Endangered languages listing: MAKOLKOL [zmh]

Number of speakers: 7; population of language area: 35 (1988).

Makolkol is a Papuan (non-Austronesian) language spoken in the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain, Papua New Guinea; it belongs to the Baining family of languages. Wurm (1975: 789) commented that “Baining itself consists of five very divergent dialects… which are almost sub-languages.” Rosensteel (1988) argued that Makolkol was in fact a distinct language on the basis of cognate levels between 36 – 48% with other Baining “dialects”.

Makolkol speakers appear to be restricted to the village of Gunapeo. When last surveyed in 1988 (Rosensteel 1988), the language was dying; language shift was both to Tok Pisin and the neighbouring Austronesian language Meramera (the villagers said children were mixing Makolkol with Meramera). Rosensteel was able to get a wordlist from a young man, perhaps twenty-five years old, but he did not feel confident to tell a story. There were perhaps seven fluent speakers of the language from a village population of about thirty-five; these were aged between forty-five and sixty in 1988.

Language resources:


References:

http://www.ethnologue.com/
