

# The Sound(s) of Melanesia

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Languages vary in numerous ways (eg., lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse structures). We also know that these features can diffuse between neighbours as a result of social and linguistic contact. Over what distance do these diffusion networks operate, and how easily can we detect them? This talk examines these questions in the domain of phonological systems, and with a focus on Melanesia. We will discuss evidence for recent diffusions of sounds, and ancient relics implying earlier contact, by comparing phonological systems from New Guinea and its surrounds.