ibu Esterlina joined me in an all-day, intensive elicitation session.

[10] In Maluku, resettlement on the coast, whether by communal choice, forced removal or bureaucratic persuasion, has seldom had a positive effect on population growth. In Collins (2003: 252, 258), the situation of the Kelang language community, violently displaced from their homeland through de Vlaming's policy of ethnic cleansing in the seventeenth century, is discussed.

3. THE NAKA'ELA LANGUAGE

The methods with which the Naka'ela language data were obtained in 1978[11] were based on two research principles: Empiricism and Inductivism. The corpus was assembled, based on a procedure for collecting data through experience, experiment, and observation; and, the research proceeded with an analysis procedure that yielded generalizations that could be shared with and tested by others. To accommodate the need for critical testing and collegial evaluation, in fewer than two years after the data were collected in Seram, a dissertation drawing on those data was submitted in Chicago (Collins 1980b). That dissertation, published three years later (Collins 1983a), included the Naka'ela language as a component of a broader hypothesis about the classification of languages in Central Maluku. The Naka'ela language was also included in an overview of many languages in Maluku (Collins 1982). Moreover, the language was mapped with annotations in Australia's Pacific language atlas project (Collins and Voorhoeve 1983); see Map 1, placing Naka'ela on the coast of Seram, north of the Alune dialects.

Map 1. The languages of western Seram, Central Maluku (S.A. Wurm and S. Hattori 1983: sheet 45).

Although Barbara F. Grimes (1988) included the Naka'ela language (based on Collins 1983a) in the eleventh edition of *Ethnologue*, members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics working in Maluku only began publishing the results of their initial lexicostatistic surveys later in that decade. The Naka'ela language was discussed in Yushin Taguchi (1989); see also Mark Taber (1996). Taguchi worked with one of the few remaining speakers and, using lexicostatistics, came to slightly different conclusions compared to the linguistic classification in Collins (1983a and elsewhere). Although he apparently collected 190 Naka'ela words, Taguchi included no data in his report.[12] Almost twenty years later, working with materials assembled by Pusat Bahasa in Jakarta, Mahsun et al. (2008: 131-132) published a completely erroneous classification of the Naka'ela but included no data. Mukhamdanah (2015), apparently collected Naka'ela data in 2005 or 2006, and these data then formed the basis of Mahsun's incorrect classification.[13] Mukhamdanah (2015) argued for that unacceptable classification and, thus, shed some light on "the mechanistic calculations and simplifications in Pusat Bahasa's Jakarta office [that] superseded everything else" (Collins 2019b); however, scattered in Mukhamdanah's dubious arguments, a few words of Naka'ela were cited.[14]

In Grimes (1988) Naka'ela was considered "critically endangered". Glottolog (2020) labeled Naka'ela among the "nearly extinct" languages of the world. In the most recent online edition of "Ethnologue" (accessed on 8-8-2020), we learn that there are "No known L1 speakers"; the Naka'ela language is "extinct". As far as can be determined, the only published data of this extinct language add up to merely seventeen words in Collins (1983a, 2018a) and fifteen words in Mukhamdanah (2015). Two of those fifteen words[15] were already found in Collins (1983a); so the total number of published Naka'ela vocabulary is thirty words. This incredible gap in our knowledge of the Naka'ela language is currently being addressed through an ongoing effort to prepare a trilingual vocabulary (Naka'ela-Indonesian-English) of about 750 entries, using the data collected in 1978.

The essay presented here, drawing on some of the morphological and grammatical data also collected forty-two years ago, will examine briefly the genitive marking system, the inflectional system of agentive sentences and the inflectional system of non-volitional (stative) sentences. Because of the paucity of data and the impossibility of consulting with "L1 speakers"

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[12] Apparently, he collected the Naka'ela data from Bapak Yanci Hilewe ("J. Hilewe", Taguchi 1989: 55) who formed part of the Naka'ela team in 1978. Bapak Yanci also told him there were perhaps five speakers of the language (Taguchi 1989: 39). Thanks to my colleague, Rick Nivens, I was able to re-read Taguchi's essay online as well as portions of "Ethnologue".

[13] I am grateful to S. Latue for drawing my attention to Mukhamdanah's article.

[14] See Collins (2019b) for a critique of the absurd classification offered by Mahsun et al. (2008) and Mukhamdanah (2015).

[15] Three of those fifteen words display semantic or transcription (printing?) errors, perhaps occurring in the elicitation session. In Naka'ela *hai* (in Mukhamdanah's article "hay") means 'tree', not 'root'; in Naka'ela 'root' is *wa:ti*. Similarly, *malike* means 'smile', not 'laugh' as Mukhamdanah suggested; 'laugh' is *ktalake-*. The correct form of 'year' is *taun* or *taune*, not "*taume*".

(Ethnologue 2020), there will be gaps and uncertainties in the following discussion. Nonetheless, the complexity of Naka'ela grammar deserves our attention even with an incomplete purview.

4. The genitive marking system

The languages of Central Maluku share with most other languages of the Central East Malayo-Polynesian subgroup of Austronesian languages (R.A. Blust 1978) distinctive, often complex, systems for marking genitive relationships.[16] Indeed, at one time J.L.A. Brandes (1884) divided Malayo-Polynesian languages into east and west branches, partly based on word order differences in genitive constructions. See the discussion in Collins (1983a: 27). However, one hundred years ago, J.C.G. Jonker (1914) rejected such word order criteria as the basis for language classification. Moreover, recent research, for example, A. Schapper (2015a: 108-110), suggests that the elaboration of the genitive marking systems of east Indonesian languages perhaps reflects a Sprachbund phenomenon or, at least, the influence of non-Austronesian (Papuan) languages on the Austronesian languages of east Indonesia and the Pacific. However, in agreement with F. Lichtenberk et al. (2011: 669), in this essay we are not concerned with the possibility of language contact as the source for the elaboration of the genitive marking systems that appear in many of the languages in the region. Rather, we are simply aiming at a description of the genitive system in Naka'ela based on the limited data available.

In Collins (1983a: 27), a brief discussion of the prevalence of elaborated genitive marking systems in Central Maluku was set forth:

> The genitive systems in Central Maluku languages involve two factors: word order and noun categories. In the interaction of these two factors, certain sound changes take place. Those sound changes and the mechanics of genitive constructions in Central Maluku are considered here. The languages of Central Maluku distinguish two categories of nouns: alienable and inalienable.

The distinction between these two categories of nouns, or perhaps better expressed as the distinction between the relationships embedded in the two genitive constructions, is not always straightforward and may vary among related languages.

In reference to the two systems of genitive marking, we note that alienable genitive constructions encompass a wide range of relationships between two nouns, including ownership, frequent use, consistent association, control, and other factors, for example "my shirt", "her paintings", "your actions". On the other hand, inalienable genitive constructions relationships usually refer to relationships that are perceived as inseparable, inherent, or intrinsic. Writing

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[16] The term "genitive", learned long ago in high school Latin class, refers to an attributive relationship involving two nouns and indicating an association of some kind, such as possession. Genitive seems a more "bleached" term compared to possessive. Nonetheless, terms such as possessor and possessed referring to the two nouns in the construction are used here. Other authors prefer to use the term possessum, rather than possessed.

about the Oceanic group of some 450 languages, Lichtenberk et al. (2011: 663) identified seven different inalienable relations.[17]

In the context of Central Maluku, the most salient inalienable relationships are probably: kinship and some other social relations, most body parts (animate possessors, for example, "eye", "mouth"), inherent parts (inanimate possessors, for example, "branch of a tree"), something emanating from the possessor's body (for example, "voice", "smell"), personal name of the possessor, and some spatial relations (for example, "on one's side", "in the interior"). Details may vary in each language, as noted briefly below.

Collins (1983a) already observed that in the genitive systems of the languages of Central Maluku the possessor noun (NP_1) precedes the possessed noun (NP_2).[18] Moreover, the possessed noun is marked for the person, number, and often the gender of the possessor. These pronominal markers are obligatory, whereas the possessor noun itself can be deleted. The claim that there are two marking systems rests on the fact that the position of these obligatory markers varies according to the category of the genitive relationship. If the relationship is alienable, the pronominal marker precedes the possessed noun. If the relationship is inalienable noun, the pronominal marker generally usually follows the possessed noun.[19]

Collins (1983b: 34) offered some examples of genitive marking in the Asilulu language, a Central Maluku language spoken on the northwest coast of Ambon island.[20] For comparison, we may examine Table 1.

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[17] As they wrote, "(a) kinship relations and other social/cultural relations; e.g. father (see [1]), spouse, trading partner; (b) the possessum is part of the possessor; e.g. head, nose, branch (of tree); (c) the possessum is something emanating from the possessor's body; e.g. sweat, smell, voice; (d) the possessum is something on the surface of the possessor's body; e.g. tattoo, dirt, clothing (when being worn); (e) mental organs, states, products of mental processes; e.g. mind, fear, thought; (f) various attributes of possessors, such as name (by which the possessor is known), age, height; (g) spatial and temporal relations, such as beside (X is beside 'possessor') and after (time after 'possessor time', e.g. 'after four days'); (h) the possessor is a patient or theme or stimulus in a situation, such as a blow received by the possessor or medicine for the possessor" (Lichtenberk et al. 2011: 663).

[18] We might suggest that this word order parallels the SVO sentence order in these languages, that is "The head (agent) noun of the genitive noun phrase precedes the dependent (object) noun just as in a sentence the subject precedes the verb" (Collins 1983a: 27); see also Lynch (1973) about Oceanic languages.

[19] Van Hoëvell (1877) recognized the existence of preposed and postposed pronominal markers, but he was not certain what determined the positioning. He wrote: "*De bezittelijke voornaamwoorden staan nu eens **vóór**, dan weder **achter** de zelfstandige naamwoorden. Vaste regels zijn hiervoor niet te geven*" (Van Hoëvell 1877: 21).

[20] See Collins (2007, 2018a) for more information about the Asilulu language and the community of Asilulu speakers.

Alienable	Inalienable
a'u **_ku_**_haka_ 'my boat'	*a'u uluku* 'my head'
ale **_mu_**_buku_ 'your book'	*ale wali**_mu_*** 'your younger sibling'
ali **_na_**_luma_ 'his house'	*ali nala**_ni_*** 'his name'
ami **_ma_**_tipil_ 'our (exclusive) basket'	*ami* **_ma_**_tuku_ 'our (exclusive) knees'
ite **_ra_**_pikal_ 'our (inclusive) plate'	*ite mata* 'our (inclusive) eyes'
imi **_mi_**_lapun_ 'your (plural) shirt'	*imi* **_mi_**_meme_ 'your (plural) uncle'
sini **_ri_**_kata_ 'their trousers'	*sini* **_ri_**_lima_ 'their arms'

Table 1. Marking alienable and inalienable genitive relationships in the Asilulu language (Collins 1983b).

In Table 1, forms in bold script indicate the obligatory pronominal markers. With two exceptions, in Asilulu the markers in both alienable and inalienable relationships are the same. The third person singular (human) marker is *na-* for alienable nouns but *-ni* for inalienable nouns.[21] Also note that the first person inclusive marker is zero (*ite mata*). The first person (exclusive), second person and third person plural pronominal markers appear *before* the NP$_2$ in both alienable and inalienable constructions.[22] As noted earlier, each Central Maluku language reflects slightly different rules for genitive marking. See, for example, the genitive paradigms of Kaitetu (Collins 1983a: 28).

Although existing data and tables for some Central Maluku languages, like Asilulu, are adequate, information about the genitive construction in Naka'ela is limited. In Table 2, the paradigm for the Naka'ela inalienable genitive system is set forth using the lexical term *mata* 'eye'.

	Singular	Plural
1	*au mata**_ku_***	*hami mata**_ma_*** (exclusive) *hita mata**_la_*** (inclusive)
2	*hale mata**_mu_***	*himi mata**_mi_***
3	*ile mata**_i_***	*sile mata**_si_***

Table 2. Marking inalienable genitive relationships in the Naka'ela language.

In contrast to the Asilulu system, Naka'ela consistently reflects postposed pronominal markers for all plural constructions. By and large, these markers are the same as or similar to the Asilulu markers above. We note, however,

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[21] Though not included in the original table of examples (Collins 1983b), Asilulu like many languages of the region distinguishes human from nonhuman nouns; see Collins (1983a: 28). This gender distinction is reflected in the choice of pronominal markers. The difference between human and nonhuman genders was discussed in Schapper (2015b). Of course, almost one hundred fifty years ago, Van Hoëvell (1877: 20-21) wrote about the possessive pronouns (*de bezittelijke voornaamwoorden*), listing them out accurately and observing that for nonhumans (*van zaken*) different markers were used, namely *na* and *ru* ("*roe*").

[22] In Van Hoëvell (1877: 21), these plural markers in Asilulu are preposed as well.

that in Naka'ela -*la* is the first person inclusive marker, not *ra* (as in Asilulu). Another difference is the third person singular marker in Naka'ela: -*i*. Based on the data available, -*i* is the marker, unless the possessed NP ends with the high front vowel /i/, when -*ni* is used. For example,

*halu**i***	'its tail'
*hulu**i***	'its fur'
*hai sana**i***	'a tree's branch'
*ho wala**i***	'strands of hair'

in contrast to:

ai 'leg'	*ai**ni*** 'his/her leg'
hei (counter for trees)	(*hai*) *hei**ni*** 'one tree'

Unlike Asilulu, Naka'ela does not distinguish between human and nonhuman gender in the singular person. Indeed, Naka'ela uses -*i* for both singular and plural nonhuman third person constructions:

(*apal*) *mata**i***	'the boar's eye'
(*apal a*) *mata**i***	'the boars' eyes'[23]

We shall see that this contrasts with pronominal marking in verbal inflection systems. While the Naka'ela data presented here, including the inalienable paradigm, were collected in Taniwel in 1978, data related to the alienable genitive construction were not well documented at that time. A sample paradigm was collected for *wanu* 'house':

	Singular	Plural
1	*au **k**wanu*	*hama**wanu* (exclusive) *hita **la**wanu* (inclusive)
2	*hale **mu**ʷanu*	*himi wanu*
3	*ile **ni**wanu*	*sile **si**wanu*

However, very few other examples were recorded. The only explicit data collected were the following:

mnona 'husband'	*__ni__mnona* 'her husband'
mhina 'wife'	*__ni__mhina* 'his wife'

Here we see the third person singular marker *ni* preposed to the possessed NP. First, we can conclude that in Naka'ela, unlike most kinship terms, those

[23] In Naka'ela, *apal* refers to undomesticated boars/pigs. A domestic swine is specified as *apa loane*. Note too that in the word *apal a*, the *a* indicates the plural number, just as it does in *hesi* 'torch' and *hesia* 'torches'. Indicating the plural is not obligatory but nor is it unusual in the region's languages.

meaning 'spouse' belong to the alienable category of relationship.[24] Second, we can conclude that in Naka'ela, as is the case in other languages of the region, that alienable genitive relations are indicated by preposing the pronominal marker, but membership in the category of alienable or inalienable relationship is not always clear.

5. The inflectional system of agentive sentences

The complicated and diverse inflectional systems of Central Maluku languages were touched upon in Collins (2012):

> In general, many languages of Central Maluku (Stresemann 1927; Collins 1983a, 2007a), indeed throughout eastern Indonesia (Jonker 1911), display morphological systems in which changes in the form of a verb indicate the person and number of the agent or subject. Systems like this are systems of inflection. Verbal inflection causes changes in the sounds of the root word in order to indicate details about the agent (subject) of the verb. In a given language, there may be more than one system of verbal inflection, depending on the root word; these systems are called conjugations.[25]

The two languages discussed in that essay (Collins 2012), namely Luhu and Kaibobo, perhaps represent two extremes on a continuum of verbal inflection in the region's languages.

On the west shore of the Piru Bay, the language of Luhu boasts five active verbal conjugations. In the neutral conjugation no changes take place in the verbal root[26]; one conjugation yields changes to verbal roots that begin with /s/ or /t/ and another conjugation involves verbs beginning with /k/; there are also two conjugations involving /p/. For example, the s/t conjugational paradigm below demonstrates the changes that take place in the Luhu verb *saʔa* 'climb, ascend, ride (a vehicle)'.

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*usaʔa*	*masaʔa* (exclusive) *saʔa* (inclusive)
2	*araʔa*	*misaʔa*
3	*iraʔa*	*sisaʔa*

Because the person and number are already indicated by the pronominal marker, the full pronoun usually is only used for emphasis. "If someone hears

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[24] Many other languages in the region also treat spousal relationship as alienable, for example in Asilulu. At this point, it is not clear that only consanguineal kinship relations belong to the inalienable category; there are indications that collateral kinship relationships other than spousal relationship may, in fact, belong to the inalienable category, for example *sau* 'brother-in-law' in Naka'ela.

[25] Usually, Latin, for example, is considered to have four conjugations ([HarperCollins] 2003:146).

[26] In addition to numerous inherited words, most verbs borrowed from Malay into Luhu display the neutral conjugation (Collins 2012).

the utterance *araʔa*, he or she will know that sentence means 'You climb [it]!' or 'Come on up!' or 'Get on board!'" (Collins 2012). This is how the conjugations functioned in spoken, everyday speech in Luhu in 1978.[27]

In another Luhu example, as summarized in the following paradigm (again taken from Collins 2012), one of the two different conjugations involving words that begin with /p/ displays the sound changes that take place. In Luhu the word *pahoi* means 'to bathe, to shower'.

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*uahoi*	*maahoi* (exclusive) *ahoi* (inclusive)
2	*apahoi*	*miahoi*
3	*ipahoi*	*siahoi*

In the previous example of *saʔa*, the regular alternation is between /s/ and /r/. In the paradigm above, the morphological rule is demonstrated by the alternation of /p/ with Ø. This diversity of inflectional systems does not occur in all the region's languages.

On the east shore of the Piru Bay, the language of Kaibobo displays no conjugational changes. Moreover, also in contrast with the Luhu language, there are no pronominal markers, such as Luhu *i-* in *ipahoi* 'He is taking a bath' and *ma-* in *maahoi* 'All of us are taking a bath'. In Kaibobo, for example, *tahura* means 'to expectorate'. The paradigm of *tahura* below is devoid of both morphophonological changes and pronominal markers.[28] Note in Kaibobo, an East Piru Bay language (Collins 1983a), we might expect an alternation between /t-/ and /k-/; but there is none (Collins 2012).

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*au tahura*	*ami tahura* (exclusive) *ite tahura* (inclusive)
2	*ale tahura*	*imi tahura*
3	*i tahura*	*si tahura*

There are, however, indications of fossilized forms of inflection. For example, in Kaibobo, the lexeme *pahui* means 'to bathe'; and there is variation between *pahui* and *ahui*. However, unlike Luhu, where, as we saw above, the variation between *pahoi* and *ahoi* is determined by the person and number of the agent, in Kaibobo these two forms are merely in free variation. Both *au ahui* and *au pahui* mean 'I am taking a bath'.[29]

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[27] Not included in this paradigm are the Luhu forms of the pronominal marker for nonhuman gender, namely *a-* in the singular and *u-* in the plural. See Collins (2012).

[28] Collins (2012) discussed pronouns in Kaibobo.

[29] Musgrave (2006) recorded similar examples of apparently free variation among speakers of some other East Piru Bay languages spoken on the island of Ambon. See also Collins (2012) for semantic and morphological shifts of the 1978 Kaibobo word *asaʔa*, recorded by Van Ekris

In Central Maluku languages, then, verbal inflection is or was an important part of their grammatical systems. In Asilulu there are probably four conjugations (Collins 2007); in Banda six (J.T. Collins and T. Kaartinen 1998). And all these inflected languages have or had exceptions and irregular conjugations, as does (or did?) Latin (Richard E. Prior and Joseph Wohlberg 1995). In the language of Manipa, spoken on an island off the west coast of Seram, there are at least four conjugations (Collins 1983a: 25); but in Alune, a language spoken in the mountains above Kaibobo and on Seram's north coast, at least some dialects display only traces of verbal inflection in fossilized forms (Collins 1983a: 26).[30] This phenomenon was also explored in a discussion of the Laha language spoken in the bay of Ambon island (Collins 1980a). Where does the Naka'ela language fit in?

In company with most Central Maluku languages, Naka'ela displays seven full, independent pronouns.[31]

	Singular	Plural
1	*au*	*hami* (exclusive) *hita* (inclusive)
2	*hale*	*himi*
3	*ile*	*sile*

The data collected in 1978 suggests that at that time Naka'ela had at least three conjugations.[32] Parallel to Luhu's system, there is a neutral conjugation, as indicated in the following paradigm for *lihi* 'pull' in Naka'ela.

	Singular	Plural
1	*au klihi*	*hamalihi* (exclusive) *hita lalihi* (inclusive)
2	*hale alihi*	*himi lihi*
3	*ile lihi*	*sile silihi*

In this paradigm the full, independent pronouns appear as well as the pronominal markers.[33] Table 3 lists (some of) the Naka'ela pronominal markers in the verbal inflectional system.

(1864-1865) as "pasaa".

[30] "For example, in Murikau (Alune) we note rekwa *to know* but makatekwa *an unusually clever person*. Both of these are from PCM *tewa. The agentive prefix *maka- has preserved the older form of the verb whereas only the third singular form of the verb has survived as the unconjugated verb".

[31] As is often the case in Central Maluku languages, in Naka'ela there are also two third person singular respectful pronouns distinguished by gender: *ilemtuane* 'he' and *makhinawe* 'she'.

[32] With misplaced enthusiasm, Collins (2018: 78) wrote of Naka'ela: "Masih terdapat lima konjugasi verbal yang berbeda-beda." [There are still five distinctive verbal conjugations.]

[33] The exception is the first person plural exclusive pronoun *hami* 'we', which always links by contraction to the pronominal marker singular *ma-*. So *hami malihi* → *hamalihi* 'We pull'.

	Singular	Plural
1	*k-*	*ma-* (exclusive) *la-* (inclusive)
2	*a-*	Ø
3	*i-* (human) *e-* (nonhuman)	*si-* (human) *reu-* (nonhuman)

Table 3. Naka'ela pronominal markers.

Although the nonhuman third person markers do not appear in the collected conjugational paradigms, the forms *e-* and *reu-* did appear in some sentences and phrases elsewhere in the data.

*apal **e**keu pea* 'The boar already left.'
*apal a **reu**keu pea* 'The boars have gone (from the garden)'[34]
*hihiku **e**minake* 'My mouth is greasy.'

Another Naka'ela verb that apparently displays the neutral conjugation is *hunu* 'kill':

	Singular	Plural
1	*au khunu*	*hamahunu* (inclusive) *hita hunu* (exclusive)
2	*hale hunu*	*himi hunu*
3	*ile hunu*	*sile hunu*

However, the second person singular form *hale hunu* displays no pronominal marking, nor do the first person (inclusive) and third person plural forms.[35]

A second Naka'ela paradigm involves some words that begin with /n/. For example, the verb *nalahae* 'think about, ponder'.

	Singular	Plural
1	*au kwalahae*	*hamanalahae* (exclusive) *hita lanalahae* (inclusive)
2	*hale nalahae*	*himi nalahae*
3	*ile nalahae*	*sile salahae*

In this paradigm, we see in the first person singular, *au kwalahae* 'I'm pondering (something)', that /n-/ was replaced with /kw-/; similarly, in the third person plural /n-/ was replaced by /s-/. In the second person singular

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[34] The verb *keu* 'go' is discussed below.
[35] These differences may reflect a subset of the conjugation, or possibly free variation in the use of pronominal marking at least in this conjugation. In the conclusion of this essay these issues will be addressed.

no pronominal marker appears, whereas the marker *a-* appears in the neutral conjugation as we saw in *alihi* 'You pull' above. However, there are other words beginning with /n/ which display a slightly different pattern, for example *nipi* 'hit, strike':

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*au kwipi*	*hamanipi* (exclusive) *hita lanipi* (inclusive)
2	*hale nipi*	*himi nipi*
3	*ile nipi*	*sile sinipi*

In this case the third person plural displays the pronominal marker *si-*, not a replacement of the initial /n/ with /s-/, as noted for *nalahae*. It is unclear if this differences in detail reflects a different conjugation or simply an irregular form in the same conjugation, perhaps governed by the high vowels of the root word *nipi*.

In another paradigm, we observe that some words with an initial /k-/ display inflectional changes that parallel those observed in the *nipi* paradigm. The paradigm of *keu* 'go' contains one difference with the *nipi* data. The pronominal marker *a-* appears in the second person singular, *akeu*, as follows:

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*au kweu*	*hamakeu* (exclusive) *ite lakeu* (inclusive)
2	*hale akeu*	*himi keu*
3	*ile keu*	*sile sikeu*

Here the initial /k-/ of the root verb *keu* is replaced by the first person pronominal marker *kw-*, and the interaction of the root verb with the third person plural marker, *si-*, parallels that of *sinipi* in the *nipi* paradigm. Both *sikeu* and *sinipi* do not display the merge of *si-* with the root verb, as noted in *nalahae* above.

In the 1978 lexical fieldnotes, there are many annotations of verbs that parallel this difference between some words beginning with /n-/ and many words beginning with /k-/.[36] Although the paradigms are incomplete, root verbs were jotted down with parentheses around the initial sounds to indicate the conjugation, often with side notes of some of the inflected forms.[37] For example,

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[36] These are the forms (beginning with /n-/ or /k-/) as the language resource specialists cited them in our 1978 sessions.

[37] In these side notes, the abbreviation 1s marks inflected examples of first person singular and 3p examples of third person plural. Often these abbreviations were not used because the examples speak for themselves. In some cases, no sample sentences were written down, but the parentheses indicate that the inflectional changes were checked orally.

(*n*)*ataneta* 'do the laundry'; *kwataneta*
(*n*)*araninia* 'groan'
(*n*)*ahoike* 'sniff at'; *kwahoike* 1s, *sahoike* 3p
(*n*)*anu* 'swim'; *kwanu, sanu*
(*n*)*ieke* 'do, make'; *sile sieke*
(*n*)*ili* 'choose'; *sili*
(*n*)*inu* 'drink'; *kwinu, sile sinu*
(*n*)*ohoke* 'sit, squat'
(*n*)*opake* 'climb by hugging (a pole, a branchless tree trunk)'
(*n*)*oluke* 'shout'; *kwoluke* 1s, *soluke* 3p

and,

(*k*)*a* 'eat; *kwa* 1s, *sika* 3p
(*k*)*atiliai* 'leap over (an obstacle)'
(*k*)*aikatuke* 'send'
(*k*)*isake* 'tear apart, rip'
(*k*)*esie* 'throw away'
(*k*)*ele* 'stand'; *au kwele, ile kele, sile sikele*
(*k*)*oti* 'call, call out'; *kwoti* 1s, *sikoti* 3p

Based on this evidence, the indication is that forty years ago some verbs beginning with /n-/ (whether followed by /a/, /i/ or /o/) fell into a different conjugation from the neutral conjugation exemplified by *lihi*.[38] The most significant identifying feature of that second conjugation is the loss of the initial /n-/ in the verbal root and its merger with a contracted form of the pronominal marker in the third person plural form. We note these characteristic data: *nalahae → salahae, ninu → sinu,* and *noluke → soluke.*

Nonetheless, in the case of verbs like *keu* the status of the conjugational paradigm is not so clear. The "(k)" verbs above display an inflectional system similar to the regular conjugation, except that the first person singular marker appears as /kw-/, not /k-/. Other verbs beginning with /k-/ may shed light on the situation. For example, a paradigm for *knia* 'ask' was documented:

	Singular	**Plural**
1	*au kuknia*	*hamaknia* (exclusive) *hita laknia* (inclusive)
2	*hale aknia*	*himi knia*
3	*ile knia*	*sile siknia*

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[38] However, some verbs beginning with /n-/, like *nipi* above, show different (irregular?) pronominal marking. Note the incomplete paradigm collected (in five brief sentence examples) collected for *nana* 'shoot an arrow at'; *si-* does not contract and merge with *nana*.

au kwana i 'I shot an arrow at him.'	*hamanana si* 'We shot arrows at them.'
hale anana i 'You shot an arrow at him.'	
inana au 'He shot an arrow at me.'	*sile sinana hami* 'They shot arrows at us.'

Here we see a pattern that is similar to the regular conjugation of *lihi*, except that the first person singular marker is *ku-*, not *k-*. A number of verbs documented in 1978 share the inflectional pattern of *knia*, including:

khuse 'cough'	*au kukhuse*
knana 'look upward'	*kuknana*
kniki 'pinch'	
ksale 'lean on'	*kuksale*
ksopa 'sneeze'	*kuksopa*
ksupake 'walk in one's sleep'	
kule 'spray with spittle especially in healing rituals'	*kukule*

Based on the data presented in this section, a few tentative conclusions can be drawn. First, the first person singular pronominal marker is probably the underlying morpheme *ku-* and, depending on the initial sound of the verb, this marker appears in three allomorphs.

- Before some initial voiceless (continuant?) consonants, it appears as /k-/.
- In many verbs beginning with /n-/ or /k-/, *ku-* appears as /kw-/.
- In verbs beginning with consonant clusters /kC-/, the allomorph *ku-* appears.

Second, in addition to the neutral conjugation exemplified by *lihi* above, there are two other conjugations. This is clearest in the marking of the third person plural. In many verbs with /n-/ in the initial position, that /n-/ merges with the preposed marker *si-*; /n-/ is lost and the final /-i/ of *si-* is also lost, for example, *si-* + *nalahae* → *salahae*. Although the allomorph of *ku-* in many verbs beginning with /k-/ is the same as many verbs beginning with /n-/, the merger of the pronominal marker *si-* with the verb did not occur, for example *si-* + *keu* → *sikeu*.

Third, these data, then, suggest that in 1978 there were at least three conjugations functioning in Naka'ela grammar.

6. THE INFLECTIONAL SYSTEM OF NON-VOLITIONAL SENTENCES

Central Maluku languages, as well as many others in the east Indonesian region, not only display complex inflectional systems for agentive verbs but also parallel systems for agentless verbs. This distinction was discussed in passing in Collins (2007) as an issue in lexicography, as follows.

In Asilulu there are two categories of verbals. In one category, the features of person, gender and number of the agent are marked by pronominal markers which are pre-cliticized. In the other, these same features of the experiencer or patient are indicated by post-cliticized markers. The one category might be labeled agentive and the other agentless [...] In this dictionary agentless (experiential) verbals are marked by a final dash; agentive verbals are not so marked.

In the *Asilulu-English dictionary* (Collins 2007), there are indeed scores of verbs "marked by a final dash". For example, *hulamitike-* 'caught up by nightfall',[39] *kalalalek-* 'daydream', *ko'ok-* 'sleep in a curled up position', *luaketa-* 'be hungry', *luluk-* 'be cast ashore (of wreckage, dead fish)', *mutik-* 'become cool, feel cold', *pukanawa-* 'die by suffocation', *rehek-* be sound asleep', *wetu-* 'be startled', and many more. Some of these are everyday words, others archaic or seldom used. But the postposed pronominal marking remains the same.[40]

Nonetheless, although the term "agentless verbal" addresses the syntactic and morphological issues involved, these verbs also belong to a semantic category. Perhaps, following some scholars of Japanese grammar, a better way to describe this category of verbs might be non-volitional verbs.

> Non-volitional [verbs] are those verbs that, despite the fact of having a human subject, are outside of the control of such subject. The outcome of the action is not controlled by the subject in any case, so its onset, development and outcome are out of the subject's control. Examples are: to die, to become, verbs that are linked to weather conditions, verbs that are related to psychological sensations, verbs that express sudden changes, verbs that indicate capabilities and the potential form. (Pancho4112 2013: 1).

In addition to Japanese, many languages, including languages of Asia, such as Sinhalese, Karen, Burmese, and others, are characterized by specific strategies (rules) for marking the category of non-volitional verbs, including verbal affixation, auxiliary verbs, nominal particles, syntacticized verbs, and adverbials. The specific semantic categories of Japanese may not apply in all these languages and there may be exceptions as is so often the case. In many Central Maluku languages, including Asilulu, most non-volitional verbs were indicated by postposed pronominal markers.[41] The limited data available for Naka'ela demonstrates that this language distinguished a non-volitional category of verbals with its distinctive morphosyntactic system. In 1978, under the ersatz label of "Postposed Experiencer", the Naka'ela paradigm for *ktalake-* 'laugh uncontrollably and boisterously' was collected:

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[39] Scholars of Indonesian might compare the semantics of this form to *kemalaman* and other similar circumfixed forms.

[40] The data base for the Asilulu dictionary was collected between 1972-1987, partially through funding from the Fulbright-Hays Fellowship program (1977-1978) and more specifically the Fulbright-Hays Research Abroad Award [Indonesia] program (1986-1987), both programs within the U.S. Department of Education, in cooperation with and under the auspices of Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (Jakarta) and the sponsorship of Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa (Jakarta). Even in the mid-1980s the younger speakers of Asilulu were shifting this non-volitional pattern to conform to the SV(O) structure of Ambonese Malay. At that time, for example, I met a young school teacher from Haruku posted to Asilulu who had been instructed by his Asilulu friends to say *a'u luaketa* 'I am hungry' rather than *luaketa'u*, as older speakers would expect.

[41] See for example, Wyn D. Laidig and Carol J. Laidig (1991: 29, 32) for details of the "suffixes" of "unaccusative verbs" in the Larike language, spoken on the west coast of Ambon island (Collins 1983a). They noted that verbs of this category include "actions that are involuntary, or out of the direct control of the subject".

	Singular	Plural
1	*ktalake**ku***	*ktalake**ma*** (exclusive) *ktalake**la*** (inclusive)
2	*ktalake**ka***	*ktalake**mi***
3	*ktalake**i***	*ktalake**si***

The postposed pronominal markers of Naka'ela (in italics, bold, and underlined in the paradigm of *ktalake-* presented above)) match the genitive markers we have seen for nouns in the inalienable genitive paradigm, with one exception.

	Singular	Plural
1	*-**ku***	*-**ma*** (exclusive) *-**la*** (inclusive)
2	*-**ka***	*-**mi***
3	*-**i***	*-**si***

Here, unlike the inalienable genitive marker *-mu*, we note the second person singular marker is *-ka*; however, even in the small corpus available at least one lexeme displayed *-mu* for this second person singular marker; see below. One example of the non-human third person singular pronominal marker was collected in the brief phrase *pia muti**n*** 'cold sago porridge'. This seems to parallel the use of /-i/ and /-n/ or /-ni/ in the Naka'ela inalienable genitive paradigm discussed in Section above.

Below are listed the few other non-volitional verbs collected in the Naka'ela corpus.

kainawa- 'pant, experience difficulty breathing' *kainawaku, kainawamu, kainawai*
knohake- 'snore' *knohakeku, knohakeka, knohakei*
kola- 'be satiated/full (after eating)' *kolaku, kolai*
masi- 'feel pity/sympathy' *masika, masini*
mutike- 'feel cold' *au mutikeku* 'I feel cold.'
ninuklale- 'forget'[42] *au ninuklaleku, ile ninuklalei*
paksurue- 'trip, stub one's toe' *paksurueku, paksurueka, paksuruei*

As mentioned above, one form *kainawamu* unexplainedly reflects *-mu* rather than the expected *-ka*. We might want to compare the sentence *au mutikeku* 'I feel cold.' with the phrase *pia mutin* 'cold sago porridge' indicating a change of state (from hot to cold) of a nonhuman referent.[43]

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[42] In a discussion of volitionality in Burmese, Kato Atsuhiko (2014: 3) pointed out: "In Burmese, this distinction is highly clear. For example, the sentence mê=dɛ̀ (forget=REAL) 'I forgot (it)' always means that the speaker has involuntarily forgotten something, and it can never represent a situation where the speaker 'forgets on purpose'. Unlike Naka'ela, in some other Central Maluku language the verb 'to forget' is not marked as a non-volitional verb".

[43] Let us note in passing that some of these non-volitional verbs in Naka'ela can be compared to data in other related Central Maluku languages. For example, in Collins (2007) we note

The Naka'ela data base is quite small but it provides a clear indication of the two categories of verbals noted in Asilulu (Collins 2007) and other languages in Central Maluku (W.D. Laidig and C.J. Laidig 1991), indeed in the larger eastern Indonesian region (Marian Klamer 2007). It is intriguing to note that the system for marking non-volitional verbs parallels the system for marking inalienable nouns – also widespread in the region. Lichtenberk et al. (2011: 633) included in the list of relationships often included in the inalienable category those connected with "states, products of mental processes; e.g. mind, fear, thought" and those in which "the possessor is a patient or theme or stimulus in a situation". These characteristic relationships echo those semantic features of non-volitional verbs with postposed pronominal markers. The semantics of the non-volitional verb often, but not always, dictates the postposted pronominal markers, including the Naka'ela language. While it is true that we can no longer collect additional Naka'ela data, nonetheless we can be sure that not all the details of the non-volitional system nor the verbs assigned to that system will be the same as those found in other languages of the region. As Klamer (2007: 251) emphasized, "In sum, the semantic parameters of alignment in the languages of eastern Indonesia show considerable variation [...]".

7. Conclusion: "All cultures are interlinked"

The purpose of the research in the environs of Taniwel more than forty years ago was not language documentation, nor was it linguistic description. The focus was narrow: collecting credible data to resolve issues in language classification based on the procedures of historical comparative linguistics. To accomplish this specific task there was a need to collect lexical data as a starting point for language comparison and to assemble morphosyntactic information (verbal and nominal paradigms) to better understand how the phonology of that time (1978) reflected older elements of the proto-language of Central Maluku. As Collins (1983a: 26) explained:

> In all descendants of PCM [Proto-Central Maluku] the complex conjugational systems have gradually eroded. Sometimes this results in complete loss of any trace of conjugation. In other cases, it has resulted in numerous irregular verbs. In most cases it has left traces in the contemporary lexicon. It is precisely the retention of remnants of the conjugational system which is of importance in phonological reconstruction.

Using the limited data collected in 1978 – the blurred "traces" of change and gnawing erosion, this modest essay has explored briefly three components of Naka'ela grammar: the genitive marking system, the inflectional system of agentive sentences, and the inflectional system of non-volitional (stative)

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pukanawa-*v*. 1) to die by suffocation. 2) to lose all of one's breath. 3) to suffer a child's disease characterized by suffocation; the meaning and phonetic shape of this word compares well with Naka'ela **kainawa**- 'pant, experience difficulty breathing', as does Asilulu **mutik**-*v*. 1) to become cool. **te mutiken** 'The tea has become cold'. 2) to have lost momentum, to have broken the tempo (especially in games) and Naka'ela **mutike**- 'feel cold'.

sentences. Many questions remain. As Schapper (2015a: 100) pointed out, "[O]ur picture of many languages is based solely on rapidly elicited wordlists and sketchy example sentences (see, for example, Collins 1982 on Maluku languages)". In the case of the Naka'ela language, unfortunately those hurriedly jotted down wordlists and sketchy sentences are the only resource we have for understanding and appreciating this complex and extinct language.

Somewhat earlier than that sketchy documentation of Naka'ela, that is in 1977, data were collected in Luhu (mentioned above), a large village also on Seram but on the west side of Piru Bay about 150 km from Taniwel. At that time, villagers of all generations spoke the indigenous Luhu language. In that setting it was possible to hear the language used spontaneously and, thus, collect data through experience, experiment and observation. Younger speakers enjoyed joking, for example (Collins 2012), "in this sentence joking about eyeglasses, an assistant said: *kalu amatulu apake kacamata hueʔe* 'If you sleep, do you wear glasses too?'".

In all the other villages on either side of Piru Bay the sociolinguistic context was completely different. Reflecting later on that experience, I wrote (Collins 2012):

> I was surprised to see how few sentences and phrases I actually recorded or jotted down in almost all these villages. By contrast, in Luhu, villagers spontaneously offered me sample sentences as I elicited data using wordlists, but also when I had tea at a neighbor's home, walked through the village, or just joked on the beach near the durian trees. This spontaneous and relaxed input was not forthcoming in other villages because the use of local languages was highly infrequent in those villages. In 1978, especially in Eti, Piru, Kelang, Waesamu and Hatusua, the indigenous languages could be recalled by the oldest generation, but they were seldom spoken. My kind and generous language assistants in those villages belonged to the category of *rememberers,* rather than users of their languages.

The hospitality and generosity of all the villagers along either coast of Piru Bay were overwhelming, but the indigenous language was only spoken and thriving in one of them, Luhu. The outgoing and lively culture of Central Maluku had survived in the villages but, except for Luhu, the local language had become a ghostly shade.

This contemporary cultural and social crisis is not limited to the shores of Piru Bay. Almost ten years ago, one could observe that the entire island of Seram was undergoing a massive sociological shift: incredible economic progress and simultaneous deterioration of indigenous languages and cultures.

> In Seram there is a disturbing inverse relationship between economic development and language and cultural maintenance. While vast resources were poured into developing the physical infrastructure of Seram, none were spent on the network of indigenous languages, nor on the local cultures [...] As extensive development projects rolled out in Seram, local languages and local cultures declined. The spiritual element of human culture was overlooked as new crops were introduced, new water supplies accessed, new motorbikes purchased. The need to balance the

development of the island by maximizing sustainable economic benefits, while minimizing disruption to the cultures and languages of the indigenous people, was overlooked. Seram [...] is an exemplar of skewed development (Collins 2011).

That observation is already a decade old. The diminishment and deterioration of Maluku's languages have accelerated. Facing the impending and proximate loss of heritage languages in Maluku, some non-governmental organizations and individuals are taking steps, such as using the local language in play groups for very young children. Moreover, Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, both through teams in Jakarta organized at the national level in Pusat Pembinaan as well as through the efforts of its regional office, Kantor Bahasa Maluku, have also spearheaded targeted language revitalization projects in some villages of Maluku. Similarly, some academics have also undertaken fact-finding efforts and experiments to explore responses to this language crisis, for example at Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya, Universitas Indonesia. These are all laudable and exemplary initiatives; however, this crisis is so widespread and so threatening to the survival of heritage languages in Maluku and elsewhere in Indonesia and the region that nothing less than a well-funded, thoroughly planned and expertly managed Language Revitalization Campaign with the full support of the national and provincial governments, indeed of UNESCO, can succeed. This is not a local problem in a few villages and this is not the time for piecemeal, temporary solutions.

With regard to language revitalization, not only obsolescent and extinct languages need to be rehabilitated and saved. Languages that are still used and still known by communities also need assistance and support. Teaching materials, story books for play groups, recordings, and CDs can be prepared for communities using the same language so that language loyalty can be increased. Any plan devised for language revitalization must be based in the hearts of the communities that recognize their languages as deep symbols of their identities and personhoods as individuals and also as symbols of each of their communities as one family with one purpose.[44]

The establishment of the national management team of a Maluku Language Revitalization Campaign can serve as a model for other initiatives in Indonesia and the region. This management team's tasks encompass establishing priorities and schedules, drawing up standard operating procedures, and ensuring a high level of communication among those groups working on diverse language in different localities. Certainly one of the major

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[44] These issues were raised in Collins (2016: 27): "*Dalam hal pelestarian bahasa, bukan saja bahasa yang sudah hampir punah atau memang sudah punah yang harus direhabilitasi dan diselamatkan. Bahasa yang masih digunakan dan masih diketahui masyarakat memerlukan bantuan dan tunjangan.* [...] *Bahan pelajaran, buku cerita PAUD, rekaman dan cd* [...] *dapat disediakan untuk seluruh masyarakat yang menggunakan bahasa yang sama demi meningkatkan loyalitas bahasa. Apapun rencana yang dibuat tentang pelestarian bahasa harus bersumber pada hati nurani masyarakat yang merasa perlunya bahasa itu.* [...] *sebagai simbol yang amat mendalam tentang identitas dan perbadi mereka secara individu dan juga sebagai lambang masyarakat yang sekeluarga dan setujuan*".

responsibilities of this campaign must be working closely with all generations of the community to reach a consensus on the value and importance of their heritage language as well as the strategies to maintain its use. We should also insist that language revitalization is not focused on language documentation.[45] That is why community engagement and empowerment must be a top priority. Community members must be convinced of the importance of maintaining their heritage language and the value of transmitting it to their children. As the representative of UNESCO, Qian Tang (UNESCO 2016), declared "Cultural diversity is the other name for human dignity and human rights. All cultures are interlinked, and we need to embrace them all [...]". For too long, speakers of Maluku's heritage language and members of minority language communities throughout Southeast Asia have had to face societal disdain for or even ridicule of their ancestral languages. Dorian (1998) wrote eloquently about this "ideology of contempt".

In 1978 I worked with speakers and rememberers of many of west Seram's diverse languages. These elderly resource specialists often told me of the punishments devised for them fifty years earlier if they dared to utter even a single word of their heritage languages in school. Indeed, in many Seram villages even in 1977-1979, I myself heard teachers and officials speak with scorn and contempt about Maluku's languages. It can be no surprise that these devalued languages have not been transmitted by parents to their children. With only four or five speakers of Naka'ela still alive in 1978, the impending demise of this remarkable language was already obvious. The same was true at that time for the languages of Kelang, Hulung, Kaibobo, Paulohi, Amahai, Haruru, and many others. Moreover, today we know this is a national, regional, and global crisis. In this setting of dying, dead, and forgotten languages, we might recall the history of the brutal genocides and culture murders in Australia (Nettle and Romaine 2000). Recently, Dianne Biritjalawuy Gondarra, a Yolngu woman from northern Australia, explained that "culture is a shadow, it's something that follows you everywhere, and part of culture is language, which connects me back to my land" (Griffiths 2020).

This essay was intended to shed glimmers of light on the Naka'ela language of forty years ago, as well as a glimpse at today's complex setting of fading multilingualism in Central Maluku, indeed in the world. Perhaps these few paragraphs have revealed, too, the flaws and weaknesses of a research methodology focused on collecting comparative data two generations ago. Other choices could have been made with different results. Nonetheless, today, the displaced, disregarded Naka'ela community survives in Seram with their strong sense of a unique, shared commonality and cultural heritage. But recently their emblematic homeland, so important to them – as all homelands

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[45] Krauss (1992: 9) already outlined the tasks and strategies: "We should not only be documenting these languages, but also working educationally, culturally, and politically to increase their chances of survival. This means working with members of the relevant communities to help produce pedagogical materials and literature and to promote language development in the necessary domains, including television. And it involves working with communities, agencies, and, where possible, governments for supportive language planning".

are to the peripheralized communities of Australia, Alaska, and the world – is under imminent threat. The ramparts and heart of Mount Naka'ela, described so eloquently by Rumphius more than three hundred years ago (Buijze 2006: 102), are soon to be utterly destroyed by a quarry company so that those formidable, glistening escarpments can become marble slabs in the bathrooms of the urban elite (Koran Peduli Rakyat 2020). Their ancestral heartland is now under threat and already a cultural connection has been sadly and permanently lost. Their Naka'ela language now is only a shade, a ghostly memory.

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