

Documentation of Bena Bena, a community of the Eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea: In-depth linguistic and anthropological investigations (continuation)

Initiative: Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen (beendet)

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Bena Bena is an endangered language spoken in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. There are approximately 45,000 speakers, but there is a strong tendency for the younger generation to be brought up speaking Tok Pisin, a lingua franca of the area, as their primary language. The linguistic properties of the Bena Bena language, along with the anthropological context and examination, were successfully documented during the first project period. The follow-up research will focus on more complex linguistic and anthropological aspects of the Bena Bena language and culture as well as continuing to enrich the language documentation and language maintenance efforts. As the basic language documentation is complete, a "deeper level of analysis" regarding the morpho-syntactic properties, the syntax-semantics interface, and matters of pragmatics is necessary. Main points of focus will be multi-word units, transitivity patterns, information structure, and metaphoric language. Anthropological research will concentrate on the hidden/veiled cultural practices, specifically in language use. The investigation will include the changing cultural influence on the community due to closer contact with Western cultures and the use of modern electronics, especially cell phones and how these effect the population's self-representations. The cooperating Bena Bena community has shown great enthusiasm and interest in the documentation of their language and they desire the work to continue. The Bena Bena documentation project is being carried out by an interdisciplinary team, Dr. Carola Emkow (linguistics) and Dr. Regina Knapp (anthropology).

Projektbeteiligte

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