

# Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea Abstracts for 2016

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***Benjamin Pehrson***

SIL PNG

## **Title: Complex pronoun marking and language change in Romei Onnele**

As one of the furthest north-western language varieties of the Torricelli family, the Romei Onnele dialect of Northern One displays a rich pronoun system that provides a remarkable example of language change. The complex Romei Onnele pronoun system is built upon a set of seven basic free pronouns and a set of three emphatic free pronouns. It includes a first person plural clusivity distinction, a feature that appears elsewhere among the extensive subgrouping of the West Wapei dialect chain, yet otherwise is rare within this linguistically diverse region of northcentral New Guinea.

A complete lack of gender distinction is also quite unique within the Torricelli family. Free subject pronouns are syntactically optional since verbs are regularly marked for person and number with bound subject pronoun prefixes, and free object pronouns are sometimes also optional for a limited number of verbs that include an object pronoun suffix. An alternative set of three emphatic pronouns are used only in combination with the basic pronouns.

Asymmetry in the paradigm of basic and emphatic free pronouns provides a clue for understanding diachronic developments of the Onnele pronoun system. These include the emergence of the clusivity distinction and disyllabic forms among the basic free pronouns as well as neutralization among the emphatic forms. An extensive number of dual and compound pronouns are formed by combining one or more of the free pronouns with a verbal form meaning 'and' or 'with' along with its bound subject and object affixes.

Ordering appears somewhat significant. Thus, the complex system of free pronouns in Romei Onnele is quite productive, including over 130 forms. Perhaps the compound forms are better understood as verb serialization for which some of the more common forms are in the process of becoming grammaticized.

Carl R Whitehead,

SIL-PNG

## **Title: Sixty years of sound change in Menya, with ramifications for orthography and grammar**

The Menya language is spoken in the Menyamya District of Morobe Province. Apart from a short period in the early 1930s, contact with the world beyond their immediate neighbours began in 1950, when the Australian Administration established a station at Menyamya and they were joined by the Australian Lutheran Mission. There are now at least 25,000 speakers of the language, in three mutually intelligible dialects.

The earliest records of the language are a series of recordings of Biblical stories recorded by Gospel Recordings Inc., in (or before) 1950, working with a native speaker who was resident in Bulolo. The Rev. Murray Jordan, working with the Lutheran Mission, lived among the Menya people from 1954 until 1964. From all reports, he was a fluent speaker of the language. He developed (and substantially modified) an orthography and wrote preliminary phonology and (pedagogical) grammar papers, and compiled significant dictionary materials.

SIL work in Menya was begun by Len & Amy Chipping in 1971-73, and taken over by the current author and his wife in 1975, but the earlier materials only became available in later years. The current paper looks at a number of changes in both the phonetic inventory and phonological system based on comparison between Jordan's materials, and the author's own materials gathered since 1975. It will also look at some of the ramifications of those changes for the orthographic system, and on the verb morphology, where some forms have been neutralized and some morphemes are undergoing semantic shifts.

## Two *be* Or Not Two *be*? An Areal Pattern of Macrofunctionality in the Cenderawasih Bay Region

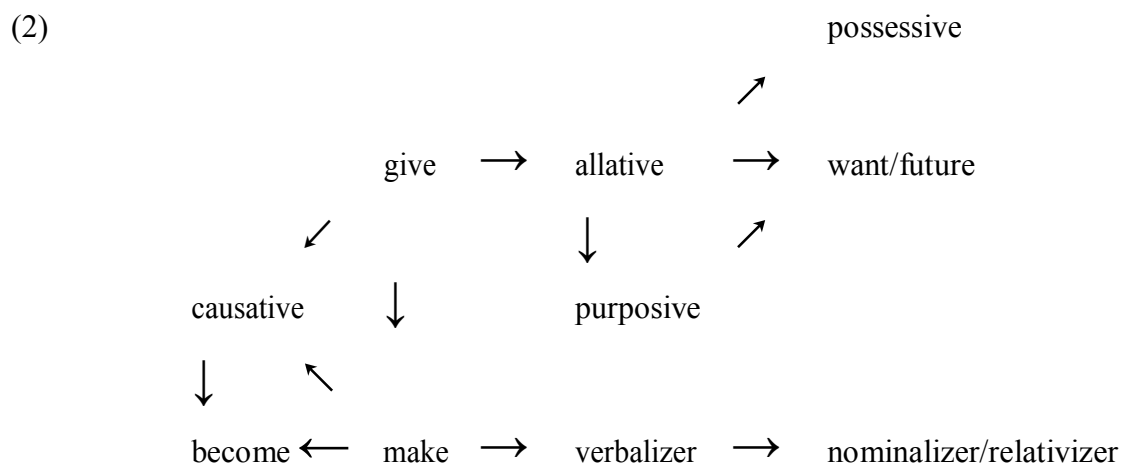
David Gil

Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History

In languages of the Biakic subgroup of the South Halmahera West New Guinea branch of Austronesian, there is a single form *be* with a wide range of functions, including the following:

- |     |                   |                             |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) | (a) 'give'        | (f) 'make'/'do'             |
|     | (b) allative      | (g) causative               |
|     | (c) purposive     | (h) 'become'                |
|     | (d) 'want'/future | (i) verbalizer              |
|     | (e) possessive    | (j) nominalizer/relativizer |

The question arises whether these different functions are related and if so how. This paper provides evidence for the following patterns of grammaticalization relating the above functions diachronically:



The focus of this paper is on the connection between the 'give' and 'make'/'do' functions. A cross-linguistic survey, some interim results of which are presented in Figures 1 and 2 below, shows that cases of the same word meaning both 'give' and 'make'/'do' (represented by red dots) are vanishingly rare throughout the world's languages. However, in the Cenderawasih Bay region, 'give'-'make'/'do' identity is a common areal feature, occurring not only in Biakic, but, manifest with other forms, in at least two other Austronesian languages on the island of Yapen, and, in addition, in the neighboring (unrelated) non-Austronesian languages Meyah and Hatam on the Bird's Head mainland. This areal pattern suggests that the incoming Austronesian languages adopted 'give'-'make'/'do' identity from the non-Austronesian languages that were there before them. It also suggests that 'give'-'make'/'do' identity in the region in question does not represent accidental homophony but rather a case of synchronic macrofunctionality, with a single form being associated with a single broad function corresponding to multiple narrower functions in other languages. Accordingly, in Biakic languages, there is just one *be*, not two (or more).

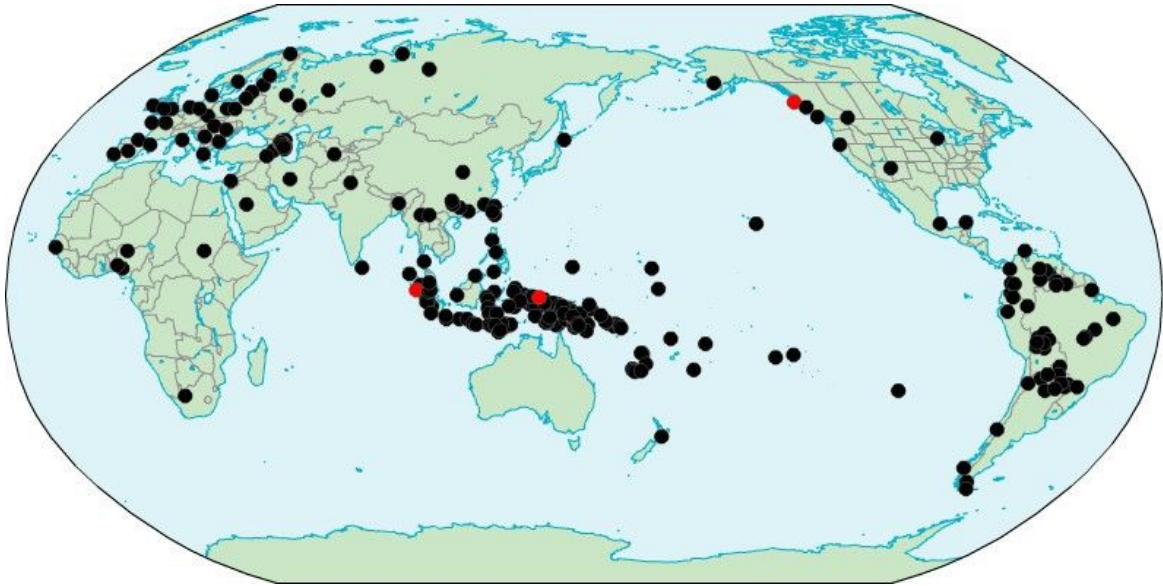


Figure 1: 'give'-'make'/'do' Identity: Worldwide

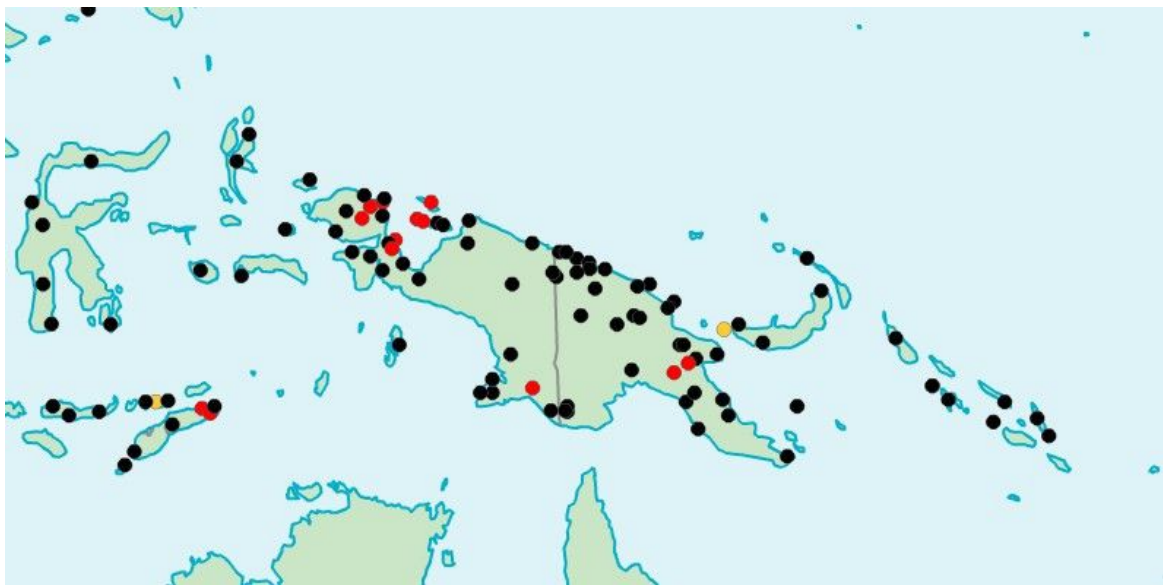


Figure 2: 'give'-'make'/'do' Identity: New Guinea

**Name:** David LOEA (BA Theology, current MA student in Translation with UFS, SA)

**Submission date:** 02/06/2016

**Position:** Training Coordinator - PILAT

### **Abstract**

#### **Translation equivalence in theory and practice. A case study from Mailu.**

This paper looks at a brief section of the Old Testament (Joshua 5:1-6) in the Mailu language and compares this with the English source text (NIV), on which the translation was based. This is done to analyze and test Mona Baker's (2011 second edition titled; *In Other Words: A course book on Translation*, London/NY: Routledge) levels of equivalence in order to identify specific issues and the strategies for solving them.

Mailu or Magi (Ethnologue code: mgu) is spoken by some 8,500 people in Central Province. Mailu was classified as a Papuan (non-Austronesian) language in the late 1890s when the first missionaries arrived. However, more recent studies have shown that Mailu also has many Austronesian features, presumably due to contact with neighboring Austronesian-speaking communities. The paper analyzes translation equivalence in terms of lexical choices (including euphemisms and idioms), grammatical choices, dealing with names, and cultural practices.

**Don Daniels**

## **A systemic perspective on tense systems in the Sogeram languages**

While our understanding of the development of verbal tense–aspect–mood morphology has advanced considerably in the last few decades (Heine & Kuteva 2002; Hopper & Traugott 2003, *inter alia*), diachronic change in systems of verbal morphology, understood holistically, remains under-studied. This shortcoming is even more pronounced when it comes to Papuan languages, which often possess very rich tense systems. This paper describes how one such verbal system, the system of tense, has changed in the Sogeram languages, a group of Trans New Guinea languages spoken in Madang Province. The Sogeram languages possess complex tense systems that often make several past remoteness distinctions. Fortunately, many of the forms involved in the expression of different tense meanings are cognate, allowing for a fairly accurate reconstruction of the tense system of Proto-Sogeram, which contained five past tenses (one of which included the present moment in its time reference) as well as a future tense. After reconstructing this system, I discuss how it changed in the different daughter branches of the family, outlining common sources of new tense morphology and frequent patterns of replacement. This paper thus offers a valuable contribution to our understanding of the development of tense systems in general, and to our knowledge of Papuan historical linguistics in particular.

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## **“SIL and Ethnomusicology in Papua New Guinea”**

**Don Niles**

While SIL’s sixty years of involvement in Papua New Guinea have focussed on the languages of the country, SIL workers have also contributed significantly to studies concerning other aspects of culture, particularly music. As would be expected, this work has often focussed on hymnody and the production of hymnals, but there have also been SIL linguists interested in subjects such as traditional performance and song structure. At various times there have also been ethnomusicologists on staff, one of whom introduced me to Papua New Guinea and ethnomusicology.

My paper will overview such contributions, consider how they relate to music-related writings by non-SIL linguists, and suggest other music-related activities SIL might contribute to.

Equipment required: computer, PowerPoint, software, projector, speakers (maybe)

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## **Early Writing Among Elementary Children from Tigak Language**

One of the goals of writing instruction in elementary grades of Papua New Guinea is to teach children the skills of reading and writing in their home language so that they may be ready for higher level learning in English—a second language. Although the developmental writing process may begin as early as 12 months, emergent writing skills can be traced along with age related changes in young children’s development. Stages of writing development include (1) marks on a piece of paper; (2) scribbling; (3) letter like forms; (4) random letters; (5) invented spelling; and (6) conventional writing. The purpose of this study was to observe emergent writing of 6 to 9 year old students at Kaselok Elementary School in New Ireland Province and compare the findings with examples of early writing stages described in current research. Instructional writing activities in predominantly Tigak classes include letter formation, spelling, word building, sentence building and story writing. Samples of student writing were collected at three grade levels—preparatory, Grades 1 and 2. In this case study, writing samples from six students (two from each elementary grade level) were collected over a period of three months, analyzed, and discussed. In conclusion, recommendations for teacher inservice and comparative research on emergent reading and writing in rural elementary schools are suggested.

Key words: early writing, elementary, writing skills

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**Abstract for LSPNG 2016 presentation by Jed Carter and Sam Smucker:**

## **The Guide: a Participatory Approach for Language Development Planning**

A Guide for Planning the Future of Our Languages (<http://www.sil.org/guide-planning-future-our-language-0>) was developed by SIL as a participatory approach for decision-making during language development planning. The Guide promotes the sociolinguistic self-awareness of language communities, provides a format to visualize and discuss their situation and where they would like to go, and enables a productive decision-making process shared by language communities and SIL-PNG.

This presentation focuses on how the Guide has been adapted for the Sepik and SPES's approach (Sepik Partnership and Engagement Strategy). Some of the core principles behind the Guide do not match with realities in the Sepik, requiring significant adjustment. These realities include small languages, low vitality, extant values and expectations, and limited education.

Some Guide tools have been effective, but others are not suitable or productive. The SPES team, with limited resources, has sought effective ways to facilitate participatory decision-making. Having utilized their adaptation of the Guide in recent months, SPES is examining what additional processes would be helpful and how to take the next steps in language development in the Sepik.

How language communities are approached by service organizations has historically been a contentious issue. The Guide is evidence of the move towards participatory approaches. This presentation will show one way SIL-PNG is approaching and interacting with language communities of PNG while not hiding challenges faced. It will give others involved in similar efforts ideas of specific participatory tools that may help communities and service organizations navigate complex decisions.

# Tok Pisin Phonology; a preliminary study.

## Adult Pilot study

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Curtin University, Perth, Australia.

Various studies have been done of Tok Pisin, the “defacto national language” (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2014) of Papua New Guinea (PNG). None as yet have addressed the normal acquisition of phonology amongst Tok Pisin (TP) speaking children. This has been commenced by this author as a necessary part of providing Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) services to Papua New Guinea children (Maphalala, Pascoe, & Smouse, 2014). Prior to commencing the child study, a pilot study was performed to confirm the description of adult phonology in the literature (Geoff P. Smith, 2013; Mihalic, 1989; Romaine, 1992; Smith, 2002).

As a creole language spanning a variety of sociolinguistic settings, variation is even more of an expected feature in TP than other languages (P. Mulhausler, 1984b; P. Mulhausler, & Dutton, T. E & Romaine, S, 2003). This is due not just to linguistic competence but also performance (Fromkin, 2009) and is subject to the practice of codeswitching between English, vernacular and TP (Paliwala, 2012.). The study tested the hypothesis that this adult population of multi-lingual speakers of TP, Melpa (vernacular) language and English, whose TP has been creolising since the mid twentieth century (G. Sankoff, 1973; G. Sankoff, and Laberge, S, 1972), will have brought changes to the standard TP phonology.

Participants were a Convenience Sample from amongst colleagues, teachers, community members and parents of the children to be studied. They are all members of Melpa substrate language background in the Mt Hagen region. Using a picture stimulus book, the phonology of twelve adult speakers of Creole TP was elicited, recorded and transcribed in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This data was then analysed using Excel and the SIL program ‘Phonology Assistant’. The entire corpus was analysed to examine changes in the phonetic repertoire of the group. Phonetic inventories were analysed individually to determine any creolisations of the phonological inventory and changes to the rules of distribution. In this population there were additions of fricative and affricative phonemes to the phonology and expansion to the rules of distribution. These phonotactic and phonological changes were summarised and used to derive a phonology which is being used to research the phonological development of children aged 3-6 in the Mt Hagen district.

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Title: Evaluation of the PAU Learning Centre.

Author: Jillian Thiele

Citizens of Papua New Guinea (PNG) are aware of the benefits of obtaining post-secondary qualifications, but many grade 12 school leavers do not have the opportunity to attend such institutions, due to limited space. Those students who are able to obtain gain enrolment are regarded as very privileged, but the problem is that many of these elite students struggle academically. It is therefore, important that post-secondary institutions provide avenues for students to acquire the necessary academic skills to succeed in their studies. Responding to this problem, Pacific Adventist University (PAU), in Port Moresby, created the 'Learning Centre' with the main focus of providing the necessary academic support that hopefully will lead to improved academic standards. From two questionnaires, the Learning Centre endeavoured to determine if the aims of the Centre were achieved. Data collected seems to indicate that PAU has been successful. Most of the students who have accessed the services of the Learning Centre demonstrated that their semester GPAs and written assignments greatly improved; has a more positive self-esteem and were more confident in their studies. There was strong evidence that with the correct academic support, academically struggling students can develop into critical thinkers and successfully succeed in their studies

**The Linguistics Society of Papua New Guinea**

**2016 Annual Conference.**

**Presentation Abstract: Jonathan Saras**

Bumbita is a variety of Arapesh and is a Papuan language spoken in the Torricelli Mountains of East and West Sepik provinces. It has few affixes which are mostly pronouns. These affixes undergo morphological processes including prefixation, suffixation and infixation to derive the following functions; person, number, tense and gender in syntax. In comparison with other languages, Bumbita is very interesting because even though these affixes can only be attached to the verbs, the alterations to the verbs have the ability to perform the four functions mention. Furthermore, the pronouns can also be sub-classed according to the functions they perform such as subjective and objective case, dependent possessive and independent possessive case, and reflexive case. Since there is no language development programme in this variety, the purpose of this presentation is to present some interesting findings in Bumbita as a little contribution to language research and preservation.

## *Going and Coming in Urim Kalpm*

Abstract for LSPNG 2016

Joyce Wood

Urim is a Torricelli language of the Sepik Region. This paper will compare the verbs for 'go' and 'come' in Urim with the English verbs 'go' and 'come'. When someone calls to another person to "Come here!" the affirmative response in English is "I'm coming!" However, the corresponding response in Urim is "I'm going!" After introducing Urim motion verbs and their inherent directionality, I will examine the deictics of going and coming in Urim, showing that the speaker is always the deictic centre or centre of reference of an utterance. This has interesting implications for translation between Urim and English, and may be quite common in other Papuan languages.

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## Education for Life

educationforlife@sil.org.pg

Subject: abstract for presentation at LS-PNG meeting

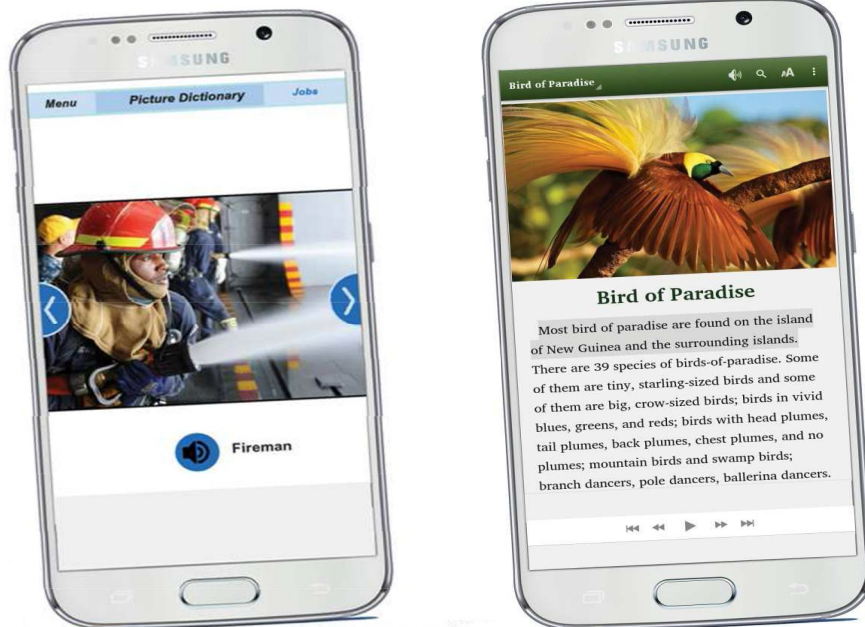
### Prepare PNG students for life in a digital age!

Education for life is a new project run by SIL to help improve education in PNG by using digital mobile technology.

Development in PNG has taken a huge step forward with the coming of mobile technology and easy access is becoming more and more widespread.

Education's role is to equip students for the future. What better way to do that than to help students learn how to use the mobile tools that will be a continual part of their lives?

With many schools in remote locations, the Education for Life app system is built with limited or no Internet access in mind. All apps in the system will operate on any Android device and can be distributed freely via MicroSD cards. Let's create an even playing field where all students, regardless of whether they live in a remote village or in town, will be able to learn through technology.



May Huvi (Miss)

Devare Adventist High School-AROB

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**Topic: Identifying the potential in students**

Abstract

Students come to school to learn. They try their best to speak English with their peers for it is the language of instruction used in the school. They encounter difficulties with school work and yet produce great stuff. They are taught the unknown but also have the potential that teachers might or might not realise. The main talk of the paper will be about the reason why the students at Devare Adventist High School in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville try to improve English language and also identify the potential that the students have.



# Effect of Early Language Education on POMNATH Students' Academic Performance

**Olga TEMPLE,<sup>1</sup> Georgia Guldán,<sup>2</sup> Matthew Maito<sup>3</sup>**

& UPNG linguistics students:

ANDREW Leanne, IPARA Joe, KATI Jordan, LEE Nicole, LIU Fiona, LUNEN Jeremy, MALAGA Daniel, MAUTA Claire, MICHAEL Noranne, MUNDIA Kenneth, MURIKI Keison, PETRUS Nicholas, TINE Mick, SAPAK Anna-Lisa, WARPULU Joanne, WINDUO Cheryl & YOMBA Victor

<sup>1</sup> Correspondent author (SHSS UPNG)

<sup>2</sup> SMHS UPNG

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This paper reports on the study of a possible correlation between the Age of Onset (AO) of second language acquisition (SLA) and the learners' attainment of optimal proficiency in that language (L2). Current research is ambiguous on this issue: some researchers claim that the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) extends to SLA (1; 2; 3; 4), while others (5, 6, 7, 8) deny that physiological maturation of the brain affects the learners' attainment levels in SLA. In the uniquely multilingual setting of Papua New Guinea, where English is the **language of education** at secondary and tertiary levels, resolving this issue is imperative for national development.

This study aimed to expand the scope of our 2015 investigation of the 'Effect of Early Learning Language on UPNG students' academic performance' (9) to National High School level. This paper will describe the methods of data collection and discuss the analysis of the findings of this investigation.

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## Same, identical, or equal? Idematives in languages of PNG

LSPNG 2016  
René van den Berg  
SIL International

**Idematives** is a freshly-coined term to broadly cover constructions or lexemes with a meaning component ‘the same, equal, identical, likewise’ (based on Latin *idem* ‘same’). The following semantic distinctions can be made:

- **True identity** with a single external referent ‘one and the same’. Examples: ‘We have the same father’; ‘I live in the same town as you’.
- **Close similarity**, but not true identity, ‘same kind’. There are different referents, but they are so similar that there is a perceived identicalness. Examples: ‘I notice we are wearing the same shoes’; ‘We drive the same car’.
- **Identicalness** with respect to some concrete or abstract standard. Examples: ‘he is as tall as his dad = they are equally tall = they have the same height; ‘She walks the same way as her mother’.

This presentation looks at a number of languages spoken in PNG (Austronesian and Papuan, as well as Tok Pisin) and tries to answer the following questions. What lexical or morphological means do these languages employ to encode the meaning ‘sameness’? What semantic distinctions are made?

The answers to these questions lead to a preliminary typology of idematives.

The presentation ends with a tentative look at a semantic map that covers idematives, similatives (‘he runs like a deer’) and possibly equatives (‘My father is a teacher’).

# Dialectical differences between North and South Fore (Eastern Highlands)

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The Fore language is spoken in the Okapa District of Eastern highlands Province Of Papua New Guinea. There are approximately 20,000 Fore speakers who are separated by the Wanewindi Mountains into the North and South Fore regions.

There are two dialects, the northern and southern dialect. Anthropological details of the Fore region began to emerge in the early 1950's during the existence of the Kuru disease.

While previous descriptions of Fore have introduced northern Fore and southern Fore as different dialects, no detail account of the differences between the two dialects have been provided so far. In this presentation I would like to illustrate some phonetic, morphological and lexical differences between northern fore and southern fore.

**Robbie Petterson (SIL)**

## **Differences in Phonologies and Orthographies of five North-east Kiwai Dialects.**

There are five dialects grouped under the name North-east Kiwai: Urama, Gibaio, Era-Maipu'a, Kope, and Anigibi. Only two of these (Urama and Gibaio) share a common phonology, which is also the phonology of other Kiwaian languages further west. The other three dialects are on the "cutting edge" of the language family migration inland, and have lost phonemes or merged phonemes, probably through contact with nearby unrelated languages. This paper looks at the sort of sound changes that have taken place in the development of these dialects, and tries to find connections with the sound systems of neighbouring languages. The paper also compares their orthographies; there are two for each dialect: one based on the Roman alphabet, and a Uniskript one. The way that each dialect developed and chose the symbols for the Uniskript dialects is described.

**Robbie Petterson (SIL)**

## **A report on the Kikori Literacy Trials**

In 2015 we carried out a literacy survey of the students at the Kikori Elementary School, and found widespread failure to acquire literacy. We then chose 111 of those students who could speak Motu or Tok Pisin, and divided them up into three classes. We taught each class using a different phonics method for seven weeks, and then measured the literacy levels for the three classes to see how they compared. The methods were: English phonics, Tok Pisin phonics with Roman letters, and Tok Pisin phonics with Uniskript. We found that all three literacy methods brought large improvements, compared with the typical non-phonics English literacy methods used at the school. This paper will discuss the initial survey results, and show what the final test results showed about the three different phonics methods tried.

**Samantha Kusari**

**The Changing Fore Language: Tok pisin verb/adjective + Fore infinitive marker.**

Languages of the world are forever changing and Fore language of Okapa in the Eastern Highlands province is no exception. Over the years the language has changed in terms of its vocabulary and syntax. Much of the change involves borrowing words, especially verbs and adjectives from Tok Pisin and incorporating it into the tok ples. For example, the original word for the infinitive “to spoil” is “asosari wene”. But today most adults when speaking to children would say “bagarapim wene”, using the tok pisin word “bagarapim” with the tok ples infinitive marker “wene”. Same also applies for adjectives such as “to do good” in Fore is “Ayogi ena wene” but most speakers today would say “gutpla ena wene”, with the Tok pisin word “gutpla” and Fore adjective marker “ena” and infinitive marker “wene”.

**Steve W Labuan**  
Voluntary Resource Person,  
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**Title:**

**Learning English as second language through natural learning approach: a comparison of *Vernacular Pathway to English* and the *Trans-phonemic Bridge* techniques for Language transfer at Mother Tongue elementary schools in PNG.**

This paper demonstrates that learning English as second language (ESL) can best be done using the inverse pattern for natural learning approach popular for children acquiring their first language (L1). This is expounded by comparative analysis on two transfer methods currently used for ESL at mother tongue (MT) elementary schools in PNG. *Vernacular Pathway to English (VPE)* which follows the order of natural learning approach, and the *Trans-phonemic Bridge (TPB)* which follows the inverse order of the approach, are compared. Summary of the processes involved, as well as learner results from classroom performances indicate that while the approach applies naturally for first language acquisition, its reverse order applies naturally for second language learning.



*Syd Gould*

## **Title: Huli Primary School Children's Use and Perceived Value of the Three Languages Used in Huli Society**

In Huli Society (Hela Province) there are three main languages in use: Huli, *Tok Pisin*, and English.

This presentation attempts an analysis of a brief survey conducted amongst Huli Primary School students to ascertain how students used each of these languages and ranked their value. Data entry and analysis is still in process [but hopefully completed in time to complete and present the paper at the conference – *not to include this parenthetical comment in the final abstract*]. Early indications are, however, that there are significant differences in language choice for different modes of processing and in different communicational contexts. The most conspicuous of these is the use of Huli for the spoken mode, while English is most frequently used in the written mode (both reading and writing), in spite of the fact that for the Huli children it is the most difficult of the three languages. Respective perceived values of the languages and retention of the vernacular is also analysed.