

## 2.5 WRITING SYSTEMS AND THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF TOK PISIN

S.A. Wurm

### 2.5.1 GENERAL REMARKS

This chapter is concerned with the nature, development and history of the writing systems used for rendering Tok Pisin in writing and with the various attempts at the creation of orthographies, or standard spelling systems, of Tok Pisin over many years.

Since the beginning of Tok Pisin in what is today Papua New Guinea in the 1880s (Mühlhäusler 1976), Tok Pisin has been reduced to writing first only very sporadically in public announcements such as warnings, directives, etc., and with gradually increasing frequency as time wore on, though its use in writing had remained very restricted until after the turn of the century when missionaries, in particular in what was then German New Guinea, took a very active interest in the question of creating orthographies for Tok Pisin - then called simply Pidgin. Until that time, Tok Pisin words had largely been spelt in accordance with the spelling of the English words from which they were derived, which involved some misinterpretation such as the writing of *he* for the Tok Pisin particle *i*, which is of Austronesian origin. However, with the early development and stabilisation of Tok Pisin taking place in an area in which the dominant language was German, not English, pressure from the English spelling system in writing Tok Pisin was comparatively weak, and it must be taken into account that in contrast to the attitude of English speakers towards Tok Pisin or other varieties of English-based pidgins, German speakers largely recognised Tok Pisin as a language in its own right and separate from English, and did not regard it simply as a bastardised form of English, which has been the common attitude towards English-based pidgins in areas in which the dominant language is English.

However, the close similarity between much of the lexicon of Tok Pisin and that of English was recognised by those concerned with the creation of the earliest standardised Tok Pisin orthographies, and this fact left very clear marks on the orthographic systems created by them. This tendency has persisted until today and is strongly in evidence in all standardised Tok Pisin orthographies created and proposed to date. This meant that even if the creators of standardised Tok Pisin orthographies attempted to make strong allowances for the specific nature of Tok Pisin phonology, they also paid very much attention to the English origin of Tok Pisin words in devising standardised spellings for them, even if the features reflected in the English spelling of such words were absent from the Tok Pisin phonological shapes of these words.

One very typical feature of this kind is the distinction between the voiced and voiceless stops *b* and *p*, *d* and *t*, and *g* and *k* in many cases according to the spelling of the English word from which a Tok Pisin word may be derived, even though the actual pronunciation of the Tok Pisin word is at variance with that of the English word in this respect. Final stops are usually voiceless in Tok Pisin and the spelling *dok*, and in some varieties of Tok Pisin even *tok*, will be

---

S.A. Wurm and P. Mühlhäusler, eds *Handbook of Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin)*, 167-176. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-70, 1984.

© S.A. Wurm

167

phonologically correct for *dog* rather than the spelling *dog*. Initial dental stops tend to be voiceless in Tok Pisin, but whenever an English source word has an initial *d*, standard orthographies tend to propose the use of initial *d* in the Tok Pisin words derived from them, even though the initial dental stop is phonologically *t* in such words, such as *dispela* (pronounced *tispela*) which is derived from English *this fellow*.

At the same time, distinguishing voiced and voiceless stops in Tok Pisin spelling in accordance with the spelling of the English source words, and other instances of following the English spelling as a model rather than rendering the Tok Pisin phonological shape of the words, has the advantage of giving greater clarity to written Tok Pisin: Tok Pisin has a very large number of homonyms, many of them attributable to the conversion of phonologically different English source words into a single phonological shape in Tok Pisin. This does not constitute a very serious problem in spoken Tok Pisin, because situational contexts and the embedding of such words into utterances accompanied by a range of extra-linguistic clues makes the distinction between the various meanings of homophonous Tok Pisin words a simple matter in most instances. However, the determination of the specific meaning of a given written Tok Pisin word, for which other homographic forms with different meanings exist, may tend to be much more difficult in many instances than the corresponding situation involving spoken Tok Pisin. Because of this, a decrease in the homography of Tok Pisin words certainly contributes to disambiguating written Tok Pisin. Good examples of this in the latest standardised orthography of Tok Pisin are the following: the spelling as *dok* of the Tok Pisin word for *dog* and *tok* for the word for *speech, language* (derived from English *talk*), though both these Tok Pisin words are generally pronounced alike in Tok Pisin as *tok*; the spelling *hot* of the Tok Pisin word for *hot* and *hat* of the Tok Pisin word for *hard*, though both are pronounced as *hat*; the spelling as *jip* of the Tok Pisin word for English *jeep* and as *sip* of the Tok Pisin word for *ship*, though both are pronounced alike in Tok Pisin as *sip*; the spelling as *pis* of the Tok Pisin word for *fish*, and as *bis* for the Tok Pisin word for *beads*, though both are generally pronounced alike as *pis*.

In spelling systems devised during the period in which English had become the dominant language, another factor prompting the imitation of English orthographic principles in writing Tok Pisin made itself felt. The view was largely held by members of the Australian Administration who were concerned with education and with administration in general, that English features of Tok Pisin spelling systems might make it easier for indigenous Tok Pisin speakers to learn English subsequently, and to spell it correctly. Also, the view was held by some members of the administration that an increasing influence of English upon Tok Pisin, beginning with its spelling system, might lead to Tok Pisin eventually becoming English anyway - a development which would have been welcomed by many such expatriates who viewed Tok Pisin with very low esteem indeed.

A third factor had a quite decisive influence upon the nature of the spelling and form of the spelling systems and orthographies devised for Tok Pisin until 1955: the designers of such individual orthographies were guided by the assumption that decisions concerning their shape were exclusively a matter for European speakers of Tok Pisin. The designed spellings for Tok Pisin words generally reflected the ways in which European speakers of Tok Pisin pronounced the language - who, as has been pointed out above, yielded in this to pressure from English orthographic principles. Some allowances were made for what such European speakers of Tok Pisin might have regarded as the local pronunciation of Tok Pisin words. In addition, in the case of several missions, spelling habits developed from the writing of vernacular languages exerted pressure on the spelling systems which such missions devised for writing Tok Pisin.

## 2.5.2 HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD TOK PISIN ORTHOGRAPHIES

### 2.5.2.1 The period until 1955

Some remarks have already been made above (section 2.5.1) on the early period of the designing of spelling systems and orthographies for Tok Pisin and on factors and circumstances impinging upon such activities in the early days, in particular on the fact that the dominant language was German, not English, though some pressure from English and English orthographic principles was present in the development of spelling systems for Tok Pisin.

It has been pointed out that the development of Pidgin spelling systems and orthographies in the early days rested generally with missions. For example, well before World War I, missionaries of the Roman Catholic Society of the Divine Word (SVD) devised a spelling system and orthography for Tok Pisin, which was used quite extensively in the activities of that mission, but also adopted by the German Administration (Hall 1966). It had quite a long life in the framework of the Catholic missions. It embodied to a very large extent the principles mentioned above (section 2.5.1), regarding attitudes towards some approximation to English spelling as far as the consonants were concerned, though the five vowel symbols a, e, i, o, u represented sounds according to German usage. The view was very strongly held by the creators of this spelling system that the German speakers' pronunciation constituted the model to be followed in the spelling of Tok Pisin words of English origin. It was recognised by its creators that the Tok Pisin pronunciation of local speakers tended to be at variance with the pronunciation suggested by the spelling of the words as designed, but the view was held by them that the local indigenous speaker ought to be taught to pronounce Tok Pisin according to its designed spelling and that, in all cases, the European pronunciation of Tok Pisin words was decisive.

After Alexishafen near Madang, which in those days was the headquarters of the SVD mission, this SVD spelling system was named the Alexishafen spelling. Its use was quite widespread, but it was not followed by missionaries of other denominations, and in other parts of what is today Papua New Guinea, even Catholic missionaries devised spelling systems which differed from the Alexishafen spelling in various ways and to varying extents, and even in underlying philosophies. So for instance, SVD missionaries in the Rabaul area of New Britain held the view, which was supported by administration education officials, that Tok Pisin was very predominantly, and originally, a language used by the indigenous population and that therefore spelling systems devised for it should reflect the pronunciation of Tok Pisin as used by local indigenous speakers. This view which was directly opposed to that held by the creators of the Alexishafen spelling, led to the abandonment of the principle of following the English spelling principles regarding the distinction between voiced and voiceless stops in the spelling of Tok Pisin words, and to some other quite fundamental differences from the Alexishafen spelling, including differences in vowel representation.

Another system, devised by the Methodist Mission in Rabaul for writing Tok Pisin, followed the principles adopted for the writing of vernacular Austronesian languages of Melanesia. Features in which this system deviated particularly strongly from the other systems mentioned above were the use of k for both g and k sounds and the adoption of g for representing the sound of ng in *sing* for which, in the other Tok Pisin orthographic system, ng or ŋ had been adopted. Also the sound represented by y in English and in most other Tok Pisin orthographic systems was represented by i (Hall 1955a).

With more and more missions and other agencies creating their own spelling systems and orthographies for writing Tok Pisin in the years until the mid 1950s, the systems multiplied and by the mid 1950s, a very large number were in actual

use, amongst them nine major systems. The various missions, different news media and different government departments all had their own spellings, which in part were greatly different from each other.

No attempts at creating a single standardised Tok Pisin spelling through a collaborative effort involving the various agencies themselves were made, and repeated attempts by the Department of Education of the Administration in the late 1940s and early 1950s did not produce results because the users of the various spelling systems showed no interest in cooperating in these efforts and in compromising, largely because of lack of interest and unwillingness to get involved in such an exercise. At the same time, the view was held by many Europeans involved in using varying Tok Pisin spelling systems that pidgin was only corrupt English anyway and that there was no reason to waste time and effort on devising a general standard orthography for it.

At the same time, all parties concerned seemed to slowly move towards the view in the early 1950s that the basis of Tok Pisin spelling systems and orthographies should be the way in which local indigenous speakers pronounced the language, rather than the ways in which European speakers of it pronounced it. However, in practice, a clear division developed over this issue between missionary agencies and news media and government departments. The former largely adopted the principle that recent loan words from English had to be respelt in the orthographies used by them so as to reflect the actual Tok Pisin pronunciation. However the latter tended to spell such recent English loan words according to English orthography.

#### 2.5.2.2 The period from 1955 until 1969

In the year 1955 the administration of what was then the Territory of Papua New Guinea, through its Department of Education, decided that the time had come for serious official steps to be taken towards the standardisation of the spelling systems and orthographies used for Tok Pisin. The background to this attitude by the administration was the official approval in that year by the Minister for Territories in Canberra, of the use of Tok Pisin in what was then the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. This approval had been given on the understanding that the purpose of the approval was to serve the aim of furthering the teaching of all children in administratively controlled areas of Papua New Guinea to read and write English, that Tok Pisin was to be used exclusively as a medium of instruction and that only in schools in areas where it was in general use, and that the production of primers, readers and textbooks in Tok Pisin was not to be permitted to prejudice or limit the production and distribution of similar teaching materials in English for the use in all phases of school work.

In connection with this approval, the Minister also approved that a regional form of Tok Pisin be selected which was to be adopted as the standard form of Tok Pisin for the Territory of Papua New Guinea, that a linguistically sound standardised orthography be adopted for Tok Pisin, that a Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary be prepared and published and that school primers, readers and textbooks in Tok Pisin be prepared for publication.

These ministerial approvals followed the recommendations, in March 1955, of the use of Tok Pisin officially in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea by the Education Advisory Board and the Committee on Languages, which were under the auspices of the Department of Education. Upon the recommendation by the Director of Education to the Administrator of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea that these suggestions be adopted, approval for them was given by the Minister for

Territories in Canberra. It was against the background of these official actions that the events outlined below took place. Also, R.A. Hall of Cornell University, who had devoted many years of study to questions of Tok Pisin, published detailed orthographical proposals for Tok Pisin in that year (Hall 1955d), based on his analysis of the phonology of Tok Pisin. His proposals were adopted as the basis of scholarly activities aimed at producing a standardised Tok Pisin orthography. T. Dietz and L. Luzbetak were engaged by the Administration of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea to carry out extensive consultations with missions and education and school authorities in the Territory for this purpose and to undertake the necessary scholarly work aimed at the creation of such a standardised orthography. The task of the two linguists was a very difficult one, because while they received a considerable number of constructive suggestions from the missions and agencies approached, there was in general little support for their work from the various missions which were utilising Tok Pisin to a great extent in their work, and they also met with considerable opposition from some quarters.

However, Dietz and Luzbetak succeeded in devising a new Tok Pisin orthography which was reflecting essentially the pronunciation of Tok Pisin by indigenous speakers using the variety of Tok Pisin as encountered in northern coastal areas of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, with the form met at Madang given the greatest consideration. The orthography was not entirely based on the phonemic structure of Tok Pisin as represented by its northern coastal variety, which led to some difficulties with it, as discussed below.

This proposed orthography and spelling system received approval from the Director of Education and the Administrator of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and was also approved by the Minister for Territories in Canberra. Subsequently, it was decreed to constitute the standard Tok Pisin orthography in an official publication issued by the Department of Education (Department of Education 1956) and was used, with a few minor changes, in Mihalic's Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary which was published a year later (Mihalic 1957).

In the beginning, various mission bodies strongly resisted the introduction of this new Tok Pisin orthography. The reasons for this resistance were in part traditionalism and in part rivalries between the missions. L. Luzbetak who, as has been mentioned above, was one of the two linguists engaged by the administration to work on devising the new standard Tok Pisin orthography, and F. Mihalic, the author of the new Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary, were both members of the Catholic Mission, which may have contributed significantly to the resistance of other missions to the new Tok Pisin orthography. However, the missions gradually moved towards the adoption of it, at least on the New Guinea mainland, and it appeared, at least for the short period of about two years, that the spelling system and orthography of Tok Pisin was moving towards quite widely adopted standardisation. Nevertheless, a number of missions and other agencies were continuing to use Tok Pisin orthographies of their own design and there was some quite pronounced criticism of features of the new Tok Pisin orthography which reflected the English spelling of Tok Pisin words derived from English, with these spellings being quite considerably at variance with the way in which such words were pronounced by indigenous speakers of Tok Pisin. An example of this was the use of final *nk* in word such as *stink rotten* and *plank board* which, while spelt like the English words from which the Tok Pisin words were derived, were actually pronounced *sting* and *plang*.

Ironically, the standardisation process involving the orthography of Tok Pisin which had been introduced by the administration, was ruined by the administration itself. The various administration departments and the Europeans active in them had shown a very pronounced lack of enthusiasm in adapting to the standard orthography, but nevertheless moved, though rather reluctantly and grudgingly, in

the direction of adopting it, bowing in this to the official backing given to the new standard Tok Pisin orthography by the administration. Reasons for this reluctance were diverse. Inertia and general lack of interest were certainly amongst them, but also the fact that a mission had played a significant part in the devising of the new Tok Pisin orthography constituted an important reason in the light of the frequently not overly positive attitude of administration officials towards missionary activities in the Territory. In addition, many Europeans in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea did not regard Tok Pisin as a language in its own right, but only as a corruption of English and could not see why it was necessary to worry unduly about how to spell what they regarded as a contemptible and rather ridiculous jargon. The misinformed and unrealistic pronouncement of the United Nations Trusteeship Council of 1953, which urged Australia to immediately abolish and prohibit the use of Tok Pisin in the Territory of Papua New Guinea, is likely to have constituted a strong encouragement to many Europeans who harboured such views and showed attitudes as mentioned above towards the newly devised standardised orthography of Tok Pisin. It was not uncommonly felt by European officers in the administration circles in the Territory that Tok Pisin would soon cease to exist as a result of the impact of English, considering the insistence of the administration after 1953 that the use of English be encouraged in all possible instances.

In the light of these attitudes, it becomes understandable that in administration agencies, in which European officials reluctantly adapted to the use of the new standardised Tok Pisin orthography, no serious attempt was made to ensure that the indigenous employees, whose task it was to carry out the official translating and writing work in Tok Pisin, used the officially adopted standard Tok Pisin orthography. In addition to the background reasons for this attitude as mentioned above, the view held by many of the European administration officials was apparently that, since Tok Pisin was the language which the indigenous speakers knew best, they should, and ought to, know how to spell it. This attitude, though completely in error (see below), demonstrated a complete change from earlier attitudes on the part of Europeans, as referred to before in this chapter, according to which Europeans had taken the view that the European pronunciation was to be regarded as decisive for how a Tok Pisin word was to be spelt. The attitude of the administration officials, and as has been mentioned below, of missions to regard the indigenous speaker of Tok Pisin as the arbiter of how a Tok Pisin word ought to be spelt constitutes in itself a very interesting shift in attitudes on the part of Europeans in this matter when compared with earlier days.

The indigenous employees working in the various administration departments were largely unable to use the new standardised Tok Pisin orthography for a variety of reasons. The most important of these reasons was that they did not know it. The wording of the approval by the Minister for Territories in Canberra regarding the use of Tok Pisin in education excluded the teaching of Tok Pisin as a language in all government schools and in consequence also in all schools eligible for government finance and subsidy. In addition, in spite of the approval quoted above, the use of Tok Pisin as a medium of instruction, including literacy, in such schools was virtually banned as a matter of policy around that time. The only schools in which Tok Pisin was taught or instruction in Tok Pisin given were non-subsidised standard schools administered by various missions as an annexe to the government-subsidised English language schools which were under their auspices. Translators and writers of Tok Pisin employed by the administration obviously required a high proficiency in English, which such schools could not impart to their pupils and, as a result, such indigenous employees in administration departments had all been through an education process in which English had been employed exclusively. Having had no formal training in Tok Pisin, they did

have a native proficiency of Tok Pisin, but no familiarity with the new standardised official orthography, except that some of them may have been vaguely familiar with it from publications which they might have seen. At the same time, indigenous employees of administration departments and other agencies such as media services came from different parts of Papua New Guinea and in consequence used different varieties of Tok Pisin: In the mid 1950s, dialect diversification of Tok Pisin was still quite strongly in evidence, though in subsequent decades local dialect differences tended to be reduced and to disappear as a result of increasing mobility of the population. As a result of the regional differences of Tok Pisin which they wrote tended to show a number of spelling features reflecting features of the pronunciation of their respective Tok Pisin dialects.

The free rein given to such indigenous employees in administration departments with regard to how they spelt Tok Pisin in writing, had however one interesting result: recent English loan words in Tok Pisin were very generally spelt by them according to their Tok Pisin pronunciation, although, in some instances, such indigenous employees tended to include English spellings into their written Tok Pisin, even in cases of Tok Pisin words which were not recent loans from English.

The result of the apathetic and lax attitude on the part of the European administration officers, as mentioned above, towards the ways in which the indigenous employees spelt Tok Pisin in writing, was a proliferation of diverse Tok Pisin spelling systems in areas outside the missionary sphere and resulted in even greater chaos in Tok Pisin spelling systems than had existed before.

At the same time, some of the missions which had, with some reluctance, adapted their ways of writing Tok Pisin to the rules laid down in the standard Tok Pisin orthography guidelines, gradually started modifying it largely to approximate their spelling systems to the indigenous pronunciation of Tok Pisin in the northern coastal variety of it, in particular as it was heard in the Madang area. The Lutheran Mission went about quite systematically in this and devised a modified standard Tok Pisin orthography for their own use. These modifications were brought about largely by pressure upon the Lutheran Mission and Church by indigenous Tok Pisin speakers who were literate in the language. One of the changes, for instance, resulted from the insistence of such indigenous Tok Pisin speakers that the distinction between *ng* as in *sing* and *ngg* as in *fingger*, which was a feature of the standard Tok Pisin orthography as decreed by the administration, be abolished and that both be written as *ng* only, though the indigenous speakers recognised the difference in their pronunciation and the fact that they clearly constituted a phonemic contrast in Tok Pisin, but took the attitude that there was no need to distinguish between these two phonemically distinct sounds in writing the language.

The fact that such suggestions coming from indigenous speakers of Tok Pisin were adopted by the Lutheran Mission, though they contravened established linguistic principles, also accentuates the shift in European attitudes towards the role to be played by indigenous speakers of Tok Pisin in determining features of Tok Pisin orthography, which has already been referred to above with regard to European administration officials. At the same time, the abovementioned suggestions by native speakers of Tok Pisin show that the views which were held then, and are still being held today, by the majority of linguists, according to which newly created spelling systems for languages had to indicate all phonemic distinctions found in the language for which they were to be used, are in error. These suggestions appear to indicate that in practical orthographies, phonemic distinctions with a low functional load need not be indicated. Alternatively, practical orthographies may well benefit from incorporating subphonemic distinctions in some instances - this has been clearly shown in the case of a practical orthography

devised for the Äyiwo language of the Reef Islands in the Santa Cruz Archipelago at the eastern extremity of the Solomon Islands chain, which had largely been devised and developed by indigenous speakers of the language, which the present writer has been studying (Wurm, Bwakolo and Moŷiya, forthcoming).

The modified orthography incorporating suggestions as mentioned above was adopted officially by the Lutheran Mission for their publications and constitutes the orthography used in the Tok Pisin translation of the New Testament, which was first published in 1968 and became the largest and most circulated book published in Tok Pisin to that date: 40,000 copies of the 861-page book were sold within nine months of its publication. It has certainly contributed to acquainting speakers of Tok Pisin with the modified standard Tok Pisin orthography used in it.

### 2.5.2.3 The period since 1969

As has been mentioned above, the influence of the modified standard Tok Pisin orthography used in the translation of the New Testament made itself felt as a result of the wide circulation of the book amongst many indigenous speakers of Tok Pisin who had access to the book, and who tended to adapt at least some of their spelling habits in Tok Pisin to the New Testament spelling. At the same time, most publishers of literature in Tok Pisin, such as the Bible Society, the New Guinea branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the Creative Training Centre at Nobonob in the Madang Province, the Christian Leadership Training College, the Kristen Pres in Madang, Wantok Publications in Wewak, etc., but rather importantly, not the Government Printer and the Department of Information and Extension Services, adopted the modified standard Tok Pisin orthography used in the New Testament, which led to a further proliferation of this type of Tok Pisin orthography amongst Tok Pisin speakers.

In the light of this, it was decided in November 1969 to take further steps in attempting to arrive at a standardised Tok Pisin spelling system and orthography. Meetings of experts concerned with the standardisation of Tok Pisin orthography were called and a Tok Pisin Orthography Committee set up under the joint chairmanship of F. Mihalic, the author of the original standard orthography Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary (Mihalic 1957) and J. Sievert, one of the chief translators and editors of the Tok Pisin New Testament. The purpose of this committee was to fully standardise the spelling system and orthography of Tok Pisin and to attempt to persuade all publishing agencies of the then Territory of Papua and New Guinea to voluntarily cooperate in this venture. At the meetings in which the heads of seven government departments, three university professors, linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, translators, indigenous journalists and broadcasters, four indigenous members of the then Papua New Guinea House of Assembly, and various missionaries took part, the Tok Pisin spelling system employed in the New Testament was unanimously recognised as the norm for the spelling system and orthography of Tok Pisin to be used universally in writing and publishing in the language, and it was suggested that the dialect used along the north coast of mainland New Guinea be chosen as the standard for a High Tok Pisin.

At the same time it was decided not to try to resort to a decree for the adoption of these proposals, because it was felt that all agencies involved in the writing of Tok Pisin in the country would recognise that it would be in their own interest to cooperate in this matter.

In 1970 the Orthography Committee approached government departments and other agencies repeatedly, strongly suggesting the adoption of the proposed orthography

by them. However in the absence of official enforcement, the proposals of the Orthography Committee were largely disregarded in government departments and other agencies, which continued using their own varied Tok Pisin orthographies and spelling systems. The reasons for these attitudes may have been local traditionalism and inertia, and perhaps also the feeling on the part of some people in the government departments and other agencies that may not have been well disposed towards missionary activities, that the Tok Pisin orthography proposed by the Orthography Committee constituted a missionary spelling.

At the same time, the publication of a new edition of Mihalic's Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary appeared in 1971 (Mihalic 1971) and in this the New Testament spelling was employed. At the same time, other teaching and similar materials aimed at Europeans, which were published in Papua New Guinea and also in Australia (e.g. Dutton 1973), also used this orthography, and it had also been employed in teaching courses in Tok Pisin held at the Australian National University in Canberra. This has led to an increased acceptance of and adaptation to this Tok Pisin orthography amongst Europeans.

The political events in Papua New Guinea during the last decade, culminating in the independence of the country in 1975, resulted in the gradual disappearance of Europeans who had been in the country for a long time and who had been the main exponents of the negative attitude towards Tok Pisin as mentioned in this chapter and elsewhere in this publication. They are being replaced by new Europeans who do not have the biased attitudes typical of many of this vanishing group of former Europeans in the country. Many of these new Europeans take Tok Pisin seriously as a foreign language and study it as such, getting acquainted with it through its new standard orthography. Many members of this new generation of Europeans in Papua New Guinea are persons who play an intensely active role on the Papua New Guinea scene over short periods and thereby contribute significantly to the proliferation of the acceptance of the new Tok Pisin orthography. A new enlarged and revised edition of Mihalic's Tok Pisin grammar and dictionary is in preparation, and will put a new major reference work, using the new standard Tok Pisin orthography, into the hands of those seeking information on the language.

Official acceptance of this orthography by government agencies in Papua New Guinea is still lacking, but may be expected to be officially forthcoming in the wake of the official acceptance of the name 'Tok Pisin' for the language by the government to replace its traditional designation as 'Pidgin'.

The continued use of this new Tok Pisin orthography in publications of wide circulation such as the weekly newspaper *Wantok* (supported by the Catholic Church), which has a circulation of over 10,000 copies, ensures that Tok Pisin materials utilising this orthography are frequently seen by indigenous Tok Pisin readers.

However, there have been developments involving Tok Pisin in recent years which constitute a counterbalance to the general acceptance of the new standardised Tok Pisin orthography.

One of these is the strong development of two distinct Tok Pisin sociolects, rural and urban (Mühlhäusler 1975e). Of these, the rural sociolect constitutes a continuation of general Tok Pisin, whereas the urban sociolect shows very strong influence from English without at the same time becoming more readily intelligible to speakers of English. This sociolect which tends to become rather more fluid in its structure and vocabulary than the rural sociolect, incorporates a large number of recent English loans and there is an inclination by some indigenous speakers of it to introduce English spelling habits into writing it. Another, perhaps even more important factor is constituted by the gradual appearance of Tok Pisin literature in the form of plays, poems, songs, and stories written by

indigenes of usually high, mainly tertiary educational level. Such writers tend to use their own varieties of Tok Pisin, and even if the language in which they write is very close to the High Tok Pisin as exemplified by the New Testament and other major translations of Scripture which have since been prepared, the spelling systems which they employ tend to reflect local and sometimes idiosyncratic pronunciation habits of the writers. This indigenous Tok Pisin dialect literature is very popular among indigenous speakers of Tok Pisin and constitutes a powerful factor militating against the general adoption of the new standard Tok Pisin orthography by its readers.

An interesting study of varying spelling habits by post-secondary students at the Administrative College in Port Moresby in recent years provided by Carrington (1983) shows that, while a number of students more or less closely followed the standard orthography in their writing of Tok Pisin, a considerable number of them deviated from it in various, often quite idiosyncratic, ways.

It is difficult to predict how far, in the absence of official government directives, the new standard Tok Pisin orthography is likely to become more or less generally accepted and used in the writing of Tok Pisin in future. This question, which ties up closely with the roles likely to be played by the language in Papua New Guinea in years to come, remains unsolved. While it is likely that European users of Tok Pisin employ the new standard orthography more and more in writing it, it remains to be seen how far this orthography will gain general acceptance amongst the indigenous users of the language in writing.