INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

1. 1. The Wolio language is spoken on the south-west coast of the isle of Buton, south-east of Celebes, by the inhabitants of the capital Baubau, the residence of the Sultan Kota Wolio (a little landinward from Baubau), two villages south of Baubau: Meomeo and Bonebone, and five villages north of Baubau: Kadosomoko, Kadosokatapi, Waruruma, and Bungi. Besides it is spoken by the inhabitants of Tolandona, on the east coast of the isle of Muna, and the isle commonly known as Pulau Makasar (Wolio: Liwuto Makasu) 1) lying between Muna and Buton. On the northern border of the language area there are two villages where Munanese is spoken as well as Wolio: Lowulowu (on Buton) and Baruta (on Muna).

Outside the proper territory of the language it is spoken by people belonging to the nobility (La Ode) living scattered over the country. The total number of Wolio speakers does not surpass 25,000. As Wolio is of old the official language of the Sultanate, some knowledge of it is also found with officials of lower rank (village chiefs etc.) who do not belong to the La Ode. To this day Wolio still holds the position of official language in this region.

Wolio belongs to the Indonesian branch of Austronesian 2). In its vocabulary it shows many borrowings from cognate languages (esp. Malay), from Arabic (often evidently with Malay as intermediary), Dutch etc.

From 1936 till 1942 the Wolio language was studied by the governmental linguist Dr. E. J. van den Berg. Alas, this scholar was killed in 1942 during the war on Celebes and all his written material was lost. The quarterly reports in which Dr. van den Berg reported progress of his researches also contain remarks on Wolio. Reading them one gets an

1) The origin of this name is discussed by E. J van den Berg in Cultureel Indië vol. I (1939), p. 366.
2) Thé traditional terminology and division is maintained here, because a comprehensive investigation on modern methods into the relationship of these languages is still to be done.
impression of the great quantity of important linguistic material that was collected by him but was lost by the violence of the war.

1. 2. Wolio literature consists for the greater part of unwritten folk-tales, songs, etc. But there also exists a written literature in manuscripts. Of this literature a poem called *Kanturuna mohelana* (The lamp of the sailor) is best known.

For writing Wolio, Arabic character is most used, but formerly Macassar script seems to have been used also. In recent times the modern school-education has propagated the use of Roman character. But to people having passed through such schools Roman letters are so closely connected with the Malay language that they usually write even personal correspondence in Malay. So it may be said that Wolio as a written language is falling into decay.

1. 3. The description is mainly based on the information given by La Ode Manarfa, son of the present Sultan, and supplementary information given by his wife, Wa Ode Dawia.

La Ode Manarfa spent the first five years of his life on Buton. Then he went to Macassar to go to the elementary school. He stayed there during eight years visiting his native country only during holidays. During this time he learned Dutch in the school and spoke Malay, Macassar and Buginese outside the school. Then he went to Djakarta where he visited the Secondary School (A.M.S.). There he very often spoke Dutch. When he was 21 years old he went home and stayed there during the Japanese occupation and the first time after. During that period he mainly spoke Wolio. In the beginning of 1947 he went to the Netherlands to study at the University of Leiden. His wife grew up in Buton and came to the Netherlands shortly after him. She then had some knowledge of Malay but learned Dutch only after her arrival in the Netherlands.

1. 4. The description given here is meant as an account of present-day Wolio. Questions of historical or comparative linguistics are in general left out of discussion or, in some cases, are discussed in the notes.

As this description is meant to be a contribution to linguistic knowledge rather than to linguistic theory, very few definitions are given so that linguistic terms which are generally accepted (e.g. predicate, subject, etc.) are used without explanation. Certain changes are sometimes (esp. in morphology) described in terms of processes, because this seemed to be the most practical way of description.

1. 5. The examples are preferably chosen from the texts which are
added to the description. The material for the greater part of these texts was supplied by Mr. Manarfa. Only nrs. XII, XIII, and XV were written down at his request by a native clerk in Arabic character with an imperfect Roman transcription added. As the contents range from daily conversation to traditional tales, several differences in style may be found.

References to the texts are made in the description by a Roman cipher followed by an Arabic one, placed between brackets, e.g. (X, 5).