INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE [1]
PAPUAN LINGUISTICS: PAST AND FUTURE

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Papuan linguistics had its origins at the time of the first recognition by linguists of Papuan languages, towards the end of the 19th century. While a certain amount of survey work and study of individual languages was carried out during the first half of the present century, large scale systematic work started only after World War II. Until about thirty years ago, the Papuan languages had been generally thought to be mostly not related to each other, and to constitute a vast conglomerate of hundreds of highly diverse, structurally complex and numerically mostly small languages showing no obvious links with each other or any outside languages. Only a few Papuan languages could be included, in small groups of inter-related languages, with such groups showing no obvious connection with each other. The term 'Papuan languages' or 'non-Austronesian languages' was, in consequence, only employed as a negative classificatory term to distinguish languages referred to by that name from Austronesian (and Australian) languages, without presuming the existence of any genetic link between them.

Already during that early period however, it had been observed that many Papuan languages displayed a few typological and structural resemblances which were greater than those sometimes noticed in typological comparisons between unrelated languages in other parts of the world (Wurm 1954).

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1. This introduction is a revised version of the text of the keynote address to the conference by Professor Stephen A. Wurm, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.

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Since the late fifties, extensive research and survey work has been carried out in the Papuan linguistic field, mainly through the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University and the New Guinea Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Also some Dutch linguists were working in former Dutch New Guinea until it became a part of Indonesia in 1962, and this work steadily intensified and gained in volume, especially after the mid-sixties.

One important result of this work, especially in the earlier years, was the discovery and establishment of a considerable number of usually quite large groups of inter-related Papuan languages.

These discoveries resulted in quite a far-reaching change in the earlier Papuan linguistic picture, though it was still believed that the Papuan languages belonged to a considerable number of disparate, seemingly unrelated groups.

By the mid-sixties, over a dozen groups of Papuan languages were known or believed to exist, with five additional groups tentatively added to these.

In addition to bringing about a profound change in the Papuan linguistic picture conceived of prior to these discoveries, the discovery and establishment of these quite numerous and predominently large to very large groups of Papuan languages was beginning to suggest the need for a strong qualification of the previously purely negative classificatory meaning of the term "Papuan languages", though it appeared that Papuan languages still belonged to a quite large number of distinct groups which were seemingly unrelated to each other.

During the work leading to the establishment of the large groups mentioned, indications appeared suggesting that some distant relationship might exist between members of different groups. On the basis of such indications, the present writer intimated that there might be some distant relationship between the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum, the Huon Peninsula Group and the Dani Family (WURM 1961a), and conceivably also between the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum and the Binandere, Ok and Ndu Families (Wurm 1961b). The possibility was

also mentioned that the Ok, Awin-Pare and Awyu-Dumut Families might constitute a single large stock or phylum, and that the Kamoro-Sempan-Asmat Family might also be a member of it (Healey, A. 1964). Earlier the present writer had noted that there appeared to be some likelihood of a relationship existing between the Ekagi-Woda-Moni and the Kamoro-Sempan-Asmat Families, with this relationship also involving a few other languages in the south-eastern part of what was then Dutch New Guinea (Wurm 1961a). At the same time, Capell (1962) made similar observations concerning the possible relationship of the Ekagi-Woda-Moni Family to the Dani Family, and of both of them to the east New Guinea Highlands Phylum.

Most of these various suggestions and assumptions were drawn on by Voegelin and Voegelin (1965) in proposing a tentative macrophylum which extended over a large part of the New Guinea mainland. The albeit tentative, setting up of this very large group of inter-related languages constituted a further considerable weakening of the accepted view that the term 'Papuan languages' referred merely negatively to a large group of South-western Pacific languages which were generally unrelated to each other.

This macro-phylum included a sizeable portion of the Papuan languages known at the time of its establishment, and its members had been given the, if only tentative, status of at least distantly inter-related languages. Further intensive work by Wurm, Laycock, Voorhoeve, Dutton, Franklin, McElhanon, Z'graggen and members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, New Guinea Branch, between 1965 and 1969, resulted in a large amount of additional evidence becoming available for the more definite establishment of this macro-phylum, and, at the same time expanded its area far beyond that suggested by the Voegelins, to cover about three-quarters of the New Guinea mainland and to comprise well over half of the over 600 Papuan languages identified by that time. In particular, the existence of the South-east New Guinea Phylum (Dutton 1969) and its membership of the macro-phylum was recognised, and the geographically very far-flung Central and South New Guinea Phylum (Voorhoeve 1968) was set up within the macro-phylum.

The presence of wide local connections between languages in the highland areas of Irian Jaya was also discovered, while the Kukukuku group, which was recognised as constituting a single stock or family and renamed the Anga Stock (or Family), was found to have clearly discernible links with the macro-phylum.

All this constituted a quite revolutionary change in the earlier Papuan linguistic picture, and shifted the term 'Papuan languages' from its status of a purely negative classificatory term towards that of a term denoting, for the greater portion of its area of applicability, apparently genetically interrelated languages of a certain type.

Late in 1969, the macro-phylum mentioned above which had been given the name Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum, was still believed to be a super-phylum consisting of several inter-related, but separate, phyla and phylum-level stocks and families which were the following:

The East New Guinea Highlands Phylum.

The Central and South New Guinea Phylum (including the Goliath Family).

The Finisterre-Huon Phylum.

The Madang Phylum.

The South-East New Guinea Phylum.

The West New Guinea Highlands Phylum.

It was, in addition, believed that there was a high possibility that genetic links could be established between members and languages:

The Anga Stock and

Adelbert Range Phylum.

It was also assumed at that stage that what had been established as the Middle Sepik Phylum, the Upper Sepik Phylum and the Sepik Hill Family, had links with the Macro-Phylum, though this later proved to be in error. At the same time, these three groups were believed to be inter-related and to possibly constitute a single phylum, with evidence mounting in favour of this assumption.

The first strong evidence suggesting a possible closer connection between the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum and the Central and South

New Guinea Phylum had been the independent classification, supported by some correspondences and other evidence favouring genetic relationship, of the Duna language as a family-level isolate of both these phyla by Wurm and Voorhoeve. Additionally, the Foe language was established as a family-level isolate member of the Central and South New Guinea Phylum by Voorhoeve and Franklin and at the same time, as a stock-level isolate of the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum by Wurm. Also, Franklin (personal communication and Franklin and Voorhoeve 1973) was able to demonstrate the existence of regular sound correspondences in first over sixty, then many more, cognates linking Fasu of the then Central and South New Guinea Phylum, and Kewa, a member of the West-Central Family of the then East New Guinea Highlands Phylum. Subsequent, more detailed work undertaken for the purpose of classification of these languages by Franklin and Voorhoeve (1973) provided additional proof of the assumption that Fasu and Foe, along with several newly identified languages, were members of two different families which had a stock-level relationship with each other. This allowed their inclusion into a stock, and the name Kutubuan Stock was proposed for it by Franklin and Voorhoeve (1973),

As a later development, Franklin (1975) suggested that the two families constituting the Kutubuan Stock be reassigned membership to two different stocks, i.e. the West Kutubu Family to the Central and South New Guinea Stock, and the East Kutubu Family to a newly proposed Trans-Murray Stock to which also the Teberan and Pawaian (now sub-phylum-level) Families should belong. He argued that this proposed reclassification is supported by cultural factors, lexicostatistical evidence, and by the postion of Fasu which, in spite of its obvious relational proximity to Foe, appears to have even closer relationships elsewhere, within the Central and South New Guinea Stock. This proposal has considerable merit, especially in highlighting the fact that linguistic classifications of Papuan languages tend to include a range of hierarchically oriented relationships in various directions. In particular, it shows the existence of a chain-relationship running through from ordinary Trans-New Guinea Phylum status as represented by

the Central and South New Guinea Stock, to quite highly aberrant sub-phylum status within that phylum, as represented by Pawaian.

At the same time, the present writer (Wurm 1964) had already pointed out the presence of striking typological agreements between languages of the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum, the Huon Peninsula Group and the Ok Family, with some of these agreements extending to the Binandere Family. This approach was continued by McElhanon (1967) who indicated the presence of structural similarities between languages of the Ok Family and the Huon Peninsula area which were separated from each other by the large expanse of the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum. Later, Voorhoeve (1969) who was studying the possible genetic interrelationship between the Asmat language of the Central and South New Guinea Phylum, and the Sentani language in north-eastern Irian Jaya, found evidence suggesting that the proto-language from which elements present in both languages were derived may have been located somewhere in a lowland riverine area and he proposed the Sepik or Ramu River basins as possibilities. At the same time, he observed striking lexical agreements between Madang Province languages (Z'graggen 1971) and languages of the Central and South New Guinea Phylum.

The discoveries foreshadowed the second revoluntionary change in the Papuan linguistic picture which took place during 1970 and 1971, and whose full effects and total extent became clear only in 1972. The first major step in this was the setting up of the hypothesis by McElhanon and Voorhoeve that the member languages of at least a few of the separate phyla included in the Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum could be shown to be members of a single phylum and therefore to be relatively closely related to each other. To prove this hypothesis, they undertook a comparison of lexical items from member languages of the Central and South New Guinea Phylum and the Finisterre-Huon Phylum, drawing on languages of other potential phyla only marginally while intentionally leaving the geographically interposed East New Guinea Highlands Phylum out of consideration. In the course of this work, they were able to establish interphylic cognate series for 53 items,

out of a total of 85 compared (McElhanon and Voorhoeve 1970), with the sound correspondences between members of given interphylic series clear enough to leave little room for doubt that these series constituted evidence of a relatively close genetic relationship between the language groups involved. In view of the discontinuous nature of the basis chosen for their work, the authors attempted the reconstruction of proto-forms only in a few instances.

McElhanon and Voorhoeve regarded their results as convincing enough to propose a strong modification of the notion of the Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum as a super-group consisting of a number of separate, distantly interrelated, phyla. They proposed replacing the macro-phylum, at first only in part (but with a view to its later total replacement), by a single very large phylum, the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, into which they provisionally included the stocks constituting the former Central and South New Guinea, and the Finisterre-Huon Phylum, as well as the Binandere Stock and the Sentani Group, with the stocks making up the East New Guinea Highlands and the Madang Phyla, the Rai Coast Stock, and the Nimboran Group as potential further members. Voorhoeve (personal communication) later also suggested the inclusion of the Wisselmere-Kemandoga Stock (consisting of the Ekagi (or Kapauku)-Woda-Moni Family and Uhunduni) into this Trans-New Guinea Phylum.

The present writer continued the application of McElhanon's and Voorhoeve's ideas and undertook a systematic comparison of lexical items of languages of the East New Guinea Highlands Stock, the major part of the East New Guinea Highlands Phylum, with the interphylic series established by McElhanon and Voorhoeve (1970). He observed that lexical items of individual languages of the East New Guinea Highlands Stock which had been chosen for this work fitted in well with McElhanon's and Voorhoeve's interphylic cognate series in about three-quarters of the cases, which was adequate proof that the East New Guinea Highlands Stock was a member of the new Trans-New Guinea Phylum. The extension of this work to member languages of the Anga Stock

yielded equally satisfying results, and an assessment of member languages of the stocks constituting the Adelbert Range Phylum also produced evidence in favour of the inclusion of these stocks into the Trans-New Guinea Phylum. The same applied to languages which were formerly included in Cowan's (1957a,b) extended North Papuan Phylum which had been found by Voorhoeve (1971) to have links with the Trans-New Guinea Phylum languages. The systematic extension of this procedure to languages of all the stocks belonging to member phyla of the former Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum enabled the present writer to work on the reconstruction of a number of tentative Trans-New Guinea Phylum proto-forms (Wurm 1975, 1979), and to propose the inclusion of all the languages of the thereby now fully superseded Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum into a new, and at the same time greatly extended, Trans-New Guinea Phylum.

Some language groups which had tentatively been included in the original Central New Guinea Macro-Phylum were definitely excluded from the Trans-New Guinea Phylum. This was true of languages of the Sko Family on the north coast of New Guinea which had been found to be part of a stock including some other languages related to this family, and also of languages of what had been established as the Middle Sepik and Upper Sepik Phyla, and the Sepik Hill Family, whose similarities to Trans-New Guinea Phylum languages were recognised as borrowed features and which now form part of the newly established large Sepik-Ramu Phylum (see below) which appears to be unrelated to the Trans-New Guinea Phylum. This work also led to the inclusion (in part tentatively) of Papuan languages of the Vogelkop and Bomberai Peninsulas in Irian Jaya into the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, and the discovery of Trans-New Guinea Phylum lexical elements, on the basic vocabulary level, in language groups which are believed to be outside the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, e.g. in most member groups of the Sepik-Ramu Phylum, the Kwomtari and Sko phylum-level Stocks, the West Papuan Phylum, and the East Papuan Phylum. There remains some uncertainty concerning the inclusion of some very few languages located in the border area between the Trans-New Guinea and Sepik-Ramu

Phyla (see below), into one or the other of these two large phyla.

Another, in some respects perhaps even more radical, change in the Papuan linguistic picture prevailing in late 1969 resulted from extensive fieldwork by Laycock in the two Sepik Provinces in 1970-71. In the course of this work, almost all of the languages in those areas were assessed, a number of languages discovered, and the last linguistically unknown parts in those regions surveyed. It was established that of the previously known large groups in the area, the Upper Sepik and the Middle Sepik Phyla as well as the Sepik Hill Family, were relatively closely interrelated, and constituted stocks within a phylum, and that relationship links existed between these stocks and quite a few other languages and language groups of the region, but excluding the languages of the Torricelli Phylum (Laycock 1975) and apparently also those of the Sko Stock mentioned above. Members of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum located in the Papua New Guinea-Irian Jaya border areas and occupying a portion of the extreme western and north-western part of the Western Sepik Province, while apparently unrelated to the large new phylum composed of the various groups and languages referred to above, were found to have to some extent been influenced by members of it. The same was observed to hold for a few small groups and isolates. It also became evident that the languages of the Ramu Phylum established by Z'graggen (1971) showed relationship links with this new phylum and could be included with it into a single very large phylum. As a result of this, the latter occupies much of the northern part of Papua New Guinea, in particular the Sepik and Ramu River basins, and in view of this, it was named the Sepik-Ramu Phylum (Laycock and Z'graggen 1975).

The establishment of the interrelationships between the postulated members of this Sepik-Ramu Phylum was particularly difficult because quite extensive borrowing on almost all levels had apparently taken place between members, and also between them and outside languages such as languages of the Torricelli and Trans-New Guinea Phyla, which produced considerable variation in the structures of the Sepik-Ramu Phylum languages. Much of the variation in the

forms of these languages can be explained through postulated migrations and contacts between Sepik-Ramu languages and outside languages but some of the views arrived at concerning the internal classification and composition of the Sepik-Ramu Phylum, and to a very small degree also those about its total extent, are still somewhat tentative and may require to be worked out in some greater detail (Laycock 1973; Laycock and Z'graggen 1975).

Another important change in the 1969 Papuan linguistic picture was brought about by work undertaken by the present author in the Papuan languages of the island world to the north-east and east of the New Guinea mainland, utilising the results of earlier studies, his own materials and materials kindly put at his disposal by Capell, Grace, Chowning and Hackman. Only two separate groups of interrelated languages had previously been set up in that area, i.e. the Bougainville Phylum on Bougainville (Allen and Hurd 1965) and the Reef Islands-Santa Cruz Family (Davenport 1962, Wurm 1969, 1970). However, the possibility of the presence of relationship links between a number of the languages of the area, most of which had earlier been regarded as unrelated isolates, had been suspected before (Capell 1969, Wurm 1971). Wurm's overall work in the languages of the area produced indications that they appeared to be all interrelated in varying degrees, and he proposed their inclusion in a new phylum, named the East Papuan Phylum, and put forward suggestions concerning its probable internal composition (Wurm 1972, 1975). Some of Wurm's findings have been corroborated by Todd who undertook extensive field-work in Solomon Islands Papuan languages, and the interrelationship of languages of that particular area was found to be even closer than assumed by Wurm (Todd 1975).

The most recent major changes in the 1969 Papuan linguistic picture were brought about by Voorhoeve's work in the languages and language classification of western and northern Irian Jaya (Voorhoeve 1975). Voorhoeve's work had two very important results.

First, he was able to establish that most languages of northern Irian Jaya were interrelated and that they, as well as the languages of Timor, Alor and Pantar which constituted a stock and had previously been believed to belong to the West Papuan Phylum, could be included into the Trans-New Guinea Phylum.

Voorhoeve's findings produced a considerable extension of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum and at the same time, greatly reduced the extent of the West Papuan Phylum. At the same time, it appeared that there were only very few 'pure' West Papuan Phylum languages, these being mainly confined to the Northern Halmahera area and some parts of the Vogelkop Peninsula, though the West Papuan Phylum language type as such seems to be present to some extent as a substratum feature over wide areas on the New Guinea mainland.

The Timor-Alor-Pantar Stock languages contain strong West Papuan Phylum elements, and it appears to be possible to argue for their relationship with either of these two phyla.

Another result of Voorhoeve's recent work has been the setting up of two small phylic groups and the identification of a few language isolates in northern Irian Jaya.

In the light of what has been stated so far, the present picture of Papuan languages and groups in the New Guinea area is as follows:

A) MAJOR PHYLA:

1) The Trans-New Guinea Phylum which covers most of the New Guinea mainland except for a) the greater part of the Vogelkop Peninsula, b) the north-western-most part of the non-peninsular portion of Irian Jaya, c) most of north-western Papua New Guinea, d) a few very minor areas occupied by isolates, and e) the regions in which Austronesian languages are met with.

2) The West Papuan Phylum extending over the greater, northern, part of the Vogelkop Peninsula, and over northern Halmahera.

3) The Sepik-Ramu Phylum located in the Sepik Provinces and a western portion of the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea.

4) The Torricelli Phylum occupying two comparatively small northern parts of the Sepik Provinces, and a small enclave in the

north-western part of the Madang Province.

5) The East Papuan Phylum extending in discontinuous sections over some parts of the island world adjoining the New Guinea mainland in the north-east and east.

B) MINOR PHYLA:

1) The Sko phylum-level Stock located in the far northern border area between Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya.

2) The Kwomtari phylum-level Stock situated in the north-western part of the West Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, with one of its geographically separate members found on the other side of the Papua-New Guinea-Irian Jaya border.

3) The Arai (Left May) phylum-level Family, located south of the Kwomtari phylum-level Stock in the West Sepik Province.

4) The Amto-Musian phylum-level Stock in the area lying between the Kwomtari phylum-level Stock and the Left May phylum-level Family.

5) The Geelvink Bay Phylum is eastern coastal areas of the Geelvink Bay and on Yapen Island in western Irian Jaya.

6) The East Bird's Head phylum-level Stock occupying an eastern portion of the Vogelkop Peninsula.

The Yuri Isolate situated in the extreme western part of the West Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea may prove to be related to Oksapmin which has been tentatively included into the Trans-New Guinea Phylum as a stock-level isolate, though this classification is doubtful. If these two languages are found to be related to each other, this would lead to the establishment of another minor phylum, i.e. a two-language phylum-level stock.

C) ISOLATES:

At this stage of our knowledge, over half a dozen Papuan languages cannot be included in any of the groups mentioned above. The main reasons for this are the inadequacy of the information available on them, and insufficient comparison of these languages with languages which are geographically far removed from them. It seems likely that with the advance in our knowledge, most, if not

all, of these isolates may eventually prove to be members of established groups, or be combined with each other into small groups. However, at present only some vague links between them are apparent, and it is not possible to say how far these may be attributable to influences resulting from language contacts, or to some very distant relationships.

These isolates are located in the West Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea and in northern Irian Jaya, with one Maisin, located in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea. Maisin, whose status as either Austronesian-influenced Papuan or Papuan-influenced Austronesian is still being debated, is situated in the Northern Province. There are no major linguistically unknown regions in the New Guinea area today, but a few as yet incompletely surveyed pockets remain, mainly in northern Irian Jaya, especially in the mountainous country between the eastern shores of the Geelvink Bay and the Rouffaer and the Mamberamo River areas, in parts of the Vogelkop Peninsula, and to the east of the Lake Plain in north-eastern Irian Jaya. A few additional Papuan languages may perhaps be located on the islands west of Alor and Pantar in Indonesia. The total number of as yet undiscovered Papuan languages, including a possible few which may have escaped discovery in Papua New Guinea (for instance in the uppermost Strickland and Carrington Rivers region) is not likely to be much in excess of twenty or so.

What has been briefly outlined constitutes in general, the present Papuan linguistic picture. This is however only the beginning. It has been necessary to establish, in part tentatively, the total framework of what constitutes the Papuan linguistic world, as the basis on which further work in Papuan linguistics will have to proceed. There have been arguments that it would have been more appropriate to carry out depth studies in a number of languages in preference to wide survey work, with such depth studies demonstrating the nature of Papuan languages. Persons arguing along these lines overlook the fact that we are not dealing with a small compact language group consisting of relatively closely interrelated languages which would lend itself

to such an approach, but with a vast conglomeration of highly diverse languages. Without establishing the outlines of the general linguistic picture first, it would have been quite impossible for scholars to pick representative languages, i.e. languages representative of the various linguistic types occurring in Papuan languages. Also, persons arguing along these lines are those who have generally not yet realised that linguistics is not a subject in isolation but is one of a close-knit family of subjects all of which benefit mutually from their respective findings. What advantage would for instance anthropologist, sociologist, human geographers, and others just to name a few, have had from a few depth studies of Papuan languages before the overall language picture of the Papuan world had been established which, through its very nature, constitutes vital background information for students of other disciplines? I am not saying that some depth studies have not been valuable and should not have been undertaken. They were, and they have proved very useful in certain ways and for the interests of persons interested in questions of linguistics in the narrow sense. However to devote all the attentions and energies to that rather than to survey work would have been ill-advised.

However now that the overall Papuan linguistic picture has been established, there is obviously the time for shifting the energies to more detailed work on a narrower scale. The time has now come to devote increasing energy to more detailed depth studies of individual languages and small language groups. At the same time, and at least as importantly, there are three fields of study which should attract the attention of scholars interested in Papuan linguistics in general.

The first of these is that increasing attention and efforts should be directed towards comparative linguistics in the Papuan fields, involving the detailed comparative study of smaller and larger groupings. Such work will be devoted to increased comparative work involving individual language families as has already been done in several areas, especially in several families of the Highlands languages of Papua New Guinea. At the same time, comparative

linguistic approaches of a more detailed nature than have been carried out to date, are called for in the individual established phyla all of which, with perhaps the exception of the Torricelli Phylum, offer some problems concerning their full extent and delineation, and some problems regarding some of the language families and stocks included in them, in some cases highly tentatively.

In the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, the exact nature of the links between the individual stocks constituting it, calls for the attention of comparative linguists, and the question of the inclusion or otherwise of some highly aberrant stock-level sub-phyla in it is a field of special importance for such approaches.

The problems in the Sepik-Ramu Phylum are, in this respect, perhaps even greater, and the inclusion of at least one sub-phylum in it, i.e. the Nor-Pondo (Lower Sepik) Sub-Phylum, appears somewhat questionable.

The nature and degree of interrelationship between the various sub-phyla included in the East Papuan Phylum requires a lot of further study, and comparative work is called for to establish the nature and degree of interrelationship within its individual sub-phyla.

Similar problems exist regarding the two main parts of the West Papuan Phylum in terms of the degree and nature of interrelationship between the two groups. Work along these lines is already in progress as well, mainly by Dr. C.L. Voorhoeve, and the results are encouraging.

Comparative work may perhaps also help in determining whether there might be some degree of interrelationship between the individual phyla, including the minor phyla, and perhaps the isolates, though in the light of what I am going to say, this does not seem very likely.

Another field of work waiting for more serious attention in the Papuan linguistic field is the overall question of language contacts and unilateral or mutual language influence. It appears that such influences are particularly strong in Papuan languages, and as a field of specific interest, the question of the influence of Austronesian

languages upon Papuan languages has to be investigated in much greater detail than has been done to date, though some quite important preliminary work has already been carried out on these lines.

A third field of interest, very much neglected to date, is the question of artificial interference with languages which again seems to be very strongly in evidence in the Papuan linguistic field, though not unknown in other linguistic areas, notably the Australian language area. It does appear that artificial interference with languages, undertaken for purposes of group separation and group identification and other social and sociolinguistic reasons, has played and is playing quite an important role in the Papuan linguistic field and requires study for the sake of its own interest and for the sake of general linguistic questions which impinge on some fundamental assumptions concerning language development and language diversification.

What I have said above about the effects of language contacts and about artificial interference with language does, at the same time, put a bit question mark against what I have said about the importance of further comparative work. One of the great problems of comparative linguistics in the Papuan linguistic area appears to be the fact that in some cases its application is of limited value-even in a few instances virtually useless-because the fundamental assumptions on which the application of comparative linguistics is based are in many instances weakened or virtually absent in the Papuan linguistic field. This is a result of the important role of aspects which are largely absent in those linguistic areas in which seminal research has been done, on the basis of which the present axioms, methods, and expectations of comparative linguistics have been developed. I am thinking particularly of the pervading influence of languages upon each other, which affects not only vocabulary but many other features of languages which are of importance for the comparative approach, and also the high incidence of artificial interference with languages which makes the application of comparative methods very difficult. It appears that because of the comparatively low incidence

of these problems militating against the strict application of comparative linguistics in other language areas, attention paid to them by linguists outside the Papuan linguistic field has been very low key, though eminent linguists such as Mühlhäusler in Oxford and Foley in Canberra are increasingly directing their attention to them. Papuan linguistics certainly has an important role to play in drawing the attention of linguists in general to the existence of these problems and to issue a note of caution against the insistence of rigid application of comparative methods in cases where the study of sociolinguistic factors, mutual language influence, artificial interference with languages, and the comparing of developments rather than states (i.e. the comparison of living and changing language features rather than that of static artifacts) are called for.

It is to be hoped that the future of Papuan linguistics will be a bright one and will make some contributions of a quite fundamental nature to linguistics in general.

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