Abstract

This thesis describes certain areas in the grammar of the little-known Kuot language, spoken by some 1,500 people in New Ireland Province in Papua New Guinea. Kuot is an isolate, and is the only non-Austronesian (Papuan) language of that province. The analyses presented here are based on original data from 18 months of linguistic fieldwork.

The first chapter provides an overview of Kuot grammar, and gives details of earlier mentions of the language, and of data collection and the fieldwork situation. The second chapter presents information about the prehistory and history of the area, the social system, kinship system and culture of Kuot speakers, as well as dialectal variation and prognosis of survival of the language. Chapter three treats Kuot phonology, with particular emphasis on the factors that govern allophonic variation, and on the expression of word stress and the functions of intonation. Word classes and the criteria used to define them are presented in Chapter four, which also contains a discussion of types of morphemes in Kuot. The last chapter describes in some detail the class of nouns in Kuot, their declensions, non-singular formation, and the properties of grammatical gender.

Appendices give the full set of person-marking forms in Kuot, a transcription of a recorded text with interlinear glossing and translation, the Swadesh 100-word list for Kuot, and diagrams of kin relations and terminology.