

Kaure and its relatives: a language family of West Papua's eastern Lakes Plain

The eastern Lakes Plain of West Papua is perhaps the most phylogenetically complex and poorly understood linguistic region in the world, home to at least seven unrelated families, as many isolates (Foley 2017), and members of several larger families. Most groupings are tentative and disputed. I advance our understanding of the region with findings on one such group: the Kaure family.

Five putative languages have at times been associated with this family. Voorhoeve (1975) identifies a Trans New Guinea (TNG) Kaure Stock comprising Kaure, Narau, Kapauri and Sause. Wurm (1982) follows this, but adds Kosare. Silzer & Clouse (1991) place Kaure, Kosare and Kapauri in a Kaure Stock, but place Sause in a separate Tor-Lake Plain Stock, and don't mention Narau. Foley (2017) treats Kaure, Narau and Kosare as a family, with possible links to TNG, and with Kapauri a possible distant fourth member or unrelated isolate. He too shows Sause in a Tor family, but regards this as doubtful with it a likely further isolate. Pawley & Hammarström (2017), in contrast, regard the evidence on Kosare and Kapauri as insufficient to posit a link with Kaure, and regard the evidence as insufficient to warrant claiming TNG membership. They do not mention Sause.

I compare all available material on 13 doculects, six identified as Kaure: 2 from Jafi (Galis 1956; Smits & Voorhoeve 1994), 1 from Lereh (Clouse 1997), 1 from Harna (Auri et al 1991; Dommel et al 1991), and 2 from Guai (Smits & Voorhoeve 1994) (my Guai A and B). I compare these with Narau (Giël 1959); 3 Kosare doculects (Muara Nawa and Naira dialects (Wambaliau 2006) and Heeschen's (1978) list); 2 doculects of Kapauri (Rumaropen 2006; Voorhoeve 1975); and 1 Sause doculect (Smits & Voorhoeve 1994). I demonstrate that the two Kapauri doculects are one variety, and that Narau is not a separate language, or even separate dialect of Kaure, but Kaure's Guai B.

I present evidence that Kaure, Kosare, Kapauri and Sause do belong to a single family, vindicating Wurm (1982), with regular sound correspondences detectable (some cognates in Table 1). Sause underwent several sound changes not seen in the other varieties, including *k>ʔ/V_V; *w>Ø/C_V; *s>h/#_ (neutralizing *h); and loss of final vowels. Other correspondences include *u>y in Harna & Lereh; *k>h/#_ in Harna, Lereh & Guai B; *k>p,φ/#_ in Guai A; *k>g/#_ and *p>g/#_ in Jafi; *k>g/V_C in Lereh & Guai B; *k>x medially in Harna & Guai A; *r>l in Harna; *r>l/C_V and *r>Ø/V_C in the other Kaure dialects; and loss of final consonants in most Kaure varieties. Higher cognate numbers and shared lexical innovations suggest closer links between Kapauri and Sause, but Kaure and Kosare are the two closest languages. Overall, the data suggests a tentative branching into a Kaure-Kosare branch and a Kapauri-Sause branch, with evidence of contact between many varieties, particularly Kapauri and Kosare (e.g. Kapauri's innovated form for 'ear' borrowed into Kosare alongside that language's regular cognate form). Based on sound correspondences and shared cognates across the family I reconstruct a set of forms for the proto-language. Finally, I explore possible links with Trans New Guinea, concluding no evidence links the two families.

Table 1:	Jafi	Guai A	Harna	Lereh	Guai B	Kosare	Kapauri	Sause
'one'	sutu	soto	soltok	sutu	so:to	sroto	sɾutu	hor
'eye'	gewe	pye	hwen	hwai	-	-	[hu]kwani	kɛŋ
'ear'	go-klu	φɔ-xlu	ho-xelyk	hu-[a]glyt	ho-gru	kɔro, wɔɾu?	[tu]waru	[to]ʔor
'moon'	gaka	-	paxa	poka	-	paka?	paka[ɾu]	-

Foley, W.A. 2017. The languages of Northwest New Guinea. In Palmer (ed.) 433-567

Palmer, B. 2017. *The languages and linguistics of the New Guinea area*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Pawley, A. & H. Hammarström. 2017. The Trans New Guinea family. In Palmer (ed.) 21-195

Silzer, P.J. & H.H. Clouse. 1991. *Index of Irian Jaya Languages*. 2nd ed. Jayapura: Program Kerjasama Universitas Cenderawasih and SIL.

Voorhoeve, C.L. 1975 *Languages of Irian Jaya, checklist: Preliminary classification, language maps, wordlists*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Wurm, S. A. 1982. *Papuan languages of Oceania*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.