

PREFACE

The manuscripts now appearing in print as the contents of the three large volumes which constitute the present reference work on New Guinea linguistics from a general point of view and bear the overall title *New Guinea Area Languages and Language Study* were originally solicited by Professor Thomas A. Sebeok and S.A. Wurm on the initiative of the former in his capacity as General Editor of the series *Current Trends in the Language Sciences* published by Mouton Publishers, The Hague, Netherlands. Professor Sebeok was the first to conceive the idea of the publication of a set of volumes in that series under the editorship of S.A. Wurm with the overall title *Current Trends in the Study of New Guinean Area Languages*.

After the manuscripts had been delivered to Professor Sebeok by mid-1974, and through him to Mouton Publishers, and accepted by the latter, Professor Sebeok resigned from the editorship of the series *Current Trends in the Language Sciences*. In negotiations between S.A. Wurm and Mouton Publishers over the fate of the series in general and the New Guinea area volumes in particular, it became clear that the very large overall size of the envisaged New Guinea area volumes was expected to cause serious difficulties for the prospective publisher under prevailing circumstances, and their publication was likely to suffer quite substantial delays.

This would have resulted in the withholding of much unique information from the interested public for a long time, not to mention the frustrations of the numerous authors who would have not seen the results of their work appear in print within a reasonable time as parts of a large reference work. At the same time, the highly topical and changing nature of much of the subject matter treated in the volumes would possibly have made some of their contents obsolete by the time of the eventual publication, which would have been most unfortunate.

In view of this situation, other potential avenues for a speedy publication of the manuscripts in the form of a set of three to four large

volumes were explored and it proved possible to arrange for their reasonably quick publication, in three large volumes, in the book series (Series C) of the serial publication *Pacific Linguistics* issued through the Department of Linguistics in the School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University in Canberra.

This seemed all the more appropriate in view of the fact that most of the contents of volume I, *Papuan Languages and the New Guinea Linguistic Scene* in particular, and some of those of volumes II and III, constituted the results of up to one and a half decades of intensive research work by linguists associated in one form or another with the Department of Linguistics of the School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University, with these volumes presenting the overall results of their research for the first time in a comprehensive form in the framework of a detailed compendium.

In addition, the choice of these publication channels had the advantage that quite a number of language and related maps could be added to those originally envisaged for the volumes, thus considerably enhancing their overall value.

The technical tasks of copy-editing and indexing were carried out in the Department of Linguistics. The editor would like to express his heartfelt thanks to his colleagues and staff for the help given him by them in his efforts to see the volumes through the press, and in particular, his thanks are due, for volume I, to his varitypists Jeanette Coombes, Pam Griffith, Elaine Sommer and Judy Wise who carried out the lengthy and exacting task of setting up the over one thousand printing pages with their usual skill and devotion under the able supervision of Sue Tys, Linguistic Assistant in the Department who at the same time did the lion's share of the setting up herself.

Also, the editor would like to give his thanks to his staff who have so ably carried out the lengthy and arduous task of preparing the voluminous indexes for volume I under the direction and guidance of Basil Wilson, Senior Research Assistant in the Department who devised the system underlying the indexes and carried out the most difficult part of the work himself.

Again, his thanks go to the Linguistics Officer of the Department, Hilda Leach, for her dealing very ably and resourcefully with the many technical aspects and problems of guiding the three large volumes through the pre-printing, printing and finishing stages and for efficiently supervising their further handling which, on the distribution side, has been most efficiently handled by Miriam Curnow in her capacity of Publications Distribution Officer.

He also expresses his thanks to the Department of Human Geography for its wonderful cooperation in making its cartographic facilities

available. Most especially he wants to thank the excellent cartographers themselves who, especially Keith Mitchell, but also Ian Heyward and Leo Pancino, spent many hours in producing the numerous highly detailed maps in the volume, with Hans Gunther, the cartographer-in-charge, supervising the work and allotting the various tasks in a most efficient manner.

Very importantly, the editor's thanks go out to our numerous friends in Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, the Solomon Islands and the New Guinea area as a whole who have been our helpers and teachers in our long painstaking work in their languages and who also made our work possible in their countries in many other ways, notably as members of local administrations and governments.

The editor also wishes to voice his thanks to the Australian National University for the cooperation and facilities given and made available to him and his Department and rendering practicable the publication of these imposing volumes for which, on the technical side, the printers in the University, as well as Patria Printers and Adriatic Bookbinders deserve high praise.

He should like to give his thanks to Sir John Crawford who was Director of the School of Pacific Studies when the New Guinea Project now resulting in the publication of these three volumes made its start, and who later as Vice-Chancellor and now as Chancellor has maintained his interest in our work. He also thanks the successive Directors of the School, Professors Oscar Spate, Antony Low and Wang Gung Wu, for their continued interest in our work and their support.

Last, but not least, his thanks go out to all the numerous contributors to the volumes, whose work in compiling the many chapters and mostly many years' research preceding the writing down of their final results has made the appearance of these three volumes possible.

S.A. Wurm

Editor's Note to the second printing:

In this second printing (December 1977), amendments have been restricted to corrections of typographical and other obvious errors, and the updating of population figures in a number of languages of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, the East Papuan Phylum and the Sepik-Ramu Phylum. The maps accompanying chapter 2.3.3. have been made clearer. Otherwise no major changes have been made to the first printing.