A PROPOSAL FOR THE USE OF PIDGIN IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Papua Niugini i gat planti tok ples. I gat Tok Inglis na sampela manmeri i save yusim long tokim ol manmeri bilong narapela narapela kantri. Na i gat tupela bikpela tok ples, Tok Pisin na Hiri Motu na ol manmeri ol i save yusim long tokim ol manmeri bilong narapela narapela hap. Na i gat sampela tok ples bilong sios, Tok Dobu, Tok Gogodala, Tok Jabem, Tok Kâte, na Tok Kuanua. Olsem na ol manmeri bilong wanpela lain sios ol i save yusim long tokim ol lain bilong ol. Orait, i gat planti liklik tok ples istap, na ol manmeri ol i save yusim long tokim ol wantok bilong ol.

Orait, mi laik makim wanpela rot bilong pulim sampela tok ples i kam insait long skul. Na mi laik makim fopela lain skul. Pastaim ol tisa bilong as tok ples ol i ken skelim tok na tok save long ol pikinini na mama papa bilong tok ples. Na ol i ken kisim save long rit na rait long tok ples, na as bilong skelim namba (long Tok Inglis ol i kolim <u>matematik</u>), na pasin bilong lukautim gut skin bilong yumi, na pasin bilong ol pipel bilong narapela narapela hap.

Orait, pinisim dispela lain skul na ol pikinini ol i ken go long namba tu skul (praimeri skul). Taim ol pikinini i stat long dispela skul, ol tisa ken mekim long tok ples na skulim ol pikinini long Tok Pisin o Hiri Motu samting. Na ol i ken skelim sampela hap liklik Tok Inglis wantaim. Orait, wanpela yia pinis, ol tisa ken mekim long Tok Pisin o Hiri Motu na opim tingting bilong ol sumatin na ol i ken kisim sampela moa Tok Inglis. Olsem olsem na long yia namba faiv, ol tisa i ken mekim long Tok Inglis tasol na ol sumatin i ken kisim strong Tok Inglis. Tasol ol i no ken lusim pinis tok ples na Tok Pisin o Hiri Motu.

Orait, long hai skul o yunivesiti ol i ken mekim long Tok Inglis tasol.

Na ating em gutpela samting bai ol pikinini ol i ken stat long tok ples bilong ol yet. Bilong wanem? Taim ol pikinini ol i stat long skul ol i no ken seksek na pret, nogat. Ol tisa i ken autim tingting na mekim long tok ples na ol sumatin ol i ken klia gut. Na sapos wanpela sumatin i gat wanpela askim, orait em inap autim na tisa i ken stretim tingting bilong en.

Orait, yumi no ken wari long hamas buk bilong tok ples istap o yumi sot long wanem samting. Nogat. Sampela tok ples i gat

planti buk pinis. Na sampela manmeri ol i bin pinisim hai skul
ol inap raitim sampela buk bilong tok ples. Em tasol.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relationship between the
complex linguistic situation in Papua New Guinea and the problem of lan-
guage use in education. First some sociolinguistic terms are introduced
which provide a framework for the discussion that follows. Then an
analysis of the linguistic situation in PNG is presented along with a
summary of past governmental policy on languages and education. Finally
a sociolinguistic view of the goal of education in a multilingual soci-
ety is presented together with a proposal for multilingual education in
PNG.

Some Sociolinguistic Terms

Those in the discipline of sociolinguistics have done significant
research on the relation between language and education in multilingual
societies (Fishman *et al.* 1968). The analytical concepts of this disci-
pline can enable us to see the linguistic situation in PNG more clearly.
After understanding the situation better we will be in a better position
to discuss education policy as it relates to the linguistic realities of
the country.

The first term that it will be helpful to consider is *communication*.
Communication can be defined as an act in which individuals make them-
selves understood to each other by means of a common code, or language.
Communication involves both encoding (sending a message) and decoding
(receiving a message). The important aspects of this definition for our
discussion on education are understanding and a common code, or language.
Certainly understanding is a *sine qua non* of education. And for under-
standing in education to be adequate there must be bi-directional commu-
nication: from student to teacher as well as from teacher to student.
For this to occur there must be a language that both the student and the
teacher understand. For initial education this means that the teacher
must speak a language known to the student. If this is not the case,
effective communication may be delayed for years until the student
learns enough of the teacher's language to be able to communicate with
him. In the meantime, his learning has been greatly restricted or made
impossible altogether. Communication is further complicated when the
teacher is teaching in a language foreign to him, i.e., English for
Papua New Guinean teachers.

The role of language in communication will be pursued a little fur-
ther. In a monolingual society only one language is used for communica-
tion. If one is to communicate with the people of that society, he must
learn that language. On the other hand, in a multilingual society there
are two or more languages that may be used for communication. The lan-
guage used may depend on the degree of social distance between the speak-
ers, the topic under discussion, the geographical location, or other
factors. Each language is used with specific functions in specific
situations so that the more languages a person knows, the more people he
will be able to communicate with.

Another term of relevance to our discussion is *communicative network*.

This term can have a wide as well as a more restricted meaning. In the restricted sense it refers to the totality of all those individuals that a person or social group communicates with. In the wider sense it refers to all those individuals with whom one could potentially communicate because they both know a common language. Those who know English can communicate in an international network. Those who know Pidgin or Hiri Motu can communicate within a basically national network whereas those who know only a vernacular are restricted to a local network.

In a wider sense, a communicative network includes not only oral communication but also written communication through letters, magazines, newspapers, and books. Two aspects of this wider definition are important here. First is the potentiality of the network. If a person knows Pidgin, the number of people that he could communicate with in PNG is much greater than those with whom he would actually use Pidgin. Being a part of a larger network gives an individual greater mobility and security outside his local area. The second important aspect of this wider definition is that one can receive communication in such a network without reciprocating. In the English communicative network most of us are more on the receiving end of communication than on the sending end as far as written communication is concerned. In like manner, it is more important for most Papua New Guineans that they be recipients in the international English network than that they be initiators of communication.

The last sociolinguistic term that we should consider is *linguistic repertoire*. This is a modification of the term verbal repertoire used by Gumperz (1964). A linguistic repertoire consists of all the linguistic forms that one uses for communication. In other words, it is all the skills that one has learned that enable him to communicate as he desires. This refers to both the languages that a person controls and the modes in which he uses them, i.e., speaking, hearing, reading, and writing. The bilingual or multilingual has a larger linguistic repertoire than the monolingual. Likewise the person who can read and write has a larger repertoire than the person who can only speak a language. From the individual viewpoint, the larger one's linguistic repertoire, the more communicative advantages he possesses. From a national viewpoint, the more people there are in the nation who have a national language in their repertoire, the wider the national communicative network is spread and the faster national development can proceed.

The Linguistic Situation in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is a multitribal nation with one international, two national, several regional, and numerous vernacular languages functioning as codes in multiple networks in a complex communications system. Two significant features of the PNG situation stand out. One is the existence of two pidginised languages functioning in regional-national communicative networks. They are Pidgin (Tok Pisin) based on English and Hiri Motu based on Motu. The other significant feature is the linguistic fragmentation: approximately 700 languages in a population of under three million.

English is an international language that functions as both an international language and an official national language in PNG. Its most important function is in providing a link with an international communications network. This link permits essential communication with the

outside world without which the nation's political, economic, and social development would be stunted. Because of its importance as an international language, English is essential as a subject and as a means of instruction for higher education. English also permits foreigners to communicate with educated Papua New Guineans so that their skills and knowledge can be utilised without the necessity of learning another language first. Papua New Guineans use English as an international language more as receivers of communication than as senders. Consequently, a reading and understanding knowledge of English is more essential to them than a writing and speaking knowledge of it.

In addition to its function in providing an international communications link, English also plays an important part in the communicative network within the country itself. As a national language it is supraregional transcending the regional connotations of Pidgin (New Guinea) and Hiri Motu (Papua). The upper levels of government basically operate using English, a politically neutral language available equally to Papuan, New Guinean, and expatriate. It is also used between educated compatriates in non-casual social situations or situations in which there is no common vernacular or regional language.

The communicative function of Pidgin[1] is largely complementary to that of English.[2] Whereas English functions primarily as the code for international-national network within PNG, Pidgin functions mainly in national and regional networks. As a national language it serves as an intermediary between the international communicative network and the local network and provides vertical communications between the governing and the governed, the more-educated and the less-educated. It is largely through Pidgin that government departments communicate and implement their policies in the local areas. Likewise, much of the information about the outside world, science, medicine, or theology that has reached the village level has been transmitted first via Pidgin, then via the vernacular.

As a regional language Pidgin provides a code for a horizontal communications network between tribal groups. This permits wider communication on the local level without one group being cast in an inferior social position by being forced to learn the language of another group. As a regional language Pidgin enables local government councils to operate in many multi-tribal contexts.

Pidgin has functioned primarily as a verbal code. However, several factors have contributed to make its importance as a written language increase rapidly. One is the importance the government is giving to written Pidgin for its communications. A second factor contributing to its importance as a written language is the emphasis given to it as a means of basic education and adult literacy, especially by missions. A third factor is the appearance of widely-read publications such as the *Nupela Testamen* and *Wantok* newspaper.

Regional languages are vernacular languages that are used in a communicative network outside their indigenous areas but they have not attained national significance as languages. Many of these languages gained their regional status because they were used by missions as a means of evangelisation and Christian education beyond the areas where they were originally spoken. The missionaries often learned one significant local language and translated portions of the Bible into it. Then they tried to establish communications with those in surrounding
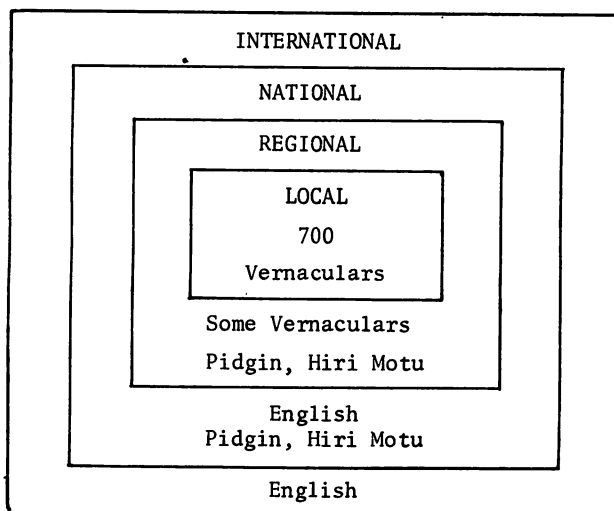
language groups by teaching them that language. Examples of regional
languages are Kâte (Madang and Morobe districts), Jabem (Morobe dis-
trict), Kuanua (East New Britain district), Dobu (D'Entrecasteaux
Islands) and Gogodala (Balimo area of the Western district). Because
some of these languages had parts of the Bible translated into them and
were used for basic education they were significant as written languages
before Pidgin. In areas where Pidgin is used, the regional communica-
tive role of these languages is being displaced by it.

The function of the vernaculars is restricted mainly to communicative
networks within the local social groups. However, they are the most
effective means of communication within the local groups. When the
topic is about everyday life in the village or things significant to the
local culture, there is no substitute for the vernaculars. They are
used mainly in personal, informal social situations whereas Pidgin or a
regional language would be used where there is a more distant social
relationship. For the large number of Papua New Guineans who remain
monolingual the vernacular is their only means of communication. These
monolinguals present one of the greatest challenges to the education
system. They need to be made bilingual so that they can communicate
within a national communicative network and become more active partici-
pants in national life.

Approximately 30% of the vernaculars of PNG have orthographies.[3]
However, few of them have many published materials or have established
literacy programmes using them. As a result very few of them can be said
to be used in the written form as a significant means of communication.

Chart I shows the relationship between communicative networks and
languages in PNG. The inner local networks are the most restricted in
area while the international is the largest. Networks are written with
CAPITALS and languages are written with capitals and small letters.

Chart I

Communicative networks of Papua New Guinea

INTERNATIONAL

NATIONAL

REGIONAL

LOCAL

700

Vernaculars

Some Vernaculars

Pidgin, Hiri Motu

English
Pidgin, Hiri Motu

English

In summary, the languages used in PNG can be classified into four groups according to their functions. They are largely complementary in function and provide the Papua New Guinean with entry into increasingly larger networks of communication starting with the local social group and extending to the international community. Each language has its unique role to play. The roles of some, e.g., Pidgin and English, are expanding whereas the roles of others such as the regional vernacular languages are contracting. However, the role of each is significant--otherwise it would cease to exist.

Past Education Policy on Language

Having discussed the types of languages found in PNG we shall now look at past education policy on languages and some of the results of this policy. The discussion will cover two periods: the period approximately to the end of the 1940's and the period from the 1950's to the present.

In the period to the end of the 1940's there was not a strong central education department and the missions provided most of the education for the country. Without a policy enforced by the government the missions were able to devise education systems suited to their needs. Their goals were generally to provide education for as many people as possible and to train leaders for the community and the church. These goals were achieved by providing basic education in the vernacular, a regional language, or one of the pidgin languages. There was then a transfer to English for those who were to advance in their education beyond the first few years. Many of the present leaders in PNG were educated in this type of system.

This system was fairly successful in that areas where it was used generally developed a higher rate of literacy than areas where only English has been used for education. Its success was due to several factors. One was that in most cases education was started in a language that the students understood so that it was meaningful and potentially motivating. Another factor contributing to the success of this system was that the system could be operated with little outside help and finance and without the extensive training of teachers required for an English education system.

By the 1950's the government began taking a more active role in determining education policy for the whole country. The education system was to be expanded greatly to provide education for a greater number of people with a goal of obtaining an educated elite who would be able to run and govern the country. This expanded system was to be uniform, and to meet the need of teachers more dependence was placed on expatriate teachers. Since it would be difficult to use vernaculars under these circumstances and since Pidgin was largely considered a debased language by the colonial education authorities, education in English only became the actual practice. With government assistance provided only for English education, missions using the vernaculars or Pidgin in education were forced to drop or curtail these programmes and switch to initial education in English.

Another reason for the use of English was the view of national development held by the colonial government. National development meant becoming more like Western societies. Diverse cultures and languages

hindered progress toward becoming westernised and so their development was discouraged. The best way to westernise the country was to intro- duce a Western education system with a Western language, English. As a result the Australian system was imported with only minor consideration given to local needs.

Considering the goals of this policy, it has been moderately success- ful. Many of the middle echelon of leaders in PNG were educated under this system. There is now an ample supply of educated persons to train for the manpower requirements of a developing nation.

However, this policy of education through only English has many dis- advantages. The initial education experience of most PNG children is meaningless and non-creative as they are taught in a language they do not know. Together with the language, the content of the courses is also alien so that education is not relevant to the student's immediate situation. This alien English education has created social problems by emphasising Western values to the detriment of local values with the result that many students are alienated from their local societies. This system is also very expensive for providing basic education as expensive training and relatively high salaries are required to give a minority an education while the majority receive none. One can ask a troubling question about education through English only: Would not the country be more advanced today if more emphasis had been given to uni- versal basic education in vernaculars and Pidgin rather than to basic education in English?

A Sociolinguistic View of education in a Multilingual Society

Using our sociolinguistic analysis of the linguistic components of a multilingual society, we shall now formulate a goal for education as it relates to languages in a multitribal developing nation, specifically, Papua New Guinea. A minimal goal of education would be to extend the linguistic repertoire of every person so that he can read and write in his mother tongue (UNESCO 1965) and that as many people as possible become participants in a national communicative network. This implies universal literacy with most people able to use a national language (Pidgin or Hiri Motu). From the viewpoint of the nation, this goal involves spreading its communicative network as extensively as possible throughout the nation. The maximal goal for languages in education would be to extend the linguistic repertoire for the largest number of students possible to include the effective use of English. This would strengthen one national communicative network as well as strengthen the link with the international network.

There are a number of implications related to attaining the above goals that need to be specified. The first is that reading and writing are the first skills to be added to the linguistic repertoire. This is best done in the vernacular. Where this is not possible, a regional or pidgin language known to the student should be used. As these literacy skills are learned only once, after they are acquired they can be read- ily applied to new languages that are learned. The second implication is that since effective education involves effective communication, the initial language used must be one that is understood by the students and not a foreign language. For education to be relevant to the immediate situation the language of the playground must be the language of the classroom. The third implication is that languages unknown to the

students should be added to their repertoires by means of second language teaching. This applies equally for Pidgin, Hiri Motu, or English in the PNG context. And finally, widespread effective use of a national language is more essential for national communication and development than the widespread but ineffective use of an international language.

To summarise, one goal of the education system in a multitribal nation is to extend the national communicative network as far as possible. This is accomplished by expanding the linguistic repertoires of most or all of the nation's citizens so that they include the proficient use of a national language. This is best accomplished by first extending the repertoires to include the skills of reading and writing using a vernacular or known national language. Then the additional language or languages required to meet national needs can be added to the repertoires by means of second language teaching. The result should be more effective communication through increased literacy, a national communicative network that includes most of the nation's citizens, and an adequate number of people in an international communicative network to meet the needs of a developing nation.

A Proposal for Multilingual Education in Papua New Guinea

We have discussed the linguistic situation in PNG, past policies on language and education, and a sociolinguistic view of education in a multilingual society. We are now prepared to make a general proposal for the use of language in education in PNG. It is proposed that the best education programme for PNG's development is one that is multilingual and consists of four levels. These four levels are initial, primary, secondary, and tertiary. By making the system multilingual everyone would have an equal chance for a meaningful, relevant education. By including initial education in a national plan, vernacular and adult education would be given a legitimate status in education. Most of the discussion on the proposal will be on initial and primary education as secondary and tertiary education would remain in English as they are at present.

Initial education would be community oriented and would have as its main task functional literacy in the vernacular. In addition it would involve teaching a national language (Pidgin or Hiri Motu) and literacy in that national language. Initial education would be for both children and adults though conducted in separate classes.

The basic curriculum would include vernacular literacy, basic numeracy, social studies, hygiene, Pidgin or Hiri Motu as a second language (unless one of these languages is already known), and transitional literacy to Pidgin or Hiri Motu. Instruction would be in the vernacular. This would not require instructors trained in teacher's colleges if none were available but could suffice with people in the community adept at teaching and trained in literacy and basic education techniques. This curriculum would equip the child for entering primary school and provide adults with an adequate basic education while enabling them to become part of a national communicative network.

Initial education would be aimed primarily at the rural sector in order to remove some of the disadvantages the rural monolingual child has in comparison to the urban child who usually enters primary school knowing a national language. However, initial education would apply to

urban areas also where there were large concentrations of vernacular speaking children or illiterate adults.

Primary education would use both vernaculars and Pidgin or Hiri Motu for the first year. In most urban areas only Pidgin or Hiri Motu would be used. English would be taught as a foreign language subject. From the second year on, the vernacular would be included as a subject in the curriculum. Most instruction would be in one of the two national languages with an increased emphasis given to English. By the fourth year English would become a medium of instruction also and by the final year almost all instruction would be in English. However, vernaculars and Pidgin or Hiri Motu would remain an essential part of the curriculum. This plan would need to be flexible and could be modified to meet local and changing situations. For example, some less-developed areas may need to continue using the vernacular for a longer period whereas in the larger urban centers instruction could begin in a national language and could probably switch to English earlier than in the rural areas.

There are two important differences between this proposed system and the one that has been in operation in PNG. First, because "psychological and educational considerations clearly favor the learning of reading and writing in the mother tongue" (Bowers 1968: 385) the task of learning these skills is separated from that of learning a foreign language. The student would be taught to read and write a language he already knows using an alphabet that generally has a much better sound-symbol correspondence than does English. The second difference is that the student's initial education would be more meaningful in that he could communicate with his instructor and it would be more creative since he would be using a language he controlled. The temporal staging of this system would guide the student gradually from the vernacular which he knows best to English which is unknown at first. English would be used as a medium of instruction only after it had been taught as a subject for several years.

Chart II shows the roles of the different languages in the proposed education system for PNG for initial and primary education. The languages may be used either as a medium of instruction or as a subject. As a subject they are taught as a second language or in cultural and creative arts, in which case they are underlined. The numbers refer to the years in primary school and the abbreviations are E(nglish), P(idgin), H(iri) M(otu), and V(ernaculars). P/HM indicates that either Pidgin or Hiri Motu is used in their respective areas.

There are two practical problems related to introducing this system. One is providing teachers who know the vernaculars and the other is providing educational materials in the vernaculars and Pidgin and Hiri Motu. As for teachers, it is not essential that they have tertiary training to be able to teach in an initial education programme. Many of these teachers could be those who are already teaching in literacy programmes or those with primary education who could be trained as teachers. For primary schools the teacher need could be met by assigning enough teachers to their home areas to cover the needs for the first year of primary school. Capable teachers from the initial education programme could help where there were no trained teachers who knew the local vernacular.

The problem of materials could be solved by training individuals to write books in their own language or in Pidgin or Hiri Motu. Many of

Chart II

Roles of languages in a proposed PNG education system.

	Years	Language as medium	Language as subject
	6	E	V, P/HM, E
PRIMARY	4-5	P/HM, E	V, P/HM, E
	2-3	P/HM	V, E
	1	V, P/HM	V, E
INITIAL		V	P/HM

the larger language groups already have alphabets and reading materials. They also have educated people who could write the books needed for a vernacular program. For languages where there are no alphabets or written materials, educated members of these groups could work with linguists and educators to prepare alphabets and educational materials in their languages.[4] Preliminary efforts to produce written materials in this way have proved successful.

Conclusions

PNG is a multilingual nation with many communicative networks based on the different local, regional, and national languages and English. Although early education took into consideration the reality of the different communicative networks, later education policy chose to ignore their relevance and use only English, an international language, in education.

One sociolinguistic view of education in a multilingual situation sees a main task of education to be that of expanding the linguistic repertoires of those in the country to include the skills of reading and writing and the use of a national language. Education requires communication so it must start with a known language with the linguistic repertoire of the student expanded first to include the skills of reading and writing. Then other languages can be added to the repertoire. In applying this principle to PNG it is suggested that initial education be in the vernacular and emphasise literacy and the introduction to a national language. Primary education would begin with both a vernacular and a national language with English being taught as a third language. Primary education would shift to the use of one of the national languages and then in the final stage to English. This system would permit the nation to approach universal basic education and at the same time provide enough people with an English education to meet its development needs.

Notes

[1] This paper is a revision of a paper entitled "What role should Pidgin and vernaculars have in Papua New Guinea's education policy?" read to the Pidgin Conference in Port Moresby in September 1973 and to the Eighth Waigani Seminar, also at Port Moresby, in May 1974. This paper was published under the title 'Pidgin and Education', *New Guinea* 9: 47-52 (July, 1974). I would like to thank Ger Reesink for reading and making valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper. Research for this paper was provided in part by the Papua New Guinea Research Fund of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (PNG branch).

[2] What is said here of Pidgin applies largely to Hiri Motu also but relates to a smaller part of the population.

[3] A manuscript by J. Franklin entitled 'Towards a Language and Literacy Directory of Papua New Guinea' provides statistics on the languages of PNG with orthographies and published materials.

[4] One proposal for such a program was given by Sarah Gudschinsky in a paper read at the Eighth Waigani Seminar in Port Moresby, May 1974 entitled 'Vernacular literacy as a base for formal education'.

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