

VERNACULARS AS BRIDGES TO
CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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I gat tripela kain tok ples long Papua Niugini. Wapela kain em i ol tok ples. Narapela kain em i tok Pisin na tok Motu. Narapela kain em i tok Inglis. Dispela tripela kain tok ples i got tripela kain wok bilong en.

Wok bilong ol tok ples em i olsem.

Olsem, taim ol manmeri i laik autim tingting na ol wantok i ken klia gut long as bilong tok, long dispela taim ol i save mekim long tok ples bilong ol yet na ol i no popaia o paulim tok o tok kranki, nogat. Bilong wanem? Tok ples bilong ol i no hevi na ol inap autim tingting long olgeta samting. Olsem na gavman bilong planti narapela kantri ol i pulim tok ples i kam insait long skul bilong ol.

Wok bilong tok Pisin em i olsem.

Orait, Tok Pisin i no kisim gut as bilong tingting bilong yumi, na sapos yumi autim tingting bilong yumi na mekim long Tok Pisin ating yumi autim hap tingting bilong yumi tasol. Orait, sapos yumi mekim long wapela tok ples tru, ol wantok i ken klia gut. Olsem, bihain yumi pulim Tok Pisin i kam insait long skul ating yumi mas makim Tok Pisin olsem namba tu bilong tok ples. Na sapos Tok Pisin i nogat wapela tok, ol i ken mekim long tok ples bilong ol na stretim Tok Pisin.

Wok bilong tok Inglis em i olsem.

Orait yumi save pinis. Tok Inglis em tok ples bilong ol waitman. Olsem taim ol i autim tingting bilong ol o toktok long pasin bilong ol yet, Tok Inglis inap. Tasol Tok Inglis i no samting bilong Papua Niugini, na taim ol manmeri bilong Papua Niugini ol i laik toktok long pasin bilong ol yet, Tok Inglis i no inap. Tru, yumi inap mekim long Tok Inglis na toktok wantaim manmeri bilong narapela narapela kantri. Tasol planti manmeri na sumatim ol i go long skul na taun na ol i lusim o paulim pasin bilong tumbuna bilong ol.

Yumi no ken rausim Tok Inglis, nogat. Tasol ating em gutpela yumi pulim tok ples i kam insait long skul na sumatim bilong standet wan tu samting ol i ken skul long tok ples bilong ol yet. Na bihain ol i ken kisim save long Tok Inglis. Na ating em gutpela samting ol sumatim husat i pinisim haiskul o yunivesiti ol i go bek na helpim ol pipel bilong as ples na tanim sampela Tok Inglis long tok ples. Em tasol.

Abstract

Often it has been suggested that there are so many indigenous languages in Papua New Guinea that it is impossible to use them in education. Instead, English, or more recently, Pidgin English, are proposed as a unified approach to education and, by implication, to national unity. In this paper I comment upon the basic policies of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in respect to the vernaculars, and make comments as well on Pidgin and English. By focusing on the individual merits and functions of the three kinds of languages I imply that all can be fully utilised in Papua New Guinea, not only in education but for all aspects of communication. However, the use of Pidgin English by itself in education is seriously questioned. Throughout the paper references to Pidgin should, by implication, extend to Hiri Motu as well. The paper concludes with some observations on the decrease of intelligibility in Pidgin English when it borrows too heavily from standard English.

Introduction

The work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Inc. (= SIL) is now going on in some 25 countries throughout the world. Approximately 600 languages and dialects are being studied by its workers.

The goals of SIL (also called *Institut Bilong Tok Ples*) centre upon three distinct, but closely related areas: linguistics, literacy, and translation. Each of these programmes reflect the dignity of the indigenous people and their languages. The work of SIL, which began in 1934, has been motivated since its inception by the recognition of individual groups, no matter what size their languages in all areas of the world.

The SIL has its own training programme in the countries where it works, as well as at universities in the homelands. It is recognised as a worldwide authority on indigenous languages and programmes related to their use. Materials published on the languages are tied closely to a practical orientation and viewpoint, although certain more scholarly articles and books are also published. In Papua New Guinea since 1956 (through 1972), of the 966 items published in linguistics, literacy and anthropology, almost 550 of these are in the field of literacy alone. In addition SIL has published over 425 separate titles of Christian Scriptures, all which have been translated by its members. These are printed in low cost, limited editions which are available, if in print, to anyone.

With this great emphasis on literacy and literature in the vernacular it is not surprising that SIL has often been criticised for its approach, sometimes it seems, to the exclusion of Pidgin or English. For the most part this emphasis reflects the type of basic work the members of SIL engage in: village work on a local level. Most often the work is small and unspectacular, with limited financial or moral support. Nevertheless, the materials used in such areas are well tested and designed and could easily be adopted into a system of initial education.¹ It is essential that vernacular languages and materials prepared in them should not be considered as a substandard vehicle of education. Added to this there is already the danger that Pidgin English has a

reputation as an ineffective method for formal education. In fact, speakers of English alone have enjoyed the prestige which should rightly be enjoyed by the speakers of all indigenous languages of Papua New Guinea. We shall turn now to a short discussion on the potential roles of each of the three major kinds of language used in Papua New Guinea.

Vernaculars

Those who are members of SIL take pride in studying the languages of Papua New Guinea. But this is not an academic pride, i.e., the goal of simply knowing linguistic facts about areas of the country. Rather, it is our attempt (done with varying degrees of success) to identify with and appreciate the cultural viewpoint of the village people. For this reason SIL members request the village people for the privilege of living in the local setting. It is a privilege because we have no right to live in such areas by virtue of citizenship, or because we can guarantee economic benefits to the area. What we can offer is an honest and sincere effort to learn to speak the language well, to prepare literacy materials in the language, and to translate New Testament materials for the use of the local church. (There is, however, no SIL church set up by expatriate SIL members.)

The vernacular language reflects the heritage and identity of the people. It is rich in vocabulary which relates the people to each other, to geographical places and to the natural environment around them. The beliefs and myths of the people are reported through the cognitive framework expressed most adequately in the vernacular. It would be a simple matter to preserve cultural artifacts so that they could be examined and in some sense remembered. However, in order to talk about the same objects, the vernacular alone supplies the richness and depth of emotions that are associated with the customs surrounding mere objects. For this reason, if a vernacular is destroyed or allowed to be immersed by a larger cultural group the culture of the smaller group has also effectively been destroyed. We of SIL maintain that to bypass the vernacular in education is to bypass the basis of the very heart and soul of the Papua New Guinea people.

Because this emphasis may seem impractical it is important to remember that basic education (reading and writing, as well as simple math) has been going on in Papua New Guinea languages for some time. Dr Alan Healey, in a report to the Educational Research Unit and SIL, estimates that orthographies of various degrees of accuracy have already been established for 191 of the 354 languages spoken by more than 1000 people. In fact 78% of Papua New Guineans have their language written, and most of these have reading materials as well. A further proposed joint survey by SIL and the Educational Research Unit will undoubtedly give a much more complete picture of the potential for basic education in the vernacular.

A practical problem which confronts SIL is the funding of literacy materials in the vernacular. In 1969-70 many items were underwritten by Miles for Millions (Calgary, Alberta, Canada) and in 1971-72 by Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe E.V. (Bonn, West Germany). In addition some Local Government Councils (in the Goroka, Kainantu, Okapa and Markham Valley areas) have supplied funds. The Department of Information and Extension Services has also aided SIL in many ways. Currently SIL is exploring funding from other outside sources.

Quality control of SIL publications in the vernacular is assisted by a trained core of literacy consultants who carefully check each manuscript. Field training courses supervise the preparation of additional materials. An example of the range and scope of such materials can be found in the current SIL Bibliography (compiled by P.M. Healey and published in 1973) from pages 31-62.

As J. Allen demonstrated for the educated Buka, a knowledge of the cultural tradition transported by the vernacular language is still a very worthwhile goal. However, without materials in the Buka language this goal would be frustrated. This fundamental desire for vernacular materials does not preclude a distaste for materials in Pidgin or English. The needs which each supply are simply in separate realms.

Robert Litteral, in another paper given at this conference, (called "What Role Should Pidgin and Vernaculars Have in Papua New Guinea's Education Policy?") suggests the mechanics whereby vernacular materials can be initially introduced into an educational programme. Certain aspects of this have been tried in SIL related programmes, such as the academies at Ambunti in the East Sepik District and Kipu in the Morobe district. On the other hand, the emphasis on vernacular education in Papua New Guinea received early support from linguists such as S.A. Wurm (1966, 1971a). Other countries have also emphasised the vernacular in education despite problems of the lack of trained teachers, teacher and pupil transfer, and related problems. B.P. Sibayan (1971) provides an excellent summary of language policies in the Philippines. In this country English is the chief language of government, business and industry, but it is also used in mass communication and in schools and universities. English is on a par with Pilipino, the national language in all levels of instruction, but the vernacular is used in primary education. An attempt in the same country to make Spanish an official language by law resulted in it being hated and rejected (Sibayan 1971: 145) --perhaps an interesting lesson for Papua New Guinea. Elsewhere in the Pacific, the French have adopted a policy in French Polynesia where all education, from the most elementary level, is conducted in French only. This has led to the complete exclusion of Tahitian (Lavondès, 1971: 1118), although no such attitude prevails toward Chinese. A political decision of this type presumably would not be tolerated in a country like Papua New Guinea.

In the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (as reported by G.J. Trifonovitch, 1971) English is taught as a second language and is used as a vehicle of instruction, but not until students prove comprehension in other subjects in English. The vernacular is the first choice for learning to read, following what linguists and UNESCO have long recommended as the best procedure (cf. Lefevre 1964 and Fries 1962 for linguistic principles of reading). The UNESCO report (1953) summarises twenty points which should be seriously considered before any binding educational policy is proposed for Papua New Guinea (see Appendix B).

Finally, even in Australia, long the bastion for a strict English approach in Aboriginal communities, the government is now proposing that the child's first language should 'in general' be used for initial literacy (B.H. Watts, et. al. 1973).

One might ask, in the light of such overwhelming positive evidence in favour of initial literacy in the vernacular, why the proposal for English or Pidgin (or both), to the exclusion of the vernaculars, is

even seriously considered. It would seem that even if there are considerations about vernaculars other than those proposed on linguistic or even moral grounds, these have probably already been anticipated in the studies made by UNESCO, as well as the other authors mentioned above. A further excellent proposal on literacy education in the adult community of developing countries is given in Blowers (1968). In choosing the language(s) of instruction he considers psychological factors, literacy status, availability of teachers and materials, costs, as well as the general aims of such a programme. Such a programme often incorporates the national language as well as the vernacular. Such bilingual programmes will be mentioned briefly in the next section of this paper.

Pidgin English

Historically, Pidgin languages which are European-based (e.g., Haitian French, Jamaican English, Cameroons, Pidgin English, Pidginised Afrikaans, Chinese Pidgin English, etc.) are related to communication barriers between communities where bilingualism is absent and contact is always multilingual. It fulfils a practical function and for this reason it has often been called a 'trade' language. Some linguists (such as Hall 1962) assert that a pidgin language owes its origin to causal short-term contact where the groups concerned have no common language. Others (such as Whinnom 1971) claim that pidginisation is a result of hybridisation between two distinct languages. The result is a new, separate creation, but subject to natural mutations and barriers, such as factors of contact, attitude, phonology, grammar and cognitive conditioning. The distinction between a pidgin language and the mechanism of pidginisation has also been made (Samarin 1971). The latter is "any consistent reduction of the functions of language both in its grammar and its use" (Samarin 1971: 126). In this view secret languages and the like (e.g., Kewa 'Pandanus' language in Franklin 1972, or Dixon 1971 on an Aboriginal language) are pidginised in that their use is more restricted, but they are not pidgin languages. A pidgin language typically has a great reduction in usage, i.e., ideas and concepts may be transmitted but there is no meta-language for precise definitions.²

There is general agreement that Pidgin English is now tending toward standardisation. This trend will continue as more publications follow some uniform spelling system. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that Highland Pidgin (e.g., Wurm 1971b) is not Lowland Pidgin (e.g., Laycock 1970) and that National Broadcasting Pidgin is neither. The latter is more of an attempt at what is sometimes called a *koiné* (Samarin 1971: 133) where various features from several regional varieties are incorporated, as well as some from English. This attempt at standardisation will affect spoken Pidgin much more slowly than the written form.

Given the limited source materials available in Pidgin, it is unlikely that it can provide anything more than we should expect at this time: a very general, non-precise education which demands a simplification of the same materials rendered in either the vernacular or English.

For this reason alone education in Pidgin should always be closely tied to at least one other language. The second language provides the preciseness that Pidgin, due to its nature, cannot. In fact, the more precision that one attempts to incorporate into Pidgin, the more English words one must introduce. Of course, for a speaker who already knows

English this is a simple matter (witness the circular in Pidgin in Appendix A at the end of this paper), but the decoding of the new terms is contextual, resulting in ambiguity, circumlocution, and direct misunderstanding. One only needs to examine the brief outline of the Constitutional Planning Committee (e.g., as given in the *Post-Courier*, Wednesday, August 23, 1973) and count the direct borrowings from English into Pidgin and Hiri Motu to be aware of the problem. Terms such as 'judicial system' become *ol kot*, *ol jas an magistret*, *na ol loa bilong kot*, where four English nouns attempt to convey the concept. The lack of precision which is inherently part of the nature of Pidgin language is somehow thought to now be made precise by the introduction of new English words. To translate these terms into the vernacular it is also necessary (for the most part) to use loan words from English, but the nominalised descriptive phrases render them quite satisfactorily. For example, *kot* can be amplified as 'the house for making court', *jas* as 'the man who hears court' and so on.

All of this is not to say that Pidgin English (or Hiri Motu) are not extremely important and necessary in the development of this country. Their use in contact, trade and elementary education are well known and attested. In SIL, Pidgin has been used as a bilingual aid in diglot materials published by the Institute. Many indigenous translators have made excellent use of materials written in Pidgin and with proper training and checking, they have translated very serviceable materials into their own languages. But in order to translate well they have had to move away from the literal rendering of the Pidgin words and phrases. Far too often, however, those who translate from English into Pidgin have retained a literal and wooden style. Creative writing and expression is obviously not any easier in Pidgin than it is in English, or the vernacular.

It seems apparent then that Pidgin or Hiri Motu have a limited value in education if they are divorced from English, or for that matter, the vernacular. To illustrate this point in detail we shall now turn to the circular in Appendix A at the end of this paper.

The circular, called *Kaunsil Kopi Plantasin*, was distributed from the district headquarters at Mendi in the Southern Highlands District. Details of its distribution are unclear, but we may assume that it is not unlike other Pidgin materials and information disseminated to sub-district offices, schools, councils and missions. Words which were dictated for written explanations in the vernacular are underlined and listed serially in Table 1. Those on the left-hand side of the Table were not understood, i.e., for any one term, more than half of the students did not understand the term. The definition of understanding is drawn from the English-speaking cultural perspective underlying the circular. The number given in the first column indicates the number of Standard 6 or Skulanka students who did not understand the term, or in the right-hand side of the Table, those who did understand the term. The second column on both sides simply transfers the number of students into the percentage of students.

Certain comments follow about the explanations given by the students. The numbers given identify the terms with their location in Table 1. Students were instructed to write the meanings of the Pidgin word or phrase in the vernacular (Kewa) by pretending that they were explaining the word or phrase to someone who did not know Pidgin, such as an older person in the village. We now comment on the explanations given for

misunderstood words before giving some additional observations.

- (1) *komiti* (sometimes capitalised in the document)--invariably understood as an individual, reflecting the borrowing and use of the term in the language. Usually associated with roads, courts, surveillance and so on.
- (2) *Southern Highlands Area Authority* (English spelling used in document)--generally understood as a group of men with powers as some type of guardians, often hearing courts about land.
- (3) *Ekonomik development* (note mixing of spelling systems)--generally understood variously as guardians, those who tell about something (such as self-government) or ask about things, but in one case suggesting some kind of work that black men do.
- (4) *wok bisnis*--often interpreted as the ones who began businesses, but usually those who simply work "strong".
- (5) *profit*--interpreted in a variety of ways including: money, what comes from money, what follows a debt (repayment), redistribution after a sale, change, and exchange.
- (6) *kaunsil*--interpreted as those who are important, go to meetings, head men, those with badges, guardians, tax collectors, those who hear courts, and those who are elected.
- (7) *rural development mani* (note spelling)--money in banks, in Australia, head men who have money, money the council gives for working on roads, money given for cars, money for the council, money to start businesses, (two correct answers).
- (8) *aplikesin*--a paper, paper for getting things ready, something the police give, for buying some ground, the place of government, etc. but generally (by the context of the document) associated with ground.
- (9) *Lain bilong didiman*--interpreted as the *didiman's* 'line', those who look after pigs and cows, those who foster businesses, those who plant things, men of the *didiman*.
- (10) 50%--interpreted as 20 + 20 + 10.
- (11) *kontrak*--what those who go to the coast get, about work, to carry when work is finished, get it for money-work.
- (12) *kampani*--this word and the following (which is more easily explained) are the only ones which were understood by one group and not by the other. Usually this term was interpreted as people who somehow encouraged work, but also as those who had a business, searched for oil, or did some kind of work.
- (21) *nurseri*--not dictated in context for Standard 6 and hence only correctly interpreted in 3 cases. However, even in context Skulanka students in 6 cases associated the term with sickness or the hospital.

Table 1

WORDS NOT UNDERSTOOD

| | | STANDARD 6 (20) | | SKULANKA (22) | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------------|----|---------------|------|
| | | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1 | <i>komiti</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4.5 |
| 2 | <i>Southern Highlands Area</i> | | | | |
| | <i>Authority</i> | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4.5 |
| 3 | <i>Ekonomik development</i> | 0 | 0 | 3 | 13.6 |
| 4 | <i>wok bisnis</i> | (omitted) | | 4 | 18.2 |
| 5 | <i>profit</i> | 6 | 30 | 4 | 18.2 |
| 6 | <i>kaunsil</i> | 0 | 0 | 8 | 36.3 |
| 7 | <i>Rural development mani</i> | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9.1 |
| 8 | <i>aplikesin</i> | 2 | 10 | 1 | 4.5 |
| 9 | <i>Lain bilong didiman</i> | 10 | 50 | 7 | 32.8 |
| 10 | <i>50%</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | <i>kontrak</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | <i>kampani</i> | ----- | | 9 | 40.9 |
| 21 | <i>nurseri</i> | 3 | 15 | ----- | |

WORDS UNDERSTOOD

| | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-------|-----|-------|------|
| 13 | <i>mun Januari</i> | 16 | 80 | 20 | 90.9 |
| 14 | <i>1973</i> | 20 | 100 | 16 | 72.2 |
| 15 | <i>lip ti</i> | 17 | 85 | 12 | 54.5 |
| 16 | <i>wok pay</i> | 20 | 100 | 19 | 86.3 |
| 17 | <i>faktori</i> | 17 | 85 | 22 | 100 |
| 18 | <i>(16/20) acres</i> | 20 | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| 19 | <i>8 o 10 dollar</i> | 20 | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| 20 | <i>gavman</i> | 14 | 66 | 15 | 68.1 |
| 21 | <i>nurseri</i> | ----- | | 14 | 63.6 |
| 22 | <i>plantasin</i> | 18 | 90 | 18 | 81.8 |
| 23 | <i>nambis</i> | 20 | 100 | 20 | 100 |
| 25 | <i>takis</i> | 11 | 55 | 18 | 81.8 |
| 24 | <i>famili</i> | 20 | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| 26 | <i>kopi na tree</i> | 20 | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| 27 | <i>ples kol long kopi</i> | 20 | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| 12 | <i>kampani</i> | 16 | 80 | ----- | |

Now for some more general comments.

- (a) The Kewa spelling rendered by the students varied from very good to practically unintelligible. It is noteworthy that the more capable the students were (judged by the headmaster) the better they could handle vernacular writing. Conversely we have noted that there is a correlation between the ability to learn to read and write the vernacular in the village and later ability in Pidgin.
- (b) The spelling of the document should not be taken seriously. The words were pronounced, in context, so that spellings such as 'pay' (16) 'tree' (26), 'acre' (18) or 'dollar' (19) should not have influenced the interpretations.

- (c) The standard of correctness for the interpretation was judged by a simple dictionary rendering, or its variants.
- (d) 'Folk' explanations were related to world view in such words as *nambis*, *famili*, *mun Januari* or even 1973.
- (e) The exercise demonstrated clearly that Pidgin documents are going to need much more preparation and editing if divorced from either the vernacular or, for that matter, English.

The difficulties inherent in proposing Pidgin without amplification in the vernacular or English should be apparent from this discussion. To incorporate either demands a bilingual programme that only seems to add to the already known problems of literacy in one language. In SIL, we have attempted to publish materials of a diglot or triglot nature (e.g., in Kewa see Franklin and Kirapeasi 1973). Elsewhere in countries such as Peru, quite successful bilingual programmes have been implemented by SIL for many years (cf. reports by Burns 1968 and Wise and Shell 1971). The first stage in such programmes is for materials to be published in vernacular-national language(s) format.

This summary of Pidgin as an instrument for education is only negative if considered apart from the vernacular. Even if Pidgin is closely linked to English there is no assurance that understanding of non-cultural concepts will take place, since the concept will be Western but the spelling will be Pidgin--in some form or another. We will now turn to an examination of English for some additional comments.

English

It has been strongly claimed by some (Papua New Guineans as well as Europeans) that Pidgin, if used in education with a wholesale introduction of words, phrases and expressions will gradually develop or evolve into some kind of more sophisticated language. Pidgin, as Whinnon suggests, is a hybrid, and the process of relexification always tends toward the simpler (and cruder) system. This is so even if there is considerable linguistic awareness, and thus to suggest that a higher-grade Pidgin will evolve through natural selection from the hybrid is to ignore a long history of the use of Pidgins and Creoles. It is true that certain deficiencies (such as what Whinnon labels referential inadequacy, i.e., the naming of objects) can easily be repaired by the introduction of English terms. But the wholesale introduction of semantic or linguistic structure from English into Pidgin is impossible, even if it is possible to promote language engineering (such, for example, as described by Wurm 1971a).

Even when a Pidgin or Creole is based squarely upon an indigenous language (as, for example, Police Motu or Katanga Swahili--for the latter see Polome 1971) the prestige language (in these two cases English and French respectively) will be used at all or certain levels of education and administration. For this reason alone it is impractical to use Pidgin without a bilingual or trilingual programme complementing it.

On the other hand, the blatant use of English to the exclusion of Pidgin or the vernaculars is quite likely to be regarded as a 'colonial'

relic. Presently a vernacular may be used for the first two years of primary school if a syllabus is prepared in that language. Now the vernaculars may even be introduced into primary schools for approximately one hour per week. Pidgin, as far as I know, is not taught as a subject in any administration school, although it has been widely used as a vehicle of instruction in mission schools.

It seems obvious then that there is no need to stress the importance of English in education in Papua New Guinea. Pidgin has also enjoyed some legitimacy in recent years. The vernacular languages, however, have been viewed cautiously and with a certain amount of suspicion. The voiced feeling that 700 languages represents a fragmented society which can only be unified through one language is, of course, a natural concern to those involved in administration or education. But is the present country really fragmented as a result of some 700 indigenous languages being spoken, or rather, is not any tendency toward fragmentation based on political and economical factors which have been fostered through inadequate communication? The liberal sprinkling of English words into Pidgin does not communicate any more than the same liberal incorporation of Pidgin words into the vernaculars. And both are done in political speeches, House of Assembly meetings, council meetings, church meetings, and in printed materials. English is a foreign language to almost all Papua New Guineans and, as such, it represents a foreign influence which is necessary in advanced education but which when used alone is a direct threat to the cultures of the country. English is spoken mainly by foreigners and we represent an alien culture which promotes materialism and results in urbanisation. Speaking English can guarantee job security to a select class of people who can become educated and live, for the most part, quite divorced from the traditional way of the village or hamlet. Seen in this light, it is English that promotes certain aspects of fragmentation, especially when separated from the languages and cultures of the people of Papua New Guinea.

English, of course, is here to stay and it is pointless to propose that it be discontinued. However, at the beginning levels of education when children, (or for that matter, elected political figures) still have a strong link with the traditional cultural setting, the vernaculars should complement the use of English. In fact, but idealistically, every expatriate involved in education, including political education, should learn a vernacular language and, when required, develop a vernacular meta-language to talk about new concepts introduced into the culture. Here especially is where the high school and university graduate can help the rural settlement in a practical manner: assuring that all sectors of the community can comprehend and discuss all factors that they are expected to be familiar with. This will include terms and concepts such as House of Assembly, Constitution, Judicial system Public Prosecutor, Public Solicitor, Executive Officers and the like (all mentioned in the item on the Constitutional Planning Committee which appeared in the *Post-Courier*). The graduates should prepare explanations and definitions of these concepts for use in beginning and lower-level education. Once this is attempted the grass-roots problem of education can perhaps be better appreciated.

Summary

I have argued that both Pidgin and English are inadequate without the vernacular. Other aspects which display this inadequacy, such as phonological interference between the vernacular and Pidgin or English have not even been mentioned. This type of interference is not confined only to the sound system, extending also to grammar and semantics. For those interested, the study by D. Bee (1972) illustrates persuasively that fluency in Pidgin is questionable if the concepts cannot be adequately translated into the vernacular.

I also maintain that the appeal to teach everyone English will not lead to national unity, as its proponents suggest. If such an approach were possible it would be only at the sacrifice of the traditional heritage of the people of Papua New Guinea. It might not be entirely facetious to suggest that urbanised, semideculturated tertiary students return to their rural settlements periodically as volunteer teachers to translate new concepts into vernacular languages. This constructive type of cultural reidentification would go a long way toward counteracting the present boredom and resentment of those high school drop-outs who do return to the villages.

Finally, I suggest that if only part of the materials in written Pidgin are understood by those in the upper levels of Primary education, then far less is understood by the village people when they hear orally translated Pidgin. This assertion is based on a small formal sample, but it can easily be tested in other areas by using the same or a modified technique. It can also be tested in secondary schools or other primary schools even if someone who does not know the vernacular(s) administers the test. Here the students can be instructed to explain the meanings of terms by writing them in English. The results to such formal techniques may prove embarrassing; we may be surprised to know how little of our Western jargon is understood at any level of education. On the other hand, such evidence, if found, should clearly warn us that the Papua New Guinea cognitive framework does not match the academic perspective for the interpretation of cultural change.³

Finally, we conclude on a more positive note: despite the multiplicity of languages and cultures in Papua New Guinea, all of them are far closer in universal features to each other than any of them are to English. This fundamental fact, far from being ignored, should be exploited at all levels in education.

Notes

¹ Often programmes are supported locally. See, for example, the description of SIL literacy programmes among the Kanite of the Eastern Highlands by S.G. Harris (1971) and among the Atzera of the Markham Valley (A. Cates, unpublished). Additional articles can be found in *READ*, an adult literacy and literature magazine, published by SIL, Papua New Guinea Branch. Research for this paper was supported in part by the Papua New Guinea Research Fund of the SIL.

² Note, however, that there is no reason why such a meta-language cannot be coined and learned. Phil Staalsen and David Strange of SIL, in another paper given at this Conference and which is based on a training course in Pidgin, mention a few Pidgin English terms used to

describe semantic relations. Hoenigswald (1966) proposes that reaction of the indigenous speakers of a language should be sought, in particular notions of correctness, dialects and concepts related to word, sentence and so on.

³ I cannot hope to comment on aspects of cultural change in this paper. Barnett (1953) provides an exhaustive account on the incentives which lead to what he calls the innovative processes inherent in change. A more practical book with constructive comments on change as a positive means in societies is by Goodenough (1963). The contrast in approach for cultural development between so-called democratic and communist 'underdeveloped' countries is given in Staley (Revised edition, 1961). The latter book, although essentially political and hence doctrinaire in approach, gives comments which are relevant to the development of a country such as Papua New Guinea.

Appendix A

KAUNSI L KOPI PLANTASIN

Long (13) *mun Januari* (14) 1973 (1) *Komiti* bilong (2) *Southern Highlands Area Authority* toktok long gerapim (3) *Ekonomik development* insait long dispela hap. Ol iet i tinting imas gat (12) *Kampani* long makem (14) *wok bisnis* long (15) *lip ti* na Kopi. Komiti i tok ol man long ples ino inap long meikim dispela wok pastaim bilong wanem oli no save gut long dispela tupela samting. Ol tu tok man i laikim (16) *wok pay* tasol. Na oli no inap long wet long fopela yia samting long kisim bak sampela (15) *profit*. Ol bakim tok i go long komiti ino gat wanpela kampani i laik kamap long (2a) *Southern Highlands* long dispela taim. Ino olsem long ol kampani i tingting dipsela wok ino gutpela wok. Oli tolim komiti inap long (6) *kaunsil i kisim* (7) *rural development* mani long helivim kaunsil long gerapim dispela wok bilong ol iet. Tasol oli tingting lip ti i hatwok tumas. Sapos bihain igat (17) *Faktori* long lip ti i kamap kaunsil inap long tingting moa long lip ti. Komiti i tok emi gutpela tok save na bai oli ken tokim kaunsil bilong ol.

Wei bilong mekim dispela wok i olsem. Pastaim kaunsil mas putim (8) *aplikeisin* long wanpela gutpela nap graun ol pipal i laik salim. Dispela graun i mas winim mak long (18) *60 acres*. Pei bilong dispela graun i olsem (19) *8 o 10 dollar* long wanpela (18a) *acre*. (9) *Lain bilong didiman* i mas go lukim dispela graun long tok save emi gut pela long kopi o nogat. Na oli ken tok tu long hamas (28) *mararsin* kaunsil i mas putim long graun na wanem kain diwai oli mas planim long wokim (27) *ples kol long kopi*. Behain kaunsil i mas askim (20) *gavman* long halpim ol long rural development mani long planim inap long (18b) *20 acres* long namba wan yia. Dispela mani kaunsil askim gavman long en i ken kamap (10) *50%* long mani didiman i makim long pei bilong wokim dispela graun.

Taim oli kisim mani pinis kaunsil i mas givim (11) *kontrak* long ol man long ples long rausim pitpit, wokim (21) *nurseri*, wokim hol na plantim (26) *Kofi na tree*. Na behain man long ples i kisim kontrak long klinim graun. Taim kofi i redi pinis inap long kaunsil i ken baim man long wok dei oa long narapela wei. Kaunsil i mas holim tingting dispela wok bisnis em bilongsowim ol man wei bilong wokim (22) *plantasin* bilong em iet, na wei bilong maikim wok bisnis. Taim dispela plantasin i kamap bikpela kaunsil i mas makim wanpela man bilong lukautim dispela plantasin. Tasol kaunsil i mas askim didiman long halpim kaunsil long kisim wanpela man igat save long dispela wok. Kaunsil i mas givim kontrak long dispela man long sampela yia na oli no ken rausim nating.

Taim plantasin i kamap gutpela ol man long ples i ken kisim wok klostu long haus bilong ol long pei wankain long (23) *nambis*. Em olsem man i ken kisim gutpela wok na stap klostu long (24) *famili* bilong ol. Kaunsil inap long kisim sampela mani moa na ino gat wok long spim (25) *takis* igo. Tasol sapos kaunsil ino wokim plantasin olsem wok bisnis tru, profit mani ino inap long kamap.

Appendix B

(From UNESCO Report, *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*)

1. The mother tongue is a person's natural means of self-expression, and one of his first needs is to develop his power of self-expression to the full.
2. Every pupil should begin his formal education in his mother tongue.
3. There is nothing in the structure of any language which precludes it from becoming a vehicle of modern civilization.
4. No language is inadequate to meet the needs of the child's first month in school.
5. The problems of providing an adequate supply of schoolbooks and other educational materials should be specially studied by Unesco.
6. If the mother tongue is adequate in all respects to serve as the vehicle of university and higher technical education, it should be so used.
7. In other cases, the mother tongue should be used as far as the supply of books and materials permits.
8. If each class in a school contains children from several language groups, and it is impossible to regroup the children, the teacher's first task must be to teach all pupils enough of one language to make it possible to use that language as the medium of instruction.
9. A lingua franca is not an adequate substitute for the mother tongue unless the children are familiar with it before coming to school.
10. Adult illiterates should make their first steps to literacy through their mother tongue, passing on to a second language if they desire and are able.
11. Educational authorities should aim at persuading an unwilling public to accept education through the mother tongue, and should not force it.
12. Literacy can only be maintained if there is an adequate supply of reading material, for adolescents and adults as well as for school children, and for entertainment as well as for study.
13. If a child's mother tongue is not the official language of his country, or is not a world language, he needs to learn a second language.
14. It is possible to acquire a good knowledge of a second language without using it as the medium of instruction for general subjects.
15. During the child's first or second year at school, the second language may be introduced orally as a subject of instruction.
16. The amount of the second language should be increased gradually, and if it has to become the medium of instruction, it should not do until the pupils are sufficiently familiar with it.
17. Efficient modern techniques should be used in teaching the mother tongue and a foreign language. A teacher is not adequately qualified

to teach a language merely because it is his mother tongue.

18. Where there are several languages in a country, it is an advantage if they are written as uniformly as possible.

19. For convenience of printing, languages should as far as possible be written with a limited set of symbols which are written in a single line. For a summary of other recommendations on orthography, see (elsewhere in the UNESCO article).

20. For the needs of a polyglot state which is developing a national language, the materials for teaching the language should be simplified for instructional purposes, so that pupils may progress towards full mastery without having anything to unlearn.

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