

Negatives, between Papuan and Austronesian

Negation has figured in the documentation of contact influence between Papuan and Austronesian languages, more particularly, in the argumentation for an East Nusantara linguistic area (eastern Indonesian archipelagoes and Western New Guinea) (Reesink 2002, Klamer, Reesink & Van Staden 2008). The latter argument involves two sets of markers, *ba* and *ta* (and their cognates), shared between some Papuan and some Austronesian languages, with the former arguably being of Papuan origin and the second of Austronesian origin. These markers are postverbal, a position associated with the verb-final character of the Papuan languages and untypical for Austronesian, and are thus heralded in support of Papuan influencing Austronesian.

This talk, based on a survey of 212 Papuan languages and of 421 Austronesian ones (of which 217 are spoken in the 'greater New Guinea area') has four goals. It will be shown that

- (i) the existence of *ba* and *ta* negatives in both Austronesian and Papuan languages is not restricted to the East Nusantara area; they are found throughout the greater New Guinea area, which makes sense, for contact happened throughout this area;
- (ii) the existence of negative look-alikes (i.e. possible borrowings) in both the Austronesian and the Papuan languages of greater New Guinea is not restricted to *ba* and *ta* morphemes; this also makes sense, for there is no reason why contact influence should be restricted to just two negative morphemes;
- (iii) the existence of negative look-alikes *ba*, *ta* and other ones (i.e. hypothesized or possible borrowings) in both families is not restricted to postverbal position; this makes sense: the typological default position for negation is the preverbal one;
- (iv) though it is true – and we will show how – that a postverbal position of negation is weakly associated with the Papuan languages, that the preverbal position is strongly associated with the Austronesian languages, and that a postverbal position of an Austronesian negative can be construed in arguing for influence from Papuan to the Austronesian, there are other ways for languages to acquire a postverbal negation, most prominently, the so-called 'Jespersen Cycle' (which is what gave English a postverbal *not* after a doubling stage with a verb embracing *ne ...not* and an initial stage with only a preverbal *ne*); the Jespersen Cycle has been shown to be operative in Austronesian for the Vanuatu languages since Early (1994a, 1994b), but it will be shown to be no less plausible for the Austronesian languages of the greater New Guinea area – and no less also for the Papuan languages, since merely saying that Papuan languages often have a postverbal negation does not tell us yet how they acquired this postverbal negation.

Early, Robert. 1994a. Lewo. In *Typological studies in negation*, in Peter Kahrel & René van den Berg (eds.), *Typological studies in negation*, 65-92. Amsterdam: Benjamins. – Early, Robert. 1994b. *A grammar of Lewo, Vanuatu*. PhD dissertation, Australian National University. – Klamer, Marian, Ger Reesink & Miriam van Staden. 2008. East Nusantara as a linguistic area, in Pieter Muysken (ed.) *From Linguistic Areas to Areal Linguistics*, 95-149. Amsterdam: Benjamins. – Reesink, Ger P. 2002. Clause-final negation, structure and interpretation. *Functions of Language* 9: 239-268.