

2.15.3. ISOLATES: GULF DISTRICT

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There are several languages which were considered linguistic isolates in the light of a recent survey of the Gulf District (Franklin, ed. 1973), although two of them do not lie strictly within the district.¹ The two so-called isolates which are considered in this section are Porome and Tate, or Raepa-Tati as Brown (1973) calls the latter language.

2.15.3.1. POROME

Porome and Kibiri are two closely related dialects of a language spoken near Kikori town in the Goaribari Census Division. The villages in the area which speak the dialects are Ero (Porome dialect of 600 speakers), Babaguina, Doibo, Paile, Tipeowa, and Veiru (all of the Kibiri dialect).

The only lexical relationship established between Porome and another language (Purari) is slight. Purari, also called koriki or Namau, is spoken in the Purari delta area by over 6,000 people. On the basis of the Swadesh wordlist Porome-Purari displayed an 8% lexical relationship, while for Eleman or Kiwaian languages the relationship is always 3% or less. There is little grammatical information on Porome, but the free pronominal forms show their closest cognates as follows:

	POROME	MORIGI	IPIKO	TATE	KAIRI
1st singular	amo	mo	wo		
2nd singular	do	lo		aro	
3rd singular	da				a

	POROME	MORIGI	GOGODALA	KALULI
1st dual	amokai	nimotoi		
1st plural	amq	nemo		
2nd plural	a			
3rd plural	abq		emo	tābo

The languages indicated above are of the following linguistic groups (all of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum): Morigi (Kiwaian Family, Trans-Fly (sub-phylum-level) Stock), Ipiko (Inland Gulf Sub-Phylum), Tate (see below), Kairi (Turama-Kikorian Sub-Phylum), Gogodala (Suki-Gogodala Stock), and Kaluli (Bosavian Family, Central and South New Guinea Stock). In other words the linguistic groups are so diverse that the few pronominal relationships are non-conclusive. For the present Porome remains a linguistic isolate.

2.15.3.2. TATE

The language we have called Tate is referred to as Raepa-Tati (*Hill Tati*) in Brown (1973). Further evidence by Brown suggests conclusively that Tate is on a stock-level relationship with the Eleman Family.²

Brown (1973:312) has compared all languages and dialects of Eleman with each other and with Koriki and Tate. Eleman lexicostatistical percentages are never lower than 15% with Tate and some languages show as high as a 21% relationship. Some of the 75 cognates that Brown found in comparing 400 Eleman-Tate words are now listed.

Example of Tate-Eleman Cognates

English Gloss	Tate	Eleman
<i>2,3 dual</i>	a'ura	auka (T)
<i>belly</i>	here	ere (T)
<i>body hair</i>	pupura	lupu (K)
<i>breast</i>	ame	ame
<i>toe</i>	fera eke	mora eveveka (K)
<i>lips</i>	anara poe	ape poe (T and S)
<i>urine</i>	mine	mi (T)
<i>brains</i>	aropure	haropuru (T)
<i>veins, sinew</i>	enena	elele (T)
<i>river</i>	mai	mai
<i>island</i>	finu	firu (T)
<i>sweet potato</i>	hawani	kauari (T)

English Gloss	Tate	Eleman
<i>yam</i>	mapori	mapore (O)
<i>many</i>	himiri	siviri (K)
<i>louse</i>	saruta	saruta (T)
<i>rotten</i>	pulula	purula (S)
<i>shark</i>	ainyari	aitari (O)
<i>taboo</i>	safu	safu (T)
<i>person, man</i>	aru	karu (T)
<i>mother</i>	noura	lou (T)

According to legends, the Tate people came from the Nara (Austronesian language north-east) area (Brown 1956, 1972). There is no evidence of this from a linguistic point of view. There is also little linguistic affinity between Eleman and language groups to the east (Brown 1973).

However, on the basis of the relationship of Tate and Eleman, there is no longer evidence to consider Tate as a linguistic isolate.

N O T E S

1. In chapter 10 of Franklin, ed. 1973, Dutton (p. 511) lists Porome, Pawaian, Purari, Tate, Waia, and Wiru, as isolates. Some of these were so listed by Dutton because the complete study of the Gulf District had apparently not yet been seen by him. We can clarify the issue by suggesting now that Pawaia is a single member of a family on a stock-level (or super-stock-level, see 2.7.5.1. and 2.2.6.8. in this volume) relationship with the Teberan Family, and that Purari and Wiru hold the same type of stock-level relationships with the Eleman and West Central Families, respectively. Wurm (1973) considers Waia to be a member of the Pahoturi River Family of the Trans-Fly Stock (Wurm 1971). This leaves only Porome and Tate as potential isolates in the Gulf District. (Waia is in the Western District and Wiru is in the Southern Highlands District.)

2. I am indebted to H.A. Brown for the lexical comparison of Tate and Eleman and also for the cognates listed. The abbreviations in the table are (T)oaripi, (O)rokolo, (S)epoe and (K)aipi. O is in the Western Eleman group; the other three are in the Eastern Eleman.

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