

44. Mbula

Contributors:

Introduction and Wordlist : *Salme E. – Robert D. Bugenhagen*

1. Introduction

Mbula¹ is a language spoken on Sakar Island and the eastern half of Umboi Island in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea. There are some 2500 speakers of the language, who live in seven villages: Alario, Kabi, Kampalap, Marile, Birik, Yangla, and Gauru. There are four mutually intelligible dialects: (1) the Sakar dialect, which is spoken only in Alario village on Sakar Island, (2) the Northern dialect, which is spoken in the villages of Kabi and Kampalap, (3) the Central dialect, which is spoken in Marile, Birik, and Yangla, and (4) the Gauru dialect, which is spoken only in Gauru village.

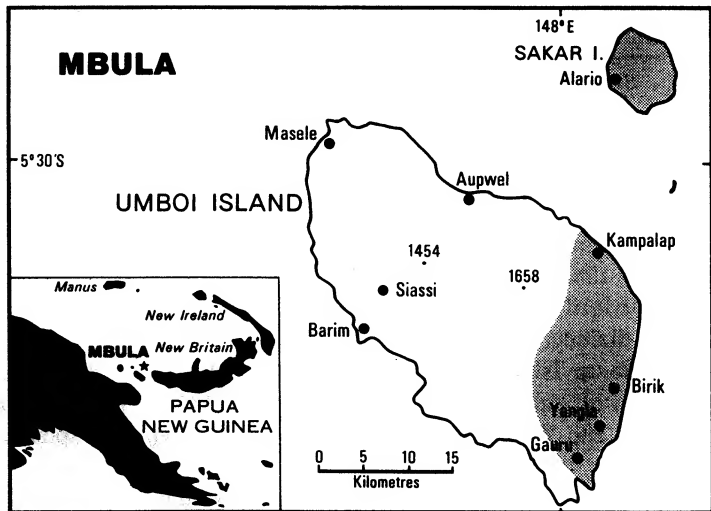
There is very little earlier published work on the language or culture. Chinnery's anthropological report (1926: 24-29) contains some notes on vocabulary by the Reverend G. Bamler, and Harding (1967), in his study of the Siassi traders, makes some references to the Kaimanga. Bugenhagen (1986) describes the possessive system of the language, Bugenhagen (1989) the encodings of various degrees of transitivity, and Bugenhagen (1990) the modality system of the language.

Hooley (1971) classified Mbula as a member of the Siassi Family. Ross (1988: chapter 5) classifies it as a member of the Vitiaz linkage of his North New Guinea Cluster.

Data have been collected on the language by the authors since October 1982. Approximately two and half years of this period have been spent in residence in Yangla village. The fieldwork has been conducted under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the government of Papua New Guinea. We are grateful to the Papua New Guinea Government for allowing us the privilege of serving in their country, and to the many Mbula speakers who have been willing to share their homes, food, time, language,

1. Mbula has generally been referred to in the literature as Mangap or Kaimanga. During our residence in the area, we have heard the names Mangāba and Mbula, with different villages preferring one or the other name.

culture, and in general their lives with us. Our main teachers of the language have been: Silas Ariko of Gauru village; Giemsa Apei, Moses Gial, David Aibike, Phillip Ibop, and Makele Gilingde of Yangla village: and Dick Awa of Birik village.



Map 44. Mbula language area

Bugenhagen, Salme E. and Robert D. 1995. Mbula. In Tryon, Darrell T. (ed.) *Comparative Austronesian Dictionary*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.