

7.3.2. ADMINISTRATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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7.3.2.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Historians have tended to draw contrasts between the policies of the German Administration in New Guinea and those of the British and Australian Administrations in Papua, and again between the Papuan Administration and the New Guinean Administration when both were under Australia in the period following 1914. In terms of language policy there was remarkably little difference, in that they all claimed to have the same objective, none of them achieved it, and the only distinguishable difference was that the Papuan Administration, which had few resources, seemed sincerely to wish to carry out its announced policies, while the New Guinean Administration, which had some resources, seemed insincere.

7.3.2.2. NEW GUINEA UNDER GERMAN ADMINISTRATION

Official German policy in New Guinea was the propagation of the German language, and subsidies were paid to missions which taught German in their schools (Meere 1973:28 and 130). (The use of subsidies by government in order to effect its policies will be a recurring theme in this chapter.) The policy was not effectively implemented; there are occasional stories of aged New Guineans who still speak German, but there must be very few and their German must be very strange, for the first German Administration school only opened in 1908, began its German-language programme in full in 1911, and was closed in 1914.

The Annual Report 1901-02 advocated 'the compulsory use of German by all settlers and officials in their dealings with natives' (Ralph 1965:74). In December 1913 a circular letter from the Government set

out educational policy. It carried with it a draft of an educational ordinance which was to have been introduced in 1915 (Meere 1973:31). It emphasised the use of German, and local or approved vernacular languages in schools. In recognising the use of vernacular languages the German Administration was simply facing the realities of the educational situation which was dominated by the missions and was based upon vernacular languages.

It was at one time widely believed by 'uninformed British residents' that the German Administration promoted and even invented the Pidgin language (Reed 1943:271) but this was not so. Both missions and government exhibited that strong prejudice against Melanesian Pidgin which has characterised so many language planners in Papua New Guinea. The Catholic Mission of the Holy Ghost wrote in the 1901-02 Annual Report: (Meere 1973:29) 'It might be most desirable and beneficial if it could be suppressed and the sooner the better'. However the missions were less antagonistic towards Pidgin than the administration. The German Imperial Government ordered Governors to discourage its use and Baron von Hesse Wartegg declared that it would be a source of lasting disgrace for the 'world standing' of Germany if Pidgin were not rooted out (Hall 1955:35). The circular already mentioned said:

Great stress should also be laid on the fact that German should be taught instead of Pidgin English for the latter must be eliminated and German gradually introduced in its place in order to bring the natives round to understand German and Germany better and to look at affairs through German eyes. (Rowley 1958:280)

Such was the policy, but in fact, mission education was largely vernacular based and some missions used Pidgin supplemented with German words (Ralph 1965:74). The language had already been established as a lingua franca before the German Administration was established. It was used ever more widely by traders and was gradually adopted for convenience by the German field administration. The German trader-consul at Matupi, F. Hershheim, wrote in 1880:

In New Britain where about seven years before not a native understood a European language, this sort of English is now spoken by everyone, especially by the children; some speak it with considerable fluency. (Reed 1943:272)

H. Cayley-Webster is also recorded by Reed as remarking 'on his astonishment during his earlier visit to the Territory on finding so many natives speaking "English"'. He says: 'They could not have worked for Englishmen since 1886 and yet they still retained their knowledge of the language'. (Reed 1943:272). A number of traders working the New Guinea coast and islands were English-speaking (Reed 1943:276) but it was certainly Pidgin that Cayley-Webster was referring to. Thus Pidgin

was in no way an invention of the German Administration imposed upon the people of New Guinea. On the contrary, the form of the language was already established when the Germans moved in, and the language was successfully imposed by the people upon a reluctant administration.

7.3.2.3. PAPUA UNDER THE BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN ADMINISTRATIONS

Language policy in Papua up to 1941 was very similar to that of the German Administration, except that English was the chosen language. In the Annual Report of 1896, Sir William MacGregor, Lt Governor of Papua, called on the missions to teach English (Dickson 1970:16). The Royal Commission of 1906 emphasised the importance of English and recommended that its teaching should be made compulsory in mission schools (Dickson 1970:16). In 1897 education had been made compulsory for at least three days a week for pupils aged five to 14 living within one mile of a school (Mair 1948:47) in order to help the missions to obtain pupils for their schools. In 1907 this regulation was amended to make education compulsory only at schools where English was taught (Legge 1956:177). Field Officers in Papua, as in New Guinea, were pragmatic. The Fijians and New Hebrideans brought into Papua to establish the police force were taught the trade language of the Papuan coast which soon became known as Police Motu. South Sea pastors, particularly from Samoa, also tended to learn Police Motu, and to progress from there to a knowledge of the vernacular. One reason why the missions did not follow government policy was that they could not. Their village teachers were not English-speakers.

Pidgin, a Papuan variety, was not as well established as it had been in New Guinea, otherwise it would no doubt have imposed itself on the administration in Papua as it did in New Guinea. However after 1906, when Australia took over the administration from Britain, Sir Hubert Murray began his consistent opposition to the use of the language. He wanted the language eliminated from Papua and by 1941 he had very largely succeeded. It is the only example before World War II of an official language policy being successfully followed through; ironically so, since Papua New Guinea now has good reason to regret his success. Murray's views on Pidgin were as strongly expressed as those of the German Governor: 'It is a vile gibberish, especially the form of it that prevails in the Mandated Territory ... and should be discouraged'. (Murray 1924:10).

Murray's reasons for supporting English, again like the German arguments for the German language, suggest claims for cultural and even racial qualities inherent in the language which would be acquired by

those natives who learned it. There is evidence for this both in what he says:

The superiority of English to any New Guinea language is so great that it is obviously to the advantage of the native to acquire it as quickly as possible; and if we do not teach it to him we are hardly carrying out the duties of our "sacred trust". (Murray 1924:7),

and in the quotations he uses to support his views. He quotes Dr Marett, an anthropologist of that era:

... whereas it is the duty of the civilised overlords of primitive folk to leave them their old institutions so far as they are not directly prejudiced to their gradual advancement in culture ... yet this consideration hardly applies at all to the native language. If the tongue of an advanced people can be substituted, it is for the good of all concerned. (Murray 1924:9)

In 1912 Murray wrote, 'He [the Papuan] is inferior to the European, and if we wish to avoid trouble, we should never forget this, and should never look upon him as a social or political equal'. (Dickson 1970:17). Dickson considered that this view was modified only slightly throughout Murray's lifetime.

It is interesting to reflect that Murray's long administration of Papua was and is often looked back upon as a golden era in colonialist history. 'He was loved, admired and trusted by every Papuan, white or brown By 1945, the Murray regime had come to be regarded as a golden age'. (Mair 1948:12-13). Clearly this was so only comparatively.

Use of the local languages was regarded by Murray as a temporary expedient, both for Administration Officers and the Papuans themselves. He approved of the idea that Administration Officers should learn native languages while insisting, nevertheless:

as a matter of permanent policy, I am of the opinion that English should be made the common language and not any of the native languages, or any combination of them ... to attempt to preserve the native languages and to give them rank as "official" is in my opinion a step in the wrong direction, and is in effect to sacrifice the future of the race to the convenience of the present moment. (Murray 1924:7-8)

He also quotes Sir Frederick Lugard: 'Government encouragement should not be exerted to stimulate or preserve these native languages'. (Murray 1924:8-9).

It is a mark of the progressive attitudes of the Murray administration for those times that the Government Anthropologist, F.E. Williams, played an important role in shaping policy, particularly in the areas of language and education. Williams summed up the language situation in 1928 when he wrote: 'In our own territory there is no doubt that the missionaries are the linguists; with the vast majority of the other Europeans

knowledge of the native language is beneath contempt'. (Williams 1928:7), and he is quoted by Reed as saying in 1936: 'at present the means of communication are pidgin Motu, pidgin English, telepathy and swearing'. (Reed 1943:269). As with Sir Hubert Murray we find that (on attitudes to race and language at least) the views expressed conflict, to modern ears, with the high reputation he had and to some extent still has. Williams had no doubts about the superiority of both the English language and the English race:

In the first place the ability to speak, and better still to read, the superior tongue will open the gate to far wider fields of experience and knowledge: it will provide for the development - to what limits we cannot foresee - of the intellectual powers which, however hidden at present, we must assume the native to possess. (Williams 1935:30)

Again, as with Murray, the purpose in teaching English seems to have been essentially mystical; it had no practical, economic function. Both men recognised that Papuans lived and would continue to live in villages. Williams said: '... education must have due regard to the society or culture in which the educand is destined to live' (Williams 1935:6) and Murray admitted:

I must confess that I regard agricultural training of natives as a matter of very high importance - higher in fact than primary or technical education, and higher even than the acquisition of the English language. (Dickson 1970:29)

and Williams:

... let him [the educator] not forget that English, for that vast majority of pupils who never reach the higher standards, is THE subject I suggest, then, that our language should not be treated merely as one of the subjects of the curriculum on a par with the others, ... but that it be regarded emphatically as the first and foremost subject, the principal aim of scholastic education AT THE LOWER GRADES. (Williams 1935:29)

(This is a situation where education was limited to primary level schooling.) The inescapable conclusion is that English was taught, less as a means to an end, than as an end in itself.

It is true that Papuans were eager to learn English. Murray was asked at Daru in 1911 that the government should establish schools 'with a schoolmaster who would teach the children to read and write English' (Dickson 1970:16), and the 'Papuan Courier', September 19, 1924, reported

Four little Papuans read the following address to the visiting Australian Governor-General: "We thank the Big King for your visit to us and for sending His White Men to take care of us. We can now live in peace. Your white men protect us, make us good and happy, and teach us to speak English". (Dickson 1970:35)

However, it is certain that Papuans were expecting more concrete benefits from the process than the kind of mental uplift Murray and Williams had in mind. In this they were disappointed. C. Wedgwood described how some school leavers 'used to come into Port Moresby, with their precious certificate encased in a bamboo tube, only to discover with dismay and resentment that no-one wanted to make use of their hard won accomplishment' (Wedgwood 1945a:3-4).

What Sir Hubert Murray might have achieved if he had had sufficient finance to support his policies cannot be known. Between 1913 and 1917 a number of proposals for native taxation were put forward in order to subsidise and thus gain influence over mission education; a prerequisite for the payment of a subsidy was to be the teaching of English (Dickson 1970:19). A system of subsidies was finally instituted, with limited effects, during the 1930s on a scale of payments ranging from 50¢ to \$2.50 per pupil who satisfied the requirements of an examination in English, Arithmetic and Geography. In theory, the 1931 educational syllabus should have been followed by all schools receiving the subsidy, and it was laid down in that syllabus that all instruction must be through the medium of the English language. However, 'no compulsion was laid upon the missions to follow the Government syllabus in any of their schools'. (Wedgwood 1945a:2). Mission policy continued to be basic education through the vernacular. For English teaching the only materials which were available were the five Papuan Readers, one for each grade, which the pupils soon learned by heart (Wedgwood 1945a:5), and the 'Papuan Villager' written in simple English and published between 1929 and 1941 by F.E. Williams. These were distributed free to all mission schools. Of the 'Papuan Villager', Camilla Wedgwood wrote: 'Judging from what I was told, [it] seems to have been of little interest to them'. (Wedgwood 1945a:6). No administration schools were started, and only a small proportion of a tiny budget went on mission education subsidies. There was a maximum of \$500 per school in per capita subsidies, though other subsidies were also made available.

The policy of making English the lingua franca of Papua cannot be said to have failed. In practical terms it was hardly implemented. Meere sums up the situation: 'English was the [official] school language, but only a limited number of Papuans had learnt to speak, read and write it'. (Meere 1973:27). Dickson notes that 20 years after Murray's education policy had been introduced 'nothing higher than fifth grade primary education was supported by the government, and less than 100 pupils annually were successful at this grade'. (Dickson 1970: 29).

7.3.2.4. NEW GUINEA UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN ADMINISTRATION

It would perhaps be dignifying the actions of the Administration in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea to refer to a language policy. Official policy undoubtedly was the spread of English. This policy was put into practice to the extent that English was taught in administration schools, and to this extent the New Guinea Government implemented its policy more effectively than the Papuan Government, but in New Guinea a very different spirit prevailed. There was no sense of 'sacred trust' or of seeking, however paternalistically, to raise the native from what was seen as a lowly situation. The aim was to 'keep him in his place'. Groves referred to the question of language policy in 1936 as:

one of the many matters confronting education in New Guinea, and one to whose solution the Administration, under expert guidance and in co-operation with the various missionary organisations, must soon give attention. (Groves 1936:18)

He noted that Europeans, apart from missionaries, 'insistently use Pidgin in their dealings with the natives' (Groves 1936:115). Some ex-New Guinea Administration Officers working in Papua after World War II refused to speak to a Papuan in English and insisted on using a Pidgin-speaking interpreter (personal communication from the Rev. Percy Chatterton). In Papua, Sir Hubert Murray almost completely dominated the small and not prosperous expatriate community, but in New Guinea, as Reed notes, '... the Territorial Government is virtually dependent on European enterprise for its proper maintenance'. (Reed 1943:252). The expatriate in New Guinea showed 'definite hostility towards the native being given any education at all' (Reed 1943:189). This hostility can be illustrated by an editorial from the 'Rabaul Times' where pressure had been successfully applied. The editor writes: 'We learn with pleasure that the seven natives who were to be sent to Australia did not go, owing to representations made by the Citizens' Association'. ('Rabaul Times' No.198, February 1, 1929). (This editorial was written at a time when the expatriate population had been alarmed by a general strike in the Rabaul area. However, it is typical of the attitude of the expatriate population that education was seen as being more likely to cause friction than cure it.) Reed noted further:

One inevitably receives the impression that the Government's policy, notwithstanding its limited budget, is shaped on the do-nothing model in response to the attitude of the non-official population (Reed 1943:189),

and this impression was shared by Meere who wrote 'Lack of administration educational progress was due mainly to shortage of money, to public [European] apathy if not antipathy and to administrative procrastination'.

(Meere 1973:51). The prospects for the pupil who had left school were no better than for his counterpart in Papua despite the higher levels of economic and commercial activity. Reed reports a positive preference for non-educated labour in both government and the private sector.

'Governmental reports contain no references to this informalised policy I am certain however, that it exists'. (Reed 1943:213). Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the administration schools were considered to have failed. Groves states that pupils from the first government school were not holding useful positions, nor were they psychologically or socially well-adjusted (Groves 1936:118).

W.C. Groves is an important figure in tracing the changing patterns of language use and language policy in Papua New Guinea, not only because of his book which is an important source of reference and still relevant in its comments and proposals concerning language issues, but also because as the first director of education in the post-war joint administration of Papua and New Guinea, he was one of the few people with relevant pre-war experience. In the years following 1946 he tried to carry through the ideas and proposals which were discussed in *Native Education and Culture-Contact in New Guinea*. He failed, but his ideas are widely respected and many of the 'new' ideas being canvassed at present are similar to his, whether or not they owe a debt to him.

Groves came to New Guinea in 1922 as the first European teacher to work under the then newly established educational organisation. One of the main aims of the government schools was the teaching of English, and the failure of this attempt, as he saw it, had a profound effect upon his views. He wrote:

... with native teachers and in a native environment, it will never be possible to teach English even reasonably well in the village schools, even if it were desired to do so. All experience and reason are against it. When English is widespread in New Guinea villages, they will no longer be New Guinea villages. And a sorry day that indeed will be.
(Groves 1936:116)

Referring to the various solutions by missionaries to the language problem he wrote: 'On the whole their solutions seem to have been satisfactory. None of them, of course, has been foolish enough to attempt to make English the language of instruction'. (Groves 1936:117). However, Groves acknowledged the value of and necessity for English for higher-level studies (Groves 1936:117). He had some reservations about the uses of Pidgin, but believed that it could and should be used as the medium of instruction in village schools where there was no suitable mother tongue. Finally, referring to education in general, but also to language policy with which he was very much concerned, he wrote:

'One thing is certain: that whatever is done, must not be done hurriedly. Every step in the broad plan must be carefully measured and its implications fully considered'. (Groves 1936:169).

As Director of Education he was to find himself caught up in a pressure of events which did not allow for the time he needed, and which forced him eventually to go against every principle he had put forward.

In the early 1920s, the Administration had not yet abnegated responsibility. Government expenditure on native education dropped from £18,000 in 1923 to £5,000 in 1937. The Administration's first school was established in 1922, and soon afterwards Col. John Ainsworth was called upon to report to the Minister for Home and Territories on language policy amongst other things. He was the previous Chief Native Commissioner, Kenya Colony, and his recommendations were consistent with British colonial policy at this time. Ainsworth's report was strongly pro-vernacular. Schools were to be conducted in the vernacular. Administration Officers were to learn the vernacular language of the area in which they served (Ainsworth 1924:129). He deprecated the use of Pidgin which he refers to as 'a form of crude speech' and 'this semi-jargon' and stated that:

... so long as "pidgin" remains in use as at present, effective administration of the native districts must be hampered
.... Unfortunately, in the present circumstances, its use remains a necessity, but in the interests of good administration alone, it should not remain a necessity a day longer than can be helped. (Ainsworth 1924:130)

He approved of the Mission system of adopting a vernacular language for a particular district and suggested that it might be adopted by the government (Ainsworth 1924:132). On the policy of teaching English in government schools, he wrote:

The scholastic side of the work [in the government schools at Malaguna and Rabaul] seems to be largely actuated by the desire and intention to teach a number of boys English, with the idea that they may be useful as interpreters in dealing with the natives in the districts. (Ainsworth 1924:29)

Since Pidgin already supplied this need, the rationale for teaching English seems to have been weak to say the least. No action was taken on his report.

In a burst of activity in 1927, a Mission-Administration conference was called and told of government plans to inspect and subsidise mission schools. Meere writes that the missions were unwilling to co-operate with these plans, which were therefore dropped (Meere 1973:40), but according to Groves, a number of missions introduced English into their school programmes:

in anticipation of definite proposals being made by the government to assist the missions in their secular education work; and it was confidently believed that this assistance would be arranged on the basis of an English-teaching programme. (Groves 1936:117)

However, the Administration did not introduce subsidies whether to give it some control over mission education or to promote the use of English in mission schools. It would probably have proved impracticable in any case, since, according to Reed 'white teaching is at a premium and only 189 of the 3000 mission schools have European instructors' (Reed 1943: 239), and according to Mair there were only 81 missionaries in New Guinea who were native speakers of English, the remainder of the 373 being predominantly German, many of whom never learned to speak English and used Pidgin to speak to other Europeans who did not know their language (Mair 1948:167).

Whatever may or may not have been possible, very little was attempted. Meere remarks:

lack of finance is not the whole reason for the low government expenditure on education, as in most years there was considerably more money available in the Native Education Trust Fund than was spent. (Meere 1973:49),

and Mair,

The history of native education policy in New Guinea has in fact consisted largely of postponement of action pending the results of discussion, conferences and what not. (Mair 1948:170)

Mair also notes the opinion of an educational expert, Miss Dannevig, speaking at the last meeting of the permanent Mandates Commission who said: 'she knew of no territory under mandate in which education progressed so slowly'. (Mair 1948:173).

In spite of the clear differences in intention between the Administration in Papua and that in New Guinea, the one frankly paternalistic, the other exploitative, the results were similar. English was the official language, field administration was carried out through a lingua franca, and education was left in the hands of the missions, whose language policies remained very much their own affair in New Guinea and largely so in Papua.

7.3.2.5. THE TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA UNDER AUSTRALIAN ADMINISTRATION

During the war, under the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit, there were some important developments. Radio programmes were broadcast in Police Motu and Pidgin, and receiving sets were provided for natives in forward areas (Mair 1948:196). Secondly, the first government secondary school was opened at Sogeri in 1944 and staffed by army personnel who were ex-teachers (Meere 1973:53).

The war generated a great deal of sympathetic interest for Papua New Guinea in Australia; partly no doubt because it was impossible to ignore the long hard battle which had been fought there, but also because many Australian soldiers owed their lives to Papua New Guineans. As early as August 1945 Camilla Wedgwood produced in response to Government request, the *Suggested Organisation of Native Education in New Guinea* (Wedgwood 1945b). Her views were similar to those of Groves, and on the language question she states specifically that English must be subordinated to vernacular education, though

later, with better trained native teachers it should be possible to begin lessons in English in some of the Village Schools. The general education and intellectual development of the children will not, however, be sacrificed for the sake of gaining an early knowledge of this language. (Wedgwood 1945b:3)

This gave the first indication that Papua New Guinea might come into line with the language policies held in for example Colonial Africa, where experts were generally agreed upon the need for '... the wise educational use of the language in which a pupil has learnt from infancy to name the things he sees, hears and handles ...' (H.M.S.O. 1927), and 'It is surely unquestionable that in a school course of six years, the instruction must be given entirely through the medium of the vernacular'. (H.M.S.O. 1943).

Between 1946 and 1950, A. Capell made a number of visits to the Territory at Groves' invitation as part of the 'broad plan' outlined in 1936. Groves wrote: 'On the basis of this survey, policy with regard to languages will be decided for all localities'. (Proposed Programme for the Five Year Period, July 1948-June 1953. 1948:8). The proposed development of vernacular education which was the purpose of Capell's visit was not to be in opposition to the use of English, in fact Capell recommends: 'The preparation of suitable textbooks for the teaching of English [as against Reading Primers...] is a matter of urgency'. (Capell 1951:Foreword). Surprisingly, since he was the only linguist to adopt this attitude, Capell was against any use of Pidgin in education.

The very first necessity is that Pidgin should be abolished at the earliest possible date. It has had certain practical advantages, but it can never be the vehicle of education. (Capell 1951:Foreword)

In the 'Proposed Programme of the Department of Education for the Five-Year Period July, 1948-June, 1953', provision was made for the payment of grants-in-aid to mission schools which were teaching through a vernacular and it was noted that vernacular schooling would remain in the hands of the missions 'during the period of the plan'. (Proposed Programme ... 1948:2). The need for education officers to be able to

speak the language of the community they served was stressed and it was noted that in order to effect this, 'continuous and widespread movement of staff is to be avoided'. (Proposed Programme ... 1948:8). In adult education the department advised that:

adult education, if carried out, will have to be fully vernacular So far as the dissemination of mass information by such technical departments as Health and Agriculture is concerned, it may, in fact, be necessary to use Pidgin or Police Motu, though in many cases vernaculars will be both practicable and more effective. (Proposed Programme ... 1948:9)

A Special Services Division had been established with sections for broadcasting, art, publications and languages in 1946. Following Sir Hubert Murray's example, Groves appointed a government anthropologist to the Education Department. On broadcasting it was noted:

The languages of broadcasting are vernaculars, Police Motu, Pidgin and English. Local experience has shown that vernacular broadcasts are, at present, the most effective; and that English, even in extremely simple form and in the limited field of fairly advanced school pupils, is of little use.

However, it was noted that the standard of vernacular broadcasts was generally poor because of the low level of education of those who did the translation into the vernacular. This situation was to be remedied (Proposed Programme ... 1948:9). The proposed programme did not favour the use of either Pidgin or Police Motu.

The Department's view is that the extension of the use of these marginal languages is not to be encouraged, since they are not considered to be adequate educational media, and since in the case of Pidgin, its spread may provide a positive impediment to the wide adoption and spread of real English ... it will be the Department's aim that both should disappear in due course. (Proposed Programme ... 1948:20)

English was to remain the ultimate objective, but removed now to some indefinite time in the future.

While the ultimate use of English is considered to be the only solution to the problem of the linguistic diversity in the Territory, it is recognised that the achievement of this will, in the majority of localities, be extremely remote. It is not, therefore, intended to permit a present lack of balance in educational plans by concentrating on the universal, high-speed teaching of English, and since the vernacular is the medium of instruction in most village schools, vernaculars will, for some time, remain the most important educational media for most people. (Proposed Programme ... 1948:8)

Groves' policies received the support of the post-war Australian Labor Government and of the first post-war Administrator, Col. J.K. Murray, but when the Liberal Government came to power in December 1949 the situation changed rapidly. In the Territory of New Guinea Report 1950-51 the stated aim of universal literacy still meant vernacular

literacy (Meere 1973:60). However, by the early 1960s the situation was to have changed completely and the use of vernacular languages on school premises was not only frowned upon, but in some schools had become a punishable offence. K.R. McKinnon the last expatriate Director of Education considered that post-war vernacular education was a failure and suggested reasons:

Apart from the fact that standards of general education of teachers were low and supervision of the school system infrequent, the most important reason seems to be that there were very few vernaculars in written form and even for those there was little reading additional to segments of the Bible. The number of people competent to prepare learning material in the vernacular well enough for this task was particularly small since the number of missionaries who learned the vernacular well enough for this task was smaller than has been generally realised and since the vernacular was never used as a tool of advanced education for indigenous students. (McKinnon 1971:8)

However, it might be more appropriate to say that Groves' policies were never effectively tried out. One reason for this may have been Groves' apparent lack of administrative ability, but it should be taken into account that he was working in a period in Papua New Guinea's development which Sir Paul Hasluck has described as follows: 'I found much that inspired me and much that made me feel humble. Quite frankly, however, I was appalled at the state of the Territory Public Service'. (Hasluck 1958:115). Earlier Hasluck had said:

Whatever may be said about the wisdom and effectiveness of the Administration of Papua and New Guinea since I became Minister, I would say with complete confidence that one of the substantial and lasting achievements has been the building of sounder foundations for a better public service. (Hasluck 1955:114)

These foundations were to support for the first time, a vigorously pursued language policy in Papua and New Guinea in the next few years.

Groves survived, with some credit, a departmental investigation by the Commonwealth Government in 1953, but there were other reasons why his policies were progressively reversed, until by the time of his retirement in 1958, the educational system in Papua and New Guinea was almost the opposite of the one he had set out to achieve. There were many reasons for the movement towards English as the sole medium of instruction in schools; one was that Papua New Guineans were generally disillusioned by the practical benefits obtained from mission vernacular education, and believed that 'real' education was only to be obtained through English, in fact that 'real' education was the ability to read and write English (Wedgwood 1945b:2). Another reason was that those who were against the adoption of English tended to be dismissed

as sharing the attitudes, no longer acceptable, of the pre-war New Guinean expatriates who wanted the 'natives' kept in their place. None of these reasons might have been important if it had not been for the change in world attitudes which was taking place at this time. Groves could and did point to the extensive literature on the advantages of vernacular education. He was instrumental in the production by T.A. Dietz of a document which reviewed this literature exhaustively and came to the conclusion 'The medium of instruction to be the vernacular or Pidgin for the first four years, absolutely'. (Dietz 1955:26). The UNESCO 1953 monograph (UNESCO 1953) had also given the strongest statement up to that time of the importance educationally, psychologically and sociologically of education through the mother tongue. The decision to change language policy to English was not taken therefore in ignorance of current advice, it came about because pedagogical, psychological and sociological criteria were no longer being given primary consideration. The new criteria were political, economic and logistic. There was determination in Australia that, at last, there should be tangible evidence of development in Papua and New Guinea, and there was pressure from the United Nations to ensure that this determination did not flag. The problems which a programme of vernacular education faced were enormous, and vernacular education would not in any case lead to the economic goals which were now being pursued for Papua and New Guinea.

This change in both attitude and criteria did not apply only to Papua and New Guinea, it was a world-wide phenomenon. The dependencies of the now crumbling colonial empires were to be hurried, willingly enough for the most part, into the technological era and towards an increasingly inevitable independence. William E. Bull in his review of the UNESCO monograph makes these new criteria and attitudes quite explicit.

The Committee, rather obviously, strongly believes that what is best for the child psychologically and pedagogically should be the prime point of departure in planning for universal education. This proposition appears, however, to be somewhat unrealistic. What is best for the child psychologically and pedagogically may not be best for the adult socially, economically or politically and, what is even more significant, what is best for the child and the adult may not be best or even possible for the society which, through its collective efforts, provides the individual with the advantages he cannot personally attain. (Bull 1955:528)

The assumptions underlying the monograph are said to be

hopelessly unattainable when expressed in terms of the economics of a modern education ... and endangers the elaboration of a long-range program compatible with the needs and the potentials of modern society. (Bull 1955:532)

A great deal of faith was being placed in the ability of language engineering to generate economic progress, for the adoption of English was a prerequisite for the changes which it was hoped education would bring.

Sir Paul Hasluck at least had some doubts, admitting that he wondered what the effect of their education would be on pupils' emotional life and on their relationships with the others 'who are to form the society in which he is to live', but he continues:

Perhaps we should not get too worried about it. We certainly do not want to reduce ourselves to the state to which child psychology has brought parents in our own society, for it would be no good if, besides having troublesome children, we have a neurotic trustee power. (Hasluck 1958:100)

Others had no doubts at all. J.T. Gunther, then Assistant Administrator and later first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea said bluntly:

There is no education until the people have a knowledge of English Teach them English, English and more English; this is what they want. (Gunther 1958:58)

... only Christianity can replace the myriad philosophies, legends, pagan practices and supernatural fears that 510 tongues have engendered. It is only by removal of these 510 tongues and the acceptance of a common language that the end of many unnatural behaviours can be achieved. (Gunther 1958:59)

His views on Pidgin and Police Motu were equally condemnatory: 'At this stage I am denying as languages those bastard creations known as "Pidgin English" and "Police Motu"' (Gunther 1958:46). Many Papua New Guineans shared these attitudes. Mr Akau'undo spoke as follows in giving evidence to the Commission on Higher Education:

Perhaps you will laugh at me because I speak Pidgin, and because I cannot read and write. But in a short while I will die and Pidgin will die with me. My children will be able to speak English. (Johnson, F.C. 1973:1)

There was opposition from Canberra to evening classes run by the Department of Education to teach the local *lingue franche* to expatriates 'on the grounds that teaching such languages militated against proficiency in English'. (Dietz 1973:3). Groves' successor as Director of Education, G.T. Roscoe, immediately began planning for the mass production of materials and aids to improve the teaching of English (Meere 1973:64) while disbanding the literacy and linguistics section of the Special Services Division.

Groves had pioneered a scheme of publishing manuscripts for vernacular primers and readers prepared by the Department in Pidgin and Police Motu. All of this was cancelled ... even the Pidgin and Police Motu primers in press. (Dietz 1973:3)

The position of Government Anthropologist was also abolished.

The most improbable opponent of Pidgin to enter the lists however was the United Nations Trusteeship Council Mission to New Guinea of 1953 which called for Pidgin to be abolished on four main grounds:

1. That the use of Pidgin is undemocratic and colonialistic;
2. That Pidgin is a 'corruption' of English;
3. That it 'may do great harm to native psychology';
4. That it could easily be replaced by standard English, by fiat and overnight (Hall 1955:103)

This brought a spirited response from Robert A. Hall with the book *Hands Off Pidgin English!* Hasluck dismissed the demand as 'just another indication of the unreality which often characterised Trusteeship Council resolutions'. (Hall 1955:13, 14). Hall suggests that the Department of Education discontinued Pidgin as a medium of instruction and that various missions did likewise as a result of this 'blast' (Hall 1955: 103). However, in view of Hasluck's comment, and changes which were already in progress in government thinking on the language question this seems unlikely. In fact a standardised orthography was published by the Department of Education in 1956 ('The Standard Neo-Melanesian [Pidgin] Orthography' 1956). The Introduction, written by W.C. Groves is as informative about the 'climate of the times' as it is about the value and uses of the orthography. Groves wrote: 'In 1955, the Minister for Territories approved the use of Pidgin in the Territory' (this was necessary because of the Education Ordinance 1954, see below), with the proviso

that the purpose of this approval is to further the aim of teaching all children in controlled areas to read and write English; that Pidgin is to be used only as a medium of instruction and then only in schools in areas where it is in general use; that the production of primers, readers and text-books in Pidgin is not to be allowed to prejudice or limit the production and distribution of similar material in English for use in all phases of school work. (The Standard Neo-Melanesian [Pidgin] Orthography 1956, Foreword)

He also noted the Minister's approval for:

1. The selection of a regional form of Pidgin to be adopted as the standard form for the territory; (the Madang area was chosen)
2. the adoption of a linguistically sound standardised orthography;
3. the preparation for publication of school primers, readers and text books. (The Standard Neo-Melanesian [Pidgin] Orthography 1956)

In the Introduction section, the writer T.A. Dietz who was largely responsible for its production, wrote circumspectly regarding the aims of the orthography and said in hoping that it would be widely used,

'It has a very large part to play in education, both in schools and out, particularly in the teaching of English'. (The Standard Neo-Melanesian [Pidgin] Orthography 1956). It might be noted here that no Pidgin was used officially in schools after 1959.

The Australian Government did not change its basic position on language policy after 1955. 'The basic policy statement on education was issued by the then Minister for Territories in February 1955' (Department of Education, Territory of Papua New Guinea Programme of Development 1966-1971:1). This policy statement stressed universal literacy with English as the common language (Hasluck 1955). Neither was this policy challenged by the spokesman for the Australian Opposition Labor Party. Mr Kim Beazley, speaking in 1968, recommended in fact that this policy should be pursued even more vigorously.

I believe, realistically, we must campaign massively for English as a unifying language. I do not ignore Pidgin as a lingua franca, but English must be the unifying language of Government and Education I believe this means a trebling of our present educational expenditure.
(Beazley 1968:117)

In the years preceding independence the Australian Government considered that any decisions on language policy should be taken by a government elected by the people of Papua New Guinea. The Education Ordinance of 1954 cleared the way for the implementation of the policy that English and English only should be the medium of education. It made the Administration responsible for the control and direction of secular education, required that all schools conducted by other agencies be 'registered' or 'recognised' and authorised the making of grants to such agencies. The extension of English as the lingua franca and the attainment of universal literacy were to be the main and related aims. At first sight this was a continuation of previous uses of subsidies to direct schools towards a particular policy, but this time the stick was to be applied as well as the carrot: schools which were not granted the category 'registered' or 'recognised' would be illegal, and by the end of the '50s the missions had come into line with government policy, for the most part reluctantly and with vociferous opposition which has been maintained in some cases up to the present. However, with soaring educational costs and governmental willingness to subsidise teacher-training and the salaries of qualified teachers (Meere 1973:478), the missions had little alternative but to abandon what had been until then the widespread policy of using Pidgin and vernacular languages as the media of education.

By the end of the '50s, the inadequacies had become all too apparent in both the materials for teaching English as a second language, and the teachers, most of whom had necessarily received only primary education themselves. The problem of materials was tackled vigorously. The Department of Education produced some materials but no curriculum centres were established as was done in parts of Africa. The main effort was made by officers of the Department in collaboration with Australian publishing houses. F.C. Johnson produced the *Minenda Series* with Jacaranda Press, and later a group of writers working in Papua New Guinea combined to produce the *Pacific Series* with Oxford University Press. The materials were designed so that the teacher had the maximum assistance and the minimum of responsibility. The syllabuses produced by the Department of Education gave further guidance. Teachers' colleges based their training courses on these materials and on very little else, and a considerable amount of in-service teacher training was carried out. From 1956 there was an increasing emphasis in the School Curriculum on English. There were no further broadcasts in vernacular languages from the Educational Services Division (Meere 1973: 478), and up to half of educational broadcasting time was devoted to supplementing the teaching of English (Tokome 1973:2). There can be no doubt that the standard as well as the amount of English teaching went up considerably during this period. Without this improvement in quality it might have proved more difficult to expand the education system at secondary and tertiary levels, as was done during the '60s, thus providing the resources of educated manpower which enabled Papua New Guinea to achieve a smooth transition to independence in the '70s. Nevertheless, by the late '60s there was a growing sense of uneasiness: uneasiness about the language courses themselves, but more importantly, uneasiness that the great gamble that an economic miracle would result from the new policy was not going to pay off.

The professional uneasiness of language teachers was expressed by David Lewis:

There is a widespread feeling that we have gone about as far as we can go in teaching English in this country using the methods we are using in the context of our dependence in the primary schools on teachers whose mother tongue is not English. Though significant innovations might be possible in techniques, the method and the type of syllabus we are using, have no viable substitute. This opinion is held despite serious misgivings felt about the psychological assumptions underlying present methods and genuine doubts entertained about their efficiency. (Lewis 1970:10)

These misgivings had also caused F.C. Johnson to re-think the rationale for second-language learning (Johnson, F.C. 1973), and to design a new

set of teaching and learning materials (J.I.L.A.P. (Jacaranda Individualized Language Arts Programme) 1973).

The second feeling of uneasiness, that the gamble had not worked, was world-wide. Primary education through English was found to provide an adequate medium of communication for those who went on to a higher level of education, but those whose education ceased at the end of primary school, the great majority, had no jobs to go to and lacked the skills necessary to create jobs for themselves. They feel necessarily that the English they have acquired so painfully, and in most cases so inadequately, must have some justification. In the village situation it has none, and since the largest city in Papua New Guinea has a population of only approximately 70,000, the 'village situation' applies to more than 90% of the population. Increasing numbers of people were coming to the conclusion that English had proved at this level, at best useless, and at worst had alienated the child from the environment in which he would spend his life. The aim of universal primary education was tacitly dropped, and budget figures now indicate that there will be difficulty in supporting the present 50% enrolment in the primary system as the population increases. Many Papua New Guineans still see English as the road to advancement for their children, which it is, since it is a prerequisite for entry into higher levels of education and employment, but this section of the economy accounts for only some 10% of the working population, and increasingly, members of the community are expressing their disquiet at the fate of the primary school leaver who cannot find a place in this sector. There has been little indication of active hostility to English, as has happened in some other ex-colonies, but English is no longer considered sacrosanct as the following example illustrates: A Local Government Councillor addressing the Madang District Education Board was reported by the Rev. A. Schuster at a University forum in 1972 as asking:

Education for what? When our children come home they are good for nothing; they have even lost the skill of garden work; they don't know enough English and are not literate in Pidgin either.

The problems caused by the use of English, or of other second languages, have received a great deal of world-wide attention in the last eight to ten years. Many countries which adopted English as the medium of instruction, for example Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tanzania have abandoned that policy completely, for primary education at least. Other countries have reintroduced or are reintroducing vernacular education in the lower grades, for example Zambia, Kenya, Ethiopia and a number of West African countries, and

publishing enthusiastic reports of the improvement in the classroom atmosphere and children's learning ability. Notice is being taken of the successful bilingual education schemes undertaken in Russia, and in many South American countries. The language rights of minority groups are being given consideration as never before; e.g. the French Canadians, American Indians and other minority groups in America, and the Aborigines in Australia. A recent UNESCO publication discussing the historic role of the 1953 monograph recommended only one change, that where the original had suggested 'that the promotion of mother tongue impedes national unity' the revised version should stress that 'National Unity and cultural and linguistic pluralism are not necessarily in fundamental opposition to one another'. (UNESCO 1972a:9). Another UNESCO paper reasserts the original criteria for determining language policy:

We must question the wisdom of defining educational development as the attainment of quantitative or economic goals ... economic frames of reference ... are too restricted to account for the social, cultural and linguistic dimensions of education.... It has become necessary to revise accepted notions of educational advancement and ask some fundamental questions such as: "Growth for what?", "in whose terms?" and "by which means?". (UNESCO 1972b:1)

Very much the same questions that were asked by the Local Government Councillor from Madang.

7.3.2.6. PAPUA NEW GUINEA: THE PRESENT SITUATION

In spite of much discussion and several proposals for change (below) Papua New Guinea has as yet done nothing to change the course which was set in the mid-1950s. On the contrary, that policy has recently been reaffirmed. Papua New Guinea was one of the first countries to adopt a policy of English as the sole medium of instruction, and it invested a great deal more time, effort and money in the policy than did most others. At its height, the policy was carried to extremes, as the following mild recommendation illustrates: K.R. McKinnon wrote in 1963

It could be that where children have opportunities to relax occasionally and use their own vernacular, their attitude to learning English will improve - they may even do better in English. I for one would like day secondary schools to try this theory. (McKinnon 1963:51)

The ban on the use of any language other than English was generally imposed at this time not only in the classroom but in the school grounds as well. These excesses have been toned down, if not eliminated, and from the late '60s onwards some positive encouragement has been given to teachers to use vernacular languages or a lingua franca, though this

was done either to promote more effective learning of English or under the heading of cultural activities. As Director of Education, McKinnon consistently brought forward the language question for discussion, and even claimed that the Papua New Guinean education system was in fact bilingual:

Current language policy in education is better stated as a policy of bilingualism. The curriculum for schools specifically states that vernaculars may be used and taught in schools initially. The restrictions are professionally defensible ones for there is insistence that there be an organised vernacular syllabus, suitable material from which to learn reading, and teachers suitably competent in the particular vernacular. (McKinnon 1971:8)

However, since no resources had ever been directed towards the development of such syllabuses or materials, the claim represents rather a reaction to the uneasiness mentioned above than an actual change in policy. McKinnon seemed to recognise that change must come, but felt that success might not have been far away if the old policy could have been maintained:

Establishment of English as a common language could only be expected to take place gradually over several generations. The first signs of success of the policy are now evident in the second generation children reaching the upper levels of primary schools and high schools. Given a little more time, the increasingly wide use of English would have reached the point where its growth and spread became at least in part self-sustaining and the job of teaching English considerably easier. (McKinnon 1971:9)

In the next few years there were a number of indications that a change in language policy was imminent. In his speech at the official opening of the Teachers' Association Conference in May 1973, the then Minister for Education, Mr Olewale, called for a multi-language system in Papua New Guinea's schools. 'We can express our thoughts and feelings better in our own language' but the importance of English for higher education and links abroad was also stressed. 'Obviously we will have to rely on learning several languages, but what we have to decide is which languages and the priority to be given to each one of them'.

In reply to a question in the House of Assembly from Mr Naipuri Maina on the use of Pidgin or Motu courses in the primary school syllabus, Mr Olewale replied: 'Mr Speaker, the present policy of the Government is for all the teaching in schools to be carried out in English. This is a policy which is being looked into at the moment...'. (House of Assembly Debates 1973a). The first Papua New Guinean Director of Education, Mr Tololo, has made no direct statement, but his views have been reported as follows:

He questions the value of teaching English at primary level where children's interests could be better served by learning Pidgin, Motu, and a local language. He does not underestimate the importance of English, but feels it should be introduced at a later stage.

The first document published to promote discussion on the future of education in an independent Papua New Guinea was the *Report of the Five Year Education Plan Committee* (Department of Education 1974).

The major aim expressed in the committee's report was that the school system should be community-orientated, and to this end, the school curriculum should be revised 'to make sure that what is being attempted at school is relevant to the life the student will have to live when he leaves school' (Department of Education 1974:1). Since 'at least 80 percent of Papua New Guinea's population will continue to live in the rural areas for quite a long time yet' (Department of Education 1974:1), education at primary level was seen as essentially education for life in a village community. (Primary schools have since been renamed 'community schools'.) Language policy was seen as a key element in the implementation of such an aim, which is in many ways the antithesis of the previous policy in which lower levels of education were seen primarily as a preparation for higher levels in spite of the large numbers of primary school leavers for whom there were no secondary school places (Johnson, R.K. 1970).

Key elements in the proposed language policy were as follows:

6.2. The language policy in P.N.G. schools must conform to the general diversity of the society, its people and their languages.

6.3. The medium of instruction from Grades 1 to 4 will be the functional language of the community in which the school serves.

6.4. Although English will be taught as a subject in the lower grades, it will become the medium of instruction in all schools as from Grade 5. (Both Melanesian Pidgin and Hiri Motu must be used when and wherever necessary).

6.5. Wherever possible vernaculars including Melanesian Pidgin and Hiri Motu will continue to be encouraged at all levels of the national education system.

6.6. English will remain the language of high school and tertiary education.

6.7. During the life of this plan, the Department of Education will draw up possible strategies for the implementation of the language policy. (Department of Education 1974:38)

The *Report of the Five Year Education Plan Committee* was widely discussed, and while its intention of making education more relevant to the needs of the community, in particular the rural community, was generally approved, it was also felt to be too radical a departure from the established system, and to give insufficient emphasis to the national role of education, its role as the agent of change and development, and

to the role of primary level education as a preparation for secondary and subsequent levels of study. The *1975 Education Plan* (Department of Education 1975) stated its overall aim in relation to the community as follows: 'The objective, in brief, is to integrate the local community into the school and the school into the local and national community. The key is creative participation'. (Department of Education 1975:16).

This was to be achieved by equipping

... the child with basic knowledge, concepts and skills which will be developed as he matures, whether he proceeds to secondary education or not. These should enable him to learn to think of himself in relation to the tradition and values of his society, and to fit into the changing local and national community in ways that are socially useful and personally satisfying. (ibid.:13)

The plan also stated the need for a new approach to learning if these aims were to be achieved: '... a successful community school ... requires what for many teachers is a wholly new style of education - one which goes beyond rote-learning to questioning and child-centred discovery'. (ibid.:17)

This style of learning was seen as the antithesis of educational practice which '... imparts inert ideas or turns a child against his culture ...' (ibid.:15)

Language policy was still regarded as crucial to the proposed re-orientation of the education system. The *1975 Education Plan* reaffirmed the need to recognise and accommodate the linguistic complexity of Papua New Guinea society:

If primary education is to achieve its complex aims, not only must the variety of spoken languages be recognised, but the locally differing status and function of the vernaculars and the lingua franca [*sic*] - English, Hiri Motu and Melanesian Pidgin - must be accommodated. (ibid.:59)

However, the policy as stated in the *1975 Education Plan* is more cautious and less radical, or perhaps less prescriptive than the previous planning document. Policy is to be 'flexible', 'the selection of the language of instruction will initially be the responsibility of the community through the Board of Management of each school' (ibid.:59). But the Board of Management must submit its decision to the District Education Board and the Department of Education for approval, which will be subject to the availability of a suitable teaching programme and teachers who can carry it through (ibid.:59,60).

In practice this meant that there would be little change in the medium of instruction in schools since only limited resources were to be allocated at this stage to the development of teaching programmes or

the in-service training of teachers which would enable schools to satisfy these requirements.

As is noted in the *1975 Education Plan*, the University of Papua New Guinea, in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, established a Diploma in Language and Education intended for curriculum advisors and developers who would work in Teachers Colleges or in the field towards setting up the conditions under which the new language policy could be implemented. Also in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Port Moresby Teachers College instituted a programme to prepare primary level teachers to prepare materials and teach literacy in vernacular languages and/or the *lingue franche*, and it was intended that similar courses should be mounted at other teacher training colleges. The Department of Education itself planned to review language policies adopted at the primary level during the second half of the Plan period, to determine whether or not to set up a special language unit within the Department, and if so, at what cost (*ibid.*:61).

At secondary level, English would continue to be the medium of instruction, and it was envisaged that ultimately '... Melanesian Pidgin and Hiri Motu will become examinable subjects of the High School Curriculum' (*ibid.*:60-1), though not during the period of the plan.

Finally, the plan notes the implications of the proposed language policy for teacher-training institutions, particularly at the primary level and the need for extensive reorientation of that training (*ibid.*: 62-3).

Thus the *1975 Education Plan*, if tentative in relation to the implementation of its policy, offered a positive and consistent pointer towards future developments. The aim of education in Papua New Guinea was to be the integration of the school with the society it served, not passively, but actively or creatively as an agent of development within the community and as a link between the local and the national community. This overall policy was to be effectively supported by the language policy: the schools would be integrated into the local community by means of the use of the language of the community, while English was to provide the medium by which new ideas and contacts could be established. The tentative nature of the procedures for implementation, compared for example with the *Report of the Five Year Education Plan Committee* discussed earlier, may be ascribed to three reasons: firstly many officers in the Department of Education had doubts about the feasibility of a vernacular education programme in a country with over 700 languages, and there were fears that the introduction of vernacular education might lead to a serious drop in standards throughout the education system;

secondly, some officers in the Department of Education, by no means all expatriates, believed that Papua New Guinean languages were not capable of serving effectively as the media of education; thirdly, as was stated earlier, many Papua New Guineans have come to believe, understandably in view of past policies, that formal education means learning English, and as a result there could have been considered resistance in the local communities to the proposed changes.

In the event, neither the challenges and problems of the new policy, nor its potential for a new and more relevant approach to educational development in Papua New Guinea could be tested. When the *1975 Education Plan* was submitted to government for approval, the decision handed down was that the plan should be accepted as presented with the exception of the language policy. This was rejected totally and the Department of Education was instructed that the medium of education would be English and only English.

The current (November, 1976) position regarding language policy in schools is stated in the September 1976 issue of the Papua New Guinea Gazette in official notices numbers 46/76 and 47/76. (These notices are given in full as an appendix to this chapter.)

The Ministerial Policy Statement (46/76) states the conditions under which vernacular languages may be introduced into schools and colleges: 'A governing body of a school or college, if it wishes, may introduce a study of a language of Papua New Guinea into the curriculum' (Department of Education 1976:215), but this would be subject to approval by the Provincial Education Board 'after careful consideration' and would be 'in addition to the other studies required by the syllabus, in time normally regarded as student time or elective time, or in Cultural Activities time as part of a balanced cultural activities programme'. Further,

The school governing body and/or the local community will have to be responsible for the provision and maintenance of the necessary resources essential to teach the language effectively. The essential resources include - teaching materials, trained teachers and money for teachers' salaries and for teaching equipment and materials. (ibid.:215)

Secretary's Instruction (47/76) on the 'Language of Instruction and Teaching in Schools and Colleges' is equally explicit:

The National Executive Council has decided that the language of instruction in all community schools, provincial high schools, national high schools, teachers' colleges, technical colleges and vocational centres in the national education system will continue to be done in English. It is the duty of Provincial Superintendents and their professional staff and teachers in each province to ensure that this decision is implemented. (Department of Education 1976:215)

A prerequisite for approval of any vernacular language programme in a school is the availability of a suitably trained teacher (see above). In the Secretary's Instruction it is specifically stated: 'Student teachers will not be taught how to teach such languages'. (Department of Education 1976:216).

Vernacular education programmes already being conducted in teachers colleges were discontinued as soon as the policy decision was made known, projected programmes were cancelled, and no more students were financed by the Department of Education for the University of Papua New Guinea's Diploma in Language and Education.

This, along with the other constraints effectively means that there will be no officially sanctioned vernacular education in schools in spite of the fact that the great majority of Papua New Guinean children know no English when they enter a classroom for the first time, and will use none in their village communities when their schooling is completed.

The possibility of any real integration between the life of the school and the life of the community, a prime aim of the *1975 Education Plan*, would seem to be eliminated by this change in the language policy associated with the plan (Johnson, R.K., forthcoming). The present policy, English only, is unlikely to be challenged during the period of the present plan, but given the steady movement of opinion over the past ten years towards the introduction of some form of vernacular education, and the increasing acceptance of the irrelevance of English in the lives and for the purposes of most Papua New Guineans it seems highly probable that the issue will be raised again and that the present policy will be subjected to even stronger challenges. Meanwhile it is to be regretted that the present policy prevents exploratory studies into different approaches to the use of vernacular languages, since such studies will be of crucial importance if a future change to vernacular education is to be implemented effectively.

At tertiary level, the *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into University Development* (1974) was as insistent as the *Report of the Five Year Education Plan Committee* (Department of Education 1974) quoted above, on the value of languages other than English in the educational process.

If the elite are to be 'in touch' with the public, a first requirement is a common language. It is impossible at present to teach everybody the language of civil servants and other leaders. Therefore, the leaders should learn the language of the people, and this should be an integral part of their education. (Report of the Committee of Enquiry into University Development 1974:36)

Recommendation No.32 of the report was that '... all new undergraduates enrolled from 1975 onwards be able to speak and write both Pidgin and Hiri Motu before graduation'. (ibid.:36).

Further the report suggests that: 'For more senior classes, both Melanesian Pidgin and Hiri Motu should be used as the media of oral instruction when and wherever possible'. (ibid.:36), and to facilitate this suggestion, Recommendation No.27 was that 'all foreign staff ... (should be encouraged to) ... learn either Pidgin or Hiri Motu ... and that facilities be provided for them to do so' (ibid.:112).

Language courses in Pidgin and Hiri Motu have been established under the auspices of the Language Department at the University of Papua New Guinea, but these do not form part of the degree structure. The Pidgin and Hiri Motu courses have been attended primarily by expatriate members of staff, and some academics have experimented with the use of Pidgin in tutorial groups, often reporting considerable success, particularly in relation to students' willingness to participate in discussion. However, staff turnover of expatriate staff is fairly rapid, and few attain a level of proficiency in either language which would enable them to perform adequately in such a group. Few Papua New Guineans are at present teaching at either university, and little progress therefore has been achieved towards implementing the recommendations of the report. Nor does it seem for the present that there is much pressure for their implementation from students or from staff.

Thus, both in the government Department of Education, and at the universities, there have been radical proposals with regard to language policy, but in neither case have these proposals been implemented in spite of the fact that they initially generated a great deal of interest and support. It may well be that at this stage in the country's development, there is a considerable psychological need to assert what is seen as the best policy, particularly where that policy is different from the previous colonial policy, but once that psychological need has been satisfied there is some reluctance to undertake the often far-reaching organisational restructuring which the implementation of the proposals would require.

One further factor which should be discussed and which will inevitably affect future considerations of language policy is the remarkable increase in status which Pidgin has achieved in the last few years. People no longer apologise for speaking it; it is the language most commonly used in the House of Assembly, the nation's parliament; a flourishing Pidgin literature is growing up, with plays, poetry and short stories. Some agricultural and other vocational courses are again being conducted

through the medium of Pidgin; and adult literacy materials, and the quantity of adult educational materials available (e.g. those produced by the Departments of Information and Extension Services, and Agriculture Stock and Fisheries)¹ continues to grow; at least two Pidgin newspapers are published regularly. The possibility of using Pidgin in adult education (necessarily a badly neglected field under the present policy) is a very real one and departments other than education are increasingly recognising the role that Pidgin (and to a lesser extent Hiri Motu) can play and does play in extension work, and its use in schools was being seriously considered until the recent policy decision.

A conference held at the University of Papua New Guinea in September 1973 had the task of deciding what role the University could play in Pidgin studies, and the role Pidgin might play in facilitating greater contact between the University and the community at large. The suggestion that Pidgin would be the natural choice for the national language has often been made, most recently by Professor T.E. Dutton of the University of Papua New Guinea in his inaugural address (Dutton 1976), which led to a lengthy and spirited correspondence in the press (McDonald 1976). However, the national language issue is an extremely sensitive one, as illustrated by the fact that in 1971 the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea could find no 'official' figure who was prepared to speak on the subject.

In reply to a question on this issue in the House of Assembly, Mr Somare, the Chief Minister, replied:

The question of a national language is one that will need to be considered by Cabinet and by the House of Assembly before any action is taken. My own personal opinion is that English would probably be the official language for education and administration while Pidgin and Hiri Motu [the name 'Police Motu' has been dropped; Hiri Motu refers to the origins of the language in the Hiri trading expeditions along the Papuan coast] could be the official languages for other purposes. (House of Assembly Debates 1973b)

The development recently of a separatist movement in Papua makes the issue even more sensitive. Dr J. Guise, then the Deputy Chief Minister, was reported in the English-language daily newspaper warning that 'The use of Police Motu had been rubbished for too long and that if this continued there could be trouble'. (*Post-Courier*, May 26, 1971). There are then grounds for the fear that any decisions in favour of Pidgin could provoke a reaction in non-Pidgin-speaking areas, and particularly in Papua.

There are therefore a number of reasons for the present hiatus in policy with regard to language. The period during which power was being transferred from Australia to Papua New Guinea has not been an easy one

for taking new initiatives which would involve major changes in the administrative structure. Not unnaturally Australia was anxious to hand over the going concern which had been built up over a number of years and at some cost; the Papua New Guinean administration, in the process of taking over, wished to take a firm grasp on what existed before attempting far-reaching changes. Nevertheless, the decision to retain English as the medium of education, and therefore by implication as the medium of administration and commerce at all levels is a surprising one given the changes in the climate of opinion over the past ten years as outlined above. Given the present political emphasis on decentralisation and the establishment of regional government, it seems inevitable that more and more of the daily business of the nation will be conducted in languages other than English, and that pressure will continue to mount against the exclusive use of English throughout the education system.

7.3.2.7. SUMMARY

In the language policies pursued in Papua New Guinea, the colonial language was the dominant choice of the colonial powers throughout the history of the Territories with the exception of the brief post-World War II period when vernacular languages received some emphasis. The main instrument of this policy was the use of government subsidies in the education system, and this was largely ineffective until the last 15 to 20 years, when legislation was passed to back up a financial control of education which, by this time, was almost complete.

Another theme of this study has been the development of Pidgin, so often despised but successfully imposing itself upon the reluctant German Administration, and the apathetic administration of the Mandated Territory. It may yet emerge as the national language. English is secure as the language of higher education, international contact, and probably of national administration. At regional levels vernacular languages show no signs of dying out as was predicted, and may be expected to grow stronger as literacy and community education materials are developed, as seems inevitable in spite of the recent policy decisions. It has been noted however that the records of local government councils are usually kept in a lingua franca even when discussion has been in the mother tongue (Wurm 1969:102). Hiri Motu seems not to be spreading while the use of Pidgin is gradually increasing amongst Motu-speakers. Its future is uncertain, but if it becomes established as the rallying point for the Free Papua Movement, its effect on Papua New Guinea's future could be profound.

It is estimated that there are over 700 vernacular languages in Papua New Guinea. Even those who are most convinced of the need for vernacular education admit the enormity of the problem. A number of mission groups and in particular the Summer Institute of Linguistics, are working to establish orthographies for the various languages. A recent estimate suggested that:

... approximately 200 languages representing 80% of the population already have an orthography. Many of these orthographies are satisfactory, but quite a few are still only experimental ... there are still about 150 medium-sized languages (1,000-10,000 speakers) that do not yet have an orthography. (Healey 1975:56)

S.A. Wurm, while admitting that 'the practical difficulties are quite staggering' (Wurm 1966:137-8), nevertheless argues that the production of primers and teaching materials in a multiplicity of languages need be neither impracticable nor prohibitively expensive, given the ability of a native speaker to type, and given modern cheap offset processes (Wurm 1966:137-8). Others argue that community education does not require literacy as a prerequisite and that oral education through the vernacular could be organised on a national scale on the basis of teacher-training centres which operated through English and/or the *lingue franche*. However, these are options for the future. A joint language survey in relation to areas where literacy work has been carried out has been conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Educational Research Unit of the University of Papua New Guinea. The aims of the survey are as follows: (1) to identify the numbers of speakers of the various first languages and their dialects; (2) to identify the areas and frequency of language use by bilinguals; (3) to establish which languages have orthographies; the types of orthography used and their adequacy; which languages have a literature and the nature of that literature; the details of literacy programmes, the number of literates, their motivation for acquiring literacy and the uses to which literacy is put (chapters 7.2.1. and 7.2.3. in this volume, also Kemelfield forthcoming). This survey should provide valuable information for future language planning if the Ministry of Education maintains its commitment to the eventual introduction of vernacular education shown in the two versions of the education plan discussed above, despite the recent reversal of policy moves in this direction.

One final sobering thought emerges for language planners: the two stories of effective language engineering in Papua New Guinea are the partly incidental elimination of Pidgin from Papua in the period between the world wars, and the imposition of English as the sole medium of instruction in the education system of Papua New Guinea in the past 20

years. It seems likely that the country may pay dearly for the success of both, though the importance of the colonial education policy in producing the élite which has led Papua New Guinea to independence should not be undervalued. Pidgin, the real success story amongst the languages of Papua New Guinea, was condemned outright by almost every language planner who was consulted or who offered an opinion on the subject until very recently. It flourishes in spite of them.

N O T E

1. Now the Office of Information, and the Department of Primary Industry.

R.K. JOHNSON

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APPENDIX

The following official notices are taken from the *Papua New Guinea Education Gazette*, vol.10, no.11, September 1976:215-16. These notices state the current position of the Department of Education with regard to language policy.

46/76 - LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Ministerial Policy Statement No.MPS2

File: EC2-5-22

GG1-5-2

The language of instruction in all schools and colleges of the national education system is English.

Teachers may use a language other than English in Grades 1 and 2 (years 1 and 2 of community schools) only if this is considered necessary to communicate an English concept more effectively to the pupils.

- (a) A governing body of a school or college, if it wishes, may introduce the study of a language of Papua New Guinea into the curriculum. This must be approved by the Provincial Education Board after careful consideration.
- (b) The introduction of a language of Papua New Guinea into a school would be in addition to the other studies required by the syllabus, in time normally regarded as student time or elective time, or in Cultural Activities time as part of a balanced cultural activities programme.
- (c) The school governing body and/or the local community will have to be responsible for the provision and maintenance of the necessary resources essential to teach the language effectively. Introduction or teaching of a language of Papua New Guinea in such institutions will have to be on a self-help basis. The essential resources include - teaching materials,

trained teachers and money for teachers' salaries and for teaching equipment and materials. The Department of Education will not be able to provide such resources. This policy is to be effective immediately.

47/76 - LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND TEACHING IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Secretary's Instruction 6/76

File: EC 2-5-22

CM 2-4-2

The National Executive Council has decided that the language of instruction in all community schools, provincial high schools, national high schools, teachers' colleges, technical colleges and vocational centres in the national education system will continue to be done in English. It is the duty of Provincial Superintendents and their professional staff and teachers in each province to ensure that this decision is implemented.

However teachers in Grades 1 and 2 may use a language of Papua New Guinea when it is considered necessary to explain a difficult idea to the pupils. This should only occur occasionally. In vocational centres, it would be permissible to use a language more appropriate than English in certain circumstances.

Examples:

- (a) A class of vocational centre trainees with little or no understanding of the English language.
- (b) A certain teacher might explain particular ideas better, trying to get the trainees to understand by using Pidgin, Motu or the local vernacular instead of English in which he is not fluent or confident.

A school governing body or the local community may have their pupils taught to read and write their own vernacular or a language such as Pidgin or Motu. The teaching and learning of a vernacular, Pidgin or Motu will be in addition to the other studies required by the syllabus, in time normally regarded as student time or elective time, or in Cultural Activities time as part of a balanced cultural activities programme. The responsibility for all staff and materials cost for such vernacular or language programmes will have to be carried by that school board or that local community.

Before a school or college can begin such language programmes it must first of all seek the approval of the Provincial Education Board. The school governing body must carefully investigate all the costs to be involved before seeking the approval of the PEB because financial

support for this kind of programme will not come from the Department of Education.

The PEB is strongly advised to consider very carefully all applications and it must be clearly demonstrated to the Board that the essential resources for a successful vernacular programme for such a school are available before the Board approves any application.

A college governing body may allow their students to learn a vernacular or other language. The teaching and learning of such a language will be in addition to the other studies required by the curriculum, in time normally regarded as student time or elective time. The responsibility for all staff and materials costs for such a language programme will have to be carried by the governing body. Student teachers will not be taught how to teach such languages.

This Instruction, that all teachers teach their students in English only, does not apply to persons or guest speakers who are invited by the school on specific topics. The visitor or invited speaker should use the vernacular or language he can best communicate in and which all the students understand well.

This Instruction is effective immediately.