

# *Pidgins and Creoles in Education (PACE)* *NEWSLETTER*

Number 7

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Charlene (“Charlie”) Sato (see the article in the next column).

In addition to the usual features, it includes a special report on Melanesia, promised last time, and some detailed information on l’Institut d’Etudes Créoles et Francophones, which has much involvement in French-lexifier creoles and education.

Thanks to support from the Australian Research Council and the University of New England, this newsletter is still free of charge. But as a cost-cutting measure, future issues will be available by e-mail. If you are willing and able to receive the newsletter by e-mail, please send in the enclosed questionnaire form or contact me by e-mail.

Once again, thank you to all the contributors. Please keep the information flowing and pass the word (and the newsletter) on to others who may be interested.

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PS Sorry for all the typos in the last issue!

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## Charlene “Charlie” Sato

Speakers of pidgin and creole languages have lost one of their strongest supporters, Charlie Sato, who died on 28 January 1996 at the age of 44 after a 10-month battle with cancer. Charlie taught pidgin and creole studies, sociolinguistics and other linguistics subjects at the University of Hawai‘i for 14 years and was Chair of the PhD program in Second Language Acquisition. She was editor of the *Carrier Pidgin* newsletter from 1989-93 and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Pidgin and Creole Linguistics since its inception in 1989.

Charlie was a tireless fighter for social justice and the rights of the underprivileged – especially speakers of Hawai‘i Creole English (HCE), who she saw were being disadvantaged in education and employment. In the late 1980s Charlie served as an expert witness for two HCE speakers who filed a lawsuit against their employer for accent discrimination. She also led the attack on the Hawai‘i State Board of Education when it attempted to ban the use of HCE in the classroom. In both cases, Charlie’s frequent appearances in the media and eloquent defence of HCE helped to increase community awareness about linguistic issues and galvanize support for the language as an important part of Hawai‘i’s identity. She was also instrumental in establishing the Hawai‘i Coordinating Council on Language Policy and Planning, which has since proposed a very progressive state policy for education.

During her brief time in Australia in 1993-4, Charlie took an active interest in Australian creoles and Aboriginal English and the rights of their speakers. At the Australian Linguistic Institute in 1994 she was coorganizer of a well attended workshop on pidgins, creoles and non-standard varieties in education.

Charlie was an inspiration to her students and her colleagues. And no one who has met her can forget her ability to bring out the best in people, her sense of humour, her strong commitment, her contagious laugh and her fun-loving outlook on life.

Some of Charlie's key publications on PACE:

- Sato, C. 1985. Linguistic inequality in Hawaii: The post-creole dilemma. *Language of inequality*, ed. by N. Wolfson and J. Manes, 255-72. Berlin: Mouton.
- . 1989. A nonstandard approach to Standard English. *TESOL Quarterly* 23/2, 259-82.
- . 1991. Sociolinguistic variation and attitudes in Hawaii. *English around the world*, ed. by Jenny Cheshire, 647-63. Cambridge: CUP.

## Jones E. Mondesir

from: Jeff Allen  
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I am sad to relay news to you that was announced on the radio in St. Lucia yesterday evening (Tuesday, Nov 19). Mr. Jones E. Mondesir passed away early this week in London.

Born in Soufriere, St. Lucia in 1915, Mondesir began a career as an educator in 1930. Throughout a good portion of his career in education, he diligently collected words and phrases in Patwa (St. Lucian French Creole) and their equivalent in English. One of his greatest contributions to the field of creole studies was the completion of the *Dictionary of St Lucian Creole*, published in 1992.

We shall miss Mondesir's perseverant dedication to the survival of St Lucian Creole. May his example, evidenced by a gentle spirit and a genuine love for his people, encourage us to strive toward that same goal.

Reference:

Mondesir, Jones (compiler) and Lawrence Carrington (editor). 1992. *Dictionary of St Lucian Creole* (Trends in Linguistics Documentation 7). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

## REPORTS

### Belize

from: Ken Decker  
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Belize City  
BELIZE (Central America)  
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“We are working on a language development project with Belize Creole in Belize. While the Ministry of Education has not formally

recognized the need to recognize the mother tongue of students, they are beginning to consider it. Many teachers are convinced of the need to somehow include the mother tongue in early education, and that English should be taught as a 2nd language. We have made good progress in orthography development. There is an increasing number of people trying to write Creole, even though we have not begun any formal literacy activities.

“We have had a weekly newspaper column in Creole for over one year now and many teachers use it for discussion in the class-room. We will definitely need to approach the use of Creole in the classroom as a means of improving English proficiency.”

### St Lucia

from: Didacus Jules  
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Castries  
ST LUCIA (West Indies)  
e-mail: julesd@candw.lc

“Member for the Movement for the Promotion of Kweyol (MOKWEYOL). Founding member of the Fol Research Centre involved in development of Kweyol orthography.”

### Australia

from: Dagmar E. Dixon  
Central Metropolitan College of TAFE  
25 Aberdeen St  
Perth, WA 6000  
AUSTRALIA

“Involved in interpreter training (interpreting practice, ethics, theory and techniques) and coordinator of program. Also involved in the development of course materials.”

[see *PACE Newsletter* 6, p.14.]

from: Denise Turnbull  
Torres Strait, Cape & Gulf  
Support Centre  
PO Box 117  
Thursday Island, QLD 4875  
AUSTRALIA

“I am an ESL teacher working with students from preschool to year 12 in the Torres Strait. Whilst Torres Strait Creole is the lingua franca of this region, on some islands the traditional indigenous language is the first

language of the students.”

from: Dave Nathan  
AIATSIS, GPO Box 553  
Canberra, ACT 2601  
AUSTRALIA  
e-mail: djn@aiatsis.gov.au

“I am interested in computer-based applications for research, communication and teaching in indigenous languages, including Australian creoles.”

from: *The Koori Mail*  
14 February 1996

“The future looks even more healthy for the Torres Strait islands after 18 people recently completed a special two-week orientation course to introduce them to the region’s health system. The workshop, coordinated by acting sector health worker Yanct Laifoo, will be the first of many to be held for potential health workers.

“The workshop was held in Creole language to ensure participants were fully aware of their role in the health system.”

### ***Africa***

from: Marike Post  
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“I’m finishing my PhD [at the University of Amsterdam] on the morpho-syntax of Fa d’Ambu, the Portuguese-based creole spoken on the island of Annobón, situated in the Gulf of Guinea [off the coast of west Africa].”

### ***Papua New Guinea***

from: Chelsey (Tiny) Ray  
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Secretariat  
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“The elementary movement continues to make progress in PNG...Where possible, elementary classes are conducted in the local vernaculars. However, in some of the towns the vernacular has become Tok Pisin. Also, many of the materials we prepare as source materials to help and encourage local literacy projects are prepared in Tok Pisin. One reason for this is that many people can read

and understand the stories in Tok Pisin but cannot effectly read them in English. At the present time the *Adult Literacy Workers’ Manual* is being translated into Tok Pisin so literacy workers can use English or Tok Pisin, whichever is easier for them.

“Tok Pisin is widely used in churches as the language of wider communication. Some churches read the Scripture in Tok Pisin then turn it into the local language. This is sometimes done even when the Scripture is available in their own language since many church leaders have been reading Tok Pisin for many years and find it easier to read than their own language.”

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

“1995 has gone with its problems. Most of our [Tok Pisin pre-] schools closed...due to financial constraints. A few schools stayed open until the end of the year.

“This year the schools started again with some hope to continue till the end. We have 82 teachers training 1,245 students in 45 schools. Besides the pre-schools, we started 20 adult literacy classes, The demand is very high. We are still waiting to switch from pre-schools to [the new] elementary [system].”

from: Joseph Nidue  
PO Box 320  
University of PNG, NCD 134  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“I know of a number of Tok Ples Pri Skuls [vernacular preschools] or Elementary Schools in Papua New Guinea that use Tok Pisin and vernaculars in education. I was educated via PNG Tok Pisin. I have a great interest in the use of Tok Pisin and other vernaculars in education. I have been working on PhD thesis on the use of Tok Pisin in education.”

from: Otto Nekitel  
Language and Literature Department  
PO Box 320  
University of PNG, NCD 134  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“I am currently supervising Dicks Thomas who is revising an MA thesis titled *Gramablong Tokpisin*, which is written in Tokpisin with a view to having this converted into a

textbook for students taking Tokpisin courses at UPNG. This will be supplemented by Verhaar's 1995 reference grammar of Tokpisin.

"Congratulations for taking the initiative in promoting pidgins and creoles in education per the newsletter. It certainly helps us all to know what's happening in the world today with respect to the languages that have been, and in some instances still are, castigated as 'not real languages'."

### ***Solomon Islands***

from: Bernie O'Donnell  
LASI (Literacy Association of  
Solomon Islands)  
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Honiara,  
SOLOMON ISLANDS  
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"LASI, as a non-government organization, making much use of Solomon Islands Pidgin as a medium of literacy instruction, went through growing pains and a restructuring in 1995. It now has two Training Officers and is awaiting the appointment of a Programme Manager.

"The two big training programmes in 1995 were conducted mainly in Pidgin, involving more than 50 potential teachers of literacy in each course. Work was also done in translating in to Pidgin any relevant information. A Parish Newsletter here is now in Pidgin and articles appear occasionally in the media in Pidgin. The Old Testament is quite quickly getting into Pidgin with great help from Bislama [the Vanuatu dialect of Melanesian Pidgin].

"Many expatriates like to learn Pidgin on entering the country. In fact two enterprising women have begun a school in Honiara to teach expatriates (both of Asian and European origin). People who have worked here before comment on the need now to have spoken knowledge of Pidgin. It is becoming more common.

"There was a course for teachers at USP [University of the South Pacific] in October 1995 to help them with literacy in primary schools – whether this is to be Pidgin literacy remains to be seen. However, despite the official policy, much teaching seems to be done in Pidgin in the schools.

"Generally it seems here that Pidgin is an acceptable language for instructing adults, but its use in formal education is still limited.

However, the 'Speech from the Throne', when the Governor-General opened Parliament in August [1995], made specific reference to more literacy in the Ministry of Education and Training."

from: Ernest W. Lee  
Box 986  
Honiara  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

"I am using SI Pijin in translation courses at Bishop Patterson Theological College. There is a contribution on this in the book edited by Mugler and Lynch [See "Recent publications" in the Special Report on Melanesia below.] I will be teaching here for another two years. My wife Lois teaches Pijin literacy to the students' wives."

[Ernie Lee also kindly forwarded a copy of *Solomon Grasrut* (Vol.1, no.2, 10 Sept. 1996) with the following comments:]

"This newspaper is the first full-fledged newspaper in Solomon Islands Pijin. The first issue came out on 3 September 1996. Although there is considerable variation in the quality of the Pijin within the newspaper, it is a breakthrough for the use of Pijin. Some articles such as the "custom story" on page 14 are reasonably good as far as the quality of the Pijin is concerned and the use of previous standards for spelling which are the Pijin New Testament and the 1995 *Wei for raetem olketa wod long Pijin: Solomon Islands Pijin spelling guide* (Solomon Islands Christian Association). News articles have a lot of English words which are only transliterated, and they make no attempt to express English passive constructions with active constructions in Pijin. Nonetheless, it is a big step from the all English newspapers we have had to date. I hope that it will be read, that it will continue and that over time it will come to reflect both a standardized form of spelling and fewer English grammatical features."

### ***Vanuatu***

from: Claire Ngwira  
31 Kelvin Road  
Northeast Valley, Dunedin  
NEW ZEALAND

"[Involved in] adult literacy projects in Vanuatu run by World Vision and the Bahá'í

Faith on the following islands: Epi, Ambrym, Malakula, Santo, Tanna. Small groups of 3-9 adults are learning functional literacy using Bislama. [Some are] also learning Bislama.

“My research is a secondary analysis of data collected from World Vision and Bahā’i Faith projects, two visits to Vanuatu and visiting all classes. The literature review includes similar projects in Melanesia.”

[See the Special report on PACE in Melanesia below for more information on Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.]

## L’INSTITUT D’ETUDES CREOLES ET FRANCOPHONES (IECF)

The IECF (Institute of Creole and Francophone Studies) of the University of Aix-Marseille I (Provence), established in 1981, was originally created to study the Creole-speaking and French-speaking areas in the American-Caribbean region and the Indian Ocean. However, since 1985, the scope of the institute has expanded to cover problems in language and development in all French-speaking areas.

The activity of the IECF is concentrated in four main areas:

### 1. Documentation and information

1.1 Primary documentation and data base: This is a fundamental area and is the main reason for the creation of the Institute. It had appeared that, despite the development of French studies on Creoles and despite the importance of the French Creole-speaking community (more than 1,500,000 speakers – which put the Creoles far ahead of other regional languages), the only centres of documentation about the Creole world were located outside France. This is why a centre of documentation was created (“Societies, cultures and languages of the world of Creole”). Thanks to a very active policy of acquisition of primary documents (1,200 a year average), considerable resources were gathered in five years. The transfer of the old “colonial library” to the Overseas Archives in Aix-en-Provence, close to the university, completed the documentation of materials from before 1970. It can now be said that virtually all of the documentation on French Creole societies, cultures and languages is available at Aix-en-Provence.

Moreover, as previously stated, the development of research on the subject of

“Languages, education and development in the Creole world” has led to a broadening of the field of study to include the entire French-speaking world.

A network of international scientific cooperation was established in 1988 to do research on “languages and development”, and a research program in 1989-91 analysed and did a typology of linguistic situations in the French-speaking world, identifying social and economic areas where linguistic and social factors may contribute to modernization. Linguists, economists, anthropologists are involved in this research program. The African states concerned are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Congo, Mali, Senegal, Chad, and Zaire.

1.2 Distribution of information. Bibliographies are published and distributed from the data base: this is the case of *La bibliographie des Etudes Creoles* (‘Bibliography of Creole studies’) first published in 1983 and revised in a new edition in 1991, and of *La bibliographie selective: aménagement linguistique et développement* (‘Selective bibliography: Language planning and development’).

The two newsletters of the IECF, each appearing 3 times a year, aim to provide the quick diffusion of information which is the primary goal of the IECF:

- *Gazet sifon blé / lavwa ka bay* (which means something like ‘gossip’ in some French Creoles) was established in 1984 (with 48 issues having been produced as of October 1995). It has a circulation of 400 and is distributed either free of charge to the institutions that collaborate with the IECF and the researchers who participate to the programs, or by subscription (50 francs a year; 60 francs if sent overseas). The newsletter essentially deals with the world of French Creoles (information regarding publications, meetings, symposiums, short book reviews, announcements of theses, etc).

- *Langues and developpement* has followed the same principle since 1988, and serves to link researchers in the Languages and Development network (28 issues produced as of October 1995). It is also distributed to people who are interested in languages and development, and has a circulation of 400.

1.3 The IECF has a library of recorded tapes mainly on three Creoles (Réunion, Rodrigues and Haiti) with about 200 hours of recording. These resources are linked with the production of the linguistic and ethnographic

atlas of Réunion (first edition published in 1985, second 1989, third in production), of Rodrigues (in production) and of Haiti.

## 2. Research

It is impossible to detail here all the research by the IECF in association with other programs both in Aix-en-Provence and Réunion. At least 30 researchers are involved.

Some of the areas of research are:

- Creole Studies (including the production of a linguistic atlas, description of Creoles and the theory of creolization);
- The use of the French language outside France (linguistic and sociolinguistic description, linguistic insecurity in multilingual contexts);
- Literature of Creole-speaking and French-speaking areas of the West Indies and the Indian Ocean
- Studies of language and society in Réunion.

2.1 In these different programs, the research team has produced numerous publications (80 each year).

2.2 Periodic publications: The editorial responsibilities are numerous and varied. Two examples are:

- The journal *Etudes Créoles*, edited by Marie-Christine Hazaël-Massieux and published twice each year; Volume 28, nos. 1 and 2 appeared in 1995.
- The series *Langues et Développement*, under the supervision of Robert Chaudenson; it includes 20 volumes, all published in the last five years.

2.3 Organisation of international symposiums (10 in the last 5 years), including the 7th International Colloquium on Creole Studies, held in Mauritius in 1992.

## 3. Teaching

Teaching done by the IECF is in two main areas: university and non-university.

3.1 Regular university teaching: Teaching regarding Creole languages and cultures is provided for different levels (undergraduate, Masters, PhD). Masters and PhD students, as well as visiting scholars, can access the resources of the IECF, including the data base and primary documents (available in the reading room). Two computers with the software SUPERDOC and WINWORD 6 are in free access at the library.

3.2 Teaching by request to answer to the needs of other organizations. This is often in the form of short intensive workshops with the content chosen according to the needs of the organization. For example, M.C. Hazaël-Massieux taught at the University of Nice, in

the summer of 1995, in answer to a request by some American university lecturers.

## 4. Participation and promotion

The IECF participates in conferences and discussions for the general public organized by various associations, such as the West Indies Association in Aix-en-Provence, and has helped out with exhibitions by loaning maps, documents, books etc. about Creoles.

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## PUBLICATIONS

Several chapters relevant to PACE are found in *The Social of Identity in Creole Situations* edited by Marcyliena Morgan (Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, Los Angeles, 1994). In "Problems of standardization of creole languages" (pp.7-18), Mervyn Allyne starts off by calling for creolists to do more applied, as opposed to theoretical, work. He quotes some remarks made by Hubert Devonish in 1980.

Far too little attention has been paid to creole languages as languages whose speakers have linguistic rights. As a result even less attention has been paid to the development of creole languages as a means of promoting the rights and interest of creole speakers.

Allyne describes situations in the Caribbean where the creole is relatively autonomous, as in Haiti, St Lucia and the Netherlands Antilles, versus those where there is a continuum ranging from the creole to a variety close to the standard form of the lexifier language (eg English for English creoles), as in Jamaica and Guyana. Standardization is more difficult in the continuum situation because of problems of attitudes as well as the need to decide which part of the continuum to choose as the standard.

The author also mentions that in some countries, the creoles have spelling conventions based on their lexifier languages and "transitionalists" view this as a good basis for learning literacy in the lexifier. On the other hand, in other countries, such as the

Netherlands Antilles, Suriname, Martinique and Guadalupe, "autonomy protagonists" have developed "pragmatic phonemic principles" for writing the creoles, thus reinforcing the separateness of the languages.

Donald Winford's chapter, "Sociolinguistic approaches to language use in the Anglophone Caribbean" (pp.43-62), also contrasts situations where the creole is considered autonomous and those where it is not because of variation along a continuum. He notes that the latter situation is generally found in the Caribbean countries where English is the official language and is one reason why creoles have not been "instrumentalized" in these countries for use in official functions such as education. Another reason is public attitudes, especially among the middle class, which favour the use of Standard English and not creole in formal domains. Even though scholars have shown that the use of creole in education would help to solve many problems faced by Caribbean children in the school system, it is these attitudes, plus the lack of realization that creole and English are quite different in structure, which have prevented the reform of educational policy and any official use of creole.

In "Language standardization and linguistic fragmentation in Tok Pisin" (pp.19-42). Suzanne Romaine notes that standardization and literacy "go hand in hand". Catholic missionaries first developed Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin English in Papua New Guinea) as a written language for education in the 1920s and the Lutheran church followed in the 1930s. The use of Tok Pisin in education began to wane in the 1950s when an English-only policy was instituted in government-funded schools. However, with new policies allowing the use of Tok Pisin and other vernaculars in the education system, its use is increasing again. [See the special report on Melanesia in this issue.] Romaine discusses the controversy about which variety of Tok Pisin to use in writing: the conservative rural variety or the more anglicized urban variety which has been a direct result of the formal education system. She notes the widening gap between the urban and rural varieties is undermining the previously integrative function of Tok Pisin.

Finally, Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo discusses the situation in another part of the Pacific in her chapter "Language and education in Hawai'i: Sociopolitical and economic implications of Hawai'i Creole

English" (pp.101-20). She starts out by giving some background information about Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) and language use in the classroom, and then reports some negative attitudes towards the use of HCE in education and other public domains similar to those described for the Caribbean. Then the author illustrates a change in community attitudes by describing the public outcry in 1987 over a proposed Board of Education policy to eliminate HCE from the classroom. There was strong support for developing children's skills in both Standard English and HCE because of its "important role in local identity". In 1989, the Department of Education successfully applied for bilingual education funds from the federal government for a program to teach Standard English (SE) to HCE-speaking pupils. While this indicates an important change in policy, the program was not a very good one for several reasons pointed out by the author.

While many people have been predicting that HCE would eventually merge with SE, Watson-Gegeo presents evidence suggesting that it may continue to develop independently, and be influenced as well by the large number of non-English speaking immigrants expected to settle in HCE-speaking areas of Hawai'i in the near future. She notes four resultant needs for education and research: (1) long-range educational planning for vocational training as opposed to the current emphasis on liberal arts and graduate education in which SE is so important; (2) better teacher education including courses on HCE and teaching in the creole-standard context; (3) research on forms of discourse in HCE; and (4) basic statistics on HCE-dominant communities and anthropological or sociological studies of their language and culture.

A new book has appeared which is relevant to PACE in Australia: *Writing on the Backs of Blacks: Voice, Literacy and Community in Kriol Fieldwork* by Mari Rhydwen (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1996). This book has not been seen by the editor, but here is a description from the *Koori Mail*, July 1996:

In this book, author Mari Rhydwen argues for an awareness of the dangers of denying a voice to the very people who are the objects of linguistic research. Her awareness comes from the personal experience she gained when she set out to study the effects of newly developing literacy on a predominantly oral society.

Her experience among the creole-speaking communities of the Northern Territory started her on a different path, which she describes as a personal journey of cross-cultural learning. The communities' frequent question: "What gives you the right to write about us?" turned the focus of her project to the legitimacy of the very processes of her own research.

Rhydwen began to ponder the way her own inquiries sought to define and subsume other cultures. Many of the controversies along with a discussion of the global impact of literacy are combined here with fieldwork accounts of the Kriol-speaking communities and the Bilingual Program.

## **SPECIAL REPORT: PACE in Melanesia**

### **Introduction**

Melanesian Pidgin is the most widely spoken Pacific language, with more than two million speakers in three countries: Papua New Guinea (PNG), where it is known as Tok Pisin; Solomon Islands, where it is known as Pijin; and Vanuatu, where it is called Bislama. As the most common lingua franca in each of these linguistically diverse countries, Melanesian Pidgin would seem to be a natural language of education. Yet it has been given only a minor role mainly because of lingering colonial attitudes, left-over pre-independence policies emphasizing English or French, and fears that using a pidgin language would interfere with the acquisition of these favoured language. In recent years, however, more use is being made in education of all three varieties of Melanesian Pidgin. This special report outlines this use, including some information previously given in earlier issues of the *PACE Newsletter*. It also describes some research showing that educators' fears of interference are unfounded.

### **Papua New Guinea**

In 1955 W.C. Groves, then the Director of Education in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, wrote a report entitled: *The Problem of Language: Paper no 1: "Pidgin"*, recommending the use of Melanesian Pidgin in formal instruction as a way of achieving "accelerated development of the Native people". [Detailed quotations from the report appeared in *PACE Newsletter* 1 (1990), p.7.] However, Groves' recommendations were never implemented, even after independence in 1975, and until very recently, Tok Pisin was

not used officially in government schools.

On the other hand, Tok Pisin has been used for years as a medium of instruction in many church-run schools, which provide a large proportion of primary education in the country. With regard to adult education, there have been several programs using Tok Pisin. The Kisim Save Tok Pisin Literacy program has been operating since 1970, teaching reading, writing and numeracy. The program has produced the *Kisim Save* [literally 'get knowledge'] series of four primers and also a *Teachers' Guide* with a training section and 74 lessons. Literacy teachers are trained in 3-4 week sessions and then they go to remote villages to teach [*PACE Newsletter* 3 (1992), p.2].

Another project using Tok Pisin was the mass adult literacy campaign conducted in the Southern Highlands in the late 1970s and 1980s. It is estimated that over 60,000 students were involved in the project (Apelis 1988), with those taught by the Christian Brethren Church learning literacy in Tok Pisin. (The other two churches involved used different local vernaculars.)

According to Ray (1994), in 1994, there were 330 adult literacy programs with 449 teachers and 7,543 students. Many of these teach literacy in Tok Pisin, but exact figures are not available.

Also in the area of non-formal education, a community-based movement started in PNG to teach initial literacy in the local vernacular (or "Tok Ples") in preschools, in spite of the government policy of English-only in community schools. The first Vernacular Prep School (VPS) or Tok Ples Preschool (TPPS) began in the North Solomons Province in 1980 and the idea spread to the East New Britain and Milne Bay Provinces in 1983 and to Enga and Oro Province in 1985. Largely because of the success of these programs, one of the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee Report, *A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea*. (Matane et al 1986:48) was: "That the vernacular language be used as the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling and English be used in later years."

There have been revolutionary changes in educational policy since the appearance of this report. The national Literacy and Awareness Programme (NLAP) was established in 1988, and the National Department of Education (NDOE) policy followed which outlined the responsibilities and strategies for raising the level of literacy in the country. In 1989 the



National Literacy and Awareness Council was established, the English Section of the Curriculum Development Division of NDOE was renamed the Language and Literacy Section, and the Literacy and Awareness Secretariat (LAS) was set up to provide technical assistance and coordination for implementing the NDOE policy. The preamble to this policy is as follows (quoted in Faraclas 1989:4):

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.

Following the TPPS model, the policy encouraged communities to set up preparatory classes (or preschools) 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 policy it is defined to also include lingua francas, such as Tok Pisin.

The training of teachers for these vernacular preschools (and also for adult programs) has been carried out over the years largely by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the Language and Literacy Consultancy Group of the University of Papua New Guinea, and the Papua New Guinea Integral Human Development Trust (PNG Trust), established in 1990. Over 2000 trainers, coordinators, supervisors, materials writers and teachers have been trained at over 32 National Literacy and Awareness Training Courses conducted since 1989 by UPNG and the PNG Trust alone (PNG Trust 1994). As part of these courses, relevant literacy materials were produced in a variety of languages, including Tok Pisin. Some of the courses held in PNG have had participants from the Solomons Islands and Vanuatu, and materials were also in the other dialects of Melanesian Pidgin: Pijin and Bislama.

In 1991 PNG had TPPSs operating in at least 91 languages. According to information sent to the Literacy and Awareness Secretariat, Tok Pisin was third in the number of students in classes from a single language, with over 1600 students, and there were probably even more who were not reported [*PACE*

*Newsletter* 3 (1992), p.3].

One of the largest and most successful TPPS programs is the Tok Pisin Prep-school program in the Ambunti District of the East Sepik Province, run by Papua New Guineans working for Pacific Islands Ministries (PIM). [This program has been described in several issues of the *PACE Newsletter*.] It 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 community schools. Instruction is entirely 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 4 classes. In 1994 there were 32 schools with 916 students in 39 classes, supported by dozens of different villages throughout the area. [See the report in this issue for the latest figures.]

Like other TPPSs, the Prep-school Program is a community based one. A village asks for a Prep-school to be set up by forming a committee and sending a representative to PIM who then do a feasibility study. If the village is found suitable, the committee must then get permission from the head teacher of the local community school, provide one or two people with some primary education to be trained as teachers, provide land for the school and build the classroom. PIM trains the teachers and provides basic equipment and teaching materials, usually cyclostyled or screen-printed in Ambunti.

TPPSs like the ones in the Ambunti District have spread like wildfire. According to figures from LAS, in 1993 there were 1,560 classes with 49,691 students using 227 languages. In some areas (such as the East Sepik Province and National Capital District) extensive use of Tok Pisin is noted, but the exact numbers are not available. According to figures given by Ray (1994), there were 2,309 TPPS programs with 79,445 students in 1994.

Despite support from the national government, these programs are still outside the formal education system, and run by local communities and non-government organizations (NGOs) such as various church groups, Women's Councils, the YWCA and environmental groups. However, according to the educational reform recommended by the 1991

*Education Sector Review* (PNG Department of Education 1991), the system is being restructured to include vernacular education in the first three years of formal schooling: “the reform removes the first two years of schooling out of the current Community Schools and into a new village based Elementary School with a programme that resembles some of the vernacular schools that are currently operating outside of the formal system” (Curriculum Reform Office 1994:4). These two years will be preceded by one preparatory year, modelled on the current TPPSSs.

There have been many criticisms of the proposed educational reform, and there will be massive funding and organizational constraints on its implementation. But the biggest obstacle is in trying to convert a successful grass-roots, community owned movement into a top-down, government-controlled system. At any rate, if it is successful, many of the Community Schools will be using Tok Pisin as the language of education, and Groves’ recommendation will be partially implemented after all.

### Solomon Islands

The government of the Solomon Islands took over the formal education sector in 1974, and since then, as in PNG, the educational policy has revolved around the attainment of literacy in English – even after independence in 1978. There has been no attempt in the formal sector to use other languages to teach literacy, including Pijin. Jourdan (1990) points out that “despite the fact that Pijin is the most widely spread language of the archipelago, and certainly the main language of the urban centres, it is not recognized as being an asset in the education process” (p.169). However, she describes the widespread use of Pijin among school children and its unofficial use by teachers in the classroom (p.170).

This observation was backed up by a large-scale national survey of literacy and language, conducted in 1991 (Solomon Islands National Literacy Committee 1992). The objectives of the survey were to determine usage of languages throughout the country, attitudes to languages, and literacy levels. [The results were described in the *PACE Newsletter* 4 (1993), p.8.] With regard to formal education, the survey found that while English is the official language of instruction in the education system, Pijin is the de facto medium of instruction in most schools (p.28). In the

communities surveyed: “78% of schools use a mixture of English and Pijin, with or without a vernacular, as the medium of instruction” (p.43). The report makes the following suggestion (p.43):

A less confused learning environment for students could be created by the adoption of a single language as the medium of instruction. In view of the large numbers of people who understand Pijin, the most effective language in this respect should be Pijin on a national basis...English should be taught as a subject using tried methods of TESL teaching.

The report contains three important recommendations with regard to the use of Pijin in education:

- Recommendation No.3 (p.3): “Pijin should be adopted as the national language of the Solomon Islands.”
- Recommendation No.4 (p.4): “Instruction in educational institutions should be in Pijin or a vernacular.”
- Recommendation No.6 (p.5): “All educational establishments should examine the possibility of offering courses in vernaculars and Pijin. The medium of instruction at all levels should be that language which offers maximum understanding, ie Pijin.”

Whether or not these recommendations would be acceptable to the general population is another matter. Another part of the survey (Tables 11 and 12, pp.28-9) shows that while Pijin is used most in schools, people still prefer English. This information is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Reported and preferred language use in Solomon Islands schools:

	home language	Church language	Pijin	English
reported use	27%	1%	55%	17%
preferred use	22%	---	21%	40%

The only areas in which a clear decision has been made to use Pijin for instruction are non-formal education programs, mostly for adults. The first attempt to use Pijin as a medium for teaching literacy was the Pijin Literacy Project, coordinated by the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) beginning in 1978. The project produced a number of readers and a guide book for reading and writing in Pijin: *Hao fo ridim an raetem Pijin*. However, the specific project no longer exists, although SICA is still active in Pijin literacy with ongoing translation work. Another pioneering organization in Pijin literacy has been the Nazareth Apostolic

Centre (NAC). They have been teaching initial literacy in Pijin to women for a number of years and also have trained students to teach reading and writing skills when they return to their villages. NAC have also produced several books in Pijin.

In 1992, the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (LASI) was formed and a coordinator appointed. [See the latest report form LASI in this issue.] LASI has since sponsored several non-formal education efforts using Pijin. These include the production of new materials and the reprinting of *Buk fo ridim an raetem Pijin* (Lee 1981). LASI has also sponsored several training courses, including training of 50 new literacy teachers at NAC, done by the PNG Trust and UPNG training team, and 15 one-day workshops to train teachers from the Honiara Preschool Association to use newly developed Pijin materials. LASI-supported literacy projects using Pijin include: the Holy Cross and Valeato Literacy Class, the adult literacy group at Bishop Epalle Primary School, the Malaita Vernacular Literacy Program (along with three Malaita languages) and the Mother's Union of the Church of Melanesia (Mosley 1992).

The Mother's Union runs at least 60 schools, including 7 in Honiara with approximately 300 students and about 1000 students outside Honiara. The classes are held three days a week, taught by volunteer teachers. Although the program formerly taught literacy in English, it is now done mostly in Pijin (Dora Ho'ota and Alice Kaua, interview, 1995).

In 1995 LASI embarked on a large-scale adult literacy project, called "Literacy 2000". Its goal is to improve the literacy rate in the Solomons to 95% of the adult population, and to create a sustainable literacy network with other Melanesian countries that provides training, follow-up support and literacy materials. Literacy will be taught mostly in Pijin. As pointed out by the Chairman of the Management Committee of LASI (Bernie O'Donnell, personal communication, 1994):

There has been no acceptance of Pidgin teaching in schools, but the successes of LASI with adults should provide a demonstration of possibilities. In short, it would be reasonable to say that Pidgin certainly has acceptance for Adult Learning and is most effective...

## 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. Thomas (1990) outlined developments with regard to the proposed use of Bislama as the language in education. He reported (p.244):

During a debate on the question of Bislama in schools, in April 1982, a majority of members of parliament favoured introduction of Bislama as either a medium of instruction or as a subject. Support for the teaching of Bislama in schools came from government and opposition members alike.

He also reported a similar point of view from participants at the 1981 Vanuatu Language Planning Conference and from the Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs (p.245):

The final resolution which the Language Planning Conference adopted showed strong support for the use of Bislama. It recommended that Bislama should be taught at least as a subject in the first four years of primary school and used as the medium of instruction for classes five and six.

Although nothing came of these recommendations, Bislama does have an unofficial role within the formal education system. 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*, 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. The report noted (p. xiii):

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.

[See also *PACE Newsletter* 1 (1990), p.4.]:

Bislama is most probably used unofficially as a medium of instruction in primary education as well, but as with Pijin in the Solomons, its use is openly recognized only in non-formal education. For example, the 15-20 Rural Development Training Centres, which provide education for school leavers in areas such as health and the environment, are now developing Bislama curricula.

The largest adult literacy project in Vanuatu, run by World Vision, also uses Bislama, and has produced an effective set of literacy materials in the language. (In some cases, Bislama is taught first, and then literacy.) It began in 1989 in northeast

Malakula, expanded to Epi, Ambrym and Tanna in 1992, to Santo in 1993 and to Maewo in 1995. The figures in 1993 were as follows (World Vision Vanuatu 1993):

Table 2: *The World Vision Adult Literacy Program, 1993*

Island	No. of classes	No. of trainers	No. of students
Malakula	3	3	23
Ambrym	3	5	30
Epi	5	8	50
Tanna	13	15	206
Santo	4	4	32

The program is community based, as described below (World Vision Australia 1995:39):

Ni-Vanuatu village literacy teachers are supported for the time of their services to the community, by the community. They receive gifts of food and labour from their classes, and these classes, often with the assistance of the communities from which they come, or from the democratically-run Village Committees, conduct fund-raising activities such as the production and marketing of vegetables. Thus established, village based literacy programs, serving the interests and needs of all in the community, can continue for as long as the communities wish, and are as sustainable as those communities choose...

The reason Bislama was chosen over other vernaculars is given as follows (World Vision Australia 1995:12):

WVV [World Vision Vanuatu] has elected to teach literacy in Bislama because in a country populated by circa 156,000 speaking 105 languages, Bislama is used by the largest group and has something of a unifying function amongst a people only recently encouraged to think of themselves as a nation. More than this, literacy in local language, whilst this certainly does help with the retention of the local culture, does not facilitate access to information about the changes in the external world that are impacting on village life, including their health. For this, knowing Bislama is most important in Vanuatu because this is the language of the government departments such as the Ministry of Health, of NGOs and of the radio...

The program has been evaluated in 1992 by Ross McDonald who noted (World Vision Vanuatu 1993): "The program is filling a need in Vanuatu for non-formal education. It gives hope to many older ni-Vanuatu who see

the program as offering them a last chance to become literate as well as giving school dropouts another chance at literacy and numeracy."

World Vision also receives requests for training and materials in adult literacy from a range of church groups and non-government organizations, such as the National Council of Women, and from government departments as well, including Health, Education, Early Childhood Development, and Agriculture. In a 1994 evaluation of the program, involving extensive consultation with these bodies, it was found that "with the exception of SIL, there was broad agreement with its practice of teaching Bislama where necessary and then literacy in Bislama" (World Vision Australia 1995:4).

Another organization that runs adult literacy programs using Bislama is the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i faith. They began on Tanna in 1977, suspended the program from 1983-9, and started again in 1990. They now have youth volunteers teaching in five areas of Tanna and in a very remote area of Santo (Charlie Pierce, interview, 1995). The Baha'is have also developed attractive reading materials in Bislama. Other groups doing adult literacy work in Bislama on a smaller scale are the Presbyterian and Anglican churches.

Training for all these projects has recently been provided by a national workshop run by visiting trainers from UPNG and the PNG Trust. The National Community Development Trust (NKDT) in Vanuatu also provides training using the PNG Trust model. They have a mobile team of 7 trainers on the islands of Efate and Nguna. In addition to training teachers for adult literacy, they have trained teachers for preschools following the PNG TPPS model.

Vanuatu has an active preschool program with approximately 570 schools and 800 teachers. Bislama is often the medium of instruction, and it is the language used in *Kindabuk* (Brown and Crowley 1990), a collection of educational activities for young children, which is an important resource for preschool teachers. The Vanuatu Preschool Association is an NGO, although coordinators are employees of the Department of Education. However, the Vanuatu preschools are quite different from those in PNG. Children are introduced to some basic reading and writing, but the goal is socialization rather than acquisition of literacy skills. However in some cases, efforts are being made to

combine the two systems. For example, teachers at Lawa Preschool at Southwest Bay (Malakula) have attended the PNG Trust training course held in Port Vila, and are attempting to teach literacy in Bislama to the preschool children. The progress of these students in comparison to others will be monitored when they reach the primary school in 1996.

In 1993, the Literacy Association of Vanuatu (LAV) was established, with members from organizations doing literacy work, including SIL, World Vision, NKDT, the Baha'i Faith, the Preschool Association. With an increasing interest in literacy in Vanuatu languages, the use of Bislama in non-formal education will almost certainly increase as well.

### Research

One argument against using Melanesian Pidgin in education is that it will interfere with students' subsequent acquisition of English. This argument is used by people who may otherwise support the use of vernacular languages in education, but think that Melanesian Pidgin is a special case because of its apparently close relationship to English in terms of vocabulary (or lexicon). For example, Thomas (1990:245) described reactions to proposals made at the 1981 Vanuatu Language Planning Conference that Bislama be used in the formal education system:

One of the most common fears concerning the introduction of Bislama as a language of education is that, owing to lexical similarities, negative transfer occurs when pupils subsequently learn English. This fear was also expressed at the conference, when it was claimed that when children learn Bislama at an early age 'it tends to interfere with their learning of English'.

Similar reactions occurred at the 1988 Workshop on Vernacular Education and Bilingual Education in Australia and the South Pacific in response to suggestions that Melanesian Pidgin be used in bilingual programs in linguistically heterogeneous urban areas (Siegel 1993:300).

In order to test the legitimacy of these fears, an evaluation of the PIM Tok Pisin Prep-school program in Ambunti PNG (described above) was started in 1989. The program was evaluated according to both socio-cultural and educational criteria, using ethnographic, survey and formal comparative data. The ethnographic research consisted of

unstructured interviews with community school teachers, village committee members and parents, in which they were asked to give their general opinions about the program. In light of the predictions of interference made by senior educators and administrators, teachers were also asked a specific question about the effect of having learned initial literacy in Tok Pisin on the English of the former prep-school students. In addition to this ethnographic research, teachers' opinions and attitudes were also surveyed by questionnaires.

The formal comparative research was carried out in the community school at the district centre of Ambunti (St Joseph's Community School). It involved comparing the educational achievement of students who had gone through the prep-school program and those who had not. Since the evaluation was interested in finding out whether the community judged the program as a success or failure, the decision was made to use locally familiar and accepted criteria: namely community school term test results. These tests are normally held at the end of each of the four terms in the school year. Marks are given in three subject areas: English, Mathematics ("Maths"), and General Subjects (health, social science, etc.). The term test results of "ex prep" students (who had gone through the prep-school program) were compared to those of the "no prep" students (who had not gone through the program). There were three research hypotheses:

- H<sub>0</sub> there is no difference between the marks of the two groups
- H<sub>1</sub> the marks of the "no prep" students are significantly higher than those of the "ex prep" students, especially in English (the prediction according to the "interference" argument)
- H<sub>2</sub> the marks of the "ex prep" students are significantly higher than those of the "no prep" students

Because their one or two years of extra formal education may give ex prep students an initial advantage, the marks were also examined in upper as well as lower grades, with the prediction being that any initial differences between the groups would be neutralized over time.

Results: First of all, interviews and questionnaires showed that community school teachers think that the "ex prep" students are well-adjusted, cooperative, more active in participation in class and have better attendance records than "no prep" students.

With regard to English, the teachers reported that there are no special problems of interference, and that the influence of Tok Pisin can be seen only sometimes in spelling and pronunciation. The “ex prep” students learn English more easily than the “no prep” students. The same is true for Mathematics and General Subjects to some extent. Several teachers said that the Prep-school Program makes their job easier. Of the three head teachers interviewed, the two from “bush schools” (small schools outside the district centre) were extremely favourable in their comments. The head teacher from the Ambunti community school, however, was not so impressed. He said that the Prep-school Program helps the students when they first come to school, but after one or two terms, the other students catch up. Interviews with parents, committee members and students reveal only favourable attitudes to the program.

At this stage of the research, figures on drop-out rates and term test results have been analysed for the Ambunti community school only up to the end of 1992. There are many problems with gathering these figures because some results have been lost and some teachers have left the school without leaving their records behind. Sufficient results are available so far for three “streams” of community school students:

Stream 1: those who began Grade 1 in 1988

Stream 2: those who began Grade 1 in 1989

Stream 3: those who began Grade 1 in 1990

For Stream 1, complete records are available only for 1988, 1990 and 1992 (Grades 1, 3 and 5); the 1989 and 1991 records are missing. For Stream 2, complete records are available for 1989, 1991 and 1992 (Grades 1, 3 and 4); the 1990 records are missing for one of the two classes. For Stream 3, complete records are available for 1990, 1991 and 1992 (Grades 1, 2 and 3).

The statistical analysis of the data on academic achievement involved the measurement of three dependent variables and two groups of possibly relevant influencing factors. The dependent measures were final term test scores for English, Maths and General Subjects, all of which were standardized. The first groups of factors were whether the students attended the prep-school program (prep-school) or not (no prep-school). The second group were measurement occasions: three different grades for each stream.

The means for the standardized scores are given in the tables below.

Table 3: Stream 1: Means (standardized scores)

		Grade 1	Grade 3	Grade 5
Ex prep N=9	English	1.00	0.61	0.58
	Maths	1.01	0.55	0.60
	General Subjects	1.12	0.67	0.69
No prep N=7	English	-0.30	0.06	-0.30
	Maths	-0.46	-0.36	-0.42
	General Subjects	-0.53	-0.12	-0.09

Table 4: Stream 2: Means (standardized scores)

		Grade 1	Grade 3	Grade 4
Ex prep N=9	English	0.53	0.47	0.46
	Maths	0.51	0.77	-0.08
	General Subjects	0.53	-0.003	0.15
No prep N=14	English	-0.29	-0.35	-0.26
	Maths	-0.29	-0.52	0.05
	General Subjects	-0.30	0.02	-0.002

Table 5: Stream 3: Means (standardized scores)

		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Ex prep N=17	English	0.41	0.46	0.21
	Maths	0.47	0.40	0.36
	General Subjects	0.27	0.51	0.40
No prep N=13	English	-0.48	-0.19	-0.12
	Maths	-0.56	-0.26	-0.32
	General Subjects	-0.40	-0.22	-0.37

The analysis of these results indicates that children who had been involved in the prep-school program scored significantly higher in term tests than those who had not been involved. Importantly, the overall higher achievements were in English, as well as in Maths and General Subjects. Therefore, both the null hypothesis and H<sub>1</sub> (the prediction of the interference argument) can be rejected. Furthermore, on the basis of the test scores, the prep-school children showed significantly higher academic achievement across time in all subjects. The differences between the groups over time were consistent for all grades, with the exception of Maths in Grade 4 for Stream 2. There is no explanation for this anomaly, but it does not alter the overall result that the effect of two extra years of schooling was not significantly neutralized over time. This is contrary to the view that students who have not attended prep-school quickly catch up with the ones that have.

Thus, this study clearly refutes arguments that using Melanesian Pidgin in formal primary education will adversely affect

students' subsequent acquisition of English.

## Conclusion

Although Melanesian Pidgin is now recognized as an important tool for non-formal education in Papua New Guinea, Solomons Islands and Vanuatu, it is still not seen as appropriate for formal education. Perhaps word of the success of the Tok Pisin Prep-school program will begin to filter through to educational planners in all three countries.

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## Recent publications:

The report above is taken from "The use of Melanesian Pidgin in Education" by Jeff Siegel, a chapter in the recent publication: *Pacific Languages in Education* edited by France Mugler and John Lynch (Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, 1996). Three other chapters are relevant to PACE in Melanesia.

In the first, "Solomon Islands Pijin in education" (pp.191-208), Ernest W. Lee describes the unofficial status of Pijin as the national language and reviews two arguments against using Pijin in formal education: lack of standardization of spelling and lack of materials. According to the author, both of these would not be problems if "the value of including Pijin in the curriculum is taken seriously". The chapter also describes the translation courses he teaches in Pijin at the Bishop Patterson Theological College. In these courses he gives students the history of Melanesian Pidgin and helps them appreciate that it is a genuine language. He also teaches students to use a standardized spelling for Solomons Pijin. In addition, students examine some of the grammatical differences between Pijin and English, and some of these are described. The chapter ends with a short description of Lois Lee's teaching of basic literacy in Pijin to the wives of the students. He emphasizes the importance of people learning literacy in a language they know before learning it in English.

In "The banned national language: Bislama and formal education in Vanuatu" (pp.245-57), John Lynch describes how "in

some schools students may actually be punished for speaking their national language [Bislama] in the school grounds”, and examines the reasons for such a state of affairs. These include the view that Bislama is not a real language and that it is unsuitable because of lack of standardization and necessary vocabulary. However, Lynch shows that the real difficulty “lies in the lack of official recognition or endorsement of any standard orthography, and in the lack of official encouragement of vocabulary development”. Several recommendations and proposals for using Bislama in education are described, but none of these have been implemented, and will not be, according to the author, until people’s attitudes change. Until that time, Vanuatu will remain as “probably the only country in the world in which the constitutionally recognized national language is neither an official medium of instruction nor a subject in the primary or high school systems”.

In contrast, the use of Bislama for teaching a university level course about Bislama is the topic of Terry Crowley’s chapter: “Yumi toktok Bilsma mo yumi tokabaot Bislama: Teaching Bislama *in* Bislama” (pp.259-72). He presents a rationale for teaching the language as a subject to people who already speak it, describes the course “Introdaksen long stadi blong Bislama” he wrote for the University of the South Pacific in the 1980s and discusses the development of linguistic terminology in Bislama for use in talking about the language in the course.

*Vernacular Education in the South Pacific* by Jeff Siegel (International Development Issues No.45, AusAID, Canberra, 1996) is a report reviewing the literature on vernacular education in general and in the South Pacific in particular. Melanesian Pidgin is considered a Pacific vernacular and its use in education (especially non-formal education) in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is described in detail.

## CONFERENCES

### Past conferences

The second Annual Creole Language Workshop was held at Florida International University in March 1996. The theme was “Creole Language Use in an Urban Setting: New Directions in Education and Society”. The workshop addressed relevant issues such as:

- What are creole languages?
- How are creoles different from traditional languages spoken in south Florida?
- How can the public school system linguistically and educationally better accommodate children who speak creole languages?
- What are the implications of creoles for the public schools’ traditional bilingual programs?
- How can public school teachers become knowledgeable about and learn creole languages?
- How can individuals in the public sector address and better accommodate the needs of speakers of creole languages?
- How can creole languages become part of the university curriculum?

The keynote address, “The language education of Creole speakers in international urban society”, was given by Dr Dennis Craig, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana. Other papers included:

- “No one’s language in no one’s land: pidgin and the politics of development in Papua, New Guinea” by Suzanne Romaine
- “Educating the creole-speaking child in North American schools” by Ian Robertson
- “S’up with African American English? Continuities, characteristics, controversies, and curricular implications” by Faye McNair-Knox
- “Da wey wi tak de wey wi lib: Education and evolution of Gullah/Geechee culture through language” by Marquetta Goodwine
- “Creole languages and bilingual education: Problems, rights or resources?” by Flor Zephir
- “Creole in education: The case of Guadeloupe” by Juliette Sainton
- “The role of Haitian Creole in the Haitian school system” by Yves DeJean
- “Couleuvre qui cache, vini gros: The construction of identity and its effect on learning among creole-speaking children” by Peter Roberts.

### Upcoming conferences:

The **Pacific Area Contact Linguistics Association** (PACLA) will be meeting in conjunction with the Third Conference on Oceanic Linguistics (TRICOL) at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand 16-19 January 1996 (not 8-12 January as announced in the last newsletter). For further information, contact Terry Crowley, Linguistics, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand; e-mail: tcrowley@waikato.ac.nz.

As part of the 1997 conference of the American Association of Applied Linguistics



(AAAL) there will be a colloquium “**Creole Linguistics and Social Responsibility**”. The conference will be from Sat. 8 March - Tues. 11 March 1997 at the Holiday Inn International Drive Resort, 6515 International Drive, Orlando, Florida.

Here is some information, provided by the organizer, Lise Winer:

*This colloquium is dedicated to Charlene Sato, whose pioneering and persistent work on and on behalf of creole languages and speakers provide us with an example of the quintessential applied linguist.*

Presenters and abstracts:

Lise Winer, Southern Illinois University-Cabondale (Chair):

Creole languages provide special windows into both the most fundamental and the most changeable aspects of language. Traditionally marginalized and stigmatized as inferior, creoles attract special attention in regard to their social matrix and interactions of their speakers. These presentations describe some roles and tasks of creole linguists, including educator, health-care worker, novelist, historian.

Robin Sabino, Auburn University, “The linguist and the last speaker”:

The linguist/consultant relationship with a last speaker of an underdocumented creole language poses singular responsibilities. In addition to protecting the consultant’s privacy, the researcher must meet the challenge of interpreting the consultant’s linguistic competence to both the local community and the broader academic audience. This paper considers several aspects of this challenge.

Ian Robertson, University of the West Indies, “Language, linguistics and social responsibility in the Caribbean”:

Initial motivation for study of Caribbean sociolinguistic complexes was redressing the failure of education systems. Realization that information from such study has considerable implications for linguistic theory has lured many creole linguists away from addressing social concerns. This paper examines practical contributions linguists can make to developing necessary levels of social “linguistic literacy”.

Jean D’Costa, Hamilton College, “The linguist as author: Authorizing new voices”

Outside the academy, the fiction writer faces hostile confusions and brilliant possibilities, fought over by prescriptivists of every kind – from publishers to parents. Defining a fictional world forces the *author* into proscribed territory where the *linguist* clarifies such strategies as orthography and

code-switching – choices involved in representing complex language cultures.

Peter Patrick, Georgetown University, “Linguistics and health: Discourse in an urban creole setting”

This paper reports ongoing research on ethnocultural and sociolinguistic dimensions of diabetes care in Jamaica. Drawing on perspectives from sociolinguistics and medical anthropology, doctor/patient talk in a Jamaican NGO diabetes clinic is described, focusing on miscommunication, (lack of) shared knowledge, and strategies of resistance to institutional authority.

For more details about the colloquium contact Lise Winer

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The Linguistics Program at Florida International University in Miami is running the **Third Annual Creole Language Workshop** to be held 19-23 March 1997. The Annual workshops provide an opportunity for public school educators and administrators, university staff and students, creolists, and members of the community to come together to exchange views and address issues and concerns of creole language use in an urban setting, with particular emphasis on the educational system. This year’s theme is “Empowering creoles: Developing pedagogical materials in and on creoles”. The keynote speaker will be Dr Loreto Todd. There will also be lectures by invited speakers, panel discussions and several workshops on a variety of creole languages.

Additional individual papers and panel proposals on the theme are still being solicited. Please send a 1-page abstract to the following address or get in contact for further information:

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\*\*NOTE: The deadline for submission of abstracts is 20 December 1996. Submissions by e-mail will be accepted! Notification will be sent in early January.