

KAKI AE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS RAEPA TATI), A POTENTIALLY ENDANGERED LANGUAGE IN SOUTHERN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Papuan Kaki Ae language of the coastal Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea is assumed to belong to the large Trans-New Guinea Phylum of Papuan languages (see Note below). It has 310 speakers who are mostly multilingual in both surrounding and trade languages. The language is still strong and very much favoured by its speakers, but is potentially endangered because of the high level of intermarriage between Kaki Ae speakers and speakers of other languages, and the pressure from other very much larger neighbouring languages and trade languages. The multilingualism of the Kaki Ae speakers itself seem to have little direct influence in this.

John M. Clifton's description of the sociolinguistic situation of Kaki Ae, the grammar sketch, the vocabularies, and the texts with morpheme divisions, interlinear and free translation provide a good insight into, and a permanent record of, the Kaki Ae language in its present, still fully functioning, form.

NOTE: Very recent work by Andy Pawley and Malcolm Ross (A. Pawley 'C.L. Voorhoeve and the Trans New Guinea hypothesis', M. Ross 'The Great Papuan pronoun hunt: recalibrating our sights', both in Connie Baak, Mary Bakker, Dick van der Meij, eds, 1995, *Tales from a concave world*, Liber amicorum Bert Voorhoeve, Projects Division, Department of Languages and Cultures of South East Asia and Oceania, Leiden University, pp.83-123 and pp.139-168 respectively), is beginning to demonstrate that the very large postulated controversial *Trans New Guinea Phylum* of over 500 Papuan languages may, at least for a very considerable part of its presumed extent, be shown to be in fact a large group of interrelated languages. Its existence was first proposed by K. McElhanon and C.L. Voorhoeve in 1970 (*The Trans-New Guinea Phylum: Explorations in Deep-Level Genetic Relationships*, Canberra, *Pacific Linguistics* B-16 and later elaborated on by S.A. Wurm, C.L. Voorhoeve and K. McElhanon in 1975 in their contribution 'The Trans-New Guinea Phylum in General' in S.A. Wurm (ed.), *New Guinea area languages and language study*, vol.1: *Papuan languages and the New Guinea linguistic scene*, Canberra, *Pacific Linguistics* C-38:299-322, and by S.A. Wurm in contributions to that volume, and in his S.A. Wurm 1982 *Papuan Languages of Oceania*, *Ars Linguistica* 7, Tübingen, Gunter Narr).

Portions of John Clifton's contribution have appeared as follows: 'Stable multilingualism in a small language', *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia (LLM)* 25:107-124 (1994), and as 'A grammar sketch of the Kaki Ae language', in *1995 Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*. Permission for the present publication to contain those portions is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

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S.A. Wurm, Editor

