

A Relationship Terminology of Asymmetric Prescriptive Alliance Among the Manggarai of Eastern Indonesia

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The relationship terminology of the Manggarai people of Flores, an island situated in eastern Indonesia, has engaged the attentions of scholars interested in the evolution of relationship terminologies, and terminologies of prescriptive alliance in particular. In a recent essay Rodney Needham (1980a) argues that at least two sets of relationship terminologies occur in the Manggarai language. In the central dialect of Manggarai, a symmetric terminology (or two-section system) is employed, whereas in the western dialect an asymmetric terminology finds favor. These basic characterizations he subjects to certain qualifications. First, by having incorporated into itself a number of asymmetric components, the central terminology is now modified in the direction of an asymmetric structure. Second, by retaining a number of symmetric components, the western terminology is not unambiguously asymmetric. These symmetrically modifying components are two equations:

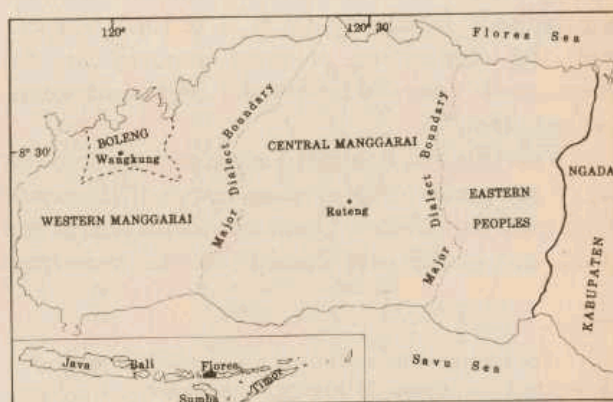
MBS (*késa*) = FZS (*késa*)

WB (*kéla*) = ZH (*kéla*)

That is to say, despite the fact that in an asymmetric system they belong to opposite affinal lines (wife-givers and wife-takers respectively), the male cross-cousins are equated, and, despite belonging to these two opposite lines, the male affines-after-marriage are also equated.

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The purposes of the present essay are to record the relationship terms employed by those western Manggarai-speakers living in the region of Boleng (map), and analyse them in the context of Needham's characterization. The results promise to increase our knowledge of the modes of social classification of prescriptive alliance in eastern Indonesia, a knowledge that, thanks principally to the writings of Barnes 1973, 1974, and 1977; Van Bakkum 1944; Cunningham 1967; Hicks 1973, 1978a, 1978b, 1981, 1983, and n. d.; and Needham 1966, 1968, 1980a, and 1980b has steadily accumulated over the last two decades.



Approximate Location of Western Manggarai (Boleng) Relationship Terminology (modified and considerably simplified from Verheijen 1967)

Manggarai, a language that has been classified as belonging to the Bima-Sumba group of languages, is the indigenous tongue of about 155,000 people residing in the *kabupaten* of Manggarai, in the western third of Flores (Coolhas 1942; Gordon 1975 and 1980; Meerburg 1891 and 1892; Needham 1966 and 1980a; Verheijen 1951, 1967, and 1970). The major authority on the Manggarai,