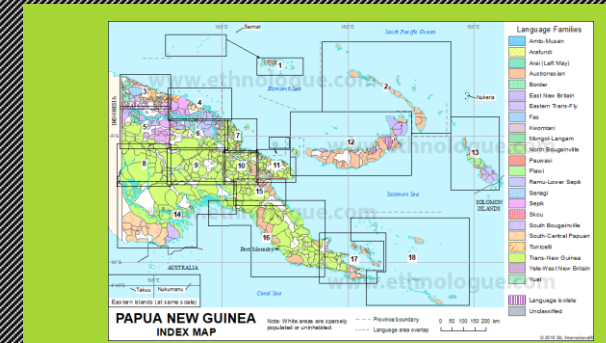
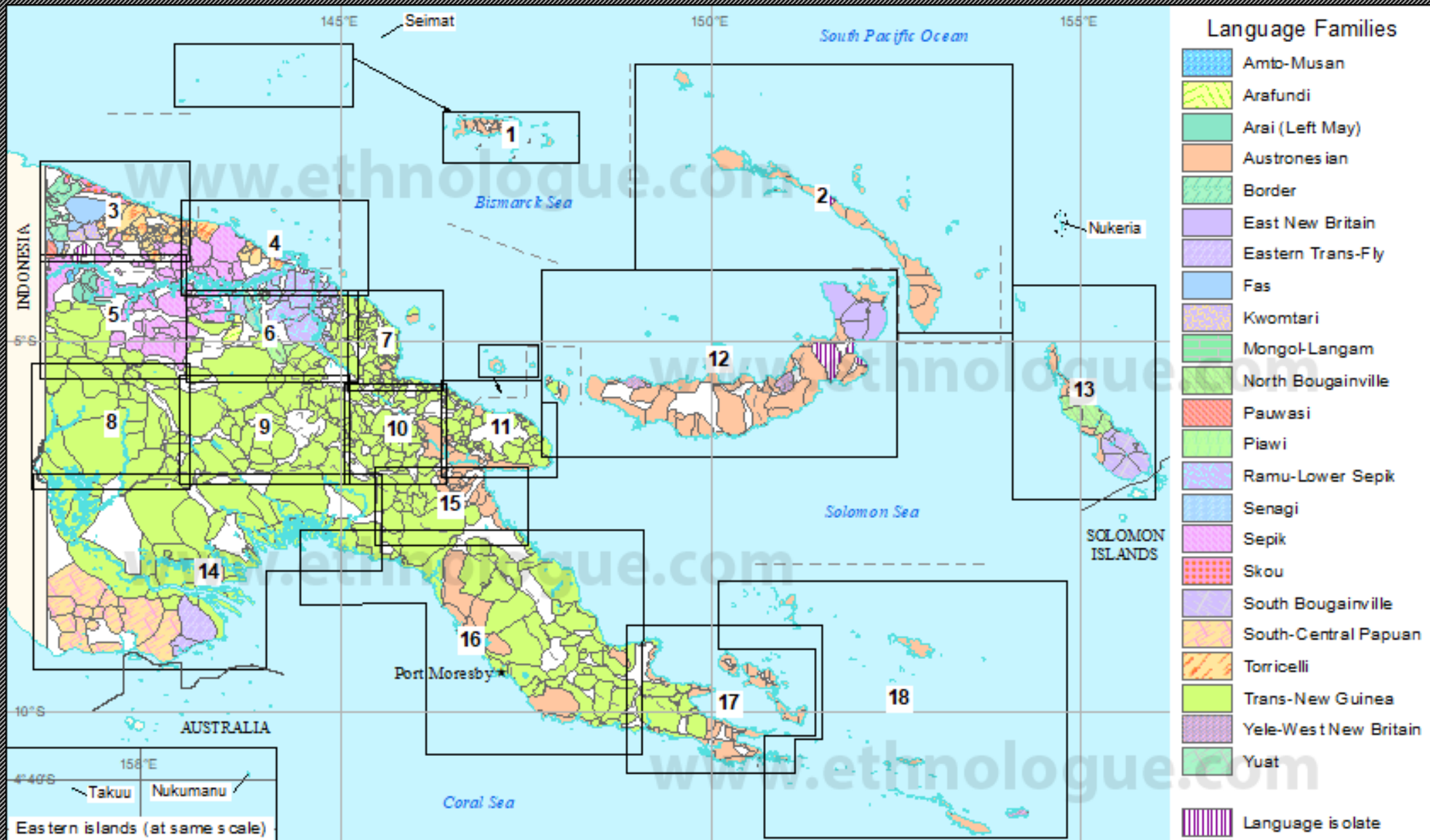


# Graphemic choices in writing Papua New Guinean languages through the years



LSPNG 2019

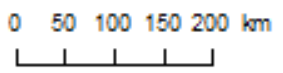
Ray Stegeman, SIL-PNG



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA INDEX MAP

Note: White areas are sparsely populated or uninhabited.

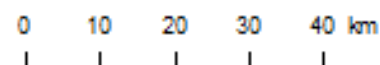
--- Province boundary  
 ..... Language area overlap



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## MAP 3

### Language Families



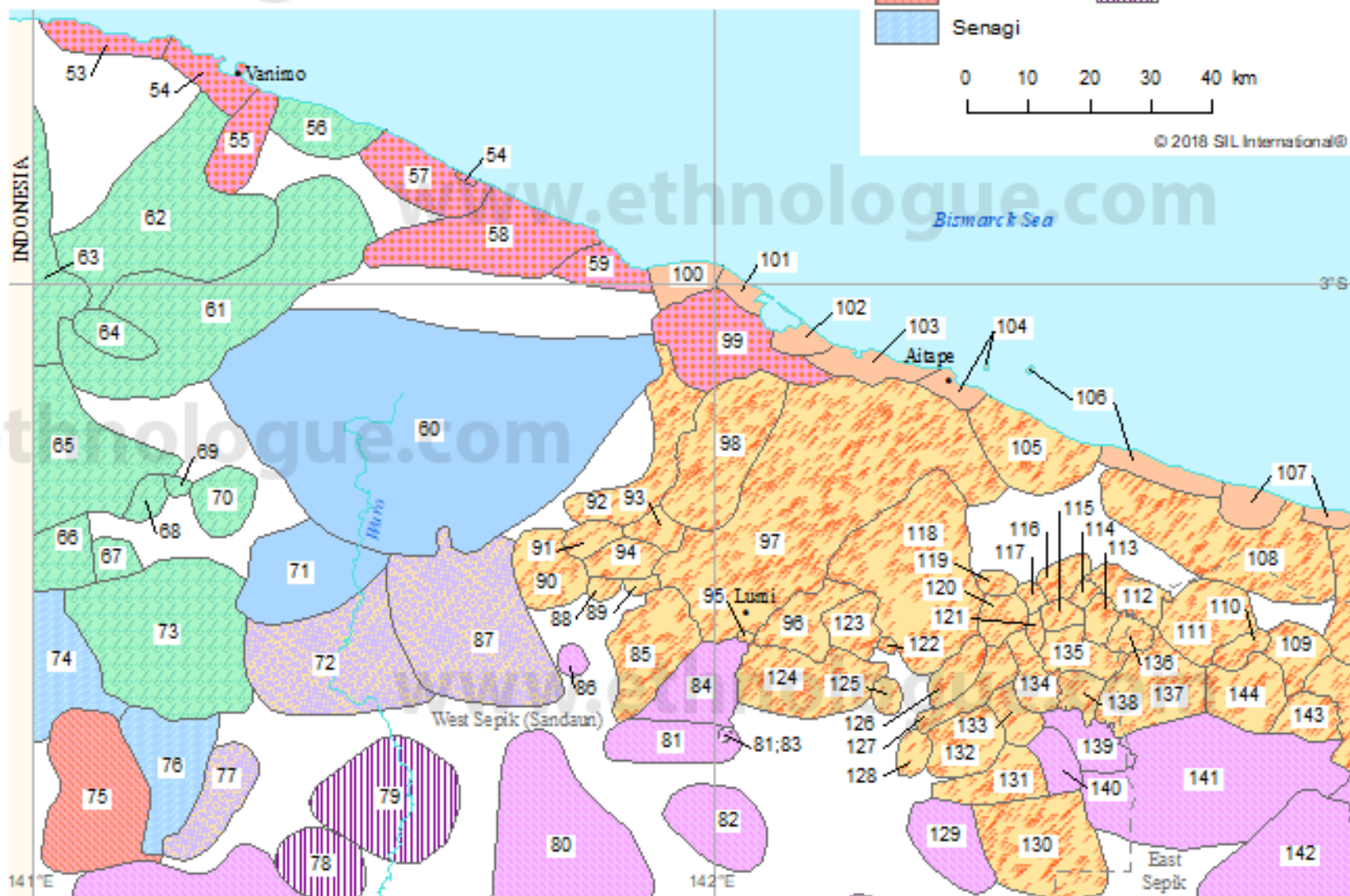
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### Notes:

1. White areas are sparsely populated or uninhabited.
2. Parentheses show the number of times a language's number appears on map, if more than once.

--- Province boundary      --- Language area overlap

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 53 Wutung       | 99 Warapu           |
| 54 Vanimo (2)   | 100 Sera            |
| 55 Isaka        | 101 Sissano         |
| 56 Ningera      | 102 Arop-Sissano    |
| 57 Rawo         | 103 Malol           |
| 58 Puare        | 104 Tumleo          |
| 59 Womo         | 105 Valman          |
| 60 Fas          | 106 Kap             |
| 61 Pagi         | 107 Ulau-Suain      |
| 62 Kilmeri      | 108 Aruék           |
| 63 Manem        | 109 Wom             |
| 64 Ainbai       | 110 Yambes          |
| 65 Waris        | 111 Kombio          |
| 66 Sowanda      | 112 Torricelli      |
| 67 Umeda        | 113 Bragat          |
| 68 Imonda       | 114 Amol            |
| 69 Daonda       | 115 Yangum Dey      |
| 70 Auwe         | 116 Aruop           |
| 71 Baibai       | 117 Yapunda         |
| 72 Kwomtari     | 118 Dia             |
| 73 Amanab       | 119 Sinagen         |
| 74 Dera         | 120 Agi             |
| 75 Karkar-Yuri  | 121 Yangum Gel      |
| 76 Angor        | 122 Ningil          |
| 77 Nai          | 123 Yil             |
| 78 Odiai        | 124 Au              |
| 79 Yale         | 125 Gnau            |
| 80 Namia        | 126 Nabi            |
| 81 Pouye (2)    | 127 Minidien        |
| 82 Awun         | 128 Laeko-Libuat    |
| 83 Karawa       | 129 Pahi            |
| 84 Awtuw        | 130 Heyo            |
| 85 Yis          | 131 Yahang          |
| 86 Ak           | 132 Beli            |
| 87 Guriaso      | 133 Siliput         |
| 88 Seti         | 134 Wanap           |
| 89 Kwamtim One  | 135 Yangum Mon      |
| 90 Seta         | 136 Eitiep          |
| 91 Molmo One    | 137 Urim            |
| 92 Kabore One   | 138 Ambrak          |
| 93 Inebu One    | 139 Mende           |
| 94 Southern One | 140 Mehek           |
| 95 Yau [yyu]    | 141 Kwanga          |
| 96 Elkei        | 142 Hanga Hundi     |
| 97 Olo          | 143 Bumbita Arapesh |
| 98 Northern One | 144 Urat            |



# Some PNG Language Statistics

- 839 indigenous languages, 11.7% of the world's total! - ethnologue.com
- "only" 254 (30%) are listed as either "in trouble" or "dying"
- SIL's work in PNG has served 337 language communities
- SIL is currently active in 187 language communities
- [www.pnglanguages.sil.org/resources/](http://www.pnglanguages.sil.org/resources/)
- This presentation represents 221 of the languages in which SIL-PNG has worked in the past 63 years.

## 3 time periods

- 1960 - 1990 - older, paper archives
- 1990 - 2010 - electronic archives
- 2010 - today - currently active projects
- I was able to get feedback from a questionnaire from the last group.

	older data ←	→ newer data		
PNG Province names	languages from folder (pre-1990)	languages from OPDs (pre-2010)	languages in the questionnaire (current projects)	total languages from each province
Morobe	5	9	9	23
East Sepik	9	7	3	19
Madang	2	15	2	19
Milne Bay	5	9	4	18
Gulf	7	6	2	15
Western	5	5	4	14



	older data ←	→ newer data		
PNG language families represented	languages from folder (pre-1990)	languages from OPDs (pre-2010)	languages in the questionnaire (current projects)	total in each language family
Trans New Guinea	53	37	11	101
Austronesian	35	15	21	71
Sepik	6	4		10
Torricelli	1	4	3	8
South-Central Papuan		3	3	6



# Rotokas (N Bougainville) - 11 phonemes

/a, ɛ, g, i, k, o, p, ʃ, t, u, β/



# Tawala (Austronesian) - 19 phonemes

/a, b, d, e, g, g<sup>w</sup>, h, i, k, k<sup>w</sup>, l,  
m, n, o, p, t, u, w, y/

# Melpa (TNG) - 26 phonemes

/a, <sup>m</sup>b, <sup>n</sup>d, <sup>n</sup>d̥, e, <sup>ŋ</sup>g, ɪ, i, j, k, l, d̥, l̥, t̥,  
m, n, <sup>ŋ</sup>ŋ, o, p, r, t, t̥, Ū, u, ʉ, w/

# Alekano (Trans New Guinea) - 16 phonemes

/a, e, ɣ, h, i, k, l, m, n, ɣ,  
p, s, z, t, w, β/

# Sudest (Austronesian) 40 phonemes

/a, b, b<sup>w</sup>, d, e, g, ɣ, ɣ<sup>w</sup>, g<sup>w</sup>, h, h<sup>w</sup>, i, dʒ, k, l, m,  
m<sup>b</sup>, m<sup>b</sup><sup>w</sup>, m<sup>w</sup>, n, n<sup>d</sup>, n<sup>d</sup>ʒ, ŋ, ŋ<sup>g</sup>, ŋ<sup>g</sup><sup>w</sup>, ŋ<sup>w</sup>, ɲ, o, p,  
p<sup>w</sup>, r, s, t, ð, u, β, β<sup>w</sup>, w, j/

# Raw data and weighted mean

	older data ←		→ newer data		
PNG language families represented	languages from folder	languages from OPDs	languages in the questionnaire	total in each language family	
Trans New Guinea	53	37	11	101	
Austronesian	35	15	21	71	
Sepik	6	4		10	
etc.	-	-	-	-	
total number of languages	<b>108</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>221</b>	
divide raw data (RD) by this number to get a weighted mean (WM)	<b>.489</b>	<b>.330</b>	<b>.181</b>	<b>1.000</b>	

		older data ← → newer data				
strategy used		examples	folder	OPDs	survey	
			RD/WM	RD/WM	RD/WM	
1.	diacritic	ê, ã, ú	78/160	65/197	54/298	increase in use
2.	multigraph	th, mp, ndr	264/540	263/797	153/845	increase in use
3.	underdifferentiation (including phonemes not written)	<e> for both /e/ and /ə/	40/81.8	35/106	33/182	significant increase in use
4.	overdifferentiation	<b> and <mb> for /b/	114/233	89/270	32/177	eventual decrease in use
5.	English letter not used elsewhere	c, q, x	125/256	72/218	33/182	decrease in use
6.	non-English letter	ʹ, ʔ, ŋ	36/73.6	31/93.9	8 /44.2	eventual decrease in use (but increase in use of ŋ)
			(6 ŋ, 17%)	(13 ŋ, 42%)	(5 ŋ, 62%)	

# Use of diacritics

		older data ← → newer data			
strategy used	examples	folder	OPDs	survey	
		RD/WM	RD/WM	RD/WM	
1. diacritic	ë, ã, ú	78/160	65/197	54/298	increase in use

# What the trend might show

A. Use of diacritics in orthographies employed by SIL-PNG language projects were mostly used in the vowel systems, to show a similar place of articulation to another vowel on the vowel chart. Gizrra (tof) does this with two of its seven vowels:

<o> for /o/; <ó> for /ə/

<u> for /u/; <ü> for /i/



# What the trend might show

B. Many languages use diacritics to show nasalization and/or vowel length, so depending on the number of vowels in the inventory, one language can have many diacritics for differentiating just one or two sound concepts; eg.

<a, e, i, o, u>

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

<a, e, i, o, u>

<ã , ë , i" , ö , ü >

# Use of multigraphs

			older data	←	→	newer data	
	strategy used	examples	folder		OPDs	survey	
			RD/WM		RD/WM	RD/WM	
2.	multigraph	th, mp, ndr	<b>264/540</b>		<b>263/797</b>	<b>153/845</b>	<b>increase in use</b>

# What the trend might show

A. This is the most common strategy for prenasalized consonants, labialized consonants (sometimes both) and for length in vowels and consonants. Since these features often cover a range of consonants or vowels (and not just one at a time), this strategy can be used a lot in any one language.



# What the trend might show

B. Multigraphs are often used in overdifferentiation, when something like prenasalization does not need to be shown in a more purely phonemic orthography. To know that English spells its nasals before nonnasal consonants can be a big bridging factor in employing this type of overdifferentiation:

combine, condition, twin, quick

# Sudest (Austronesian) 40 phonemes

/a, b, b<sup>w</sup>, d, e, g, ɣ, ɣ<sup>w</sup>, g<sup>w</sup>, h, h<sup>w</sup>, i, dʒ, k, l, m, m<sup>b</sup>, m<sup>b</sup>w, m<sup>w</sup>, n, n<sup>d</sup>,  
n<sup>d</sup>ʒ, ŋ, ŋ<sup>g</sup>, ŋ<sup>g</sup>w, ŋ<sup>w</sup>, ɲ, o, p, p<sup>w</sup>, r, s, t, ð, u, β, β<sup>w</sup>, w, j/

<a, b, bw, d, e, g, gh, ghw, gw, h, hw, i, i̇, j, k, l, m, mb, mbw, mw, n,  
nd, nj, ng, ngg, nggw, ngw, ny, o, p, pw, r, s, t, th, u, v, vw, w, y>

# Use of underdifferentiation

		older data ←		→ newer data		
strategy used	examples	folder	OPDs	survey		
		RD/WM	RD/WM	RD/WM		
3. underdifferentiation (including phonemes not written)	<e> for both /e/ and /ə/	40/ <b>81.8</b>	35/ <b>106</b>	33/ <b>182</b>	significant increase in use	

Use of underdifferentiation



# What the trend might show

Possible reasons for the increase in use of underdifferentiation:

- increase in use of technology
- the felt need for communicating in one's mother tongue using different electronic devices
- Cell phone use has skyrocketed in PNG in the recent past
- If the phonology of a language is complex enough to need many orthographs for a more phonemic representation in the alphabet, it may be even more desirable by the community to reduce the number of "untextable" letters in the alphabet, to make it easier to communicate with each other by using today's technology.

# Use of overdifferentiation



		older data ← → newer data			
strategy used	examples	folder	OPDs	survey	
4. overdifferentiation	<b> and <mb> for /b/	114/ <b>233</b>	89/ <b>270</b>	32/ <b>177</b>	eventual <b>decrease</b> in use



Use of overdifferentiation ↓

# What the trend might show

A. Possible reasons for the decrease in use of overdifferentiation:

- cell phone and computer use
- A felt need for shorter words. A lot of PNG languages can have complex morphology, especially on the verb, and this can make words unwieldy in their length. Together with multigraphs, written words become more difficult to decypher. One way to counteract this problem is to use fewer multigraphs, which might be preferred for other reasons (like bridging) but would help with certain reading challenges.

Use of overdifferentiation ↓

## What the trend might show

B. In the Urim language, for example, it was mentioned that although they have long vowel phonemes:

/a:, e:, i:, u:/

they decided NOT to write them as:

<aa, ee, ii, uu>

because they are phonemic only in one-syllable words. It's desirable not to use these digraphs at all.

# Use of a LWC letter not used elsewhere

			older data ←	→ newer data		
	strategy used	examples	folder	OPDs	survey	
			RD/WM	RD/WM	RD/WM	
5.	English letter not used elsewhere	c, q, x	125/256	72/218	33/182	decrease in use

Use of a LWC letter not used elsewhere ↓

## What the trend might show

The decrease in use of English letters not used elsewhere could be due to bridging concerns, where the letters used in one's mother tongue are expected to reflect the alphabet and sound patterns of the official language. So, for example, using a <c> for the glottal stop doesn't "feel" natural, when one has a strong association that the <c> letter should/must represent the [k] sound, as in <cat>.

# Use of letters not available in the LWC

		older data ←		→ newer data		
strategy used	examples	folder	OPDs	survey		
		RD/WM	RD/WM	RD/WM		
6. non-English letter	ʹ, ʔ, ŋ	36/ <b>73.6</b>	31/ <b>93.9</b>	8 / <b>44.2</b>	eventual decrease in use	
		(6 ŋ, 17%)	(13 ŋ, 42%)	(5 ŋ, 62%)	(but increase in use of ŋ)	

Use of letters not available in the LWC ↓

## What the trend might show

A. This is perhaps to be expected, again considering the spread of technology and the texting phenomenon. These characters for use in an alphabet are not standard on computer keyboards or phone touchpads. Some special, non-English letters are found on smartphones by pressing and holding buttons, which reveals a choice of alternate characters, but this feature is only available on higher-end phones and often only the diacritics used in European languages.

Use of ŋ as a letter representing the velar nasal



## What the trend might show

B. The use of ŋ as a grapheme has increased over time, which contrasts with the overall decrease in using other non-English letters. This strategy helps to make words shorter, especially when a language has a lot of velar nasals. It's also easy to write (not text!) and recognize.

## Other questionnaire responses - newer data

- General challenges
  - developing an alphabet for multiple dialects - unilectal vs. multilectal, etc.
  - breaking habits of previous orthography choices; e.g. German <ch> for /x/, Fijian/Samoan <g> for /ŋ/; <q> for /y/ influences on orthography



# Other questionnaire responses

- Stakeholders in the orthography enterprise consulted
  - teachers (many trained to be literacy teachers as well)
  - local language speakers (informal meetings)
  - Church leaders, especially related to the translation
  - community leaders
  - language/translation committees formed, responsible for making orthography decisions
- Challenges
  - disagreements between groups of stakeholders (age, education, dialect, etc.)

# Other questionnaire responses

## Orthographic strategies that needed changing

- differentiation - either more underdifferentiation or more overdifferentiation
- this is mostly an issue for items like nasality, length, etc.

## Continuing challenge

- What to do with more than 5 vowels? Digraphs can be easily confused with diphthongs.

# Other questionnaire responses

- Orthographies and technology
  - Communities are "getting by" with less differentiation; e.g. leaving off diacritics because they aren't available without special apps
  - this is more easily done with a fewer number of diacritics
  - using numbers to help shorten longer words; e.g.
    - <waiwaisana> --> <wai2sana>

# Other questionnaire responses

- Forces at work shaping the orthography:
  - linguistics/phonemics
  - community input
  - a healthy mixture of these two
  - striving to make it easier to read and to teach reading
  - bridging to official language literacy (English, Tok Pisin)

# Overall impressions

Orthographies are moving towards:

- less of a felt need to fully reflect the phonemic reality in a language
- more of a felt need for the written language to mirror the official languages of English and Tok Pisin (bridging)
- more of a felt need to have a simpler orthography to utilize technology with one's mother tongue

Questions?

THANK YOU!

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# Yisasi makakac nonim wayani

*Mactiu afaremóni*

**Yisasin anafu akeckuyic andai**

*(Dk 3:23-38)*

<sup>1</sup> Yisai Karaisi weni Dewictin ana wanimi Dewicti weni Ewaran ana wanimi Yisasin ankun nanni macni mukemoni. <sup>2</sup> Ewaram weni Aisackim macdanimi Aisacki weni Yekopim macdanimi Yekopi weni Yura namac weankunnamac macdanimi <sup>3</sup> Yura weni Tema mandemi Perasin namac Siran namac yenkanda macdanimi Perasi weni Esaron macdanimi Esarom weni Dam macdanimi <sup>4</sup> Dam weni Aminarapin macdanimi Aminarapi weni Nason macdanimi Nasom weni Saramon macdanimi <sup>5</sup> Saramon weni Decafi mandemi Boasin macdanimi Boasi weni Ructi mandemi Owectin macdanimi

Owecti weni Yesin macdanimi

<sup>6</sup> Yesi weni Dewicti yikoyunic inanin macdanimi

Dewicti weni Yurayan anac mandemi Soromonni macdanimi

<sup>7</sup> Soromonni weni Diawoam macdanimi

Diawoam weni Awaisa macdanimi

# before - Gadsup NT excerpt - after



**Jisasi makakac nonim wayani**

*Metiu afaremoni*



**1**

**Jisasin anafunan yiwikuci**

<sup>1</sup> Jisasi Mesaya Devitin ana wanimi, Deviti Abrahamin anam wemoni. Afo Jisasin ankun yiwikuci macnimukemi:

<sup>2</sup> Abrahami Aisakin afoi,

Aisaki Jekopin afoi,

Jekopi Juda namac wen afaconan yifoin wemi.

<sup>3</sup> Juda weni Tamami mandemi Peresinuc Serankanda makemoni.

Peresi Hesronin afoi, Hesroni Ramin afoi.

<sup>4</sup> Rami weni Aminadapin afoi,

Aminadapi weni Nasonin afoi,

Nasoni weni Salmonin afoi.

# Orthographic conventions

- replaced underscore with diaeresis for different vowel quality
- eliminated all tone markings (acute and caron)
- c is used for glottal stop (common among related/nearby languages); now not written before a consonant (see Dewictin vs. Devitin)

## Paléti ngê Yesu u vyee tédê u ngwo dy:ââ ngê

*Mak 15:6-15, Luukî 23:13-25, Njon 18:39-19:16*

<sup>15</sup> M:ââ k:oo Nju tpémi yi naa ndîi u dye ghi ngê, yélini mbwa k:oo dnyimo kwo, Paléti ngê ngmêdpîmo pw:iipw:ii, apu, Nju tpémi yi nuw:o dmi mb:aamb:aa ngê paa pyaa we. Pini n:ii u pi pi knî y:oo u kwo dnyimo tpapê, yini yidpîmo pw:iipw:ii. <sup>16</sup> Yi m:aani ngê mbwa u mênê pi ngmêdoo kwo, u pi Mbadapas. Pi yintómu yi lama yi pini u pi doo ya. <sup>17</sup> Dini ghi n:ii ngê yoo kwodonkwodo a wó, Paléti ye póó wo, yepê, Ló pini u yi nmye ngma a kwo, nî pw:ii? Yepê, Mbadapas ay:aa pw:ii ó Yesu ay:aa pw:ii, pini n:ii p:uu ala kópu a tpapê ngópu, apu, Pini n:ii Chóó Lémi ngê a ngmidi ngê, wu vyîlo. <sup>18</sup> Paléti ngê yi kópu ye poo ngê, mu kópu u dîy:o u lama doo ya, Nju tpémi yi kada pini knî y:oo Yesu ka n:ee dê kaa ngmê, a kêê k:oo u l:êê dîy:o dê kaa ngmê.

# Orthographic conventions

- 11 vowel phonemes - 5 vowel letters plus 6 diacritics on same
- Nasalization is marked with a colon before the vowel.
- Length is marked with double vowel letters.
- Lots of prenasalization, labialization and/or palatalization on the consonants - nj, nd, pw, ngm



## Jakobo â Johane jahe feكية enicte mupic

(Mar 10: 35-45)

Kâte NT excerpt

<sup>20</sup> Dameŋ ira Źebedaio ŋonân-ticnezi ŋokâ jahec-ticne Jesure manfunko bacjofa rarâ fodapehuc' wiac mocte numucnewec. <sup>21</sup> Eme wiocnerâ muwec, "Go wemo wiacte egarekac?" Eme eki muwec, "Go mutec ŋokâ jahec-nane Wofuŋ sâko fua tâcnezokic dameŋ ira gâjongoao ŋifec â ŋifec ŋezepirec." <sup>22</sup> Mume Jesuzi âzâcnewec, "Ŋoŋe fuŋne kâuc bahuc iŋuc muŋgopieŋ. Noni opâ zazacne nâpemu i ŋohe sâcne nânictimu me?" Eme jahe mupic, "Ea, sâcne nanacmu." <sup>23</sup> Mupire jasawec, "Opâ zazacne nânâ i nânictimu, â gâjoŋ-naneo ŋeŋe irec dâŋ mumu ine norao mi fokac, Mamac-nanezi mujarewec i jaŋe ŋeŋe ira ŋeniŋmu."

<sup>24</sup> Eme motec 10 jaŋe dâŋ i manarâ âgo jahec-jeŋic jahere mana sâqorem-biŋ. <sup>25</sup> Eme Jesuzi hefârec-joparâ ziŋuc jazawec: "Mâreŋ ŋicwofuŋ jaŋe ŋic rauc-jopahuc kiŋaŋ qaqa fâc-jeŋic bacjopaengopieŋ, â feكية jaŋe omane qâhuc-joparâ ŋicbombon ejareengopieŋ, i manaengopieŋ. <sup>26</sup> Ŋoŋe ine iŋuc mi enzepieŋ. Ŋoŋeraonec moczi feكية ezo murâ gâcne ŋoŋere wahamicne erâ juzejec. <sup>27</sup> Â micne ezo murâ gâcne ŋoŋere kiŋaŋ qaqa erâ juzejec. <sup>28</sup> Ŋic Fâri Wâtuŋne e iŋuc jaha ŋoŋe kiŋaŋ qacneniŋte mâcne, e jahac kiŋaŋ qaqa gie bahuc ŋic bocjaha kiwiric-jeŋic rorâ juju-ticne qikiŋ-neocte wahawec."

<sup>8</sup> Gêdên tonan Jesunê nacsenjomi sêsa malac sêja sebe sênam ôli mo. <sup>9</sup> Ma awê Samariana tonan kêsôm gêdên en gebe “Aôm Juda ma aê awê Samariana, mago amboac ondoc tec kotenj gebe jakênj bu aôm ônôm nec.” (Gebe Juda to lau Samaria nêj biñ gelom tau atom.)

<sup>10</sup> Go Jesu gêjô en awa gebe “Aôm embe ôjala gên, tan Anôtô kêkênj nan, to nac tan kêsôm gêdên aôm gebe Ôkênj bu mênjanôm nan, go aômgenj otenj en gebe êkênj bu mata jaliña êndênj aôm.”

<sup>11</sup> Ma awê kêsôm gêdên en gebe “Apôm-tau, aômnêm laclu masi ma bu nec gacgenj kêsêp gêja su, ma aôm oc ôkôc bu mata jaliña tau angga ondoc. <sup>12</sup> Aêac tamenj Jakob kêkênj bumata tonec gêdên aêac. Êsêac to latui ma nê bôc sênôm bu tau. Aôm kôlêlêc en su me.” <sup>13</sup> Go

ma jamênj tonec êtu jatê buña êtiam atom.”

<sup>16</sup> Ma Jesu kêsôm gêdên en gebe “Ôna ômôêc nêm akwenj, agêc amu amênj tonec.” <sup>17</sup> Tec awê gêjô en awa gebe “Aênoc akwenj masi.” Go Jesu kêsôm gêdên en gebe “Kôsôm jagêdênj gebe nêm akwenj masi. <sup>18</sup> Aôm gôjam nac lemenj tenj su, ma nac, tan galoc gôjam gômoa nan, nêm akwenj en atom. Tec kôsôm jagêdênj.”

<sup>19</sup> Ma awê kêsôm gêdên en gebe “Apôm-tau, aê galic aôm propete tenj

<sup>20</sup> Aêac tamenj tetenj mec angga lôc tônê, ma amac tec asôm gebe atenj mec gamala gêc Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup> Go Jesu kêsôm gebe “Awê, ôkênj êwiñ aê gebe noc tenj oc mênjêsa, nan atenj mec êndênj Tamoc angga lôc tônê to Jerusalem atom.

# Official languages of Papua New Guinea

- English - taught in schools
- Tok Pisin - an English-based pidgin/creole
  - mostly used along the north coast, highlands and islands
- Hiri Motu - a simplified version of the Motu (Austronesian) language
  - mostly used along the south coast; in decline