

Roos & ruins: A project to document the Ujir language of the Aru Islands

Initiative: Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen (beendet)

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The Ujir language belongs to the almost completely unknown Aru sub-group of the Austronesian family. Ujir (East Indonesia) itself has had no previous research. The language is critically endangered: children do not acquire the language any longer and already one of the two original Ujir speaking villages has completely stopped using the language. This project will, as such, deliver timely multi-media documentation of Ujir, combining audio, video and photo materials with text files, glosses and translations. The documentation will put a particular focus on two little-studied domains: (i) Ethnozoological documentation of the traditional knowledge of the unique Arunese environment, in particular, the local knowledge and cultural significance of fauna including many endemic marsupials and bird species. (ii) Heritage and oral tradition documentation, in particular, as to do with the arrival of Islam in Aru and the associated ruins of a significant pre-colonial Muslim settlement located next to the modern village. The principal investigator of this project is Dr. Antoinette Schapper, Cologne.

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