# POEMS CHANTS and LULLABIES IN THE MOTUNA LANGUAGE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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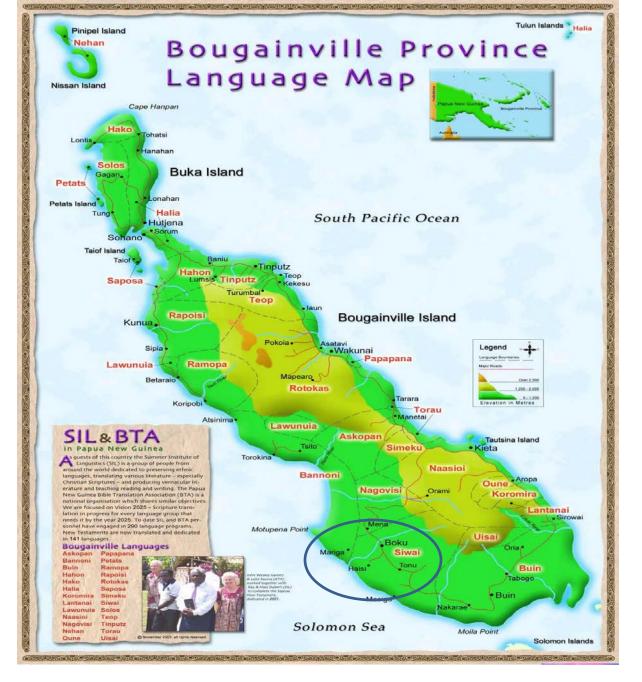University of Goroka

# LOCATION OF MOTUNA LANGUAGE

- Southern part of the Automous Region of Bougainville

- Spoken by the people of Siwai

- Covers the Tonu, Haisi, Boku, Mena, Mosigo and Mariga areas

- Estimate speakers is about 6600 (no date)

# The family tree of the Motuna language

Non- Austronesia ⟶ Proto-Language

East Papuan ⟶ Phylum

South Bougainville ⟶ Stock

Buin (Telei) ⟶ Family

Motuna ⟶ Language

# Brief description of the Siwai people

- As the Siwai society is an oral society, speech is an important part of our life. In speech we express ourselves.

- We use poems, chants and lullabies that are sung for different purposes or occasions. We use poems as songs too.

- The poems are about the relationship between man and the environment around him and also about the man and his inner being expressed in the songs he sings

# Focus of the presentation

- Poems are, expressions of the feelings or emotions that one has towards love, happiness, sorrow or anger and /or appreciation towards the creation/nature, etc.

- Chants: a)are melodic sounds of the voice

                 b) to recite something in a monotonous

                    repetitive tone

- Lullabies –are songs that are sung to children to put the baby/child to sleep.

# Main discussion

- Poems (sirosi) are a vital part of the Siwai culture. Poems in the Siwai society are rarely spoken but are sung in times of war, victory, good harvest, success, etc. or they can be sung just for entertainment. It can be sung as a group or individually.

# Styles used in the poetic songs

- The words in the poems are such that in the lines of the songs there are some words that are repeated in the following lines and the repetition is usually a synonym and it appears several times in a single verse or a supposedly stanza and it continues until the poem or song ends.

# Example of a poetic songs

- Hongorai rono **simosimo romo**

  porohei rono **ngomongomo romo**

  nuro saikoiyinno **kotuna**

  nuro siruhennuno **pituna**

  huhu karo **kahropito**

  marawo karo **keropito...**

- Nunu nunu kong tungori

  tungori karuro kungko' noro'

  *tikahe* meu

  *meuke* meu

  *tino'ki noro'ki*

  *sukonomo* nongoporo

   *rehnomo* nongo poro...

# Words used in the song

| Language word | Meaning |
|---|---|
| 1a) simo simo romo | Moving down stream |
| b) ngomo ngomo romo | Following down stream |
| 2a) kotuna | To be with |
| b) pituna | To be attach to |
| 3a) kahropito | Opening (wings) |
| b) keropito | Opening(as in the action of legs) |
| 4a)tikahe meu | Initial stage of carving |
| b)meuke meu | Careful carving |
| | |

# Chants

- In the Siwai society chants are very common as it is a way of communicating with the surrounding or the nature, as already stated Siwai people had a strong connection with their surrounding environment.

# Styles used in chants

- The styles of the chants are just the same with that of the poetic song but the only difference is that the poems are sung as songs and chants are recited or spoken.

# Example of a chant

- *Pomah ikimah*

  *wonah rokonah*

  kukuhiku

  *Uruwiki teruina*

  *Kokisiki naruina*

  Rua ye rua

# Lullabies

- Lullabies in the Siwai culture: the lullabies that are sung to the children in the Siwai society are mostly name calling songs in which the mother or sitter sings in order to put the baby/ child to sleep.

# Style used in lullabies

- In lullabies, the repetition is rarely used but a different style comes in which is name calling. The songs are very short but are repeated until the singer feels tired of singing it.

# Example of lullabies

- Example 1) Riwo,(name of the child)  riwo,
     ihapung ong kewa surei  morata
     sariata aruki ku'kui rung , ro riwo
     itirana mape.

     2) Tuha (name of child) ne rowako
     pakong sino rohe, sino rohe ah ro
     pehkita

# CONCLUSION

- Unfortunately these oral traditions today are rarely  practised in the Siwai society.

- The lullabies are slowly being replaced by English nursery rhymes and other songs like "twinkle twinkle little star"

- Today, poetic songs are dying out and people resort to modern music to express their feelings by composing songs for the music industry.

# Contributing factors

- Education

- Intermarriages

- Modern technology

# References

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# THANKYOU

# ANY QUESTIONS?