

Pidgins and Creoles in Education (PACE) *NEWSLETTER*

Number 1

August 1990

HELLO

This is the first issue of a yearly newsletter devoted to the use of pidgins and creoles in education. One of the goals of the PACE project is to establish a communication network among organizations and individuals interested in the use of pidgins and creoles in education, and I hope that this newsletter will help meet this goal. As promised, the newsletter contains information about existing programs and evaluations. Quite a lot of information in this issue comes from responses to the questionnaire I sent out about a year ago. (Thanks to all those who responded!) I've also included some background info from my own research.

I'm hoping that contributors will send in updates on the programs mentioned here and that readers ask other people working with pidgins and creoles in education to send information about their programs.

If you have any info you would like to share or you know of anyone who would be interested in receiving this newsletter, please drop me a line.

Jeff Siegel
Linguistics Department
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351 AUSTRALIA

IN THIS ISSUE

	<i>page</i>
Changing Attitudes?	1
Existing programs	2
Training and materials development	5
Evaluations	6
Feature program	7
Flashback	7

CHANGING ATTITUDES?

Most linguists and educators these days realize that pidgins and creoles are legitimate languages, quite capable of fulfilling any role in society. But many people, including some pidgin and creole speakers themselves, still have negative attitudes towards these languages

For example, in **Vanuatu**, Bislama (the local dialect of Melanesian Pidgin) has been declared the national language in the constitution. But it is reported that the current Minister of Education (from Vanuatu) has banned its use in the high schools (even outside the classroom) and in the education ministry offices.

In **Papua New Guinea**, English has officially been the language of education starting in primary school. Recently, an article titled "A survey of teachers' attitudes towards the use of Tok Pisin as a medium of instruction in community schools" was published by Joseph Nidue in the *Papua New Guinea Journal of Education* (Volume 24, number 2, 1988, pages 214-31). He notes on page 216:

The PNG elite have developed prejudiced attitudes towards T[ok] P[isin] from the colonial administration including such groups as expatriate teachers and academics. As a result of this pro-English indoctrination, many of the indigenous elite, as well as many unsophisticated Papua New Guineans, believe that there is no real education until they learn how to read, write and speak in English. To these people, Tok Pisin is not "real" education...

The survey shows that teachers agree that using Tok Pisin would facilitate teacher-student communication, improve students' understanding of subject matter, enable parents to participate in their children's education and promote traditional cultural activities in the schools. Yet over 90 per cent of teachers surveyed were strongly in favour of English-only medium schools. He concludes (pp. 226-27):

The implication of this finding seems to be that teachers view English in terms of their career-related interests, and not necessarily in terms of its suitability as a medium for enabling students to improve the quality of their educational experience and development.

Joseph Nidue also found (p. 227) that the surveyed teachers were evenly divided on the question of whether learning initial literacy in Tok Pisin would make it harder or easier to learn English later. He says that this finding should be an impetus for conducting research into the effect of teaching initial literacy in the vernacular, presumably including Tok Pisin, on the later acquisition of English. (This kind of research is one of the goals of the PACE project.)

In **Hawai'i**, in 1987 the state Board of Education went as far as to formulate a policy saying that only Standard English (and by implication not Hawai'i Creole English) should be spoken in the classroom and all other school related settings. Many studies of attitudes in Hawai'i show a negative evaluation of Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) by both teachers and students. Six of these studies are summarized in a recent article by Charlene Sato in the *University of Hawaii Working Papers in ESL* (Volume 8, number 1, 1989, pages 191-216). But she also says (p. 201):

It is also important to note that all of the attitude studies were conducted in Honolulu, i.e., in an urban setting where mainland U.S. institutions and values are most pervasive. It remains to be seen what similar studies would yield in rural, working class areas... with a high proportion of native Hawaiians, or areas with a low proportion of Caucasians.

Furthermore, Charlene Sato refers to "heated and prolonged public discussion" which occurred in 1987 as the result of the Board of Education's policy with regard to HCE in the classroom as well as an employment discrimination trial involving two local HCE-speaking weather forecasters. She notes (p. 202): "For the first time in Hawai'i's history, positive attitudes toward the use and maintenance of HCE were explicitly endorsed by some elements in the local mass media."

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Although pidgins and creoles are unofficially used in classrooms around the world, there are relatively few educational programs in which they are officially the language of instruction or literacy. This section outlines some places where such

programs exist (and others where they don't exist).

The Caribbean

Different English-related creole languages are spoken in many places in the Caribbean, such as Jamaica, St Lucia, and Trinidad. While there have been frequent calls, many politically motivated, for the use of these creole languages in education, there seems to be no published evidence that any programs have been implemented. An interesting book on the subject is *Language and Liberation: Creole Language Politics in the Caribbean* by Hubert Devonish (London: Karia Press, 1987).

Haiti

Haitian Creole (French-related) has been used in adult literacy programs for many years and by government decree, published in 1982, it was made the medium of instruction and a subject of study for the first six years of primary education. Details are given in a recent article, "Haitian Creole: a challenge for education" by Alain Bentolila in *Diogenes* (number 137, 1987, pages 73-87).

Seychelles

In the Indian Ocean, another French-related creole, **Seselwa** (Seychellois), has been used in education for many years in the Seychelles. Over the last decade, it has advanced from being only a medium of instruction to the language of initial literacy and a subject of study throughout the first four years of primary education.

Hawai'i

Hawai'i Creole English has never been endorsed for general use in the islands' schools, but it has been accepted to some extent in the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) for ethnic Hawaiian children. Using a "language experience approach", teachers in this program based their reading instruction on children's utterances, whether in Hawai'i Creole or in Standard (American) English. While Standard English remained the medium of instruction, discourse strategies and participation structures used by Hawai'i Creole speakers were adopted by the program for use in the classroom.

The 1987 Hawai'i Board of Education Standard English-only policy just mentioned above met with widespread public opposition people also realized that it was virtually impossible to implement and enforce.

Some useful articles about the Hawai'i situation are:

- Au, Kathryn H. 1980. Participation structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children: analysis of a culturally appropriate instructional event. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 11, 91-115.
- Au, Kathryn H, and J.M. Mason. 1983. Cultural congruence in classroom participation structures: achieving a balance of rights. *Discourse Processes* 6, 145-67.
- Sato, Charlene. 1985. Linguistic inequality in Hawaii: the post-creole dilemma. In *Language of inequality*, ed. by N. Wolfson and J. Manes (Berlin: Mouton), 255-72.
- , 1989a. Language attitudes and socio-linguistic variation in Hawaii. *University of Hawai'i Working Papers in ESL* 8/1, 191-216.
- , 1989b. A non-standard approach to Standard English. *TESOL Quarterly* 23, 259-82.
- Speidel, Gisela E. 1981. Language and reading: bridging the language difference for children who speak Hawaiian English. *Educational Perspectives* 20, 23-30.
- , 1987. Conversation and language learning in the classroom. In *Children's language* (Volume 6), ed. by K.E. Nelson and A. van Kleeck (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum), 99-135.

Australia

Kriol (the creole of the Northern Territory) has been used in education at Barunga (formerly called Bamyili) since 1975, when an experimental program was started in the community preschool. A formal bilingual program, under the Northern Territory Department of Education, began at the primary school in 1977. The model of "partial bilingualism" has been adopted, with Kriol being used for reading and writing until English is introduced at the grade four or five level. Kriol is then restricted to subject matter relating to cultural heritage. A recent report on the bilingual program has been published by the Department of Education: *Barunga School: accreditation process for Northern Territory bilingual schools*, 1988.

Kriol is also reportedly used as the language of instruction at the community school in Ngukurr. Although it is not used for reading and writing at present, there has been some discussion of starting a formal bilingual program.

Kriol has also been a subject of study at another school, Yiyili, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. But there it was an "awareness" rather than initial literacy program, although some creative writing in

Kriol was used in translation exercises to English. According to a paper by Joyce Hudson ("Kriol or English: an unanswered question in the Kimberleys", presented at the 54th ANZAAS Congress in Canberra in 1984), the program was "based on the premise that if children could be taught how to separate Kriol from English, along with the social rules for appropriate use of each language, they would learn English better and quicker".

At present, an in-service "awareness" course is being developed by the Catholic Education Office for teachers in the Kimberley region. This course, which is being trialled this year, is aimed at helping teachers of Kriol-speaking children to understand more of the children's language. The ultimate goal, however, is to make teaching of Standard English more effective.

Contact: Joyce Hudson
PO Box 1264
Broome 6725 AUSTRALIA

With regard to **Torres Strait Creole** (also known as Broken, Pizin and Blaikman), Anna Shnukal of the University of Queensland reports that she has observed a great amount of teaching carried out in the language, but that it wasn't acknowledged officially. In fact, there is great resistance to the use of Torres Strait Creole (TSC) in education, both from educators and Islanders themselves, even from those who are native speakers. She adds:

I doubt very much that Islanders would accept even the teaching of initial literacy skills in the creole, although this may change in the future, especially with the proposed publication of the New Testament in TSC. Although TSC has taken over domains formerly reserved for English, it isn't yet accepted as written language. All the written material I've seen has been written in English orthography.

More on Torres Strait Creole will be published in the next issue.

Papua New Guinea

Although **Tok Pisin** has not been officially used in government schools, it has been used as a medium of instruction for years in many church-run schools, which provide a large proportion of primary education in the country. In the Catholic church, the Divine Word Mission declared Tok Pisin its official language as early as 1931. Although the Lutheran church preferred using indigenous church lingua francas for education, they did have at least one "Pidgin school" as early as 1950. But in 1962, the Education Department

decreed that only English should be used in schools receiving subsidies from the Australian Administration, and so the use of Tok Pisin waned.

However, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG established a "Bible School" program to be distinct from the Administration's official education program so that vernacular languages including Tok Pisin could still be taught. In 1973 there were 340 teachers and 9500 student at Lutheran primary schools where Tok Pisin was the main (or sometimes the only) medium of instruction. (This information comes from articles by Francis Mihalic and G.L. Renck in *New Guinea Area Languages and Language Study*, Vol. 3, *Language, Culture, Society and the Modern World*, edited by Stephen S. Wurm [Canberra: Pacific Linguistics C-40, 1977, pages 643-69]).

The newly independent Papua New Guinea government simply carried on with the educational policy established by the Australian Administration. But there have been revolutionary changes in educational policy since the 1986 appearance of the Ministerial Committee Report, *A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea*. The most recent development is that the Secretary of Education has recently (6th June 1989) endorsed a plan including a list of responsibilities and strategies for raising the level of literacy in the country. The preamble to this plan is as follows:

In order to improve the quality of education, to strengthen traditional cultures and values, to facilitate participation by citizens in national life, to promote national unity and to raise the level of literacy in Tok Ples, Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu and English, we recommend the development of educational programmes to ensure that children, out of school youth and adults become literate in Tok Ples, transfer their skills to Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu or English and maintain their literacy skills in these languages.

The plan encourages communities to set up preparatory classes to teach initial literacy in Tok Ples before children enter Grade 1. It is up to each community to decide what Tok Ples is to be used. "Tok Ples" usually refers to indigenous vernacular languages, but in the plan it is defined to also include lingua francas, such as Tok Pisin.

The widest range of programs is still run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG. The following numbers for schools and other training institutions where Tok Pisin is the

medium of instruction (as of September 1989) have been provided by Duaro Embi, the Lutheran Church Assistant Secretary for Tok Ples Education:

78 primary schools (grades 1-6)	164 teachers	648 students
15 high schools (grades 7-10)	54 teachers	462 students
6 training institutions	20 teachers	79 students
TOTAL:		1189 students

These programs are non-transitional in that they are not meant to prepare students to go on to mainstream English-medium schools.

Contact: Duaro Embi
Evangelical Lutheran Church
PO Box 80
Lae, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Another large-scale program is run by Pacific Islands Ministries in the East Sepik Province. This program is described as the feature program later in the newsletter.

A different type of non-transitional program is being run in the Eastern Highlands Province, described by Joy McCarthy in a paper presented at the National Seminar on Community-based Education, held last year in Port Moresby. Here adults learn initial literacy in their first language, Inoke, and then go on to learn to read and write in Tok Pisin. As of December 1988, there was a total enrolment of 3041 in the program in 52 villages, and 1483 "new literates" had been trained.

There are several other educational programs in Tok Pisin, such as the national *Kisim Save* adult literacy program, but I haven't been able to get any details about them. (If anyone knows anything, please send some information so I can include it in the next newsletter!)

Solomon Islands

In contrast with Tok Pisin, Solomons **Pijin** (another variety of Melanesian Pidgin) has been used hardly at all in education.

One pioneering program in Solomons Islands is being run by the Nazareth Apostolic Centre near the capital of Honiara. It involves teaching women initial literacy in Pijin. One teaching method being used is making sets of letters of the alphabet with bamboo pieces (like Scrabble tiles). Also, the Pijin news from the radio is being transcribed and printed to use as reading material. Plans are also being made for a full intensive year of preparing some literacy teachers in 1991.

Contact: Bernie O'Donnell

Nazareth Apostolic Centre
PO Box 197
Honiara, SOLOMON IS.

Vanuatu

Although **Bislama** is constitutionally the national language of Vanuatu, it is not officially recognized as a language of education. (English and French are given this role.) However, according to the 1987 report of the Asian Development Bank/Australia Development Assistance Bureau Joint Technical Assistance Team on *Vocational Training and the Labour Market in Vanuatu* (Asian Development Bank, T.A. No. 810-VAN Vocational Training Project), Bislama is used as the language of instruction in the Police Training School, the Trade Training and Testing Scheme, the Marine Training School and 10 different rural training institutions. Here are some quotations from the report about the use of Bislama:

The Study Team believes that most of the vocational training currently provided in Vanuatu is at a level where Bislama could be used far more extensively with no detriment to efficiency. (p. xiii)

The Study Team notes that the Marine Training School is able to provide instruction in marine engineering to international standards using Bislama as the primary language of instruction. (p. 184)

All teachers at INTV [the national technical training institution] should be required to develop fluency in Bislama. Intensive Bislama courses on arriving in Vanuatu should be provided for this purpose. (p. 185)

The International Literacy Year Committee of Australia has funded two programs on the island of Malakula in Vanuatu as part of the larger Melanesian Literacy Project. Both programs involve teaching initial literacy in Bislama, one to women and one to out-of-school youth. The programs are being run by the World Vision organization, headed in Port Vila by Kali Vatoko, with Enikelen Netine doing the teacher training and coordination in the field. Enikelen attended the second National Literacy Training Course in PNG earlier this year (see below). A preschool program using Bislama is also going ahead in the area.

Contact: Enikelen Netine
c/o World Vision Office
Port Vila, VANUATU

Also in Vanuatu, Bislama is used in education in a way which must be unique for

any pidgin: it is the medium of instruction and the subject of study for a second year university course in linguistics. The course, *Introdaksen long Stadi blong Bislama* was written by Terry Crowley and has been taught by him since 1985 at the Pacific Languages Unit of the University of the South Pacific in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The course is for Bislama speakers who have completed the introductory linguistics course taught at the university (in English).

Contact: Terry Crowley
Pacific Languages Unit
PO Box 12
Port Vila, VANUATU

TRAINING AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Naihuwo Ahai and Nick Faraclas of the Department of Language and Literature of the University of Papua New Guinea have run four National Literacy Training Courses (NLTC) since November of last year. These courses have trained literacy teachers for small-scale community-based programs and produced relevant literacy materials (mostly using silkscreen printing) for these programs. At each course, **Tok Pisin** was one of the languages for which materials were designed and produced.

At the second NLTC held in Wabag in the Highlands Region from 8 January to 2 February, the 48 participants, trained to be preschool and adult literacy teachers, materials producers and trainers themselves, included two from outside PNG: Albert Nori, from Solomon Islands, and Enikelen Netine, from Vanuatu. They produced full sets of literacy teaching materials in **Pijin** and **Bislama**.

Contact: Naihuwo Ahai
Curriculum Development
Department of Education,
P.M.B., Boroko
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Nicholas Faraclas
Department of Language and
Literature
UPNG, PO Box 320
University,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

EVALUATIONS

Reports of detailed evaluation of educational programs using pidgins and

creoles are difficult to find. But here is a summary of what is available.

Haiti

In the article by Alain Bentolila, mentioned on page 2 above, the results of evaluations done in Haiti are described (page 82):

Those who have been ingenuous enough to believe that a decree would suffice to give Creole the status of oral and written instruction, so that the Haitian educational system would be rapidly and significantly improved, have been sorely disappointed. The few evaluations that were made in 1983 and 1984 have shown that linguistic competence in both creole and French has remained mediocre.

According to the article, these negative results have been significantly affected by controversy over the adopted orthography and difficulties teachers encountered in mastering written Haitian Creole. This was partially caused by continuing negative attitudes towards the language.

Seychelles

A more positive evaluation is described by Derek Bickerton in *The Carrier Pidgin* (Volume 16, no. 3, 1988, page 3) for the use of the creole in the Seychelles:

A systematic evaluation compared the scores of the 1986 grade 6 (the last class prior to the introduction of Seselwa as the medium of instruction) with those of the 1987 grade 6, first to be taught through Seselwa. Scores were about even on English, on French, the 1987 class showed a gain of 12 percentage points, on math of four, on science of seven, and on social studies of nearly 11. The prediction by the enemies of creole, that education in creole would lower scores in English and French, has failed to be borne out.

Hawai'i

With regard to Hawai'i Creole English, research has shown that the use of discourse strategies and participation structures in the Kamehameha Early Education Program (mentioned above) have fostered increased reading achievement and development of spoken Standard English. (See the articles listed on page 3 above by Sato, Au and Mason, and Speidel.)

Australia

By far the most rigorous evaluation of an educational program using a pidgin or creole has been done on the use of Kriol in the bilingual program at Barunga, described

above. Edward J. Murtagh, then a student at Stanford University, did research on the program for his 1979 PhD dissertation. Later he published an article entitled "Creole and English used as languages of instruction in bilingual education with Aboriginal Australians: some research findings" in the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Volume 36, 1982, pages 15-33). The purpose of his study was "to find out whether or not a bilingual program which uses Creole and English as languages of instruction facilitates the learning of both Standard English and Creole" (p.15).

Murtagh compared several measures of oral language proficiency in Kriol and English of grade students in the first three grades at two different schools: the Kriol/English bilingual school at Barunga (Bamyili) and an English-only school at Beswick Reserve, where the children are also Kriol speakers. The overall results were that students at the bilingual school scored significantly better than those at the monolingual school, especially in the grade 3. Murtagh concludes (p. 30):

The results of the study indicate very definite trends towards the superiority of bilingual schooling over monolingual schooling for Creole-speaking students with regard to oral language proficiency in both the mother tongue, Creole, and the second language, English.

He attributes these results to the bilingual school students' "progressively greater success at separating the two languages" resulting from "the two languages being taught as separate entities in the classroom". This, he says, "constitutes a powerful argument for the introduction of bilingual education to other schools where similar conditions obtain".

However, according to social and cultural criteria, the program appears to be less successful. Most Aboriginal communities see bilingual programs as a means of maintaining traditional languages and cultures and have chosen to use a traditional Aboriginal language, even where Kriol is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the children. At Yiyili, for example, Gooniyandi is taught even though it is spoken only by old people. At Barunga, many people are not happy with only Kriol and English being taught in the schools and want traditional languages taught as well, even though this would be more of a language revival than a language maintenance program (This information comes from the Northern

Territory Department of Education accreditation report mentioned on page 3 above.)

FEATURE PROGRAM

One of the largest and most successful educational programs using a pidgin language is the Tok Pisin Preschool program in the Ambunti District of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. The program is run by Pacific Islands Ministries (PIM) and is coordinated by Edward Wiruk, assisted by David Kassen.

This is mainly a two year preschool "bridging" or transitional program which teaches initial literacy in Tok Pisin to children six or seven years old before they go on to English-medium government schools.

Instruction is all in Tok Pisin, and besides basic reading and writing, includes basic mathematics, health and hygiene, cultural activities, religious instruction, social studies, and physical education.

The program was started in the district centre, Ambunti, in 1985 with two schools and 150 students in four classes. At present there are 14 schools with more than 800 students in 25 classes, and a total of 35 teachers, supported by dozens of different villages throughout the district. There are no roads, and transport within the district is nearly all done by dugout canoe up and down the Sepik River and its tributaries. Some schools are more than an eight hours' journey from Ambunti by motorized canoe.

The Tok Pisin Preschool program is a good example of grass-roots, community-based education. A community originally makes a request to PIM for a preschool to be set up. When the request has been approved, the community selects two people to become teachers and go to Ambunti for the 10 weeks' training course run by Edward Wiruk and his assistants at the PIM headquarters. The community is responsible for building the classroom (usually made out of traditional bush materials) and paying the teachers.

When the preschools first started, many teachers in the government schools were opposed to the use of Tok Pisin. They thought that the children's learning to read and write first in Tok Pisin would interfere with their later learning of English. But now, the general opinion seems to be that the Tok Pisin Preschools not only help children to adjust to the government school environment but also

actually help rather than hinder the learning of English, as well as other subjects.

Although the popularity of the preschools is mainly due to the success of their "graduates" in the government schools, the advantages of literacy in Tok Pisin are also important to adults. The district is linguistically quite diverse, with over 20 different languages. Knowledge of Tok Pisin is nearly universal, and besides being spoken as the lingua franca, it is widely used for reading (in church services) and for writing letters (these days, especially love letters). In fact, five of the fourteen preschools have recently been established in very isolated areas where there are no government schools, and many of the students are as old as 11 or 12.

Contact: Edward Wiruk
Pacific Islands Ministries
PO Box 41
Ambunti, ESP
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

FLASHBACK

Thanks to Peter Mühlhäusler, I've got hold of a copy of a 1955 report by W.C. Groves, then the Director of Education in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The title is *The Problem of Language: Paper no 1: "Pidgin"*. Here are some quotations from the summary of the report (pages i- ii):

Pidgin is a language in its own right... Practically any concept that can be expressed in English can in fact be expressed fully and without ambiguity in Pidgin...

As to Education, experience has shown that Pidgin is not only a useful, but also an adequate means of instruction in most fields...

The use of Pidgin for formal instruction in organized teaching institutions enables instruction to be given through that medium immediately, since the language is known to the students as a starting point. To wait upon the Natives' learning of English would be to deny them literacy and a wide range of educational interests for years and years and thus to retard the development of the people...

I believe that, if Pidgin were officially and openly adapted for educational and other communication purposes in the Territory...the result in accelerated development of the Native people would be inestimable.