

Incorporating local knowledge and language in public primary schools

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About this presentation...

- a *Community-based Project* that was developed with the Nalik group of New Ireland Province in Papua New Guinea.
- and tries to demonstrate how specialized knowledge of traditional terminology can be included, through a multidisciplinary project, in the curriculum of the postcolonial school.



INTRODUCTION

- Traditional / indigenous knowledge generally does not have space for representation in the school curriculum and, when included, rarely contemplates the local reality of the community (Volker 2015).
- By providing a curriculum that also embraces the knowledge that students bring with them, the school starts to recognize it as having legitimate knowledge, capable of appropriating new knowledge that the school can and should offer them (Garcia, 2001).
- It also contributes to developing linguistic awareness through redesigned pedagogies, from the acknowledge of the “knowledge and experiences acquired” (Freire, 1992) that students already have, which can be extended to other cultural and linguistic contexts.

Project setting
Papua New Guinea
New Ireland Province



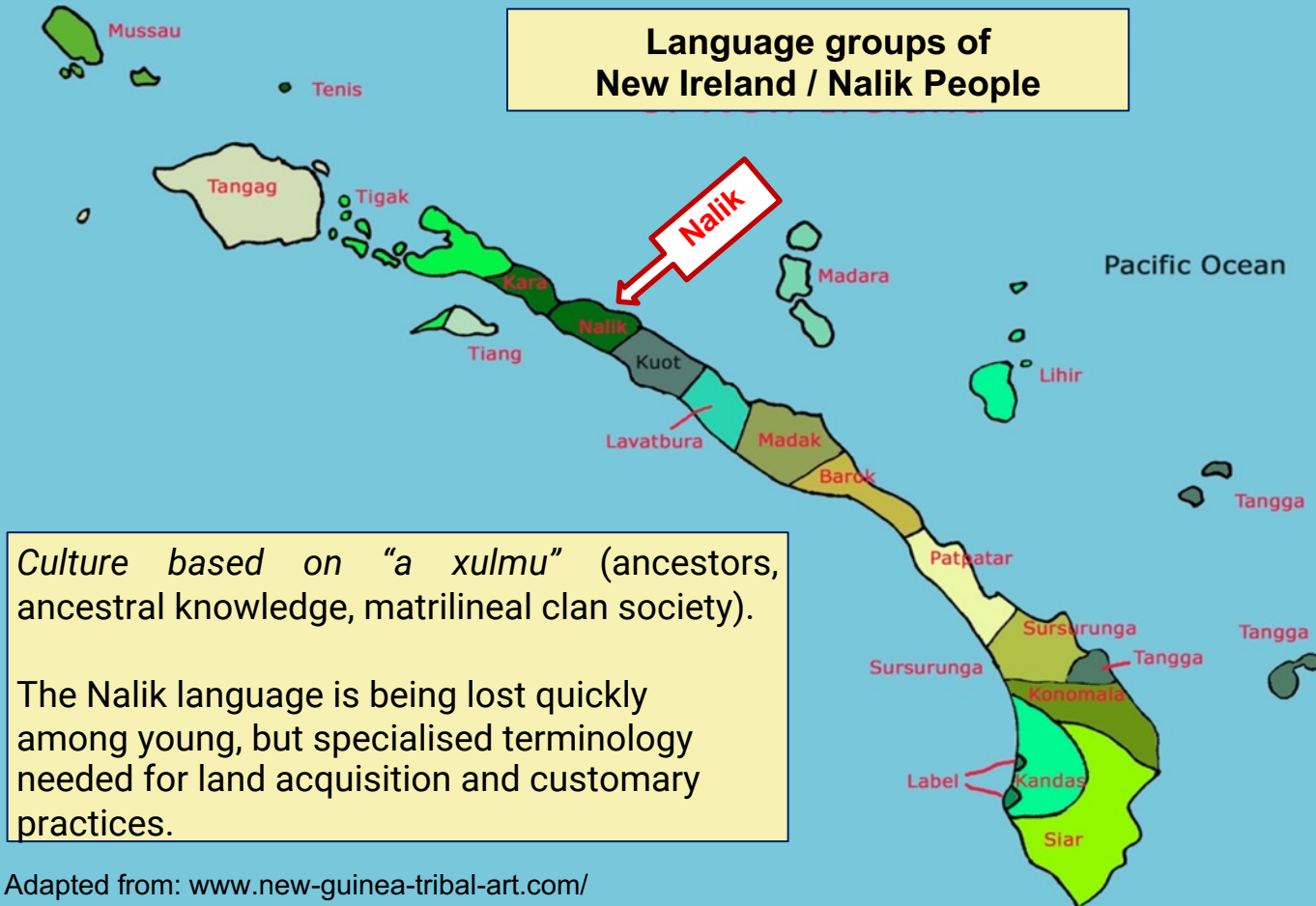
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Language groups of New Ireland / Nalik People



Culture based on "a xulmu" (ancestors, ancestral knowledge, matrilineal clan society).

The Nalik language is being lost quickly among young, but specialised terminology needed for land acquisition and customary practices.

Adapted from: www.new-guinea-tribal-art.com/

INTRODUCTION

The central theme of this research were the **birds**. Birds have great importance in the local culture, representing 7 of the 8 Nalik clans.

Nalik clans' name and their totemic animals			
Clan names in Nalik	Animal symbol in Nalik ¹	Animal names in English	Animal scientific names
Moxomaaraba	a regaaum	Eastern osprey	<i>Pandion cristatus</i>
Moxokala	a rok	Red-bellied pitta	<i>Pitta erythrogaster</i>
Moxomaaf	a mangaaf	Coconut lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
Moxokaamade	a babanga	Blyth's hornbill	<i>Aceros plicatus</i>
Moxotirin	a dau	Great frigate bird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>
Moxonuaas	a baalus	Red-knobbed imperial pigeon	<i>Ducula rubricera</i>
Moxomunaa	a manungulaai	White-bellied sea eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
Saramangges	a xalawizi	Sea krait*	<i>Laticauda sp.</i>

1. All the animals are birds, except the sea krait that is a snake (da Silva, 2016)

Language dilemma

INTRODUCTION

The three languages commonly used by the community

English

the academic language, present in books, signs,
used as instruction language at school,
but poorly learned

E

Nalik
People

T

N

Tok Pisin
most oral
communication but no
place at school to
develop linguistic
flexibility

Nalik
needed for a *xulmu*
but rarely learned well
at home and not at all
at school



INTRODUCTION

Challenges

- ✓ monolingual English education
- ✓ school system doesn't support transmission of children's indigenous cultures or languages: extremely multilingual & multicultural
- ✓ materials from overseas or centrally produced, often by foreigners
- ✓ no educational materials about local cultures

The background of the slide features a close-up photograph of a wooden structure, possibly a roof or a wall, with numerous water droplets scattered across its surface. The wood grain is clearly visible, and the lighting creates a soft, natural atmosphere.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this project was to create in students an awareness of the cultural knowledge of their community and to help them improve their knowledge of the vocabulary needed to describe it in their indigenous language and in English.

- ❑ Contribute to a recognition of the biocultural diversity of the Nalik people by documenting narratives about birds that are present in the common imagination of the Nalik community.
- ❑ Develop strategies for a possible integration of traditional Nalik material and nonmaterial culture into the curriculum of the local school.

METHODOLOGY

Participants in the study:

- Villages: Madina and Luaupul
- 58 students at Madina Primary School



(Madina Primary School - photo: da Silva, 2014)

METHODOLOGY

Action research

integrating action and the resolution of a collective problem involving researchers and participants cooperating and participating together (Thiollent, 1985, p. 14).

Horizontal methodologies

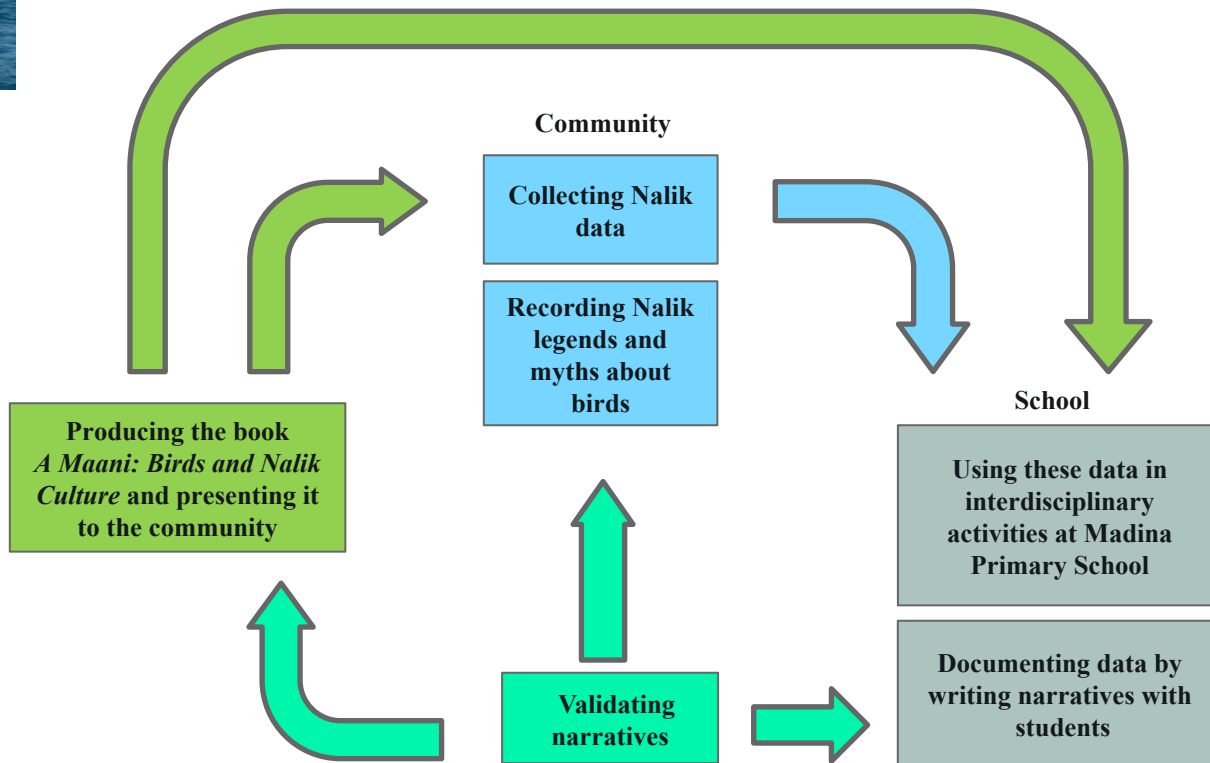
involving the construction of knowledge through dialogues in a relationship of equality between the researcher and the society. The research is undertaken *with* the other and not *about* the other (Berkin, 2017, p. 95).



Identifying birds at Luaupul Village
(Photo: Volker, 2016)

The Development of the Research Project

METHODOLOGY



Elaboration of collective texts with the students



(Cláudio da Silva - Photo: Volker, 2016)

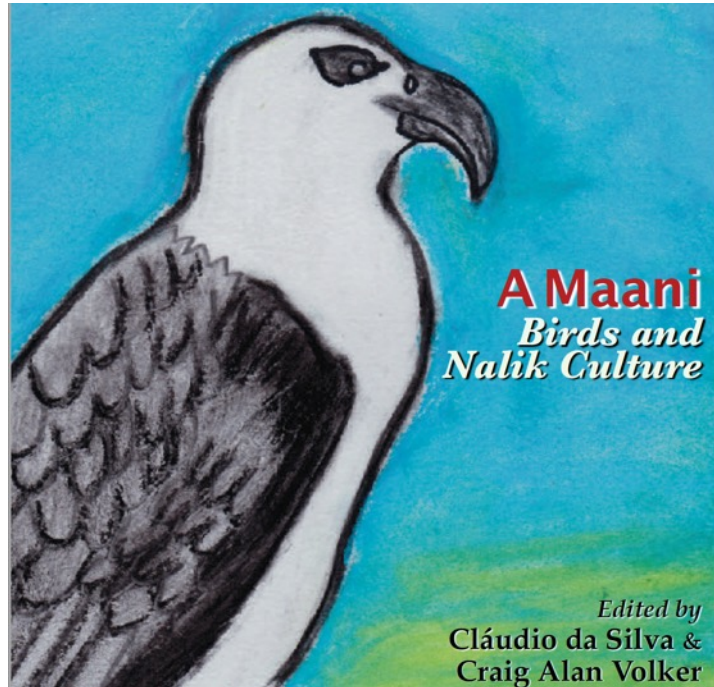


(Professor Craig Alan Volker - Photo: da Silva, 2016)



(Maimai Neil Gaalis - Photo: da Silva, 2016)





RESULTS / DISCUSSIONS



The community book
developed through this project

Clan animals illustrated by the Madina Primary School students with their respective terms in Nalik, English and scientific classification.

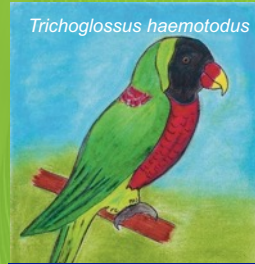
Nalik clans:

-  Scientific name
-  Madina dialect
-  Luaupul dialect
-  Animal – Name in Nalik



Ducula rubricera

Moxonuaas
Manganuaas
A Baalus



Trichoglossus haemotodus

Moxomaaf
Mangamaaf
A Mangaaf



Aceros plicatus

Moxokaamade
Mangakamade
A Babanga



Laticauda sp.

Saramangges

A Xalawizi



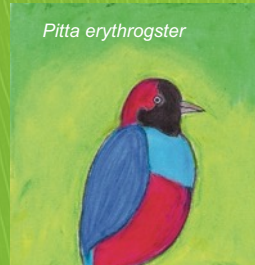
Fregata ariel

Moxotirin
Mangatirin
A Dau



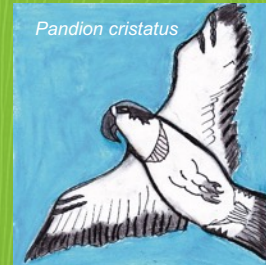
Haliaeetus leucogaster

Moxomunaa
Mangamunaa
A Manungulaai



Pitta erythroster

Moxokala
Mangakala
A Rok



Pandion cristatus

Moxomaaraba
Mangamaaraba
A Regaum

Response from the community

- The participants became keenly interested in children learning about Nalik culture.
- They became aware of gaps in children's cultural knowledge (some students didn't know to which clan they belong).
- Acceptance that Nalik language must be explicitly taught (no longer being absorbed).

Some community leaders comments

“This project marked first inclusion of local Nalik knowledge in school as being equal with introduced knowledge”

Adam H. Kaminiel - *Itak (Traditional Carver)*

“It is possible to integrate Nalik knowledge with Western scientific knowledge to create holistic learning.”

Neil Gaalis - *Maimai (Chief) from Moxokala Clan*

Response from the students – Nalik culture

RESULTS / DISCUSSIONS

- The project increased awareness of precision in local Nalik terminology and the correct Nalik forms to use in public.

Examples: *Poxai* = reciprocity, *Osaaning* = Traditional feasts, *Faamatkibul* = giving money for funerals, the Clans' names, their birds symbols, etc.

- Helped them to understand the difference between pure Nalik & Tok Pisin terms


Some student comments

“Yes I learn some new things from you. I knew matrilineal that means the land right come through the mother”

“I learn more about things that are new like, my own clan, my bird clan and colouring pictures”

“Mr Claudio teach me many things and I learn about many animals in the clan”

Response from the students – English language



RESULTS / DISCUSSIONS

- better use of English grammar in writing
- rules for written composition in English
- teaching local language and culture can aid--not hinder—the learning of English

Some student comments

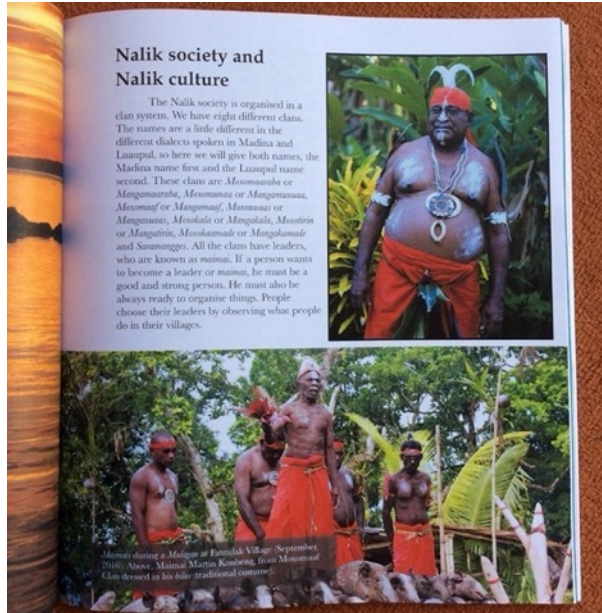
“I learn how to write a book, learn some grammar spelling”

“I learn a lot of things that I didn’t know. You help me how to write a lot of English”

“I learn how to speak English. I did not like writing before but now I love writing”

“I learn how to write a story in past tense”

CONCLUSIONS



Action research applied in an horizontal approach was fundamental in establishing a climate of trust with the Nalik community.

CONCLUSIONS



Madina Primary School students today feel distant from elements of Nalik culture and therefore do not value traditional knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

The book *A Maani: Birds and Nalik Culture* is a compilation of diverse aspects of Nalik culture, documented and described by listening to the voices of the students' own community.



CONCLUSIONS

Incorporating aspects of the local culture and its traditional language terminology in the school curriculum would better prepare children for adulthood, and also would help them to be more accurate with the languages that they use.





FUTURE RESEARCH

Participants:

Community-based Project with Notsi and Kuot group of New Ireland Province in Papua New Guinea - producing a community book with the students and local villagers along with an ethnographic case study.

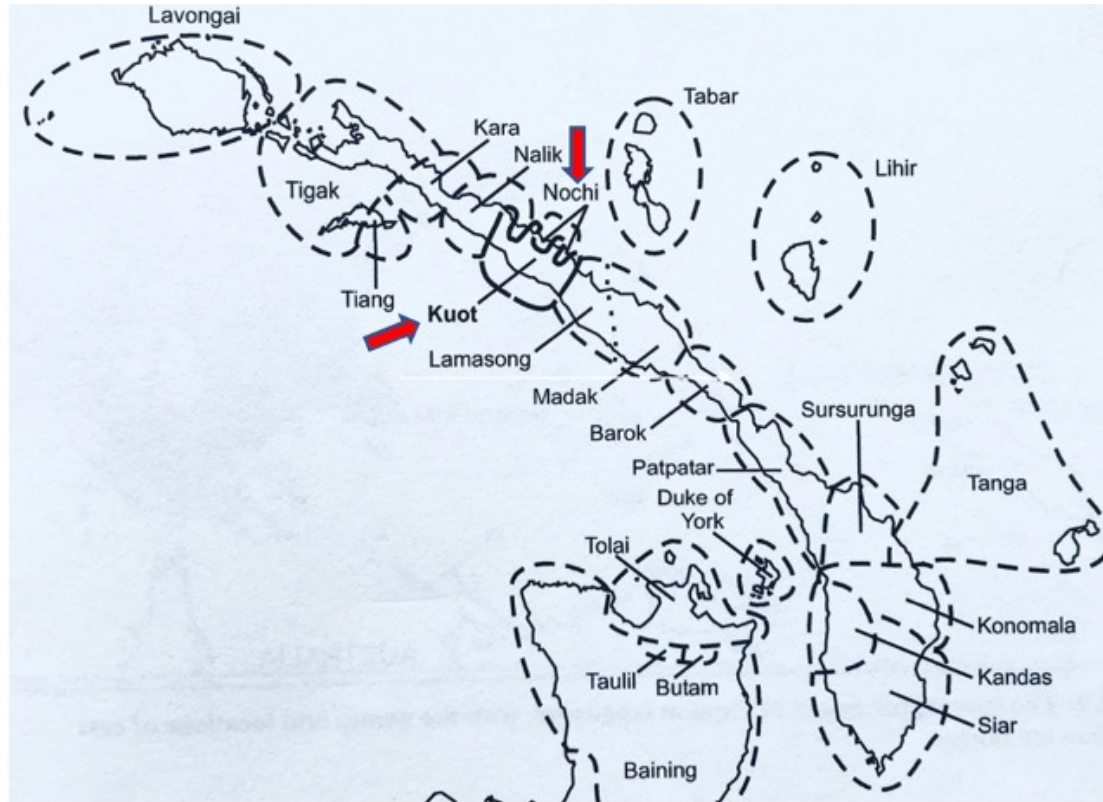


Figura 3. Localização dos grupos étnicos Notsi e Kuot, na Província de New Ireland (Lindström, 2002).



FUTURE RESEARCH

Construct a dialogue that enables acknowledge the “**unity in diversity**”, identifying not only the particularities by which these types of knowledge are distinguished, but also the specificities that bring them together, enabling the construction of a dialogue between knowledge (Freire, 1992).

“The important thing is to highlight the incompleteness of all knowledge and the potential that exists in the dialogues between them” (Santos, 2007, p.134).



FUTURE RESEARCH

Main Objectives:

- Understand what expectations the community has about the role of the school in its educational role and interaction and contribution to the community, as well as the perceptions of the pedagogical team regarding the involvement and participation of the community in school life;
- Develop a practical-constructive model for an education contextualized in intercultural relations, promoting integration and social participation through a critical look based on dialogue between cultures;

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The background of the slide features a light green gradient with several semi-transparent images of birds in flight, scattered across the page. A dark green horizontal band is positioned in the middle, containing the main text.

Thank you very much

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