

Linguistic Diversity at Risk: Description of Endangered Languages in Papua

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Abstract

Language and linguistic diversity in Papua are on the edge of extinction. Merely few languages have been documented and hundreds of them are still hitherto underdescribed or undescribed. The paper provides a brief description regarding the situation and condition of endangered languages in Papua by using a descriptive qualitative. The data was outlined in the shortlisted information based on Fishman's EGIDS involving dormant languages, nearly extinct languages, and moribund languages. As a result, 42 languages in Papua are generally categorized as critically endangered. Moreover, rapid vitality decline is driven by several issues such as cultural assimilation, economic pressures, breakdown of language transmission, and the dominance of superior languages. Describing and documenting those endangered languages is crucial for preserving their unique linguistic features, cultural heritage, and traditional knowledge. Without immediate and comprehensive documentation, the richness of linguistic diversity in Papua stands to be irretrievably gone.

Keywords: endangered languages, linguistic diversity, Papua

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia stands for second place with the largest number of languages in the world with approximately 700 languages after Papua New Guinea. Based on the data from Ethnologue, there are 704 living languages in Indonesia, and most of them are categorized as endangered languages (Eberhard et al., 2024). One of the greatest concentrations of languages in the world is discovered in Papua region of Indonesia. Papua contributes the largest number of languages with richness and abundance of linguistic diversity. The variety of languages can be attributed to complex structures of topography and the historical isolation of its indigenous communities. Separated valleys and isolated villages may create their own unique language, contributing to the extraordinary linguistic landscape.

The languages of Papua belong to several distinct language families, reflecting the profound and complex linguistic heritage. The two main groups of languages in Papua are Austronesian languages and non-Austronesian also known as Papuan languages

(Sawaki, 2019). When a language is termed as Papuan, a claim of the language is not Austronesia (Foley, 1986). Specifically, the most prominent family is the Trans-New Guinea family, which is one of the largest language families in the world and includes hundreds of languages spoken across the island. Furthermore, there are significant numbers of Austronesian languages, which arrived with seafaring peoples and are mostly found in coastal areas and offshore islands. The West Papuan languages form another distinguished group, consisting of languages spoken in the western part of the island in Papua, Indonesia. Beyond these major families, there are several smaller isolated languages, respectively representing unique linguistic features.

The loss of language and linguistic diversity has focused on much attention in recent decades (Upadhyay & Hasnain, 2017). Most languages in Papua are categorized as endangered languages and some of which are even critically endangered with very few speakers. Therefore, several languages are prioritized for fieldwork documentation. The most priority language in Papua is Kembra [xkw] with approximately 20 speakers left and the only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation. Only an overview document has been obtained for Kembra language. Masep [mvs] is a language with only 25 speakers alive and grandparents are people who are still proficient in the language. A few wordlists have been documented for Masep language. Additionally, Mor [moq] with only 30 speakers is also categorized as a language that needs documentation and grandparents are the living speakers of the language. Mor language similarly has a lack of documents, with a few wordlists (Hammarström, 2010). Many other endangered languages in Papua with a significant number having fewer than 100 speakers also need preservation.

All the languages previously mentioned belong to endangered languages. A language is said to be endangered when it is at risk of disappearing within a generation, when its last fluent speakers are only elderly, or when few or no more children learn the language as a first and second language (Thomason, 2015). Moreover, a language is clearly endangered when it may no longer remain to exist after a few more generations as they are not acquired by children as a first language (Austin & Sallabank, 2011). What is apparent nowadays regarding the languages of the world are in a predicament and language endangerment and death are now going on an unprecedented occurrence (Rehg & Campbell, 2018). Endangered languages are those at risk of falling out of use,

characteristically because they have few surviving native speakers. Furthermore, they will become extinct when losing all of their native speakers.

Levels of language endangerment can be measured by Fishman's Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale or Fishman's EGIDS. Scale 0 is International showing that the language is used internationally for a broad range of functions. Scale 1 (national) shows that the language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the nationwide level. Scale 2 (regional) shows that the language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services. Scale 3 (trade) shows that the language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders. Scale 4 (educational) shows that literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education. Scale 5 (written) shows that the language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community. Scale 6a (vigorous) shows that the language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.

Scale 6b (threatened) shows that the language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generations are transmitting it to their children. Scale 7 (shifting) shows that the child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children. Scale 8a (moribund) shows that the only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation. Scale 8b (nearly extinct) shows that the only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language. Scale 9 (dormant) shows that the language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency. Scale 10 (extinct) shows that no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes (Lewis & Simons, 2010).

Languages in Papua turn out to be endangered for several reasons, many of which are tied to broader social, economic, and cultural changes. Globalization and dominance of the official language of Indonesia, which includes the province of Papua. The dominance often leads to its increased use in the marginalization of local languages, especially among younger generations. Moreover, formal education in Papua is primarily conducted in the official language, with inadequate support for indigenous languages. The focus on official language in schools can erode proficiency in native languages. The

migration of people from rural areas to urban centers in search of better livelihoods contributes to language shift. In cities, people are more likely to use dominant languages, leading to a decline in the use of their native languages. Another reason is that there can be social stigma of indigenous languages, which are sometimes viewed as less prestigious compared to dominant languages.

Several fieldwork studies have documented and described languages in Papua. The language documentation is preserved in long grammar, grammar, or grammar sketch. A grammar of Abun [kgr] has been documented to maintain the language from extinction. Most of the grammatical features of Abun have been studied and four recognizable dialects are mutually intelligible (Berry & Berry, 1999). A grammar of Aghu [ahh] has also been studied involving its phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse (L. De Vries, 2020). Biak [bhw] as an Austronesian language got very well documentation. Profound linguistic features of Biak language are outlined in long grammar. Even though the number of Biak speakers is relatively high compared to the area, Biak language is in danger of dying (Heuvel, 2006). Furthermore, a grammar of Hatam [had] has also been identified. Hatam is genuinely spoken by people who live in the Arfak mountains, in the Bird's Head region of Papua (Reesink, 1999).

Another fieldwork study is the language of Korowai [khe]. Not only the linguistic features but also the cultural context of Korowai language has been studied (Van Enk & De Vries, 1997). A study of Marind [mrz] focused on the grammatical features. Specifically, the grammar of Marind language describes the western dialect of Coastal Marind (Olsson, 2021). Moreover, a grammar of Maybrat [ayz] has been documented in long grammar involving phonology, morphology, and word classes. Although it is one of the larger local languages in Papua in terms of the number of speakers (Dol, 2007). Meyah [mej] is also a large language in terms of population. The language spreads from the Arfak mountains northwards to the Pacific Ocean and eastwards on the shores of Cenderawasih Bay (Gravelle, 2010).

A study about Moskona [mtj] language produced comprehensive documentation on its grammar. The aim of the study is to provide a detailed linguistic description of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Moskona language (G.J., 2010). Papuan Malay [pmy] has been studied a lot in its long grammar. In Papua, the language is used as wider communication and the first or second language that a growing number of people in the

area (Kluge, 2017). Some linguistic features of Suabo [szp] have been studied including its phonology, morphology, and grammar. Suabo language is losing out due to generational degradation. Generally, only speakers above the age of fifty speak and comprehend it properly (L. J. de Vries, 2004). Additionally, a grammar of Western Dani [dnw] obtained lots of documentation. Thus, the language has been well-described comprehensively. Western Dani speakers live in the mountain river valleys (Barclay, 2008).

Based on the previous studies, only a few languages have been documented and hundreds of languages in Papua are still hitherto underdescribed or undescribed. Those languages with very few remaining speakers face a serious risk of extinction. Several of those languages are counting the days before loss. When the last native speakers die, the language will be lost forever. In addition, endangered languages in Papua often contain unique knowledge about local ecology, folklore, and cultural traditions. Loss of the languages and their linguistic diversity means indeed loss of unique knowledge. Therefore, the study aims to give a brief description regarding the situation and condition of endangered languages in Papua. Describing endangered languages, especially in the eastern part of Indonesia, helps provide a comprehensive understanding of their unique linguistic structures and features. This contributes to the broader field of linguistics by expanding knowledge of language typology and diversity.

METHODS

The study is a descriptive qualitative method focusing on the description of endangered languages due to the objective of this study is to give a brief explanation regarding the circumstances of critically endangered languages in Papua. It is a literature study from numerous and reliable previous studies to accumulate all information about endangered languages in Papua. A literature study is a systematic method of gathering and analyzing information using various resources available. The primary data involves books, academic journals, databases, reference materials, and a special collection of archives about languages in Papua. The data was synthesized by identifying themes and patterns of information, comparing and contrasting the information, cataloging the language information, and developing an argument to obtain a comprehensive

description. As a result, the data was outlined in the shortlisted information based on Fishman's EGIDS of endangered languages in Papua.

FINDINGS

Endangered languages are languages at risk of becoming obsolete, typically as their speakers shift to speaking other, frequently more dominant, languages. An endangered language is often characterized by a decreasing number of speakers, with younger generations not learning or using the language anymore as a fragment of their daily lives. As a language becomes endangered, not only its linguistic features but its rich cultural heritage, including oral traditions, literature, and unique perspectives on the world, faces the threat of being lost forever. The notions for conserving diversity are similar whether people consider the extinction of a rare bird, the vanishing of tree species, a part of cultural knowledge that will soon be forgotten, or the loss of endangered languages (Evans, 2011). The perspectives of entity endangerment should always obtain special attention.

The number of endangered languages in Papua is quite significant with more than five hundred (Eberhard et al., 2024). However, the data of description is limited and sorted based on the most endangered languages. Therefore, the languages are primarily shortlisted through consideration of Fishman's EGIDS involving dormant languages, nearly extinct languages, and moribund languages which are critically endangered. The following 42 endangered languages in Papua are comprehensively portrayed and the description generally involves 1) official and alternate names of the languages, 2) ISO 639-3 criteria for language identification, 3) user population, 4) a description of the location where the language is spoken, 5) language status of endangerment, and 6) classification of the language family. The endangered languages are as follows:

1. As

As [asz] is a language with only 2 semi-speakers, but the ethnic population was still 45 speakers in 2020 (Arnold, 2020). The location of As language is in Southwest Papua province, Sorong regency, Makbon district, Asbaken village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of As language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, South Halmahera-West New Guinea, West New Guinea,

Cenderawasih Bay, Raja Ampat (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Predictably, there are no active speakers nowadays.

2. Awera

Awera [awr] is a language with no known speakers alive nowadays but there was only 1 speaker remaining in 2007 S. Kim report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Awera is in Papua province, Waropen regency, Wapoga district, Awera village. Status of language endangerment is 9 (dormant). Family classification of Awera language belongs to Lakes Plain, Awera (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Inevitably, there are no active speakers anymore these days.

3. Awyi

Awyi [auw] alternatively named Awje, Awji, Awye, Njao, or Nyao is a language with 350 speakers in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Awyi is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Arso Timur district, Sangke village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Awyi language belongs to Border, Taikat (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

4. Bonggo

Bonggo [bpg] alternatively named Armopa, Bgu, Bogu, or Bongo is a language with 790 speakers in 2006 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Bonggo is in Papua province, Sarimi regency, Bonggo district, Kiren village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Bonggo language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarimi-Jayapura Bay, Sarimi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is lessening these days.

5. Burumakok

Burumakok [aip] is a language with 40 speakers in 1994 R. Kroneman report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Burumakok is in Highland Papua province, Yahukimo regency, Seradala district, Burupmakot village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Burumakok language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, Ok-Awyu, Ok, Western (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is

reasonable to suppose the fact that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

6. Dineor

Dineor [mrx] alternatively named Meremgi or Merengge is a language with 55 speakers in 2006 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Dineor is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Bonggo Timur district, Tarawasi Marenggi village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Dineor language belongs to Tor-Kwerba, Orya-Tor, Tor (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

7. Dusner

Dusner [dsn] alternatively named Dusnir is a language with only 3 speakers in 2011 University of Oxford report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Dusner is in West Papua province, Teluk Wondama regency, Kuri Wamesa district, Dusner village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Dusner language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, South Halmahera-West New Guinea, West New Guinea, Cenderawasih Bay, Biakic (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Probably, there are no active speakers currently.

8. Gresi

Gresi [grs] alternatively named Geresi, Glesi, Gresik, or Klesi is a language with 2500 speakers in 1987 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Gresi is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Kemtuk Gresi and Gresi Selatan districts, Bring, Ibul, Jagrang, Swentab, and Klaisu villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Gresi language belongs to Nimboran (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is supposed that the number of active speakers appears to diminish at the moment.

9. Kanum Badi

Kanum Badi [khd] alternatively named Bedi Ngkolmpu, Enkelembu, Kanum, Kenume, or Knwne is a language with only 5 speakers in 2018 (Evans et al., 2018). The location of Kanum Badi is in South Papua province, Merauke regency, Naukenjerai district, Onggaya village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Kanum Badi language belongs to South-Central

Papuan, Morehead-Upper Maro, Tonda (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is decreasing or there are no active speakers anymore these days.

10. Kaptiau

Kaptiau [kbi] alternatively named Kapitiauw, Kaptiauw, or Sobei is a language with 230 speakers in 2006 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Kaptiau is in Papua province, Sarimi regency, Bonggo Timur district, Kaptiau village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Kaptiau language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarimi-Jayapura Bay, Sarimi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

11. Karas

Karas [kgv] alternatively named Kalamang is a language with 240 speakers in 1983 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Karas is in West Papua province, Fakfak regency, Karas district, Antalisa and Mas villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Karas language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, West, West Bomberai, Karas (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

12. Kaure

Kaure [bpp] alternatively named Kaure-Narau, Kaureh, Kaureki, Kaurne is a language with 450 speakers in 1995 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Kaure is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Kaureh and Airu districts, Yadauw, Soskotek, and Aurina villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Kaure language belongs to Kaure, Kaure Proper (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that active speakers is falling right now.

13. Kayupulau

Kayupulau [kzu] alternatively named Kajupulau, Kayapulau, or Kayu Pulo is a language with 50 speakers in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Kayupulau is in Papua province, Jayapura municipality, Jayapura Selatan district, Tahima Soroma village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Kayupulau language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern

Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarmi-Jayapura Bay, Jayapura Bay (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It seems that the number of active speakers is currently reducing due to urbanization.

14. Keijar

Keijar [kdy] alternatively named Keder is a language with 370 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Keijar is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Veen district, Timron and Keder II villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Keijar language belongs to Tor-Kwerba, Orya-Tor, Tor (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

15. Kembra

Kembra [xkw] is a language with only 20 speakers but the ethnic population was still 50 in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Kembra is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Kaisenar district, Kiambra village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Kembra language is unclassified (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

16. Kwerisa

Kwerisa [kkb] alternatively named Taogwe is a language with only 15 speakers but the ethnic population was still 130 in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Kwerisa is in Papua province, Mamberamo Raya regency, Rufaer district, Kai village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Kwerisa language belongs to Lakes Plain, Tariku, East (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

17. Liki

Liki [lio] alternatively named Moar is a language with only 11 speakers but the ethnic population was still 320 in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Liki is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Sarmi district, Liki and Armo villages (Liki and Nirumoar islands). Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Liki language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic,

North New Guinea, Sarmi-Jayapura Bay, Sarmi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is decreasing these days.

18. Mander

Mander [mqr] is a language with only 20 speakers in 1991 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Mander is in Sarmi regency, Bonggo Barat district, Rotea village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Mander language belongs to Tor-Kwerba, Orya-Tor, Tor (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Probably, there are no active speakers currently.

19. Masimasi

Masimasi [ism] is a language with only 10 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Masimasi is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Pantai Timur Bagian Barat district, Artibe/Pulau Masimasi village (Masimasi island). Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Masimasi language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarmi-Jayapura Bay, Sarmi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

20. Masep

Masep [mvs] alternatively named Masep, Potafa, or Wotaf is a language with only 25 speakers but the ethnic population was still 85 in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Masep is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Apawer Hilir district, Masep village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Masep language belongs to Isolated language (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is supposed that the number of active speakers appears to diminish at the moment.

21. Mekwei

Mekwei [msf] alternatively named Demenggong-Waibron-Bano, Menggei, Menggwei, Moi, Mooi, Munggai, Mungge, or Munkei is a language with 1200 speakers in 1987 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Mekwei is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Sentani Barat district, Maribu, Sabron Yoru, Sabron Sari, Dosay, and Waibron villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Mekwei language belongs to Nimboran (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

22. Mlap

Mlap [kja] alternatively named Kuangsu-Bonggrang, Kwangsu-Bonggrang, Kwansu, Kwansu-Bonggrang, or Malf is a language with 300 speakers in 2000 (Wurm, 2000). The location of Mlap is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Kemtuk district, Kwansu village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Mlap language belongs to Nimboran (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is decreasing these days.

23. Mombum

Mombum [mso] alternatively named Kemelom, Kemelomsch, or Komolom is a language with 250 speakers in 1993 R. Doriot report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Mombum is in South Papua province, Merauke regency, Kimaam district, Komolom village (Komolom island). Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Mombum language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, Mombum (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

24. Mor

Mor [moq] is a language with only 30 speakers and 70 semi-speakers in 2012 (Hammarström, 2010). The location of Mor is in West Papua province, Fakfak regency, Mbahamdandara and Bomberay districts, Mitimber and Tesha villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Mor language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, Mor (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

25. Morori

Morori [mok] alternatively named Marori, Moaraeri, Moraori, or Morari is a language with 50 speakers but the ethnic population was still 250 in 1998 M. Donohue report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Morori is in South Papua province, Merauke regency, Merauke district, Wasur village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Morori language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, Moraori (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is supposed that the number of active speakers appears to diminish at the moment.

26. Nafri

Nafri [nxx] is a language with 1630 speakers in 1975 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Nafri is in Papua province: Jayapura municipality, Abepura district, Nafri village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Nafri language belongs to East Bird's Head-Sentani, Sentani, Sentani Proper (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is decreasing these days due to urbanization.

27. Namla

Namla [naa] is a language with only 30 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Namla is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Senggi, Towe, and Web districts, Namla, Tefalma, and Dubu villages. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Namla language is unclassified (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

28. Nimboran

Nimboran [nir] alternatively named Nambrong is a language with 2000 speakers but the ethnic population was still 3500 in 1987 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Nimboran is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Nimboran and Namblong districts, Yenggu Lama, Oyengsi, Singgriway, Tabri, Gemebs, Singgri, Meyu, Benyom, Kuipons, Imsar, Kaitemung, Kuwase, Pobaim, Yenggu Baru, Sanggai, Sarmai Atas, Sarmai Bawah, Yakasib, Imestum, Sumbe, and Hanggai Hamong villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Nimboran language belongs to Nimboran (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

29. Sawi

Sawi [saw] alternatively named Aejauroh or Sawuy is a language with 3500 speakers in 1993 R. Doriot report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Sawi is in South Papua province, Asmat regency, Pantai Kasuari district, Saramit, Hainam, and Yagamit villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Sawi language belongs to Trans-New Guinea, Ok-Awyu, Awyu-Dumut, Sawi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

30. Sowari

Sowari [dmy] alternatively named Demta or Muris is a language with 1300 speakers in 2000 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Sowari is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Demta district, Ambora, Yakore, Muris Kecil, and Yaugapsa villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Sowari language belongs to East Bird's Head-Sentani, Sentani, Demta (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

31. Sunum

Sunum [ymn] alternatively named Yamna is a language with 560 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Sunum is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Pantai Timur district, Sunum/Yamna village including Yamna island. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Sunum language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarmi-Jayapura Bay, Sarmi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It seems that the number of active speakers is currently reducing.

32. Tabla

Tabla [tnm] alternatively named Jakari, Tabi, Tanah Merah, or Tanahmerah is a language with 3750 speakers in 1990 UBS report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Tabla is in Papua province, Jayapura regency, Depapre, Yokari, and Ravenirara districts, Doromena, Entiyebo, Kendate, Tablasupa, Waiya, Wambena, Yepase, Yewena, Maruway, Meukisi, Endokisi, Snamay, Buseryo, Yongsu Sapari, and Yongsu Desoyo villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Tabla language belongs to East Bird's Head-Sentani, Sentani, Sentani Proper (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

33. Tandia

Tandia [tni] is a language with no known speakers alive nowadays and the last known speaker is in 1991 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Tandia is in West Papua province, Teluk Wondama regency, Rasiei district, Tandia village. Status of language endangerment is 9 (dormant). Family classification of Tandia language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian,

Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, South Halmahera-West New Guinea, West New Guinea, Cenderawasih Bay, Tandia (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Inevitably, there are no active speakers anymore these days.

34. Tarpia

Tarpia [tpf] alternatively named Sufrai or Tarfia is a language with 630 speakers in 2006 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Tarpia is in Papua province: Jayapura regency, Demta district, Kamdera village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Tarpia language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarimi-Jayapura Bay, Sarimi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling now.

35. Tebi

Tebi [dmu] alternatively named Dubu is a language with 220 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Tebi is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Web district, Dubu and Umuaf villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Tebi language belongs to Pauwasi, Western (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

36. Tobati

Tobati [tti] alternatively named Enggros, Humboldt Jotafa, Jayapura, Jotafa, Tobwadic, Yautefa, or Yotafa is a language with 100 speakers in 2007 (Wurm, 2007). The location of Tobati is in Papua province, Jayapura municipality, Abepura and Jayapura Selatan districts, Engros, Awiyo, Vim, Entrop, and Tobati villages. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Tobati language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarimi-Jayapura Bay, Jayapura Bay (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It might be expected that the number of active speakers is decreasing these days owing to urbanization.

37. Towe

Towe [ttn] alternatively named Towe is a language with 120 speakers in 1975 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Towe is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Towe district, Towe Hitam village. Status of language endangerment is 8a

(Moribund). Family classification of Toweï language belongs to Pauwasi, Western (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is supposed that the number of active speakers appears to diminish at the moment.

38. Usku

Usku [ulf] alternatively named Afra is a language with 110 speakers in 2004 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Usku is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Senggi district, Usku village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Usku language is unclassified (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be inferred that the number of active speakers is falling right now.

39. Viid

Viid [snu] alternatively named Senggi is a language with 250 speakers in 2005 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Viid is in Papua province, Keerom regency, Senggi district, Senggi village. Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Viid language belongs to Border, Waris (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It can be assumed that the number of active speakers is decreasing nowadays.

40. Worïa

Worïa [wor] is a language with only 5 speakers in 2000 R. Dariot report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Worïa is in Papua province, Waropen regency, Oudate district, Botawa village. Status of language endangerment is 8b (nearly extinct). Family classification of Worïa language belongs to East Geelvink Bay (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). Probably, there are no active speakers currently.

41. Yarsun

Yarsun [yrs] is a language with 200 speakers in 1991 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Yarsun is in Papua province, Sarmi regency, Bonggo Barat district, Yarsun village (Yarsun island). Status of language endangerment is 8a (moribund). Family classification of Yarsun language belongs to Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic, Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Sarmi-Jayapura Bay, Sarmi (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It seems that the number of active speakers is currently reducing. Based on SIL survey in 2005, Yarsun language may not exist anymore since the speakers have moved or migrated (Eberhard et al., 2024).

42. Yelmek

Yelmek [jel] alternatively named Jab, Jabsch, Jelmek, Jelmik is a language with 400 speakers in 1978 SIL report (Eberhard et al., 2024). The location of Yelmek is in South Papua province, Merauke regency, Ilwayab and Tubang districts, Bibikem, Uli Uli, Wanam, Wogekel, Dodalim, and Woboyo villages. Status of language endangerment is 8a (Moribund). Family classification of Yelmek language belongs to South-Central Papuan, Yelmek-Maklew (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). It is reasonable to suppose that the number of active speakers is dropping in recent years.

DISCUSSION

Language extinction occurs when an existing language system is no longer used as a tool of communication (Orman, 2013). Besides endangered languages, several languages in Papua have been identified as extinct due to no more speakers alive nowadays. They are Duriankere [dbn] with the last fluent speaker in the 1990s, Mapia [mpy] with the last speaker who survived into the 1990s, and the ethnic group that moved from Micronesia in the early twentieth century, and Saponi [spi] with the last known speaker existed into the first decade of the 2000s (Eberhard et al., 2024). It implies that language extinction occurs when a language loses its last native speakers and falls out of use completely. This process is often slow and gradual, but once complete, the language ceases to be spoken and understood by anyone. Unfortunately, only very few documents of linguistic features are archived from those languages.

Some factors collectively contribute to the gradual decline of language use within communities, leading to languages becoming endangered and eventually extinct. Conquest can lead to linguistic endangerment and death in some colonial settings if the invaders' language replaces the native language. Economic pressure may apply not just to conquered peoples, but also to voluntary immigrants and to contact situations in which, while no one has relocated anywhere, one group begins to dominate the other. The dominant cultural ideology is a melting pot in which people from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds come together to form a single united population. It seems obvious that merging into a single homogeneous culture means shifting to a dominant language and giving up other languages (Thomason, 2015).

Furthermore, language politics also contributes to endangerment. It is simple to identify governments throughout the world that try to repress minority languages, while recent worldwide support of language rights has begun to discourage discriminatory laws. People's perceptions of their language about its worth, usefulness, and value to their society can have a significant impact on its fate. If a language is on the edge of extinction, its speakers' attitudes toward it can hasten, slow, or even reverse its demise. Inferior languages usually lose linguistic diversity via standardization and most minority languages, including those that are endangered, have no standard form. Nevertheless, treatments are quite different for a language that is in the process of being or already standardized (Thomason, 2015). Generally, it can be supposed that those factors prevail in all languages and linguistic circumstances, including endangered languages in Papua.

Languages are increasingly going extinct owing to globalization and shifts from rural to urban places (Majzub & Rais, 2011). Cultural assimilation in the dominant cultures often affects the languages of minority communities, encouraging people to adopt the dominant language and abandon their native tongue. In Papua, native speakers of Papuan and Austronesian languages, e.g., Tobati [tti], Kayu Pulau [kzu], and Nafri [nxx], have partly absorbed modern cultures in urbanization causing ignorance of their cultural identity and mother tongue. In addition, language transmission breakdown occurs when parents do not teach their native language to their children. The language fails to be passed down to the next generation. Parents commonly, not only in Papua but in Indonesia, prefer teaching international languages, e.g., English [eng] and Chinese Mandarin [cmn], to teaching indigenous languages to their children.

When languages lose their viability, it is difficult to regenerate their functionality, regardless of how much the government and individuals strive (Unganer, 2014). In fact, the marginalization of minority language speakers often faces discrimination and a lack of support from the government and institutions. Policies that discourage or prohibit the use of minority languages in education, media, and public life contribute to their death leading to language loss. Regarding endangered languages in Papua, there are no regional regulations from the government that specifically support language rights and the vitality of endangered languages. If there is a solid regulation of endangered language support, it will contribute a lot to the continuity of endangered languages in Papua and become more accepted in general education as well as more prestige in societal use.

Language attrition and loss are significantly progressing, so working on documentation and preservation must be done prior to the death of the last speaker (Kraisame, 2018). Reviewing the risk of the previous description, it can be confirmed that endangered languages in Papua will become extinct in the next few decades. Therefore, documentation of endangered languages in Papua urgently needs to be conducted soon. A long-lasting, multifunctional record of a language is defined as language documentation (Gippert et al., 2006). Specifically, language documentation is the process of systematically collecting, recording, and analyzing information about a language, especially those that are endangered and at risk of extinction. This includes its sounds, words, grammar, usage in different contexts, and cultural aspects.

Documenting endangered languages helps preserve the diversity of linguistic structures and features, which is essential for a comprehensive understanding of human language. Besides, documentation can create a historical archive of a language that provides long-lasting linguistic insights. Then, detailed documentation of endangered languages provides essential resources for teaching and revitalization efforts. These resources can be used to develop educational materials. Accurate documentation of languages can facilitate their transmission to younger generations and this ensures that the language continues to be used. By addressing these aspects, the documentation of endangered languages plays a crucial role in preserving the richness of linguistic diversity and avoiding language loss.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic diversity in Papua is at significant risk due to the rapid vitality decline of many indigenous languages, driven by issues such as cultural assimilation, economic pressures, breakdown of language transmission, and the dominance of superior languages. Furthermore, hundreds of languages in Papua struggle with those issues. A preliminary description above should help identify which languages must be documented first. Describing and documenting those endangered languages is crucial for preserving their unique linguistic features, cultural heritage, and traditional knowledge. Efforts to record and analyze these endangered languages not only contribute to scientific research but also empower local communities by providing resources for language revitalization

and education. Without immediate and comprehensive documentation, the richness of linguistic diversity in Papua stands to be irretrievably lost.

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