

**Culture Specific Forms of Ideologies in Verbal Interaction:
The Trobriand Islanders' Ideology of Competition and Cooperation in the Make**

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Abstract:

Competition is one of the most typical and characteristic features of the Trobriand Islanders' culture and society. It permeates all areas of the Trobriand Islanders' life. However, in the dialectics of Trobriand society, competition is always based on cooperation between competitors and their supporters. This paper documents and analyzes a speech in which a man in his late thirties transmits his version of the Trobriand ideology of competition and cooperation to a group of schoolchildren in the village centre of Tauwema on Kaile'una Island. After a brief introduction that contextualizes this speech and introduces the concept of language – in this case educational – ideologies, the speech documents this ideology of competition and cooperation in the make; moreover, it also reveals that this ideology is already influenced by radiations of present processes of globalization, radiations which by now have reached villages as remote as Tauwema.

Introduction:

In our volume “Growing Up on the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea – Childhood and Educational Ideologies in Tauwema” (Senft & Senft 2018), my wife and I pointed out that on the Trobriands

- attempts of parental education are confined to a minimum,
- parents only sporadically request strict obedience from their children,
- and
- that the Trobrianders consider their function as parents first and foremost as a priming one: they believe and trust in the power of the ‘good example’, the proper ‘role model’: If the parents lead an orderly life, then their children will do so as well.

However, it goes without saying that the Trobrianders also use a number of more subtle educational means to prepare their children for their roles in their social world, trying to make sure that their children will gradually grow into the role of respected members of their society, that they come up with the culture specific expectations of what it requires and means to be a responsible and valuable adult and to thus completely conform with the cultural and social norms that are valid and essential for their construction of reality. These educational aims are based on “a set of beliefs governing conduct”. This last expression can be found with one of the definitions the Oxford English Dictionary provides for the entry “ideology” (see: <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91016?redirectedFrom=ideology#eid>>). In agreement with this definition we understand the set of beliefs that underlie the Trobriand Islanders’ educational aims as culture-specific educational ideologies. This understanding is supported by Jef Verschueren’s discussion of the concept of ideology. In his monograph on *Ideology in Language Use* Verschueren points out that ‘... ideology is associated with *underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, world views, or forms of everyday thinking and explanation.*’ (Verschueren 2012: 7). One of the definitions Verschueren (2012: 10) provides for “ideology” runs as follows:

We can define as ideological any basic pattern of meaning or frame of Interpretation bearing on or involved in (an) aspect(s) of social ‘reality’ (in particular in the realm of social relations in the public sphere), felt to be commonsensical, and often functioning in a normative way.

Verschueren (2012: 17) then continues: “[One of] the most visible manifestation[s] of ideology is LANGUAGE USE or DISCOURSE, which may reflect, construct and/or maintain ideological patterns”. And it is in language use, indeed, where we find manifestations of the Trobriand Islanders’ educational ideologies. Contrary to what Margaret Mead (1930: 98f.) reports about the Manus Islanders, the Trobrianders – adults as well as children – are great story-tellers (see Senft 2015). And it is in different kinds of stories, tales and in specific speeches that we could document on the Trobriand Islands where we find some of the basic concepts that underlie and constitute the Trobrianders educational ideologies.

In this paper I document and analyze a speech, Keda'ila - a man in his late thirties - presented to schoolchildren during a meeting called **education pela gugwadi pelabu bunesi bwena valu Tauwema** – “educating children in the good customs of Tauwema village”.¹

Before I present Keda'ila's speech, let me start with the following observations: I had one of my first "aha" experiences (Bühler 1934: 311) that made me realize why Bronislaw Malinowski over and over emphasizes competitive aspects of Trobriand culture in his Oeuvre (see, e.g., Malinowski 1922; 1935 Vol. I: 181-187, 211-217, 392-405; Vol. II: 187-192, 194-196; see also Bell-Krannhals 1990: 209-217; Weiner 1988: 111-116) when I observed the prize distribution at the end of the "**kayasa**" - the harvest competition - in Tauwema in 1982, a few weeks after I had set foot on the Trobriands for the first time. During this prize distribution it is not only the best three or ten gardeners who are mentioned and get their prize, but all men are listed with respect to their harvest results that were counted in basketfuls of yams produced by each of them. When the last few men - obviously the worst or laziest gardeners - were mentioned, I took this as a public face-threatening act, if not as a public blaming and shaming, although I realized that men who were mentioned rather late or who were even among the last mentioned could save their faces by responding to the calling of their name with a joke or even a rather blunt lie as an excuse for being denounced and blamed as a lazybone. If they could make the audience laugh they could somehow get away with the blame.

Another insight I got observing this **kayasa**, was that Topiesi, who organized this harvest competition in honor of his father, chief Kilagola, had to rely on a number of men, mainly but not exclusively relatives, who cooperated with him for at least a year to make sure that he could provide the prizes to be distributed - for the most part yams and betelnuts, but also a few pigs, some pots and pieces of cloth. This cooperation implied that they agreed to working for Topiesi in the gardens to supply him with additional food and to organizing fishing expeditions for him so that he could barter or sell fish at the markets on Kiriwina Island to be able to accumulate the necessary prizes. The benefit they could expect from investing in Topiesi's "**kayasa**" was that they could count on future support by a man whom they had helped to get more prestige and political influence, a man who had shown "who he

¹ This paper quotes Senft & Senft (2018: 148f & 205-224) – with slight modifications. The whole volume is published in Open Access and can be downloaded for free under the following URL: <https://doi.org/10.1075/clu.21>

is" (Weiner 1988: 111). Thus, I realized that the form of competition I observed was actually based on, and only possible because of, cooperative actions.

This, of course, also holds for the famous "**Kula**" expeditions (Malinowski 1922)² where the crews of a "**Kula**"-canoe are dependent on their good cooperation at sea, although they know that they will severely compete with each other in the actual "**Kula**" enterprise, leaving no stone unturned to get the most prestigious "**soulava**" necklaces or "**mwali**" bracelets (see also Weiner 1976: 129, 180f).

And it also holds for Trobriand women who finish the mourning period for a deceased person with a final distribution of (grass-)skirts³ and banana-leaf bundles - the "**doba**" - during the "**lisiladabu**" ritual (see Weiner 1988: 116-123). This ritual is a competition in women's wealth, in "**doba**". A woman who gives away most "**doba**" to other women during this ritual earns much prestige. She demonstrates that she is very influential within her matrilineage⁴. Again, to be able to engage in this competition with other women in the "**lisiladabu**" mourning ritual a woman is dependent on her husband who has to plant banana trees so that his wife has as much banana leaves as possible at her command for making "**doba**". However, it is not only a cooperation between husband and wife that is important for the women's competitive wealth distributions. Weiner (1988: 120) summarizes this complex sociopolitical aspect of Trobriand society as follows:

Because a woman and her husband receive yams from her brother every year, her husband must help her find bundles whenever someone dies who was a member of her matrilineage. In this way, a woman's large accumulation of wealth is intimately tied to yam production. This is the key to the exchange relations among a woman, her husband, and her brother. By giving yams each year to his sister, a man secures women's wealth from someone in another matrilineage for his own matrilineage... When men give yams to their sisters and their sisters' husbands, they are

² In his book "The Argonauts of the Western Pacific" Malinowski (1922, 81ff) describes the **Kula** as "a form of exchange...carried out by communities inhabiting a wide ring of islands, which form a closed circuit. ... articles of two kinds... are constantly traveling in opposite directions. In the direction of the hands of a clock, moves constantly one of these kinds - long necklaces of red shell, called soulava... In the other direction moves the other kind - bracelet of white shell called mwali..."

³ The gloss "grass-skirts" is actually a misnomer; these fibre-skirts are made of banana and pandanus leaves.

⁴ Note that the society is matrilineal but virilocal; its marriage system is exogamous.

crediting a debt that can be repaid only in women's wealth.... Women draw on their husbands' resources to make their own matrilineage look strong (italics in the original, G.S.)"

These few examples should suffice to show that competition is one of the most typical and characteristic features of the Trobriand Islanders' culture and society - however, in the dialectics of Trobriand society, competition is always based on cooperation between competitors and their supporters. Competition permeates all areas of the Trobriand Islanders' life affecting, among many other things, the control of land (Weiner 1976: 157), leadership (Powell 1960; Senft 1995), gardening (Malinowski 1935), magic (Senft 1997a; Weiner 1976: 70-72, 153), mortuary ceremonies (Senft 1985; Weiner 1976: 65, 86), and games like the famous Trobriand cricket (Leach 1976, Weiner 1988: 114).

In what follows I do not zoom in on one such a specific manifestation of competition on the Trobriand Islands. This has already been done in exemplary ways by Malinowski, Powell, Weiner, Leach and others. Rather, I will document and analyze a speech in which a man in his late thirties transmits his version of the Trobriand ideology of competition and cooperation to a group of schoolchildren at the village centre of Tauwema on Kaile'una Island.⁵ This speech documents this ideology in the make; moreover, it reveals that this ideology is already influenced by radiations of present processes of globalization, radiations which by now have reached villages as remote as Tauwema.

2. The Trobriand Islanders' ideology of competition and cooperation in the make

2.1 Keda'ila's speech

On the 21st of June 2003 Keda'ila, a man in his late thirties and one of my long term friends and consultants in Tauwema, came to me and told me that he in his function as the chairman of the "*Tauwema yuti*", the local youth club, was soon going to present a speech addressing some of the schoolchildren of Tauwema. The children were gradually gathering at the centre of the village. He invited me to video- and audiotape what he referred to as

⁵ Tauwema has been my place of residence on the Trobriands since 1982

Education **pela** **gugwadi** **pela** **bubune-si** **bwena valu** **Tauwema**
 education for children for custom-Pl good village Tauwema

Educating children in the good customs of Tauwema village

When I asked him whether this speech was a kind of "**luavala**" - a traditional admonitory speech - he somewhat reluctantly agreed: "**E, makala, taga pikekita ituali**" - "Yes like this, but a little different". In 1983 I already documented a series of admonitory speeches addressed to the schoolchildren by Kilagola, the then chief of Tauwema, and some other influential elderly men (Senft 1991). These speeches admonished the children to regularly go to school. Despite the fact that officially Papua New Guinea has compulsory education, only a few of the school-age children living in Tauwema went to school in the neighboring village Kaduwaga, and not all of them attended school regularly. The speakers argued that all school-age children should regularly attend school to get a proper education which will allow them to get good jobs in the cities on the mainland of Papua New Guinea. The moral of the admonitory speeches was that once these educated young men and women would have well-paid jobs, they should not spend their wages on partners and make themselves a good life, but save most of their money and send it back to their parents, especially to their fathers who had to pay the school fees for them. This was quite amazing, if not revolutionary, given the fact that in the matrilineal Trobriand society a father is not related whatsoever with his children. I then took it as a first indication that there were attempts to change the matrilineal organization of the society into a patrilineal one (see also Senft 1992: 74f.). Moreover, the emphasis the speakers put on virtues like hard work, diligence, austerity and sexual continence reminded me more of Max Weber's "Protestant Ethics" (1905) than of the description of the life of adolescents in Bronislaw Malinowski's (1929) "Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia" (and my observation of their life in the village). I remembered all this while I prepared the documentation of Keda'ila's speech at the village centre and I was keen to hear (and see) whether his speech would follow the example set by the speeches I documented 20 years ago. A handful of girls were sitting on palm tree leaves in the shade of chief Mota'esa's big yamshouse. The chief was sitting in the shade nearby, and Keda'ila was standing in front of the children. He started his speech with the following introductory remarks and asked the children a first question (lines 1-5):

personal question one of the children - after a relative long pause - provides the answer in form of a repeated noun that is first uttered in a low voice and then, after a short pause, with confidence (line 6):

Child:

Kabitam, [pause] **kabitam!**
 knowledge knowledge
Knowledge, [pause] knowledge!

Thus, the child claims that their motivation for attending school is to seek and acquire knowledge there. The concept of "**kabitam**" is very important for the Trobriand Islanders (see Senft 1986: 239). Persons who are characterized with the epitheton ornans "**tokabitam**"⁶ are people who have gained expert knowledge and proficient skills in a specific domain; they are masters in their fields, intelligent, clever, and even artistic. The title "**tokabitam**" generally referred to a master-carver and strongly implied knowledge of specific forms of magic (see Campbell 2002; Scoditti 1990); however, in the last 25 years the semantics of this title broadened in the way just described, with almost no more connotations to magic. The fact that one of the young schoolchildren answered Keda'ila's question with this term indicates that he may not have asked the question for the first time - it seems to be staged somehow. And indeed, when I talked to Keda'ila about his speech after he had delivered it he told me that he relatively regularly addresses not only the schoolchildren but also other members of the "**yuti**" with such speeches. After the child's answer Keda'ila repeats the elliptic utterance in a full sentence phrased as yet another question (in line 7)

Keda'ila:

Ku-savali-si pela kabitam?
 2.-strive-Pl for knowledge
You strive for knowledge?

And after the children had answered this question positively (in line 8) with

⁶ "**Tokabitam**" can be classified as either an adjective or as a nominalized adjective; it consists of the classifier (or 'classificatory particle' in Malinowski's terms) "**to-**" which can be glossed as "human" and more specifically as "male" and the adjective form "**-kabitam**" which requires a prefixed classifier.

Child:

E!

Yes

Yes!

Keda'ila continues his speech as follows (lines 9-21):

Keda'ila:

E kabitam ka-lisavali-si makala sena mwau,
 yes knowledge 1.excl-be.very.busy-Pl like very difficult
Yes, knowledge – we are very busy (it is) like (that): (it is) very difficult,

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kidi-keda-la kabitam ka-lisavali-si mwau,
 Redup-way-Pl knowledge 1.excl-be.very.busy-Pl difficult
(the) road (to) knowledge, we are very busy – (it is) difficult,

olopola e-sisu molu i-bwadi bita-lumkwali,
 inside 3.-be hunger 3.-be.full Fut.Dual.incl-feel
inside (there) is hunger, it is full (of it and) one will feel (it),

e i-bwadi somata bita-lumkwali,
 and 3.-be.full tiredness Fut.Dual.incl-feel
and it is full (of) tiredness – one will feel (it),

i-bwadi mayuyu bita-lumkwali,
 3.-be.full pain Fut.Dual.incl-feel
it is full (of) pain – one will feel it,

e oluvi bita-bani kabitam.
 and then Fut.Dual.incl-find knowledge
and then one will gain knowledge.

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E ma-na-kwe-si vavagi olumolela
 and Dem-Dem-CP.general-Pl things inside
And (with) these things inside

bi-nukwale-da-si tommota,
 3.Fut-know-Dual.incl.PPIV-Pl people
they will know one, the people,

da-kabitam igau bi-nukwali-si tommota.
 Dual.incl.PPIV-knowledge then 3.Fut-know-Pl people
one's knowledge – then they will know (about this) the people.

O da-savali o da-bwetulula,
 oh Dual.incl.PPIV-being.busy oh Dual.incl.PPIV-hard.work
Oh, one's attempts, oh, one's hard work,

e, tommota bi-nukwali-si. E tommota
 yes people 3.Fut-know-Pl yes people
yes, people will know (about it). Yes, people

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o-si-nukwali bi-nukwali-si ambeya bi-kanobu-si,
 binding.vowel-3.Pl.PPIII-knowing 3.Fut-know-Pl where 3.Fut-come.out-Pl
their knowing (about it) they will know where they (knowledge and mastership) will appear,

bi-nukwali-si.
 3.Fut-know-Pl
they will know.

Keda'ila takes up the concept of "**kabitam**" again and points out that he and others - but not his addressees - are (or were) very busy to reach that aim. Using the subject prefix "**ka-**" marking 1st person exclusive (in line 9) which is unspecified for tense, aspect, and mood, he deliberately separates himself and others (who are not specified) from the schoolchildren to

whom he addresses his speech, indicating that they have not been busy enough so far in their efforts to gain knowledge. He then starts to explain why this is so. It's a very difficult, long and winding road to gain "**kabitam**" (lines 9-10). Before he elaborates on this he repeats once more (in line 10) that he and others - but not his addressees - are (or were) very busy to reach that aim. With this repetition he emphasizes the rhetoric device which excludes his addressees, denying that they can claim the same yet. He then repeats that it is difficult to get "**kabitam**". The children will feel the need for it like hunger inside their bodies (line 11). They will feel hunger for knowledge, but also tiredness (line 12) and even pain (line 13) which is caused by this hunger. When Keda'ila points out that all this can be felt he no longer uses the 1st person exclusive subject prefix but the dual inclusive marker with future tense marking "**bita-**". This subject marker can be used in Kilivila as a defocusing and impersonalizing device in a stylistically quite sophisticated form of verbal politeness. This means that the schoolchildren can feel to be included again in what he says, that he is addressing them again. And he tells them that after these feelings of hunger, tiredness (if not exhaustion), and pain one will finally reach one's aim and gain knowledge (line 14). If this aim is reached, he continues, people will recognize it (lines 15-16). It is interesting to note that Keda'ila does not refer to "**kabitam**" here but that he produces the noun "**vavagi**" (in line 15) which can be glossed very generally as "thing", but also as "product" and "deed". This indicates that for him the concept of "**kabitam**" is a variety of products or deeds (he explicitly marks the plural in the demonstrative "**manakwesi**" - "these" in line 15) created during and based on a long, difficult, tiresome and painful process of learning. The benefit for all these efforts is that one will be recognized by the people as someone who has achieved to have "**kabitam**" (lines 16-17) - and this means that one has gained higher status and prestige. People will acknowledge the hard work which was the basis for this achievement (lines 18-19), and they will also know and can expect that the ones recognized as having gained "**kabitam**" will be able to use their skills (lines 19-21). This knowledge of the people with respect to who has gained "**kabitam**" is marked both as a state (in the possessed noun "**sinukwali**" in line 20) and as a process (in the verbal expressions "**binukwalisi**" in lines 20 and 21), and the verbal expression "**bikanobusi**" reassures the addressees that once they will have acquired knowledge it will appear - the verbal expression "**-kanobusi-**" can also be glossed as "to come out" - whenever they need it. Once they have "**kabitam**" they can always fall back on it and use it. After this part of his speech Keda'ila announces a second question (line 22)

Keda'ila:

Beya katupoi number two:

here question number two

Here (is) question number two:

and asks (in line 23)

Ambeya bi-kanobu-si bi-nukwali-si tommota? [Pause]

where 3.Fut-come.out.Pl 3.Fut-know-Pl people

Where will they (knowledge and mastership) appear (so that) they will know (it) the people?

And again, after a marked pause, one of the children answers this question with a nominal ellipsis (line 24)

Child:

Vavagi.

deeds

(In) deeds.

which is evocative of the famous line in Matthew's gospel "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7, 16). Again, this answer seems to be staged somehow. Keda'ila takes it up and briefly elaborates on it (lines 25-27):

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Keda'ila:

E-ya metoya o mi vavagi, buku-vagi-si

yes-Emph with.us Loc 2.Pl.PPIV deed 2.Fut-do-Pl

Yes indeed, with us in your deeds, you will do

vavagi siligaga beya tommota bi-nukwali-si

deed many here people 3.Fut-know-Pl

many deeds (and) here people will know (about)

mi kabitam mokwita.

2.Pl.PPIV knowledge true

your real knowledge.

Now he directly and explicitly addresses the children and points out twice that it will be their deeds, the products of their efforts in their future lives, by which the Trobriand Islanders⁷ will realize that they have acquired true knowledge. He then continues with another thought that he finally formulates as another question (lines 28-31):

Beya kwe-yu-vela nanamsa e-sunapula:

here CP.thing-two-Emph thought 3.-come.out

Here another thought appears:

E o-ku-savali-si-ga ma-na-kwa

yes binding.vowel-2.-be.busy-Pl-Emph Dem-Dem-CP.general

Yes you are busy indeed (for) this

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kabitam. O-ku-savali-si bi-kanobu-si avela bi-kam?

knowledge binding.vowel-2.-be.busy-Pl 3.Fut-come.out-Pl who 3.Fut-eat

knowledge. You are busy, they (knowledge and mastership) will appear – and for whom will it be good?

Pela tommota kena pela ve-mi-ya?

for people or for relatives-2.Pl.PPIV-relatives

For (all the) people or for your relatives?

At this point of his speech he first summarizes what he and the children have agreed upon so far. They are and will be busy to acquire "**kabitam**" and finally they will reach their aim. And then he asks them the "*cui bono*" question (in line 30): "For whom will it be good?" and he elaborates it with the additional question: "For all the people or for your relatives?" (in line

⁷ This is the referent for "**metoya**" in line 25.

31). Note that the literal translation of the first question is: "Who will eat (it)?" Here Trobriand tradition surfaces extremely prominently: Experts, "**tokabitam**" like mastercarvers or magicians have been traditionally paid for their products and skills with food. Their "**kabitam**" provided them with additional wealth in yams and betelnuts. They could redistribute this surplus food either within their matrilineal clan or during competitive food exchanges, especially during mourning rituals. Doing this they could gain even more prestige and status than they had anyhow, because, as McDowell (1980) has pointed out, "It's not who you are but how you give that counts" all over in Melanesia and especially in the Massim area (see also Young 1971). The literal phrasing of the question in line 30 alludes to the redistribution of food within the matrilineal clan of the "**tokabitam**" which strengthened the line either literally by offering additional food for consumption or indirectly by having available a surplus of food for competing with other clans in food exchanges. The free gloss "For whom will it be good?" is certainly adequate, however, it does not encompass all the connotations of Keda'ila's wording of the question. Another important issue that I would like to point out here is the fact that Keda'ila explicitly uses the possessed noun for denoting clanspersons, that is relatives within the matrilineal clan of the addressed (see also Malinowski 1929: 422f.). With this question he strongly emphasizes the traditional primacy of the matrilineal organization of Trobriand society. One of the children relatively promptly provides the expected answer to this question (line 32):

Child:

Pela ve-ma-ya-si.

for relatives-1.excl.-relatives-Pl

For our relatives.

Again, Keda'ila takes up this answer and elaborates on it as follows (in lines 33-38):

Keda'ila:

Pela ve-mi-ya,

ma-na-kwe-na

for relatives-2.Pl.PPIV-relatives

Dem-Dem-CP.general-Dem

For your relatives, that's (it),

o-kusavali-si **pela** **ve-mi-ya.** **Gala** **pela**
 binding.vowel-2.-be.busy-Pl for relatives-2.Pl.PPIV-relatives not for
you are busy for your relatives. Not for

35

titolemi **o** **kena** **gala** **pela** **tommota** **ituali,**
 yourselves oh or not for people different
yourselves oh or not for other people,

bi-kam-si **gala.** **Bi-savali** **olumolela,** **o-ku-lumkwali-si**
 3.Fut-eat-Pl no, 3.-Fut-be.busy inside binding.vowel-2.-feel-Pl
they will not profit. It is busy inside, you feel

somata, **o-kulumwali-si** **molu,** **o-kulumwali-si**
 tiredness binding.vowel-2.-feel-Pl hunger binding.vowel-2.-feel-Pl
tiredness, you feel hunger, you feel

mayuyu, **pela** **ve-mi-ya** **bi-kam-si.**
 pain for relatives-2.Pl.PPIV-relatives 3.Fut-eat-Pl
pain for your relatives, they will profit (from it).

Kwe-tolu-la **nanamsa.**
 CP.general-three-Emph thought
(That was the) third thought.

He emphasizes that with their acquired "**kabitam**" they will first and foremost support their maternal clanspersons. He repeats his point and then explicitly first excludes the children themselves (lines 34-35) and then other people with which the children are not related. They should not profit from the children's "**kabitam**" (lines 35-36). It is worth noting here that Keda'ila expects the children to use their acquired knowledge and their skills solely for the welfare of their maternal clanspersons but not for themselves. This is rather atypical for Trobriand Islanders - altruism is a concept which is quite foreign to this society; it does not play any role whatsoever in the everyday life of the Massim (see Malinowski 1922: 26). Keda'ila may come up with this demand because he does not want the schoolchildren to

become presumptuous, despite the fact that he indoctrinates them as becoming the future elite within their society and despite the fact that this would be impossible anyhow: a "**tokabitam**" is a person with prestige and status in the Trobriand society - and this is a value per se in Trobriand culture. After his verdict that they should use their "**kabitam**" to be acquired for the welfare of their relatives only, he repeats again that the longing for "**kabitam**" is something busy inside (of people) and that the children will feel tiredness, hunger and pain exclusively for the sake of their maternal clanspersons - it is them who will profit from their efforts; they will get the benefit of the fruits of the children's work - as Keda'ila's literal formulation implies (see lines 36-38). He closes this part of his speech with the remark that this was the third point he wanted to make in his speech (line 39), and immediately continues with his forth point (lines 40-45):

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E **kwe-vasi-la** **nanamsa** **bita-vakela-si:**
and CP.general-four-Emph thought 1.incl.Fut-step.on-Pl

And the fourth thought we will step on:

yokwami **gugwadi** **gudi-mi(na)** **Tauwema.**
you children CP.child-from Tauwema

you children (you are) children from Tauwema.

E **ku-sisu-si** **ku-paisewa-si** **olopola** **Tauwema,**
and 2.-live-Pl 2.-work-Pl inside Tauwema

And you live and work in Tauwema,

e **ku-si-savali-si** **pela** **Tauwema.** **E** **mi** **nanamsa**
and 2.-Redup-be.busy-Pl for Tauwema and 2.Pl.PPIV thought

and you are busy for Tauwema. And your thoughts

olumole-mi: **Ku-savali-si** **pela** **m** **valu** **ituali**
inside-2.Pl.PPIV 2.-be.busy-Pl for hm village other

inside you: Are you busy for – hm – another village

45

kena pela Tauwema?

or for Tauwema

or for Tauwema?

After mentioning that he will now come to his fourth point⁸ he explicitly addresses the children as children of Tauwema, as children who live and work in this village and who are busy for it, that is to say that they offer their services for the village community (lines 41-43). He wants to know what they think about his next question, namely whether they would like to be busy and offer their services for Tauwema or for another village? (line 44-45). Keda'ila's question is answered by two children in the expected way (line 46):

Children:**Pela Tauwema!**

for Tauwema

For Tauwema!

Again Keda'ila takes up this answer, repeats it and explicitly states that the children have spiritualized their solidarity with their village community (lines 47-48):

Keda'ila:**Pela Tauwema. E gugwadi si nanamsa olopola**

for Tauwema and children 3.Pl.PPIII thought inside

*For Tauwema. And the children's inner thoughts***si savali makala: pela Tauwema bi-savali-si.**

3.Pl.PPIII busy like for Tauwema 3.Fut-be.busy-Pl

(for) their being busy (are) as follows: for Tauwema they will be busy.

This is the third demand Keda'ila is exacting on the children: They have to strive for knowledge at school, they have to use their acquired "**kabitam**" solely for the benefit of their maternal kinspersons, and they have to offer their services exclusively for Tauwema

expressing their solidarity with the village where they live. In what follows (lines 49-57) Keda'ila elaborates on this point:

E beya kwe-yu, kwe-yu-vela nanamsa.
 and here CP.general-two CP.general-two-Emph thought
And here (are) two thoughts.

50

E kwe-tolu-la nanamsa bita-tota-si:
 and CP.general-three-Emph thought 1.incl.Fut-stand-Pl
And we will step on a third thought:

Gwadi gudi-tala gudi-tala olopola Tauwema, e bi-ke'ula
 child CP.child-one CP.child-one inside Tauwema yes 3.Fut-carry
Every child in Tauwema, yes, will carry

ala vilavila, bi-pelasi pela tommote-la Tauwema.
 3.PPII share 3.Fut-help for people-Emph Tauwema
its share, it will help the people of Tauwema.

Gala pela bi-kau vilavila ma-na-kwa kena
 not for 3.Fut-take share Dem-Dem-CP.general or
It will not take its share like this or

bi-kibubwati bi-pilasi-ga bi-la bi-pilasi
 3.Fut-be.oriented 3.Fut-help-Emph 3.Fut-go 3.Fut-help
it will be oriented (so that) it will really help (that) it will go and help

55

tommota ituali, gala! E-savali-si e-bwetukula-si bi-pilasi-si
 people other no 3.-be.busy 3.-work.hard-Pl 3.Fut-help-Pl
other people, no! They are busy they work hard and they will help

⁸ Note the use of the subject prefix of 1st person inclusive marked for future tense in

pela wala Tauwema tommota-la: tauwau vivila
 for only Tauwema people-Emph men women
only the Tauwema people, indeed: men, women

deli gugwadi deli nunumwaya.
 with children with old.women
and children and old women.

He not only repeats his demand for village solidarity emphasizing that every child in Tauwema will contribute to the benefit of the village community and help the people of Tauwema in their daily routines (lines 51-52). He also explicitly excludes that the children may even think of helping other people who do not live in Tauwema (lines 53-55), and then rephrases once more his request for the children's solidarity with the people of Tauwema (lines 55-57). After this he mentions that he wants to make one more point (line 58) and he continues as follows (lines 59-62)

E taga kwe-tala katubuyoyu olopola e-sisu:
 yes but CP.general.one admonition inside 3.-be
Yes, but one admonition remains inside:

Toginigini bi-vini-si, mokwita bubuna tokarevaga.
 pupils 3.Fut-work.hard true custom person.with.responsibility
(The) pupils will work hard, (and) this is the correct custom of a person with responsibility:

60

Avelai bubune-la bwena, e, m-to-na
 who custom-3.PPIV good yes Dem-CP.human-Dem
Whose customs (are) good, yes, this one

vilavila bi-kau. Avelai bubune-la gaga gala

the verbal expression "**bitavakelasi**" in line 40.

share 3.Fut-take who custom-3.PPIV bad not
will take his/her share. Whose customs (are) bad won't

vilavila bi-kau.
 share 3.Fut-take
take his/her share.

The schoolchildren will work hard - as any other responsible person within the community of Tauwema. Hard work is good custom, and people whose customs are good can rely on the fact that the community will reward them - they can always take their share in the social and economic welfare of the village; however, those people whose customs are bad can not.⁹ With the use of the archaic form "**avelai**" of the pronoun "**avela**" ("who") Keda'ila marks the seriousness and the traditional validity of this maxim.

After this culmination of his speech Keda'ila finishes his "education of the children in the good customs of Tauwema village" with the following summary of his main points (lines 63-77) and a comparison between the Trobriand Islanders and white people and their search for knowledge:

Gugwadi olopola si paisewa
 children inside 3.Pl.PPIII work
(The) children (immersed) in their work

i-si-savali-si, i-ne-ne'i-si pela wala kabitam.
 3.-Redup-be.busy-Pl 3.-search-Pl for only knowledge
they are busy, they search only for knowledge.

65

E kabitam-gwa olopola e-sisu sena mwau sene-la.
 and knowledge-Emph inside 3.-be very hard very-Emph
And to have the knowledge inside is very very hard indeed.

⁹ Again, this reminds one of Max Weber's "Protestant Ethics" (1905)

Bogwa ta-kamituli-si ma-kada-si-na keda
 already 1.incl-reveal-Pl Dem-CP.road-Pl-Dem road

Already we revealed that these roads

olopola pe'ulaki bi-bani-si, e tuta oluvi
 inside strenuous 3.Fut-find-Pl and time afterwards

inside will be strenuous to find, and (in) the time afterwards

asi bwena bi-bani-si. E yam kwe-tala
 3.P.PPII well.being 3.Fut-find-Pl and day CP.general-one

they will find their well-being. And day by

kwe-tala olopola si pasiewa bogwa makala.
 CP.general-one inside 3.Pl.PPIII work already like

day in their work (it will be) like (this).

70

E-savali-si i-bwetupula-si i-ne-ne'i-si pela wala kabitam.
 3.-be.busy.Pl 3.-work.hard-Pl 3.-Redup-search-Pl for only knowledge

They are busy, they work hard, they search for knowledge only.

Gala makala dimdim, dimdim kabitam si vavagi,
 not like white.people white.people knowledge 3.Pl.PPIII thing

(It is) not like (with) white people, white people – knowledge (is) their thing

e yakamesi to-bwabwau gala. Kabitam sena mwau
 and we CP.human-black not knowledge very hard

but not with us black people. Knowledge – (it is) very hard

ala paisewa, i-gaga bagula yakamesi.
 3.PPII work 3.-be.bad garden we.(excl.)

its work, (this) is bad – the garden is ours (our thing).

E pela-ga ginigini: olumolela gugwadi e-bani-si mwau,

and for-Emp writing inside children 3.-find-Pl hard

And with respect to learning how to write: the children find it hard,

75

bi-savali-si **pe'ula** **pela** **kabitam** **e** **si** **savali**
3.-Fut-be.busy-Pl strong for knowledge and 3.Pl.PPIV smartness

they will be busy with all their strength for (achieving) knowledge, and their smartness

olopola. **Bogwa** **la-taniku** **ma-kada-si-na.** **A-doki**
inside already 3.Past-unknot Dem-way-Pl-Dem 1.-think

(will be) inside (of them). I already unknotted these ways. I think

bogwa **makala** **olopola** **buki.** **Bog(wa)** **e-okwa.**
already like inside book already 3.-finish

(it is) already like this inside the book. It is already finished (the speech).

Keda'ila states - in a probably provocative vein - that all the children are immersed in their work, that they are busy in searching for "**kabitam**". (lines 63-64). He concedes again that it is very hard to acquire knowledge and to have it "inside" (line 65, see also line 63). This expression refers to the fact that according to the Trobriand Islanders' indigenous and by now archaic belief system, the human belly functions as the store or, if you like, the memory for magical formulae and other forms of knowledge (see Malinowski 1922: 408-409; Senft 1998: 88-90); thus in this view knowledge is "**olopola**" - "inside", that is "**o lopo-la**" - "in belly-his", "in the belly". Keda'ila takes up this idea when he points out that he has revealed in his speech that it will be difficult to find the roads to acquire knowledge and even strenuous and painful to construct these roads to knowledge inside one's body; however, he also points out that once they have achieved this, the children will feel well again (lines 66-68). To busily strive for "**kabitam**" will be their daily routine (lines 68-70).

Keda'ila then compares the Trobriand Islanders, the "**tobwabwau**" - "the black people" with the "**dimdim**", the "white people". He states that "**kabitam**" is the white person's "thing" or domain, but not the domain of the Trobriand Islanders. To acquire "knowledge" means hard work - and Keda'ila ironically concludes that this is bad because it means that the domain of the Trobriand Islanders is not knowledge but their gardens and gardening (lines 71-73). This contradicts the main points of his speech - and therefore I think

one has to interpret this utterance as a provocation for the schoolchildren to do their very best so that they can compete with the Whites in their country. This reading becomes plausible when we realize that immediately after this almost resignative note which gets some additional support by Keda'ila's statement that the schoolchildren find it hard to learn how to write (line 74), he again emphasizes that the schoolchildren will do whatever they can to achieve "**kabitam**" and that they will become smart and intelligent people (lines 75-76).

He finishes his talk by pointing out that in his speech he has paved the way that leads towards knowledge - unknotting its various paths (line 76). This is obviously his personal assessment of his speech. Keda'ila then briefly and jokingly refers to my work insinuating that his speech will soon be transcribed and stored in my notebook (lines 76-77). And he finishes his speech with the ritualized formula "**bogwa eokwa**" - "(it is) already finished" (line 78).

2. 2 The ideology of competition and cooperation transmitted in Keda'ila's speech

Keda'ila's "education of the children in the good customs of Tauwema village" is relatively short - it lasts for about 5 ½ minutes. The structure of this speech event is presented in Figure 1. I just want to emphasize here the following observations once again before I summarize the main points of his speech.

What is most striking here is the fact that "**kabitam**" in Keda'ila's speech - and in his reading of the concept - does not refer to the traditional concept of the Trobriand Islanders. At school the children do not learn how to become a mastercarver, or an expert magician with specialization in one or more of the various forms of Trobriand magic, or an expert healer, or an expert canoe builder and navigator; they learn how to read and write, how to do arithmetics, they get instructed in geography and biology and in other disciplines of Western type and origin (see e.g. McInnes 1995). Keda'ila tries to motivate his audience to acquire the "**kabitam**" that is codified in Papua New Guinean curricula, most of which are based on Australian theories of education and the respective Australian teaching aids. However, Keda'ila points out that to become a "**tokabitam**" in this field is as difficult and burdensome as to become a "**tokabitam**" in the traditional domains of Trobriand culture! Moreover, this striving for the modern forms of "**kabitam**" at school is competitive, too, because only the best pupils will be recognized by the other Islanders as the new "**tokabitam**" of post-colonial times. To be publicly recognized and estimated as a "**tokabitam**" has always been a matter of prestige, status and power on the Trobriand Islands - this will be the benefit for all the costs

the schoolchildren will take upon themselves in the years to come. And with this argument Keda'ila is on firm traditional grounds of Trobriand culture again.

The Trobriand "**tokabitam**" have always been forced to proof their faculties in their deeds and actions. Thus, the piece of art created by a mastercarver was the proof of his "**kabitam**" (see Scoditti 1990), and magicians like for example weather magicians had to proof over and over again that their magic was not only powerful but also more powerful than the magic of other magicians once they agreed to engage in it. The results of their magical deeds were easy to observe, and if they would have failed with their magic they would have lost their reputation and their face in the Trobriand society (see Senft 1997a; Weiner 1976: 203f.). The schoolchildren, the future "**tokabitam**" of modern times will face the same challenges: according to Keda'ila they, too, have to proof their competence over and over again to ensure their public reputation - and this implies that they have to compete with each other in the same ways as the traditional "**tokabitam**" had to proof the power of their faculties in competition with each other.

Keda'ila emphasizes the importance of exclusively supporting one's matrilineal clanspersons (K VII). This part of Keda'ila's speech highlights the strong undercurrents of rivalry and competition between the four main clans and their subclans in the hierarchically structured Trobriand society that go back to time immemorial (see Malinowski 1929: 417-421). Whoever has achieved "**kabitam**" is compelled to use it first and foremost - and if possible even exclusively - in cooperation with, and for the benefit of, his or her matrilineal clanspersons. This rule and principle for competition and cooperation guides almost all social behavior on the Trobriands.

However, Keda'ila somehow relativizes this strict verdict. He demands them to offer their services also - but here again exclusively - to the village community of Tauwema. With this demand, however, Keda'ila severely weakens his former claim for exclusively supporting matrilineal clanspersons. The society of the Trobriand Islanders is matrilineal, but with patrilocal residence. Thus, many women leave the villages where they have lived with their parents when they marry and move to the village of their husband to live there with him. The children, however, that come of these marriages have most of their matrilineal clanspersons in their mothers' villages. Therefore, Keda'ila's demand for extending the cooperation from the matrilineal clanspersons to the village community in which the future "**tokabitam**" live is quite contradictory to his demand for clan solidarity and puts the children in a kind of social dilemma. The fact that Keda'ila does not seem to be aware of this indicates the severe contradictions in a society torn between traditional and modern values.

Figure 1: The structure of Keda'ila's "education of the children in the good customs of Tauwema village" (K = Keda'ila; Ch = Child / Children)

| | | |
|--------|---|---------------|
| K I | Introduction and 1st question "What do you want" | (lines 1-5) |
| Ch I | Answer: " kabitam " | (line 6) |
| K II | Reassuring 1st question: " kabitam "? | (line 7) |
| Ch II | Answer: Yes | (line 8) |
| K III | The difficult, tiresome, and painful road to " kabitam " and the benefit that people will know who has acquired it | (lines 9-21) |
| K IV | 2nd question "Where will " kabitam " appear?" | (lines 22-23) |
| Ch III | Answer: In deeds | (line 24) |
| K V | Elaboration on deeds as proof for " kabitam " | (lines 25-27) |
| K VI | 3rd question: " <i>Cui bono</i> - all people or the relatives?" | (lines 28-31) |
| Ch IV | Answer: For the relatives | (line 32) |
| K VII | Emphasis on support of the matrilineal clanpersons | (lines 33-39) |
| K VIII | 4th question "Are you busy for Tauwema or for another village?" | (lines 40-45) |
| Ch V | Answer: For Tauwema | (line 46) |
| K IX | Demanding exclusive solidarity with the village community of Tauwema | (lines 47-48) |
| K X | Elaboration on this demand | (lines 49-57) |
| K XI | Responsible persons will get their share in the social and economic welfare of the village | (lines 58-62) |
| K XII | Summary and final comparison of Trobriand Islanders with white people | (lines 63-76) |
| K XIII | Assessment of the speech | (line 76) |
| K XIV | Joking reference to the documentation of his speech and closing formula | (lines 76-77) |

He also points out that anybody who is willing to take over responsibilities in his or her village community can expect to get their share in the social and economic welfare of the village. This assurance of the validity of the Trobriand social contract for everybody who accepts the Trobriand (almost Protestant) ethics of hard work is the culmination of Keda'ila's speech. Resorting to these traditional ethics provides security not only for the schoolchildren, but also for other adolescents and younger people who are confronted with new Western ideas, values and standards in their changing culture.

In what follows I summarize the main points of Keda'ila's speech to elucidate how he transmits important aspects of the Trobriand ideology of competition and cooperation:

- The schoolchildren have to work as hard as possible to acquire "**kabitam**" at school.
- This "**kabitam**" will become manifest in their future deeds and thus will be socially acknowledged by the Trobriand Islanders.
- The children will use their "**kabitam**" as exclusively as possible for the benefit of their matrilineal clanspersons.
- The children will also use their "**kabitam**" to solely support the village community of Tauwema.
- With their "**kabitam**" the schoolchildren will become persons who are willing and able to take over responsibilities in their society, and therefore they can trust in getting their share in the social and economic welfare of their village community.
- Despite the fact that white persons may acquire the modern forms of "**kabitam**" easier than the Trobriand schoolchildren, people trust in their diligence, smartness and intelligence.

There is competition and cooperation in both the acquisition and use of "**kabitam**" on the individual level, on the matrilineal clan level, on the village community level, and on the broader national and even international level. However, the Trobriand ethics which are based on the dialectic interplay between competition and cooperation will offer social and economic security to everybody who is willing to engage in this kind of competition and cooperation and thus takes over his or her social responsibilities. This is the gist of the Trobriand ideology that Keda'ila transmits in his speech to the schoolchildren.

3. Concluding remarks:

An outlook on radiations of globalization processes on the Trobriand Islands

Keda'ila classified his speech as a form of "education of the children in the good customs of Tauwema". However, the emphasis he puts on the modern forms of "**kabitam**" that are taught at the schools on the Trobriand Islands reveals that some of the 'good customs' have been changing over the last 25 years. As mentioned above most of the traditional forms of "**kabitam**" like the art of carving, knowledge of magic, skills in canoe building, sailmaking, and traditional navigation have lost their importance in modern Trobriand society; they have been in decline for years by now. When so-called curio-dealers from Alotau, the capital of Milne Bay Province, and Port Moresby, the national capital, decided some years ago to regularly buy Trobriand carvings they started a wave of mass production of carvings on the Islands. Pieces of excellent quality were bought at the same prize as pieces of much less quality. Master-carvers not only lost their apprentices who learned the art and the magic of carving over many years of apprenticeship because their skills were good enough for the demands of the market, they themselves were also forced to work faster and without care if they wanted to make money in this field - their very own domain (see Senft 1992: 71). After almost a hundred years of mission activities Christian missionaries finally managed to supersede the Trobriand magicians (see Senft 1997a&b), fiber-glass dinghies - the so-called banana boats with outboard engines are gradually replacing the big "**masawa**" canoes with their pandanus sails, and the knowledge of how to build these canoes and to make these sails is gradually getting lost (see Senft 1992: 75). These processes of culture change which originate in the ever increasing contact with, and influence of, forms of modern capitalist economy have resulted in the shift of what kind of form of "**kabitam**" is regarded as most important on the Trobriand Islands. And the fact that some of the pupils who finished High School, left the Trobriands, and got well-paid jobs on the mainland that enabled them to send back money to their relatives and at the same time secure their influence in their former village community convinced the majority of the Trobriand Islanders that it is no longer necessary and appropriate these days to strive for traditional forms of "**kabitam**" but for the knowledge that can be acquired in the Papua New Guinean school and education system. Thus, it is certainly a 'new', a more recent custom that Keda'ila propagates in his speech.

However, a rather old Trobriand custom supports this new goal to strive for school education, namely the fundamental principle of competition and competitiveness in the Trobriand Islanders' society. People like Keda'ila have realized that the increasing importance

of Western capitalist market economy has already cast its shadow on the Trobriands and the smart people of his generation know that their children soon will have to compete with other Papua New Guineans as well as with Australians and other (not necessarily white) foreigners for jobs to secure their standard of living. Moreover, over the last years the population of the Trobriand Islands has exploded, due to missionaries' activities against traditional and modern forms of birth control. This has resulted in shortening the periods during which the bush could overgrow former gardenland that was gained through slash-and-burn cultivation from between five or six years to three or even two years to get bigger crops. It is foreseeable that the soil will soon be overcultivated - and this means that people have to leave the Trobriands and live somewhere else. A good school education will help these people to adapt to these impending changes in their living conditions. Thus, competition will remain a constitutive feature in the life of a Trobriander. However, the relatively well established and well-off community of Trobriand Islanders in Port Moresby has shown that the Trobriand Islanders also stick to their custom of cooperation, especially in their competition with other Papua New Guineans (see Battaglia n.d.). And this community has also confirmed that the Trobriand ethics work not only on the Islands but also elsewhere: these ethics, based on the dialectic interplay between competition and cooperation, offer social and economic security to everybody who is willing to engage in this kind of competition and cooperation and who takes over social responsibilities.

Abbreviations:

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | first person |
| 2 | second person |
| 3 | third person |
| CP | classificatory particle, classifier |
| Dem | Demonstrative |
| Emph | Emphasis |
| excl. | exclusive |
| Fut | Future |
| incl. | inclusive |
| Loc | Locative |
| Pl | Plural |

| | |
|-------|--|
| PPII | possessive pronoun (intermediate degree of possession) |
| PPIII | possessive pronoun (alienable possession) |
| PPIV | possessive pronoun (inalienable possession) |
| Redup | Reduplication |

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