

**TITLE: THE LINGUISTIC PREHISTORY OF THE EASTERN BISMARCKS, PAPUA  
NEW GUINEA**

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This paper examines the relationships between the Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages in the Eastern Bismarcks region of Papua New Guinea. By combining archival evidence and new linguistic and ethnographic materials based on fieldwork from languages of the region, a preliminary view of the language relationships will be examined. We will examine fieldwork data from the non-Austronesian languages Taulil, Mali and Simbali (Baining) and more recently published materials by others on Sulka, Kol and Kuot (Lindström 2002; Reesnik 2005). In addition, we will look at the Austronesian languages Kuanua and Vinitiri with some additional data from Austronesian languages of New Ireland. Early ethnographic sources as well as the oral history in the region, suggests a complex history of contact between the different ethnic groups. By examining origins and migration, the history of language contact, comparative phonology, gender and noun class marking, pronouns and syntactic structure, we hope to shed new light on the linguistic prehistory of the region.

**LIST OF REFERENCES:**

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Reesnik, G. P. 2005. Sulka of East New Britain: A mixture of Oceanic and Papuan traits. *Oceanic Linguistics* 44.1:154-193.

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