Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Setting

The Tukang Besi language is spoken in the archipelago that bears the same name, the *Kepulauan Tukang Besi*, east of the island of Buton in the province of Southeast Sulawesi. In this area it is the main (and almost sole) language of everyday communication. Administratively the archipelago is made up of four *kecamatan* (sub-districts), Wanci, Kaledupa, Tomea and Binongko, each consisting of one main island, and each except Binongko having a cluster of smaller islands, some inhabited, in addition to the main island. These four *kecamatan* (sub-districts) are all located in the *Kabupaten* (district) of Buton.

In addition to these primary islands where the language is unchallenged there are many monolingual and bilingual settlements of Tukang Besi speakers on other islands in Sulawesi, Maluku, Nusa Tenggara and Irian Jaya, and large populations of speakers in trading centres such as Baubau, Ujung Pandang, Surabaya, Jakarta, Banjarmasin, Singapore, Ambon, Taliabu, Obi, Fakfak, Manokwari and Darwin. As well as the members of the communities who are actively involved in trading many Tukang Besi have become market gardeners (especially in the east), or construction workers (more in the west), and producers of raw goods for their trading cousins. An account of a typical one of these communities comes from Anceaux (1958: 112), writing about the linguistic situation in the city of Fakfak on the Bomberai peninsula of Irian Jaya:

Fakfak, the principal town of the whole peninsula and its direct environs are inhabited by people from the adjacent language-areas but also by an important number of original Indonesians, mainly from the Moluccas (Ambonese, Ceramese, Keiese and a great number of Butonese), who for the greater part have given up the use of their original language and taken up Malay. Only amongst the Butonese groups one can still hear the original languages regularly used,…

The extent and numbers of speakers in these settlements and cities is rich ground for further sociolinguistic investigation. The Tukang Besi traders that I have visited have all been very active in their use of the language, but there is evidence that the youngest generation is losing its active command of the language when raised in a multilingual environment. This is probably due to the demise of the previously wide-spread pidgin varieties of Tukang Besi, as a result of the spread of local Malay dialects, and so the narrowing social environment in which Tukang Besi functions in these far-flung trading posts. In the home archipelago itself Tukang Besi is the main language spoken by all people, of all ages and occupations. In the coastal areas near to government centres most people can understand Malay or Indonesian, but do not use it, even when speaking to outsiders, who are expected to learn the local language.
There are only two significant groups of non-Tukang Besi peoples in the area. The first of these is a widely scattered group of Bajau villages, on Kaledupa (Mantigola, Sepela and LaHoA), Tomea (LaManggau) and Wanci (Mola, founded in the main in 1957 by refugees from Mantigola, though there was a small settlement in Mola Utara before 1957), where Bajau is the first language of all, but most of whom can also speak Tukang Besi bilingually. The only other significant presence of non-Tukang Besi peoples is in the southern part of Binongko, which is home to about 3,000 Cia-Cia speakers, descendants of soldiers sent there in the 1700s by the sultan of Wolio to quell an uprising on the island. Apart from these areas, there are various government officials in the kecamatan capitals who come from other islands, many from Baubau or other places in Sulawesi, typically Bugis or Toraja people, but with some Javanese as well. These people are usually forced by circumstance to learn enough Tukang Besi to communicate in the market. In many coastal villages there are people from other language areas who have married Tukang Besi women, and have moved to the islands; these people too become Tukang Besi speakers, as their numbers are not great enough to form a significant community.

1.1.1 Geography

The islands that are the homeland to the Tukang Besi people are all coral islands, with no hills higher than 300m, and no permanent water except in sinkholes and caves, which abound in the karst environment created by the coral. The staple food crops are cassava and corn, with sweet potatoes occasionally consumed. Additionally, kangkung, young bamboo shoots, beans, tomatoes, eggplant and jackfruit are occasionally grown as vegetables, and the islands produce bananas, custard apples, pineapples, watermelons, and a glut of mangoes at the end of the rainy season. Fishing forms an important part of the diet, and on Wanci the fish are also farmed in or pens by the shore, thus providing a regular food supply. There is little animal husbandry, restricted to some sporadic keeping of buffaloes, goats, chickens, and very many ducks. Wildlife is in the main scarce on the islands due to overpopulation by humans, the only wild land animals being lizards, rats and mice. In the sword grass flats of the east and south west there are in addition to these also countless insects (spiders, centipedes, grasshoppers, beetles, etc.). In the more extensive forested areas of the north-west and the south-east there are still cuscus to be found in the trees, but they are scarce these days, and nowhere near as abundant as they are in, for example, the heavily forested vicinity of Lasalimu on the Butonese mainland.

1.1.2 Demography and population

A count of the total population of Tukang Besi speakers will probably never be made accurately, with many communities in eastern Indonesia being listed in local censuses as Bajau or Bugis communities. When asked about their ethnic origins, most of those people will say that they are from Sulawesi, and if pressed specify Buton. An outright admission of coming from the Tukang Besi islands is not easy to extract, this location being thought to be too insignificant to merit any mention. Approximate figures for the number of people on the four islands in Southeast Sulawesi are:
These figures reflect almost exclusively native speakers of Tukang Besi, since there are no other ethnic groups in this island chain apart from the Bajau, who number about 4,000 in the Wanci subdistrict, and 1,500 in the Kaledupa subdistrict, and the Cia-Cia speakers on Binongko, about 3,000. This leaves a total of approximately 80,000 people. The addition of the communities that are scattered throughout Indonesia is likely to double this total (in Fakfak alone there are approximately 10,000 speakers, for instance).

The original Tukang Besi culture of the islands is a matrilocal one, with husbands usually moving to their bride’s village area, but without becoming part of that family. Marriage is described as being an alliance of families, rather than the husband entering the bride’s family, or vice versa, and the bridewealth payments are correspondingly low (when compared to, for instance, patrilineal areas in eastern Indonesia), a marriage costing about Rp 2,000,000. Despite this matrilocal residence pattern, there is a system of patrilineal inheritance; this leads to men working in separate garden locations scattered about the island, in some instances extending to cover more than one island. Most of the gardening work on Wanci is done by men, all except the final harvesting and transportation home of the cassava that is ready for eating, which is carried out by women with a male guard. Some inland gardens, far from other villages in the north and north-east, are also the domain of women, but this is considered exceptional by most Wanci people. Women are also responsible for harvesting the tidal flats, searching in the shallow water, or more commonly on the flats when the tide has receded (which can create an area up to a kilometre wide along some parts of the coast), digging up crabs, molluscs and starfish, which are eaten. Men conduct the fishing and trading that involves traversing the deep water beyond the coral drop-off that mars the end of the shallows, but do not engage in any productive work in the tidal flats. This movement of people to different areas on a regular basis adds to the cohesion that the whole society has, with constant interaction for most villages. The only exceptions to this overall cohesion are the more secluded areas of Wungka, occupying the central-southern jungle area, and Melai ‘one on the south-east coast.

The people of these islands cannot be characterised in simple socio-economic or ethnic terms, as there is a large degree of variation from island to island, in terms of both socio-economic habits and ethnic composition. Trading communities away from the main islands intermarry with local people whilst preserving a strong sense of a Tukang Besi identity, making the ethnic composition of a Tukang Besi community independent from its linguistic status. Culturally, it can be said that the Tukang Besi people fall within the cultural dominion of Baubau and the Sultanate of Wolio, having had their local ruler (the Meantu‘u of Lia, on Wanci) appointed by a Sultan 400 years ago, and generally giving obedience to and having pride in the sultan, though noticeably less so than the mainland peoples on Buton. Many of the traditional stories are identical to those told by Wolio speakers, and indeed those in other areas further west in the Wolio cultural area, such as on the island of Muna (René van den Berg, personal communication), or indeed even north in the Philippines (Walrod 1979 presents a tale of a monkey and a tortoise in Ga‘dang (Philippines) which is almost identical to the sixth text presented in the appendices to this
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volume). Island by island, the following stereotypes emerge:

The Wanci islanders are the most oriented towards trade, with fleets of up to 40 vessels regularly smuggling second hand clothes and karaoke stereos from Singapore to most of Indonesia, as well as more mundane trade in plastics and agricultural tools. They have the greatest number of people living in cities elsewhere, typically staying for up to a year away from the islands, working in odd jobs and helping family in business ventures, before returning to their villages for half a year to help with harvesting and ceremonies. Trading voyages conducted by Wanci people tend to be along fixed trade routes, with representatives waiting in the overseas ports to organise a cargo to be ready when the ships arrive, so there is a roughly set route and schedule to the trade.

On Kaledupa, the emphasis is on education, as the island has a tradition, since its conquest by Tidore in the 1600s, of sending sons to centres of learning, and even more important there is a tradition of well-educated teachers returning to Kaledupa. The Kaledupa people are not particularly known for their seafaring abilities, riding when necessary with cousins from Wanci or on motor-powered vessels, and are well known for their lack of business acumen. Kaledupa is the one island in the group without shops, and only in 1991 was a market area built by the government to promote commerce on the island.

Tomea is regarded as the most culturally intact of the islands, with the least impact from other cultures and regions. Tomea speech is thought of as being the most refined of the dialects, and Tomea considered to have the finest dancers and musicians. Tomea has the lowest population, due to a very low number of expatriates and poor conditions on the island itself. Not known for their trade, there are but a few natives of Tomea in the Maluku region, scattered around Ambon, Banda and a few other islands.

Binongko has a smaller population than Tomea, but has probably the highest number of emigrants to other regions of any of the islands. The Tukang Besi communities with permanent residents on islands in eastern Indonesia tend to be descended from Binongko traders, and the island of Kapota west of Wanci is largely populated by Binongko people. The island of Binongko is very poor, with little fresh water, and none close to the villages, which are all located on the coast, so agriculture is less effective on this island than elsewhere. Binongko is also situated in an area poor for fish (the best area being just east of Kaledupa), so many of the people of Binongko have taken to craft to earn their livings: the name of the island chain, Tukang Besi (‘blacksmith’ in Malay), comes from the Binongko blacksmiths whose wares predominate as far afield as Ujung Pandang in South Sulawesi. The blacksmiths of Binongko are largely credited with secret powers (ilmu gaib) that enables them to pull glowing iron from the hearth without tongs, and to beat metal into machetes with their hands if necessary. Trade conducted by the Binongko people tends to be less organised than that carried out by the Wanci traders, and is more of an individual family affair, with whole family units taking to the boat for up to ten months at a time, sailing to gardens and potential trade opportunities in
other islands.

The Tukang Besi people are nearly 100% Muslim (as is most of the Butonese population; I have met exactly one non-Muslim Tukang Besi person, Roy from Laha on Ambon island, who is a recent convert to Christianity), and practice their faith fervently, whilst incorporating many elements of the pre-Islamic beliefs that are common in the area. These animistic beliefs take the form of offerings to male and female spirit shrines in certain locations, and the widespread use of shamanism to guarantee success in agriculture or fishing. A detailed spirit world is accepted as existing in the same space as the normally accessible world, but is invisible and immaterial to most people; only those with the rare ability to see the other world are capable of manipulating it and its denizens, which include many varieties of spirit and demon beings, both sentient and non-sentient, benign and malevolent. Many unusual landscape features, such as protruding rocks or unusual trees are thought to be inhabited by spirits that dwell there either voluntarily or through having been bound there against their will by another spirit or person. In the event of a storm in which such a tree collapses, the spirit is released, and can pose quite a problem to a nearby settlement or garden. Skilled shamans (mia pande, ‘clever person’ in Tukang Besi) can interact with this world to combat the effects of the spirits, and some become entwined with the beings of that world to the extent of marrying a spirit there, or retrieving weapons and wealth from some of the other world’s cities. A full treatment of these aspects of the Tukang Besi world view is beyond the scope of this short introduction, but it is hoped that it can be expanded on in the future.

1.1.3 History

The Tukang Besi people do not claim to be native to their area. The origin myths from Wanci relate that the ancestors of the modern Tukang Besi population arrived from across the ocean from the area of Palakarang to the south-west coast of Wanci. On arrival they found the island to be already inhabited by the people who built the stoneworks that can still be seen on the summit of Tindoi. The stories tell that there was originally a village of these pre-Tukang Besi people on the top of Tindoi, but all that remains of this now are the ruins of stone walls; the area is now the site of a primary rainforest (the only one still on the island).

After the arrival of the Tukang Besi peoples on Wanci there followed a period of fighting which saw Lia and Mandati emerge as rival powers in the region. Refugees fleeing from this fighting colonised the north coast, via Tindoi (the people known nowadays as Rupu), and up the west coast to Wanse. These divisions are preserved today in the different dialect areas, and the different occupations that people from different areas tend to carry out, with (for instance) persons from the west coast more likely to be involved in trading syndicates conducting business with ports to the west, those on the north coast more likely to be individual traders with a route stretching east to Irian Jaya, and people from the south east of the island simple farmers. Certain villages have a strong reputation for criminal activities, and other areas are more renowned for their shamans.
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1.2 The region

1.2.1 Surrounding languages

The immediate area about the Tukang Besi islands in Southeast Sulawesi is the waters of the Banda Sea and the Flores Sea. The islands form an extension of insular Southeast Sulawesi into the Banda sea, so there are no immediate neighbours of any size. The closest other languages of contact are Bajau, spoken in two communities in the archipelago itself and in numerous small communities along the east Buton coast, the Desa Wali dialect of Cia-Cia on Binongko, and Lasalimu, spoken in the village of the same name on the coast of east Buton, a village into which many Tukang Besi people have married, and now comprise about 25% of the total population of 2,000 in the village. The Lasalimu language is only spoken in Lasalimu and the kampong of Malaoge, about 4km away from Lasalimu proper. Other languages of East Buton include (from north to south) Kulisu, Pancana (east), Kamaru, Cia-Cia (main), Cia-Cia (Pasarwajo), and Cia-Cia (Wabula). Other languages in the rest of Buton include Cia-Cia (Sampolawa), Kaimbulawa, Busoa, Muna and Wolio. Further details can be found in Donohue and van den Berg (forthcoming).

1.2.2 Previous studies in the region

The Muna-Buton region is still virtually unknown, linguistically. The Dutch government linguist E. J. van den Berg did deep studies on Wolio, the sultanate language and first language of most of the inhabitants of Baubau, but he was killed and all his notes lost during the Japanese occupation in World War II before much of this work was published. J. C. Anceaux conducted research in Wolio, culminating in his description of Wolio (1952) and dictionary (1987). René van den Berg is conducting ongoing research into Muna, spoken all over the large island of the same name, which has resulted in a grammar of the language, a dictionary, and several other publications on historical and syntactic issues (see bibliography). Apart from these works, however, the approximately 15 languages of insular Southeast Sulawesi remain unknown and undocumented (though extensive work has been carried out by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics on the Moronene and Tolaki languages of the Southeast Sulawesi mainland). Survey work has been conducted by this author in conjunction with René van den Berg, but is yet to be published.

1.3 The language

1.3.1 Previous (and other) work on the language

There have been very few references to the Tukang Besi language in print. The language appears on language maps, such as Esser (1938), Salzner (1960), without any substantive work having been done on the language. Anceaux (1978) is the first treatment of the language situation on the islands off mainland Southeast Sulawesi, with the publication of a list of about 30 words from the language and a tentative (but largely accurate) subgrouping hypothesis. This study represents the first time that any language data had appeared in print. This improvement of the detail on the language was repeated in Sneddon (1987). Two other linguistic surveys of the area, Bhurhanuddin (1979) and Kaseng
Information about the structure of language did not appear until Collins (1983b: 32-33, and endnote 35, p. 139) who, with accurate data, speculated on the possible connection of the article te (described by Collins as a prefix) to a Central Maluku suffix *-t. In Blust (1993: 251), brief reference is made to Tukang Besi, where ꧃쐬 ‘chicken’, from Popalia (a large village on Binongko) is listed (incorrectly) as a possible cognate with the putative proto Central Malayo-Polynesian *kandoRa ‘rat’ (proto Austronesian *R becomes Ø (adjacent to /u/ and sometimes /i/) or /h/ (elsewhere) in Tukang Besi, but never /l/). Pawley and Pawley (1994: 358) correctly list ꧃uencia as a Tukang Besi word meaning ‘descend, go seawards, go west’ in a discussion of Austronesian canoe and seafaring terminology. The Pusat Bahasa in Jakarta has produced Morfologi dan sintaksis Bahasa Binongko (published in a less complete form as Manyambeang et al 1985), a monograph purporting to describe morphological and syntactic processes in the language (as represented by the southern dialect spoken in Binongko), but misses many crucial points, such as word breaks, morphological divisions and phonemic principles. Since then various studies on some aspect of the language (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, dialectal) have appeared by the present author (see bibliography for a full listing), and Klamer (1997) has presented an insightful study on certain complementation types.

1.3.2 Alternative names

The name Tukang Besi is an exonym, from Malay tukang besi ‘blacksmith’. The local word for a blacksmith is Pande tutu or Tuka kabali, but these terms are never used as a means of reference for the island chain or its language. The closest the Tukang Besi come to an endonym is to change the pronunciation to fit their phonological system, making it [tuka mbasi]. Note that this is distinct from the loan form of the word ‘tukang besi’, meaning blacksmith, which has been borrowed into the language (alongside Pande tutu and Tuka kabali) as [tuka mbasi]. Other names used by the people to refer to themselves and their language varieties include:

- Wakatobi (WAnCi, KAledupa, Tomea, Binongko)
- Bahasa Pulo (island language)
- Pogau Ka'umbleda (from the folk etymology of the proto-word for ‘fact’)
- Pogau Wanse (for WAnCi)
- Pogau Kahedupa (for KAledupa)
- Pogau Tomia (for Tomea)
- Pogau Binongko (for Binongko)
- Pogau Daoa (trade language used in the market between people from different dialect groups)

The word for ‘speech, language’, pogau, has the additional connotation that is not official, proper, or refined (halus in Malay), while the loanword bahasa has no such connotations. The two terms are interchangeable in the speech of most speakers, event hose with no knowledge of Malay, but the difference becomes apparent with the following example:
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1.3.3 Attitudes to their language

Despite the fact that Tukang Besi is a language that is only rarely written there are strong feelings about what is ‘correct’ use of the language, many of which are at strong variance with what the speakers themselves use. Principal amongst these, for the purposes of this description, include the following:

- Genitive marking on stative verbs: speakers seem universal in their non-acceptance of this, yet nearly everyone employs it (chapter 7).

- Co-occurrence of \([-um]\)- and object suffixes. In elicited sentences speakers are reluctant to accept verb forms that display both the \([-um]\)- infix and an object suffix, yet in real (unguarded) speech this is common (chapter 7).

- Derivation of verbs without the verbalising prefix he-. Whilst many cases of verbs derived from an associated noun through prefixing with he- are common, there are many cases in normal speech of ‘nouns’ being used as verbs simply by the addition of subject prefixes (chapters 4 and 11).

As this grammar is descriptive, rather than prescriptive, the forms treated here represent what was actually heard. Native speaker intuitions have been followed and consulted as much as possible, but not to the extent of denying data.

The language is spoken by all age groups in almost all settlements visited, even those communities away from the main islands in which there was a mix of different languages, of which Tukang Besi was not the main language. Such settlements include Laha on Ambon island, where Ambonese Malay is the dominant language of communication between groups, or many small settlements in eastern Nusa Tenggara, where Lamaholot and Malay compete as trade languages, and even further east in Irian Jaya, where local Malay and in some cases New Guinea languages (such as Onin and Iha in the vicinity of Fakfak) are used between members of different linguistic communities. In such
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communities even the younger speakers spoke Tukang Besi, though often without the understanding of the different dialectal words that a child growing up in a purer Tukang Besi environment would have learned, and with lexical reduction. For instance, children on Pantar were observed to use kaluku ‘old coconut’ to refer to all stages of coconuts, including drinking coconuts, for which the lexeme osimpu ‘young coconut’ exists. Adults in the same community (originally settled from Binongko possessed a full command of their language, but were unable to recognise many of the northern Tukang Besi words that I used. These words posed no problems to the elders of the same community, people who had grown up on the Tukang Besi islands, and so learned many northern dialect words along with their own dialect words when still children.

1.3.4 Dialects

There are many dialect differences in the Tukang Besi language, probably enough to warrant separating the speech of Wanci and Kaledupa from that of Tomea and Binongko, and establishing a northern Tukang Besi and southern Tukang Besi as separate, though very closely related languages (a conclusion also reached by E. J. van den Berg - see Cense 1954). The differences appear to be mainly in the area of the lexicon and allophonic variation (see Donohue forthcoming a); grammatical differences are minimal. The lexical differences are small (typically no more than 20% of a 200-item list being different), but this is enough to make intelligibility very difficult, unless both parties are already experienced in dealing with speakers of the other speech variety. This is because the divergent vocabulary is all very common lexical items, such as (contrasting Wanci and Binongko dialects) ika / kenta ‘fish’, poda / soka ‘knife’, moro’u / motindo’u ‘drink’, ‘oloo / moina ‘day’, morondo / uutu ‘night’, mo’aro / mo’omuru ‘hungry’, etc. See Donohue (forthcoming a) for further details.

Within these two broad divisions each island has its own distinct speech, again distinguished lexically and allophonically. Each island has in addition to this several sub-dialects – on Wanci, where my personal experience is greatest, there are at least five broad linguistic areas with distinctive speech. These areas are:

- **Rupu** used in the coastal areas north from Wandoka around the island to Longa, and the hill areas of Tindoi;
- **Wanse** Spoken on the west coast from Pongo to Woua, and inland as far as ‘Ehata;
- **Kapota** spoken on the island of the same name, a mixture of Binongko and Wanci;
- **Mandati** The west coast of the island south from Pongo and Mandati to include Mola and the neighbouring hamlets down almost to Lia, and inland across the island through Pada Kuru and Wungka to Melai ‘one and north to Sousu;
- **Lia** Very similar to Mandati, centred around the old palace in Lia, including the coastal villages of ‘One melangka and Lia Mawi. It is characterised by the high frequency of borrowings from Wolio, the language of government in the Sultanate days.

The greatest difference lies between the Lia-Mandati complex and the rest. Several lexical
items, and the [d] allophone for /d/ (pronounced [d̪] in the other sub-dialects, and sometimes [z] on the north coast) set the Lia-Mandati dialects apart from the rest. The differences between Rupu and Wanse speech are minimal, being restricted mainly to vocabulary items, and there are few difficulties in comprehension between the two. Some diagnostic lexical items for the different areas are given below (Kaledupa is included for comparison as an example of the next large dialect area):

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Rupu</th>
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<td>iri</td>
<td>kawea</td>
<td>kawea</td>
<td>kawea</td>
<td>wande</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fuller treatment of the dialect situation is given in Donohue (forthcoming a), which includes detailed comparative vocabularies from all four main islands in the Tukang Besi archipelago, and a list from Bonerate in South Sulawesi as well.

The locations of the Wanci subdialects are shown in map 4. The division between Kapota and the rest is clear, having a sea channel separating the main island and Kapota. The division between the Rupu dialect area and the rest roughly follows the line that marks the Tindoi hill area off from the rest of the lowlands to the west and south. The extension of the Rupu dialect to the north, around Patuno and Waha, is the result of a population expansion in the last 80 years; previously the north coast was too dangerous for permanent settlement, due to the threat of piracy. The Lia-Mandati dialects are set in the area of (supposed) original settlement on the island, and the Wanse dialect is a northwards extension of that settlement, mixed with movement to the coast by people from the Rupu area since the establishment of the sub-district capital at Kota Wanci in the last 30 years.
One important and consistent difference between the Wanse-Mandati-Lia dialects and Rupu dialect lies in the treatment of certain high back vowels, which would involve the positing of six vowel phonemes in a ‘pre-Tukang Besi’ stage of the language (before the split up of the subdialects of the modern Wanci area). The correspondences are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wa-Ma-Lia</th>
<th>Rupu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[o] / [o]</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u] / [w]</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u] / [o]</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
<td>लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These alternations point to an analysis that would require three high back vowels to account for all the modern correspondences. The pre-Tukang Besi forms corresponding to the above sets would be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pre-TkB:</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[o] / [o]</td>
<td>* l/</td>
<td>* लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u] / [w]</td>
<td>* लेरेरा</td>
<td>* लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u] / [o]</td>
<td>* l/</td>
<td>* लेरेरा</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus a pan-dialectal approach to the phonology would need to refer to three different high back vowels, even though no dialect displays more than a two-way contrast between
vowels in this environment synchronically.

1.4 Sources for this study

My first, informal, trip to the Tukang Besi islands was in August 1991, during which time I gathered mainly lexical materials on Wanci and swam off Hoga, near Kaledupa, but did only a small amount of grammatical work. I had earlier met Tukang Besi people travelling on Pelni ships through Indonesia, and had noted the people who referred to themselves as being from Sulawesi Tenggara, or if pressed Buton, but only reluctantly as being from the islands. Before and since that time I have visited Indonesia a number of times, on each occasion inevitably meeting Tukang Besi people in the unlikeliest of places, and later conducting research under the auspices of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia. During these visits, between 1992 and 1995, the majority of the time was spent in the village of Patuno on the north coast of Wanci, and also a fair deal of time around Kota Wanci on the west coast. Walking trips around the island of Wanci were undertaken, to see how people in other villages lived and spoke, and occasionally to Kaledupa as well. Tukang Besi people from all the islands have been met with, and talked to informally on islands and boats between Surabaya and Irian Jaya in the years 1994 to 1998, sometimes in the scope of ongoing linguistic research, but sometimes merely adding socio-historical details to my knowledge of the area. All such encounters have deepened my understanding of the Tukang Besi people and their place in modern and historic Indonesia.

The people whose contact has fuelled this study have been from a wide cross-section of the Tukang Besi speaking community, ranging in age from around four to eighty, both male and female, and most age groups in between.

The formal education of the speakers I worked with reflects a range of experience. Some of the speakers were totally untouched by modern education (whilst often possessing a deep traditional education), being illiterate and having received no schooling either from the Dutch, the Japanese, or the modern Indonesian government. Others have been educated by the Dutch before World War II, received training under the Japanese regime, or have attended teachers’ colleges since Indonesian independence. The most highly (formally) educated of my informants had just completed a basic university degree in Sulawesi, and was working as a junior lecturer when the field work for this study was completed.

Most of the people who have contributed information have been bilingual (or more) in Indonesian, Straits Malay, Ambonese Malay or Makasar Malay, or a mixture of these. Some older speakers contributed information elicited in Dutch or Japanese, and some of the younger generation are learning English to various degrees of proficiency. Many people who have helped me with paradigms, stories, explanations, and simple companionship, have been completely monolingual in Tukang Besi; these are the people living in the hill areas of Tindoi.

The social status of the people I have worked with varies between acknowledged mia pande shamans who are members of the nobility (La Ode, Wa Ode), to those who are considered kombeo ‘mad’ by others on the same island. Texts have been recorded from people known for their ability as raconteurs, others from those who consider themselves as unable to contribute worthwhile data (but who did, nevertheless, consent to being recorded). Casual conversation has been the source of many insights during festivals, boat building works, marriages, gardening, canoeing and simply chatting.
Whilst the input (in the form of data gathered from elicitation and stories recorded) has come from a wide cross-section of the Tukang Besi speaking population, the variety represented here is that of the Rupu sub-dialect of Wanci speech, unless otherwise mentioned (this is only important in chapter 9).

1.5 Data-gathering procedures

Most materials used in this grammar have been taken from recordings of traditional stories, explanations about how certain aspects of Tukang Besi material and social culture operate, and recordings of conversations. Texts were always transcribed with a native speaker, usually someone other than the person who gave the text in the first place; in this way the textual material represents the speakers’ perception of “proper” speech, and also a consensus of views. Texts on various subjects, from traditional stories to life experiences and simple conversation, were recorded from speakers ranging from six years old to approximately ninety years old in age, ranging from village pariahs to local nobility in terms of social status, and from people from all the main dialect areas (all four islands), and representing all the subdialects of Wanci island. In this way it is hoped that the corpus of data is as representative as possible of Tukang Besi as it is actually spoken.

As will become obvious, some of the chapters in this grammar are largely populated by elicited examples (especially chapters 9 and 10). Whilst I prefer data that has come from textual or conversational materials, as being more indicative of spontaneous, “natural” language (for obvious reasons), I have no aversion to the use of elicitation to fill out a paradigm. Whilst I believe that an ideal linguistic description would include only naturally-occurring materials, and make no use of elicitation at all, such a grammar would also take 50 years or so to write, waiting for all the combinations of things to turn up by chance. Both my funding and my patience are insufficient for such a wait… As a restraint, I have deliberately not extended elicitation into areas for which there was no supporting data available from other sources. As an example of this, the material on double applicatives was only collected after double applicative constructions had been observed in texts, and in freely occurring speech; the elicitation sessions did not seek out paradigms that were not there. Most elicitation was conducted on a group of people (typically three to five), and later checked both with other groups, and with the same groups, to see if the judgements were consistent, and not just reflecting a peculiar idiolect. In general, (almost) all the materials present as examples in this grammar have been checked with about 10 different people, some of them more than once, to act as a check on quirky responses.
‘We have not really budged a step from home until we take up residence in someone else’s point of view.’

–John Erskine,

quoted in Alan Healey, ed., *Language learner’s field guide.*