

“The Lord of the Golden Cloth.”

Observations on lexical parallelism in Fataluku (East Timor)

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Fataluku is a non-Austronesian (NAN) language spoken in the easternmost district of Lautem in the republic of East Timor. Oral tradition claims that Fataluku is a relative newcomer that came from the west and eventually pushed back the Austronesian Makuva language far into Tutuala subdistrict where the latter became a ritual language.

Fataluku oral tradition distinguishes *rata lolo* ‘talking about the old times’ from *no lolo* ‘talking about the past’. The latter style features extensive lexical parallelism, the pairing of words, as it is attested in most Austronesian languages in the region. Fox (2005) explains the phenomenon of lexical parallelism in Bunak, another NAN language spoken on Timor Island, as being motivated by extensive influence from its Austronesian neighbour Kemak. McWilliam (2007) shows that, whereas their language is classified as non-Austronesian, Fatalukus clearly live in an Austronesian society.

This contribution focuses on the *Lau Karas Ocava* text, a *no lolo* text of the Resiratu clan written down and transcribed by the late Filipe da Costa Meneses in his 1997 BA thesis of which one remaining copy was found back in 2006.

Fataluku lexical pairs are compared with the ones in Leti, its offshore Austronesian neighbour language in order to determine whether they have comparable structural and semantic motivations.

References

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