Using Grammatical Data to Determine Language Relationships in Fergusson and Normanby Island Languages of the Papuan Tip Cluster

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1. Introduction

In a recent paper (Lithgow n.d.) I have shown how the languages of Fergusson and Normanby Islands of Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea have changed in the last 25 years, due to the influence of the local lingua franca, Dobu. In my earlier surveys, in 1965 and 1976, I grouped the languages into families using vocabulary similarity plus similarity of elementary grammatical data (Lithgow 1976:447). Later I found that these groupings did not all accord with what the people said about the relationships of their languages, so during 1989 and 1990 I did a comparison of detailed grammatical data, the results of which are listed below. The results of this study confirmed what the people said about their own languages, notably that Bunama and the Duau dialects, though some vocabulary cognates are as low as 59%, are actually one linguistic unit, and that Molima, Salakahadi, Fagululu and Bosalewa are one linguistic unit.

The Somwadina and Meudana dialects of Duau share only 59% of vocabulary cognates, but they share 63% of grammatically similar forms. For geographical reasons Meudana has been strongly influenced by Dobu, and Somwadina has been strongly influenced by Tubetube. Vocabulary borrowing occurs more rapidly than grammatical borrowing, hence the retention of grammatical similarity after the vocabularies of the two dialects have diverged considerably from each other.

In 1976 (Lithgow 1976:460-61) I grouped Fagululu with the Bwaidoka family, and Bosalewa and Molima with the Dobu family. On reviewing the data I had then, I find this was a reasonable decision, partly because the Molima data which I used was from Ailuluwai dialect, which had been very strongly influenced by Dobu. Comparison of the more detailed grammatical data, however, shows that Bosalewa, Fagululu, Salakahadi and Molima are in fact one linguistic unit, separate from the Bwaidoka and Dobu families.

The vocabulary cognates and grammatical similarity counts of Bosalewa show the superiority of grammatical data in determining relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dobu</th>
<th>Molima</th>
<th>Galeya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bos (vocab)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bos (grammar)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From vocabulary cognate counts Bosalewa seems equally close to Dobu, Molima and Galeya, with Molima seeming a little more distant in relationship than the others. However the grammatical data shows that Molima is much more closely related to Bosalewa than the others are.

Ross (1988:192-212) and Chowning (1989:113-40) have written about the grouping of these languages. I hope that the publication of these data will help to clarify the picture.

2. Method

Daphne Lithgow (1974) in a Dobu Language Learning Course had progressively introduced all of the important grammatical structures and clause types. From this data I constructed 29 clauses which produced 85 contrastive features, which were used for comparison counting.

Features which were identical for all languages were ignored. This made for lower comparison counts, and exaggerated the differences.

Words and affixes which were phonemically different but still cognate were counted as different. The results are actually a measure of how different the dialects and languages are from each other now. For instance, languages which lack a third person subject verbal prefix are grouped together as being cognate; those which have the prefix ‘i-’ are grouped as being cognate; and Bwaidoka which has gi- is separated off as being different, even though ‘i-’ and gi- are phonetically cognate with each other. Where there is nonphonemic variation, however, I counted the words and affixes as the same. For instance, there is fluctuation in the languages between [ð], [j], and [ŋ], although the local people represent this sound with the symbol <γ>. Words or affixes differing only in these sounds were counted the same, although I transcribed each utterance according to whatever sound seemed to be predominant in that utterance.

I will include the similarity percentages obtained, and then the actual data from which I obtained them, which other researchers may use to determine their own results. I give full morpheme breakdowns for the Dobu data. The other languages are sufficiently similar for the morphemes and their meanings to be deduced with a fairly high level of accuracy. As I do not know the other languages in detail I have not listed the morphemes with glosses, lest it appear that I am confident of the accuracy of them all.
3. Results

The first table which follows includes the Fergusson Island languages plus Bwaidoka, Sewa and Bunama. The second table includes the languages of Normanby Island, excluding Sewa, and including also Tubetube and Suau.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUN</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>SEW</th>
<th>38</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>G-SE</th>
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<tr>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>G-BA</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUA</th>
<th>34</th>
<th>TUB</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>KUR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>DOB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>LOB</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>MWA</td>
<td></td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The following abbreviations are used for language names.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOB</th>
<th>Dobu</th>
<th>Y-MA</th>
<th>Yamalele Maiodom</th>
<th>D-MWA</th>
<th>Duau Mwalakwasiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M-AI</td>
<td>Molima Ailuluwai</td>
<td>G-BA</td>
<td>Galeya Basima</td>
<td>D-SIG</td>
<td>Duau Sigasiga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-TO</td>
<td>Molima Tongesi</td>
<td>G-SE</td>
<td>Galeya Sebutuya</td>
<td>D-LOM</td>
<td>Duau Lomiawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>Minaveha (Kukuya)</td>
<td>SEW</td>
<td>Sewa Bay</td>
<td>D-MEU</td>
<td>Duau Meudana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAG</td>
<td>Fagululu</td>
<td>BUN</td>
<td>Bunama</td>
<td>MWA</td>
<td>Mwatebu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWA</td>
<td>Bwaidoka</td>
<td>D-KAS</td>
<td>Duau Kasikasi</td>
<td>LOB</td>
<td>Loboda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAL</td>
<td>Kalokalo</td>
<td>D-KUM</td>
<td>Duau Kumwalau</td>
<td>KUR</td>
<td>Kurada (Auhelswa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAM</td>
<td>Yamalele</td>
<td>D-GUL</td>
<td>Duau Guleguleu</td>
<td>TUB</td>
<td>Tubetube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAL</td>
<td>Salakahadi</td>
<td>D-SOM</td>
<td>Duau Somwadina</td>
<td>SUA</td>
<td>Suau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>Bosalewa</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Data

The following clauses and sentences were used in the Fergusson Island survey, with the function words for ‘if’ and ‘because’ listed at the end. The Yamalele data was elicited first in the Masimasi dialect on the north coast of Fergusson Island. This was later checked with a speaker from the central dialect, further south, and where his response was different I have included it also in brackets. Beneath each set of clauses I have indicated what grammatical morpheme or structure was examined in that clause. When a particular morpheme or structure occurs in more than one clause, it is indicated only in its first occurrence unless its distribution is different in another clause.²

| ENG | Their house is good. |
| DOB | 'idi anuwa bobo'a-na |
| 3p.POS | house good-3s |
| M-AI | 'edi vada bobo'a-na |
| M-TO | 'edi vanuwe bobo'a-na |
| MIN | jai manua a'yiayi-na |
| FAG | 'edi vanuwe a'yiayi-na |
| BWA | yadi manuwa iwaka-na |
| KAL | yadi manuwa giamai-na |
| YAM | gadi vanuya atumai-na |
| SAL | 'edi vanuwe hagihagi-na |
| BOS | 'idi vanuwe sedai-na |
| Y-MA | di vanuya giamai-na |
| G-BA | 'adi welai ginabwe-na |
| G-SE | di 'aha kauhalc-na |
| SEW | di anuwa gitamu-na |
| BUN | 'idi hada bwebwe'a-na |

3p distant possessive pronoun³

²The following abbreviations are used for grammatical categories.

1s 1st person singular 1px 1st person plural (exclusive) PL plural
2s 2nd person singular 2p 2nd person plural CONT continuous
3s 3rd person singular 3p 3rd person plural FUT future
1pn 1st person plural (inclusive) POS possessive

³I am using the terms ‘intimate’, ‘intermediate’ and ‘distant’ to refer to the three possession classes.
ENG  Yesterday that man hit my child.

DOB  boga tai ni-na natu-gu 'i-unu-na
     yesterday man that-3s child-1s.POS 3s-hit-3s(PAST)

M-AI  goluwana-ya 'olotona-ina natu-gu 'i-unu-ya
M-TO  goluwana-ya 'olotona natu-gu 'i-unu-vi-ya
MIN  navinavi onotona natu vunu-i
FAG  gugo-ja no'i tomo'yina liliva-gu vunuyi-ya
BWA  boi kaliva-nai natu-ku gi-munu-na
KAL  bwagina-i tomo na-na natu-gi 'i-nige-ya
YAM  nuwabune tomogo ni-na natu-gu 'i-nige-i
     (tomogo ni-na bogi natu-ku 'i-nike-i)
SAL  goluwana-ya 'oloto na-na natu-gu wunu-yi-ya
BOS  gogonana tomo'ya na-na natu-gu wunu-yi-ya
Y-MA  bogi tomogo ni-na natu-gu 'i-nige-i
G-BA  boi tomotau ne-na natu-gu 'i-lau
G-SE  aibam tai ne-na natu-gu 'i-lau
SEW  nabonimo tau ni-na natu-gu i-unui-ya-na
BUN  boi loheya-ina natu-gu 'i-hunu-ya

morpheme for 'yesterday'; demonstrative 'that'; 1s intimate possessive suffix; 3s subject prefix; transitive suffix vi ~ yi ~ Ø; past (completed) suffix na ~ ya ~ Ø

ENG  What! Did you hit him?

DOB  mwa 'adega 'u-unu-na-ya
     what!  2s-hit-3s(PAST)-EMPATIC

M-AI  ma'oda 'u-unu-ya-ya
M-TO  ma'oda 'u-unu-vi-ya
MIN  mescina 'e-vunu-i
FAG  ma'eba 'u-gunu-gi-ya
BWA  gaveiyamu u-munu-na
KAL  vakaniko ku-nige-ya
YAM  ava pai'ai-na 'u-nige-ya
     (bani'ode umunega 'unike-i)
SAL  ma'oda 'u-wunu-yi-ya
BOS  ma'ipadi 'u-wunu-vi-ya
Y-MA  banikodi ku-nige-i
G-BA  madiwisige 'u-lau
G-SE  tapi'iga 'u-lau
SEW  sidoi u-uni-yu-na
BUN  togidega 'u-hunu-ya

exclamatory 'what'; 2s subject prefix; emphatic suffix
ENG You (pl) are just burning them.
DOB wa-gabu-gabu-di tuga
2p-CONT-burn-3p just/only
M-AI libi 'o-gabu-gabu-i-di-mo
M-TO libi 'o-gabu-gabu-di-mo
MIN eu-dewa-dewa ataina
FAG 'o-gabu-gabu-di-mo
BWA wa-kabu-kabu-mwc-di
KAL kwa-gabu-gabu-di-mo
YAM wa-gabu-gabu-ni-di-mo
SAL 'o-gabu-gabu-di-mo
BOS 'o-gabu-gabu-di vine
Y-MA kwa-gabu-gabu-di-mo
G-BA wa-gabu-gabu-di naga
G-SE wa-gabu-gabu-di kwenaga
SEW a-gabu-gabu-di tuwa
BUN wa-gabu-gabu-di-mo

2p subject prefix; transitive suffix i ~ ni ~ Ø; morpheme for 'just/only'

ENG When did you go to Salamo?
DOB to-tuta 'u-tauya salamo
what-time 2s-go Salamo
M-AI to-tuta-ya 'u-tauya-ya salamo
M-TO avi tuta e-nei salamo
MIN —
FAG ai tute i-na salamo
BWA gava-tova u-na salamo
KAL vaka-tovaga ku-nago salamo
YAM ma aviya 'u-nago salamo
SAL to-tuta 'u-tauya salamo
BOS a'i bogi-ya 'u-nago salamo
Y-MA vaka-kayata ku-nayo salamo
G-BA eto tuta 'u-to salamo
G-SE eto tuta 'u-to salamo
SEW to-tuta-i u-tauya-na salamo
BUN to-tuta 'u-tauya salamo

interrogative 'when'; locative suffix on 'time'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language and Linguistics in Melanesia</th>
<th>125</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ENG**  
Here is my food to eat so I will get strong.

**DOB**  
'a-gu gete ya-'ai be 'encga ya-e-waiwai  
food-1s.POS this 1s-eat and(FUT) then 1s-become-strong

**M-AI**  
'a-gu ba'e ya-'a-ai be 'inega ya-ve-waiwai

**M-TO**  
'agu 'abwaga ba'e ya-'aini-ya be 'ena ve-waiwai

**MIN**  
auma teina am aiwadayina a-bagabagi

**FAG**  
hagu obai ena'a be 'ena ve-waiwai

**BWA**  
a-kuya taidei ya-na-kani a-da-vautoyogina

**KAL**  
ka-gu meina ya-na-kani be ya-na-e-wagiwagi

**YAM**  
'agu 'agu de'c-i 'a-na-'ani bega 'a-na-ve-toketoke  
(de'c 'aku 'aku 'a-'ani-'ani-ya bega 'a-na-ve-toketoke)

**SAL**  
'agu 'abwaga ba'e 'c-na-'ai 'inega 'e-na-ve-waiwai

**BOS**  
'agu kinaic 'ainana 'a-'ai-ya be 'a-ve-paisu

**Y-MA**  
ka-gu dcda 'ai-kan ma tautau 'ai-ve-waiwai

**G-BA**  
'agu kame ḫa'e ya ḫa-e-waiwai

**G-SE**  
'agu kame ḫa 'ey'a ya ḫa-e-waiwa

**SEW**  
'agu bebai nai ya-iyai be dcinega ya-e-waiwai

**BUN**  
'a-gu bewa ya-'a'i ma 'oicga ya-he-waiwai

1s intermediate possessive suffix; demonstrative 'this'; 1s subject prefix; purpose conjunction: 'then'; causative 'become'

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<tr>
<th>Language and Linguistics in Melanesia</th>
<th>125</th>
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</table>

**ENG**  
There (near you) is your food to eat.

**DOB**  
'a-mu nate 'u-'ai  
food-2s.POS there(near.you) 2s-eat

**M-AI**  
'a-u bena'e 'u-'ai

**M-TO**  
'au 'abwaga ba'e 'u-na-'ai

**MIN**  
am-ma taina e-na-m

**FAG**  
'au 'obai be'i 'u-na-'a

**BWA**  
tainei aga u-na-kani

**KAL**  
ka-m neina ku-na-kani

**YAM**  
'am 'am siwe 'u-na-'a-ni  
(we'c 'am 'am 'u-na-'a-ni-ya)

**SAL**  
'au 'abwaga bena'e 'u-'ai

**BOS**  
'au kinale mc'inana 'u-'ai-ya

**Y-MA**  
ka-m weđe ku-kan

**G-BA**  
'a-m ko 'u-'e-'a

**G-SE**  
'a-m ko 'u-'e-'a

**SEW**  
name o bebai u-ai

**BUN**  
'a-u beno 'u-'ai

2s intermediate possessive suffix; demonstrative 'there (near you)'; future prefix na-
There is their food to eat.

'adí gote si-'ai
food-3p.POS there 3p-eat

'a-di 'omo'e si-'ai

'adi 'abwaga 'omo'e 'i-na-'ai

ai-ma tanoi in-na-m

'adi 'obai no'i 'i-na-'aya

badi 'adiya tayuwa i-na-kani

ka-di bwcina i-na-kani

'adi 'adi no'o 'i-na-'a-ni

'adi 'abwaga 'omo'e 'i-na-'ai

'adi kinale no'inana 'i-'ai-ya

ka-di noko na-ka-ni

'a-di kanoi si-'a

'a-di kano hi-'a

adi bebai mei si-ai-ai

'a-di nage si-'ai

I want only water.

nuwanuwa-gu bwasi na-mo
desire-1s.POS water 3s-only

nuwanuwa-gu go'ila na-mo

'ege nuwanuwa go'ilu na-mo

nuwanuwa-u daudau anañeta

nuwanuwa-gu duda na-mo

nuwanuwa-ku gufa yaya

nuwanuwa-gu ufa kavakava

nuwanuwa-ku upa anañet
(nuwanuwa-ku ufa 'ava)

nuwanuwa-gu goili na-mo

nuwanuwa-gu duda naya

nuwanuwa-gu kaiya bwasiya

nuwanuwa-gu bwasi daisi-na

nuwanuwa-gu bwahi 'a'a

nuwanuwa-gu bwasi na-mo

nuwanuwa-gu we'aha-mo

'only'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENG</th>
<th>Perhaps he won't come.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td>nai nigeya 'i-ma-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perhaps not 3s-FUT-come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-AI</td>
<td>nai geya'abo 'i-mai-mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-TO</td>
<td>nage geya na-mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>kadieya ta-o-moi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAG</td>
<td>'ana 'isa gebu na-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWA</td>
<td>kai keke gi-na-ela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAL</td>
<td>kanuwa gege i-na-nagoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAM</td>
<td>gebu 'i-da-mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(voke kebu 'i-na-maiya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAL</td>
<td>'ana 'ita gebu na-mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>nai gebu na-mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y-MA</td>
<td>'oye ge i-na-mai-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-BA</td>
<td>nai ge sawene 'i-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-SE</td>
<td>nai gebua 'i-da-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEW</td>
<td>nai nigeya i-tau-tauya-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUN</td>
<td>nuwana geya 'i-tauya-ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbial 'perhaps'; negative 'not'; presence or absence of subject agreement prefix 'i-'; future negative (reduplication or future/subjunctive prefix); final -ma vs -mai; simple or compound verb stem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENG</th>
<th>Later he will go to you (sg).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td>ma’ctamo 'i-wa-wai 'emu-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>later 3s-FUT-go.to.you 2s-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-AI</td>
<td>nawale 'i-wa-wai 'iu-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-TO</td>
<td>nawale na-wai 'iu-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>afaina na-o-moi wajagi-m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAG</td>
<td>'iba'igo na-waga 'iu-ja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWA</td>
<td>eimoina gi-na-ilai wagaini-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAL</td>
<td>bolava i-na-nagowa waya-mu-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAM</td>
<td>bola 'i-na-wai waimuđe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(bola 'i-na-wai maiμuje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAL</td>
<td>nawale na-wai 'iu-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>'iba'igo na-waya 'iu-ða</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y-MA</td>
<td>ka i-na-wai waimue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-BA</td>
<td>tadi lawa yawa 'cnemo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-SE</td>
<td>ma’ctam 'i-wei-wewa 'cnem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEW</td>
<td>maetamo i-tauya-wa decinamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUN</td>
<td>'abwa 'i-tauya-wa 'oiu-wa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbial 'later'; 2s postpositional locative
Grammatical Information and Language Relationships

Tomorrow Dobu men will visit you (sg) and get a pig.

Dobu: gibwa'i me-dobu si-a-yausi-yo be si-lo-bawe
Tomorrows people-Dobu 3p-by.foot-visit-2s(FUT) and 3p-action-pig

M-AI: 'ibe me-dobu si-vai-yausi-u be si-lo-bawe
M-TO: 'ibe me-dobu 'i-na-'ite-u be 'i-na-lo-bawe
MIN: maputua me-dobu i-na-uvitau-m i-pono-vunua
FAG: 'atebe dobu tomotau 'i-na-va-ðausi-ju bau wea yina
BWA: malabutu me-dobu i-na-maduboda-ni ke i-na-lu-bawe
KAL: kamaidi me-dobu i-na-maduboda-mu be i-na-lou-bawe
YAM: 'awa'awai me-dobu 'i-na-vai'ali-m 'i-na-lu-bawe
('awa'awai me-dobu 'i-na-mai 'i-na-'ise-m 'i-na-lu-bawe)
SAL: 'ibe me-dobu 'i-na-va-yausi-u 'i-na-lu-bawe
BOS: 'ibaigonana mi-dobu 'i-na-va-lausi-u be 'i-na-lu-bawe
Y-MA: kawaiye me-dobu na-ða-vusi-mu na-lo-bawe
G-BA: tabega me-dobu si-lauhi-mo be si-lo-bawe
G-SE: gibwa'i me-dobu hi-jauhi-m be hi-lo-bawe
SEW: nabwa me-dobu gibwai si-a-yausi-yo be si-lo-bawe
BUN: gona me-dobu si-gita-go ma si-lo-bawe

Adverbial 'tomorrow'; noun compound 'Dobu men'; 3p subject prefix; verbal prefix 'by foot'; 2s object suffix; conjunction 'and'; verbal prefix 'action'

Dobu: tai gwama 'i-unu-na ga 'i-lo-e-mwawasi-na
Man child 3s-hit-3s(PAST) and 3s-action-become-die-3s(PAST)

M-AI: 'oloto gwama 'i-unu-ya-ya ta 'i-lo-ve-'aligi-ya-ya
M-TO: 'oloto gwama wunu-va-yi ta lu-ve-'aligi-ya
MIN: onoto tevana vunu na-u-vi-anigi
FAG: tomoga gwama-na vunu-yi-ya ta lu-ve-'aligi-ya
BWA: kaliva kwama-na gi-munu-na 'ada gi-lu-ve-alika-na
KAL: tomo gwama-na i-nige-ya be i-lo-c-kaliga-ya
YAM: tomo gwama-na 'i-nige-i 'i-lo-ve-wafa-i
SAL: 'oloto gwama 'i-vunu-yi-ya ta lu-ve-'aligi-ya
BOS: tomo ya gwama-na wunu-yi-ya ta lu-ve-'aini-ya
Y-MA: tomo ya gwama-na 'i-nige-i wa i-lu-ve-wafa-i
G-BA: tomo ta memeja 'i-lau to 'i-tunaimate
G-SE: tai gwana 'i-lau to 'i-lo-e-mwawahi
SEW: tau yaya i-unu-ya-ya to i-lo-e-mwawasi-ya-ya
BUN: loheya gwama 'i-hunu-ya 'i-lo-he-'amas-ya

Presence or absence of -na suffix on 'child'; conjunction 'and'; verbal prefix sequence 'action-become'
ENG You (sg) go with me.

DOB 'o oy ma-‘i ya-gu ta-tauy a
2s with-companion-1s.POS 1pn-go

M-AI 'o a ma-‘e ya-gu ka-ta-tauy a
M-TO 'o a ma-ya-gu ka-na-tauy a
MIN wamke akainuwa ka-na-nae
FAG waël ja‘a ka-na-nau-wa
BWA onodi ka-na-nau
KAL ka mke yaukc ta-na-nogo
YAM 'om tayauda ta-i-nayo
(‘om tayadi ta-na-nago)
SAL 'o a ma-heg a ka-na-tauy a
BOS wa‘a ma-‘egadi ka-na-naya
Y-MA kaml ta yau te-i-tauga
G-BA ‘om ‘egida ta-to
G-SE ‘om tolaw a ta-to
SEW you bc yau ta-taya
BUN ‘owa ma-hetc-gu ta-tau

2s pronoun; accompaniment ‘with’; ‘my companion’; suffix -da - -di; 1pn subject prefix; future ta - na - Ø

ENG He went with us (excl).

DOB tauna ma-‘e-mai ‘a-tauy a
3s with-companion-1px.POS 1px-go

M-AI tauna ma-sega ‘a-tauy a-ya
M-TO tauna ma-egadi ‘a-tauy a
MIN tauna nuwi a-na-nae
FAG tanana ‘ac y a ‘a-nawa
BWA banai imenod i a-nau
KAL kadike ma-kedi kaigabu ka-nago
YAM tauna ma-yaku ‘ai-nawa
(kumanina tayadi ‘a-na-nago)
SAL tauna ma-heg a ‘a-na-tauy a
BOS tauna ma-‘egadi ‘a-na-ya
Y-MA taunina teyau ka-na-yo
G-BA ko teawa ‘a-to
G-SE tonina tolaw a ‘a-to
SEW tauna ma-yamai a-tauyana
BUN tauna ma-hetc-mai ‘a-tau

3s pronoun; ‘our (excl) companion’; 1px subject prefix
ENG Are their houses good?
DOB mwa'adega 'idi anuwa-o bobo'a-di
  how 3p.POS house-PL good-3p
M-AI mwa'oda 'edi vada bobo'a-di
M-TO ma'oda 'edi vanuwa bobo'a-di
MIN mdeina jae manuwa ayiayi
FAG nage 'edi vanuwe ayiayi-na
BWA gacyamu yadi manuwa iwaka-di
KAL vakaniko yadi manuwa giamai-di
YAM bcn'odila yadi vanuwa 'atumai-di
SAL ma'odi 'edi vanuwc hayihayi-na
BOS ma'ipadi 'idi vanuwe-lavo sedai-di
Y-MA bankodiya di vanuya giamai-na
G-BA madiwe sige 'adi welai kausale-di
G-SE tapi'iga di 'aha kauhale-na
SEW sidoi di anuwa gitamu-di
BUN togidega 'idi hada bwebwe'a-di

interrogative 'how'; plural suffix on noun

ENG Tomorrow you (pl) embark to travel.
DOB gibwa'i wa-ge-gelu sabi 'adau
  tomorrow 2p-FUT-embark to travel
M-AI 'ibe 'o-ge-gelu sabi 'adau
M-TO 'ibe 'o-na-gelu sabi 'adau
MIN maputuwa u-na-genu am-bwanibwani
FAG 'atebe 'o-na-gelu 'o-na-na 'o-na-ve-wagawaga
BWA malabutu wa-na-yage awakawaka faina
KAL kamaidi kwa-na-yage e-wagawaga faina
YAM 'awa'awai wai-gelu wai-nago sabi ḍaba
  ( 'awa'awai wa-na-dodoga ve-wakawaka faifaina)
SAL 'ibi 'o-na-gela sabi 'adau
BOS 'ibaigonana 'o-na-gelu sabi 'adau
Y-MA kawaiye kwai-dodoga kwai-nago kwai-sasana
G-BA tebega wa-gelu-gelu sabi 'adau
G-SE gibwa'i wa-gelu sabi 'adau
SEW nabwa a-gelu sabi adau
BUN gona wa-gelu-gelu sabi 'adau

future (reduplication or not); infinitival 'to'
If it rains we (incl) will go to the garden.

If 3s-rain 1pn-FUT-go garden-to

If presence or absence of 3s subject prefix and/or future prefix on 'rain'; postposition 'to'

He gave me a banana.

3s-give-1s

1s object suffix; presence or absence of completion suffix
ENG He gave you (sg) a pig.

DOB bawe 'i-'ebwa'e-mu
pig 3s-give-2s(PAST)

M-AI bawe 'i-'ebwaye-yu-ya
M-TO bawe nai-u
MIN pono vene-m
FAG bau yai-ju
BWA bawe gi-vele-ni
KAL bawe i-vele-mu
YAM bawe 'i-vele-m
SAL bawe nchi-u
BOS bau yci-u
Y-MA bawe 'i-vele-m
G-BA bawe 'i-nai-mu
G-SE bawe 'i-'ebwae-m
SEW bawe i-bwaye-mu-na
BUN maheya 'i-'ebwae-go-wa

2s (PAST) object suffix

ENG A man gave his brother a dog.

DOB tai tasi-na kedewa 'i-'ebwa'e-na
man brother-3s.POS dog 3s-give-3s(PAST)

M-AI 'oloto tasi-na kedewa 'i-'ebwae-ya-ya
M-TO 'oloto tai-na kedewa nai-ya
MIN onoto vanci-na kedewa vene-i
FAG tomoya kedewa tuwa-na yci-ya
BWA kaliva galuweta tubwiya-na gi-vele-na
KAL tomo koukou yanadi i-vele-ya
YAM tomoya 'edewa 'iya-na 'i-vele-na
(tomogo tai-na 'ou'ou 'i-vele-na)
SAL 'oloto kedewa tahi-na nchi-ya
BOS tomoya kedewa tai-na yci-ya
Y-MA tomoyo kokou tai-na 'i-vele-ni
G-BA tomotau kedewa wese-na 'i-nci
G-SE tai kedewa hiya-na 'i-'chwae
SEW tau kedewa tasi-na i-bwaye-na-ya
BUN loheya kedewa tasi-na 'i-'ebwae-ya

3s (PAST) object suffix
ENG I am sitting in my house.

DOB ya-miyatowa 'igu anuwa-ya
1s-sit 1s.POS house-at

M-AI ya-miyatowa 'egu vada-ya
M-TO ya-towa 'egu vada-i
MIN a-manuwena jau manua-a
FAG 'egu vanuwe-ya e-towatowa
BWA ga-wctoga yaku manuwe-ja
KAL ya-elaumiyanegu yagu manuwa
YAM 'a-miyabui yagu vanuyc
SAL ya-towabui 'egu vanuwe-ya
BOS 'a-tuluva 'igu vanuwe-ya
Y-MA 'a-tawai giga 'igu vanuwe
G-BA ḫa-iseba 'agu welai 'enc
G-SE ya-mihobu gu 'aha 'enc
SEW ya-towa gu anuwa-i
BUN ya-miyatoi 'igu hada

1s distant possessive pronoun

ENG He went from his garden to his house.

DOB 'ina bagule-ga 'i-tauya 'ina anuwa-ya
3s.POS garden-from 3s-go 3s.POS house-to

M-AI 'ena bagul-ga 'i-tauya 'ena vada-i
M-TO 'ana talave-ga tauya 'ENA vanuwe-ya
MIN ja-baguna i-ne ja-manuwa
FAG talaye-ya 'cvivi 'ENA vanuwe-ya
BWA yana bakule-ya gi-nau yana manuwe-ya
KAL yana bagule-ga i-nago yana manuwc
YAM ḫa-bakula-ńeya 'i-nago jana vanuyc
SAL 'ena vahoye-ya tauya 'ENA vanuwe-ya
BOS 'ina bagula-ega 'i-naya 'INA vanuwe-ya
Y-MA na tano-yo 'i-nayo 'INA vanuyc
G-BA 'ana bagule-ga 'i-to welai
G-SE na bagule-ga 'i-to na'ahe
SEW na lowe-ga i-tauya-na na anuwa-i
BUN 'ina tonohe-ga 'i-tauya 'INA hada

3s distant possessive pronoun; suffix 'from'
ENG Don't take it from me.

DOB geya'abo 'egu-yega 'u-'ewa-'ewa
don't 1s-from 2s-CONT-take

M-AI geya'abo 'igu-yega 'u-'ewa-'ewa

M-TO gebu 'igu-yega 'u-na-'cwc-i

MIN ega wada-giwa cnepeci

FAG ge 'igu-jeya 'u-na-'cwc

BWA keke wagai-ku-ya u-na-vai-vai

KAL gege waya-gu-yega ku-na-kewa-kewa

YAM gebu wai-gu-ðega 'u-na-'ewa-i

SAL gebu 'igu-yega 'u-na-'ewa

BOS gebu 'igu-ðega 'u-na-'cwe-'cwc

Y-MA ge wai-gu-we ki-kewa

G-BA ge sawcne 'ene-gu 'u-'ewa

G-SE gi huwena 'we-gu-wega 'u-'ewa

SEW saebana deinu-gu-wega u-ewa-cwa-i

BUN geya'abwa 'oigu-wega 'u-'cwa-'ewa

prohibitive; construction 'from me'; presence or absence of reduplication; presence or absence of 3s object suffix -i

ENG I want to go to Samarai to shop/buy.

DOB nuwanuwa-gu ya-ta-tauya samarai be 'an'c ya-gimwane
desire-1s.POS 1s-FUT-go Samarai and(FUT) so/that 1s-buy

M-AI nuwanuwa-gu ya-ta-tauya samarai be ya-gimwane

M-TO 'egu nuwanuwa 'e-na-tauya samarai be 'e-na-gimwane

MIN nuwanuwa-u a-na-nae samarai ce a-na-mwane

FAG 'egu nuwanuwa 'e-na-nawa samarai 'inega 'e-na-gimwane

BWA nuwanuwa-ku ga-na-nau samarai 'ada ga-na-lufalufali

KAL nuwanuwa-gu ya-na-nargo samarai be ya-na-gimwane

YAM yagu nuwanuwa 'a-na-nayo samarai bega 'a-na-gimwane

SAL nuwanuwa-gu 'e-na-tauya samarai be wona 'e-na-gimwane

BOS nuwanuwa-gu 'a-na-nayo samarai be wona 'a-na-gimwane

Y-MA nuwanuwa-gu 'ai-nayo samarai nigodi 'ai-da-gimwane

G-BA nuwanuwa-gu ya-to samarai be ya-gimwane

G-SE nuwanuwa-gu ḥa-to samarai be ḥa-gimwane

SEW nuwanuwa-gu ya-taya samarai be edeto ya-gimwane

BUN nuwanuwa-gu ya-tau samarai 'abehcga ya-gimwane

1s intimate possessive suffix vs pre-posed morpheme; purpose word
Language and Linguistics in Melanesia
ENG He has finished cooking.
DOB ni'atu 'i- 'e- 'ule
   finished 3s-act-cooking.pot
M-AI ni'au 'i-bude-ya
M-TO ni’a bude-ya
MIN avaya yamitava
FAG to’o 'i-budabuda
BWA bademowa gi-ve-tavoga
KAL kamena i-yec-tagova
YAM 'agodi 'i-ve-togo
   ('akonadi 'i-ve-togo)
SAL ta 'iwa 'e-bude
BOS ni’a budaya
Y-MA ganabei i-ve-tago
G-BA naitu tai 'e-bude
G-SE naitu tai 'e-budec
SEW tulina i-te-bude
BUN 'i- 'e- 'ule pwaiya

construction for completion

ENG I can't see it.
DOB nigeya ya-da- 'ite-na
   not 1s-SUBJUNCTIVE-see-3s(PAST)
M-AI ge ya-da- 'ita-ya-ya
M-TO ge 'e-da- 'ite-ya
MIN ega a-ta-duwe-je
FAG ge da- 'ise-ya
BWA keke ga-da- 'ita
KAL gege ya-da-kise
YAM gebu 'a-da- 'ise-ni-ga
SAL ge 'e-da- 'ite-ya
BOS gebu 'a-da- 'ogale-ya
Y-MA ge 'a-da-kise-ni-ya
G-BA kakai hj-da- 'ita
G-SE gebu'a ja-da-do'a
SEW nigeya ya-da- 'ita-ya-na
BUN geya ya-da- 'ite-ya

negative; subjunctive
ENG  if          because
DOB  'eguma/'abo  manuna
M-AI  'eguma       weyaina
M-TO  'eguma       weyavina
MIN  aityyu       waqagina
FAG  'eguma       wecagina
BWA  kai          faina
KAL  kanuwa       faina
YAM  'am'edi/'ai'edi  fai'aina
SAL  'eguma       weya'ina
BOS  'eguma       weya'ina
Y-MA  ka          wagi'ina
G-BA  'eguma       weya'ina
G-SE  'eguma       manu
SEW  'eguma       sabina
BUN  'eguma       weya'ina

5. Conclusion

In languages which are changing through contact with each other, vocabulary changes more rapidly than grammatical structures. For the languages and dialects of Fergusson and Normanby Islands I have determined percentages of similar grammatical features, which give a clearer picture of similarity between languages and dialects as they are now. Reasons for similarities and differences may be investigated according to the various theories of language development and historical reconstruction. The data for the Fergusson Island comparisons is included, so that other investigators may use it for their own research. For some small languages and dialects this may be the only linguistic data, apart from word lists, which may be available for some time.

References