

# Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea Conference 2023

Preserving & Promoting the Indigenous Languages of the South Pacific in IDIL 2022-2032

Hosted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics  
(SIL-PNG)

In Ukarumpa, EHP PNG  
September 27-28, 2023



Founded in 1967



2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF  
Indigenous Languages

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM & BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



## DAY 1: 27-09-2023

7:00 – 8:00

ARRIVAL OF SPECIAL GUESTS & CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

### OPENING SESSION

Chairperson

Opening Remarks/ Guest Speaker

Ray Stegeman, LSPNG COC | LSPNG Secretary

TITLE OF PAPER

08:00 – 08:15

President, LSPNG: Sakarepe Kamene

Welcoming Address

08:15 – 08:30

LSPNG Secretary, Ray Stegeman

Welcoming message

08:30 – 09:30

Dr. Don Kulick (Uppsala University)

"Exchanging Languages: Explaining language shift in Papua New Guinea"

9:30 – 10:00

Dr. Robert Bradshaw (SIL-PNG)

Word play: Figures of speech in Doromu-Koki

10:00 – 10:30

MORNING TEA BREAK

### SESSION ONE

Chairperson

THE LANGUAGES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA - in the PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE

Rene van den Berg, SIL-PNG

TITLE OF PAPER

10:30 – 11:00

Natasha Simon, Simatha Tramaff. Kristy Wedel  
(SIL-LingCrop)

A Sociolinguistics Survey of Label: Can small be sustainable?

11:00 – 11:30

Linda Murom, Cletus Aigeeleng (SIL-LingCrop)

The phonology and orthography of Label, an underdescribed language of New Ireland

11:30 – 12:00

Nixon Kamit, Marie Kima (SIL-LingCrop)

The pronominal system of Label, an Oceanic language of New Ireland

<b>12:00 – 13:30</b>			<b>WORKING LUNCH BREAK</b>		
<b>SESSION TWO</b>	<b>ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Dr. Kilala DEVETTE-CHEE (NRI)</b>		<b>PAPER TITLE [EACH PRESENTATION IS 20 MINUTES; Q&amp;As – 10 mins.]</b>		
13:30 – 14:00	Jed Carter (SIL-PNG)	The State of the Languages of Papua New Guinea			
14:00 – 14:30	Steve Wawaf Labuan (Volunteer Educator/Advisor)	Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) in Papua New Guinea: Should PNG’s Language-speaking Contexts determine the Methods for Teaching & Learning English at Early Childhood schools?			
14:30 – 15:00	Olga Temple & Sakarepe Kamene (UPNG)	Bilingual ECE in PNG: Ensuring the Future of the Indigenous Languages of Papua New Guinea			
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>			<b>AFTERNOON TEA BREAK</b>		
<b>SESSION THREE</b>	<b>LANGUAGE &amp; CULTURE</b>				
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Dr. Apoi YARAPEA (LML SHSS UPNG)</b>		<b>PAPER TITLE [EACH PRESENTATION IS 20 MINUTES; Q&amp;As – 10 mins.]</b>		
15:30 – 16:00	Emmanuel Daniel (IPNGS)	Christianity and the Indigenization of Taibubu – A Cultural Transformation among the South Fly People of Papua New Guinea			
16:00 – 16:30	May Huvi	From shellfish species to seashell collection			
<b>16:30 – -----</b>	<b>LSPNG AGM &amp; SPECIAL DINNER</b>		<b>Reports by the LSPNG President, Editor, Secretary and Treasurer Elections of next Executive</b>		

## DAY 2: 28-09-2023

### TIME

#### SESSION FOUR Chairperson

#### LINGUISTICS | LANGUAGE VITALITY Ray Stegeman

#### Title of Paper

08:30 – 09:00

Koen den Hartogh (SIL-PNG)

New low-tech opportunities for multilingual education

09:00 – 09:30

Aaron Wade (SIL-PNG)

Possession in Mamusi

09:30 – 10:00

Mary O'Bannon (SIL-PNG)

Language borrowing and language vitality

**10:00 – 10:30**

**MORNING COFFEE BREAK**

10:30 – 11:00

Lydia van den Berg (SIL-PNG)

Some aspects of relative clauses in Malol

11:00 – 11:30

Dr. René van den Berg (SIL-PNG)

When is long too long? Word length and readability

11:30 – 12:00

Sakarepe Kamene (LML UPNG)

Some General Observations of First Language Acquisition in Traditional Speech Communities: The Case of Zia

**12:00 – 13:30**

**LUNCH**

<b>SESSION FIVE</b>		
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>TOK PLES &amp; INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE</b>	
	<b>Olga Temple (UPNG)</b>	
13:30 – 14:00	Dr. Craig Volker (James Cook University), Cláudio da Silva, Dr Fátima Pereira, Dr José Pedro Amorim (the Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIIE), Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto)	Indigenous knowledges through practices and indigenous worldview: a community initiative to teach Nochi language and culture in a primary school
14:00 – 14:30	Kipli Joan Minol (LML SHSS UPNG)	Tok Pisin bilong husat? Bliu o blem? An Emerging Tok Pisin Variety
14:30 – 15:00	Dr. Patricia Paraide (LML SHSS UPNG)	The Importance of Maintenance of Indigenous Medicine Practices through the survival of Indigenous Languages
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>TEA</b>	
15:30 – 16:00	Nilima Hakim Mow (GMU)	Best practices of indigenous language immersion programs
16:00 – 16:30	Dr. Apoi Yaraepa (LML SHSS UPNG)	Topic Onset, Continuity and Closure markers in the Kewapi language
16:30 – 17:00	Philip Tama (UOG)	Pronominal Possession in Alekano -a Papuan Language

# BOOK of ABSTRACTS for LSPNG 2023

In the ORDER of PRESENTATION

**1. PLENARY SPEAKER: Dr. Don Kulick (Uppsala University) - "EXCHANGING LANGUAGES: Explaining language shift in Papua New Guinea"**

[kwemkarar@protonmail.com](mailto:kwemkarar@protonmail.com)

**2. Dr. Robert Bradshaw (SIL-PNG) - Word play: Figures of speech in Doromu-Koki**

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Abstract: Figures of speech are pervasive in all languages, yet often taken for granted. They function as means of not only making communication more colourful, but also often as a tool in distinguishing insiders from outsiders. A second language learner may find that he/she is unable to understand what to the native speaker is quite natural – as with an idiom, for example, in which the parts do not equal the whole. Without inside knowledge the non-native speaker is at a loss, and as these expressions are acquired, the speaker then comes to be more a part of the language community and subsequently no longer an outsider.

Aside from the abundant idioms, languages have many other varied means of playing with language. Several of these have been observed in the Doromu-Koki language of Central Province, Papua New Guinea, and yet there assuredly are many more which have yet to be discovered and documented.

This paper is an endeavour to open “Pandora’s box” in order to see what a wealth of treasures there are. I have examined several grammars of various languages of Papua New Guinea; the outcome has regrettably in general been a paucity of information on figures of speech. However, one grammar, of the Yongkom language (Christensen 2013<sup>1</sup>) of Western Province has included a fair amount. Thus, many of my examples are derived from this research.

As well as the limited figures of speech described here, hopefully through further research many others may be discovered and documented.

<sup>1</sup> Christensen, Steve. 2013. Yongkom reference grammar. Ukarumpa: SIL-PNG Language Archives. MS.

### **3. Natasha Simon, Simatha Tramaff, Kristy Wedel (SIL-LingCrop) - A Sociolinguistics Survey of Label: Can small be sustainable?**

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Very small languages are often assumed to be threatened or endangered, as language size is one of the factors of ethnolinguistic vitality (Landweer 2016). However, in Papua New Guinea (PNG), size is not always a complete indication of vitality. Label, a language with only 160 speakers in 2005, was reported to be vital by Kassell, Lambrecht, and Mackenzie (2011).

Label is an Austronesian language in the Patpatar-Tolai family, and is spoken in a single village, Nasko, on the west coast of the southern tip of New Ireland province, PNG. In April May 2023, a twelve-day sociolinguistic survey was conducted during a linguistics training trip to this village. The survey sought to assess the vitality of the language and to see how Label's situation fits into Landweer's model of language vitality. Survey questionnaires and group discussions were held in order to collect data on language use, travel patterns, emigration, and immigration.

The survey found that the vitality of the language is not as strong as it was 18 years ago. However, evidence suggests it is still more vital than the larger language groups surrounding it. Nearly everyone speaks Label in the main village, but it is losing speakers in its surrounding hamlets. The biggest threat to Label is intermarriage with non-Label speakers, most of whom do not learn Label. The greatest strength is the attitude of its speakers. Although speakers say it has always been small, Label is said to be the source of all of the languages in the Patpatar Tolai family. Many Label speakers take their responsibility to pass this language on to the next generation very seriously.

#### **References**

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2023. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-sixth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>

Kassell, Alison, Philip Lambrecht, and Bonnie MacKenzie. 2011. *A Sociolinguistic Survey of Label [Lbb]*. Language Survey. Ukarumpa, PNG: SIL-PNG.

Landweer, M. Lynn. 2016. Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality. *GIALens* 10/1:1-14. <https://www.diu.edu/documents/gialens/Vol10-1/Landweer-Ethnolinguistic-Vitality.pdf>

### **4. Linda Murom, Cletus Aigeeleng (SIL-LingCrop) - The phonology and orthography of Label, an underdescribed language of New Ireland**

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Label is an Austronesian language spoken by around 200 people on the southwest coast of New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea. The language is classified as New Ireland, South New Ireland-Northwest Solomonian, Patpatar-Tolai. Like many languages in Papua New Guinea, Label is an underdescribed language. The basic information found in Peekel (1929-1930) is now almost a century old.

The information presented in this paper is based on a twelve-day field trip in May 2023, as well as a corpus of data from the Label translation of the

New Testament. The data was carefully checked in consultation with an expat translation advisor who has worked in the area for a long time. Label is an SVO language with a rich pronominal system and relatively little morphology. Its phonology is also simple: five vowels, fifteen consonants, and (C)V(C) syllable structure.

This presentation will focus on the following aspects of the phonology:

- A chart of the vowels and consonants.
- A few phonetic observations: unreleased plosives, sporadic prenasalisation. • A discussion of the status of vowel sounds such as found in [rau] ‘year’ and [mais] ‘seven’. Are they diphthongs, vowel + consonantal glide, or a sequence of vowels? The combination of native speaker intuition and a structural alternation yield different results for the two examples.
- A discussion of syllable structure.
- A discussion of the practical orthography used in the Label NT.

#### Reference

Gerhard Peekel. 1929-1930. Grammatische Grundzüge und Wörterverzeichnis der Label Sprache. [Grammar essentials and vocabulary of the Label language.] Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen Sprachen XX. 10-34, 92-120.

### **5. Nixon Kamit, Marie Kima (SIL-LingCrop) - The pronominal system of Label, an Oceanic language of New Ireland**

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Label is a small but vital Oceanic language, located on the west coast of southern New Ireland in Papua New Guinea. In many ways, Label is a fairly ‘regular’ Oceanic language, sharing many grammatical features with neighbouring larger Oceanic languages, including its pronominal system. The following typical Oceanic features, as discussed in Crowley, Lynch and Ross (2002), are also found in the Label pronominal system:

- dual and trial number in addition to singular and plural;
- inclusive and exclusive forms of ‘we’;
- no gender distinction among pronouns;
- three pronominal sets: an independent set, a subject proclitic set, and a possessor suffix set. There is no separate object set.
- Three features of the pronominal system are specific to Label (though not unique):
- an irrealis set, with the irrealis marker -r attached to the subject proclitic;
- an indefinite plural pronoun di ‘they’;
- two emphatic pronouns (2SG au and 3SG ai).

This presentation aims to discuss these features of the Label pronominal system, both from a formal and a functional perspective, using data



gathered during a recent field trip, as well as examples from the Label translation of the NT. In addition, a brief comparison will be made with the pronominal system of Kandas and Siar-Lak, two related languages in southern New Ireland.

References

Crowley, Terry, John Lynch and Malcolm Ross. 2002. *The Oceanic Languages*. Richmond: Curzon.

## **6. Jed Carter (SIL\_PNG) - The State of the Languages of Papua New Guinea Presentation Abstract: The State of the Languages of Papua New Guinea**

Adapted from a presentation prepared by survey and adapted and delivered by David Barton at the UNESCO-IDIL meeting in POM, 2022

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This presentation uses SIL-PNG's work in PNG to communicate progress and opportunities in language development in PNG. It provides high-level information about PNG's languages and introduces the audience to theories valuable for language development. It emphasizes opportunities for research, advocating for participatory research in language communities and clarifying opportunities to partner with them.

Topics include (the easiest alteration would be removal of some topics):

- Working closely with local communities
- Why languages matter
- EGIDS/language vitality theory overview and broad statistics for language vitality in PNG (with examples)
- Advantages of participatory research
- Diglossia (Pig & Garden story)
- Publishing sociolinguistic and linguistic data
- Language size facts

This presentation revolves around SIL-PNG's values and strategies, and serves to acquaint the audience with what we do and why.

## **7. Steve Wawaf Labuan (Volunteer Educator/Advisor) - Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) in Papua New Guinea: Should Papua New Guinea's Language-speaking Contexts determine the Methods for Teaching & Learning English at Early Childhood schools?**

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This abstract explores the topic of teaching English as a second language (ESL) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and investigates whether the language contexts of PNG, with 20% English speakers and 80% non-English speakers, should determine the methods for teaching and learning English at early

childhood schools. Key concepts such as language contexts, early childhood education, literacy, phonics (L1 phonics, L2 phonics), and language of instruction are discussed in the context of PNG's education system. Furthermore, the abstract examines the impact of standards-based education (SBE) and the current compulsory 1-6-6 and optional 3-6-6 school-level structures in PNG. The overall objective of this discussion is to shed light on the importance of considering PNG's unique language landscape when designing and practicing effective ESL teaching and learning methods in early childhood education.

Additionally, this presentation emphasises relevant evidence available in support of context-based TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) not only in PNG overall, but especially in Morobe province which is opting for the optional 3-6-6 structure. This evidence will demonstrate the effectiveness and practicality of incorporating learners' language contexts into the ESL curriculum. By highlighting this evidence, this abstract aims to present a well-rounded analysis that not only examines the theoretical aspects but also provides empirical support for the argument. This multifaceted approach will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the significance of context-based TESL learning in the PNG education system.

**8. Olga Temple & Sakarepe Kamene (LML SHSS UPNG) - Bilingual ECE in PNG: Ensuring the Future of the Indigenous Languages of Papua New Guinea**  
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This paper focuses on the seemingly contradictory aspirations of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032): to resuscitate and promote their endangered indigenous languages, on the one hand, and to succeed in meeting the goals of sustainable socio-economic development, on the other. Based on an extensive literature review, the findings of over 7 years of research and the findings of two recent research studies, we outline a realistic, 'doable' two-pronged strategy designed to meet both national goals: to achieve sustainable national socio-economic development, as well as the revival of the national indigenous languages. The first 'prong' of this strategy is to ensure the provision of bilingual Early Childhood Education (ECE) to all 3–6-year-olds, to give them a good knowledge of their Mother Tongues (MTs), while at the same time equipping them with basic English skills which they need to do well at all levels of formal schooling in PNG. This policy will thus improve the quality of education in schools and universities nationwide and ensure a plentiful supply of professional expertise required for effective and sustainable socio-economic national development.

An effective review of the BA in Linguistics program at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) is the second 'prong' of the proposed strategy. To document and describe the Tok Ples languages of Papua New Guinea, the BA in Linguistics graduates must have the relevant knowledge to do the job. Currently, the BA in Linguistics program at UPNG does not provide the students with adequate training in linguistic research methods and linguistic analysis. The course offering, therefore, must be more closely aligned with the BA in Linguistics program goals.

## 9. Koen den Hartogh (SIL-PNG) - New low-tech opportunities for multilingual education

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Bloom multilingual audiobooks have only been around for a few years but are already being used worldwide. Development organizations, as well as ministries of education, have discovered their potential. These digital Bloom books can even include Sign language to help governments with their disability-inclusive education goals.

Over the last five years, an online library of 15,000 Bloom books has evolved with books in over 600 languages. Since online solutions are not ideal in all situations, these books can also be used and shared offline. By putting the books on a micro-SD card, entire libraries with multilingual books can be distributed anywhere. This year alone, 10,000 SD-card libraries are being distributed in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Figure 1: Sun and Moon in Nehan language:



The Bloom software has many advantages:

1. Translating one of the thousands of books from the Bloomlibrary will allow you to make hundreds of multilingual books quickly.
2. Creating books is also very easy. Basic training for the Bloom software can be done in just one day.
3. Production of audiobooks doesn't require audio editing skills because the recording can be done inside the Bloom software.
4. Using analytics, Bloom can track how and where books are being used. The Bloom Reader app keeps track of it all.
5. Interactive comprehension questions can be added to every book and are proven to significantly increase students' engagement.

### Solar Projector Kit

The Education for Life team also developed a solution to implement these books in rural classrooms. Their Solar Projector Kit has been implemented in more than 150 classrooms. Their goal was to keep the solution as low-tech as possible so every kit contains only one solar panel, projector, phone and one Bluetooth speaker. But those tools have revolutionized language learning in a rural classroom.

Link to EFL's books and training:

<https://bloomlibrary.org/EFL-education-for-life-org>

Link to video about EFL's work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM0aZ4aJoos>



## **10. Emmanuel Daniel (IPNGS) - Christianity and the Indigenization of Taibubu – A Cultural Transformation among the South Fly People of Papua New Guinea**

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Taibubu is a dance genre from the South Fly District of Western Province. It was introduced and adopted there, and has had an enormous influence on cultural practices within the area. Taibubu came about during two important periods:

1. 19th century pearl-shell labour trade in Thursday Island (Torres Strait) 2. London Missionary Society (LMS) work in the 1900s

Research on the taibubu (or taibobo) dance genre from the Torres Strait Islands shows that taibubu may have ultimately come from the Rotuma (Fiji) dance called tautonga. This is suggested in the style of dancing, and with separate groups of dancers and seated instrumentalists. Taibubu influenced most of the indigenous dance genres within the different groups in the South Fly.

My presentation will discuss the influence of Christianity on traditional dance, and how taibubu was indigenized during the 19th century through the pearl-shell labour trade and LMS movement. These elements had a profound effect on the language, choreography, costumes, and rituals used in the area. I will articulate facts from different studies on taibubu, in addition to offer my own insights as a performer and researcher of this dance.

## **11. May Huvi (Ewasse village, Bialla, WNBP) - From shellfish species to seashell collection**

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Shellfish collection is an on-going activity in the village and is part of the livelihood of the people. Those living near the sea knew when there would be a low tide as it makes it easier for them to look for shellfish, especially the clam shells. The collection of shellfish had arisen an interest among the kids and the adult folk with the hobby of collecting seashells. The search

to write vernacular names of consumable shellfish initiated a venue to store the seashells. Interested people can go to see and touch the shells instead of just seeing it in pictures. The venue to store the shells is under construction. In collaboration with documenting the vernacular names of the shellfish and the everyday living lifestyle of the Nakanai coastal people of West New Britain Province, nothing beats the feeling of coming across shellfish that were never found before. The question that struck many consumers was where this additional collection of shellfish had been all these years.

Demand of shellfish consumption by others was also met. It does not only satisfy the needs of the customer but provide income for the suppliers. Furthermore, others in need of the end product often collect seashells for a variety reasons. In a scenario, where one sees a seashell as just another ordinary seashell found at the beach, another looks at the same seashell with creative ideas in mind. The Nakanai Tribe as well as the other six tribes of West New Britain Province has long used shellfish as food. The collection of shellfish varies in the location of the shellfish with the vernacular names in different Nakanai dialects. Many of the documented seashells are in the Maututu dialect of the Nakanai language. This research was carried out based

on discussions with certain local females at Ewasse, a village in the Maututu zone within the Nakanai locality. The discussions about the shellfish and seashells often brought back memories of how the people in the past made good use of the sea because most of the protein is found there. The study also looked at what to do with the shellfish after consuming the contents. This collection includes shellfish found at the seaside and reefs.

## 12. Aaron Wade (SIL-PNG) - Possession in Mamusi

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Oceanic languages generally have two basic possession strategies—direct and indirect—but the kinds of relationships encoded by each can vary widely (Pawley 1973; Lynch 1982). Grammatical possession in Mamusi (kdf), while in some ways typical within the Oceanic framework, exemplifies some interesting features, particularly in the ways speakers can combine various possession strategies.

The basic types of possessive constructions are direct (see (1) below) and indirect, with the indirect structure in Mamusi being typified by one of two classifiers: characteristic (2) and contrastive (3). \*

(1) kemanna wale-ie  
man house-3S  
'the man's house'  
(where he currently lives)

(2) kemanna ka-na wale man PC.CHAR-3S  
house 'the people-house'  
(not one for business, etc)

(3) kemanna ne-na wale man  
PC.CONT-3S house 'the man's house'  
(not someone else's)

\* Abbreviations for the possessive classifiers: CHAR = characteristic, CONT = contrastive, PC = possessive classifier 1 Here R and D are used to simplify labeling of the constituents possessorR and possesseD (possessum).

The term 'classifier' here is used in the sense of Lichtenberk's (1983) 'relational classifier', not in the standard sortal sense of a lexical index reflecting some property of the possessum. Thus, a speaker can use any of the three available constructions to relate the two nouns—in this case kemanna 'man', the possessor, and wale 'house', the possessum. The choice of which construction to use is mandated by the kind of relationship the speaker wishes to emphasize. Direct possession indicates relations such as intimate possession, part of a whole, or kinship, relationships commonly described as 'inalienable'. Characteristic indirect possession, on the other hand, tends to show that a particular possessum is characterized by association with the possessor. Contrastive indirect possession is somewhat the converse; it shows that the possessor is the one associated with the possessum, in contrast to other possible possessors.

Due to this flexibility in the possession system, Mamusi speakers can avail themselves of two distinct forms of complex possession. Recursive possession occurs when possessive constructions nest to form a chain, as in (4)-(5), where the innermost R+D1 forms the R for the next outer layer:

(4) [LiumanaR tama-naD]R meli-eD L. father-3S village-3S 'Liumana's father's village'

(5) [mangR lungapa-mangD]R ka-na koleD 1P.EX clothes-1P.EX PC.CHAR-3S bag 'the bag for our clothes'

Mamusi also has an unusual structure called multiple possession (Lichtenberk 2009: 395), as shown in (6). In this example, the speaker employs both indirect possessive classifiers to relate the shared possessum *uta* to two separate possessors. Contrastive *ne-* marks the bundle as belonging to 'them', and not someone else, and characteristic *ka-* denotes the defining quality of the bundle, its contents.

6) aereR1 ne-ra [oro posi]R2 ka-na utaD  
3P PC.CONT-3P thing meat PC.CHAR-3S bundle  
'their bundle for game'

#### References

- Lichtenberk, Frantisek. 1983. Relational classifiers. *Lingua* 60(2). 147–176. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-3841\(83\)90072-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-3841(83)90072-4).
- Lichtenberk, Frantisek. 2009. Oceanic Possessive Classifiers. *Oceanic Linguistics* 48(2). 379–402. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ol.0.0054>.
- Lynch, John. 1982. Towards a theory of the origin of the Oceanic possessive constructions. PDF. In Amran Halim, Lois Carrington & Stephen A Wurm (eds.), *Papers from the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics (Pacific Linguistics. Series C 74)*, vol. I: Currents in Oceanic, 243–268. Pacific Linguistics. <http://sealang.net/archives/pl/pdf/PL-C74.243.pdf>. (16 March, 2022).
- Pawley, Andrew. 1973. Some Problems in Proto-Oceanic Grammar. *Oceanic Linguistics*. University of Hawai'i Press 12(1/2). 103–188. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3622854>.

### 13. Mary O'Bannon (SIL-PNG) - Language borrowing and language vitality

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#### CASE STUDIES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

What is the relationship between language borrowing, language change, and language shift? Language borrowing is a natural consequence of contact, and many languages take on loan words and phrases without any threat of shifting. In other cases, frequent borrowing is a sign that a certain language is being replaced by a more dominant one. When is language borrowing a sign of shift? Sarah Grey Thomas and Terrence Kaufman lay out a framework for language borrowing in the form of a scale. This scale ranges from casual contact and purely lexical borrowing to intense contact and heavy structural borrowing. There are multiple social, grammatical, and even psychological factors that drive language borrowing, change, and shift, but social

considerations are generally considered the most important. This paper examines several case studies in Papua New Guinean languages: Mussau Emira, Doromu-Koki, and Leipon. Mussau Emira is very vital and borrowing is primarily done for pragmatic reasons. Similarly, Doromu-Koki shows no signs of shift, and while borrowing does have small effects on grammar and phonology, borrowing is done out of clear convenience. Leipon, on the other hand, is possibly on the verge of shifting, and the examples of borrowing are more complicated. Borrowing is not done out of necessity due to domains of use, nor are the Tok Pisin borrow words particularly more convenient. This suggests one possible indicator of shift when considering the factor of borrowing. More case studies could provide even more clarity regarding the relationship between shift and borrowing.

References:

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#### **14. Lydia van den Berg (SIL-PNG) - Some aspects of relative clauses in Malol**

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Malol [mbk] is an Austronesian language (Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Siau family) spoken by about 5,000 people on the north coast of Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea. It is an SVO language, with five vowels, four diphthongs and 14 consonants. There is little morphology in the language, except for inflection on verbs, which marks subject and TAM.

This paper presents the major structural features of relative clauses (RCs) in Malol, taken from a draft grammar of Malol (L. van den Berg, in preparation). These aspects include:

a) structural features of RCs: postnominal, no syntactic signs of subordination; b) four ways of joining RCs to their head noun: juxtaposition, use of connector *iy*, use of conjunction *panan* or use of question word *mean* 'who', *ean* 'what', or *ampetenin* 'when'; c) the relativisability of the first four positions in the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (subject, object, oblique, possessor; see Keenan and Comrie 1977), and the use of resumptive pronouns.

All of these aspects are illustrated with example sentences (taken from both original texts and translated material), three of which are shown below, with the relative clause in square brackets.

No connector, no resumptive pronoun, relativised position subject:

- (1) *kos* and ancestorREAL- first *k-ow.* carry  
*aviv* [*ka-wa* go *naka* REAL-  
*epin*] DEM2

‘and the ancestor who walked in front carried [the basket]’. (A3-03)

Conjunction *panan* used as connector, resumptive pronoun (*re*), relativised position object:

- (2) *oa tartar* [*panan via* 1SG IMPF- G *ne naka re* PL thing 2SG.POS  
 thing many REL *tek-'ep* get.1|2s *re*] 3PL DEM1 DEM2 *oa e'i* S|

‘all these things that I own, those are your things’ (Luke 15:31)

Question word *mean* used as connector, no resumptive pronoun, relativised position oblique:

- (3) *aj merew iyn tal* [*mean re ka-r-wama.*]  
 word secret POSS place where 3PL REAL-3PL-come  
 ‘a legend about the place where they came from.’ (A1-01)

References:

Keenan, Edward L. and Bernard Comrie. 1977. Noun Phrase Accessibility and Universal Grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8/1:63-99.  
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## 15. Dr. René van den Berg (SIL-PNG) - When is long too long? Word length and readability

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The conversion of a purely spoken language to one that also has a written dimension is not a straightforward process. Many decisions need to be made, some of which are easier than others. There is considerable literature on this topic, including the contributions in Cahill and Rice (2014), and Jones and Mooney (2017). However, it appears that relatively little academic attention has been paid to the question of word length in the field of orthography design for unwritten languages.

This presentation tries to address this issue by focussing on the question of word length in orthography from the perspective of readability (Flesch 1948,



Rabin 1988, DuBay 2004). It starts off with examples such as the German compound Rechtsschutzversicherungsgesellschaften ‘insurance companies providing legal protection’ (39 letters), and a famous Welsh train station of 58 characters. In the body of the presentation, a comparison is drawn between the length of words in a variety of languages, based on a short text sample. The languages chosen range from European languages (English, German, Dutch), to Indonesian and a few languages of Papua New Guinea (Tok Pisin, Amele, Yipma, Waffa and Iduna). The statistical analysis of word length in these languages yields very different orthographic profiles, which are presented in graphic form.

The conclusion lists a few recommendations. One of these is that the establishment of an upper limit of long words is potentially helpful for people involved in designing new orthographies for minority languages.

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#### **16. Sakarepe Kamene (UPNG) – Some General Observations of First Language Acquisition in Traditional Speech Communities: The Case of Zia**

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The paper looks at how children acquire their mother-tongue without formal instructions of the grammar of their language. Grammar, as we know, exists in different forms but that does not seem to be the motivation for the acquisition of the mother-tongue in this case. So what drives a child to want to learn his own language. This raises some interesting questions about language acquisition in traditional communities, in this case, the Zia community of Morobe, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. An attempt is also made to examine learning strategies the child employs to acquire his language. Learning, in this case, happens in the absence of formal instruction. Yet the child grows up speaking his own language. This is fascinating. Isn't? More observations reveal the child does not seem to make a conscious or serious effort in learning his language. Learning therefore appears to be a pleasurable activity. And learning progresses in its most natural and flexible way. This then brings up a rich and conducive learning environment for the child to acquire his language. Within this the child finds comfort and freedom void of pressures in experiencing language. When this happens the child eventually grows up to be a fully-fledged speaker of his own language. How does this happen? The answer could lie in the social structure and socialization process of the speech community. This is what the paper intends to explore in this conference. It is hoped the paper will shed light into pragmatics and other communicative environmental factors that could contribute to the child's language development.

**17. Dr. Craig Volker (James Cook University), Cláudio da Silva, Dr Fátima Pereira, Dr José Pedro Amorim (the Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIIE), Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto) – Indigenous knowledges through practices and indigenous worldview: a community initiative to teach Nochi language and culture in a primary school**

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Many efforts to support indigenous language maintenance or revitalisation in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have considered elementary schools as a vehicle to include and emphasise vernacular literacy. Indigenous languages are generally used to support an introduced Western concept of education and are meant as a bridge to success in English-dominated further education. This approach ignores important questions concerning the decolonisation of the curriculum, as few of the learning methodologies and content used are indigenous, even if the language of instruction is. It also does not deal with the epistemology related to the imprisonment of oral traditional knowledge through a writing system by removing its orality, location, dynamics, and context (Ellen 1996; Perrelli 2008) as traditional knowledge undergoes a process which results in giving it a permanent nature (Agrawal 2002). Based on an ethnographic case study conducted from September 2022 to July 2023 with three communities in New Ireland Province, we analyse a community-based initiative that took place at Langenia Primary School in New Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s that used oral tradition and practical activities to teach language and local culture. While teachers taught the national curriculum in English four days a week, on Wednesdays control was given to a local clan leader who taught them age- and gender-appropriate indigenous content such as gardening, fishing, singing, dancing, carving and carpentry for boys and weaving and cooking for girls, all orally and all in the Nochi language. As they approached puberty, children were taught marriage laws, proper childcare, and how to organise funeral, memorial and malagan ceremonies. This replicated traditional education in which children would spend time with elders learning the traditional ways of life. The partnership between the school and the local community provided more inclusive and dynamic practices from the acknowledgement of the knowledge and experiences acquired that student already had (Freire 1992). Today's middle-aged adults who took part in this program praise this educator, stating that they still use what he taught when they organise feasts and ceremonies. Many express regret that his system was not continued after his passing in the late 1980s. This programme could be easily enacted by community leaders, as it does not need the development of an orthography, a centralised curriculum, or literacy materials. This bottom-up approach does require active community participation as a way to include indigenous language and knowledge in schools.

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**18. Dr. Patricia Paraide (UPNG) – The Importance of Maintenance of Indigenous Medicine Practices through the survival of Indigenous Languages**  
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Indigenous knowledge systems are embedded in Indigenous languages as illustrated in the Tinatatuna (Kuanua) language in East New Britain Province in Papua New Guinea (PNG). This paper will illustrate how Indigenous medicine and medical practices are passed on orally through the Tinatatuna spoken language. My father practiced indigenous medicine and he passed on these skills to me. Medicinal knowledge and skills were usually passed on to selected sons in the family. Observations skills combined with existing knowledge were/are key for identifying habitats of medicinal plants, shrubs and trees. Such skills and knowledge minimises search time for specific medicinal plants for treatment especially when they are rare. Medicinal plants were/are also planted around homes for emergency uses in the night especially when one cannot not go into the forest to search for them. Specific names for medicinal plants and the different medicinal strengths in them had to be learned well from the expert(s).

Various Indigenous medicines are extracted from leaves, flowers, barks, roots, grass, fruits, nuts and parts of animals for treatments. Specialized indigenous medicine experts were/are consulted when people were/are sick for treatments and for prevention of diseases. Indigenous medicine practices and treatments have been practiced by indigenous peoples around the world before modern medicine came into existence. This indicates that they are effective. Indigenous medicine practices and medicines are commonly referred to in most western literature as traditional medicine or herbal medicine. Indigenous medical practices need to be elevated and validated so this area can be valued and respected by others and especially the younger generations of indigenous people.

It has been acknowledged in various research literature that Indigenous and conventional medical knowledge can be used alongside each other and that they complement each other. Indigenous medicine can support people in rural and isolated communities especially where clinics are not available or accessible. People in isolated pockets of PNG are still exposed to the use of indigenous medicine to cure diseases. It has also been acknowledged in various literature that indigenous knowledge is an underutilized resource in current times. This is largely because Indigenous knowledge has been devalued by western education and other outside influences. The fact that such indigenous medicine content is not included in much of formal curriculum content has contributed to the younger generations' lack of knowledge about this valuable knowledge and its effectiveness.

**19. Nilima Hakim Mow (George Mason University) - Best practices of indigenous language immersion programs**  
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This paper offers a comprehensive literature review on the best practices of indigenous language immersion programs. Indigenous languages play a vital role in the cultural identity and heritage of indigenous communities worldwide. However, many of these languages are endangered or at risk of extinction due to historical factors, cultural assimilation, globalization, and other reasons.

Indigenous language immersion programs have emerged as a powerful tool for language revitalization and preservation. The objective of this literature review is to identify and analyze the best practices employed in indigenous language immersion programs to effectively promote language acquisition and maintenance among learners. The study reviews a wide range of scholarly articles, research studies, and reports from diverse contexts, encompassing indigenous communities from different parts of the world. The findings of the literature review demonstrate key elements that contribute to the success of indigenous language immersion programs. These include a strong focus on creating an immersive language environment, utilizing culturally relevant teaching materials and methodologies, fostering intergenerational language transmission, involving community members as language mentors, offering ample amount of language exposure, and incorporating indigenous cultural practices into the curriculum. Additionally, the review highlights the positive impacts of indigenous language immersion programs on learners, communities, and overall revitalization efforts. It explores the cognitive, socio-cultural, and identity-related benefits that immersion programs provide, such as increased language proficiency, enhanced cultural pride and self-esteem, and strengthened community cohesion. Challenges and limitations faced by indigenous language immersion programs are also addressed in the literature review. These challenges may include limited resources and funding, a scarcity of qualified language teachers, and the need for ongoing community support and commitment. Strategies and recommendations for addressing these challenges are discussed to facilitate the sustainability and long-term success of immersion programs. The insights derived from this literature review contribute to the broader understanding of effective approaches and best practices in indigenous language immersion programs. They provide a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders involved in language revitalization efforts. The findings underscore the significance of preserving and promoting indigenous languages as an integral part of cultural heritage, fostering intergenerational connections, and strengthening indigenous identities. In conclusion, this literature review underscores the importance of indigenous language immersion programs as a powerful means of language revitalization and preservation. It highlights the key practices that contribute to their effectiveness, the positive impacts they bring to learners and communities, and the challenges they face. The knowledge gained from this review serves as a foundation for further research and informs the development and implementation of successful indigenous language immersion programs worldwide.

## **20. Dr. Apoi Yaraepa (LML SHSS UPNG) - Onset, Continuity and Closure markers in the Kewapi language**

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The aim of this paper is to identify topic onset, continuity and closure markers in Kewapi speech texts. The focus on topic markers and their roles in speech structuring requires attention to complement the published literature on phonology and grammar (Franklin 1971, Yaraepa 2006, 2013). The language data of 8 spoken texts was collected for a PhD study on the morphosyntax of the language. The texts have been fully translated into English. The analysis reveals topic onset, continuity and reactivation, topic closure and shift, new topic, coherence (outside sentence) and cohesion (within sentence) formal markers. In myth (legend) stories, formal markers signal shifting of story casting angels (lisana=say-3SG.REMOTE PAST TENSE-INFERENCE) marker.

Key words: discourse topic and structuring, topic (onset, continuity, reactivation) coherence forms, cohesive forms, story shifting/casting angels.

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## 21. Philip Tama (UOG) – Pronominal Possession in Alekano - a Papuan Language

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Alekano is a Papuan language spoken in nearly 50 villages of Goroka (Deibler, 2008) in Gahuku Minamalo Constituency of Eastern Highlands Province. This paper discusses pronominal possession in Alekano. Pronominal possession can be categorised into two: free and dependent. Free possessive pronouns indicate possession, person and number while dependent possessive pronouns are attached as affixes on nouns. Deibler (2008) classifies Alekano nouns into eight classes according to whether they have possessive affixes or not. The different noun classes that are distinguished using possessive pronouns will be analysed and discussed.

Case of each of the two categories of possessive pronouns are given in tables 1 and table 2, with an example of each, respectively.

Table 1: Free Possessive Pronoun

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Dual</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	neiq	leliq	leiq
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	geiq	lekeliq	lekeiq
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	aiq	lekeliq	keiq

- i) neiq            iza  
*1sg Poss Pro*        *pig* /  
‘My pig’

Table 2: Dependent Possessive Pronoun with the noun head -goka ‘nose’

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Dual</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	no-goka	lo-lo-goka	lo-goka
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	go-goka	lo-go-goka	go-goka
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	a-goka	lo-ko-goka	ko-goka

- ii) **no-**            goka  
*1sg Pos Pro*        *nose*/  
‘My nose’