

# 1 *Introduction*

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This chapter is a brief introduction to the Napu people and their homeland. It serves as background to the grammar of Napu that follows in the subsequent chapters. This chapter is broken into eight sections: geography (section 1.1), demography (section 1.2), economy (section 1.3), language (section 1.4), social organization (section 1.5), education (section 1.6), religion (section 1.7) and history (section 1.8).

The Napu language group comprises over 6,000 speakers most of whom live in the North Lore subdistrict, Poso district, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The Napu language is an Austronesian language and is one of the Kaili-Pamona languages which are spoken in the western and central parts of Central Sulawesi.

## **1.1 Geography**

The Napu Valley, at an elevation of about 1000 meters (3,280 ft.), is located near the center of the island of Sulawesi, the fourth largest island in Indonesia. This valley consists primarily of rice fields and prairie lands surrounded by forested mountains and encompasses an area of about 45,000 hectare (or about 170 square miles). To the north lies the much smaller Sedoa valley and to the south is the large Besoa valley. The Napu valley runs for about 30 kilometers from north to south and about 15 kilometers from east to west. Mountain ranges lie to the east and the west. Vast prairie lands are located in the south-eastern portion of the Napu Valley. The *Lariang* river, the longest river in Sulawesi, passes through the Napu Valley and many other smaller rivers flow into this main river.

## **1.2 Demography**

The Napu people, numbering over 6,000, primarily live in the Napu valley. Approximately 10% of the Napu people have settled in other areas. Most of these have moved to the cities of Palu and Poso (both located in Central Sulawesi) to attend school or to work in government jobs.

Table 1.1 is a chart of population figures for each village in the North Lore subdistrict based on the 2000 census. The population figures for each village are broken down by language group based on rough estimates by a North Lore census official.

Table 1.1: Population Figures for North Lore subdistrict (2000) by village

	Napu	Besoa	Rampi	Sedoa	Bugis	Other	TOTAL
Sedoa	8	0	0	505	300	18	831
Watumaeta	568	10	8	10	651	68	1315
Alitupu	760	8	0	0	723	29	1520
Winowanga	368	8	0	0	190	50	616
Maholo	468	5	0	0	120	27	620
Tamadue	550	12	0	0	788	450	1800
Wuasa	1507	50	15	15	250	249	2086
Kaduwaa	583	4	0	0	30	240	857
Dodola/Toe	8	10	285	0	20	5	328
Wanga	202	8	0	0	15	47	272
Watutau	664	15	8	0	5	0	692
Betue	8	5	249	0	6	18	286
Talabosa	298	28	4	0	18	50	398
Rompo	8	328	4	0	15	45	400
Katu	0	200	0	0	0	0	200
Torire	0	320	0	0	0	6	326
Bariri	0	395	0	0	4	16	415
Hanggira	0	738	0	0	7	67	812
Lempe	0	226	0	0	5	25	256
Doda	15	740	0	0	11	20	786
Siliwanga	35	0	0	0	127	233	395
Baleura	25	558	0	0	17	40	640
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6075</b>	<b>3668</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>3302</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>15851</b>

### 1.3 Economy

The vast majority of the Napu people work as farmers. Their staple food is rice which they plant and harvest using traditional labor-intensive methods. Most of the rice crop is utilized locally for food. Surplus rice is transported and sold in Palu.

Other crops include coffee and a variety of vegetables such as potatoes, corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, spinach, kidney beans, soy beans, and peanuts. Citrus fruits and bananas are also plentiful in the Napu valley. The Napu people raise cows and horses, and the area is known for its abundance of water buffalo. The water buffalo are used to plow and prepare the soil for planting new crops. Lumber, bamboo, and rattan from the Napu valley are transported by truck and sold in Palu.

Until recent years, there were no roads leading into Napu. To travel from the Napu valley to the nearest city (either Palu or Poso) took about three days of traveling on foot or horseback. In 1981, a road was completed between Palu and Wuasa, a trip that takes about 4 to 5 hours. Most of this road was built by lumber companies which established lumber camps just north of the Napu valley. Later the road was turned over to the government to maintain. A four-wheel drive vehicle is strongly recommended for this trip. Privately owned vehicles serve as taxis between Wuasa and Palu. Trucks carrying loads of rattan, rice and other goods also travel this road. An airstrip was built in Wuasa and was serviced by Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) pilots from 1979 until 1983. By plane the trip to Palu or Poso takes about 15-20 minutes. The airstrip is currently not in service.

## **1.4 Language**

This section includes both a discussion of the way the Napu people view and use their language (section 1.4.1) and the relationship of the Napu language to neighboring languages (section 1.4.2).

### ***1.4.1 Language attitudes and usage***

In addition to Napu, other mother tongue languages used in the North Lore subdistrict are Besoa, Rampi, Sedoa, and Bugis. Nearly all Napu people are proficient in the use of Indonesian, the national language. Many are also proficient in neighboring languages or dialects.

Indonesian and Napu each have different domains of usage. Indonesian is used at government ceremonies, in school, and in communications with outsiders. Napu is generally used between Napu people in informal settings such as at home or in the rice fields. Napu children generally use Napu when they play together. Some Napu parents use Indonesian with their children to prepare them for school. In church services and traditional ceremonies, both Napu and Indonesian are used. Napu people who have married speakers of other languages use a mixture of Napu, Indonesian and the mother tongue of their spouse.

The Napu people seem proud of their language and eager to see more literature written in their language. Young people in Napu have a positive attitude towards their language. They speak it to each other, and in their homes. Young people frequently speak a mixture of Indonesian and Napu and this annoys some of the older speakers of Napu.

### ***1.4.2 Relationship to neighboring languages***

Napu is classified as part of the Kaili-Pamona Subgroup of the Austronesian Language family. The Napu, Besoa, and Bada languages, because of their close relationship, have been referred by some as the Badaic languages (Martens 1988). These three language groups are located in three different valleys. Napu is the northernmost valley, Bada is the southernmost valley and the Besoa valley is located between Napu and Bada. Napu and Besoa are located in the North Lore subdistrict whereas Bada is located in the South Lore subdistrict. The Rampi and Sedoa languages which are spoken in the Napu area, are also part of the Kaili-Pamona Subgroup but are quite distinct from the Badaic languages. The Napu, Rampi, and Sedoa languages are not mutually intelligible.

From a linguistic point of view, using the criteria of mutual intelligibility, the Badaic languages may be considered three dialects of the same language. It is apparent that the people from these three groups can understand each other when using their mother tongue. However since each of these three language groups are geographically and socially distinct, it is more profitable from a sociolinguistic point of view to refer to them as three distinct language groups rather than one language group with three dialects.

Lexicostatistically the three languages are quite similar as can be seen from the results of two different surveys using the Swadesh 100 word list shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Degree of lexical similarity among Badaic languages (100 item word list)

Barr and Barr (1979)			Martens (1989)		
Napu			Napu		
91	Besoa		88	Besoa	
80	85	Bada	81	85	Bada

These statistics show a close relationship between the three languages and the chaining effect between them. This chaining effect might be illustrated by a three link chain in which Napu is on one end, Bada is on the other end and Besoa is the middle link. From Table 1.2, it can be seen that Besoa, the middle link, is very close lexicostatistically to both Bada and Napu. Napu and Bada being the outer links are farther apart lexicostatistically. This three link chain corresponds also to the geographic location of these three language groups, Napu being to the North, Bada to the South, and Besoa located in the middle.

### 1.4.3 Previous linguistic research

Apart from the collecting of word lists and the comparative work mentioned in the preceding section, very little prior research has been done on the Napu language. Ten Kate wrote a description of Napu pronouns (Ten Kate 1915). Closer to the present, a team of Indonesian researchers has compiled a grammar overview (Garantjang, Kadja, et al. 1989).

During the Dutch period, it was common to present information about little known languages by publishing a text along with a Dutch free translation and grammar notes. Thus in Ten Kate (1911) we find a Napu adaptation of the Genesis story of creation along with the Dutch translation and grammar notes. Ten Kate (1919) presents three short native Napu texts and their translations along with extensive notes by N. Adriani. Four \*\*\*this could be six, depending on the identity of the two questionable texts\*\*\* more Napu texts, presented in basically the same format, are found in Woensdregt's (1925) collection.

Modern day sources of texts include locally produced collections of Napu folktales (Sampali, Limba et al. 1990, Tebo 1996) and Napu conversations (Kareba, Gae and Kabi 1990), both with Indonesian and English free translations. Two glossed and translated Napu texts appear in Andersen (1999).

A Napu dictionary of just over 2000 main entries (Mondolu, Tokari, et al. 2001) has yet to see the light of publication.

## 1.5 Social organization

In this section, the social organization of Napu society is discussed in terms of political structure and cultural norms.

Indonesia has established numerous layers in its method of government. These layers are:

1. Province (Propinsi) – Central Sulawesi
2. District (Kabupaten) – Poso
3. Subdistrict (Kecamatan) – North Lore (Napu Valley)
4. Village (Desa)
5. Neighborhood (Rukun Tetangga)
6. Head of Family (Kepala Keluarga)

The Napu valley is located in the North Lore subdistrict. At the time of this writing, the North Lore subdistrict is one of 20 subdistricts in the Poso district. The Poso district is one of four districts in the Central Sulawesi province. Central Sulawesi is one of 27 provinces in Indonesia.

In the North Lore subdistrict there are 21 villages. Each village head reports to the subdistrict leader. Each village is also broken down into neighborhoods which consist of 15 - 30 families. Each head of neighborhood reports to the village head.

The neighborhood level plays a significant role in the process of local government. People meet weekly in their neighborhood groups for church home group meetings. Information regarding taxes, community workdays, visiting officials or other public information is generally relayed during these meetings or during the Sunday church service. This information is also relayed to local Muslim leaders. Often the neighborhood groups are assigned different work assignments each week or month.

In every village there is a person who is appointed by the village head to see that local traditions are carried out properly. One example of this is the traditional marriage ceremony. This elaborate ceremony, which is in addition to the official marriage ceremony and the church ceremony, involves the exchange of many gifts between the family of the bride and the family of the groom. It is the head of local tradition who oversees this ceremony ensuring that each family meets its obligations and that the ceremony is performed in accordance with Napu customs.

Napu job roles vary according to age and gender. Men plow the fields, gather wood, build houses and repair roads. Often men will spend the entire day in the rice fields and take along a lunch of rice and vegetables wrapped in banana leaves. Women generally stay at home to watch the children and perform housework such as cooking, cleaning dishes, washing laundry, cleaning house, and gardening. Children are expected to help with housework and to guard the rice plants from birds when harvest time is near. Government office workers are almost exclusively men whereas both men and women work as teachers. In the churches, men fill the role of pastors while both men and women fill the role of church elders.

Although the Napu people are progressive-minded, they still maintain some of their traditional customs. The older women regularly wear traditional dress, and the younger women enjoy the opportunity to wear full traditional dress on special occasions. Men wear authentic Napu dress for dances or traditional wedding ceremonies and many of the traditional funeral practices are still practiced.

## **1.6 Education**

All children are required to attend elementary school. In the North Lore subdistrict, there are government primary schools (grades 1–6) in every village and there are two government junior high schools (grades 7–9). One of these junior high schools is located in the Besoa valley in the village of Doda. The other junior high is located in the Napu valley between the villages of Wuasa and Watumaeta.

In addition to government sponsored schools, there are also several church sponsored primary schools. In the North Lore subdistrict, the GKST (Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah) Protestant church sponsors three primary schools in the villages of Wuasa, Talabosa, and Hanggira.

In all these schools, the primary language of instruction is Indonesian and all textbooks utilized are written in Indonesian. The Napu language is used on an informal basis in schools in the Napu valley. In the North Lore subdistrict, literacy is very high. Official figures put the literacy rate at 100%. While this figure is exaggerated, the vast majority of the people are literate.

There are no high schools in the North Lore subdistrict. Most students that go on for a high school education attend high schools in Palu or Poso. It is estimated by local education officials, that of those students who complete elementary school, about 90% go on to junior high school and of those who complete junior high school, about 85% go on to high school. When students graduate from high school, there are some who go on for further education, some who find jobs in the city, and some who return home to the village. It is usually difficult for a new high school graduate to find a job in the city. Many return to farming in their village.

The main non-formal education program in the Napu valley is in the area of health care. In each village, health care workers provide monthly baby clinics and give nutrition counseling. These workers also educate people regarding birth control and proper sanitation practices to prevent the spread of schistosomiasis.

## **1.7 Religion**

In the days before the Dutch came, the Napu people were animistic. They believed in a creator God ('Alataala') and also believed in many other spirits both good and bad. They attributed special power to corpses of their kings. When a king died, they did not bury the body but rather stored the body in a coffin in a special house. They appealed to the spirit of the king for help before they went to battle. When the Dutch came in the early 1900's, Christianity was introduced, and the Napu people embraced this religion. Protestant churches were soon established in various villages. People of the Islamic faith moved to the Napu area beginning in the 1950's but only a few Napu people have embraced the Islamic faith. Since the introduction of Christianity, most traditional practices of animism have been rejected. It is difficult now to learn about past animistic practices because people have either forgotten them, or are uncomfortable about sharing them with outsiders.

Now the Napu people gather together for worship at church on Sundays and other special days such as Christmas. Both Indonesian and Napu are used in church

services. Each week believers meet together at different homes for small group worship meetings. All believers are affiliated with either the Protestant church (GKST - Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah) or the Pentecostal church of Indonesia.

## **1.8 History**

The Napu people, also known as the Pekurehua people, have lived in the Napu Valley in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, for hundreds of years. The Napu valley is where the majority of the population still resides. It is unclear as to the date when the Napu people arrived or where they originated. The name Pekurehua is also the name of a mountain which is near the Napu village of Watumaeta. According to local legend, the people ate their rice off banana leaves which they discarded in a certain place. Over a period of many years, this place became the mountain now called Pekurehua.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's the Napu people were greatly feared by those around them. They were known to be fierce head-hunters who often attacked neighboring tribes and brought back plunder and slaves. They were fierce warriors and seldom lost in battle.

The Dutch came to the Napu area in 1905 during the time when Indonesia was still a Dutch colony. When they arrived, there was a war between the Napu people and the Dutch that lasted just one day. Many people were killed, and the Dutch with their superior weapons quickly won the battle. From 1909 to 1919, a missionary/teacher, Ten Kate, lived, preached, and taught in the Napu village of Watumaeta. Churches were built and the Napu people accepted the Christian faith. Ten Kate was replaced by the Dutch missionary/teacher J.W. Wesseldijk who stayed until he was captured by the Japanese in 1942 during World War II. After being captured, he was imprisoned in Manado where he died.

During World War II, the Japanese came to the Napu valley. They were brutal to any Napu people who did not capitulate to their demands. They stayed wherever they pleased in Napu homes and took rice and whatever else they needed from the Napu people.

In the 1950's, the Bugis people came to the Napu area and established small shops selling necessary goods. This group being of the Islamic faith built mosques and have become an established part of the community to the present day.