Issues in Language Planning and Literacy

Edited by

Anthony J. Liddicoat

Language Planning and Policy

LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY
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Introduction:
Literacy and Language Planning

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Literacy and Language Planning Activities

Literacy planning is usually treated as an example of language-in-education planning (Baldauf, 1990; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Paulston & McLaughlin, 1994), or acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989). Language-in-education planning itself is frequently considered as one type of language planning activity within a typology of approaches which also includes status planning, corpus planning, and prestige planning, each with its own foci and language planning issues. However, when one begins to examine literacy as a language planning activity, it becomes clear that there are multiple interrelationships between the four dimensions of language planning and literacy planning.

Language planning for literacy acquisition may be considered from the perspective of corpus planning, including language standardisation processes and the development of scripts, dictionaries, grammars, and educational materials to be used for literacy instruction (Liddicoat, 2005). The acquisition of literacy requires that a language has the required technologies for literacy and at the most basic level of literacy planning, descriptive linguists working with indigenous languages are frequently involved in the development of orthographies of the languages on which they work and may also produce grammars, dictionaries and texts which have a place in the teaching and learning of literacy in the language. Their work is often driven by the competing demands of their academic work and the needs and expectations of local communities and may occur as local micro-level planning (Baldauf, 2005) which is not integrated into larger educational policies and programmes.

Literacy planning also involves elements of status planning: the designation of languages as languages of literacy and as media of instruction (van Els, 2005; Tsui & Tollefson, 2004). In terms of language choice, there appear to be two central choices that literacy planning considers: the development of literacy in the official language(s) of a polity or the development of literacy in the languages spoken by the learners (vernacular literacy). In reality, most school-based literacy development is framed in terms of the acquisition of literacy in an official language, with vernacular literacy being seen as a means to literacy in the official language rather than as an end in itself. Vernacular literacy programmes, therefore, separate the acquisition of literacy from the acquisition of the official language. The first step in education is to develop basic literacy skills in the first language of the learner (often together with learning of the official language) with the objective of transferring literacy skills from the first language to the official language later in education (Lotherington, 1998).

Finally there is a prestige dimension associated with literacy planning (Ager, 2005), in that it may be necessary to promote literacy in a particular language as a

worthwhile practice. This is particularly the case where literacy is developed in a language which has held a subordinated position to another language (such as an official language) or for which there is no literate tradition. The development of a vernacular literacy programme in such a language does not in and of itself create a motivation for acquiring literacy practices in the language. Rather the motivation may need to be developed by creating a language ecology in which literacy in a local language has a valued role to play and fulfils real world needs for the speech community which is to acquire it.

Literacy and Language Planning Contexts

Given the discussion in the previous section, language planning for literacy cannot be readily reduced to language-in-education planning alone, nor to the core emphases of language-in-education planning research. Rather literacy planning is a site for the intersection of a range of language planning activities and language planning research in this area must of necessity be characterised by that complexity. The complexity of literacy planning is, however, not simply a question of the language planning activities involved, but also of the contexts in which language planning is done. Literacy planning covers a number of language planning contexts each of which generates different planning needs and approaches:

- literacy in a national language as a first language;
- literacy in a national language as an additional language, for national minorities or immigrant groups;
- literacy in a minority language as a first language, for national minorities or immigrant groups;
- literacy in a minority language as an additional language;
- literacy in multiple languages as first languages; and
- literacy in multiple languages as additional languages.

All of these areas have been treated to some extent in accounts of language-in-education planning, although language planning contexts in which the choice of the language for literacy is an important factor tend to have received the most attention.

In addition, the aims and objectives, the literacy target levels and the education processes involved in literacy planning vary in emphasis in different social contexts. The main distinction is between countries in which (near) universal literacy has been achieved and those in which it has not been achieved. Where universal literacy has not been achieved, the emphasis in language-in-education planning tends to be on the dissemination of basic literacy skills either through school education or a combination of school education and adult education. In these contexts, literacy is usually defined as the ability to read and write everyday texts (that is, functional literacy; for a critique see Lankshear, 1993; Levine, 1982). Target literacy levels may typically be quite low and focus primarily on the basic, bottom-up literacy skills of decoding and encoding text (for example, grapheme formation and recognition, word recognition, spelling, punctuation, etc.). The functional emphasis in such literacy programmes is typically placed on:

- instrumental functions: literacy to provide information about the problems and requirements of daily life: reading signs, pamphlets, instructions, advertisements, etc.;
- confirmation functions: literacy to support attitudes, ideas and knowledge already acquired: reading agreements, confirming information from a manual, reading religious books;
- memory-supportive functions: literacy as a memory aid: reading directories, health records, etc., writing notes, etc.,
- permanent record functions: literacy for the production and use of permanent (legal) records: taxation and other official forms, certificates, etc. (cf. Heath, 1986)

In countries where there is a high degree of literacy, the emphasis in literacy planning is typically quite different. In this context, the development of basic literacy is seen as the normal and expected outcome of education, and the emphasis is on the quality and nature of the literacy acquired. Furthermore, in many such countries at the moment there is a tension between the definitions of literacy and of what constitutes good literacy. At the level of definition there is a base level conflict between literacy conceptualised as print-based practices (reading and writing) and literacy as print-, oral- and screen-based practices (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing video, using computers, etc.) (Westby, 2004). This conflict involves a tension between literacy practices of the past and literacy practices of the future and reflects a period of rapid change in the nature of literacy (Brodkey, 1991).

Many high literacy countries experience 'literacy crises' (for example Green, Hodgens, & Luke, 1991), which are not so much related to objectively declining literacy levels but are the result of these tensions in understandings of literacy resulting from rapid changes in literacy practices and the adaptation of education to new literacy needs (Gee, 1990; McQuillan, 1998; Ohmann, 1987). The crises are therefore constructed around ideologies of literacy, but are interpreted in terms of literacy standards. The result of this contestation of the nature of literacy is that there can be a perception among some groups that literacy levels are declining (especially in terms of spelling, punctuation, and handwriting), while at the same time others maintain that text comprehension and production skills are much more sophisticated than in the past and that literacy levels are therefore increasing.

From a language planning research perspective, these literacy crises need to be located within their context – the levels of literacy which are considered problematic in high literacy contexts are typically higher than the levels of literacy which education aims to produce in low literacy contexts. What one society constructs as failure may be constructed in another as success. If the standards of industrialised countries were used to measure literacy in developing countries, 'the number of adult illiterates in developing countries would likely go up by at least two or three fold' (Wagner, 2000: 14). The changing standards and definitions of literacy and the changing nature of the practices needed to function effectively in the workforce, mean that the disparities between literacy approaches in high literacy contexts and low literacy contexts contribute to an increasing 'liter-

acy divide' in which only some literacy learners are actually exposed to the wider literacy demands of the post-industrial world (Walter, 1999).

Investigating Language Planning for Literacy

Classic language planning theory establishes a set of core questions that need to be asked in understanding language planning: what is planned, who does the planning, for whom and how (Cooper, 1989; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). While these questions provide one way to investigate language planning for literacy, it would appear from the previous discussion that additional issues need to be considered in understanding how literacy is planned in order to understand the subjectivities involved in literacy planning. The classic questions collectively address the question of how language planning contributes to literacy development. The complexities and social consequences of literacy require questions that go beyond issues of process and explore ideologies. It is important, therefore, to understand how language planning constructs literacy and the consequences that this construction has for literacy learners. The ways in which literacy is understood in the act of language planning affect the nature of literate practices to which learners are introduced, how their literacies are valued and how their literacies impact on their possible life choices. Furthermore, it is important to investigate how language planning constructs the literate subject and how this affects literacy education and literate practice. The discourses generated by language planning work to create a particular persona for the literate person and the relationship that persona has to power. Discourses, for example, may construct the literate subject entirely in terms of human capital and literacy acquisition would in that case be constrained by economic performativities (Lyotard, 1979).

About this Volume

This volume is an attempt to explore some of the complexities and consequences of literacy in a range of contexts and from a range of perspectives. It brings together a collection of papers on language-in-education planning with a specific focus on literacy. It draws on a range of disciplinary perspectives from language planning and education with a range of perspectives and core research issues. It therefore represents an overview of the breadth of the field of language planning as it engages with questions of literacy.

The first chapter (Liddicoat) examines two core issues in language planning for literacy – the ways in which literacy has been defined and the relationship between literacy and language selection. The chapter argues that the nature of literacy itself has been considered to be unproblematic in much language planning work and that the focus has correspondingly been programme development and modes of delivery. The result is that literacy is often oversimplified and under-theorised and this creates problems for achieving the sorts of goals that language planning for literacy typically sets. The focus on literacy planning has often been on autonomous literacy rather than ideological literacy (Street, 1984) with an emphasis on developing the economic productivity of 'illiterate'. This conceptualisation of literacy becomes even more problematic when literacy becomes so tightly conceptualised as literacy in a particular language that other

literacies are excluded from discourses about literacy. Minority language literacies are marginalised and silenced in the construction of a monolingually and monoculturally homogenous literacy in which diversity of language and literacy practices are seem as problems for remediation rather than as purposeful and valuable capabilities of individuals.

The next papers are concerned with literacy in majority national languages either as first languages or as additional languages.

Stephens' chapter explores federal policies for early literacy in the United States and examines the ways in which literacy itself is constructed through the implementation of policy. She reports on two contexts in the implementation process: the introduction of the policy to state leaders and the process of engagement with the policy in the local context of one school. In these contexts, the nature of literate practice and the literate subject are constructed in differing and often competing ways with both dominant and subversive voices contributing to the ways language planning proceeds. The chapter demonstrates that literacy is an ideologically motivated concept and that although one ideology may be embedded in policy texts, the conceptualisation may be modified through the discursive practices of implementation. This means that language planning for literacy involves much more than planning the implementation of a policy document with agreed and articulated goals, but includes the on-going construction and contestation of the very idea of literacy, which in turn has implications for what is implemented and how.

Examining both general and local literacy planning in Africa, Muthwii provides a critique of the interaction between language planning and literacy development in Kenya. Muthwii examines the impact of the choice of English as the language of literacy development. She argues that, although English was not the first language of the Kenyan population, it was felt at independence that literacy in English was necessary for the economic and political development of the country, and the establishment of national unity. At the same time, the use of an additional language for literacy development has been responsible for the failure of the Kenyan education system to establish high levels of literacy and that, as a result, the choice of English as the language of instruction in Kenyan schools has created the very problems it was meant to remedy. Many Kenyans are not able to participate meaningfully in society, especially in the important discourses and thoughts, which are expressed in a language which is simultaneously official and foreign. The choice of language is, however, not the sole cause of Kenya's literacy problems and Muthwii suggests that the working definitions of literacy used in Africa, and school language practices, all contribute to the literacy problems. She argues for the development of first language literacy programmes in Kenya but notes that there are significant obstacles to undertaking such a programme including language attitudes among Kenyan and the entrenchment of English and neglect of local languages in the intervention strategies of international donor organisations.

Cray and Currie examine the nature of literacy planning and programmes for migrants to Canada and the ways in which literacy is constructed in an officially bilingual country. They note that the official policy position in Canada is that immigrants should be assisted in acquiring one of the two official languages as a part of their integration into Canadian society, but that in reality in most parts of

Canada, the focus is on English rather than French. Within this context they examine the current language planning documents in Canada dealing with the teaching of writing to determine how literate practice is constructed for immigrant learners. They argue that the focus on discrete macroskills in ESL provision in Canada leads to a decontextualisation and trivialisation of literacy which fails to integrate writing into real world language use. Their argument is effectively that Canadian ESL policy and practice do not construct writing as literacy, as it is understood in Canadian education, but rather as a language activity related to accurate reproduction of text. Moreover, they see the definition of language instruction as supplying survival level language abilities as being inappropriate for immigrants to become literate members of Canadian society. They see in the current language planning framework a failure of practice and provision to meet the expressed policy goals of language instruction in Canada: to enable immigrants to take up the 'values, rights, and responsibilities' of Canadian life.

Examining a fourth context, Chua reviews the ideological underpinnings of literacy in the multilingual context of Singapore where there is a conflict between the place of English and that of the local official languages: Chinese, Tamil and Malay. This conflict is between the need to maintain culture and heritage associated with local languages and the political and economic ideology which governs Singapore's language planning. There is an inherent tension between the desire to maintain a distinctly Asian identity, while privileging English as an international language. She argues that this causes an East–West dichotomy which constructs Singaporean citizens as bilingual and biliterate in English and their mother tongues, but as monocultural. She sees the concept of functional literacy as providing the ideological base for this dichotomy and the function-focused policies as sites for developing conflicting tensions among Singaporeans. The crucial literacy issue for Singapore therefore becomes one of balancing the contexts of literacy use, which are almost exclusively constructed in terms of economic internationalisation, and the requirements for biliteracy, which are framed in terms of local cultural identities. Currently the cultural is subordinated to the economic in Singapore's policy practice and the result is a shift from the local languages to English.

Also investigating the place of literacy education in a multilingual context, Ramanathan presents an analysis of the relationship between English-based and vernacular-based education in India. Her approach to studying language planning is to adopt a grounded, bottom up approach that begins to address issues around the inequities resulting from language planning and policy by focusing on what is actually occurring in the lives of students and teachers in the two different school contexts. By observing classroom practices, literacy materials and aspects of educational provision, she identifies fundamental differences in the nature of educational provision in English-medium and Gujurati medium schools. At the core of her argument is a contestation of what constitutes the literate subject and the value system in which literacy is acquired. She observes that vernacular practices receive different valuings in each of the mediums and construct the cultural knowledge that students bring to literacy in markedly different ways. She then examines the ways in which individuals and institutions act to refashion language planning and policy in the face of the existing inequities and attempts to bridge the divide between English and the vernacular

by using vernacular resources as ways to address perceived socio-educational inequalities and demonstrating how literacies can be harnessed as forms of oppositional practice, giving new performativities to vernacular literacies and constructing the English-vernacular divide in different ways (see also Ramanathan, 2005).

The remaining chapters deal with issues relating to literacy in non-official indigenous languages and non-standard varieties. The first three papers look at macro-level contexts for language planning and examine the place of minority languages in language-in-education policy and planning at a more general level.

Zhao traces the development of minority language literacy planning in the People's Republic of China since 1949 and argues that language planning for literacy has moved from a literacy campaign approach to a legislative approach which treats compulsory education as the mainstream means for literacy development. At the same time, he argues that China's language policy has changed from allowing parallel development of Chinese literacy and minority literacies to a linguistic hierarchy with Chinese as the dominant language and minority languages in a subordinated position. While policy at local level constructs literacy in a particular way, language planning is also an activity of local governmental organisation and this allows for the possibility that minorities may challenge national level constructions leading to differences between national legislation and local legislation. Zhao identifies three stances in Chinese language planning: *promotion*, which involves active support for minority language literacy, *permission*, which provides a place for such literacies in education, and *tolerance*, which allows, but does not actively support, minority literacies. While the national laws generally take a permission stance towards literacy in minority languages, local laws adopt stances ranging from promotion to tolerance. Zhao argues that the stance that is adopted in legislation is dependent on two sets of factors, the political will and power of the minority and the economic context which provides the background in which literacy practices are developed and rationalised.

Kosonen's chapter is a comparative study which examines literacy planning for ethnic minorities in three countries: Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. He argues that in all three polities literacy is conceptualised as a process tied to the standardised official language and that vernacular language literacy is marginalised, although to different extents in each country. In all three countries, ethnolinguistic minorities benefit less from the education services currently provided than do the dominant linguistic groups and Kosonen argues that the present emphases in language planning and literacy development appear to be widening the educational gap between the minority and majority populations, creating an internal literacy divide. At the same time, Kosonen finds that vernaculars are not entirely absent from language-in-education policies, except in Laos, but even in Cambodia and Thailand, this takes the form only of a number of pilot projects and small-scale efforts mainly by NGOs. In spite of the lack of official recognition of minority languages in education and literacy development, the vernaculars are used orally in education in all three polities for pragmatic purposes as the ethnolinguistic minorities on which Kosonen focuses are primarily monolingual speech communities without access to the official language of education. Kosonen argues that these local vernacular language practices may provide the basis for developing viable biliteracy programmes and emphasises

that reconceptualising literacy can legitimately be a grass-roots language planning activity.

Siegal's paper looks at literacy in pidgins and creoles and notes that one of the key difficulties facing these languages is the low prestige in which they are held. In developing literacy in these languages, therefore, status planning and corpus planning need to be accompanied by prestige planning in order to respond to the existing linguistic value system. Siegal notes that only four polities have adopted pidgins or creoles as languages of education: Seychelles, Haiti, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, but in each case only as a transitional programme towards literacy in another language. In spite of their limited scope, these programmes face opposition to the use of the language for literacy purposes because of the negative connotations associated with pidgins and creoles and the positive valuing of the standard lexifier languages. In other contexts, pidgins and creoles are used as language of literacy only in limited or experimental programmes, or outside formal education. Siegal argues that, while pidgins and creoles form a range of literate activities in many societies, literacy in these languages is typically acquired by transfer from practices learned in the official language – that is, first language literacy is derived from second language literacy. The fact that literacy is practiced in these languages indicates that there is a place in local language ecologies for literacy in pidgins and creoles and that these languages do in fact form part of a literate culture; however, this *de facto* status has not overcome negative perceptions of these languages.

Crowley examines the question of literacy in indigenous languages from a broad, ecological perspective to critique arguments that literacy in the Pacific does not give added status to local languages and that it should be discouraged because it was not part of traditional cultures, and as a consequence leads to the weakening of these languages, leading their replacement by colonial languages (see, e.g., Mühlhäusler, 1996, 2000). Crowley argues that such a position ignores the ways in which Pacific Island cultures have changed and that literacy has been fully incorporated into many local cultures. The core problem for language planning, as Crowley sees it, rests with the indigenisation of literacy, that is, literacy must be incorporated into people's cultures. While literacy may be introduced into a society as an exotic practice, it will only become successful if it becomes a local practice. This means that literacy planning without reference to the social practice of literacy by the newly literate is of itself a problematic venture: literacy does not automatically create its own contexts of use, but can only exist and develop within a context of use. Such contexts must be considered in language planning activities. In the end, if literate practice does become indigenised, it is the language of indigenised practice which fills the niche for literacy. In this sense, Crowley argues, the lack of literacy in a local language may contribute to language shift.

The papers by Lindström, Dunn, and Paviour-Smith investigate vernacular literacy in the Pacific and demonstrate some of the specific instances of the complexities that are presented by Crowley in language planning for literacy. While each of these studies has a concern with issues of corpus planning, they examine quite different contextual issues relating to literate practice in the communities concerned.

Lindström examines the ways in which Papua New Guinea's vernacular literacy policy is implemented in the Kuot speech community of New Ireland. Lindström indicates some of the problems which emerge for literacy planning in situations of language death where understandings of the nature and purpose of vernacular literacy may not be shared between language planners and communities. She examines a community which constructs vernacular literacy as a way of transmitting a language to future generations, but which has not indigenised literacy in any language. The result is a literacy programme, which becomes a *de facto* language programme and develops literate practices which have no context of use. Lindström presents a pessimistic view of the prospects of this programme for maintaining Kuot in a language ecology which has increasingly little place even for spoken Kuot. In this case, it is not that vernacular literacy itself has lead to language death, but rather that the literacy programme is being introduced in a context of language death.

Dunn's study of literacy in Touo, a language of the Solomon Islands, shows quite a different language planning situation. Touo exists in a multilingual environment where Touo literacy receives no institutional support and vernacular literacy is largely seen as the domain of other local vernaculars. Touo nonetheless has an orthographic tradition that is available for use in literacy, although the orthography to be used is contested, with a cleavage between religious denominations. Although Touo literacy would appear to be marginal, Dunn argues that a possible domain for Touo literacy appears to be developing in the context of traditional practices of land tenure. While Touo is used only for linguistically marginal genres such as listing of personal and tribal names, vernacular literacy is evidently a powerful potential source of social influence. The Touo people are indigenising literacy, although to a limited extent, and are integrating literate practice and the ideologies which surround it into traditionally valued practices.

Paviour-Smith examines the issues involved in literacy-related corpus planning for the Aulua language community of Vanuatu. He examines the contestation which can occur in developing an orthography in a context where a number of alternatives exist and notes that community perspectives of appropriate orthographic systems may diverge significantly from those of linguists. In particular, the symbolic associations that particular graphemic choices have may have a strong impact on the nature of the orthography developed. He then examines the process of developing materials for a literacy programme and documents the development of written forms of oral texts. He notes that this is far from a simple question of reproducing an oral narrative as a visual representation and notes that literate practices, derived from experiences of literacy in other languages and other contexts (for example, religion), influence how people understand and construct literate text. Paviour-Smith's study appears to demonstrate that rather than indigenising literate practices by adopting literacy in the vernacular, the Aulua have exogenised their discourse to conform to an externally imposed literate culture.

Dekker and Young's study also deals with a Pacific context – language planning for literacy for ethnolinguistic minorities in the Philippines – but emphasise the planning and implementation of literacy programmes. They situate the issue of vernacular languages within the context of their subordination to the dominant (official) languages, Pilipino and English, and the further privileged posi-

tion of English within Philippine society. The consequence of this is that minority language communities are marginalised politically, socially and educationally. They note that in the Philippine context literacy has been recognised as valuable by ethnolinguistic minorities and vernacular literacy is included in Philippines' policy if not in practice. Dekker and Young argue that minorities face two problems in becoming literate – that their local language is not used as the medium of instruction and the curriculum is culturally distant from the worldview and experience of the learners. This means that in order to succeed in the education system, learners are often forced to sacrifice their linguistic and cultural heritage in favour of national and international language education. The chapter examines a vernacular language programme developed as a response to the issues confronting ethnolinguistic minorities. They present a description of a highly consultative process of working with the community to develop a literacy programme which includes many conventional language planning activities relating to corpus and language-in-education planning and argue that local language planning work can play an important role of developing education for ethnolinguistic minorities.

The final paper takes a different perspective from the other papers dealing with vernacular literacy. In their study of Cypriot Greek, Papapavlou and Pavlou examine the potential for this non-standard variety to secure a place in education. The key issue here is the possibility for bi-dialectal education in Cypriot Greek and Modern Standard Greek in the Cypriot context. They argue that the place of non-standard varieties in education is contested and note that some of the dimensions of contestation are linked with the image and valuing of the non-standard variety in relation to the standard form of the language. To explore this contestation, and its implications for literacy development and schooling in general, they investigate primary school-teachers' perceptions of Cypriot Greek as a language variety and as a language for use in an educational context. Their study shows that, although a majority of teachers view Cypriot Greek positively, there is a sizable minority that maintain a negative image of the variety and reject its use in education. These opinions construct a discourse around the non-standard variety that both open a place for it in education, but also reject the validity of that place. While a non-standard variety is not widely embraced by teachers as having a legitimate place in education, it is unlikely that language planning initiatives with a focus on developing bi-dialectal literacies is likely to succeed.

Conclusions

These studies taken collectively indicate that language planning for literacy is a highly ideological activity in which definitions and conceptualisations of literacy and the literate subject and the place and valuing of dominant languages and practices and minority languages and practices form central issues in planning. Moreover, understandings of literacy and the languages to be used for literacy are open to be contested, although the possibility of such contestation depends on the relative power of those holding particular positions, on the status and image of the languages concerned and on the opportunities and contexts for using literacy. They also document that literacy planning is a language policy

and planning wide activity, and not just a sub-category of language-in-education planning.

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Language Planning for Literacy: Issues and Implications

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Language planning for literacy has typically focused on models of provision of print-based literacy programmes in order to develop widespread literate capabilities in reading and writing. This paper argues that contemporary literacy planning needs to consider more than models of delivery and engage with issues related to defining the nature of literate capability and the selection of languages in which literate capabilities will be developed. It argues that these questions are fundamental to the literate futures of people in a globalised world.

Keywords: language planning, literacy, autonomous literacy, ideological literacy, functional literacy, multiliteracies

Introduction

Literacy development is one of the central objectives of languages-in-education planning and has developed increasing significance in recent decades. In particular, there has been a strong focus on planning for developing the literacy abilities of large sectors of the population as part of mass education both by governments and by NGOs such as UNESCO, the IMF and the World Bank. In part, the emphasis on literacy has grown out of a perception that literacy is fundamental to contemporary economic systems and that economic development depends on the provision of adequate levels of literacy to a wide segment of the population. In response to such goals for literacy, language planning has traditionally taken the form of determining how to inculcate literate capabilities in as wide a segment of the population as possible (Hornberger, 1994a; Watters, 1990). The key planning dimension of literacy, then, has been to determine how best to provide as much literacy training as possible within the resources available to the polity. Literacy itself in such perceptions may, however, be reified as the device which will transform society in significant ways by achieving extra-linguistic goals of economic development, social improvement or democratisation, although the ability of literacy to achieve such goals is, as Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) have noted, debatable.

Recently, and especially in the context of social and economic globalisation, the questions surrounding planning for literacy have become more complex than those relating to programme delivery. In particular, the nature of literate capabilities has itself changed as the result of changes in communicative practices, and there are now emerging new literacies prompted by communication change, which are both contrasted with and additional to, the old literacies associated with more traditional communicative practices. This means that language planning for literacy is no longer simply a matter of planning for improvements in a pedagogic method for teaching a stable version of print literacy but instead, needs to engage with emerging and evolving understandings, conceptual-

isations and definitions of what it means to be literate, how, where and in what contexts and in which modalities. As a consequence, language planning needs to articulate the nature of the valued literate practices in a polity as a definitional activity as much as it needs to engage with issues of implementation. This paper will examine two aspects of this emerging context for language planning for literacy – definitions of literacy and language selection – and some of the consequences of language planning choices around these.

The Nature of Literacy

A core issue in language planning and literacy lies in the way in which the activity being planned is defined and these definitions are potentially quite problematic. Auerbach *et al*. (1997: 6) state that, 'What counts as literacy changes depending on the historical time, the place, the purpose and the people'. The definition given to literacy in a particular polity shapes the kinds of policies that are developed and the teaching and learning practices that are adopted.

One dimension of the definitional problem involves determining which language skills are to be considered as literate capabilities and which will be the focus of education. The ways in which literacy is defined in language-planning contexts is influenced by and may be in tension with academic understandings of literacy, which increasingly focus on the complexity and multiplicity of literate capabilities. Definitions of literacy can privilege some literate capabilities – notably print-based reading and writing – over others and in so doing can limit the scope of literacy programmes and the outcomes of literacy learning.

For example, the OECD defines literacy as 'using printed and written information to function in society in order to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential' (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2000: x) and further identifies three 'domains' of literacy skills:

- prose literacy – the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instructional manuals;
- document literacy – knowledge and skills needed to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts;
- quantitative literacy – the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a cheque book, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement. (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2000: x)

The definition of literacy given here is very much based on a view of print literacy with the reading of written information being privileged as the central literacy skill. While the OECD definitions include a dimension of use for information, it is not clear from the discussion of the domains that this use involves much writing, beyond filling in forms. Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) argue that literacy has historically been defined in terms of reading more than writing because of an

inherent assumption that extensive reading will ensure an ability to write. Moreover, writing instruction has focused on surface correctness and orthography rather than on communication through the written language.

Literacy, especially in the context of mass literacy campaigns, has also been conceptualised in terms of functional literacy, which has as its aim to equip the illiterate with the skills and knowledge which ensure competence to function as workers and citizens in a print-dominated society. The functionality of functional literacy is, therefore, related directly to the economic functioning of the literate subject (Bhola, 1994). Initial definitions of functional literacy were, however, not framed simply as issues of economic functionality. For example, UNESCO's original definition of functional literacy is highly contexted within the person's existing cultural framework:

> A person is functionally literate when he [*sic*] has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group. (Grey, 1956: 19)

Levine argues that the development of economically focused functional literacy was the result of an increasingly utilitarian turn in mass literacy campaigns in the framing of the advantages of literacy:

> After the disappointment and failures of previous literacy schemes, the new literacy thinking – adult, selective, developmental, participative – required a label that suggested the economic benefits that could be expected from investment in literacy, and 'functional' carried appropriate overtones. Nevertheless, history clearly shows how functional literacy was at an early stage adopted in a series of political, military, educational, and diplomatic arenas by parties who needed a label for their convictions regarding the economic potential of, and justification for, mass training for adults in basic literacy skills. (Levine, l982: 35)

Functional literacy is, therefore, a view of literacy which creates a dichotomy between the literate and the illiterate and sees those who are illiterate as being limited in their value in terms of human capital. It aims to overcome this defect by enabling people to fit more fully into existing social and economic circumstances, practices and roles from which they are barred by their illiteracy. This view equates, as Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2002) have noted, with a simplistic medical metaphor of the literate state in which being illiterate is equated with a disease for which remedy must be found, and literacy programmes are associated with metaphors of eradication (e.g. the common slogan 'stamp out illiteracy'). This metaphor stigmatises the literate state and not only oversimplifies the nature of literacy and illiteracy, but also ignores the fact that for some people and in some language circumstances, literacy may not be either necessary or desirable and may impact negatively on the linguistic ecology in which inappropriate literacy practices are introduced (Messineo & Wright, 1989; Mühlhäusler, 1992, 1996, 2000).

Functional approaches to literacy have been criticised because they aim to equip literacy learners only with sufficient competence to operate at the lowest levels of mechanical performance required to meet the demands of a print-dominated culture (Kozol, 1985). In his critique of functional literacy programme in

India, Agnihoti (1994) notes that: '. . . the best we have been able to do so far is to move slightly away from "writing your name" and "counting to ten" to a highly minimalised functionalist concept of literacy' (Agnihoti, 1994: 55). Similarly, Lankshear (1993: 94) further argues that, 'Functional literacy equips the person to respond to outside demands, to understand and to follow. There is no suggestion here of leading, commanding, mastering or controlling'. That is, it does not function to expand the possibilities of the newly literate beyond their existing social and economic context, but rather to develop their potential as human capital. This means that to be functionally literate can be seen as a negative state in which the literate person avoids failure to cope in the society in which he or she lives (Lankshear, 1993).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) literacy programmes from the mid-1960s used goals and strategies that were closely linked to developing literacy skills for economic growth. The programme aimed to promote functional literacy for specific groups of adults in key growth sectors of the economy so that literacy instruction would make them better workers. The net result of the programme in the participating countries was generally disappointing (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976) because the issue of learner motivation had been neglected and the workers in the sectors selected for the programme could see no direct advantage to themselves in becoming more productive human capital (Limage, 1999). The lack of direct benefit to participants, rather than to economies, is a common problem for functional literacy programmes. The result was that the term functional literacy took on a specific ideological connotation of creating a more efficient workforce without consideration of the needs and aspirations of individuals. This connotation further affected the extent to which literacy programmes could achieve even limited functional objectives. For example, UNESCO (1974) reported that a functional literacy programme for a mining community in Brazil failed because it was perceived as irrelevant to the needs and aspirations of the workers themselves and was at best thought to be an attempt on the part of mining companies to appear more humane, especially at a time when the military government had repressed earlier experimentation with literacy for political and social liberation based on the work of Freire (Limage, 1999).

In spite of the problems which came to be associated with the term functional literacy and which were recognised by UNESCO, the term continued to be used including in documents relating to the International Year of Literacy in 1990, although with fluctuating definitions (e.g. UNESCO, 1990). The term was used both to indicate functionality in reference to work rather than to the individual's autonomy and development and also implying a broader utilitarian mastery of the written word (Limage, 1999). In addition, functionality has been used to classify people into the dichotomy of 'functional' literate and 'functional' illiterate to refer to individuals in industrialised countries who have gone through part or all of the formal system of education but failed to acquire basic skills to 'function in society' (Giere, 1987). The result has been an emerging dichotomy between the functionally illiterate, who are those in industrialised societies without the skills to participate fully in economic life and the illiterate, who are those in developing countries without literacy skills (Limage, 1999).

An example of a recent literacy programme which reflects the limited scope of functional literacy programmes can be seen in recent literacy planning work

from Indonesia (Department of National Education Indonesia, 1999). The planning for the literacy programme involves the standard activities for programme delivery: developing training manuals and handbooks; training personnel; setting up delivery; establishing targets; evaluating outcomes; and measuring learner achievements. There is little attempt to describe the nature of the literacy needs of the learners themselves, nor of the literate goals beyond a statement that 'there are many citizens with minimal education who do not have the functional literacy competencies they need for solving problems in daily life'.

This formulation locates the literate needs of individuals within the context of dealing with the literacy demands of their current social position. The economically focused construction of literacy, however, becomes much more clearly articulated in the assessment checklist used to measure the new literates' achievements. These include:

- Reading and writing ability to fill out a biodata form.
- Ability to organise the steps and write instructions for a process.
- Mechanical ability to fill in each segment of a table accurately.
- Mechanical ability to line up numbers by the decimal point.
- Ability to add a column of numbers.
- Understanding of production units.
- Understanding of unit cost.
- Ability to multiply unit cost and production units.
- Ability to calculate profit/loss.
- Quantitative amount of writing.
- Spelling ability.
- Mechanical ability to write clearly and form neat letters.
- Ability to organise words into a paragraph with sentences and punctuation.
- Ability to combine phrases into complete and complex sentences.
- Ability to explain an idea clearly.
- Ability to understand the questions. (Department of National Education Indonesia, 1999: 24–5)

The focus here, especially in the items listed in the middle of the checklist, is clearly on economic tasks, along with lower-level literacy skills. There is no critical dimension to the construction of literacy, nor is there a central concern with developing the ability to locate and access information even within the print-based focus of the practices involved. The literacy programme focuses on making illiterates into better functioning components of the state economy rather than developing emancipatory literacy practices.

These criticisms of functional literacy have been made most strongly in the context of adult literacy programmes for educational development, where literacy has a historical role in the maintenance or suppression of marginal groups (Welch & Freebody, 1993). Literacy programmes which fail to do more than maintain people in situations of dependency can be regarded as an exercise in what Freire (1970) has called *falsa generosidade* 'false generosity' in that the literate capabilities the programme develops make the people more useful as productive elements for the economy without significantly altering their social and/or economic status.

Literacy is, however, commonly identified as a much more complex set of skills and knowledges than the simple encoding and decoding of printed text. Literacy can also be seen as varying in each different context and society in which it occurs (Street, 1984). As communicative needs expand, literacy needs also expand and Kuhlthau (1990: 14) has, therefore, argued that literacy involves 'the ability to function in a society that has grown increasingly more complex, in part because of expanding computer capabilities'. One consequence of seeing literacy as complex and multivalent is to see literacy not as a singular item, but rather as a plurality – as literacies. This means that literacy involves a wide range of skills and knowledges which are needed to deal with the demands of societies for the use and processing of information as in response to the technologies available to the society. Literacies, therefore, need to be understood in a range of different ways, for example:

- *National literacy*: literacy in the official language(s) of the polity. Kaplan and Baldauf (2003), note that language planning in the educational context is fundamentally associated with the standard languages used in polities, and especially with the standardised version of the official language (Hornberger, 1994a). It is through education in the literate practices of the standard, official language that learners are socialised into the practices and norms of their communities.

- *Vernacular literacy*: literacy in minority and/or non-standard languages, which is seen as an alternative or complementary to national literacy (Akinnaso, 1996; Liddicoat, 1990; Tabouret Keller *et al.*, 1997).

- *Local literacies*: this refers to a wide range of literacy practices that are intimately connected with local or regional identities, but which are often overlooked by international or national literacy campaigns (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1994). Local literacies vary by region, and will be understood differently by people of different regions.

- *Biliteracies*: individuals practise literate capabilities in more than one language (Hornberger, 1994b, 2002, 2004).

All of these forms of literacy share the idea of a variety and diversity of literacies (and generally also languages), which reflect and constitute specific contexts and identities, rather than focusing on the idea of a single acceptable form of literacy across all possible situations. In such views, literacy is no longer conceived as a unitary set of skills but as diverse, plural sets of skills and knowledges conceived as multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), which reflect the complexity of practices, modes, technologies and languages with which literate people need to engage in the contemporary world. Cope and Kalantzis observe:

> increased multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioural, and so on. This is particularly important in the mass media, multi media and in the electronic hypermedia. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000: 5)

Multiliteracies are then divergent from conceptions of literacy as reading and writing, and the development of this multifaceted approach to literacy recognises the impact of new technologies and new ways of working with informa-

tion. These changes in the nature of literacy practice and needs are seen as a consequence of New Times (Hall, 1989). New Times is an era of internationalisation characterised by the breaking down of borders between local and global contexts resulting from rapid change in communicative practices (Gee, 2000a; Luke & Elkins, 1998). This means that individuals and communities have to engage with practices that are multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-semiotic and multi-technological. Gee (1994a, 1994b; Gee & Lankshear, 1995) contrasts 'old times' (that is, the old capitalism) and 'old literacies' (that is, academic language), neither of which have disappeared from the world's communicative practice, but which are becoming a lower strata with a new layer of social, cognitive, and economic practices on top of them. The capability to manage such events productively is rapidly assuming more significance in the lives of adults and school-aged children because this capability is called for in new settings with distinctive demographic and socioeconomic characteristics: as the workforce becomes more casualised, as core institutional and corporate activities become more regularly out-sourced, and as people move more rapidly in and out of educational, training, and vocational settings (Mikulecky & Kirkley, 1998). These developments combine to place unique pressures on individuals' and groups' abilities to communicate effectively and to learn from oral, print and electronic materials in increasingly complex sociocultural configurations. Such abilities have been shown to be critical for cultural cohesion, economic productivity, and for short- and long-term employment; failure has been directly associated with the acceleration of inter-generational exclusion and alienation (Bynner & Parsons, 2001).

The United Nations' approaches to literacy reflect the shifting understandings of literacy which have evolved over the last half century. In 1956, UNESCO declared a person to be functionally literate it terms of knowledge and skills in reading and writing (Grey, 1956: 19). At this time, literacy was a distinct set of contextually relevant print-based skills related to the decoding and encoding of text (see also the discussion in Baker & Street, 1994). By the time of the official launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade in 2003, a new definition of literacy had emerged and literacy was understood as

> . . . multiple literacies which are diverse, have many dimensions, and are learned in different ways. Contemporary definitions portray literacy in relative rather than absolute terms. They assume that there is no single level of skill or knowledge that qualifies a person as 'literate', but that there are multiple levels and kinds of literacy. (Shaeffer, 2003)

For the United Nations, literacy is no longer defined primarily in terms of individual skills in reading and writing, but rather as a complex, contexted, diverse set of practices. At the same time, however, there is still a focus in the United Nations' approach on print-based rather than electronic-based literacies.

Definitions of literacy are also affected by the ideological and political context in which literacy policies are formed. Street (1984) distinguishes between an 'autonomous' model of literacy and an 'ideological' model. Autonomous models of literacy are characterised by a view of literacy as an autonomous set of skills which are considered separately from their contexts, and literate practice is seen as mainly print-based. Literacy is related to a person's intellectual abilities, and as a result various psychological tests are used to determine individual literacy

levels, which can be characterised as either illiterate or literate and if literate then on a scale from lower levels of literacy to higher levels of literacy. Within an autonomous model, the focus is placed on the skills needed by individuals for work, education, social interaction and negotiation of everyday living. Such skills-based views of literacy identify literacy in terms of the skills which are supposed to be acquired by members of a society to ensure success or survival in that society. That is, if people are to succeed in the dominant society, they need to have certain skills, which are highly valued by the society. The purpose of literacy education is the assimilation of valued skills, and people are categorised and understood in terms of their acquisition of the skills set, with the illiterate being considered as less developed, less able and less intelligent than the literate. Illiteracy is viewed as a deficit, with the individual held largely responsible for this lack. In an autonomous literacy model, the purpose of literacy learning is to imbue an acceptance of the dominant ideologies and to enhance the economic productivity of the nation. The model is therefore oriented to the development of human capital, in which intellectually trained workers are central to the functioning of the workforce and economy, and knowledge becomes a commodity with economic value.

Many literacy programmes funded as educational aid in developing countries adopt an autonomous literacy approach with an emphasis on low-level text decoding and encoding skills. For example, the human capital perspective of autonomous literacy can be seen in the construction of literacy as bottom-up processes of text encoding and decoding seen in the functional literacy programme in Indonesia discussed above (Department of National Education Indonesia, 1999). Similarly, in Senegal, the literacy programme funded by the World Bank in which the emphasis is placed primarily on the developing of a limited skill set for reading, writing and basic numeracy (Nordtveit, 2004).

While no details are given in Nordtveit (2004) about reading and writing, the discussion of the numeracy programme gives an insight into the ways in which skills are conceptualised. According to Nordtveit, arithmetic was divided into three levels: level one taught counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and basic problem solving; level two taught use of a calculator; and level three taught geometry (surface and volume), complex numbers and fractions. However, Nordtveit notes that very few providers taught anything beyond level two and 80% of the instructors only taught level one lessons. This means that even though the skills set may have been broadly conceived, the skills imparted are not only low-level skills, but remained at the lowest level conceived in the programme. The advice given for improving programme quality similarly displays the autonomous literacy perspective of the programme:

- Learning to count using local money and transactions; discussing how to avoid being cheated.
- Simple visual tests to determine which learners might need to sit nearer the blackboard.
- Asking readers to bring in materials they would like to read. (Nordtveit, 2004: 34)

Such programmes as those in Indonesia and Senegal with their emphasis on skills highlight a common problem arising from the autonomous view of literacy

in that they provide people with skills in only a limited range of possible literacies. They restrict literate activity to what is valued in cultures of print literacy and identify literate capability as something the people do not have, rather than as a range of contexted practices that they can deploy in at least some media (for example through the practices of orally based cultures). Literate activity is therefore constructed only in opposition to current practices around language and information. Moreover, print literacy is privileged over other forms of literacy, and even when the literacies of emerging technologies are considered (as in the case of Farivar, 2003), they are conceived in terms of print-literacy deficits rather than as lack of access to wider literacy practices.

Ideological approaches to literacy have not featured strongly in language for literacy documents (Luke, 2001) however, there have been some exceptions. One such exception is the literacy strategy developed by the Australian state of Queensland (Education Queensland, 2000a, 2000b). This strategy explicitly engages with definitional issues and begins by developing an explicit opposition between traditional definitions of literacy and the definition developed in the strategy: 'Literacy is the flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with the texts of traditional and new communications technologies via spoken language, print, and multimedia' (Education Queensland, 2000b: 9). This definition moves away from an autonomous skills-based view of literacy to an ideological practices-oriented approach. The strategy emphasises the development of a range of multimodel literate practices in which the learner gains the capacity to manipulate information across and within a range of semiotic systems. The strategy specifically locates the definition of literacy within the communicative demands of New Times and seeks to develop the capacity to respond to emerging and evolving communicative needs. In addition, the strategy constructs the literate subject as a person who is a sophisticated user of texts who engages with literate practice as a decoder of text, as a maker of meanings, as a purposeful user of information and as a text analyst bringing critical thinking skills to literate work. The strategy therefore goes well beyond an idea of the literate subject as someone who can deploy specific print-based skills to someone who can deploy and adapt literate practices to communicative needs and demands. The definitional work undertaken in this policy moves the focus of literacy planning into emergent understandings of literacy, but this definitional work exists in tension with other prevailing definitions of literacy which have a direct impact on literacy provision in Queensland. In particular, there is a conflict between the way in which literacy is understood in state policy in Queensland and the way in which it is represented in commonwealth policies, which project an autonomous, skills-based view of literacy especially in the approach to measuring literacy standards (Department of Education, Science and Training, 1997a, 1997b; Masters & Foster, 1997).

Ideological models of literacy view literacy as a social practice and as a social responsibility and recognise multiple learner-centred literacies involving a diverse range of skills and understandings, including technological and computer literacies. This conceptualisation of literacy includes a critical or transformative emphasis in which literacy is seen as a tool that helps learners to understand the social structure in which they live so that they can transform it in personally beneficial ways. Through the process of acquiring literacy people

develop a critical perspective which empowers them to challenge the existing status quo. Moreover, literacy is constructed as social practice with a focus on the purpose for which people use their literacy skills and knowledge (Gee, 1999; Street, 1984). Literacy in a practices view is not conceived of as a finite set of skills but a complexly variable set of practices in which individuals participate in different, personally validated ways. Rather than viewing literacy as a unitary phenomenon, a social practices view recognises the multiplicity of literacies (Makin & Jones Diaz, 2002) and within this multiplicity individuals have differential access to different literacies. As a result of the highly contexted, individually oriented nature of literate practice, in an ideological view of literacy ethnographic approaches are adopted as assessment tools in order to account for the literate lives of the subject. The distinction between literate and illiterate people becomes a less valid construct because the same individual can be literate in some practices while illiterate in others. Nonetheless, literacy practices participate in a system of valuing in which some practices are recognised while other practices are stigmatised.

Heath (1982) has demonstrated that mismatches between home and school literate practices can lead to the literate practices of the home being marginalised in school contexts, or even as not being recognised as literate practice. In her study of African-American children from Tracktown, she has shown that the rich narrative practices of the home environment are ignored in early literacy education in favour of white middle-class practices of language use, and that the African-American children are constructed as having deficits in these middle-class practices. In such cases, the verbal creativity and transformation of information as practices in cultures of orality are subordinated to those of cultures of print literacy, so that print literacy is privileged above oracy as a set of socially valued practices. Moreover, when narrative does become a focus of school education, the on-going devaluing of home practices has led to a disengagement of these African-American children in education to such an extent that these home practices are no longer available as a literate resource in the school context. McDermott (1997) has similarly indicated that where groups are marginalised within the education and broader social systems, students can reject the literate practices of schooling and illiteracy itself can become a badge of marginalised identity. He argues that, in such marginalised groups, school failure is achieved as a strategy of resistance to the dominant culture characterised by the school.

The marginalisation of home practices in the context of literacy planning is not, however, simply an issue of the exclusion of the literacies of children of marginalised social groups. Shopen *et al.* (1999), for example, have shown that children's home practices of technologically based literacies, such as computer gaming, represent a sophisticated command of multiple symbol systems and goal-directed manipulations of information for problem solving. However, these practices are not recognised as literate practices in the school context and participation in these practices may be stigmatised or proscribed. School approaches to technological literacies typically subordinate the technological to the printed and fail to draw on the literate practices which students use and develop in their personal contexts. Conversely, the schools' construction of technological literacy may be seen as irrelevant to children and as unrelated to their participation in wider technologically mediated communities of practice, which

Gee (2000b) argues are an increasingly central component of people's lives and interactions.

Definitions of literacy are not simply important in framing the practices to be covered in literacy planning; they also play a role in creating understandings of what it means to be a literate subject in the society. Literacy planning not only enacts the development of literacy through educational provision, but also projects what the ideal literate outcome is to be. Because language-planning texts work to bring about social transformation through a combination of projection and enactment, they create an image of a valued position and valued attributes (Gee, 1994a, 1994b; Gee & Lankshear, 1995). As projective texts, language-planning documents look forward and describe future contexts for which the realisation is dependent on the text being endorsed and acted upon. This means that policy documents help to bring about the activities which they include and of which their very writing forms a part (Gee, 1994b). In turn, they become enactive texts which guide future action. Language planning and policy documents can therefore be treated as socially transformative work: they are projective in that they form part of a process of education reform and offer a vision of what education can and/or should contribute, and they are enactive as they are formulated to guide actions in order to achieve the envisioned reform. As projective texts, language planning for literacy endorses a particular construction of the literate subject.

Luke (1992) has argued that the broad educational discourses and the pedagogical practices of literacy education function to inscribe students' bodies with 'particular ways of speaking, acting, and being' (Luke, 1992: 121) that have come to represent the 'morally regulated, literate subject' (Luke, 1992: 123–4). The promotion of a particular projection of what it means to be literate has the power to provide status to those who become literate subjects and stigma to those who do not.

As a social practice, therefore, literacy instruction aims at far more than teaching children to encode and interpret print messages; it functions to constitute literacy learners in accordance with deep cultural beliefs about what it means to be literate. Luke argues that these beliefs centre on an internalisation of authority which equates with a form of 'self-surveillance' (Luke, 1992). Carrington has suggested that the imposition of the habitus of the ideal literate subject is the primary goal of school literacy instruction. Literacy instruction seeks to 'reculturate each student, training the body to create an approximation of the practices of an ideal student or citizen' (Carrington, 2001: 276). This training replicates the habitus of the mainstream middle class and weighs heavily on children from non-white, non-middle-class backgrounds. Literacy instruction, as through school participation, can act to deculturate by subsuming and, if necessary, overriding existing cultural predispositions and 'becomes more overt and insistent the further they are perceived to be from the idealised literate norm' (Carrington, 2001: 276).

Language planning for literacy is a strategic site for contestations about what literacy is and what it means to be literate. A language plan is therefore far from a series of statements about the desirability of and goals for literacy as an educational object or as matter of national development. It is also a political statement of values which frame the natural engagement in the economic and social world the language plan envisages.

Literacy and Language Selection

Language planning for literacy does not, however, make statements solely about conceptualisations of literacy and the literate subject; it also allocates status and functions to languages as languages of literacy. In language planning, the development of literacy is linked to decision making about language use in education and a key issue for determination is in which language(s) literacy is to be developed. The development of literacy can be seen as a goal which is independent of a particular language or it can be tied closely with the propagation of the official language(s) of the polity.

Literacy programmes may conceptualise the acquisition of literacy in the official language as the basis of education provision. Such programmes either assume that all or most students have control of the official language or that acquisition of the official language is a prerequisite for all educational development. In some countries the equation between literacy and the official language is so tightly drawn that literacy is defined for policy purposes as literacy in the official language only. For example, the USA's National Literacy Act defines literacy solely as literacy in English:

> For purposes of this Act the term 'literacy' means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential. (Congress of the United States of America, 1991)

Similar equations between literacy and literacy in the national language can be seen in the language planning of other countries, such as Australia (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991).

The impact of an approach to literacy which privileges literacy in the official language over other forms of literacy can be seen in the consequences of Australia's attempt to identify 'literacy' with literacy in English for the education of indigenous children, when in 1998 the Northern Territory Government in Australia moved to phase out indigenous language-English bilingual programmes for indigenous children. The Government argued that such programmes should be replaced by English-only ESL-based programmes in order to overcome the low literacy levels in English for indigenous students in these programmes compared with the Australian norm. Moreover, official rhetoric about the proposal to phase out bilingual education was couched in terms of ensuring equality of treatment for indigenous students by providing them with the same programmes as non-indigenous students – that is, programmes offered solely through English in order to develop only English (Lo Bianco, 1998). This equality of treatment, by denying the linguistic and cultural identity and context of the learners, implies a rejection of the biliterate capabilities of bilingual learners in favour of a cultural logic of elimination through linguistic replacement (Nicholls, 2001).

In constructing this argument the Government ignored overall literacy levels of the indigenous children in both of their languages (e.g. Eggington & Baldauf, 1990) and further compared English-language literacy levels among indigenous children with general literacy levels in the country, rather than with the literacy outcomes for indigenous children overall. The comparison ignored the fact that

overall literacy levels for indigenous children are significantly lower than those for the mainstream population (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 1996). It also failed to take into consideration that the indigenous children involved in bilingual education are by nature non-native speakers of English and receive English as a second language instruction. Moreover, by failing to compare the literacy levels obtained by children in bilingual programmes with those of indigenous children elsewhere, the rhetoric for closing bilingual programmes failed to indicate that the bilingual children had better levels of English-language literacy than other indigenous children. In reality, bilingual programmes developed higher levels of literacy, in both English and in an indigenous language, than was obtained by indigenous children in mainstream schooling (Cataldi & Partington, 1998; Nakata, 1995), although on a general comparison with English literacy levels nationally they underperformed. The attempt to close bilingual programmes for indigenous children demonstrates the extent to which overly restrictive views of literacy as literacy in one particular language can have problematic consequences for on-going provision of beneficial literacy programmes for minority language groups.

Where literacy is defined solely in terms of official language, literacy education in minority languages becomes marginalised and the literacies developed in other languages are unrecognised or undervalued. Manyak (2004) argues that where access to literacy is conceived as access to literacy in the official language, learners who are not speakers of that language and not members of the cultural group which controls education are constructed as being deficient in some way and their linguistic and cultural identities are 'remediated' through the monocultural process of education. Luke and Grieshaber (2004) argue that this monocultural education has durable effects which are not reducible to 'countable' lists of knowledges and skills. Alternatively, literacy can be conceptualised as a set of language processes which are independent of a particular language and which, having been developed in one language, can be transferred to other languages. Where this is the case, literacy education can focus on minority languages for initial literacy development and then introduce literacy in the official language of the country at a later stage in education, as is ideally the case with the 'Three-Language Formula' in India (Khubchandani, 1978; Schiffman, 1996). In so doing, vernacular literacy programmes separate the acquisition of literacy from the acquisition of the official language (Fordham, 1994). The first step in education is to develop basic literacy skills in the first language of the learner, often together with the introduction of the official language as a second language (cf. Auerbach *et al.*, 1997).

Conclusion

The issue of literacy in contemporary language planning is much more than a question of how to inculcate literate practice among those who are not literate. Rather, the issue of literacy raises significant questions about what is being planned and the power of definitions to shape the nature, the form, the outcomes and the impact of language-planning decisions. The nature and purpose of literacy are contested, and this contestation means that there is much more to literacy

planning than the optimal delivery of literacy to a population. Language planning for literacy has to engage with the contestation about literacy as part of the planning process. As Hornberger (1994a) argues, literacy planning needs to engage with outlining options and identifying different literacies and also with examining the nature of goals of literacy development and the uses to which literacy development will be put. It is very much the case in contemporary literacy planning that questions of how literacy is to be understood and in which languages it is taught and valued have important consequences for the social wellbeing of members of the society for which literacy is planned. While all language planning is fundamentally a political and symbolic activity, issues of language-in-education planning are particularly located within a political and ideological framework which shapes social inclusion or exclusion and gives value to languages and linguistic practices which are included or excluded within education. Language planning for literacy programmes is therefore a fundamentally social and political activity.

Definitions of literacy and the corresponding form which literacy provision takes also have important implications for the ways in which people can and do access and process information. This means that literacy planning which privileges a restricted print-based set of mechanical skills has an impact, alongside access to the technological means of accessing and processing information, in sustaining and increasing the divide between the information rich and the information poor. Language planning for literacy is faced by a need to re-evalute the nature, purpose and media of literacy in the context of the information society and information-based economies.

Although there are examples of literacy policies which advocate ideological models of literacy, language-planning theories have largely considered the nature of literacy itself to be unproblematic and have been concerned more centrally with the planning of literacy provision. This means that the current state of much work on literacy in the context of language planning has not moved beyond a print-based conceptualisation of literacy and the theory and models of language planning have largely concerned themselves with models for implementation of programmes in reading and writing. Similarly, the underlying conceptualisation of literacy has mainly been centred on an autonomous model of literacy which sees literacy development as the development of a small set of skills for decoding and encoding written information. While decoding and encoding written text is a component of literacy, literacy is not reducible to such skills. This means that the future development of language planning needs to re-examine what exactly it is that is being planned and to develop a more critical stance towards literacy. Following from this, theories and models of language planning for literacy will need to take on a more ideological view of literacy, constructing literacy as social practice and recognising the multiplicity of literacies and engaging with the new literacies which characterise contemporary communication systems.

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Early Literacy Policy: National and Local Instantiations

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This paper explores the political, social, and cultural contexts of current early literacy federal policies in the United States. Building upon existing critiques of the policy and its epistemological stances, this paper first analyses the planning and discussion surrounding the introduction of the policy to state leaders and also how it is first discussed and planned for in one local context. The paper poses questions of how language and literacy are being defined and for whom, and explores these discussions in both federal and local uptake in the implementation process. A Foucaultian analysis is used to document and explore the beginnings of the implementation of the policy. By examining the techniques of power, knowledge, and surveillance exacted through the policy, the paper also sheds light on how these explicit and sub-textual messages are mediated by school-based educators. The paper closes by averring that language and literacy policies would do best to recognise and work within the complex learning settings of schools and classrooms.

Keywords: language planning, literacy, United States, policy implementation, policy discourse

Introduction

As with many other policy and cultural contexts, the United States has experienced a long, often circuitous, and polarising debate over the 'best' way to support semiotic literacy in young children. With extremes best characterised through skills-based, synthetic approaches to explicit phonics instruction and emphases on holistic meaning-making, this politically charged debate has swirled around definitions of relevant research, the role of culture in language and literacy development, and the role of government language policies in a pluralistic society. Although policies have traditionally been articulated in state and local educational entities, the United States has recently witnessed an unprecedented assertion of federal government policy in this ongoing professional discussion. This paper explores the implementation of an explicit policy on early language and literacy development, the Reading First Initiative, first by examining the language of its initial delivery and then by examining a different context for the enactment of the policy.

This study begins with the initial presentation of the federal government's then-new policy regarding early literacy, the Reading First Initiative, at a federally sponsored meeting of state reading specialists. This meeting consisted of a series of speakers who worked to present, explicitly, the guidelines of the policy, and implicitly, the supporting epistemologies about language and meaning. It will then examine a local context of policy implementation: an instance of dialogue from one elementary school's initial exploration of this policy at a staff meeting. Although these conversations took place in wholly different times and spaces, it will be shown that the dialectic meanings made in each context connect to each other in myriad ways.

Critical Policy Analysis and Educational Importance

Policy works deliberately, but in predictable fashions, to convey to teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, what to do, how to do it, and for what purposes. Policy is a representation of values (Ball, 1990), values and actions captured in words and discourses, with very real consequences and effects. Policy thus entails questions of what is possible, what is not possible, by whom, and on whose behalf (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In this way, policy acts as a form of discourse, a way of being, doing, and acting. As a discourse, policy takes on what has been theorised as projective and enactive functions and realities (Gee *et al.*, 1993). Through its print and orally mediated versions, policy works to project particular values, proclivities, and desired outcomes, from particular sets of ideologies, purposes, and agendas. As the policy and discourse are enacted, they are interpreted in light of past experiences and work, other prevailing and/or compatible ideologies, and sets of logistical constraints. Through this complex interplay of ideology, language, and politics, policies and their implementation can be understood as emergent and malleable discourses, in a state of flux with the many participants who interact with their possible meanings and resultant practices. This complexity is mutually constitutive: policies and the planning processes through which they are hypothesised, projected, and enacted affect contexts, and local contexts and their participants in turn affect policies through interpretation and practices.

With such a view of policy as discursive, recursive, and interpretive, it can be best characterised as process, rather than as a static, print-based statement of what to do. As language educators and researchers grapple with the projective and enactive elements of policies and discourses, then, pertinent questions emerge of how policies are planned, enacted, resisted, co-opted, and modified.

Policy analysis, examining the purpose, implementation, and other aspects of policy, runs the gamut from simple cost–benefit analyses to complex questions of inducements, rules, facts, rights, and powers (Stone, 1997). These analyses are necessary, as policies, captured both in particular documents but also in the interpretive processes through which these documents pass, can simultaneously limit options of teachers and open up possibilities for pedagogy and curriculum. In particular, critically fuelled questions of who stands to benefit from the policy, who is likely to be marginalised and/or disadvantaged, and whose agendas are foregrounded become paramount for unpacking and potentially transforming the ways in which policies interact with educators' ways of acting (Lingard *et al.*, 1997). To examine the Reading First Initiative policy and how it was communicated, I drew upon the theories of Ball (1990) to develop the critical policy analysis and Foucault (2000) for an understanding of the close relationships between knowledge and power, along with key concepts of the state as panopticon, the uninterrupted gaze of surveillance.

In particular, critical discourse analysis was used to examine the spoken texts that introduced the Reading First funding opportunity to state-level administrators and how that was then communicated to school-level administrators and teachers. As a state-level policy maker and a researcher participating

in the Reading Leadership Academy, I was keenly interested in plotting the possibilities and limitations of this new federal reading policy and then following various trajectories as this policy marked overlapping territories among local, global and institutional contexts. To that end, I documented and analysed the federally sponsored meetings around the policy and one school's initial discussions surrounding the policy. By drawing upon two dialectic exchanges about the same policy, it is possible to note how different instantiations of the implementation process of a policy can be manifested through discussion, echoing, fracturing, and altering meanings.

Conversations from both contexts were explored using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). This methodology emphasises the social and political groundedness of the language and text segments surrounding early language and literacy of children. As such, the methodology draws upon the micro aspects and functions of linguistic markers and is connected to the larger and hegemonically coloured social, political, and historical fields. Using discourse analysis, afforded opportunities to examine the relationship between the language and patterns used in various settings relating to language and literacy and the possible ways of being afforded therein. This discourse perspective provided the opening to question which aspects of being a student, a teacher, and a literate person were authenticated, silenced, marginalised, and subverted within these policy spaces, both national and local. This discourse establishes a regime of truth – a pseudo truth located within scientifically based approaches to reading Foucault (2000) – and this regime of truth serves to construct the context in which the policy is implemented. For Foucault, truth is constructed through and to benefit various relations of power. In this way, Foucault's theories provide a useful theoretical grounding for examining the propagation of pseudo- knowledges or ideologies through the Reading First policy and the discourses surrounding its implementation.

In a Bakhtinian (1981) sense, the participants at the federal meeting and the local school-based staff were engaged in an asynchronous, heteroglossic construction over what teachers should do to support young children's language and literacy development. The particular language used in both settings, then, is paramount in providing a purview about these potential meanings. Understood from sociocultural perspectives of semiotics, these representations are offered as a source of intertextuality, all exploring the various meanings made of reading, literacy, teaching, and accountability. In his discussion of intertextuality, Bakhtin (1981) notes that 'an intertextual perspective stresses the historicity of texts: how they always constitute additions to existing "chains of speech communication"' (p. 94). In essence, these intertextual conversations of the implementation process worked to create worlds of possibility and nonpossibility (Holland *et al.*, 1999) for language and literacy pedagogy. By negotiating what was meant, regulated, and intended by the policy, the players at the federal and local levels of education were hypothesising, through uptake, negotiation and possible rejection of the policy, what could happen.

This discursive analysis, drawing on methods and techniques from Fairclough (1989, 1992), Gee (1996) and Luke (1997), recognises and works from the situated meanings of text, and assumes hybridisations of local, institutional, and societal discourses (Leander, 2001). These hybridisations indicated that while the handouts

and speeches of the federally sponsored meeting were delivered at a specific time and in a specific context, the words, ideas, and manifestation of the policies which impact on schools, classrooms, teachers, and students, travel well beyond the meeting, crossing time and space boundaries and shifting across these contexts.

Traditional examinations of the implementation of policy have worked from theories, scientific principles, and epistemologies that assumed linearity in systems: that the implementation follows in a linear way from the policy. The focus of this linear thinking model, based on the notion of predictability, stability, and control, was an attempt by analysts to know and understand how the systems react to policies and how to maximise positive instantiations of those reactions. By contrast, complexity theory addresses the behaviour of complex, nonlinear, most quintessentially, unpredictable systems.

Complex systems are characterised by nonlinear and often unpredictable relationships between cause and effect; small changes can have large effects, large changes can have minor effects, and all things in the system are not weighted equally. In fact, a complex system is, by definition, made up of differing components that work together to create unique results. In the context of policy implementation, it is important to consider how teachers and administrators, who are faced with several concurrent agendas and policies, respond to these texts and what trajectories are established by this response. Complexity theory argues that how change occurs in complex settings is never predictable, unidirectional, nor unitarily felt (Bowers, 1993), and when policy implementation is followed through to local contexts the complex non-linear nature of policy implementation can be seen.

National Discourses

On 20–22 February 2002 over 100 state-level educational administrators gathered in Washington DC to learn about a new funding initiative launched by the United States Department of Education to improve reading achievement during the early years of schooling. These sessions formed part of the reauthorised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (http://www.ed.gov/inits/nclb/part4.html). As a state reading specialist, I was one of the participants invited to attend. In defining what counted as policy documents and discourse during the three specific days of the federally sponsored gathering, named the *Reading Leadership Academy*, lines were blurred between the authority found in the exact wording of the Reading First grant application and by-laws and that found in the speakers' presentations and handouts. The meetings consisted of a brief introduction by then Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Susan B. Neuman, and then by a series of speakers addressing:

- Reading First Initiative and grant opportunity;
- Early Reading First Initiative and grant opportunity;
- accountability;
- effective instruction;
- reading programmes;
- professional development; and
- assessment.

At the time of this meeting, the final draft of the grant applications had not yet been released, but meeting participants were urged to use all of the information presented to inform their applications, prompting another participant at the meeting to comment, 'It doesn't matter if it's in the law or just in their presentations; it's what we're supposed to say in the application.' To that end, I used both the wording of the draft of the grant application and the discourse and handouts from speakers to conduct a discourse analysis (Gee, 1999), with the aim of identifying the cultural models proposed for the reader, the teacher, and the reading programme, and the institutional or policy-making entities. Examining the discourse of the speakers was particularly important, as it was via those speeches that participants came to understand what was important for the funding opportunity and for the policy. These same participants, then, would be the initial conveyers of this information, through their own representations, in their home states, districts, and schools.

The analysis for this study focuses strongly on the texts, both oral and written, that were shared during the three days of the meeting, and so speeches and printed artefacts comprised the sources of the data. To capture the speeches, I relied on field notes and compared these notes with two other participants in the meeting. Although videotapes that had been made of the proceedings were requested, participants were denied access to these and so they were not available for analysis. The analysis included data about reading, literacy, teaching, and learning. In the discursive analysis, samples of the discourses about these topics are used. The samples were chosen largely on the basis of their representation of converging and compatible points, their coverage of both oral and print discourses from the meetings, and the typicality of linguistic details found in the speeches and handouts. Close examination of the discourse of public speeches and artefacts provided in those three days was used to ascertain how this particular policy defined the cultural models of the reader; the reading programme, the teacher, and the governing agency (see also Stevens, 2003). The discussion covered both what was present and what was missing from these areas. Analysing what is missing is often just as important as the more conventional practice of analysing what is there. Often, when a specific text does not address a topic, it removes that topic as a viable option, interpretation, or nuance (Luke, 1997), thus building through inclusion and omission crucial axes of truth.

During the first hour of the meeting, the audience, including the author, watched a video that combined translucent images of the American flag rippling in the wind, superimposed over pictures of young children reading aloud. The powerful images intertwined patriotism with classroom use of language to support the instruction of reading. These images were punctuated by rousing music and the words of the male narrator, who told the viewers, 'Freedom is threatened when so many are not learning to read.' Such high stakes discourse and ideology demand consideration, from an educational research perspective, of several questions:

- how the federal Government was defining reading in the implementation process;
- what was left out of that definition;

- what information was supplied to this group of state bureaucrats, administrators and specialists; and
- how would this information enable, constrain and support their work of shaping literacy planning and practice in their respective states, districts, and classrooms.

The basic premises and key messages spelled out at this meeting of the Academy are the key to understanding the potentialities of the policy in its implementation, and these can be seen in the ways in which the task of the Academy was constructed. During the course of the three days, all of the speakers drew participants' attention to using 'what works' and based their conceptualisation of 'what works' unitarily on 'scientifically based reading research'. This indicates that the policy implementation process was premised on what might be termed 'functionalist' assumptions. These assumptions presuppose that schools – all of their other possible, debatable and contestable educational purposes, practices and consequences aside – in the first instance and in final accounting are sites for the most 'efficient' production of a set of measurable, behavioural skills. This construction, however, ignores the ideological, historical, social, and political nature of policy (Marcuse, 1964). By moving beyond overly simplistic and falsely apolitical questions of 'what works', a critical policy analysis poses essential questions of what works for whom, by whom, and for what purposes, bringing to conscious levels issues of hegemony, privilege, and marginalisation. In this way, the policy and the speeches around it drew upon the close dialectic between language and power. In particular the discourses created during the academy focused around the ways in which the reader was constructed and the role given to the reading programme as the agent of literacy education.

The Reader

One might assume that a clear definition of reading would be pivotal to any substantive discussion on the implementation of a literacy policy, especially one which determined the funding of reading instruction. However, an explicit definition of reading was never provided during the course of the three-day meeting. This is not to say that meaningful messages about the nature of the construct of reading were not communicated. On the contrary, consistent sub-textual messages were conveyed. Consider four specific but convergent references to reading made during this Reading Leadership Academy:

> We want every child, and I mean every child, reading by the end of third grade. (Neuman, 2002)

> Every student should read, read well, and on time. (Hunter, 2002)

> In later grades, once children have foundation reading skills [*sic*], the focus of assessment shifts to fluency and reading comprehension. (Kame'enui, 2002)

> The number of words [read] per minute is a pretty good indicator of comprehension down the road. (Kame'enui, 2002)

These utterances build a cultural model of the young reader which is being promoted in the implementation of the Reading First policy. The cultural model of the reader is further elaborated with a specification that the reader must, by the end of third grade, be able to orally decode at least 120 words per minute (Hunter, 2002; Kame'enui, 2002). For this cultural model of a reader, what counts as reading is the ability to decode enough words per minute. This quantification was repeated more than a dozen times in speeches and print throughout the meeting. This goal is constructed as universally applicable to all students, regardless of particular contexts. In fact, the only critical descriptor that defines children's expected reading ability is their chronological age. This implies that the ability to read happens, or can be made to happen, simultaneously for all children, as a function of their purportedly identical biophysical development. This model, one that was situated uniquely within the context of the Reading First Initiative, was transmitted to local, school and community-based realisations through the implementation of the policy.

This cultural model contrasts with other possible models which exist in academic discourses about literacy. It contrasts particularly with research from across widely diverse disciplines – cognitive, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, ethnographic – which has constructed the ultimate purpose of any literacy activity as comprehension. This research, in investigating how children become proficient readers, has situated meaning making as a core element, the longitudinal process of becoming a proficient and critical reader. However, in this Reading Leadership Academy, comprehension was reserved for 'later grades' and seen to be an automatic consequence of proficient oral decoding fluency by the end of third grade.

What is left out of this cultural model is the image of a complex reader, one who mediates differentiated engagement with different types of literacy events, for different purposes, and with different results. While many different models and descriptions of proficient readers exist, Freebody and Luke's (1990) Four Resources model offers a useful point of comparison because it consciously includes the historical, political, and social nature of reading texts and because it has been institutionally sanctioned in a similar literacy policy context, that of the State Department of Education in Queensland, Australia (State of Queensland, 2000). Freebody and Luke (1990) proposed that a proficient reader in New Times (Luke & Elkins, 2000) must be able to simultaneously engage four distinct but dynamic processes: (1) code-breaker (coding competence), (2) meaning-making (semantic competence), (3) text user (pragmatic competence), and (4) text critic (critical competence).

The image of a reader created in the Reading First policy consistently addresses the code-breaking process and marginally references the meaning maker process, but then only as an automatic consequence of decoding ability. Completely lacking from the Reading First policy is any allusion to the pragmatic and critical resources that proficient readers must draw on to use and create texts expertly. This absence is particularly acute when considered in light of the unprecedented convergence and confluence of digital and print texts in today's multimediated contexts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2002). In other words, an oral reading fluency aptitude, as framed in the discourses of Reading First, will not suffice in determining the purposes, interests, and nuances in books, websites, streaming video, e-mail messages, and other multimedia text outlets. The

multiliteracies enacted with these print and digital texts (New London Group, 1996) are not reconcilable with the Reading First policy.

The absence of processes beyond code breaking is also significant when considered in light of the growing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms in the United States. Through the sole and overly emphasised attention on the code-breaking aspects of reading, the Reading First policy also reifies a normative view of reading, one that prioritises consistent performance of code-breaker behaviours. Through this emphasis on repetitive behaviours and the assumed superiority of standard English, the policy promotes a colonising pedagogy, one that seeks to reproduce an increasingly diverse student population as similar subjects of the state (Gutierrez, 2002). The policy is therefore one which recreates uniformity from diversity and treats diversity as a problem to be resolved. While taking a basically bottom-up approach, the policy confuses the critical features of maintaining more fundamental skills with meaningful acquisition and learning of and through language (Eskey, 1988).

The Centrality of the Reading Programme

While an explicit definition of reading was not provided, reading programmes enjoyed an obvious and exalted status throughout the speeches addressing the Reading First policy. In one speech, Phyllis Hunter (2002) advised the participants that their first and most critical role as leaders was to 'fully implement a comprehensive research-based reading program'. This single statement was repeated *10 times* in the handouts provided to participants and voiced *a dozen times* during Hunter's presentation alone. In fact, Hunter asked the participants to read aloud the sentence with her at the start of her presentation.

In the portion of the meeting that was specifically entitled 'Reading Programs', the focus was primarily on showing examples from 'good programs and bad programs', (Eichelberger, 2002; Robinson, 2002). While copies were not provided to participants owing to copyright issues, examples from good programmes displayed on the projection screen were those that used synthetic phonics approaches and included direct quotations, or a script, for teachers. As explained by Eichelberger, examples of bad programmes were those that referenced cueing systems in addition to and beyond graphophonics and those that did not provide teachers with explicit words to say to the students. The language of such presentations provides evidence of reductionism in assessment of variable strengths and weaknesses of approaches to literacy. The implication of this argument is that *any* programme that is teacher-directed and that has a strong coding focus has virtue (is 'good'), and that all others are somehow deficient in theory, evidence and practice (they are 'bad'). The following discussion further explores the statements around what constituted good programmes and, by inference, what 'good' reading programmes in the context of federal educational policy should look and sound like.

Throughout the hundreds of times that the word 'programme' was mentioned in speech and the handouts provided to participants, it was invariably accompanied by the same descriptors: either 'comprehensive' or 'scientifically based', and usually both. What is made present throughout these references is the idea that the commercially published, pre-packaged reading programme is itself the inanimate

authority in reading instruction. Only those programmes that espoused a synthetic, phonics-based approach were anointed as 'good'. This is a significant shift from earlier policy texts. The specific wording of the draft copy of the call for proposals for Reading First, which were provided to participants, also references approaches and strategies, the presentations that comprised the bulk of the three days' meetings focused on reading programmes alone. By name, Open Court and Direct Instruction were lauded through anecdotal stories provided by several of the speakers (Ephraim, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Mahmoud, 2002; Whelchel, 2002). The reading programme was being constructed as the only qualified entity for reading instruction, all other potential contributors being absent from the discourse. Because of its pervasive presence, it appeared to be the panacea that would act as the great equaliser in creating fluent decoders by the end of third grade.

Alongside the exaltation of the reading programme as monolithic panacea, the presentations also constructed the administrator as faithful enforcer of the use of the programme. In so doing, Reading First began to situate administrators and policy officers in clear roles, which again were not stated explicitly, but emerged from a convergence of the various comments and utterances produced in the meeting. The roles that are presented are ones of surveillance, monitoring, and control. The Reading First implementation process firmly defines the state agency as the central panopticon (Foucault, 2000), the all-seeing, omnipresent central surveillance of classroom behaviour and activities.

If the state is positioned as the agentive panopticon, this relegates the cultural model of the teacher as that of an object of the state – one to be watched over and controlled by the panopticon. Teachers as agents of education are largely absent from the discourse. In fact, during the three days of meetings about literacy pedagogy and curriculum, particular and explicit attention to teachers was noticeably muted. The meeting presentation titles included topics on leadership, reading programmes, and assessment, but nothing specifically about the role of the teacher, the requisite knowledge of the teacher, or the epistemologies of the teacher necessary to promote literacy achievement. This emphasis makes sense in a context where the reading programme has already come to occupy the place of prominence, expertise, and authority in the discussions of reading instruction. Again, consider the following quotations from Louisa Moats (2002), who addressed the participants on the topic of professional development:

> Professional development courses and coaching aim to support the adopted, comprehensive reading program; implement state standards and frameworks; present the consensus findings of reading research.

> Teachers don't want endless choices. They want structure. They want fewer choices. They don't want to invent their own curriculum. They want to know what works.

> The teachers told us that when you don't have someone coming into your room to observe, you don't give your best effort.

Through her words, Moats paints the picture of a teacher whose job is to follow the reading programme closely, reading the script. The image of the teacher here is portrayed through narrative and anecdote and this is a significant

contrast to the 'scientific evidence' orientation in the construction of the reading programme. The images presented through these anecdotes and narratives is of a teacher who 'wants' products, who won't deliver unless kept under scrutiny by the panopticon, who declines to engage in the rich, substantive, and sometimes confusing complexities of literacy development, and who is externally motivated to maintain the appearance of instruction.

While Moats also emphasised the need to provide teachers with time to talk and to base professional development at school sites, these were intended to provide forums for further talk about how to faithfully implement the reading programme. In that sense, professional development is to occur, again, under the gaze of the panopticon of the scrutinising power and serve the regime of truth presented by the reading programme. In fact, it can be argued that, in relation to the reading programme, the teacher is situated as an extension of that commercially produced and sold product. In this way, the teacher is firmly situated as object of the state, and the state and commercial entities are conflated as having dominant power/knowledge controls over the teacher, the students, and their interactions in the classroom.

In summary, The Reading First Initiative, as communicated through the meetings of the Reading Leadership Academy, offered only narrow definitions of reading, prescriptive approaches to reading programme, and constrictive roles for teachers. Definitions of reading are limited to code-breaking skills necessary to be a fluent oral decoder, leaving out processes and practices of comprehension, pragmatic use of text, and critique of text (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Curricular choices are restricted to commercially published phonics programmes and are then cast in the oversimplistic binary of either good or bad. Teachers are lauded as professional only if they remain faithful to the letter of the scripted reading programmes.

While any federal funding opportunity is just that, an opportunity, there were distinct lost opportunities to draw upon compelling and converging areas of literacy research that should inform current practices, policies, and beliefs. The privilege afforded to code-breaking skills, a necessary but insufficient component of literacy, is inconsistent with the recent surge in literacy research that acknowledges the complex array of skills, processes, and practices necessary for the contemporary text-saturated world (New London Group, 1996). A discursive analysis of the spoken texts introducing the Reading First Initiative yields this limited view of literacy, along with narrow cultural models proposed for the panoptic role of state agencies and administrators, technicist and reductionist roles for the teacher, and subjugated roles for the students. However, what remained to be seen from these meetings and the discourses about reading programmes and scientifically based reading research was how the policy would be taken up, co-opted, resisted, and interpreted in institutional and local contexts, that is, how these policy notions would be reflected in the ground planning in particular contexts.

Moving from National to Local

To examine this question, the way in which one group of teachers began to engage with the policy discourse generated in the context of the Reading

Leadership Academy is investigated, revealing the ways in which the Reading First policy was mediated by teachers and students in one local context.

Local conversations

The elementary school presented here is an inner-city public school in a large city in the western United States. The school's population of students is extremely diverse, with children coming from over 25 different ethnic backgrounds. Nineteen languages are spoken by the school's children, along with a common non-standard variety of English. By and large, the children in this school do not have home languages and cultures that map closely onto the typically white and middle-class culture of schooling (Delpit, 1995). The teachers in this school are mostly female, white, and come from middle-class backgrounds.

The school has recently been designated as a struggling school, having had its students score below the desired percentage levels on a standardised test. As a result, the school now must choose a reform model to overhaul its practices, particularly in the area of literacy. At the time these interviews with staff members took place and documentation of staff meetings was compiled, the school's faculty was reacting in various ways to the impending mandate of the reform model. Some teachers spoke of leaving the school, others placed hope in the reform model to help them succeed with the school's students, while still others talked openly of ways to resist the reforms, and in particular the reading agendas of the federal Government. The local context for implementation of Reading First policy was therefore complex and interwoven with other issues.

The data for examining the local implementation process come from a staff meeting held about a month after the Reading Leadership Academies were held in Washington DC. At this meeting, the principal related information about the new funding initiative, as it had been explained to him at a monthly administrators' meeting the previous week. In the school meeting, the principal introduced the policy to the teachers and spoke of it as possibly providing more funds for the school, and of being able to use those funds along with those available for the reform programme. The following is a brief excerpt from transcripts of that meeting:

*Participants: **Terry**, the principal, **Christa**, second-grade teacher, **Joyce**, second-grade teacher, **Danielle**, a first-year teacher of first grade.*

Terry:	I know you guys will not like this, but the funding seems to be attached to one of the reading programmes.
Christa:	Which ones?
Terry:	Well, they didn't tell us specifically, but probably you know, the normal ones like DI *[Direct Instruction]* and SFA *[Success for All]*. *[Audible protests and groans from the teachers in the room]*
Terry:	I know, I know, but this is what we are facing. We are going to have to choose a reform model, and I'm also just telling you about the other monies we might get for a reading programme.
Joyce:	So, we are just supposed to get rid of all the levelled books, out the window?
Terry:	I'm not saying that, and I'm not sure. Maybe we could find a way

	to get a programme and fit it in with the practices we already, um, do.
Christa:	Or, maybe we could get the money, buy more books with it, and keep doing what we know works best for the kids.
Danielle:	I hate to be the one to disagree, but I actually like the idea of getting a reading programme. I need some kind of structure, and I feel like I'm not getting it done with my kids. Maybe the programme would be better.
Christa:	That's not the solution to that problem.
Terry:	OK, OK, look, we're not, um, going to solve this right now. I just want to let you know so that you are not surprised if it happens down the road.

In this staff meeting, many of the nuances and tones from the Reading Leadership Academy have been carried through to a local context. The funding is accurately linked to particular commercially published reading programmes, and the principal talks about the school as responsive and subject to the external forces of this funding opportunity and other policy pressures. However, what is apparent in just this first discussion around the Reading First policy is the resistance to it from at least some of the school's teachers. For them, the discussion quickly moves to a resistant exploration of ways to work within the parameters of the policy but for different purposes and with different activities. In this way, the teachers and this principal are searching for ways to escape the panoptical gaze of the state agency and to reassert the agentivity in the education process.

In an interview following this staff meeting, three teachers in the faculty agreed to participate in follow-up interviews and classroom observations. These interviews expanded the issues which emerged in the talk during the staff meeting. I have included conversations here with one of these teachers, Christa, who was a second-grade teacher at the elementary school.

Christa has been teaching early primary grades for over 20 years, and describes her philosophy to literacy pedagogy as 'balanced', resulting from many years of reflective practice, observation of her students as they develop their literacies, and 'a few worthwhile inservices'. She uses a mixture of a centre-based approach to literacy activities and the Four Blocks method (Cunningham & Hall, 1996). She is regarded as a leader in her school and is often consulted by the principal about pedagogical and curricular decisions for the school. She was asked to participate in this study because of her well-articulated beliefs about literacy pedagogy and her forthright commitment to children's critical literacy development.

*Participants: **Christa**, second-grade teacher, **Lisa**, researcher*

Christa:	Well, in some senses, it's the same thing all over again. They think that they know how they want us to teach, but it does seem to be getting more and more restrictive all the time.
Lisa:	You said, 'they', Who's the 'they'?
Christa:	Well, this time it's the feds, but normally it's the state department.

Lisa: OK, so sorry, you were saying they know how you should teach reading?

Christa: Yes, but we've all seen these swings of the pendulum before. Now it's back on phonics, but it will swing back after they figure out that our ESL kids can imitate the reading programme but understand nothing of what they've read.

Lisa: So, then you think the policies will shift back towards more holistic approaches?

Christa: Well, that's what they do – swing back and forth while we have to keep the balance going in our classrooms and get no help with the real problems.

Lisa: Like what – which problems are those?

Christa: Well, like the languages. My Spanish has gotten a bit better, and we're starting to get more Spanish resources in the classrooms and library, but I've got a student who just arrived from the Philippines, and I've got nothing for her to read. You tell me how asking her to go 'fa fa fa' *[imitating the repetitive oral decoding graphemes found in many reading programmes]* is going to help her.

Lisa: OK, so what will you do if you are asked to use a scripted reading programme?

Christa: I honestly don't know. I cannot imagine getting rid of my centres and standing in front of my kids and reading to them what someone else has told me to say. I just don't know. It depends on how strict it is, but my friends who teach in other schools just scare me with how it works in those schools. It's like completely scripted and broken down into each minute. I honestly don't know why they need a teacher to do it. They could get anybody because you just follow the directions. Sort of like a recipe.

Lisa: Do you think there's room for you to resist the programme?

Christa: There might be. Like with this bunch – they are so good, you know? We can do the scripted stuff, and I can talk to them about how the centres are better, and they'll get that but what if I can't do centres at all with the group next year? Then, I can't compare it to anything. That's all they'll know.

Lisa: Mmhmm. So if you can, you'd like to get your kids to critique the programme?

Christa: Yeah, like we do with most things. But I don't know how to do that if the programme takes up all of the minutes in the day, and I'm not sure who's going to enforce it.

Lisa: What do you mean?

Christa: Well, you know, you shut your door, and then you do what you like. Terry's really good about that. He doesn't want to know all the dirty details, but he knows that lots of us will just continue to do our own thing when no one's watching.

Lisa: But you're concerned about your ability to do that within a scripted reading programme?

Christa: Yeah, because they make the whole school do it, and everyone

> switches kids for the reading time, so it gets harder to do your own thing.

Through this conversation, Christa explores the difficult position that has been constructed for her through the Reading First agenda. She is frustrated but not surprised at the lack of recognition of teachers' expertise and knowledge in the policy implementation process. Neither a simple obedient object of the state nor a rebellious ideologue, Christa seeks ways to tease out workable regions within a restrictive literacy policy process.

In particular, Christa names the panoptic gaze of the policy makers and the state agencies as an influence which needs to be restricted. She understands implicitly that the policy constructs surveillance as a central and centralising role of government as she searches for ways to resist this particular aspect of the programme. In this way, she is probing for tactics that she can use to resist the larger strategies of the policies. These tactics provide the ways that people resist the controlling strategies of larger entities and discourses (de Certeau, 1986). In this conversation, Christa is actively engaged in hypothesising the efficacy of a few different tactics, and works within the factors that serve to draw boundaries around the possible material realities of the policy implementation.

Yet, within the same school, Danielle is likely to seize the opportunity that a scripted language and literacy programme offers to her as a frustrated beginning teacher, one who does not have confidence in the same levels of teacher-based knowledge and proficiency as does Christa. Terry may acquiesce to the policy pressures of a reform programme and a scripted reading programme, but he is searching for borders to work within the governing forces while creating spaces for his teachers to grow in their professionalism. Together, this school displays unpredictable and multiple perspectives on the implementation of this literacy policy. Nuanced and varied, the school's reaction to this policy problematises concepts of learners, literacy, and pedagogy. This problematisation extends far deeper than the platitudes conveyed around the Reading First policy implementation. The contrast between the two discourses means that the policy implementation process contradicts the complexity in this local context, and instead of offering salient direction, the policy process places strict behavioural demands on educators while operating to effectively quash substantive thought and dialogue around the relevant issues of literacy pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the contested nature of language policy implementation. The policy implementation process is a constructed context achieved through privileging certain discourses over others and these discourses construct and reconstruct the policy, its objectives and its strategies. Moreover, the implementation of a policy is not the straightforward enactment of a text but rather a process of discursive creation in which texts come to project particular realities and these realities may be affirmed or contested as they are transmitted from one context to another. While the implementing agency may use prestige or image planning to cast a policy in a favourable light through an appeal to patriotism, or research or authority – as in the case of the Reading First initiative, the uptake

and implementation of that policy is ultimately dependent on administrative and teacher networks, and the extent to which they are persuaded of its validity. This raises a number of issues for how policy implementation needs to be studied, How, when and where is the success or failure of such government educational policy documented and reported, through which discourses and texts? How can policy makers learn to cater for the complexity of learning settings?

Drawing upon the work of Davis *et al.* (2000), the elegantly simple concept of enabling constraints offers a useful alternative to the overly didactic and regulatory tone of Reading First and many other policies. Instead of policy that seeks to rein in the synergistic possibilities of human beings in complex settings, an alternative might delineate a few constraints, restrictions, or goals and then allow for divergent, creative, and necessarily unpredictable pathways to those goals. Such a fundamental but significant shift would transform interpretation of a policy and the process of its implementation from an exercise in obedience and/or resistance to one that seeks a relevant, efficacious, and inventive impact. As government policies forge their strongest alliances with large corporations, the need for accountability cutting both ways has never been higher. However, with demands for accountability must also come reconstructive efforts to envision language and literacy policies differently.

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Language Planning and Literacy in Kenya: Living with Unresolved Paradoxes

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This paper is a critique of the interaction between language planning and literacy in Kenya. It demonstrates that, contrary to the reasons given at independence for not favouring indigenous languages as languages of instruction or as languages for communication in public discourse, the very things that the language policy was meant to safeguard have happened. As in many African nations today, such a policy contributes to many ills in Kenya, in particular, the high levels of illiteracy that have persisted because a big portion of the Kenyan population does not manage to attain meaningful literacy levels through the school system. Consequently, many are not able to participate meaningfully in the important discourses and thoughts which are by and large expressed in a foreign tongue. A close look at Kenya's literacy statistics, literacy working definitions used in Africa, language attitudes, and school language practices underlines this worrying trend. Several practical suggestions are offered to combat illiteracy; a major one is the need to redefine literacy in Kenya because a peoples' perception of what counts as literacy plays an important role in determining their approach to it.

Keywords: language planning, literacy, Kenya, exolect

Introduction

One of the important aspects of language planning in a multilingual state is how it determines the statuses of the languages spoken in the country. Such decisions go hand in hand with plans of action. Language planning also implies making certain choices and giving priorities to particular aspects of corpus planning and acquisition planning. These processes should have as their goal the enabling of the citizens of a country to participate meaningfully in its socioeconomic and political discourses. However, the history of language use in such nations demonstrates that the dynamics set in motion by issues of status planning in actual fact are the ones that determine the degree and rate of success for corpus and acquisition planning (Baker, 2001; Fishman, 2001; Owino, 2002). This is also why many scholars in Africa today argue that the genesis of the language problems seen in schools or in society at large can be traced back to the type of language policies that African nations have decided upon (Adegbija, 1994; Alexander, 2000; Bamgbose, 2000; Muthwii & Kioko, 2003; Owino, 2002; Parry, 2000; Prah, 1998).

Many countries on the continent still operate on language decisions which were taken at independence when new nations emerged from colonial rule to find they needed to deal with a paradox; each new nation needed to decide on a local national language that would enhance its newfound identity but at the same time was determined to participate in what hitherto was the colonisers' world (Mbaabu, 1996; Muthwii 2002a). To resolve this initial dilemma, some nations adopted a bilingual policy whereby in school the child's home language

(henceforth referred to as 'first language') was used as the language of instruction (LOI) in the first few years of education and an official language (usually a foreign language) was used for the higher levels of education. Others took on a foreign language as the LOI throughout the school system and also in government. A few countries, like Tanzania, adopted an African lingua franca (that is, Kiswahili) for public domain and education. In a way, this last option resembles that already adopted by 'non-colonised' countries that already had a sense of nationhood like Ethiopia, which continued using Amharic in education. Nevertheless, languages like Kiswahili or Amharic, though indigenous, were still foreign to the many communities that were expected to learn and use them as a second language.

Within this scenario, Kenya favoured English as the only official language and LOI (Mbaabu, 1996; Owino, 2002). It was argued at the time that English was appropriate and pragmatic for several reasons but an evaluation of those reasons today raises pertinent questions about the road Kenya has taken with respect to language planning. One could question, for example, whether Kenyan communities are more united now than then. In a country where 74% of the population is under 29 years of age (Republic of Kenya, 2003), how many people actually access education and literacy in Kenyan schools today? How do Kenyan people function in English and how does this impede or enhance their acquisition of literacy and their participation in national discourse? Is the cost of education any less enormous and attainable because of not using the first language? These questions form the core of the discussion in this paper.

Background to Language Planning in Kenya

At the introduction of print literacy in Kenya during the colonial period, the language policy guiding education practice revolved around three languages, namely English, Kiswahili and the student's first language. The language to use as LOI was not initially problematic since it was generally accepted that the language best known and understood by the child on entry to school was the best one to be used for instruction (Mbaabu, 1996; Whiteley, 1974). Most agencies involved in education at the time were undivided on the role of indigenous languages in helping learners acquire literacy (Colony & Protectorate of Kenya, 1949). Moreover, the missionaries who founded most schools (especially those designated for the African population) strongly believed that the people understood the word of God most effectively if their local languages were used. Literacy was therefore offered in the first language in the first three years of schooling.

In some schools, Kiswahili was introduced in Class Three but not all authorities wanted Kiswahili in the schools as they viewed it as a foreign language. Similarly, not all institutions believed in offering English in what was termed the 'native schools', but when it was offered it was introduced between Classes Three and Four. Musau (2002) identifies the decisions of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924 as the crucial point that 'sorted out' the use of the languages in Kenya. While recommending the use of the first languages as LOI, the commission argued for the teaching of English as a second language after the mastery of writing and reading in the first language but that Kiswahili 'should cease to be taught except in the

coastal area where it is the vernacular' (Musau, 2002: 94). Further developments following the recommendations of the East African Royal Commission Report of 1953–55 saw English introduced as LOI from Class One in 1958 in some schools (Hutasoit & Prator, 1965; Republic of Kenya, 1976; Sifuna, 1980).

At independence when the Government took over the mandate to provide education, the strong rationalisation that all learners needed to learn in English to produce a skilled labour force to run government and industry was already in place (Mbaabu, 1996). The Ominde Commission of 1964 strengthened this position and instituted English as the LOI in all schools from Class One. English had won out to become the nation's official language while Kiswahili was recommended only as a subject in primary schools. Both moves were choices that shunned the indigenous African languages by refusing to give them status in any public domain, especially in education, government and commerce. Kenya's favouring of English was argued at the time to be appropriate and pragmatic for several reasons: (1) the need to unite into one nation a people who had been independent entities hitherto; (2) the need to access education and the wider world; (3) the fear that if one or two of the African languages were developed, those left out would consider themselves excluded and downgraded in the new nation state (Mbaabu, 1996; Owino, 2002); and (4) if used in education, the cost of developing all indigenous languages would be enormous and such development was unattainable. It is important to note that it was not until 1974 that Kiswahili was declared the national language in spite of the fact that it was the lingua franca throughout East Africa at independence. It also became compulsory and examinable in both primary and secondary schools only in 1984. No other African language has ever gained recognition in 'official' or 'national' contexts in Kenya. Nevertheless, Kenya is one of the few nations in Africa to accord an indigenous language such a coveted position. As Cline-Bailey (1994) and Mbaabu (1996) indicate, there are many countries in Africa that are yet to make such a basic decision as choosing a national language.

Kenya's language policy has been reviewed several times since independence in 1963 (see details in Mbaabu, 1996) but these reviews have always been characterised by two factors. First, the indigenous languages have never captured legitimate attention and second, the resulting revisions have been influenced by 'conflicting theories, divergent attitudes, changing political ideologies and aspirations and indecisiveness' (Muthwii, 2002b: 2). Indeed, even in the most recent review of education (Republic of Kenya, 1999 – popularly known as the Koech Commission Report), this situation has not changed. The Koech Commission did extensive work collecting and collating information on how to improve the education system and given the contradictions and problems that Kenya has had with regard to LOI in schools, one would have expected that the language issue would feature prominently in the review. Unfortunately, this latest major review does not address the language issue except to advocate the status quo. As was the case in earlier reviews, the focus is the status of English *vis-à-vis* Kiswahili and/or how to develop or effectively acquire these two languages.

English is now the LOI from Class Four upwards to the end of university education. Kiswahili continues to be used beside English in parliament and is taught as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. This current language policy, though having benefited from past experiences, still poses

tremendous challenges especially in regard to language attitudes and acquisition planning. A discussion of the identification of language attitudes follows because an understanding of the functions fulfilled by community attitudes towards language is always a first step for successful policy (Adegbija, 1994; Musau, 2002).

Language Attitudes and School Practices

Given the language policy in Kenya in general and language in education policy in particular, what attitudes do Kenyans have towards the languages within their repertoire and what factors have brought these about? There is a lot of documentation and discussion on this subject (cf. Abdulaziz, 1982; Mbaabu, 1996; Musau, 2002; Muthwii, 2002b; Owino, 2002; Whiteley, 1974); all the information indicates that there is enormous pressure for youngsters in Kenya to learn English. Of the several factors that influence language attitudes, two seem most important in Kenya: (1) the high status English is given in schools as the LOI and the language of examination (especially from the upper primary school level); and (2) the 'bottom of the pile' status given to Africans' first language in national/public matters. A Kenyan child, from as young as four when he or she gets into pre-school, experiences the effects of these two positions. Qualifications for most jobs include proficiency in English. Most technologies come dressed up in this foreign language. It is an international language that is still associated with socio-economic power by most Kenyans (Abdulaziz, 1982; Mazrui, 1992). A person is readily considered 'learned' if s/he exhibits a good mastery of English. The first language is seen as inferior since it is not developed enough to handle discourse in most domains. Even when it is given some role in the school system, there are a number of unresolved contradictions that a child has to wrestle with all the time at school. For example, there is often a contradiction between the policy of encouraging a child's first language as the language of instruction (LOI) in lower primary school and the reality as the child progresses through the education system where English completely dominates the indigenous languages; first language is virtually excluded from the syllabus after lower primary school. While first language is designated the LOI in lower school, the textbooks for content subjects like mathematics, science, social studies and so forth are in English and the examinations on these subject areas are in English as well. The status of the first language is also affected by the practice of punishing children when they speak it at school, an act which itself is a grave violation of their rights (Musau, 2003; Owino, 2002). For most of these second language learners, their fundamental right to feel secure and confident when learning and using a given language in education and the public domain is further threatened by the norms propagated in school (cf. Alexander, 2000; Banda 2000, 2003; Finlayson & Slabbert, 2003; Kioko & Muthwii, 2001; Muthwii & Kioko, 2002) and by the discriminatory practices around the use of code switching.

Kioko & Muthwii (2001) demonstrate that there is a major paradox in Kenya today where the teacher's language cannot serve as a model for the pupils because the teacher is often not in command of the norm demanded by the school system, namely, the Standard British variety of English. Neither the teacher nor the student is in touch in any meaningful way with this variety. Both teachers

and students have great difficulty working their way through the integrated English course syllabus since, on the one hand, there is the teaching of literary works that show creativity especially in using nativised English, but on the other hand there is the teaching of an English-language component that is not officially allowed to bear a relationship with the actual language-use behaviour. The insistence by the syllabus on the Standard British variety as the norm means that most students find themselves utterly lost in the 'confusing world of what are regarded as innovations, deviations, and mistakes (errors). Because of the demands of such a challenge, some students will need a lot of help to attain acceptable standards of literacy in English while others will find it overwhelming and simply give up trying' (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001: 208).

In a recent study to find out the extent to which the language policy and the concomitant language practices on LOI encourage or hamper the acquisition of desirable learning competencies in Kenya and Uganda, it was observed that there is a lot of code switching in the teaching process, especially in schools that have poor resources (Muthwii, 2002b). The overwhelming presence of code switching is partly explained as being a direct outcome of attempts to apply a language policy favouring first language instruction in the classroom and a lack of instructional materials written in the first language. The teacher is constantly struggling to translate what is written in English books into a language the children understand. This could be either Kiswahili or the first language. The children on their part are picking up these code-switching habits from the only language model they have (cf. Alexander, 2000; Banda, 2000; Kioko & Muthwii, 2001). The problem here is that while the teachers are allowed to use code switching in the teaching process to resolve language problems the learners are forbidden to do the same, especially in examinations. Surely, learners in such circumstances are bound either to acquire an imperfect English that is not improved upon at home and in the community or to find themselves simply confronted by what Alexander (2000) calls 'an English that is unassailable but unattainable'. They cannot find the confidence to participate in the world of English. The flip side of this situation is that while this is happening with regard to the language of education, the child's first language knowledge and skills are not developed or nurtured at all at school because school is out of bounds for the first language. For children who experience these dilemmas, there are simply no reciprocal learning environments between school and home, at least in the sense that is normally taken for granted.

Well-resourced schools were found to have language practices quite different from those of poorly resourced schools. Many had controlled code switching whereby limited switching between Kiswahili and English was tolerated, especially outside the classroom (Muthwii, 2002b). A number of them were able to defy the stated language policy and implement their dream for English as LOI throughout the curriculum. Often, the ability to make such a move is commensurate with an ability to find resources to support their decision, without first language featuring at all. Their hallmark is an exhibition of fairly good national examination results; their pupils acquire useful skills in their understanding and use of English, relative to those from poorly resourced and less 'aggressive' schools. It must be emphasised, however, that such schools are in the minority. The majority of schools often do not have such 'muscle', and have very limited

resources. They appear to languish in the confusions brought about by para-doxes inherent in the language of education, a situation where the teacher and learner carry a tremendous burden of sorting out the acquisition of the new skills of reading and writing in three different languages simultaneously.

From a different perspective, conflicts in attitudes on language policy from group to group can portend a more serious problem in a community. The various groups in a community or nation, holding onto different attitudes and practices, may not have the ability to understand the issues and struggles of one another. They cannot use unity as strength. Not surprisingly, in Kenya this polarisation in attitudes and practices has produced a 'first world' that continues to move on with the international community with high literacy levels and a 'third world' that languishes in its semi-literacy and illiteracy. Adegbija (2001) associates these two sides of the planning–literacy tensions of Africa with issues of language shift. He says that 'a positive attitudinal stake in a language is a dominant factor in its maintenance both at the individual and societal level. Conversely, attitudi-nal doldrums with respect to a particular language constitute the principal precipitator of language shift' (Adegbija, 2001: 288).

At an individual level, all the factors seem to conspire to produce a person who says he or she cannot perceive or conceive of education in any other language but English. Many come to sincerely believe that their indigenous languages do not have the capacity to deal with 'complex situations', advanced or abstract concepts. What learners see in the public domain, where in most cases the first language does not feature at all, is reinforced by what they see in the classroom. In most cases, especially in rural Kenya, a child is not sure whether to love or hate his first language because, as Adegbija (2001: 286) says, indigenous languages have 'acquired an inferiority syndrome and complex associated with them'. They are discouraged and sometimes despised by their speakers, but from most people's protests about their first language, one wonders if indeed, the speakers are not, in fact, themselves the ones who feel inferior, despised and discouraged. The ultimate verdict for the first language, therefore, is the same for all members of the community in spite of the fact that monolingual communities are radically different in language practices from multilingual ones (Adegbija, 1994; Muthwii, 2002b). First language as a language of education is not easily appreciated while English is fanatically pursued.

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that the stated reason for designating English as the official language and the LOI was to unite all the different ethnic groups into one nation (Republic of Kenya, 1976). History has judged this posi-tion to be too simplistic. There are in fact a lot of tribal alignments in Kenya today as seen, for example, in the composition of the various political parties. Ryanga (2002: 57) reports that the ' . . . attitudes and beliefs remain firmly held by each language group about their own language and with regard to other languages spoken by large sections of the Kenyan community, including Kiswahili and English'. But these have come about in spite of the language policy. It could even be argued that the political associations we see today represent Kenyans cele-brating and using their diversity in a positive way to bring about checks and balances in the political arena. Disunity in a nation need not be seen in the light of language but is often brought about by other factors, as has been seen in the case of Rwanda and Somalia, nations which are largely monolingual.

While variations and conflicts in attitudes may depict the struggles of a people in trying to come to terms with linguistic situations that are often riddled with paradoxes, they also signal areas of need for intervention because the factors seen in language attitudes will be seen in literacy practices (cf. Crawford, 2000; Parry, 2000). In this regard, one area that is rarely discussed in language planning literature, but one that could be argued to be an important prerequisite to acquisition planning, is the definition of literacy adopted by a given polity.

Acquisition Planning and Literacy Approaches

The kind of definition one works with directly bears on the approach to literacy one adopts; besides, 'each approach has different expectations about bilingual children that pervade literacy policies, curriculum provision and classroom practices' (Baker, 2001: 338). If literacy practices are products of language planning, we then could ask what kind of literacy is going on in Kenyan schools? What does the education system want to do with the learner and, more importantly, what are the learners expected to be able to do during and after interacting with the learning process? Before we tackle these questions in the Kenyan context it is necessary to consider definitions and approaches to literacy. To do this we shall closely follow Baker (2001).

Baker observes that the term 'literacy' is commonly used, but what precisely is meant by it is 'neither simple nor uncontroversial' (Baker, 2001: 319). He identifies three kinds of definitions: functional skills, construction of meaning, and sociocultural approaches. A functional skills characterisation is typically that used by UNESCO which expects that people are literate if they can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in their group and also for enabling them to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for their own and the community's development. A 'construction of meaning' definition, instead of focusing on the skills of reading and writing, looks at literacy as a person's ability to construct meaning. Hudelson (1994: 130) says that it is

> a language process in which an individual constructs meaning through a transaction with written text that has been created by symbols that represent language. The transaction involves the reader's acting upon or interpreting the text, and the interpretation is influenced by the reader's past experiences, language background, and cultural framework, as well as the reader's purpose of reading.

A sociocultural definition identifies a literate person as one with the 'disposition to engage appropriately with texts of different types in order to empower action, thinking, and feeling in the context of purposeful social activity' (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992: 147 quoted in Baker, 2001: 322). Similarly, Baker (2001: 323–38) discusses what he calls five 'educational approaches to literacy': (1) the skills approach, (2) the whole language approach, (3) the construction of meaning approach, (4) the sociocultural approach, and (5) the critical literacy approach.

In most schools in Kenya the predominant approach to literacy is the functional skills type with its attendant emphasis on tests and examinations (KNEC,

1994; Muthwii, 2002b; Owino, 2002; Schmied, 1990). It is an approach where the learners are given the technical skills necessary to read and write through activities such as learning vocabulary, grammar and composition. They are tested on how well they understand or comprehend information on the printed word (KNEC, 1994). As Baker argues, such examinations often 'tend to assess decomposed and decontextualised language skills, eliciting superficial comprehension rather than deeper language thinking and understanding' (Baker, 2001: 323). Hence the functional skills approach is said to be 'unable to prepare the learner or adult to achieve other desirable literacy skills like critical thinking, abstract thought, logic, and a balanced and detached awareness' (Baker, 2001: 322; see also Francis & Reyhner, 2002). At best it 'implies that the student or adult will contribute in a collaborative, constructive and non-critical manner to the smooth running of the local and national community' (Baker, 2001: 323).

Often teachers supplement this functional approach with the whole language approach as seen in the tenets of communicative grammar where reading and writing is seen as communication. This approach stresses the purpose for learning. It is an approach that has been encouraged especially by the British Council in its efforts to retrain teachers of English in many regions in Kenya in the last decade or so. The goal has been to encourage the development of children who can read 'the world' and not just 'the word'. As Baker (2001: 325) argues, 'part of the whole language approach is to stimulate the creative imagination and sheer enjoyment in reading . . . [it] is thus to develop aesthetic appreciation and interpersonal sensitivity which is a more empowering view of the . . . student than a functional approach'. It is thus an approach often used eclectically with the functional approach by many teachers, but where not well understood or inappropriately used by the teacher it too can produce an uncritical, accepting attitude in the learner (Baker, 2001).

Neither the functional nor the whole language approach as used in Kenya takes into account the variety of English used in the country or the innovations in the language that the pupils are exposed to (Kembo-Sure 2002, 2003; Kioko & Muthwii, 2001; Muthwii & Kioko, 2002). African innovations/deviations have for a long time been viewed as errors, especially by educators who are preoccupied with getting students to speak, read and write 'correct language' (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001). Textbooks, like the examinations, target external norms while the teachers and pupils have limited access to that norm. This may be the cause of great bewilderment, as expressed by the leading examining body in Kenya which asks whether their candidates, 'despite the work we put in, can never perform any better than this in their written work? Is it lack of training or simply the inability of our candidates? Is it possible to have a similar cohort of candidates, year in year out, irrespective of improved teaching or change of teachers?' (KNEC, 1994: 1). Such children, therefore, because they do not have the 'correct language' end up being labelled failures; they are the dominated even when many of their deviations may indeed be part of their creative use of language.

With a language policy that heavily leans on the English language, it is difficult to see how the learning process in Kenya can utilise a constructivist approach, which is meant to enable the student to make sense of the text from previously acquired knowledge (Baker, 2001). This sociocultural literacy is supposed to allow room for 'different students of varying backgrounds [to] . . .

make different interpretations of the text' (Baker, 2001: 327) and the teachers' role is meant to be one of facilitator rather than transmitter of authoritative knowledge. However, when small children have to reorient themselves utterly in the direction of English and suppress everything from their first language background, as is the case in Kenya, how will they construct appropriate cultural meaning while reading? Indeed, how is the teacher supposed to mediate in the construction of meaning by learners who are becoming literate if the literacy is in a language the children do not understand? It comes as no surprise, therefore, when researchers report that the kind of classroom interaction in Kenyan schools is one where the teacher dominates (Owino, 2002). It is a literacy that neither makes people meaningfully aware of their sociocultural context and their political environment nor offers them the encouragement and opportunity to offer their own interpretation and evaluation of a text. Instead of it becoming 'a joint developmental and cooperative event between student and teacher [it duplicates] the dominant-subservient relationship that often occurs in classrooms and which mirrors political domination and subservience' (Baker, 2001: 336).

The definitions and approaches to literacy in Kenya have often been based not only on perceptions from outside the continent but also mapped onto uses and purposes that are not relevant to most people in their day-to-day living (Kembo-Sure, 2002; Ryanga, 2002; Sifuna, 1980). It has been shown that many people believe that a person learns to read and write in order to get a job (Muthwii, 2002b; Whiteley, 1974). They do not go to school in order to be able to critically respond to a story they hear or make deductive judgements on events they witness (Ryanga, 2002). The skills required to enable people to participate successfully in such events have usually not been seen, at least overtly, as part of literacies. So although some of these skills traditionally existed in most oral communities, the advent of school literacies made them irrelevant, lost or despised. A narrow definition of literacy does not see these skills as resources.

Literacy Statistics

In underdeveloped countries like Kenya where issues of illiteracy are considered to negatively impact on other sectors of development (Owino, 2002; Parry, 2000), there is an urgency to properly gauge literacy levels as indicated by the recent concerns in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Each of these nations in the last decade has sought to understand the magnitude of the literacy problem in order to put in place appropriate intervention measures. Reports from these activities reveal an intricate interplay between language policy and literacy.

For example, the IIEP and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2001) report (popularly known as the Southern Africa Consortium Management of Educational Quality (SACMEQ) report)[1] describes results of a criterion-referenced reading test administered to a representative national sample in the 1998 Standard 6 pupils in Kenya and Zimbabwe. It aimed to measure two levels of mastery, *minimum* and *desirable.* The *minimum* level was deemed to be the mastery necessary for recognition of basic linguistic building blocks, for example the alphabet and simple words while the *desirable* level was deemed to be the mastery necessary for successful learning in Standard 7. A summary of the result of these tests for Kenya is given in Figures 1 and 2.
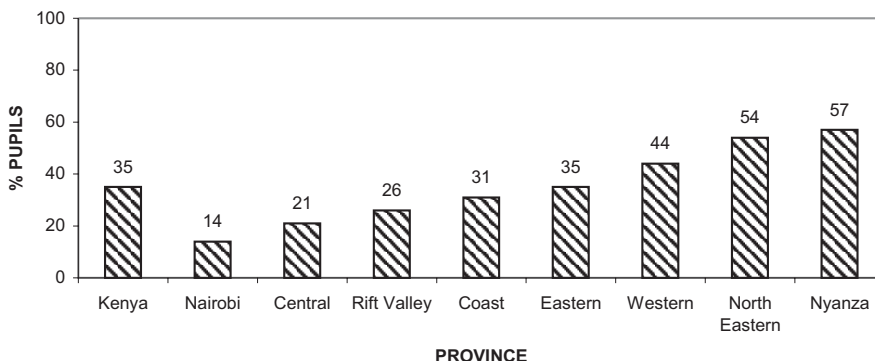
Figure 1 Percentage of Kenyan Standard 6 pupils failing to attain minimum level of English reading competency, 1998
Source: Makau (2001)
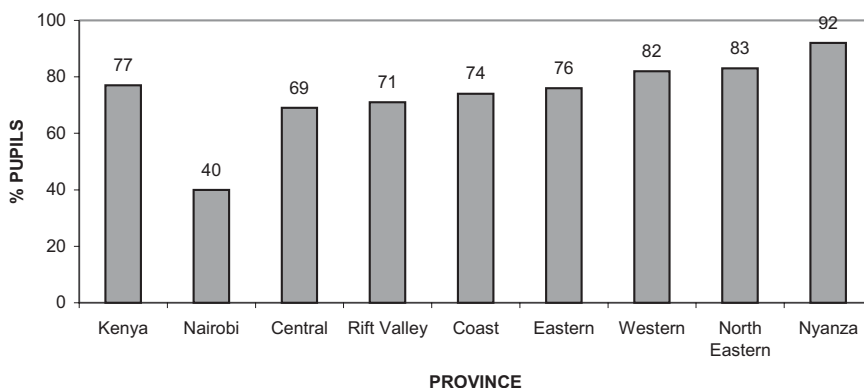
Figure 2 Percentage of Kenyan Standard 6 pupils failing to attain a desirable level of English reading mastery, 1998
Source: Makau (2001)

These figures show that 77% of Kenyan Standard 6 pupils had not attained the English reading mastery level deemed desirable. This implied that an unacceptably high proportion of learners would, among other things, have difficulties in accessing the curricula in the rest of the primary course and at the secondary education level and beyond. A similar study carried out in Uganda in 1999 focused on the mastery of reading and writing by Primary 6 pupils. It measured what was termed the *adequate* and *advanced level*, these two terms sharing more or less the same definitions as those of minimum and desirable, respectively. The results showed that at Primary 6 in Uganda 98% of pupils failed to achieve the advanced grade. According to Makau (2001: 12), 'respectively, in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda 35%, 54% and 87% fail to achieve the minimum acceptable level of competency, an indication that these pupils are virtually illiterate in English'.

One notes, of course, that the usefulness of such test results can be criticised because they appear to be based on a functional skills definition/approach to

literacy. However, in the absence of better criteria and perhaps better approaches to literacy, the results offer some assessment of literacy in the relevant communities; often this is the most available kind of information one finds on literacy levels in the continent. Another reason to pay attention to such statistics is that they are not culled from population censuses, which in essence are 'self reports' on whether an individual considers himself or herself to be a literate person. Extrapolation of literacy information using 'self reports' needs to be supplemented by cross-sectional data on gross and net school enrolment. Together they give us a more reliable basis for gauging literacy because completion rates for primary schools are more definite; they are better indicators, more so since literacy in Africa is predominantly a school system phenomenon.

The SACMEQ report, therefore, using an analysis of school dropout rates, indicates that over 50% of pupils who enroll in primary Grade One never complete the primary cycle in the countries investigated (see similar conclusions in Nyongo, 2002; Schroeder, 2001). Out of those who complete the primary cycle, less than 50% enter into the secondary education cycle. It is unlikely that 50% will be literate in such countries if 50% of the cohort drops out before completion of the primary cycle. Schroeder (2001: 9) is more optimistic when she says that, 'if we accept research studies which suggest that an average of four to five years of education are needed in developing countries to ensure lifelong literacy, then we may calculate that only 55% of Kenya's rural population are gaining lifelong benefit from the existing educational system'. This finding must be tempered with a realisation that much of the literacy received by this 55% in their first four years of schooling is affected by many problems brought about by language policy (Muthwii, 2002b; Owino, 2002). Many of the pupils are forced to acquire literacy through the English language which they hardly understand.

In the Republic of Kenya (2003) a lot of interesting information is available on dropout, completion and transition rates. While giving reasons for why students drop out of school, the report also discusses the serious phenomenon of wastage in the system. Together with the high rates of dropout,

> grade repetition is another dimension of wastage; and it ranges between 13 to 16 per cent for standards 1–6 and between 18 and 19% in standard 7. In 1998, only 47% of those who completed primary school and 85% of those who completed secondary school had graduated within the allocated time period. (Republic of Kenya, 2003: 36)

Why this high wastage? According to this report, 'there is an element of forced repetition in pre-examination and examination classes . . . in order that students improve their performance in KCPE exams' (Republic of Kenya, 2003: 36). On transition rates (which are the grade progression and retention of students in the educational system) the report laments that 'the transition rates from primary to secondary schools are below 50%. This is a disturbing trend since it indicates a lot of inefficiency and wastage in the system' (Republic of Kenya, 2003: 37).

Whether we go by performance tests or by school dropout rates, or both, the literacy levels in Kenya must be seen as of great concern, especially in the light of the LOI which is an important factor in determining pupils' understanding of what is taught in school. It is not necessarily the case that using English is successful in enabling schoolchildren to achieve useful levels of literacy and as is

with the learning of all foreign languages, those who acquire some measure of literacy in the primary school but do not proceed to secondary school education run the high risk of losing any literacy they may have acquired in the primary cycle. Casualties from the performance tests or the many dropouts (whatever the reason for dropping out) can neither read meaningfully in English or in their first language. Education in English becomes an education for a minority; the majority is locked out of any benefits that the kind of literacy available might bring. One is inclined to agree with those who hold that literacy levels of this kind are too low even for the commonly stated 40% literacy rate required for economic take off (Baker, 2001: 319; Matsuura, 2002). If any written information is to reach the majority of Kenyans and speak to them, it will have to be in the first language and this is an area most intervention strategies should be addressing.

Literacy Intervention Strategies

It would seem that agencies interested in issues of literacy in Africa would need to pay attention to several important points raised by critics of educational practices in multilingual contexts. This paper, for example, notes Baker's (2001) assessment of the functional skills approach to literacy, which is prevalent in a country like Kenya. He says that the functional view of literacy 'as evidenced in the UNESCO definition . . . often involves a kind of restricted literacy that, at its worst, can maintain oppression, a distance between elites and the subservient, and not focus on the empowering and "critical consciousness" possibilities of literacy' (Baker, 2001: 334). Those working within studies in New Literacies echo his criticisms of literacy approaches (Banda, 2000; Slabbert & Finlayson, 1999; Street, 1984, 1995). If the criticisms and observations of these scholars are accurate, then their appraisals could be taken as damning to all agencies and organisations in Kenya that promote a functional view of literacy.

Literacy intervention measures should give consideration to the way Kenyans perceive literacy. How is meaning constructed around literacy events in this community? According to Banda (2003) asking such questions is the same as viewing 'literacy practices as socio-culturally determined ways of thinking and doing reading and writing in different cultural contexts. Such a definition implies the development of pedagogic and didactic programmes that take into account the socio-cultural context of literacy practices'. It is to include ethnographic and anthropological techniques in studying literacy practices in the community (Banda, 2000; Finlayson & Slabbert, 2003; Slabbert & Finlayson, 1999; Street, 1984, 1995). In addressing literacy problems in Kenya, therefore, redefinitions of literacy may need to be articulated and promoted and to do this it is necessary not to lose sight of Kenyans' perceptions of literacy, albeit at the same time acknowledging that cultures differ from each other in their uses and purposes for literacy (Baker, 2001).

It also means encouraging intervention strategies that encompass broader definitions of literacy in order that literacy might serve more purposes in the community (Ryanga, 2002). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 149) aptly sum this up when they say that

> in formulating literacy policy, it is important for planners to recognise what literacy is – a technology – to recognise the way in which literacy is defined,

to understand that the definition changes as the society changes (yester-
day's literacy definition is of no use in today's society), and to recognise the
role of the education sector in the dissemination of an appropriate literacy
through the society.

While well aware of the language policy and practices in Kenya, a few agen-
cies have tried to redefine literacy in education. The British Council, for example,
in the last two or so decades, has either initiated or partnered with others in
projects aimed at the improved teaching of the English language. In these
programmes, they retrain teachers of English to adopt the communicative
approach to language teaching. There has also been massive support of primary
school programmes in many districts by the British Council and other donor
agencies. Of course, much could be said in criticism of the British Council's
agenda for the spread of English and the concomitant agenda to promote their
own culture in Africa. It is highly unlikely that such a group would support first
language programmes or invest much in developing critical literacy skills
among those they give 'aid' to since their agenda may conflict with the very
nature and purpose of developing these skills.

The Rockefeller Foundation has either initiated or supported research into
various aspects of education in parts of Africa, more recently in Kenya, Uganda
and Zimbabwe. These have been on the acquisition of basic learning competen-
cies, knowledge and management of pupils' sexual maturation, and 10 studies
exploring policy and practice on LOI in Kenya and Uganda. The Foundation is
looking for ways to encourage quality education in response to indications from
this research that show 'strong misgivings and conflicting opinions . . . being
expressed regarding the relevance of the curriculum to the development and
mastery of basic competencies such as literacy' (Namuddu in Muthwii, 2002b:
iii). There is in fact a current major Rockefeller research underway on the articu-
lation of English literacy norms in primary schools in Zimbabwe, Kenya and
Uganda. This is seen as the genesis of most of the shortcomings in that norms
effectively inform curriculum development, teacher education, instructional
materials development, teaching – learning, monitoring, assessment and evalua-
tion. This research argues that the current English syllabi tend to be sketchy on
specifications of the skill levels that should be achieved by learners in the four
language domains and which should be manifest in instructional materials,
classroom practice, and internal and external measurement and evaluation of
achievement.

An important point to note here, though not surprising, is that after seeing the
deplorable state of literacy in the various countries, the Rockefeller Foundation
has opted to support research and intervention measures with regard to the
English language, in spite of the results of earlier exploratory studies showing
clearly that first language suffered as a result of lack of resources which made its
users discouraged about it (cf. Muthwii, 2002b; see also Banda, 2003). How much
of Rockefeller's intervention will reach the disadvantaged rural communities is
yet to be seen. Its disregard for arguments about first language being an effective
medium of learning puts this organisation in the same category as all those who
propagate an elitist type of education achieved through competence in the
former colonisers' language, an elitism which many are keen to protect through

language policies and language use in the classroom. As we have seen from the literacy statistics above, an education that uses English as the LOI only benefits the lucky few.

Encouraging people to shift attitudes is not easy but not impossible. In Fishman (2001), numerous examples of community efforts for literacy and language revitalisation are described; all the cases are as a direct result of a shift in language attitudes. Some of the efforts are more successful than others. More resources need to be invested in Kenya to change attitudes. Any strategy or tactic used for winning people over to their first language, however, must take into consideration the nature and dynamics of the prevailing attitudes. As we have indicated in the Kenyan case, many people reject the first language for several reasons; the common ones often cited are a lack of resources to teach it in schools and the effect of many years of being made to believe in the superiority of English. How many of these people are aware of the miserable picture that literacy statistics associated with English portray? How many have seriously considered the merits of literacy in first language? Language communities need to debate these issues of language planning and literacy with more objectivity than has been the case. The people will need help to work through established attitudes and biases but change will come much faster if and when local people lead the way. Any literacy intervention strategies must of necessity be homegrown since a change in attitudes or improved literacy in indigenous languages can never be imposed from outside the community. External people could facilitate this by providing vital information on issues that matter to the people; however, as Crystal (2000) says, information on its own is not adequate – the emotions of the people must be involved. Appropriate ways, therefore, that reach both the mind and the heart must be thought out for and by a given community (see Crystal, 2000: 91–150 on fostering positive community attitudes). There is no lack of positive emotions about one's ethnic language in Kenya. While these have often been used to divide people, understanding them enough to exploit them in the fight against social ills like illiteracy is both desirable and possible.

Working together with valuable allies to advocate and resource the teaching of first language in lower primary schools would help strengthen bilingual education in the school. 'Valuable allies' (Crawford, 2000: 81) in this case would include all those interested in literacy issues in/for a given community. It has been shown that wherever scholars from the community actively participate in writing and debating on their language and its literacy issues that language gets some attention nationally (Adegbija, 2001; Crystal, 2000; Fishman, 2001). Its people begin to feel that after all it is OK to love one's own language. Scholars are generally very valuable allies (Crawford, 2000; Crystal, 2000). When bilingual education is well organised, it can go a long way in helping children attain a reasonable level of literacy by the time they leave primary school. An important question is how to work together with allies to influence policy and language rights issues for/with a community. Specific actions to be adopted will require creativity and learning from what other communities have done/or doing to give status and encouragement to their indigenous languages (Crawford, 2000; Crystal, 2000; Fishman, 2001).

It must be noted that much of what is seen in the education sector in Kenya that addresses the literacy question is done with input from donor communities.

Hence, the Kenyan Government generally provides more resources for the teaching of English in schools in spite of all the rhetoric about providing quality education that is relevant to the community and to local development. This is largely because the Government gets support funding from donor communities, some of whom are reluctant to support the teaching of the first language. However, from the issues raised in this paper, and in all literature that indicates that children learn better in their first language and that multilingualism adds value to our development efforts, it is only fair to consider how to give the first language a chance to participate in development too.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that, contrary to the reasons given at independence for not favouring the first language in Kenya, the opposite of what the language policy was meant to safeguard has happened. By favouring an exolect, the policy has inadvertently become the very agent that brought into existence all the problems it was meant to prevent in the new nation state. As in many African nations, such a policy has contributed in a twisted way to the rampant presence of many ills in the country, a most worrying one being the high levels of illiteracy that have persisted decade after decade simply because a large portion of the population does not manage to attain meaningful literacy levels through the school system. Many are not able to participate meaningfully in society, especially in important discourses and thoughts that are by and large expressed in a foreign tongue. By discussing literacy statistics, working definitions of literacy used in Kenya and other parts of Africa, language attitudes, and school language practices, this paper signals a worrying trend that calls for reflection and a quest for redirection.

The issues raised in this paper are about planning, strategising, and revisiting the issue of literacy in the African region, and especially in Kenya. It is also a call to Kenyan communities, together with those who are on their side, to do what the 'classic' donor community is unwilling to do, namely, support first language programmes in the community. The appeal is based not only on the evaluation of certain realities in the country brought about by language policy, but also on a belief in the validity of the insights of missionaries 'who had long ago discovered the effectiveness of using native languages for both educational and religious purposes' (Crawford, 2000: 69). Since part of a community's identity is expressed through its LOI, it is time for Kenya to re-evaluate what kind of identity it has created for itself when it continues to neglect the first languages of its people in schools. Policy makers need to learn that seeking social harmony produces happier and more productive people than trying to use English to preserve hierarchies of influence.

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Notes

1. SACMEQ, initiated in 1991 and housed in the UNESCO sub-regional office in Harare, is an international NGO dedicated to policy analysis and development with regard to issues of educational quality. SACMEQ has 14 member countries: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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Conceptions of Literacy in Canadian Immigrant Language Training

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For immigrants and refugees, access to a national or majority language is an important issue. According to its immigrant language training policy, Canada offers its newcomers language instruction for the purposes of settlement and integration. One important aspect of settlement and integration involves literacy. Our study examined the concept of literacy in Canada's current immigrant language-training policy; we found that the implementation of this policy actually reneges on the original promise of language instruction to a level that would allow for successful settlement and integration.

Introduction

Immigrants and refugees pose particular problems for nation states that must establish policies and procedures to integrate these newcomers into the nation. As Patten and Kymlicka (2003) note, the processes of integration 'must include an explicit focus on language' (p. 9). This imperative is based on the assumption that many will arrive in their new countries with no or limited proficiency in a majority language and, lacking such proficiency, will be unable to participate in the enterprises of the nation – to find employment, to access education and to participate in civic life. Rubio-Marín states that:

> The fact that language criteria for naturalization are generally accepted reflects the intuition that, before they can join as full members, it is legitimate to ask immigrants for proof that they will be able to function as members of the state community. (Rubio-Marín, 2003: 71)

McGroarty (2002) has noted that the acquisition of an official language is an implicit requirement 'related to citizenship (which is) the only social role common to all adults' (p. 24). In brief, for newcomers, successful integration is normally dependent on the ability to use the language of the nation.

The determination that newcomers are expected to use, and if necessary learn, a majority language opens a range of issues. Simply stipulating that newcomers must know a majority language is not sufficient because, as Patten and Kymlicka (2003) recognise, an insistence on language knowing fails to acknowledge that for newcomers language learning can be problematic: 'fluency in a state language is often a long-term goal but not yet a present reality' (p. 13). Rubio-Marín (2003) expands on this point, noting that for newcomers:

> The learning of a second language is more or less difficult depending on many factors, including the mastery of one's first language, the age at which the learning process starts, people's linguistic talents and the availability of adequate resources. (Rubio-Marín, 2003: 63)

This acknowledgement raises a number of issues, including questions about what level of proficiency is deemed adequate and how language instruction is to be organised. These and other related points are commonly addressed through immigrant language training (ILT) policies and the documents that implement those policies.

The availability of policy documentation provides sociolinguists interested in language policy and planning opportunities to investigate the ways that ILT policies legislate how newcomers are defined and positioned in their new countries. Determining the level and type of language newcomers are expected or required to attain, and locating the nature of the provision for official language training that is offered by the state, provide an understanding of the place newcomers are allocated in the nation space.

The research reported in this paper focuses the current Canadian ILT policy by addressing an important area of language proficiency for newcomers – written literacy. The assumption is that in order to settle and integrate successfully, newcomers need to attain the practices of social literacy that are shared by the majority population of the nation. Tracing the ways that language is described in the ILT policy and the ways that literacy is defined and taught in the implementation documents offers insight into what newcomers to Canada are required and allowed to learn and know.

Canadian ILT Policy

Canada is understood to be a tolerant, multicultural nation with a diversity of immigrant groups, both established and newly arrived. It is also a nation in which language has long been a contested issue and in which language policies have been used to regulate the relationships amongst majority and minority groups. The current ILT policy, implemented in 1992, is the latest in a series of policies that have legislated the linguistic integration of newcomers.

In October 1990, the Canadian Government announced a new immigration policy which recognised that 'programs which help immigrants to acquire English or French language skills are critical' if 'immigrants and refugees (are to) adapt to their new country and participate fully in the social and economic life of their communities' (*New Immigrant Language Training Policy* (*NILTP*): 1). Integral to this policy was the recognition that 'the basic ability to communicate in one of Canada's official languages is often the essential first step towards successful integration' (*NILTP*: 1).

In 1992 the Government announced an ILT policy, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), that established official language training for 'adult immigrants in order to facilitate their social, cultural, and economic integration into Canada so that they may become participating members of Canadian society as quickly as possible' (*NILTP*: 3). According to the policy announcement,[1] the provision of government-funded language instruction ILT programmes was viewed as essential, with the Government making a commitment to provide flexible, accessible and appropriate language training for most newcomers (*NILTP*: 1).

Though the new policy legislated instruction in both of Canada's official languages, English and French, and stipulated that newcomers had the right to

learn the dominant official language of the community in which they lived, French instruction has not been an important part of the provision, in large part because Quebec exercised its right to opt out.

LINC marked a new direction in Canadian ILT policy. The earlier policy, Canadian Job Strategy (CJS), focused on the provision of language instruction for newcomers who were labour market oriented (Burnaby, 1996). The LINC policy made explicit that all newcomers would be entitled to language training 'regardless of their labour market intentions' (*NILTP*: 2) and that 'clients who would otherwise be unable to pursue training, many of whom are women' would have access to language instruction programmes (*NILTP*: 3). This initiative was part of the general expansion of settlement services (Burnaby, 1996: 198).

Coupled with this increased availability and flexibility of programming was a reduction in the level of instruction to be provided. Under this new policy, immigrants and refugees were seen as requiring no more than 'the basic ability to communicate' and 'a first level of language competency' (*NILTP*: 3). The policy announcement includes the recommendation that language instruction will 'normally be offered during an immigrant's first year in Canada and will place greater emphasis on introducing newcomers to shared Canadian values, rights and responsibilities' (p. 3).

These stipulations in the policy reflect the expectation that LINC would integrate language teaching and settlement services, an intent reiterated in the statement that language instruction will ensure that newcomers attain the 'basic communication skills which are essential for any individual to function in our society' (p. 3). It is made clear in the policy announcements that newcomers require no more than a basic level of language proficiency in order to settle in Canada. There is as well the understanding that ILT programmes will be the site of settlement education, providing both the language and the content newcomers need in order to function in their new country. Under LINC, language instruction is no longer for newcomers who are planning to seek employment and need the competence in a majority language which will allow them to function in the workplace. The focus is now on developing basic competency that will allow newcomers to function at a survival level.

Clearly newcomers need to acquire basic communication skills in a majority language. As Auerbach (1986) has pointed out,

> There is little doubt that newcomers need to know the language associated with finding jobs, housing, health care, and so on. Refugees and immigrants are immersed in a process of profound transformation, and they need the tools to be able to confront changes. (Auerbach, 1986: 492)

At issue is the Canadian Government's decision to assume no responsibility for providing instruction beyond this basic level while emphasising the importance of newcomers taking up Canadian 'values, rights, and responsibilities' (*NILTP*: 2). According to a 1999 report, this goal of integrating newcomers was to be best realised by combining 'basic language instruction [with] information that helps newcomers [adjust] to the Canadian way of life' (*Performance Framework*, p. 3). These two objectives highlight a contradiction within the policy, as newcomers

are, on the one hand, not being afforded an opportunity to learn the type of language that allows full participation in the nation, but are, on the other, expected to enter quickly into the activities of the nation. Statements that couple 'basic communication skills' with the ability to 'function in our society' raise questions as to how those basic skills are defined and at what level individuals are expected to function.

Implementing the LINC policy

Language policies do not elaborate terms such as 'basic communication skills' or 'first level of language proficiency', terms that appear in LINC policy announcements. The mandates of policies are elaborated in implementation documents that mediate between the policy and the stakeholders, including in the case of LINC, programme planners and administrators, teachers and learners. It is by examining these implementation documents that we are able to understand how this policy is interpreted and translated.

The implementation of LINC has been realised through the development of numerous texts, some of which address how ILT is to be funded, administered, and delivered. There have been numerous efforts on the part of the federal government to lay out both a teaching methodology that is appropriate for LINC classes and a description of the language to be taught. The primary text is *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* (*CLB 2000*), the development of which was funded by the Canadian Government. *CLB 2000* informs and guides the teaching of English as an official language to newcomers, translating the LINC policy into a set of language competencies from basic to advanced levels.

According to the introductory material, the descriptors in *CLB 2000* are:

- a descriptive scale of communicative proficiency in English as a Second Language (ESL) expressed as 12 'Benchmarks' or reference points;
- a set of descriptive statements about successive levels of achievement on a continuum of ESL performance;
- statements (descriptions) of communicative competencies and performance tasks in which the learner demonstrates application of language knowledge (competence) and skill;
- a framework of reference for learning, teaching, programming and assessing adult English as a Second Language in Canada (as a framework, the benchmarks provide a common professional foundation of shared philosophical and theoretical views of language education); and
- a national standard for planning second language curricula for a variety of contexts, and a common 'yardstick' for assessing the outcomes. (p. viii)

The introduction to *CLB 2000* makes clear that it is not a curriculum guide, nor does it describe 'discrete elements of knowledge and skills that underlie communicative proficiency'; it is rather a 'descriptive framework of communicative language' (p. viii). This document is designed to guide every aspect of an English language instruction programme for newcomers, including an approach and methodology, guidelines for the development of classroom teaching plans, and suggested assessment procedures.

It is possible to trace through *CLB 2000* the ways that policy initiatives are to be

realised in the LINC classroom and to locate how mandates such as 'survival level language' and an understanding of Canadian 'values, rights, and responsibilities' (*NILTP*: 2) are translated into classroom practice. *CLB 2000* details 12 levels of proficiency with each level consisting of descriptors of the four skills. While *CLB 2000* describes levels of language proficiency from basic to advanced, not all levels are taught in LINC classes. In most provinces newcomers exit language instruction at Benchmark 4 for speaking and listening and Benchmark 3 for reading and writing.[2]

Though LINC classes are meant to communicate information that orients newcomers to Canadian life, this intent is erased from the overview of *CLB 2000*. It is only by focusing on terms and phrases such as 'communicative proficiency', defined as 'a person's ability to accomplish communication tasks' and on the definition of a Canadian Language Benchmark as a 'description of a person's ability to use the English language to accomplish a set of tasks' (pp. viii and ix) that it is possible to begin to locate the content that is embedded in the *CLB 2000*; this content is also embedded in the descriptors in individual benchmarks.

Literacy and LINC

The research reported here is part of a larger study designed to explore conceptions of writing within LINC. In 2001 we began to investigate the literacy practices of newcomers enrolled in LINC classes and the ways that literacy and writing were conceived in those classrooms. We interviewed 19 learners from six different LINC classes about what they wrote outside their classrooms and how writing was taught in the LINC classes. We observed their LINC classes and interviewed their teachers to understand how their teachers understood what it meant to teach new Canadians to write. The results of that research are reported in Currie and Cray (2004). In this paper we are concerned with discovering conceptions of writing in *CLB 2000* and how classroom teachers understood what it meant to teach new Canadians to write.

Why writing?

We have chosen to investigate writing and literacy on the assumption that one of the skills newcomers need to acquire is the ability to understand and realise the literacy practices of their new communities. Given that *CLB 2000* is the document that details the language skills needed by new Canadians, it should be possible to uncover a conception of what type of literacy newcomers are to learn. In other words, we assumed that the definition of 'writing' found in *CLB 2000* would include an understanding of literacy as a set of conventionalised practices appropriate to a particular context. This conception of literacy is based on the belief, now a common one in literacy research, that literacy is a set of social practices that are 'purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural purposes' (Barton & Hamilton, 2000: 8). In other words, literacy is not something that exists in isolation from society but rather is constitutive of and shaped by that society. We also assumed that writing, in the sense of social literacy, is an important skill for newcomers to acquire but that it should be defined as incorporating an understanding that writing in a social context requires the ability to understand the conventions of various types of writing as well as the ability to

write appropriately; learning to write means learning the practices of social literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Clark & Ivanić, 1997; Heath, 1983). Within this view it would be expected that teachers would help learners understand how to develop control of the literacy practices needed to function successfully as new Canadians.

In many cases second language teaching has been slow to adopt conceptions of social literacy into teaching methodologies and has continued to situate writing as one of the four language skills – along with speaking, listening, and reading – that learners must develop if they are to become proficient in an additional language. Writing is viewed primarily as a means to practice structures and vocabulary or as a means to assess reading or listening comprehension. Thus learners may complete listening or reading exercises by writing responses to questions, or they may copy or manipulate text or write passages that are assessed in terms of the accuracy of the language produced.

Clearly these two views of teaching writing have very different implications for classroom teaching. The traditional approach does not require a teacher to reference what he or she teaches to the world outside the classroom. If writing involves the practice of structures and lexicon, there is no particular benefit to ensuring that learners have access to and are allowed to practise authentic tasks. If, on the other hand, the purpose of teaching writing is to introduce the learners to why and what one writes in a social context, it matters greatly that the writing done in the classroom both reflects and explicates the type of writing that is done in the so-called 'real world'.

By determining how writing is presented in *CLB 2000* and then looking at the ways teachers teach writing/literacy, it is possible to specify what understanding of writing is available to newcomers in LINC classrooms.

Locating Writing

In the introductory material to *CLB 2000*, basic language proficiency, the level that according to the LINC policy equips newcomers to begin the processes of integration, is described as 'the range of abilities required to communicate in common and predictable contexts and within the areas of basic needs, common everyday activities, and familiar topics of immediate personal relevance' (p. xi).

The Overview to Writing in Stage I: Basic Proficiency, the stage that is taught and assessed in LINC classes, outlines what learners entering this level 'may need . . . to be taught or learn to achieve Writing Benchmark Competencies at Stage 1' (p. 41). The list includes:

- the ability to write down/record information;
- knowledge of text types such as personal letters, cheques, application forms;
- basic knowledge of English paragraph structure (e.g. topic sentence, related/supporting sentences);
- identifying . . . writing spaces on forms;
- vocabulary . . . needed to complete a variety of forms;
- writing as a process. (p. 41)

Learners are also expected to need instruction on how to 'write a short text . . . or tell a simple story' (p. 41). The authors of *CLB 2000* advise that these skills can be

Stage 1	Benchmark 3	Writing
WRITING BENCHMARK 3: Adequate basic proficiency Competency Outcomes and Standards		
What the person can do	*Examples of tasks and texts*	*Performance indicators*
I. Social interaction • Convey a personal message in an informal written note.	• Write a short note to leave with your neighbour; tell her or him that you will be away, where you have gone, for how long, when you will be back, and who to call in case of emergency. • Write a short note to invite your friend for lunch; include details of time and location. • Add a short personal note in a standard card to express sympathy.	• Conveys the message: reader can follow the text. • Uses language and content that are appropriate and relevant to the occasion, intent and social context. • Describes times and locations with precision. • Makes only a few errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
II. Recording information • Copy short texts from dictionaries, directories, schedules, instructions.	• Copy the pronunciation of a word from a dictionary. • Copy information from directories, schedules, notices, instructions for specific purposes.	• Copies words, numbers, letters, sentences, including capitalization, lower case, punctuation, phonetic notation. • Has legible handwriting or printing. Makes no major omissions and few mistakes. There is only slight uncertainty in decoding.
III. Business/service messages • Fill out simple forms. • Convey simple business messages as written notes.	• Fill out an emergency information form (e.g. for employer, school, summer camp, etc.). • Fill out an application for a driver's licence/organ donor form. • Complete a guided note to your landlord about a problem (e.g. with your bathroom or kitchen).	• Fills out form with required information. Spells and follows punctuation conventions. • Has legible handwriting or printing. Makes no major omissions. • Conveys a simple message. • Demonstrates adequate control of simple structures, with few grammatical errors.
IV. Presenting information • Write a short text about personal or familiar situation. • Describe a person, object, place, situation, event.	• Describe your day, your daily routine, a person, an object, a place, what happened (e.g. classroom stories of learners' daily experiences, past events, future plans).	• Describes the situation. • Uses simple structures. • Uses adequate vocabulary for topic. • Spells and follows punctuation conventions, with few errors.

Figure 1 Benchmark 3: Writing

developed by relating them to themes such as 'shopping . . . , housing, time, dates, money, banking, and financial services . . . health services' and so forth (p. 41), but the ways these relationships are to be developed and exploited are not clear.

'Benchmark 3: Writing' is the exit level for most newcomers to Canada (Figure 1). Like all benchmarks, this one is divided into four categories: *Social Interaction,*

Recording Information, *Business/Service Messages,* and *Presenting Information.* The second column in the table, *Examples of Tasks and Texts,* offers sample tasks that teachers can use to develop the designated competencies. The final column specifies *Performance Indicators,* features that can be used to assess how well the learner has done on the task.

There are a number of assumptions embedded in the descriptions of these competencies and tasks that have implications for what is taught in the LINC classroom. There is an emphasis in 'Benchmark 3: Writing' on the importance of accuracy with performance indicators such as 'copies words, numbers, letters . . .', 'has legible handwriting', 'follows punctuation conventions, with few errors' (p. 47), rather than on achieving communicative purpose. Some suggested activities, such as 'copy the pronunciation of a word from the dictionary' (p. 47) are trivial and without value, as it is difficult to understand what relevance they have to learners. Others, such as 'complete a guided note to your landlord' (p. 47) could be seen as mimicking real-world writing but are not contextualised in a way that would help a learner understand what the content or intent or such a note would be.

In part this decontextualisation and trivialisation result from the fact that benchmarks such as those in *CLB 2000* divide language not only into skill areas but also into discrete competencies with the consequence that they do not capture the ways that language skills are integrated and interrelated in real language use. In the real world, writing is rarely an activity dissociated from other language use. Individuals write for a reason – because they have something to communicate either to themselves or others. Descriptors that isolate skills cannot capture the ways that language use requires integration of skills within a social environment.

The benchmarks which describe writing competencies are not based on a conception of writing as literacy, a set of practices embedded in complex social realities. Rather, writing becomes a set of tasks taught and assessed in isolation. When the writing of a note to one's neighbour is evaluated on the basis of the writer's ability to 'make only a few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling' (p. 47) as it is in Benchmark 3, writing becomes an exercise focused on grammatical accuracy more than communicative competence.

CLB 2000 incorporates a traditional view of writing, presenting writing as a form of language practice for the sake of accuracy. The performance indicators, such as 'spells and follows punctuation conventions, with few errors' (p. 47), reinforce this focus. When learners are asked to copy rather than generate text, when they are expected to attend to the accuracy of small bits of language, the focus of teaching and learning is on language as a formal system, not on communication.

Teachers and their Classrooms

Six teachers agreed to discuss how they taught writing in their LINC classes. Teachers in LINC programmes are required to use *CLB 2000* to guide the teaching and assessment activities in their classrooms. LINC teachers have resisted this directive in part because they find it difficult to translate the benchmarks into classroom activities (Cray, 1997). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the government agency responsible for settlement services, has responded by

commissioning a number of documents[3] meant to help teachers choose or develop teaching and assessment materials that conform to *CLB 2000.* For example, in 2002 the Toronto Catholic District School Board released a 500-page document entitled *LINC Curriculum Guidelines: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada* which was developed to show teachers how to translate benchmarks into teaching practice. This guide conforms to the approach to writing established in *CLB 2000*, with, for example, a suggested writing topic for Benchmark 3 being 'write sentences about the food you or your family usually buys' (p. 325). Clearly there is very little in the LINC implementation documentation that guides teachers towards an understanding of writing as social practice or that recognises the importance of learning to write within a community. There is also the question of how teachers go about the teaching of writing.

The six teachers interviewed taught beginning-level LINC classes; each was aware that she was required to use *CLB 2000* to plan her classes and to assess student achievement. Their response to the requirement was two-fold. First they did not find that the document made clear how they were to teach, and secondly they did not understand how individual benchmarks were to be translated into teaching activities. They found the activities suggested in *CLB 2000* were neither useful nor interesting. While the teachers were aware of some of the supplemental materials that had been published, they did not refer to them.

When asked to discuss how they went about teaching writing, teachers articulated a traditional view, describing activities that required learners to practise writing model sentences, to complete fill-in-the-blank exercises, or to answer reading comprehension questions. Although some teachers reported that they occasionally asked learners to do some limited personal writing, such as exchange journals, these activities were relatively rare; the majority of assigned work constituted language practice rather than any pretence of real-world writing. When using the available classroom computers, teachers favoured packaged grammar and vocabulary exercises.

Teachers did not see writing as important for LINC learners, reporting that many learners, particularly women, did not need to write or could not write because their language level was too low. This attitude towards writing was reinforced by the LINC policy of requiring lower exit levels for reading and writing than for speaking and listening. This lower requirement, coupled with the ways that writing is described in *CLB 2000*, did not encourage teachers to value the teaching of writing, nor to associate writing with the development of social literacies. Only rarely did teachers attempt to introduce authentic writing tasks, discuss the place and purpose of those tasks, or help learners understand what would constitute appropriate responses.

At the same time, the teachers interviewed reported that they were dissatisfied with the ways that they were teaching writing but were uncertain about how they might improve their teaching. Why did teachers feel that they were not given the guidance they needed to teach writing? Given the availability of the texts funded by CIC that were meant to interpret the benchmarks for teachers and to help them develop relevant classroom activities, why did teachers remain wedded, however unhappily, to traditional ways of teaching writing?

First it should be noted that teachers were largely unaware of the LINC mandate that expressly associates language instruction with settlement services.

While the association is explicitly stated in the policy announcements, this intent was not reiterated in *CLB 2000*, which in any case the teachers did not refer to. The introduction to *CLB 2000* stresses the importance of language instruction being 'learner-centred', 'communicative' and 'task-based' (p. viii), but little attention is given to less abstract statements about what teaching in LINC classrooms should look like. The introductory material provides only minimal information on how settlement information is to be integrated into language teaching, stating for example that 'the CLB stresses community, study and work-related tasks' (p. viii).

Thus, teachers were not encouraged to think about their teaching in terms of what learners needed to know in order to function in Canada, but were guided to a view of the classroom as a place where communicative teaching was to happen but where discrete pieces of language were to be presented, practised, and supposedly learned. Given this orientation in *CLB 2000*, it is not surprising that teachers were uncertain about how to 'use' the document and favoured traditional approaches and activities in the teaching of writing.

There is another reason why writing is taught as one of the four language skills rather than as a component of social literacy. While CIC has refused to fund the development of teaching materials for LINC programmes, it recognises commercial Canadian textbooks that are referenced to the topics and objectives of *CLB 2000*. A cursory examination of textbooks series such as *Canadian Concept*s and *Canadian Crossroads*[4] makes it immediately clear that while these books are 'Canadian' in the sense that they incorporate information about Canada, they are also based on very traditional approaches to language teaching and learning. In these books, writing is a skill that receives relatively little attention. When students do write, they do so to copy models or complete language practice exercises. Again, no view of writing as a social practice is present in these books. LINC teachers using these textbooks, as they are encouraged to do, find reinforcement of the idea that writing is a means of practising language and assessing reading comprehension.

There is very little in the teachers' environment that encourages them to think of language instruction as a component of settlement services nor to consider the type of language to teach in order to facilitate the integration of newcomers. The framework imposed by *CLB 2000*, the supporting documentation and the textbooks that are recommended, mitigate against a view of the classroom as a place to explore real-world language use with writing as a contextualised, purposeful activity. It is not surprising that teachers view writing as a less important skill and accept the assumption communicated in *CLB 2000* that newcomers do not need to learn how to write or that writing is difficult and learners cannot achieve the same level of competency as they can in speaking and listening.

Conclusion

The LINC policy guarantees newcomers language instruction that will enable them to take up the 'values, rights, and responsibilities' of Canadian life. A superficial reading of the LINC policy suggests that Canada has put such a provision in place. The commitment to accessible and flexible programming outlined in the policy statements appears to promise language instruction for all on the

understanding that 'the primary objective of LINC is to facilitate the social, cultural and economic integration of immigrants and refugees to Canada' (*Performance Framework*: 3). Seemingly included in this commitment is the right to access education, find employment and assume civic responsibilities but this commitment to facilitate the integration of immigrants and refugees is rescinded when it is stipulated that survival-level language proficiency is adequate for purposes of settlement and integration.

Analysis of *CLB 2000* reveals that the language that is to be taught and assessed in the LINC classroom is neither at a level or of a type needed by newcomers. The competencies do not equip someone to take up those vaunted 'rights and responsibilities' nor, most probably, to begin to understand those values which define membership in the nation. As Rubio-Marín (2003) has argued,

> Part of the reason why [the] right to learn the dominant language(s) is bound to be controversial when spelled out in the context of a linguistically diverse society is that, even if agreement can be reached in the domain of principles, there will probably be disagreement as to what the fulfilment of such a right exactly requires. (Rubio-Marín, 2003: 70)

Thus, while there was agreement that newcomers to Canada were entitled to official language training at a level that would allow for integration, that principle was diluted and altered through the processes of implementation. While the policy promises that linguistic barriers to integration will be removed, the documents that implement that policy fail to address those barriers. Clearly learners are not being given opportunities to explore and develop an understanding of how language is used in everyday Canadian life.

The failure to provide adequate instruction is particularly obvious when conceptions of writing and literacy in the *CLB 2000* are considered. It can be assumed that given the mandates of the policy, the development of newcomers' written literacy would be important. After all, the literacy requirements of Canadian life are high, but as we have shown, writing is not conceptualised in terms of social literacy nor is it presented as an important language skill. There is an obvious gulf, for example, between signing a card (a task suggested for Writing Benchmark 3) and realising the literacy requirements of the workplace.

The consequences of this failure to realise the mandates of the LINC policy are serious. Because newcomers are required to leave language training programmes with such low levels of proficiency, they cannot be expected to enter fully into the activities of the nation. An examination of the Writing Benchmarks confirms that writing is of little importance. Learners are not asked at the level of exit criteria to achieve much more than the ability to copy or produce simple pieces of information. Without regard to the place of writing in the real world, *CLB 2000* holds learners to low levels of skill, far below what would be assumed for Canadian-born citizens. Rubio-Marín maintains that the 'right to (language) education is connected to the need to ensure equal opportunities of access to socially valuable skills and knowledge that are the key for achievement of social prestige, economic well-being and professional self fulfilment' (Rubio-Marín, 2003: 69).

The LINC policy, as explicated in the implementation documents, relegates

newcomers to a peripheral position in the nation by first defining them as a group requiring proficiency in an official language and then denying them opportunities to acquire advanced proficiency and a comprehensive understanding of Canadian life. May (2001) has described the results of a process such as this as deciding 'who is (and who is not) to be included in the national collectivity and on what (and whose) terms are the criteria for inclusion to be based' (p. 86). By limiting the level of language instruction as LINC does, the continued marginalisation of newcomers is ensured. Rubio-Marín (2003) states, 'most of the time it is precisely the reality of exclusion that lies at the root of the difficulty in acquiring the relevant language tools to function properly in society' (p. 75). The current LINC policy ensures that newcomers to Canada are denied opportunities to acquire those 'relevant language tools' through official language training and are thus denied equality of opportunity to participate in the nation.

This consideration of the ILT policy and its implementation documents, along with data from interviews with LINC teachers, has made it possible to demonstrate how explicit policy statements are altered and realised. Though the current Canadian ILT policy stresses the importance of providing language instruction that will allow newcomers to settle and integrate, when implementation documents and procedures are examined, it is possible to locate the places at which that mandate is altered to limit the language taught and consequently the possibility of successful integration.

It is of course not surprising to learn that there is a disjunction between what is stipulated in language policies and what is actually realised at implementation, but it is worthy of notice that the consequences of this disconnect can be, as they are in the case of LINC programmes, serious.

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Notes

1. The terms and conditions of the policy are not available to the public. Citizenship and Immigration Canada supplied copies of various policy announcements, but reported that official documents could not be distributed.
2. Ontario alone funds LINC 4 and 5 classes. The exit benchmarks for LINC 5 are Benchmark 7 for speaking and listening, Benchmark 6 for reading and writing.
3. The documentation that supports *CLB* 2000 is extensive. Much is available at www.language.ca.
4. There are two textbook series based on *CLB 2000*. Both are recommended to LINC teachers. They are: *Canadian Concepts* (Prentice-Hall, 1997) and *Canadian Crossroads* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

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Singapore's Literacy Policy and its Conflicting Ideologies

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Singapore's leading literacy policy is affected by a tension between the ideologies associated with English and those attached to Singapore's mother tongues. Singaporeans must safeguard their heritages, keeping themselves open to the places where their ancestors came from by learning their designated mother tongues. At the same time, Singaporeans are to master the English language for political and economic reasons, but ideologically, they must remain Asian by rejecting the cultural components of English, replacing them with Asian values. This East–West dichotomisation of Singaporean citizens envisages them as bilingual and bi-literate in English and their mother tongues (Mandarin, Malay or Tamil), but mono-cultural. The concept of functional literacy underlies this dichotomisation and serves as a framework for understanding language policies in Singapore. These function-focused policies, when viewed through idealistic and ideological lenses, provide a site for developing conflicting tensions among Singaporeans.

Keywords: language planning, literacy, ideology, bilingualism, Singapore

Introduction

> . . . the cultural transmission – or 'anti-banana' – theory . . . In this view, Chinese Singaporeans ought to learn Chinese – with the specific aim of absorbing their parents' 'culture' – or they end up as Westerners with yellow skin. (Tan, 2004: 16)

According to Ngugi (1986: 13), 'Language has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture'. Language functions beyond merely being an ideal tool for communication; it operates as an exemplary instrument for the formation of identity nexuses. Gopinanthan (1977) explains that the very nature of language choice and use creates political and civic consequences that are related to equality and social mobility. This is evident in Singapore where language choice is largely determined by political, economic and social factors. Singapore's choices in relation to literacy policy are therefore not neutral statements, but have significant consequences for language choice and language use. Decisions about literacy and the ways these are communicated create dialogic exchanges, which are constructed around issues of language and which influence the ways in which policies are understood and enacted. Kress (1988) argues that during dialogic exchange, there is negotiation 'of power, of authority, as well as the structures of solidarity' taking place (Kress, 1988: 5) and the dualistic nature of language in communicating information and negotiating issues of identity creates a potential site for dialogic exchange over issues of language. The results of dialogic exchanges have an impact on the ways in which language planning affects the society for which it is designed. As Eggington (2002) points out, a 'top-down, bottom-up compliance process . . . [can have] unplanned consequences' (Eggington, 2002: 408). It can, therefore,

be assumed, that Singapore's complex process of social reconstruction through language planning may have unintended consequences, resulting from the intimate relationship between language and identity involved in language planning activities. While the language planning process in Singapore is not ad hoc but carefully crafted, the outcomes of the planning process may not always be those intended.

In this paper, this dual characteristic of language (as a communicative tool and as identity marker) is explored through an examination of Singapore's language policies, with particular focus on literacy. The paper is organised into main four sections. The first section illustrates the differences in social and political contexts which influence the dialogic exchanges between the Government and Singaporeans and which have led to tensions. It highlights the authoritarian approach of government and the relationship which has developed between the concepts of survival theory and literacy. The second section looks at the how the process of globalisation has created a demand for new forms of literacy and how Singapore has engaged with this need in language policy. The third section discusses the various language policies that the Singapore Government has put in place to transform Singaporeans into an educated and literate workforce, while the final section investigates the ideologies and ideals that are embedded in Singapore's language policies for literacy, and shows how the conflicts between ideologies and ideals have impacted on Singaporeans more generally.

An Overview of Singapore

Singapore is a tiny Southeast Asia country located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, surrounded by predominantly Malay-speaking neighbours. It is a multiracial and multicultural nation with a population of about four million with four primary ethnic groupings, 76% Chinese, 15% Malay, 6.5% Indian and 2% other nationalities. Its land mass of only about 633 km^2 (244 sq. miles) is devoid of natural resources, and hence its population's skills and trade are the primary bases for its economic development.

English as Singapore's official language

The Singaporean Government chose English as the country's official language, in part for its relationship with international trade, because of Singapore's reliance on its population's skill base and on trade for economic development. Within the past 50 years, English has been upgraded from a foreign language to the main medium of instruction in Singapore's schools, and this upgrading process has passed through distinctive phases. In the first stage, which began in the 1950s as the result of the spread of multinational investors, there was an increase in demand in Singapore for a workforce that was literate in English, and as a result there was a gradually increasing acceptance of English in the community, which eventually led to the establishment of English as the country's *de facto* dominant working language. The next phase began in 1966, when, in order to increase the rate of literacy in English, the Government made it compulsory for all students to learn English as their first school language. This policy was given further impetus during the 1970s when English

became the major language of administration, commerce and education in Singapore. The status of English was further raised when it became a 'gatekeeper' for higher learning institutions; it acted as a determinant in deciding what academic careers would be available to which students (Yip *et al.*, 1997). These developments have meant that English language and literacy skills have a privileged position in Singaporean society and in education, and this affects the relationships between English and the other languages of Singapore.

Singaporean approaches to government

Before examining the major language policies relevant to the changes outlined in the previous section, it is necessary to look at the primary approaches adopted by the Singaporean Government in determining the political profile of the state.

Authoritarian concept

Unlike many of its Western counterparts, Singapore's Government adopts a 'soft authoritarian' approach in governing the country (Roy, 1994). This collectively oriented approach consists of a combination of developmentalist and interventionalist ideologies that emphasise strong government control of decision making, based on a mindset that the Government 'knows best' when it comes to decision making and nation building. According to this ideology, the nation has to be 'developed and held together by the strong autonomous state' (Ackermann, 1997: 37). Consequently, the various policies and social and economic changes that have been developed in Singapore are centred on the notion of developing a viable economy, as this is determined by the Government. Soft authoritarianism is reflected in Singapore's approach to ensuring political stability and maintaining economic prosperity in the country. This approach is reflected in the main objective of Singapore's Ministry of Manpower: 'People – their ideas and capabilities, are the key source of wealth and opportunities' (Ministry of Manpower, 1999: 7), which emphasises the pragmatic development of human capital as the basis of economic success.

Singapore's survival theory and the concept of literacy

The role of literacy in Singapore is strongly tied to the Singaporean Government's ideology of national survival, which focuses on ensuring the country's economic survival. This survival theory emphasises corporatist values like national unity and stability, which are seen as fundamentally built on state and national interests (Ackermann, 1997: 323). This philosophy provides one of the main motivations for reducing the number of uneducated people, who are perceived to be an economic liability for Singapore. Literacy is a central part of the survival ideology as it is seen as an economic resource. Singaporeans are expected to possess a set of complex abilities in understanding and using English for personal, natural and economic development. They are, therefore, expected to acquire the four macroskills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – in English in order to ensure the country's economic survival in the international market-place, which is seen as predominantly English speaking. The pragmatism of the Singaporean Government is closely associated with the ethos of functional literacy and literacy, in the Singaporean context fulfils a foundational role in educating Singaporeans and transforming them into economic assets in order to ensure the country will survive and prosper.

Pragmatic ideologies of national survival are reflected in the manner in which the Government has managed the process of Singapore's 'literalisation' (or literacy development). There are three distinct stages in this 'literalising' process. From 1965–1978, the newly independent Singapore was in a survival-driven period and literary policy was implemented with the goal of developing the literacy skills necessary to provide the country with a qualified labour force, which was able to read and write in English. At the next stage, from 1979–1991, Singapore moved into a period characterised by a concern for efficiency during which literacy in English was equated with competency and productivity. At this time, Singaporeans were expected to be proficient in English so as to provide a highly skilled and educated workforce to meet the needs of the changing economy. From 1992 to the present, the concept of literacy has again shifted as Singapore has moved into an ability-driven, technology-oriented period. As a result of this new focus, the definition of literacy now encompasses the skills needed to use English to synthesise and apply knowledge. In order to meet the goals set for this period, the Government has budgeted approximately S\$2 billion to launch an Information Technology (IT) Masterplan where the objective is to expose students to greater opportunities to use English in an IT-rich environment so that they will develop the skills necessary for processing the information they have gathered. This evolving 'literalisation' process has become the avenue by which literacy skills are identified as necessary by the Government, and policies are put in place to ensure that they are developed by each citizen in Singapore in order to meet the state's economic goals, thereby ensuring the economic survival of Singapore (Gopinanthan *et al.*, 1999).

The current approach to literacy has, therefore, shifted in response to the new social dynamics generated by global change and the implications of such dynamics for Singapore's continued economic survival. Currently, the Government's primary goal in literacy policy is to ensure that both teachers and students 'are prepared for the knowledge-based economy' and this is to be done by having a clearly 'articulated policy on the use of information technology', with 'the provision of computers and IT training for teachers' (*The Straits Times*, 2000: 56). Here, the goals and objectives for literacy have taken on a new meaning to accommodate the new demands of the changing times. The emergent global economy requires new language skills related to the language of science and technology, and young people are now encouraged to speak this language so that 'they can communicate with their peers worldwide and use this language to advance both themselves and Singapore's economy' (*The Straits Times*, 1999: 31). Former Education Minister, RAdm(NS) Teo Chee Hean, argued that the international language of science and technology will play a big role in the globalised world, and therefore it is vital for Singaporeans to be conversant in this language.

The perceived nature of literacy has, therefore, become more diversified of a result of this technology-based worldview, and literacy acquisition no longer means just acquiring the four basic macroskills in English. Currently, in this regard, to be literate in English means using English as a resource to decode a wide array of sign systems generated by the technological industry. As Bruce (1997) has argued, in order to operate successfully in today's new technologised society, sociotechnical literacy is needed, as only knowing how to read and write is no longer sufficient. The concept of literacy has, therefore,

evolved to incorporate the skills needed to work with decontextualised materials and to engage with different forms of literary texts.

Singapore's Language-in-Education Policies

Singapore's policy of bilingualism

A mandatory bilingual policy was introduced in Singapore in 1966 to reflect the multilingual nature of Singaporean society. This bilingual policy was established to broaden Singaporeans' employment prospects and to break down racial barriers. Since the 1980s, however, when all government schools were required to use English as their medium of instruction, being bilingual in Singapore has increasingly meant being proficient in English and one other official language, which is specifically defined by government policy as one's 'ethnic mother tongue'.[1] In other words, all Singaporeans are to be able to use two official languages: English, as the main language of literacy and also the first school language, and the mother tongue (Mandarin, Malay or Tamil) as a cultural language.

Singapore's bilingual policy is closely linked to the notion of developing competency in each of the languages studied at school. This policy has created a tension in Singaporean society because students are required to be literate in both languages (English and their mother tongue), while their background and school-based exposure to these subjects is unequal. All subjects taught in Singapore's schools are taught in English except for the mother tongue classes, and this means that students have more time to acquire proficiency in English, and less time for mother tongue.[2] At the same time, competency in both languages has an important gate-keeping function: for example, the Ministry of Education has made it compulsory for all students to be literate in and attain at least a pass in their second educational language (mother tongue) in order to gain entry into the National University of Singapore (NUS). Those English-medium students who fail their second educational language at A-level (matriculation examinations) can only be admitted to the university on a provisional basis. At the university, they can receive extra coaching, and are required to pass the examination in their second language if they wish to graduate (Gopinanthan, 1994).

Streaming policy

The streaming policy, introduced in 1980, is another major policy strategy in developing Singapore's overall literacy levels. It consists of a tripartite system of ability streaming whereby the students are channelled into three designated streams at both primary and secondary levels depending on their proficiency in English and the mother tongue. In primary schools, students are classified into three categories: EM1, EM2 and EM3. Those in EM1 undertake studies in both English and the mother tongue as first languages; those in EM2 study English as a first language and the mother tongue as a second language. Those channelled into EM3 study a more simplified version of both English and the mother tongue. At secondary level, a similar streaming is found. Here the streams are: Special, Express and Normal. Students from the Special stream are placed in Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools that offer both English and mother tongue as first languages. The Express stream offers a programme which has English as a first

language and the mother tongue as a second language. The Normal stream also has English as a first language and the mother tongue as a second language. In all streams, English is central to the educational programme, with the mother tongue being given differential importance in different streams. At the end of each stream, students sit the GCE O-level examination: the Special and Express streams after four years and the Normal stream after five years. There are three main objectives stated for implementing the streaming policy. These are:

- to maintain educational competitiveness;
- to ensure all students are equipped with basic literacy skills; and
- to impart the necessary training skills needed for the economy (Tan *et al.*, 1997: 17).

However, a key principle for this policy is to ensure the standard of English is safeguarded at all costs. The concept of the various streams was based on proficiency in both of the languages, and streaming is designed to ensure that even the weaker students are literate in English and have some proficiency in Malay, Chinese or Tamil. The streaming policy closely reflects the bilingual policy as it is designed to ensure development of two languages and takes language proficiency as the main basis for streaming students into ability groups (Gopinanthan, 1994).

Prestige Planning Activities

Singapore has given much attention to work in prestige planning through the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign and the 'Speak Good English' movement.

The 'Speak Mandarin' campaign

The 'Speak Mandarin' campaign was launched in 1979 because of a perception that, if different dialects (Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochew, etc.) were to continue to permeate the Chinese community, over time English might become the common language between the various groups and undermine Chinese culture and values. The main aim of the policy was to consolidate the position of Chinese by eliminating all use of dialects within 10 years and to ensure that all Chinese Singaporeans were literate in Mandarin. The Speak Mandarin campaign has been successful in promoting Mandarin in Singapore and reducing dialect use. In just 10 years, the literacy rate in Mandarin increased from a mere 10.2% in 1980 to 23.7% in 1990. Similarly, the number of people using dialects has decreased from 59.5% to 39.6% in 1990, and by 2000, the number of people using dialects had dropped further to 23.8% and the number of people using Mandarin had increased to 35% (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: 133). At the present time, the emergence of China as a major economic power and Singapore's deepening economic involvement with China underlines the importance of literacy in Mandarin, especially as it relates to Singapore's survival theory.

The 'Speak Good English' movement

The 'Speak Good English' movement began because of a perceived threat to Standard English from Singlish, the local hybrid variety of English spoken in Singapore. As was reflected in the slogan, 'Speak Well, Be Understood' (Nirmala, 2000a), it is seen as paramount for Singaporeans not only to be literate in English,

but also to maintain Standard English so that they can be understood anywhere in the English-speaking world. In this campaign, literacy is equated with proficiency in the standard variety and the local variety of English is stigmatised and constructed as a source of literacy and communication problems. Most importantly, the Singaporean Government sees Singlish as incompatible with literacy in English and, therefore, with the nation's economic survival, and it is argued that the continued use of Singlish will 'hurt the Republic's aim to be a First World Economy' (Nirmala, 2000b). With the emergence of websites such as talkingcock.com, Singapore's premier satirical humour website which celebrates the use of Singlish, the Government's greatest concern is that Singlish is growing into an icon of national identity, and this may lead to a generalised perception that Singaporeans have replaced their 'mother tongues by a Singapore English dialect which is unintelligible to the rest of the world' (Ministry of Information and the Arts, 2001). The 'Speak Good English' movement is therefore an attempt to prevent Singlish from establishing itself as an identity marker in Singapore and to promote an exogenous standard over the local variety, in the interests of promoting the language and literacy skills perceived to be necessary for economic success.

The Effects of Globalisation on Literacy Planning in Singapore

It has been shown so far that there is a strong perceived correlation between literacy and the social and economic condition of Singapore. As a result of this correlation, the Compulsory Education Act makes it mandatory for all Singaporean students to have at least six years of primary school education to ensure that all students are 'equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to be productive citizens in a knowledge-based economy' (Ministry of Education, 2003). Technological advances in recent years have had a great influence on Singapore's social, economic and political domains and 'the challenge is to look at how . . . students are given language skills to engage with the new world economies' (*The Straits Times*, 2004b). To support engagement with these new economies, Singapore's schools are incorporating IT lessons into their curriculum, which now includes spending 30% of teaching time on IT (Chua, 2000). Pakir (2001) argues that this IT Masterplan has succeeded to a large extent and it is currently estimated that about 84% of Singaporeans who surf the Internet have English-language home pages on the web. This indicates that IT is seen strongly as a preserve of the English language.

The intense competition in a knowledge economy has been a catalyst for reconsolidating Singapore's education system, and this is reflected in the current changes in the literacy policy. From the beginning of 2004, the Ministry of Education has begun to make refinements to the primary school streaming process and there will now be a gradual removal of the distinction between EM1 and EM2 streams in all of Singapore's primary schools. The modification of the streaming policy aims to create a more flexible environment for language learning by dissociating streaming in primary school from mother tongue proficiency. The change will allow a greater mobility for students to pursue higher education. A further notable change has occurred in the area of examinations and from 2002, the Ministry of Education has begun taking greater control over the GCE (General

Cambridge Examination) A-level examinations, introducing an emphasis on thinking skills, information technology, creativity and national education. This change was designed to ensure that Singapore's education is better placed to respond to the fast changing global market.

These policy changes show that at the beginning of the 21st century, the objectives of Singapore's literacy policy have been repositioned in response to global changes. One of the most distinctive features of this change is the requirement for increasing flexibility in human resources due to fluidity in the movement of people between different regions. It is estimated that about 100,000 to 150,000 Singaporeans are currently living overseas, either for work or study, and this statistic does not include those who travel in and out of Singapore on a short-term basis. Conversely, out of Singapore's total population of 4.19 million, 3.44 million are citizens and permanent residents, and 750,000 are non-residents (*The Straits Times*, 2004a) and a significant proportion of those living in Singapore are, therefore, from overseas. Given this workforce flow and the changing work environment, the definition of literacy used in literacy planning has to be 'flexible' to 'take into account students' home language background and aptitude' (Chua, 2004: 1). However, mobility also poses potential problems and the Singaporean Government believes that mobility makes it more important to remain rooted in one's cultural heritage. George Yeo, Minister for Information and the Arts and Second Minister for Trade and Industry, uses the analogy of a tree:

> . . . with spreading branches. The more we succeed, the greater will be the spread. However, the tree can be stable only if it has a strong trunk and deep roots. Strengthening our trunk and roots is critical. If we fail in doing this, the branches will break off and damage the entire tree. Or the entire tree itself may collapse. If our cultural roots are well-nourished, our economic trunk will be strong and our branches will spread wide in all directions. That is the Singapore ideal. (*The Straits Times*, 2004a: 26)

To encourage the development of these cultural roots, at the beginning of 2004 the Government proposed two major changes in literacy policy. The first change involves the offering of Mother Tongue B (MTB) in secondary schools. Mother Tongue B is a basic language syllabus compared with the original mother tongue syllabus. The second change is the elimination of mother tongue language proficiency as a university admission criterion. These changes were designed to make learning a mother tongue more achievable by encouraging every Singaporean student to study his or her mother tongue in a simpler version, because 'kids from English-speaking homes have more problems with learning Chinese' (Tan, 2004: 16). These current changes in the language policies are needed to ensure all Singaporeans develop a 'strong trunk and deep roots' in their cultures and reflects the ideological function of language as a carrier of traditional values. However, the reduction of the importance of the mother tongues in education also reinforces the primacy of English language and literacy.

Idealistic and Ideological Conflicts

The relationship between language and society is seen as playing a pivotal

role in sustaining Singapore's economy and the core reason expressed for the implementation of language policies including the bilingual policy, streaming, the 'Speak Good English' movement and the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign is to equip Singaporeans with added economic power in business dealings with foreign countries. In short, these policies are designed to address Singapore's economic, political and social vulnerability. Hence, there is an idealistic perspective taken in language policy which associates language and literacy development with Singapore's economic development and modernisation. On the other hand, there is also an ideological position that crystallises around the belief that language plays a critical role in safeguarding Asian cultural heritages and values. The Singapore Government 'believes that language determines culture and that learning a language invariably produces the moral values embodied in the language' (Alsagoff *et al.*, 1997: 41). Learning one's own language is therefore perceived as important for Singaporeans as abandoning one's native language can result in a fundamental psychological break from one's culture (Wong, 1999).

There is therefore a tension in language policy which is centred primarily on the dichotomisation of East and West, and this has inevitably caused tensions in the social, economic and political aspects of Singaporean society, as the language policies carry both idealistic and ideological motifs. From the idealistic standpoint, these policies are designed to prepare Singaporeans to be globally and economically competitive. Yet, at the same time, from an ideological standpoint, these policies act as an anchor for Singaporeans, keeping them rooted in their heritage through the learning of their own vernacular languages. A conflict therefore arises because the idealistic and ideological motifs operate in opposing directions with the idealistic motifs emphasising centripetal forces and the ideological motifs centrifugal forces – Singaporeans are to be global, but concurrently they have to stay local; they have to be Westernised in their mindsets but Asianised in their hearts. Thus, Singaporean language policies carry two contradictory messages; they demand both complete support from the people to enshrine Standard English as the normative language, buttressed by education and the national media, while at the same time, they are to maintain Asian languages and cultures as a defence against the perceived undesirable Western influences which are seen to be inherent in English.

Singapore's literacy policies have had a great impact on the development of the character of current Singaporean society, as the tension surrounding them is caused by the dynamic negotiation embedded in these policies. Contention arises when the policy stresses both cultural unity and cultural diversity simultaneously; Singaporeans are repeatedly reminded to embrace English, but not to be entwined by it. Although the Government has attempted to avoid this problem by promoting the development of literacy in both English and one of the designated 'mother tongues', this policy has had a disproportionate success in English and many young people are replacing their 'mother tongues' with English as their common language. The education system also increasingly privileges literacy in Standard English over other aspects of the Singaporean linguistic repertoire, further reinforcing the desirability of English. Moreover, local newspapers blame Western lifestyles and values for altering the traditional Singaporean system. The concept of being literate and fluent in two languages therefore becomes problematic when there are constant negotiations between language

and social production, which are further complicated by issues of ethnicity. The resulting tensions create a language problem that revolves around language maintenance and shift, and the interrelationship between language and culture. Former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong notes,

> Singaporeans must manage the external influences which the country is exposed to so that they absorb the good and filter out the undesirable. . . By striking the right balance between tradition and change. (Birch, 1999: 24)

Clearly, the emphasis here is on striking the 'right balance between tradition and change'. Western influences are 'undesirable', and therefore it is important for Singaporeans to learn their 'mother tongues' to shield themselves from these corrupting influences. However, Singaporeans must also be literate in English in order to strengthen the country economically. It is paramount for them to remain integrally connected to their heritage, while at the same time 'conscious' enough not to be 'imprisoned' by their traditional values. This juxtaposition of the ideological and idealistic accentuates the problematic nature of language policies in Singapore. In short, it is too simplistic to conclude that the English–mother tongue bilingual policy unproblematically embodies an ideal of equal treatment of linguistic and cultural competencies. The complexity within language policy is caused by what can be called a 'moveable demarcation', which separates the ideological and idealistic perceptions of literacy. Depending on the circumstances and perspectives which are being highlighted, the dividing line between these perceptions of literacy seems to fluctuate and there are shifts in emphasis at different periods of time.

This continual balancing act between the internal and the external, between Western and Eastern, between English and mother tongue in which Singaporeans must engage creates tensions, as Singaporeans are to be bilingual and biliterate, but they are not to be bicultural. Given the fundamental relationships between language and culture, there is a core problem for maintaining this distinction. Language can be used as an instrument for the formation of identity as 'language pervades all activities of human life and if language is culture, culture also pervades all the possible ways of doing things' (Crozet *et al*., 1999: 11). Furthermore, since English is or is becoming the main working language for all Singaporeans, and since they have a greater exposure to English than to the mother tongue in education, the question arises at to how Asian language and culture can be maintained, especially when the culture is under pressure from a dominant English.

The issue of bilingualism and cultural identity is further problematised by the 'Speak Good English' movement which explicitly rejects and stigmatises Singlish, a linguistic variety which could serve as a common and uniquely Singaporean point of contact for the English language and Asian culture. Singlish could therefore be used as a means to represent Singaporean identity if Singlish were not regarded as an inferior language, but rather acknowledged and accepted as part of the evolutionary process of English as a global language. As Crozet *et al.* explain,

> intercultural interaction is neither a question of maintaining one's own cultural frame nor of assimilating to one's interactant's cultural frame. It is

rather a question of finding an intermediary place between the two positions – of adopting a third place. (Crozet *et al.*, 1999: 5)

Therefore Singlish, which is a result of the combination of Western and Eastern cultures, could be this third place where the synthesis of English and the various Asian cultures takes place. It is at this point of interaction that a hybrid form of English is created – a new English and related culture that belongs to Singaporeans. Moreover, despite the efforts to eradicate Singlish at the policy level, at the practical level it has come to be used by an increasing number of Singaporeans. In addition, recent changes in the assessment of mother tongue proficiency indicate that Singapore is experiencing a cultural shift where more Singaporeans are becoming monolingual due to a movement away from the 'mother tongues' towards English. This shift heightens the conflicting tensions, because English has always been perceived as a foreign language and non-Singaporean, and in the long term, the shift could lead to an issue of conflicting identity in addressing 'what it means to be Singaporean' (Teo, 2001). The development of Singlish does not inherently mean compromising the development and use of Standard English, which as a global language is needed in transnational commercial activities. Singlish and English can co-exist. From a utilitarian and identity policy perspective, it may be more practical to encourage the use of Standard English while at the same time being more tolerant of the use of Singlish, especially given the Singaporean Government's belief that culture is embedded in the language that the people use.

Conclusion

The Singaporean Government has devoted a significant amount of its political energy to language policy in order to transform Singapore into an English-literate society and to fulfil the ideological and idealistic objectives that are embedded in the policies. On the one hand, proficiency in English serves as a means to enable Singaporeans to develop their economic potential and paves the way for the country to modernise rapidly. On the other hand, policies stress the importance of knowing 'mother tongues' in order to protect the country's cultural heritage and values. It is important to recognise that the constant negotiations between ideals and ideologies, which are embedded in conceptualisation of the literacy policy, will inevitably result in both planned and unplanned consequences. According to Baldauf (1994), 'top-down planning . . . may leave or create unplanned or misplanned outcomes . . . [because] planned and unplanned features often coexist in the same situation' (Baldauf, 1994: 82–3). For example, making English the official language in Singapore, a planned action undertaken to support economic goals, has had unplanned consequences, such as increasing monolingualism and the extensive use of Singlish and a corresponding decline in mother tongue use, which are themselves contrary to stated social policy goals. From this perspective, it is important to look beyond policy itself to the macro and micro impacts which the policy has on the society. As this paper demonstrates, language planning consists more than the text and its immediate contexts; it also involves the interactions between the text and its context.

Language policies in Singapore are used to address political, ethnic and social issues as well as to establish ethnic identity and develop interethnic relations.

Nevertheless, the convenient formula of four official languages, with one – English – serving as the national language, does not fully address the core goals of this complex situation. Therefore, the constant battle between the two ideologies co-located in Singapore's language policies is likely to continue to provide potential ground for tensions to arise.

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Notes

1. 'Ethnic mother tongue' is the term used in official government policy statements, and is therefore the term used in this paper. The ideological nature of the use of this term is evident in the discussion that follows. It also should be noted that for many Singaporeans the 'mother tongue' is not their first language, as someone who has Chinese as a mother tongue may be a first language speaker of Hakka, Hokkien, or even English.
2. As noted in the previous note, for some Singaporeans, the learning the 'ethnic mother tongue' actually involves learning a second language.

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Rethinking Language Planning and Policy from the Ground Up: Refashioning Institutional Realities and Human Lives

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At a time when connections between English and globalisation seem stronger than ever, and at a time when the 'dominant' status of English *vis-à-vis* other languages is very prominent, it seems imperative for the LPP scholarship to make room for grounded explorations regarding English and its relationship to vernacular languages in non-Western educational contexts. Drawing on an eight-year ethnographic study of English-and-vernacular-medium education in Gujarat, India, this paper argues that it may be time for language planning and policy studies to adopt a situated approach that begins addressing issues around language planning- and policy-related inequities by first focusing on what is on the ground.[1] By gaining insight into how divides between English and other languages are perpetuated by the enforcement of particular policies and by understanding how institutions and humans *refashion* and *re-plan* theirs and others lives by countering language policies, such an orientation opens up a way for us to go beyond thinking of language policies as entities that 'happen to' humans by allowing us to view language policies as hybrid entities that draw their force and movement from the lives of real peoples and their motivations. Such an approach is partially intended toward countering the top-down tendency of much LPP scholarship.

Keywords: vernacular education, vernacular literacy, refashioning language planning and policy, globalisation, non-western contexts

> . . . what is ethics, if not the practice of freedom, the considered practice of freedom . . . Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes. (Rabinow, 1984: 25)

Increasing discussions around *world Englishes* and *English as a global language* force us to take stock of the dominating role of English in current globalising surges. Scholarship in this realm ranges from researchers questioning mediums-of-instruction policies, to ways in which English operates to create inner and outer circles in different countries (Matsuda, 2003), to how it gets positioned *vis-à-vis* local, vernacular languages (Alidou, 2004). Regardless of how scholars are positioned in the debate, much of the research seems to draw from and is connected to issues in implicit and explicit English language policies – state-wide, nation-wide, and institutional – and ways in which they impact a variety of teaching and learning contexts. Such views, while valuable, can be seen to run the risk of rendering language policies around English and local vernaculars as abstract entities partially formulated behind closed doors, and formalised in documents without paying much heed to local realities.

However, we also know that language policies are living, dynamic forces that find their viability and articulation in the most local of spaces: in institutions, pedagogic practices, school settings, teacher-education programmes,

and disciplinary orientations (Ramanathan, 2005b; Tollefson, 1991; Tsui & Tollefson, 2004; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Indeed, recent research is increasingly moving in the direction of viewing language-in-education policies around English and local vernaculars as hybrid entities that necessarily have to be understood in terms of how they get translated into actual practice (Ramanathan, 2005b), including ways in which policies about languages some-times reproduce, legitimise and counter social stratifications on the ground (Lin, 2000; Pennycook, 1998), especially those relating to gender, ethnicity, caste, and home language(s) (Blackledge, 2003; McCarty, 2002; Mazrui, 2002; Jung & Norton, 2002; Norton, 2000; Ramanathan, 2005b). Adopting a situated approach – with language policies being starting points for possible reconceptualisations, this paper argues that it may be time to address language-in-education policy and planning for vernacular language and literacy education by considering realities on the ground: how teachers recognise socio-political inequities (Morgan, 1998) and seek to question and side-step policies that exacerbate them, how institutions join particular political strug-gles and find back-door ways of encouraging alternate, more democratic poli-cies to counter hegemonising ones, how extra- curricular activities become spaces whereby non-mainstream, vernacular ways of being are validated and encouraged. In cases such as these, humans and institutions are taking early ethical steps by creating alternate ('third') spaces (Crozet *et al.*, 1999) whereby students' identities and backgrounds are validated.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic work done in a variety of educational scenes in the city of Ahmedabad, in Gujarat India (cf. Ramanathan, 1999, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; more details on this evolving set of raw materials follows), this paper highlights some of the above points to underscore how language-in-education policies are embedded in and part of local *political power structures that legitimise serious social stratifications,* and *ways in which institutions and humans take note of inequalities* by rethinking their 'unplanned' language plans (Eggington, 1997; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). As will be seen, various aspects of these emphases get framed and highlighted in different ways, in different settings, given local constraints in the divergent Indian educational scenes to be discussed. While power does flow disproportionately across groups of peoples, languages, insti-tutions and polices (Tollefson, 1991), there are humans who work at *re-planning* and *refashioning* the 'ethics' around their language-related plans in these gener-ally unequal scenes,. This paper, then, attempts a partial integrated understand-ing of not only how language and literacy policies stratify people, but also of how people counter policies so as to improve human lives.

As argued elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2003, 2004, 2005b), the relationship between English and local vernaculars in post-colonial communities such as India, falls along socio-political lines of class and caste, with vernacular literacy practices, including ways of teaching, learning, living, reasoning, and believing, being marginalised. This marginalisation was cemented in place under the Brit-ish Raj in the form of two parallel tracks of education: English-medium education (EM) and Vernacular-medium education (VM). These two tracks constructed an 'English-Vernacular Divide' (Ramanathan, 2005b) in education and literate prac-tice. The reasons for this marginalisation are numerous, complex and inter-twined, and have to be understood against a most complex landscape of colonial

language-in-education policies, language ideologies, vernacular and English ways of learning and teaching, pedagogic tools, classroom practices, and political struggles. What follows offers two examples of this divide between English and the vernacular education as well two instances in which the resulting gulfs are noticed and bridged. As will be evident, all of the examples have strong implications for language policy and planning, both in India where this project is based, and in the West, where this paper will be largely read because globalisation currents of which English is a crucial component now force us to take second and third looks at grounded realities in other, divergent parts of the world. The pool of raw materials on which the current discussion rests spans eight years and what is presented here is necessarily a most selective sample, and is not intended by any means to be comprehensive. The pool includes:

- close work with three institutional contexts: an EM middle-class Jesuit college, a private middle-class EM business college, and an inner-city poor VM women's liberal arts college;
- 21 semi-formal interviews with faculty members across the three institutions, each of which lasted about an hour and a half long;
- 80 interviews with EM and VM students;
- approximately 109 hours of classroom observations in the three settings;
- a variety of written documents ranging from official bulletins, student writing, assignments, newspaper articles, exams;
- a range of informal discussion meetings where teachers freely exchanged ideas about teaching practices, workloads, institutional and state-level educational policies.

Needless to say, the present discussion rests on materials that have been selectively chosen to argue my points about language planning and policy studies needing to make room for grounded explorations which are likely to uncover various local kinds of 'unplanned' language planning in order that potential policy changes can be better envisaged.

Instances of the English–Vernacular Divide

Vernacular-medium pedagogic practices

One instance of the divide between English and the vernacular can be exemplified by the use of vernacular learning practices, especially the use of choral recitation (Crook, 1996); a mode of learning frequently frowned upon by the West. While this was not a practice that I grew up learning by in English-medium settings, I do remember engaging in it in Sanskrit classes, where the class would have to chorally recite mantras from the *Gita*. Choral recitation is however, a mode of learning and teaching frequently practised in vernacular-medium settings and can be considered a normal literate practice in such contexts, where it is encouraged by teachers and teaching materials. Choral recitation is evident in classroom interactions where teachers frequently elicit choral responses from students. The following interactions from Sanskrit and English classes illustrate this:

Sanskrit class excerpts

(1) **T:**   *kaya text laavanu cche?*   1
             (Which text is to be bought?)
     Sts: (responding chorally): *Kaadambari text laavanu cche.*   2
             (*Kadambari* [a Sanskrit play] is to be bought)
     T: *kyan thhi laavanu cche?*   3
             (Where is it to be bought from?)
     Sts: *Ratan pol maathi laavaanu cche*   4
             (From Ratan pol)

(2) **T:**   *tho eh vakhate Avanti eh, kone?*
             (So at that time Avanti, who?)   1
     Sts: *Avanti*   2
     T: *Avanti eh kharraab laagyu. Su laagyu?*   3
             (Avanti felt bad. What did she feel?)
     Sts: (responding chorally) *Kharraab laagyu*   4
             (felt bad)

English class excerpts

(3) **T:**   *Kayaa form karvaana chhe ame?*   1
             (What form are we doing this year?)
     Sts: Comedy form (chorally in English)   2
     T: *Ane kaaya playwright vaanchvaanu chhe?*   3
             (And which playwright are we reading?)
     Sts: Wild   4

(4) **T:**   *Tho, Millie eh light joyu. Suu joyuu?*   1
             (Millie saw a light. What did she see?)
     Sts: *light joyuu*   2
             (Saw a light)

As explained elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2005a, 2005b), in each of these excerpts the questions on the part of the teacher are uttered in distinct ways: slowly in a sing-song manner with an exaggerated rise at the end.[2]

The general explanations given by the language teachers for using such vernacular education practices range from 'classical languages like Sanskrit have always been sung or chanted and "singing and chanting" allows you to memorise information' (FI: 4:2) to 'this is what they have been used to in school and other non-schooling areas' (FI 4:1). As shown elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2005a), such choral recitations are a local literacy practice commonly used in valued contexts in the community, especially in discourse events such as *kathas* in temples, where priests take certain Hindu myths and explain their relevance to everyday living (*ameh katha maa kevi rithe kahiye cche?* How do we speak in Kathas?), and at key junctures elicit choral responses. Breaking off to ask questions in the middle of extended narrative turns to get an audience to respond together serves the dual purpose of ensuring audience participation as well as testing attention.

One of the instructors, who also narrates *Kathas* in local temples (indeed, many of the students had attended them), maintained that chorusing responses – a
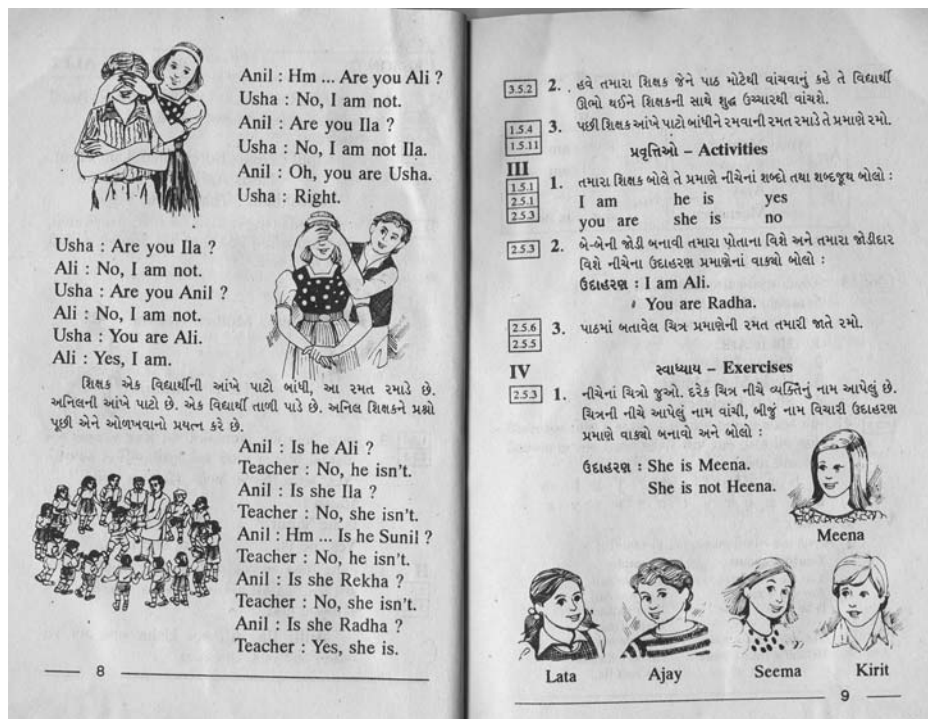
Figure 1 Gujurati medium textbook: Standard 5
Source: Nataraj and Joshi (1999: 8–9)

vestige of a strong oral, vernacular tradition (Crook, 1996) – allows novices to engage in learning without apprehension of being judged. Several of the students interviewed said they often picked up 'answers' from their friends in such responses and that they could recognise the intonational cues of their teachers' voices that prompted such responses because they were used to it in other relatively less non-academic, and non-institutionalised settings.

Choral recitation as a classroom practice is also promoted by textbooks as the following excerpt from a Gujarati-medium textbook illustrates:

The instructions given in Gujarati (on page 9 of the excerpt in Figure 1) direct students to, among other things: (1) repeat after the teacher, (2) to engage in single and choral repetition with partners enacting the dialogues (on page 8 of the excerpt), and (3) to draw on the formulaic phrases (*She is _____, She is ____*) and to repeat them singly or chorally.

Localised instances of vernacular literate practice, such as that described here, underscore the ideological and communal aspects of literacy and demonstrate how literacy practices are saturated with ideology (Street, 1993, 1994) and how valued practices in one context (VM) may be excluded from or stigmatised in others (EM). Where one context has more prestige than the other, this value system relating to literate practice becomes firmly entrenched and constitutes a strong element of an English–Vernacular divide.

Divergent Pedagogic Goals in English and Vernacular-medium Classrooms

In the Indian context, literacy in English is an important goal of education regardless of the medium of instruction, and another very local instance of the English–Vernacular divide in literacy education can be seen in the divergent pedagogic goals for English literacy for students in the two tracks of education. My efforts at understanding the struggles that vernacular-medium students encounter in English-medium colleges prompted me to examine the writing requirements for both sets of students in K-12 settings. Called 'Minimal Levels of Writing' (MLW), these writing requirements are mandated by the Gujarat State Board of Education, and are partially presented in Figure 2.

There are two noticeable differences in the construction of literacy inherent in the respective MLWs shown in Figure 2: (1) writing for vernacular-medium students is presented as a discrete skill and is addressed separately from reading, a feature that contrasts with writing and reading, which are presented as

	Excerpts from Minimal Levels of Writing from English textbooks used in the Gujarati-medium:	Excerpts from Minimal Levels of Writing from English textbooks used in the English-medium:
Grade 5	Writing: Gains control of the basic mechanics of writing in English like capital letters, small letters, punctuation, writing neatly on a line with proper spacing Transcribes words, phrases and sentences in English Writes cardinals up to fifty, telephone numbers, road signs Produces words and spells them correctly Writes numbers up to 50, telephone numbers, road signs	Reading and writing: Reading textual material and writing answers to questions based on and related to the text Reading and interpreting and offering comments on maps and charts Reading children's literature and talking about it Writing paragraphs on given topics Reading and writing simple recipes Reading and interpreting labels on wrappers
Grade 6	Reading: Reads aloud simple sentences, poems, dialogues and short passages with proper pauses Reads and follows given directions Reads numbers up to a hundred Writing: Writes with proper punctuation marks Writes words and sentences neatly on a line with proper spacing, punctuation marks, and capitalisation Writes answers to questions based on text material Writes simple guided compositions in 4–5 sentences on people, objects, or places Translates words and sentences from English into Gujarati and Gujarati into English	Reading and writing: Reading textual material and writing answers to questions based on the text Reading and interpreting simple abbreviations Reading narrative prose and adventure stories and talking about them Writing/building stories based on given questions/points Reading and using the telephone directory Writing captions for given photographs, pictures, maps, charts, diagrams and graphs Writing messages for telegrams Reading and interpreting labels on bottles

Figure 2 Divergent minimal kevels of writing for GM and EM students

conjoined entities for EM students; and (2) writing for EM students is essayist in orientation from early on, with a focus on text and communication, while for VM students literate practice in English is constructed as a lower level, decontextualised mechanical skill: for example, 'writing paragraphs on given topics' (EM, Grade 5) vs. 'gaining the basic mechanics of English writing . . . with proper spacing' (VM, Grade 5); 'writing essays based on the texts' (EM, Grade 7) vs. 'learning to write words and sentences neatly' (VM, Grade 7). The MLW, therefore, construct literate practice in English, the more prestigious literacy, in very different ways for the two groups of learners.

Bridging the English–Vernacular Divide by Harnessing Vernacular Literacies

Such instances of the English–Vernacular divide necessarily force one to ask: what can be done to make language-education issues more equitable? How do researchers, policy makers, teachers, institutions work at bridging such socio-political gulfs? The following section addresses ways in which two institutions have found 'back-door' ways of circumventing English- and vernacular-related divides. While the efforts of people and institutions in this section do not pertain directly to literacy or teaching in the classroom, they do pertain to how vernacular resources become ways by which perceived socio-educational gulfs get addressed and demonstrate how literacies can be harnessed as forms of oppositional practice giving new performativities to vernacular literacies.

Extracurricular activities emphasising civic responsibility in Gujarati

As discussed elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2005a), recognising that teaching their largely low-income students English is not going to empower them ('Teaching them English is not going to do it; that has to come later,' FI 8: 23), the VM teachers at the women's college have found non-conventional approaches to refashioning their educational realities by enhancing both the vernacular languages and the self-esteem of their VM students. By doing so, they have thereby both empowered the students and reduced the sense of threat that many learners feel regarding English. Interpreting 'empowerment' and 'pro-vernacular' in terms of addressing local, community problems, some teachers in the VM college began a local chapter of a nation-wide social service scheme called the National Social Service (NSS). This is a nation-wide volunteer organisation that trains students in the rudiments of social work and sends them out in teams to areas (primarily poor, rural, villages and farms) on special projects that range from inoculating babies, to raising awareness about health issues, to doing investigations on the purity of water.

For the VM teachers, the primary aim for starting this project was to involve students in local, community issues, and as discussed elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2005b), while none of these projects are directly related to questions of English or vernacular teaching, they are crucial to the pro-vernacular sentiments of the school and constitute a socially significant domain of vernacular literate practice. One of the teachers who started this social service project at this college specifically mentions the need to 'awaken in students the spirit of self-reliance' (FI 14: 3). As he says:

> Having them engaged in an extra-curricular project such as this makes them really strong citizens. They are learning to take pride in so many different things at the same time: their background, their home language, their communities. These students have a lot of [low] self confidence issues. Most of them want to be like you: they would have liked to have gone to EM schools and done well. Now they are beginning to see that being in the VM is really valuable: many of them will not be able to do the community work if they did not know Gujarati. Some of them have even told me they are not as crazy about English anymore. Suddenly they are realizing that they can be self-reliant with their mother-tongue. (FI 14: 5)

While 'empowering' students at this college takes partial form in extracurricular activities (such as the NSS) related to deploying literate practices, 're-awakening' seems to be pursued directly through classroom practice. Here the focus seems to be more on being pro-vernacular as opposed to anti-English. The following views of a lecturer in Gujarati literature (at the women's college) illustrate this point:

> See, I begin with what they already know, and that is Gujarati. For most of these students, Gujarati is their mother-tongue. And once they have learned to appreciate Gujarati literature, once I have re-awakened their interest in stories in their mother-tongue, other kinds of literature open up. Slowly, I get them reading English literary texts, and we draw connections. Recently, I assigned *Sophie's Choice* and they really really loved it. We worked really hard and at the end of it, one of them talked to me about what she had learned from this text and the Gujarati novel we had just finished, about how complex life's choices are and we cannot make simple judgments about where people end up in their lives. I almost cried when she said that. For an 18 year old to say that with feeling meant that something in our class had clicked. Just sparks like that make everything in this place worthwhile . . . Some of these students, by the time they come to the second year have become more thoughtful and by their final year are genuinely interested . . . I am convinced we have to start with Gujarati [the vernacular] and move outward from there. Imposing English from the outside is not going to do anything for them, except make them more frustrated. (FI 19:1)

'Reawakening' for this teacher, then, is not a matter of removing English as much as it is a matter of using vernacular and vernacular knowledges as ethical starting points for engagement and literate practice.[3] While this teacher is not actively anti-English, as she explains in the quote above, she very clearly stresses vernacular literatures as a way to re-awaken and empower her students. When asked if the grass-roots activism upheld by some members of the college (who are strongly pro-vernacular and also anti-English) ran counter to her English teaching, she said:

> See, I am a literature person, first. My job is to awaken in these students an interest in all of literature. I happen to believe that the best way to do that is by stressing vernacular ways of thinking, reasoning, and believing. That is what I meant when I said English has come later. Gujarati definitely has to come first . . . you have to keep in mind how using your mother-tongue

allows you to experience things in a way that can be quite different from English. Gujarati, the way I see it, empowers . . . English does not do that here. . . . (FI 19:2)

A general sense that emerges, then, from quotes such as the above is that many VM teachers view their ways of teaching, learning, and living as being opposed to English and its general associations, the implication being that English tends to 'suppress', 'disempower' and 'devalue' and that vernacular literacies are a means of oppositional practice which confront the inequalities of the English–Vernacular divide.

Bridging the divide: Institutional efforts at opening doors for Gujarati Dalit students

Previous research on the tracking of students into various streams of education has shown how language proficiency and control of valued literacies can serve as gatekeeping measures that determine ways in which students gain access to particular avenues to which they may seek entry (Anyon, 1997; Kalantzis & Cope, 2002; Shuman, 1985). In many cases mastery over the standard variety of a language (Gee, 1990), including its literacy practices and varied academic registers which are entailed, serve as instruments by which students' 'intelligence' and 'aptitude' are assessed – instruments that often have the unfortunate effect of slotting students into damaging grooves. In the Indian socio-educational context such measures can be seen to feed into the English–Vernacular chasm, which, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Ramanathan, 2005b), is to a large extent, held in place by policies cementing divergent and unequal literacy practices. While the general points regarding tracking issues are applicable for most VM students in the city, I address these issues in one particular institutional context that has recently adopted a highly activist orientation.

The institution under discussion is run by the Jesuit community based in Ahmedabad. The priests who run the school have in recent years under the auspices of their social justice doctrine committed themselves to joining the political struggle of Dalit[4] people, who have been historically marginalised because of their caste status. The college, like other colleges in the state, has to follow university-wide mandates[5] to track VM students entering EM colleges. VM students are tracked into different 'streams' depending on the years of English they have had through their K–12 schooling, and because VM students have the option of 'dropping' English after the 9th grade, there is one set of students that arrives at the (EM) college scene with only five years of English instruction (i.e. from 5th–9th grades). This set of students is tracked into the *b* stream, while those VM students that have had English from 5th to 12th grade get placed into the *a* stream.[6] Students in this *a* stream are assumed to have a moderate grasp on the language, and are, according to the *Teacher's Handbook* issued by the central university, considered to be placed at the intermediate level. Most *a* stream students are generally from middle-class homes, and their literacy levels in Gujarati are relatively high. The *b* stream students, in contrast, typically come from farming communities outside Ahmedabad, and most have attended municipal schools. For these students standard Gujarati may be a second language or a second dialect, with English constituting a third (sometimes fourth) language

and their Gujurati literacy may be less well developed than that of the *a* stream students.

The *b* stream students in the Jesuit college (but not necessarily in other colleges) are primarily Dalit students with rural backgrounds, and it is primarily through enrolling Dalit students that this institution partially begins to address some of the caste-related inequalities which face them. By opting to reserve all places in the *b* stream for Dalit students, the college is doing what it can to open its doors to students who otherwise would not get a chance to get in. A general understanding among the managerial staff is that the problems represented and encountered by these students are complex and that the English–Vernacular gulf they experience is a surface manifestation of a range of other issues. They relate their views to the Ignatian idea that faith and charity are to have social dimensions: 'the chief purpose of the Society of Jesus today is that the Society should strive not only for its own salvation and perfection, but for that of its neighbor as well . . .' (Mwijage, 2002: 2). As the principal of the college explains it, 'this doctrine can be adapted according to their mission in the world' (FI 7: 1). In other words ' . . . it was a matter of finding the seeds in the kingdom of God and then collaborating in the transformation of the world' (Albrecht, 2002). For this institution, the policy of supporting the Dalit students became one ethical and political way by which to join the Dalit political struggle and put their social justice doctrine to practice.[7] The institution has also committed itself to empowering the Dalits in a variety of non-academic and academic ways, including building spaces for extra-curricular support and assisting in organising regular group meetings wherein Dalits share their experiences with discrimination and think about avenues for change. As with the teachers at the women's college, they too have found ways of refashioning and replanning their policies to improve the lives of their (Dalit) students by using literacies and education as a vehicle for engagement.

Pulling Back, Looking Ahead: Implications for LPP

Each of the above local instances – whether they be around the English-Vernacular divide or around instances where educational and socio-political gulfs are bridged – are spaces of unplanned language planning, the micro realms that Eggington (2002) argues need to be part of 'formal' language planning. Understanding the value and prominence of local literate practices, such as choral recitation, is a first step in reconceptualising many language teaching materials, especially those around English language teaching. TESOL, in its enthusiasm for promoting communicative language teaching, has not only been uninterested in vernacular literacy practices (Bruthiaux, 2002), but has devalued them, and has typically characterised them as promoting rote learning and as not facilitating critical thinking. Localised perspectives such as those discussed in this paper force a rethinking of, among other things, how scholarship in the West writes about learning and teaching practices in very different parts of the world and how this constructs a value system around local practices. This has very direct implications for several aspects of language policy and planning, especially those relating to institutional policies, and the 'standards' by which student performance is judged, and of nation- and state-wide policies both in the

West (that receives a lot of international students who have had their school-ing in diverse mediums of education and have developed different local liter-ate practices) and in India itself. Divisive language policies create problems but the localised instances of individual teachers and institutions reflecting on gulfs created through policies and finding ethical responses to counter them by tweaking, side-stepping, or refashioning language policies point partially to how they are creating new modes of being and living together. Of relevance here is Foucault's (1991) notion of *governmentality*, which he defines as 'the relationship of the self to itself . . . the range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their freedom can use in their dealing with each other' (Foucault, 1984: 300). The teach-ers at both the low-income women's college and the Jesuit institution seem to be engaged in precisely such efforts: in the former teachers are attempting to harness their students' vernacular resources and literate practices heightening their civic and vernacular sensibilities by engaging them in community-related projects, or by teaching English literature by first drawing on the home/Gujarati backgrounds of the students, while in the latter priests and teachers have found ways of remaining true to their activist orientation by reserving one of the 'streams' for Dalit students thereby refashioning a policy mandated by the state. In both cases, teachers and institutions have not only taken stock of their relation-ships to themselves (cf. Foucault, 1984) but have found ways of re-planning their worlds.

   In terms of language planning and policy scholarship, then, attention to grounded, local realities, especially those around how humans rethink language and literacy-related policies moves us collectively toward a space in which to begin to make room for scholarship that addresses how humans and institutions claim authority to re-think, re-envision, re-enact their realms. This shift in the discourses of our discipline toward addressing not just how the *rules of formation* (Foucault, 1972) happen to humans, but how these rules get re-constructed offers us not only an 'enriched conception of the historical interaction of logical, epistemological and social relations,' (Gordon, 1980: 244) but also one where humans, while acknowledging these relations work towards moving themselves and others to more equal grounds.

Notes

1. This paper is a reworking of ideas and arguments that have appeared in varied forms in Ramanathan, 1999, 2003, 2005a, 2005b).
2. The English and Sanskrit classes had eight to 10 such interactions, as opposed to an average of two such interactions per class in the content-area classes.
3. I thank an anonymous reviewer for helping me notice the irony in this segment.
4. Dalits (the word means 'oppressed' or 'crushed') are outside the caste system and are placed very low in the social order. Since Independence they have been recipients of many affirmative action programmes (Ramanathan, 2005b).
5. All public colleges in the state are affiliated to Gujarat University. Mandates related to syllabi, curriculum and teaching come down from the university to local colleges, a fact that many teachers – both in this college and the two others – feel constrains their autonomy.
6. All VM students – *a* and *b* streamers – fall into the A division. All EM students fall into the B division.

7. Dalits who convert to Christianity lose the rights to the reserved quota earmarked for them, and get classed as 'OBC' in Gujarat (for whom also there are some reserved places, but not as many).

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Legislating Literacy for Linguistic and Ethnic Minorities in Contemporary China

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The People's Republic of China has employed two means of literacy promotion: a campaign approach and a legislative approach to meet the needs of nation-state building through education. From 1949 through to the late 1970s, the campaign approach was motivated by a political rationale, but later an economic rationale also became important. From the mid-1980s and continuing to the present, a legislative approach emerged which treats compulsory education as the mainstream means for literacy development and illiteracy eradication as a supplementary one. Meanwhile, China's language policy has also changed from allowing parallel development of Chinese literacy and minority literacies to a linguistic hierarchy with Chinese as dominant and minority languages as subordinate. Minorities may challenge this order and in these challenges can be seen differences between national legislation and local legislation. The national laws generally take a 'permission' stance towards literacy in minority languages, whereas local laws adopt stances ranging from 'promotion' to 'permission' to 'tolerance', with the focus for contesting relative status concentrating on the area of literacy education rather than illiteracy eradication.

Keywords: literacy policy and planning, vernacular literacy, China

Introduction

Literacy may be viewed from a number of perspectives (Wagner *et al.*, 1999). One of these perspectives is the relationship between literacy and nation-state building, which is usually realised in terms of literacy campaigns: a mass approach to promoting literacy in a given timeframe in order to propagate a particular doctrine and/or foster a particular national identity (see Arnove & Graff, 1987a; Baracco, 2004). In nation-state building, literacy is a powerful means for other ends rather than an ultimate goal. As such, literacy can be politically and/or legislatively manoeuvred to serve the goals of building the nation-state. This paper will examine how the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) has taken a legislative approach to literacy development for minority communities (and the majority community as well) during the past two decades, radically departing from its early campaign-based approach. It will first review the historical background, then discuss new developments in legislation for literacy in minority languages, and finally review the impact of legislation on literacy in minority communities. As China has switched from building a multi-nation state to a mono-nation state, the change in approaches to literacy development essentially reflects changes in political goals, as well as in assumptions regarding models of literacy in language planning.

Historical Background

During the early years of the PRC, the new Government launched campaign after campaign to eradicate illiteracy (Hayford, 1987; Peterson, 1997; Woodside, 1992). Three months after the founding of the PRC, at the first national confer-

ence on education in December 1949, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party, was quoted as saying that 'eradication of illiteracy among 80% of the Chinese population was a necessary condition for the construction of a new China' (China, 1951: 23). In 1950, the Ministry of Education asked each province to prepare literacy materials and train literacy teachers so that a massive national literacy campaign could begin in 1951. At the base of this first national campaign were numerous existing evening and seasonal (winter) literacy schools that had already enrolled more than 10 million illiterate farmers (China, 1951: 4).

The literacy campaign became an essential component of the construction of a new China and no exception was made for minority communities. The campaign was driven both by government policies and local enthusiasm. The central government's main concern was to train a cadre that could mobilise local support, a concern that Mao Zedong unambiguously stated in a cable to the PRC military authorities in northwest China as early as November 1949 (Liu & Zhang, 1994: 42–3). Minority education and language policies were developed in the spirit of Mao's instructions during the following few years (for a complete picture, see China, 1991: 25–39; Mackerras, 1995: 133–57; Zhou, 2001, 2003: 47–59). Guided by these policies, the PRC Government opened various minority schools and classes and established taskforces to create writing systems for minority languages. For example, a language survey team from Beijing worked with the Yi community in Sichuan in southwest China to create the first such new system between 1950 and 1951 (Zhou, 2003: 281–9). It was immediately used in Yi cadre training classes and literacy classes.

At the same time, minority communities did not seem satisfied with the pace of development initiated by the Government. Encouraged by the PRC's policies and eager to participate in local political life, many communities developed their own initiatives. For instance, in 1950 several young people from the Miao community in Guizhou in southwest China began to explore the possibility of developing literacy in their native language and creating their own writing system. They travelled to Beijing and asked for help from the Chinese Association of Writing Reform. The association assigned specialists to improve their rudimentary writing design, which later the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs used to print literacy textbooks for these young people to take home (Zhou, 2003: 219–20).

Both top-down efforts and bottom-up efforts were used in early literacy campaigns in the PRC, for two main reasons. First, literacy campaigns were seen as a means to economic, social, and political ends, which could legitimise the transaction of state power, facilitate the transformation of the society, and speed up the modernisation of the country (see Arnove & Graff, 1987b). Literacy campaigns were then viewed by both the Government and the populace as a symbolic and functional transition into a new China. Second, following the Leninist-Stalinist solution to the question of nation building, the PRC tried to build a multi-nation state during the 1950s (Dreyer, 1976: 93–171; Mackerras, 1994: 140–50; Zhou, 2003: 40–2). With minority rights enshrined in the PRC Constitution, this approach supported literacy development in minority languages (for more information, see Zhou, 2003, 2004a). At this time there appear to have been two parallel models of literacy, national

language and minority language, rather than competing models of literacy between the languages, in China's literacy campaigns (for models, see Hornberger, 1999).

However, the close association between literacy and political agendas proved to be a double-edge sword, at least as the PRC Government viewed it during the late 1950s. Literacy not only enabled minorities' political participation, it emboldened their political demands. The development of writing systems and literacy became symbolically and functionally associated with power that was heatedly negotiated between the PRC Government and minority communities, with the latter seeking higher official status for their written languages and a correspondingly higher level of autonomy (see Zhou, 2003: 105–11). Coupled with other factors, in the following years literacy in minority languages was first focused orthographically on *Pinyin*, but gradually moved towards the use of Chinese characters (see Zhou, 2003: 60–77; Q. Zhou, 2004). Eventually, literacy campaigns were aligned with political campaigns, such as the Socialist Education Campaign (1963–1965) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (for details, see Spence, 1990: 593–652). However, these political campaigns had a negative impact on literacy development, usually slowing it down and sometimes even creating more illiteracy in minority communities (Zhou, 2000). Therefore, in the first three decades of the PRC, minority literacy development experienced instability, which I have called a 'roller-coasting effect' (Zhou, 2000).

When China began its economic reform during the late 1970s, it reaffirmed its early language policy; however, the political ecology had completely changed. First, the revision of the Constitution in 1982 endorsed Putonghua (standard Chinese or Mandarin) as the official language of the PRC. Second, China began to reconsider its Leninist-Stalinist solution to the question of nation building as it saw the Soviet model failing. Sped by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, this reconsideration led to the formation of a new, non-Leninist-Stalinist approach to the question of nation building in the early 1990s. This approach aims to develop an inclusive Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu*) with ethnic diversity (Fei, 1999; Zhou, 2003: 93–8). The departure from multi-nation state building to mono-nation state building has had significant implications for language policy and literacy development. The early policy supported the creation of writing systems and the development of literacy in minority languages, basically in parallel with literacy in Chinese. However, throughout minority communities, the new policy has been consolidating a linguistic hierarchy with Chinese as the dominant language and minority languages as subordinate languages, resulting in the promotion of a national literacy in Chinese and tolerance of only a few local literacies. Legislation is now perceived as the best means for establishing and strengthening this new linguistic hierarchy in China's drive to mono-nation state building.

National Legislation on Literacy

Literacy can be motivated by different rationales at different times and places (Wagner, 1999). If literacy campaigns were prompted simply by a political rationale in the early years of the PRC (see Hayford, 1987), literacy educa-

tion in contemporary China is now prompted by both economic and political rationales. First, China's economic reform and modernisation require a highly literate labour force. Second, minority language literacy in Chinese is believed to facilitate a smooth and rapid development of one nation with diversity (*duoyuan yiti*). Third, these two rationales are intrinsically related because the Chinese Government now considers rapid economic development as a pragmatic solution to the question of nation building (Zhou, 2003: 95–8). Since the mid-1980s, China has taken two steps to legislate literacy: legislating compulsory education as the mainstream approach and illiteracy eradication as a supplementary approach.[1] The mainstream approach is represented by three major PRC laws, the *Law on Compulsory Education* (1986), the *Implementation Regulations of the Law on Compulsory Education* (1992), and the *Law on Education* (1995). The supplementary approach consists of the *Regulations on the Eradication of Illiteracy* (1988/1992), the *Measures on the Evaluation of Units' Eradication of Illiteracy among Adults* (1992), and the *Measures on the Assessment of No-Illiteracy Counties* (1993). These two approaches complement each other.

The *Law on Compulsory Education* is one of the first laws of the mainstream approach. It comprises 18 articles, of which five have a direct impact on literacy education in minority communities (Sun & Gao, 1996: 91–3). Article 5 requires that, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or race, all children should receive nine years of compulsory education (primary and junior secondary) from the age of six, or from seven in areas where schools are not readily accessible. It offers no exception for any child but recognises the accessibility problem in pastoral and rural minority communities by granting the one-year delay. Article 6 says that schools should promote Putonghua and may use common minority languages if most of the student population is of minority origin.[2] It establishes Chinese as the dominant medium of instruction and the minority language as a secondary medium: a legislative issue that did not emerge until the early 1980s, even though this linguistic hierarchy had already surfaced politically during the late 1950s. This approach addresses the development of Chinese-minority biliteracy in minority communities, where minority language literacy used to prevail or still does. Article 10 states that compulsory education is to be free. Article 11 requires that parents or guardians ensure that their children go to school when they reach school age. Article 12 specifies that both the central and local governments are responsible for school funding, and that the central government supports compulsory education in minority communities by providing funding and teacher training. The law points to compulsory education as the most comprehensive way to prevent any further increase in illiteracy.

Authorised by Article 17 of the *Law on Compulsory Education,* the Ministry of Education published the *Implementation Regulations of the PRC's Law on Compulsory Education* in early 1992 (China, 1998: 184–9). With eight chapters and 46 articles, the regulations detail how the law should be enforced. The regulations provide less autonomy to minority communities than the law does. For example, Article 25 specifies that Chinese must be taught in advanced grades or earlier

years, as conditions warrant, in primary schools in which minority languages are the medium of instruction.

The regulations are also financially less favourable to minority communities than the law is, even though special financial support for minority students and minority communities is reaffirmed (Articles 18 and 28). Article 17 authorises primary and secondary schools to collect fees (not tuition fees) for compulsory education, although it asks schools to waive fees for students from families with financial difficulties. However, financial difficulties are determined according to the standards of the local communities, although even 'well-to-do' families in rural minority communities are generally poorer than families 'with financial difficulties' in urban and developed (mostly majority Han) communities. Therefore, fees which are not considered a problem for urban and developed communities may become an unbearable financial burden in minority communities. To make matters worse, the regulations (Articles 29 and 30) shift the financial responsibility for a portion of teachers' salaries, school renovation and expansion, and new school construction to townships and villages, although Article 28 does promise state financial assistance to minority communities. Articles 29 and 30 have two direct and immediate consequences. First, many economically underdeveloped minority communities have not been able to raise funds to meet this responsibility, so their schools lack necessary teaching facilities and equipment, classrooms are too crowded, and some classroom buildings are in danger of collapsing (see Li, 2004: 136–7; Yang, 1996: 270). Second, many communities are not able to pay teachers a decent salary, and some have not been able to pay them at all for extended periods of time. This was particularly the case in the 1990s (Sun & Gao; 1996: 261–2). Not only does this situation damage the teachers' morale, it also undermines the perceived advantages education holds for students and communities, resulting in an decrease in the number of young people acquiring adequate literacy.

The PRC's *Law on Education*, passed in 1995, is the most comprehensive law on education in China. With 10 chapters and 84 articles, this law covers preschool, primary, secondary, higher, and adult education (China, 1998: 1–9). It reaffirms the linguistic hierarchy of Chinese as the dominant language and minority languages as subordinate (Article 12), although it does endorse the state's special financial support for education in minority communities (Articles 10 and 56). Considering illiteracy eradication as part of adult education, the law makes it the responsibility not only of governments but of *danwei*, organisations, such as businesses and non-profit organisations, and also makes acquiring literacy an obligation of illiterate citizens (Article 23). However, following the principle that local education is funded from local resources, the law increases the school-funding problem by authorising local collection of education taxes for local use (Article 57). Economically underdeveloped minority communities do not have a healthy tax base (or any tax base at all) so they rely mostly on state subsidised funding, which is far from sufficient for operating these schools. Thus, this law fails to resolve the fundamental funding problem for poor communities.

In 2000, these funding and fee problems began to be addressed economically

and politically after the Chinese Government initiated its Great West Development Project, designed to provide an economic solution to the question of nation building. In March 2005, at the National People's Congress meeting, the Central Government announced that, starting from 2005, China will waive fees for all students in its 592 poorest counties, many of which are minority communities (*People's Daily*, 9 March 2005, p. 5, Overseas Edition). However, long-term legislative solutions to these problems are still needed if schools are to function effectively as the first line of literacy development.

Literacy eradication, the supplementary approach to literacy development, faces the same funding problem but does allow some flexibility in the linguistic hierarchy. Passed in 1988 and amended in 1993, the *Regulations on Illiteracy Eradication* has 17 articles, seven of which bear directly on illiteracy eradication in minority communities (China, 1998: 992–4). Article 2 stipulates that regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity, all illiterate citizens 15 or older have equal rights and obligations to literacy education. Article 4 unambiguously defines illiteracy eradication as a supplementary approach to literacy education. It attaches illiteracy eradication to the spread of compulsory education and requires total eradication of illiteracy within five years of compulsory education (nine years) being fully implemented in a community. Article 4 might give local governments in minority communities where even six-year compulsory education is still not within easy reach less of a sense of urgency in eradicating illiteracy as it envisages that it will take these communities several years to implement the six years of compulsory education and even longer to develop a full nine years of education. Local governments in this situation, therefore, may not be in a position to put illiteracy eradication on their current agenda.

Showing some flexibility, Article 6 states that, in addition to standard Chinese, a minority community may use its 'mother language' or a commonly used minority language for illiteracy eradication. This article differs from the laws on education, all of which are limited to use of standard Chinese and commonly used, or standardised minority languages only. Flexibility is also found in Article 7, which defines the Chinese literacy standard as productive and receptive use of 1500–2000 Chinese characters, but delegates to provincial or autonomous governments the setting up of minority language literacy standards.

Some innovations in illiteracy eradication are found in Articles 5 and 9. The former requires the teaching of a combination of literacy and applied farming techniques in education for rural communities; the latter asks local government to use applied farming technology and market information schools to maintain literacy. This approach appears to have created some significant achievements in some minority communities. For example, the Zhuang community in Guanxi, where minority languages have been used to eradicate illiteracy (see Li & Huang, 2004) since 2000, illiteracy eradication has been linked to poverty eradication. In courses that have been offered to poor and illiterate Zhuang farmers, particularly women, the first 100–200 hours have been devoted to learning to read and write in Zhuang and the remaining 40–60 hours learning a skill (such as domestic animal breeding and cash crop planting) to overcome poverty. Follow-up in the form of market information

bulletins has been provided to support farming and animal husbandry skills and to maintain literacy.

In spite of some successes, the regulations for literacy eradication have the same funding problems as the laws on education. Even worse, Article 12 designates three community resources as the major funding base: (1) townships and villages, (2) *danwei*, and (3) a portion of the rural education tax, and it requires provincial, municipal, and county government subsidies and community donations. Even the Ministry of Education has acknowledged, in a written opinion, that the lack of funding for illiteracy eradication is one of two major problems with such programmes, the other being the lack of leadership (China, 1998: 1111).

During the early 1990s, authorised by the Regulations (Article 16), the Ministry of Education published the Measures on the Evaluation of Units' Eradication of Illiteracy Among Adults (Articles, see China, 1998: 1138–43) and the Measures on the Assessment of No-Illiteracy Counties (four chapters and 11 articles (see Sun & Gao, 1996: 704–6)). These two measures provide a solution to the leadership problem. They hold leaders of counties and *danwei* or units accountable for illiteracy eradication within their jurisdictions by (1) annual assessments by superior governments, (2) rewards, and (3) publication of an honour list of *danwei* and counties that have no illiteracy (Articles 3, 5, and 7 of the *Measures on the Evaluation* and Chapters 1, 3, and 4 of the *Measures on the Assessment*). These measures also establish the calculation of the national literacy rate (the number of literate adults divided by the total number of adults), the national literacy maintenance rate (the number of literacy maintenance participants plus the number of literacy test passers divided by the total number of literacy education receivers within the past three years), and national literacy testing and scoring methods (for details, see China, 1998: 1140–43).[3] How these measures directly affect literacy in minority communities is not yet clear, but the statistics in Table 1 in the final section of this paper suggests a positive impact in some communities.

Local Legislation on Literacy

In China, minority communities are mainly distributed in five autonomous regions: Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and Guangxi and autonomous counties and prefectures in western and in northeastern provinces, such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Qinghai, Gansu, and Jielin (see Figure 1; for details, see Mackerras, 1994). Generally speaking, autonomous regions, prefectures, and counties have some flexibility in making their own local legislation as long as they balance the requirements of the PRC Constitution, the Autonomy Law and specific national laws such as the *Law on Compulsory Education*. The former laws generally give local autonomous governments more flexibility than the latter (Zhou, 2004b). An autonomous government's actual flexibility, however, depends on how strategically important the minority community is and how assertive it is in its negotiation with the Central Government. This following discussion will review and analyse legislation at the provincial/regional level, and look into sample pieces of legislation from the prefecture and county level to

Figure 1 China: Administrative divisions

compare their positions on the linguistic hierarchy found in national level literacy legislation.

Legislation at the provincial/regional level

In the review of relevant legislation at the provincial/regional level, three legislative stances on the relationship between literacy in Chinese and minority languages can be found: 'promotion', 'permission', and 'tolerance', and these are reflected in terms of the degree of support for literacy in minority languages (for the typology, see Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995; for a typology of China's policies, see Zhou, 2004b). A promotion stance either legislates the maintenance of minority languages and scripts as the main medium of instruction, or it legislates the obligatory use of them in literacy development. A permission stance is less forceful and explicitly endorses the lawful use of minority languages and scripts in literacy development. A tolerance stance does not explicitly state the relationship between Chinese and minority languages in relevant legislation and local governments are not legislatively obligated to take any active steps to provide institutional and financial support for literacy in minority languages, although they are required to tolerate minority language literacy if a minority community actively seeks such a programme under the relevant provisions in the PRC Constitution. This paper will examine legislation

representing the first two positions only, as they more actively promote minority language literacy.

Legislation from a promotion stance

Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia have all taken a promotion stance; however, their legislation is not identical.

Tibet most explicitly defines the relationship between Chinese and Tibetan. According to the *Tibetan Autonomous Region's Implementation Measures of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* (passed in 1994, Tibet, 1999: 441–9), Tibet will gradually build a bilingual education system with Tibetan as the main medium of instruction and literacy development and Chinese as a secondary medium, and its schools will ensure that students first learn the local commonly used language and script well, and at the same time learn Chinese (Article 20). A further piece of Tibetan legislation, the (*Preliminary*) *Regulations on the Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language* (first passed in 1987, and amended and enacted as a law in 2002), elaborates on the bilingual education system. In primary schools, Tibetan is to be the only language of instruction, and standard Chinese may be added as a second language in the upper levels (Article 3, see Tibet, 1999: 373–5). These laws place Tibetan in a strong position in literacy education. In illiteracy eradication, either Tibetan or Chinese may be used. The *Measures on Standards and Assessment of Illiteracy Eradication among Adults in Tibet* stipulates that:

(1) literacy in Tibetan includes the ability to read and spell common Tibetan words, read popular Tibetan materials, and write Tibetan to meet daily needs;
(2) literacy in Chinese includes the ability to read and write more than 1500 characters, read newspaper and popular magazine articles, and write Chinese to meet daily needs; and
(3) possession of these abilities either in Tibetan or Chinese is considered being literate. (Tibet, 1999: 640)

In contrast to the legislation adopted in Tibet, Xinjiang takes a more delicate approach in legislating the relationship between native languages and Chinese in literacy education. Passed by the regional legislature in 1988, Xinjiang's *Measures on the Implementation of Compulsory Education* states that:

(1) schools should promote Putonghua, standard languages, and standardised scripts;
(2) minority group primary and secondary schools should use textbooks in vernacular languages and vernacular languages as the medium of instruction; schools with students from more than one minority community should use textbooks in a commonly used local language and use the same language as the medium of instruction; students whose communities do not have a written language may choose textbooks in another language (usually Chinese or Uygur) and use their native languages as an auxiliary medium of instruction;
(3) minority group primary schools are to offer Chinese from the third grade and may start earlier when conditions are appropriate for this; and

(4)   minority students may go to Chinese schools and Han students may go to minority schools. (Article 33, see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1101–7)

Clearly Xinjiang also attempts to legislate literacy education, in which Chinese is treated as a secondary language, but does not do so as explicitly as Tibet's legislation, and this is because Xinjiang's linguistic and political situations differ from those in Tibet. For example, unlike Tibet, Xinjiang has several languages with official status and many written languages and it must deal with the relationship among local languages as well as between them and Chinese.

Similar issues are found in Xinjiang's illiteracy eradication legislation (passed in 1986 and amended in 1992; see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1099–101 and 1108–9). This legislation allows illiterate adults to participate in literacy education in their native languages or in a second language (Article 8). It specifies that to be literate in Chinese, rural residents should be able to read 1500 characters and urban residents 2000 characters; to be literate in a native language one should be able to read and write the alphabet and know how to spell (Article 11). The two-tier literacy standards for Chinese are adopted directly from the national illiteracy eradication legislation (Article 7).

Qinghai, adopting yet another form of legislation, appears to promote a bilingual system in which Chinese and minority languages with scripts are on a par, at least in minority schools. Qinghai passed its *Implementation Measures of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* in 1988 and amended it in 1992 (for the complete legislation, see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1089–94). Article 10 stipulates:

(1)   schools should actively promote and use the nationally used Putonghua;
(2)   minority schools should use minority languages and scripts, as well as Chinese; and
(3)   minorities *who do not have scripts for their languages* should use the Chinese language and script as the medium of instruction, and use their native languages as an auxiliary medium of instruction. [emphasis mine]

Qinghai's legislation obviously promotes literacy in minority languages only for communities that already have written traditions. Unlike Xinjiang, whose legislation allows minorities without written languages to choose a written language, Qinghai legislates Chinese as the language for literacy development in such communities. For illiteracy eradication, Qinghai passed legislation in 1987 with exactly the same stipulations on literacy standards as Xinjiang's legislation (see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1087–9).

Finally, Inner Mongolia sidesteps any elaboration on the relationship between Chinese and Mongol. Its legislature passed *Inner Mongolia's Implementation Measures of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* in 1988 (see Sun & Gao, 1996: 876–80). Article 7 requires that:

(1)   schools promote the nationally used Putonghua;
(2)   Mongolian and minority schools use their native languages and scripts in instruction; and
(3)   schools that use Mongol as the language of instruction promote standard Mongol.

This legislation clearly promotes minority languages in literacy education, but

fails to define the relationship between minority languages and Chinese, either explicitly or implicitly. Inner Mongolia has not enacted any legislation on illiteracy eradication, probably because of its lower illiteracy rate (8.4% illiteracy in 2000, see Table 1, in Discussion and Conclusion section).

Legislation from a permission stance

In contrast to the promotion stance that may or may not maintain some ambiguity in its definition of the relationship between Chinese and minority languages, the permission stance explicitly assumes the dominance of Chinese and defines the role of minority languages under this dominance. Hainan, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Gansu, Jilin, Liaoning, and Heilongjiang provinces/regions share this stance in their literacy legislation in minority communities. In legislation from the permission stance, the extent to which minority languages and scripts might be used is usually qualified.

Gansu embraces a permission stance with the smallest amount of legislation. Passed in 1990, Gansu's *Measures on the Implementation of Compulsory Education* affirms that, while promoting Putonghua and standardised characters, minority schools may also use native languages and scripts as media of instruction, without further qualification (Article 5, see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1081–7).

In contrast, Yunnan's legislation qualifies its permission for minority language use in literacy education. Article 26 of its *Measures on the Implementation of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* states that:

(1) all compulsory education schools should promote the use of Putonghua and standardised Chinese characters;
(2) minority schools may use *commonly used* native languages and scripts together with Chinese as the medium of instruction; and
(3) schools for minorities without written languages must use the national language and script as the medium of instruction and native languages may be used as auxiliary media. (Sun & Gao, 1996: 1052–60; emphasis mine)

Unlike Gansu's two-tiered bilingual education system, which provides no restrictions on the status of the languages, Yunnan's legislation explicitly limits literacy development to officially recognised minority languages with standardised writing systems, and makes speakers of other minority languages develop literacy in Chinese.

Some provinces with a permission stance permit only the adoption of commonly used minority languages in primary schools; others even limit the use of commonly used minority languages to certain areas within their jurisdictions. For instance, Guizhou's *Measures on the Implementation of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* (passed in 1994) stipulates that:

(1) schools should promote the nationally used Putonghua;
(2) minority schools *in areas where Chinese is not spoken* may use Chinese and commonly used minority languages as the medium of instruction; and
(3) schools for minorities who do not have written languages use the national language as the medium of instruction and native languages as an auxiliary medium of instruction. (Article 18, see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1046–51; emphasis mine)

Guizhou's legislation supports vernacular literacy only in commonly used languages and in areas where Chinese is not spoken. It also seeks to maintain Chinese literacy in minority communities where it has already spread and to promote Chinese literacy where it still needs to take a hold.

Of those provinces and regions which take a permission stance, Hainan takes the most restrictive legislative stance. Enacted in 1991, Hainan's *Measures on the Implementation of the PRC Law on Compulsory Education* specifies that all schools must promote Putonghua; minority schools may adopt commonly used minority languages and scripts only *as an auxiliary medium of instruction* (Article 28, see Sun & Gao, 1996: 1026–32; emphasis mine). Hainan's legislation therefore appears to represent the ideal linguistic hierarchy from the point of view of the PRC Government.

Most of the provinces/regions with a permission stance have not enacted local legislation on illiteracy eradication, probably because they are in a position to be able to adopt the national approach without modification. It is interesting to observe that in developing regional/provincial illiteracy eradication legislation, regions or provinces do not appear to negotiate for more provision for minority languages and scripts. They usually follow the national rural and urban Chinese literacy standards (1500 and 2000 characters respectively) and add a minority language literacy standard (such as Xinjiang's and Qinghai's discussed above). The choice of Chinese or a minority language is then left up to the citizens themselves. One possible explanation for leaving the choice of language in adult illiteracy eradication to the individual may be that the Chinese literacy standards are believed to be more difficult to meet than the minority language literacy standards because Chinese is a non-alphabetic language. Moreover, it may be argued that many illiterate adults in minority language communities have in fact rejected Chinese literacy by dropping out of school and minority language literacy may therefore be more acceptable to them.

The arrangements adopted for literacy education and literacy eradication in the provinces and regions, therefore, indicate that politically and linguistically, literacy education is considered a more important battleground for establishing languages than illiteracy eradication. Literacy education has received explicit legislation, while illiteracy eradication follows national legislation and lacks local provision.

Prefecture and county level legislation

Some autonomous prefectures have enacted local language laws with articles on language use in literacy education and illiteracy eradication. The more localised prefecture and county legislation is, however, not as readily accessible as national and provincial/regional laws and so it is impossible to give as complete a picture for minority language literacy at this level. A review of the collections of local legislation in Yunnan (1988–1999) and in Qinghai (1980–2002), however, shows that some autonomous prefectures and one autonomous county have enacted legislation on (compulsory) education, but only one prefecture has passed legislation to eradicate illiteracy (see Qinghai, 2003; Yunnan, 1999). In these local laws the same three stances towards minority languages are found:

promotion, permission, and tolerance. Again, the first two only are discussed here.

Legislation from a promotion stance

The promotion stance is strongly expressed in the laws of the Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai. Enacted in 1995, its *Regulations on Compulsory Education* stipulate that:

(1)   primary and secondary schools should promote and use Putonghua;
(2)   minority primary and secondary schools should adopt Tibetan as the main medium of instruction and offer Chinese language courses at appropriate grades; and
(3)   *Non-minority* primary and secondary schools should use Chinese as the main medium of instruction and *offer Tibetan language courses at appropriate grades according to needs.* (Article 10, see Qinghai, 2003: 595–9; emphasis mine)

From this it can be seen that Guoluo prefecture actually takes a stronger position than that at the provincial and regional level in legislating the offering of Tibetan in non-minority schools (where minority students might also attend), though it cautiously qualifies this provision. This prefecture has also passed *Regulations on Illiteracy Eradication* in 1997, in which Article 7 designates Tibetan as the main language of illiteracy eradication and Chinese as a candidate language only in urban illiteracy eradication (Qinghai, 2003: 604–5). The legislation ambitiously plans to reach Qinghai's literacy standard in agricultural areas by 2000 and in pastoral areas by 2010 (Article 4). Guoluo is among a few local autonomous governments (notably along with Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture) that have tried to assert their constitutional rights of local autonomy.

Legislation from a permission stance

Most autonomous prefectures appear to adopt a permission stance with some qualification. For example, Yunnan's Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture limits Dai literacy education to primary schools. Its *Regulations on Minority Education* states that:

(1)   all schools must actively promote the use of Putonghua and standardised characters;
(2)   primary schools *with a considerable minority student population* should adopt the national language and, if it has a script, the native language as the medium of instruction or the native language as an auxiliary medium if it has no script. (Article 29, see Yunnan, 1999: 194–208; emphasis mine)

In addition, Article 21 permits Dai in illiteracy eradication only in communities where Dai script is commonly used.

More restrictions are found in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture's (Yunnan) *Regulations on Minority Education* (enacted in 1992). Article 30 divides minority communities into two types regarding literacy education and illiteracy eradication:

(1)   in minority communities *where Chinese is not commonly spoken*, bilingual education may be adopted. Standardised scripts for minority languages may be used in illiteracy eradication according to a minority community's wishes and needs;

(2)   in minority communities *where Chinese is commonly spoken*, Chinese should be used as the medium of instruction; and

(3)   all schools should promote the use of Putonghua and standardised characters. (see Yunnan, 1999: 157–70; all emphases mine)

This legislation clearly represents the state's intention to establish a linguistic hierarchy which marginalises minority language in literacy education.

The last piece of local legislation to be reviewed illustrates the structure of this linguistic hierarchy. In Qinghai, the Xunhua Salar Autonomous County's *Autonomy Regulations* (passed by the county legislature in 1988 but not approved by Qinghai provincial legislature until 1992) requires Chinese-Tibetan bilingual compulsory education in the Tibetan communities within its jurisdiction but fails to designate its native language, Salar, even as an auxiliary medium of instruction (Article 40, see Qinghai, 2003: 743–9). This is interesting because it is on the basis of Salar ethnicity that this county obtained autonomy. Moreover, the Salar community has one of the highest illiteracy rates in China (49.11% illiteracy in 2000, see Table 1, next section). Given this, it is difficult to see why the Salar-dominated county legislature does not seem to care about its native language and literacy, but supports Tibetan. Part of the answer to this lies in the fact that, while Tibetan is a minority language with official status, Salar itself has no official status (see Zhou, 2003: 99–152). A further part of the answer may perhaps lie in the politics surrounding the legislation; however, the nature of these politics cannot currently be identified. Regardless of the reasons, the Salar case shows the difficulty a minority community may have in winning status for its native language, not to mention native literacy, even in local educational legislation.

Discussion and Conclusion

Since the mid-1980s, in order to meet its goals in mono-nation state building, China has changed its approach to literacy development. It has abandoned the campaign approach that had been used during the first three decades of the PRC and replaced it with a legislative approach, which treats compulsory education as the main arena for literacy development and illiteracy eradication as a supplementary method. In spite of the concerns about the entrenchment of a linguistic hierarchy and funding issues discussed above, this legislative approach is apparently more effective than the previous campaign approach, as can be seen in Table 1, probably because it guarantees more stability in both official and societal efforts at literacy development.

Using statistics from China's two most recent national censuses, Table 1 compares the illiteracy rates for China's 56 ethnic groups (including the majority Han) between 1990 and 2000. On average, there is a 59% reduction in the illiteracy rate during that decade. In 1990, China's overall literacy rate was below 78% (22.21% illiteracy) while; in 2000 it reached above 90% (9.08% illiteracy). When minority illiteracy rates are examined, however, 17 minority language groups

Table 1 Adult illiteracy rates across ethnic communities in China, 1990–2000

Nationalities	1990 census illiteracy rate	2000 census illiteracy rate	Reduction in illiteracy 1990–2000 (percent)
Han	21.21	8.60	59.45
Achang	45.26	13.56	70.03
Bai	30.15	10.99	63.54
Blang	59.79	23.43	60.81
Bonan	68.81	55.94	18.70
Bouyei	42.81	23.77	44.47
Dai	42.21	15.71	62.78
Daur	10.03	3.46	65.50
Deang	61.68	21.25	65.54
Derung	53.64	26.80	50.03
Dong	28.53	10.87	61.89
Dongxiang	82.63	62.88	23.39
Ewenki	9.84	3.81	61.28
Gaoshan	9.39	5.58	40.57
Gelao	33.38	18.23	45.50
Hani	60.45	29.76	50.76
Hezhen	8.54	3.06	64.16
Hui	33.10	17.77	46.31
Jing	19.23	7.92	58.81
Jingpo	44.16	15.71	64.42
Jino	35.37	17.13	51.57
Kazak	12.34	2.68	78.28
Kirgiz	24.87	9.05	63.61
Korean	7.00	2.86	59.14
Lahu	71.71	23.72	66.92
Lhoba	72.71	50.79	30.14
Li	28.51	12.09	57.59
Lisu	62.91	32.54	48.27
Manchu	11.41	5.54	51.44
Maonan	17.59	7.52	57.24
Miao	41.85	19.83	52.61
Monba	77.75	56.21	27.70
Mongol	17.82	8.40	52.86
Mulam	16.27	5.96	63.36
Naxi	28.42	15.21	46.48
Nu	55.20	32.02	41.99
Oroqen	7.81	3.48	55.44

Table 1 (*cont.*) Adult illiteracy rates across ethnic communities in China, 1990–2000

Nationalities	*1990 census illiteracy rate*	*2000 census illiteracy rate*	*Reduction in illiteracy 1990–2000 (percent)*
Primi	51.26	30.06	41.35
Qiang	36.85	9.42	74.43
Russian	7.42	3.64	50.94
Salar	68.69	49.11	28.50
She	29.35	11.81	59.76
Shui	50.18	22.06	56.03
Tajik	33.45	13.32	60.18
Tatar	4.86	1.98	59.25
Tibetan	69.39	47.55	31.47
Tu	51.95	23.20	55.34
Tujia	25.24	11.71	53.60
Uygur	26.58	9.22	65.31
Uzbek	8.32	2.50	69.95
Va	58.81	23.51	60.00
Xibe	6.23	2.74	56.02
Yao	29.92	9.32	68.85
Yi	49.71	23.20	53.32
Yugur	29.68	14.62	50.74
Zhuang	21.17	6.83	67.73
Other	49.92	29.14	41.62
Average	**22.21**	**9.08**	**59.11**

Notes
The sources are the 1990 national census and 2000 national census (China, 1994 and 2003).
'Adult' refers to anyone who is 15 years and older.
'Rate' is defined as percentage of the adult population.
'Other' refers to minority members that do not yet have an officially recognized status.

have lower illiteracy rates than the dominant Han, and 23 minority language groups have had higher reduction rates. These are significant achievements in China's minority groups' literacy development.

However, serious problems in literacy development still exist in minority communities. Thirty-four groups still have double-digit illiteracy rates, six of which hover around 50%. The high illiteracy rates are the consequences of four factors (see also Zhou, 2000, 2004a). First, some minority communities lack a well established written tradition. It takes time to establish such a tradition and then build momentum in literacy development. Moreover, the existence of a written form is a precondition for use of a language in education in much legislation. Second, the interweaving of literacy and political campaigns has created the 'roller-coasting effect' (Zhou, 2000) that has not been conducive to literacy

development and maintenance and has sometimes even harmed them in the first three decades of the PRC. Third, funding for literacy development in minority communities has always been a problem. Finally, but most importantly, China has never comprehensively examined the role of literacy in minority languages.

China's economic and political rationales for literacy have motivated both national legislation and local legislation to clearly define literacy as functional. Literacy, however, is not simply the activity of reading and writing, or the ability to read and write. It is a social and cultural practice (see Ferdman, 1999). As such, literacy is a primary vehicle for maintaining and transmitting cultural values and beliefs. However, literacy in Chinese for minorities is exclusionary (see Giroux, 1991) in that it cannot serve as a vehicle for maintaining and transmitting minority cultural values and beliefs, nor the social and cultural practices of minority groups. In many cases, Chinese language literacy may actually disrupt such maintenance and transmission efforts in minority language communities; a disruption that has sometimes led to linguistic minorities being disenfranchised from literacy development.

Of course, given their constitutional rights (see Zhou, 2004b), minority communities may negotiate with the state for development of native language literacy. The national laws have established a linguistic hierarchy with Chinese as the dominant language and minority languages as subordinate, adopting a permission stance on local literacy development. However, local legislative stances vary from promotion to permission to tolerance (see Zhou, 2003: 99–152). Two key factors are therefore important in determining local legislative stances: the strength of a minority community's political will and how willing a minority community is to embrace rapid economic development. A few minority communities with strong political will have asserted their constitutional rights and negotiated the promotion of native literacy in their local laws. Other minority communities have accepted the national permission stance with or without qualification. Many communities have avoided an explicit legislative stance, leaving the issue of literacy to the constitution and national laws. This means that such local legislation may do little more than tolerate minority language literacy and commit no financial or institutional support to it.

However, the power of minority communities' political will alone can go only so far in establishing a stronger legislative stance and other factors, especially economy, have a strong effect. How the legislation is enforced and in what language community members actually develop their literacy are now essentially shaped by economic motivations. Chinese used to be more a language of political power than economic power, and therefore a language that only some were motivated to learn. Now Chinese is also coming to be seen as a language of economic power as China embraces globalisation and the market economy spreads deeper into agricultural and pastoral minority communities. More and more minority group members are developing literacy in Chinese because it has become not only a means of advancement in socioeconomic status but often of economic survival. It is not certain how local legislation, even where there is a promotion stance, will be able to handle the challenge of economics. During this age of economic globalisation, the endan-

germent of literacy in minority languages is threatened by the onslaught of economically powerful national and global languages. This is not just a Chinese problem but a world-wide problem.

Notes

1. China's law-making system is both chaotic and complicated. Generally speaking, both the legislature and the Government may make legislation. Those of the former are called laws and those by the latter are known as administrative laws. In practice, both types of legislation are equally forceful. Sometimes administrative laws become prototypes of laws and sometimes articles of laws authorise the Government to make corresponding administrative laws. I will make no distinction between laws and administrative laws in my discussion here (for more, see Otto, 2000; Peerenboom, 2002; Tanner, 1999).
2. In China minority languages with writing systems are categorised as having official, experimental, and non-official statuses that determine whether they can be used in government and education or not and how extensively they can be used. Those with official status secure the most recognition (see Zhou, 2003: 99–152).
3. In these formulae: 'adults' means those who are 15 and older; 'literate adults' means those who have finished four years' primary school in a six-year system or three years' primary school in a five-year system or intensive adult primary school; 'literacy maintenance participants' are students in primary schools and graduates of intensive adult primary schools and advanced literacy classes.

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Vernaculars in Literacy and Basic Education in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand

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Three Southeast Asian polities, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand share much of their geography, history, culture, religion and language. Not all speakers of more than 100 languages spoken in the area have a sufficient knowledge of the respective national languages, Khmer, Lao and Thai. Yet, for the most part, the national languages are the only languages of literacy or the media of instruction in education. This paper discusses language planning for literacy in these three polities. The focus is on literacy in local minority languages. The paper also compares the similarities and differences in approaches of providing literacy and basic education to ethnic minority populations. It argues that in all three polities literacy is conceptualised as a process tied to the standardised national language. Recently, however, some local level initiatives in Cambodia and Thailand have started changing such conceptualisation.

Introduction

Literacy development is a key goal of language-in-education policy and planning. The focus of such language planning is often on reading print-based media in the official language(s) of a polity (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003). New literacies and communicative practices, such as computers, the Internet and other non-print based media are not always given the importance they deserve (Luke & Grieshaber, 2004). Likewise, considerations of the language of literacy are often ignored (Liddicoat, 2004). This is understandable, however, as literacy development in multilingual polities is not unproblematic. The choice of the language of literacy is a fundamental cross-cutting factor in language planning for literacy, irrespective of the media used. Inappropriate language choices can have detrimental repercussions for learners, particularly those not having sufficient proficiently in the languages used. Consequently, ignoring vernaculars in education may lead to their endangerment or even death (Crystal, 2002). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls this process 'linguistic genocide in education', and sees the rejection of vernaculars in education as the major factor in language death.

In the developing world, the focus of literacy practice of most governments, international agencies, such as the World Bank or various UN organisations, and bilateral donors, has been on the improved literacy rates. The determination of the most effective delivery mechanisms to provide literacy and basic education for all has also attracted a lot of attention. Yet, as Liddicoat (2004: 1) argues, the selection of languages in literacy is fundamental 'to the literate futures of people in a globalised world'. The default conceptualisation of literacy of many language planners, governments as well as international development agencies,

is literacy in the national or the official language. Language-in-education planning in general is often associated with the 'standard' language only (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). In most cases, such an assumption overlooks the existing and often quite apparent multilingualism. As a result, the use of vernaculars is not always considered in language planning for literacy.

This paper will examine the use of various languages in literacy and basic education in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR or Laos) and Thailand. The paper focuses on the use of vernaculars in education. In addition to the literature cited, the information of this paper is based on informal interviews of various language specialists as well as the author's work during the past seven years in minority language education in Southeast Asia.

In this paper the terms 'vernacular' and 'local language' are used interchangeably and refer to a language: (1) without a written form, (2) for which language development is not yet complete, or (3) that is otherwise not considered suitable for education, for example, due to its low status or small number of speakers (Dutcher, 2004; Kosonen, 2005; Robinson, 1999; Walter, forthcoming). In Southeast Asia, most vernaculars are ethnolinguistic minority languages. 'First language' (L1) refers here to a language that: (1) one has learnt first, (2) one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others, (3) one knows best, or (4) one uses most (UNESCO, 2003b: 15). 'Language of wider communication' (LWC) is seen as a language that speakers of different vernaculars use to communicate with each other. In multilingual situations of Southeast Asia, also larger vernaculars are used as LWCs.

'Language (or medium) of instruction' is a language that is used for teaching and learning in a given educational system or a part of it. 'Bilingual education' refers to the use of more than one language as the medium of instruction, whereas 'biliteracy' refers to the use of two (or more) languages for reading and writing (Hornberger, 2003). The paper also employs Benson's (2004) concept of 'L1-based bilingual schooling (or education)' referring to a form of education that uses the L1 for teaching beginning literacy along with academic content, while teaching the L2 as a second or foreign language using appropriate language teaching methods. The distinction between bilingual and L1-based bilingual education is necessary, as in many parts of the world bilingual education is usually perceived as using the national language and an international language, thus ignoring the vernaculars. L1-based bilingual education assumes that the learners' first languages, even vernaculars, are used as the languages of literacy and education.

The Use of Vernaculars in Literacy and Education

Cambodia, Laos and Thailand share geography, history, culture and religion, and there are many commonalities regarding language issues as well. The scripts of all three national languages are based on Indian scripts, but in the case of Lao and Thai through Khmer. A lot of vocabulary is shared, as borrowings from Pali and Sanskrit through Buddhist philosophy, as well as more recently, for example, in academic, political and religious terminology. Thai and Lao are closely related languages of the Tai-Kadai language family, whereas Khmer belongs to the Austro-Asiatic language family. Nevertheless, there are many

loans from one language to the other. All three polities have their majority people and culture, Khmer, Lao and Thai, respectively. In addition, all have their indigenous peoples and other ethnolinguistic minorities, including, for example, significant populations of Chinese origin. Many ethnic minorities can be found in several polities in the region, sometimes living or at least interacting across national borders. More than 100 languages are spoken within the borders of these three polities. Not all speakers of these languages have sufficient knowledge of the respective national languages, Khmer, Lao and Thai – the main languages used as the languages of literacy and the media of instruction in schools (Chandler, 1998; Ethnologue, 2005; Evans, 1999; Kosonen, 2005; Osborne, 1997, 2000; Stuart-Fox, 1997).

The following sections will look at the language use in education in each of the three polities. The discussion is limited to basic education meaning pre-primary, primary and lower level secondary education. A proportion of adult population in all three polities has not received basic education as children. Adult literacy and non-formal education (NFE) programmes are often provided for such adults. In this paper adult literacy and NFE at the basic level are also regarded as basic education. Literacy development is usually a key goal of such programmes.

Cambodia

An estimated 22 languages are spoken in Cambodia (see Table 1). The largest ethnic group, the Khmer, make up more than 90% of the population and Khmer is the national and official language. Cambodia is among the linguistically least diverse polities in the region (Kosonen, 2005). The populations of most ethnolinguistic minorities are small, except for the speakers of Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese, whose populations are in the hundreds of thousands (Ethnologue, 2005; Leclerc, 2005a).

The language of literacy and instruction at all levels of education is Khmer, although some schools reportedly also teach Chinese and Vietnamese as subjects of study (Leclerc, 2005a). Figures 1 and 2 reveal that the level of literacy (in Khmer) for minorities is below the national average. The data in these figures are from an adult literacy survey that is partly based on tested skills of reading and writing Khmer and, while the available information is several years old, it provides the best data disaggregated according to citizens' ethnolinguistic background. In the figures, the category 'other' refers to the Chinese, Lao and Vietnamese, and 'highland minority' refers to all other minority groups.

Recently, some vernaculars – Brao, Krung, Mnong and Tampuan – have been introduced as languages of literacy and media of instruction in the Eastern highland provinces of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri. Pilot projects using some vernaculars have been initiated by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in close collaboration with the government. CIDSE (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité), ICC (International Cooperation for Cambodia) and NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Products) have projects for bilingual non-formal education (Thomas, 2002, 2003; A. Vitikainen, personal communication, 2005), and CARE International is running a pilot project called the 'Highland Children's Education Project' (HCEP) for primary-level bilingual education

**Table 1** Population of language groups in Cambodia

| *Language group*	*Population*	*Percent of total*
Khmer, Central	12,110,065	91.7
Vietnamese	393,121	3.0
Chinese, Mandarin	350,000	2.7
Cham, Western	220,000	1.7
Tampuan	25,000	0.2
Mnong, Central	20,000	0.2
Lao	17,000	0.1
Kuy	15,495	0.1
Jarai	15,000	0.1
Kru'ng	9,368	0.1
Stieng, Bulo	6,059	0.0
Brao	5,286	0.0
Chong	5,000	0.0
Kravet	3,012	0.0
Kraol	2,600	0.0
Kaco'	2,000	0.0
Somray	2,000	0.0
Pear	1,300	0.0
Lamam	1,000	0.0
Sa'och	500	0.0
Suoy	200	0.0
Samre	50	0.0

Source: Ethnologue, 2005

(CARE International Cambodia, 2004; Middelborg, 2005; Noorlander *et al.*, 2003). To date, experiences appear to have been good, and students are learning to read and write in the vernaculars as well as in Khmer. Before these programmes were established, most ethnolinguistic minorities in the Eastern Highlands had never had access to education services.

An important reason for the apparent success of NFE projects using vernaculars has been the major role played by the indigenous minority communities. Language committees have been crucial in language development, curriculum development, the production of learning materials in the vernaculars, as well as providing volunteer teachers. Other important factors of success in the HCEP project include community governance of the project schools, employment of indigenous staff who speak vernaculars, teacher salaries which are equivalent to government contract teachers, and active participation of the local communities in curriculum development. (APPEAL, 2001; CARE International Cambodia, 2004; Chey Chap *et al.*, 2003; Escott, 2000; Jordi, 2003; Middelborg, 2005; J. Noorlander, personal communication, 2004; Noorlander *et al.*, 2003; Thomas,
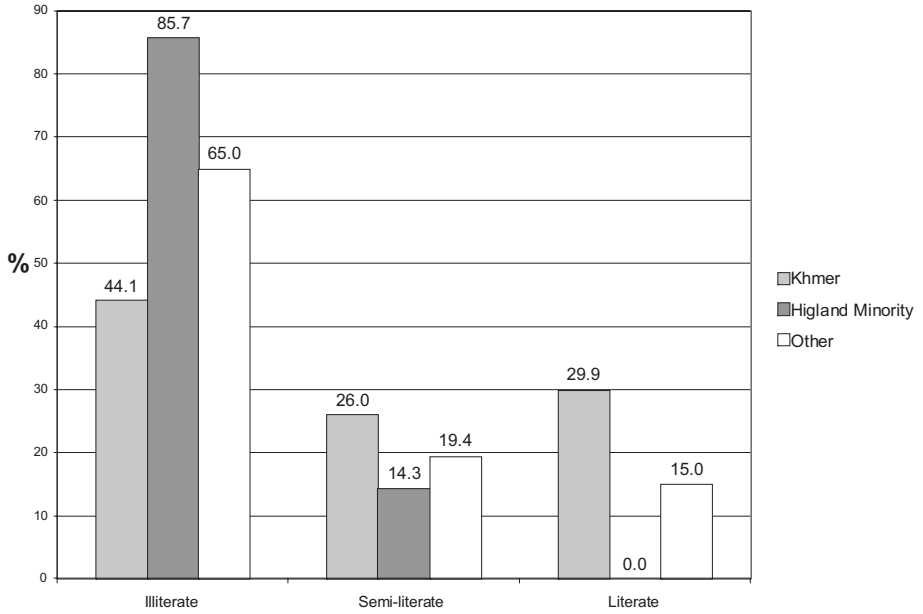
Figure 1 Ethnic affiliation and tested female literacy (in Khmer) in Cambodia
Source: MoEYS (2000: 41)
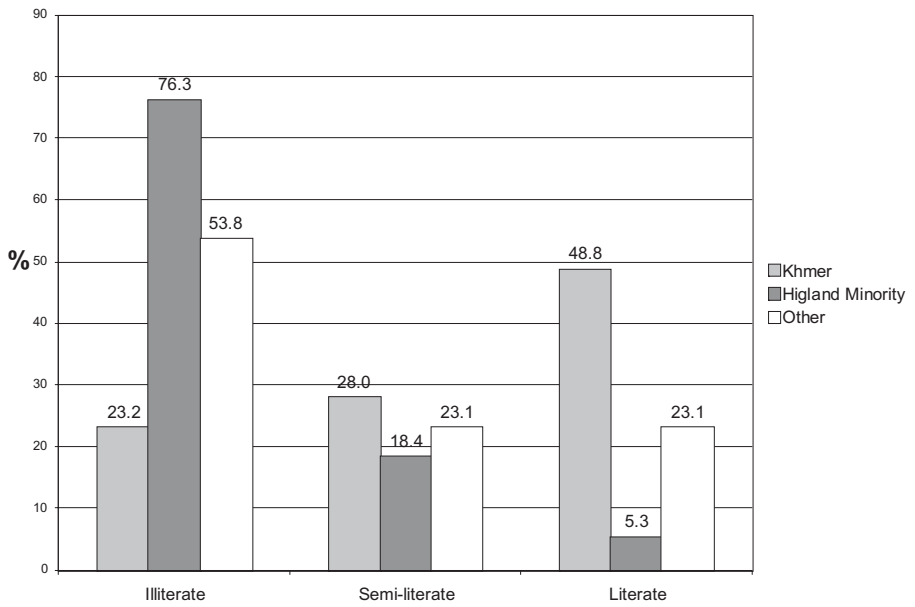
Figure 2 Ethnic affiliation and tested male literacy (in Khmer) in Cambodia
Source: MoEYS (2000: 41)

2002, 2003; UNICEF, 2004: 16). Also important is the fact that the Prime Minister (Thomas, 2003) and some officials of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) give support to bilingual education and provide justifications for the use of vernaculars in education. The following quote written by high-level MoEYS officials provides an example of such discourse:

> Using local languages – which the people understand – for basic education brings ethnic minorities closer to engaging in the national society and facilitates nation-building and decentralisation.… All citizens of the country have the right to read and write the national language as well as their local language. These basic skills make them stronger citizens and facilitate their engagement in civil society. (Chay Chap *et al.*, 2003: 3)

The models of bilingual education tested in the Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri pilots could be adapted to the education of linguistic minorities elsewhere in the country. The pilots also provide support for the MoEYS in the formulation of the future language-in-education policy. In early 2003, the MoEYS approved Khmer-based writing systems of five minority languages spoken in the Eastern Highlands. This is an important step in making the use of vernaculars and developing first language bilingual education as a part of the government system of education (Chey Chap *et al.*, 2003; Jordi, 2003; Middelborg, 2005; Noorlander *et al.*, 2003; Thomas, 2002, 2003). An expanded role for bilingual programmes is being built into government policy and a new education law is currently being developed in Cambodia. Article 44 of the available draft in English reads:

> Khmer language shall be the vehicle language used for instruction of general education program in public schools. Cambodian learners of minority origin shall have the right to instruction at public schools in their native language in addition to Khmer language for at least the first two grades – grades 1 and 2. (MoEYS, 2003)

If Article 44 is not amended in the actual law, there should be sufficient legal support for some level of first language-based bilingual education in formal schooling, and the entry of minority languages into the formal system of education should become a 'technical matter' of implementation. The future of this law is, however, uncertain as the National Assembly is currently processing many new laws and the education law does not seem to be a priority. In addition, as the education law is quite progressive, the MoEYS has moved slowly in presenting the draft to the Council of Ministers (J. Noorlander, personal communication, 2005). Therefore, it may take some time until the law is approved. Once approved, however, the new law may not necessarily mean great changes in the prevailing practice. Other polities, such as China, Indonesia and Vietnam, for example, have constitutional and education policy support for first language education, but a lack of political will and practical challenges hold back the actual provision of vernacular literacy in most languages (Kosonen, 2004, 2005; Zhou, 2005). Similar disparity in rhetoric and reality is a common trend around the world (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004).

In summary, language planning for literacy in Cambodia appears to have two main goals. Firstly, the status of Khmer as the official language is explicit, and the

promotion of Khmer as the language of literacy receives much attention in public education. This shows that literacy is predominantly conceptualised in relation to the national language. Secondly, some Cambodian policy documents and public discourse have explicit references to the use of vernaculars. As a result, literacy in some small minority languages is also being promoted by the govern-ment. The focus of literacy development in vernaculars, however, has concen-trated on the smaller minority groups, and the three large minority languages, Cham, Chinese and Vietnamese, have hitherto mostly been ignored.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

An estimated 86 languages are spoken in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Ethnologue, 2005 – see Table 2 for estimated populations of the larger languages). Lao is the national and official language. In addition to Lao, nine other languages are spoken by more than 100,000 people, each making up about 2% or more the total population. Nonetheless, the number of different ethnolinguistic groups may actually be higher than what the Ethnologue (2005) states. There is no general agreement on the number of languages or ethnolinguistic groups in Laos and various sources give different figures (see Chamberlain *et al.*, 1995; Ethnologue, 2005; Kingsada, 2003; Leclerc, 2005b; National Statistical Centre, 1997; Schliesinger, 2003). Chazée (1999), for example, lists 132 ethnic groups, whereas the Lao

Table 2 Population of language groups with more than 30,000 speakers in Lao PDR

Language group	*Population*	*Percent of total*
Lao	3,000,000	55.7
Khmu	389,694	7.2
Tai Dón	200,000	3.7
Hmong Daw	169,800	3.2
Phu Thai	154,400	2.9
Hmong Njua	145,600	2.7
Lü	134,100	2.5
Kataang	107,350	2.0
Phuan	106,099	2.0
Sô	102,000	1.9
Vietnamese	76,000	1.4
Bru, Eastern	69,000	1.3
Akha	58,000	1.1
Kuy	51,180	0.9
Tai Dam	50,000	0.9
Kang	47,636	0.9
Laven	40,519	0.8
Phunoi	35,635	0.7
Tai Nüa	35,000	0.6

Source: Ethnologue, 2005

Census for 1995, following established government classifications, disaggregates the population into 47 ethnic groups (National Statistical Centre, 1997). The population of all minority groups may actually comprise as much as 65% of the total population (Chazée, 1999: 14), depending on the definition of ethnic minority, and interpretation of statistical data, e.g. the inclusion of other languages of the Tai-Kadai language family in the category of the Lao ethnic group.

In Laos, the language of literacy and instruction at all levels of education is Lao, and at present, vernaculars are not used in education. Nonetheless, there is anecdotal evidence that vernaculars are used orally in classrooms for explaining subject matter, and in some cases an invented spelling is used to write local languages (A. Cincotta, personal communication, 2003). Some foreign NGOs have produced vernacular materials, for example, picture cards and small booklets, in some vernaculars (Informal Consultation on Ethnic Minority Language Issues and Challenges in Lao PDR, 2004). The Hmong, one of the largest ethnic groups, commonly teach Hmong literacy informally to their children in the home, and there may be more Hmong who are literate in their L1 than in Lao (J. Chamberlain, personal communication, 2003). Written Hmong is widely used in letters and emails to relatives living in the West, and glossy Hmong language magazines published in the US are sold in a bookshop in the Lao capital, Vientiane.

For a few years now, some minority children have been provided with classes in Lao as a second language, using an approach called the 'Concentrated Language Encounter', (CLE) (Souvanvixay *et al.*, 2002). CLE bases L2 literacy instruction on oral skills in L2, and takes into account that the minority learners are not native speakers of Lao. Previously, the same curriculum and materials were used nationwide irrespective of linguistic and cultural differences of the learners. CLE is a small step forward in providing relevant education to various ethnolinguistic groups. Yet, in many minority areas, Lao is only used in the school context without adaptation to the language learning needs of the students, and thus despite the use of CLE, many minority children are not learning Lao sufficiently to perform to their potential in Lao medium schools.

Owing to many historical, political, cultural and economic factors, the current status of literacy and basic education for members of various ethnolinguistic minorities is disappointing. A UNESCO study reports that 'a much higher percentage of ethnic minority children have never enrolled in, or attended school than children who have Lao as their first language' (UNESCO, 2003a: 23). Komorowski (2001) elaborates on the prevailing situation:

> Minority students will be expected to acquire literacy in Lao, but . . . an unproductive classroom scenario is set up. The existing situation is a vicious cycle: the most effective and reasonably resourced education is taking place in urban areas, so most teachers that are being trained are coming through this system. These teachers, if posted to rural areas, will likely not share a common language with their students. In turn these students will become demotivated by an inability to relate to their teacher and the language used, maintaining high levels of non-completion and low enrolment. (Komorowski, 2001: 65)

Data from the Lao National Literacy Survey (2004) confirm the prevailing situation, particularly regarding literacy rates in Lao (see Figures 3 and 4). The
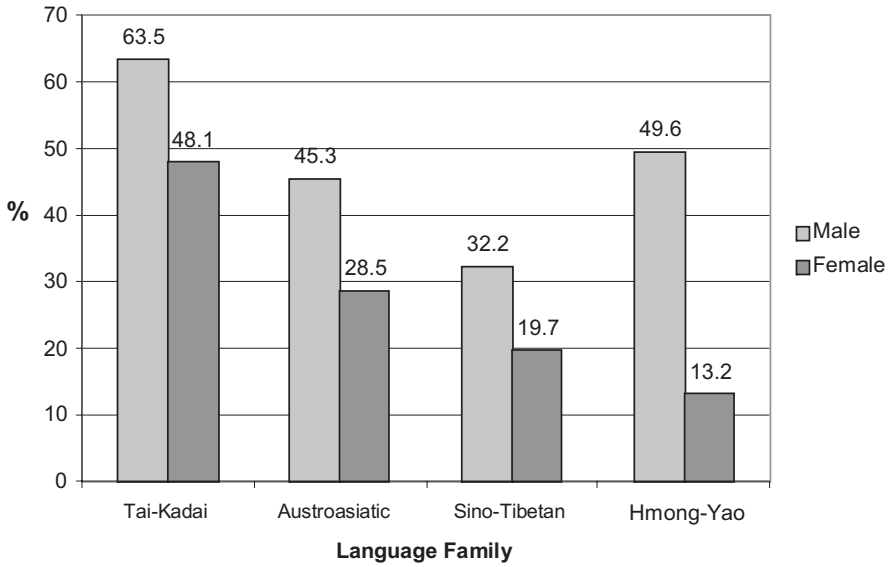
Figure 3 Tested basic literacy rates (in Lao) by the language family in Lao PDR. Age: 15–59.
Source: Lao National Literacy Survey (2004: 56)
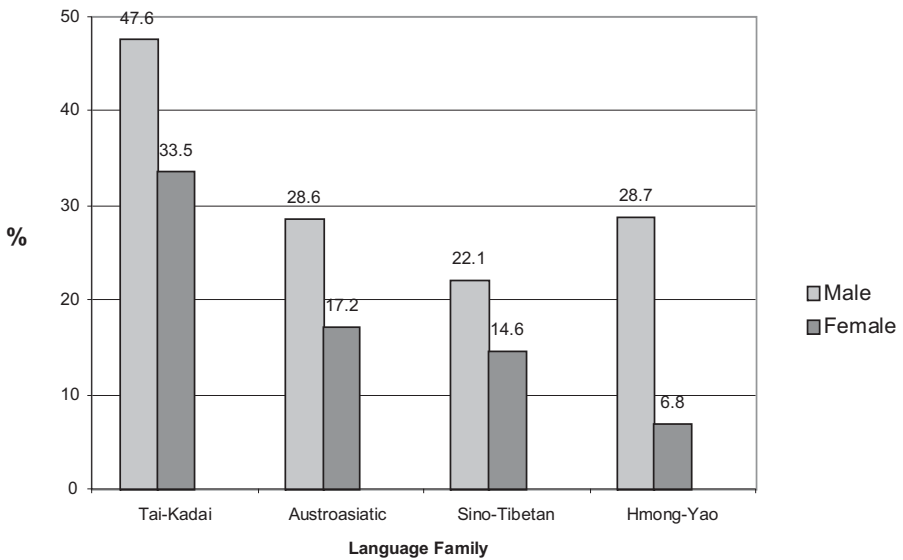
Figure 4 Tested secured functional literacy rates (in Lao) by the language family in Lao PDR. Age: 15–59
Source: Lao National Literacy Survey (2004: 56)

survey conducted tests in Lao reading and writing, as well as in numeracy skills, with the maximum score of 30 in each test. To be classified as having 'basic literacy skills', a person needed to get a minimum score of 8 in every test (Figure 3). To have 'secured functional literacy skills', or what the study also calls 'self-learning level', a person had to get a minimum score of 22 in every test (Figure 4). The test results and the consequent literacy rates show that the adult literacy skills among ethnolinguistic minorities are clearly below the skills of speakers of Lao related languages (Tai-Kadai).

In addition to lower literacy rates, the enrolment, retention, survival and achievement rates of minority children are also lower than the national average (ADB, 2000; Lao National Literacy Survey, 2004; MOE, 1999; National Statistical Centre, 1997; Sisouphanthong & Taillard, 2000). In spite of the problematic situation of minority education in Laos, few explanations of the causes have been attempted. There are exceptions, however, such as Kanstrup-Jensen (2001); Komorowski (2001); Souvanvixay *et al.* (2002); UNESCO (2004), and a Lao government report that reads: 'in an ethnically diverse country like the Lao PDR, language can be an important constraint for students to learn, especially at an early age' (MOE, 1999: 78). The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and UNICEF attempted to provide a forum to discuss minority education and related issues by organising a symposium entitled 'Achieving Millennium Development Goals in a Multi-Ethnic Society' in November 2003. Ethnic minorities and language issues were the focus of the agenda, and the participants was designed to have included a wide range of Lao stakeholders. However, the government did not approve the symposium and it was cancelled about a week before the meeting. Instead a one-day 'Informal Consultation on Ethnic Minority Language Issues and Challenges' was organised. The participants were mainly from international development and donor agencies, and no government officials attended.

The discussion above shows that language issues seem to be mostly ignored in Laos and the conceptualisation of literacy is directly tied to the national language. The disparity in education along ethnic lines is widely acknowledged, but the issue of language as it relates to the literacy and education of ethnic minorities is rarely discussed in any depth at government level. The cancellation of the national symposium on language issues shows that the government does not support public discussion on this topic, let alone practical activities using local languages. Therefore, it is evident that literacy development in Laos is explicitly tied to the propagation of the national language, Lao and about a half or more of the population, who are not be speakers of Lao, currently benefit little from literacy education provided.

Thailand

Standard Thai is the *de facto* national and official language in Thailand, but it is estimated that 74 languages are spoken in Thailand (Ethnologue, 2005). Thailand is thus linguistically more diverse than the wide use of Standard Thai would indicate. The situation is made more complex because many Thais living the Central region, including government officials, view all Tai languages as dialects or non-standard varieties of Standard or Central Thai, and not as separate languages. Academic, but not linguistic publications, such as the *Atlas of Thailand*

Table 3 Population of language groups with more than 50,000 speakers in Thailand

Language group	Population	Percent of total	Percent of total
Thai, Central	20,182,571	37.7	
Thai, Northeastern	15,000,000	28.0	86.2
Thai, Northern	6,000,000	11.2	
Thai, Southern	5,000,000	9.3	
Malay, Pattani	3,100,000	5.8	
Khmer, Northern	1,117,588	2.1	
Chinese, Min Nan	1,082,920	2.0	
Karen, S'gaw	300,000	0.6	
Kuy	300,000	0.6	
Phu Thai	156,000	0.3	
Mon	107,630	0.2	
Kayah, Eastern	98,642	0.2	
Phuan	98,605	0.2	
Lü	83,000	0.2	
Akha	60,000	0.1	
Karen, Pwo Northern	60,000	0.1	
Shan	60,000	0.1	
Chinese, Hakka	58,800	0.1	
Sô	58,000	0.1	
Thai Sign Language	51,000	0.1	
Karen, Pwo Western Thailand	50,000	0.1	
Nyaw	50,000	0.1	

Source: Ethnologue, 2005

(2004) confirm such perceptions by claiming that 'more than 90% [of the population] have a Thai language as their mother tongue' (*Atlas of Thailand*, 2004: 38). Table 3 provides estimated populations of larger ethnolinguistic groups of Thailand (cf. Leclerc, 2005c). If the major Thai languages are considered as dialects of the national language, the total population speaking a variety of Thai is above 86% of the total. As Table 3 shows, the population of some language groups number in the millions, for example, Northeastern Thai (Isan or Lao*)*, Northern Thai (Kammeuang), Southern Thai (Pak Tai), Pattani Malay, Northern Khmer, and Minnan Chinese. In addition, there are at least 100,000 speakers of Sgaw Karen, Kuy, Mon and Phuthai (Ethnologue, 2005; Jernudd, 1999; Leclerc, 2005c; Schliesinger, 2000). Most minority languages in Thailand already have writing systems and at least some literature (e.g. Kosonen, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Malone, 2001; Morse & Tehan, 2000; Person, 1999, 2005; Premsrirat, 1998, 2000, 2002; Siltragool & Petcharugsa, 2005; Siltragool *et al.*, 2003; Smalley, 1976, 1994; TU-SIL, 2002).

Standard Thai is the language of literacy and instruction at all levels of educa-

tion. Until the early 1990s, the use of languages other than Thai was prohibited in Thai schools, although in many places teachers with appropriate language skills have long used vernaculars orally in early grades to help minority children understand the curriculum (Jernudd, 1999; Smalley, 1994). Although the majority of Thai population does not speak Standard Thai as their L1 (Ethnologue, 2005; Leclerc, 2005c), millions of children in Central Thailand have a working knowledge of the language when they enter school, because Standard Thai is based on Central Thai. The wide coverage of Central Thai medium TV broadcasts may facilitate the comprehension of Standard Thai by the speakers of related languages and for many, but not all, people speaking other Tai languages, the use of Standard Thai is a possible, if not optimal, educational solution. For ethnolinguistic minorities speaking languages not related to Thai, however, the use of Standard Thai as the medium is a major obstacle in educational achievement. The current education system is problemetic in delivering Thai literacy for ethnolinguistic minorities, as the following newspaper quote illustrates. 'Many young Muslim men could not speak fluent Thai despite having completed compulsory education. The language barrier made them feel alienated' (*Bangkok Post*, 2004). Smalley's (1994) observation below, written more than a decade ago, is still valid in many minority settings:

> The [Thai educational system] is a sink-or-swim system, however, for those children who do not speak some dialect of Thaiklang when they start school. It is inefficient and frustrating because it assumes the life, culture and language of central Thailand, no matter where the children live or what they speak. It requires many children to lose two years in school before they follow well what is going on in class. (Smalley, 1994: 293)

In spite of the strong focus on Thai, some vernaculars have been used in education: for example, Kuy and Northern Khmer were taught as subjects in some Northeastern secondary schools in the 1980s and 1990s (Smalley, 1994: 281) and Pattani Malay using a Thai-based alphabet was used in some literacy projects organised by the Southern Nonformal Education Centre in the 1980s (N. Bishop, personal communication, 2005). The Thai Constitution of 1997 and generally more open Thai society since the 1990s have provided new opportunities for ethnolinguistic minorities to use their languages and since the late 1990s, the use of vernaculars in education has increased. For example, the new Thai school curriculum allows teaching of ethnic minority languages in minority areas, allocating up to 30% of the curriculum for minority language study or other local subject matter (Thai Ministry of Education, 2000). At least Chong, Lahu Shi and Mon are being taught as subjects in some Thai government schools (A. Cooper, personal communication, 2005; Kosonen, 2002a, 2002b, 2003) and other minority groups are planning to have their languages taught as school subjects as well. However, the time allocated for local language study in schools is usually just a few hours per week, and apparently no school yet allows 30% of the curriculum for the study of vernaculars. In the 2005 school year, new textbooks in the predominantly Malay speaking provinces of the South incorporated some Pattani Malay (*Bangkok Post*, 2005). This appears to be the first time that language other than Thai has been used alongside with Thai in standard formal school textbooks. In addition, Pwo Karen is being used in non-formal education

as part of a UNESCO-sponsored pilot project using minority languages (Siltragool & Petcharugsa, 2005; Siltragool *et al.*, 2003; UNESCO, 2005). However, none of these activities can be considered bilingual education, as they do not yet incorporate two languages as the languages of instruction, although recent developments in the Pwo Karen NFE project indicate that this pilot may turn into a programme of L1-based bilingual education in the Pwo Karen community.

Vernaculars have been used in non-formal education by NGOs and civil society organisations for a long time. Examples are Malay and Arabic study in Islamic Ponoh schools of the south, Thai-Chinese learning written Chinese, as well as vernacular literacy classes run by ethnic minority Churches. The extent of these activities is currently limited, but more minority groups are becoming active in the development of their languages for educational use. The ALTP programme of Payap University, for example, has facilitated curriculum development and the production of literacy materials in many minority languages. There are small-scale non-formal education programmes, particularly in Northern Thailand, in a dozen or more languages, and some groups, such as the Iu Mien, Kayah, Sgaw Karen, and Pwo Karen, have fairly comprehensive curricula of vernacular literacy and learning materials in those languages, mainly for adult learners (Jennings, 1998; Karenni Literature Committee, 1994; Khrongkaan nangsue Karien Pwo, 1999). Usually these projects use only the vernaculars as the language of literacy and do not yet incorporate instruction and literacy in Thai.

Policy documents, government officials, and the general public in Thailand construct literacy as a goal independent of a particular language and Standard Thai is the default language of literacy and education. For many the importance of Thai is so self-evident that questions of the language of literacy are rarely even raised. The current practice follows this perception, and thus, almost all literacy in Thailand promotes the use of Standard Thai only. In the past few years, the discourse on the language of literacy and instruction has increased, and the conceptualisation of literacy may in fact be broadening.

Comparison of the Three Polities

Table 4 compares the use of vernaculars in basic education in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. The first column of the table shows that according to the available data and the definition given in note 1, only in Laos no vernaculars are used in any system of basic education.

The second column shows whether several languages are used in the government system of formal and non-formal basic education, the third column indicates whether vernaculars are used as the media of instruction at some level of basic education, and the fourth column lists the languages used in the government system. According to the information in these columns, in Laos only the national language is used in schooling, while in Thailand and Cambodia vernaculars are used in addition to the national language. However, in Cambodia and Thailand the use of vernaculars is fairly recent, and mainly confined to experimental pilot projects with strong support of agencies and organisations outside the government system.

The fifth column of Table 4 provides an estimated percentage of national

Table 4 Vernacular language use in basic education

	Vernaculars used in education[1]	*Multiple languages in government education system[2]*	*Vernaculars used as media of instruction[3]*	*Languages used in the government education system[4]*	*Access to education in L1 (percent)[5]*	*Total number of languages spoken[6]*
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Khmer, vernaculars	92	22
Lao PDR	No	No	No	Lao	< 50[7]	86
Thailand	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Thai, vernaculars	< 60[8]	74

1. 'Vernaculars used in education' states whether vernaculars or languages of wider communication (i.e. other than national or official language) are used in education practice at *any level* or in *any system* of basic education (such as pre-primary, primary or lower secondary education, formal or non-formal system, run by the government or other stakeholders, such as local communities, NGOs, etc.). Yes means that both *instruction* and some *learning materials* are *in vernaculars*. Therefore, situations in which teachers use a vernacular or a LWC orally in addition to the official language of instruction are not included here.
2. 'Multiple languages in government education system' refers to a situation in which more than one language is used in the *government system* of education (either formal or non-formal at any level of basic education as stated above). Thus, private formal schools or education projects by non-governmental organisations are not included in this column.
3. 'Vernaculars used as media of instruction' refers to a situation in which vernaculars are used as the actual media of instruction at any level or system of basic education. **Yes** in bold means that vernaculars are used only in non-formal education.
4. 'Languages used in the government education system' lists the names of the languages used in the *government system*. Details are given in the text.
5. 'Access to education in L1 (percent)' refers to the estimated percentage of a polity's total population having access to education in learners' first language (L1). The criterion is linguistic, i.e. the proportion of population speaking as L1 one of the languages used in education. The figures are estimated by the author on the basis of data from Chazée (1999), Ethnologue (2005), Kingsada (2003), Leclerc (2005a, 2005b, 2005c), National Statistical Centre (1997), Schliesinger (2000, 2003), and Smalley (1994).
6. 'Total number of languages spoken' in a given polity. Source: Ethnologue (2005).
7. Chazée (1999: 7, 14) claims that only about 35% of the Lao population are Tai Lao (also called Lao Loum or Lowland Lao). He maintains that other ethnic groups related to the Lao are included in higher figures of Lao population. However, there are no data on whether these other Tai groups speak Lao as their L1 or not.
8. Data on the level of bilingualism in Central Thai among ethnolinguistic minorities are not available. Therefore, this figure assumes that, in addition to the native speakers of Central Thai, some 20% of the other Thai citizens are bilingual in Central Thai.

populations speaking languages of instruction as their L1. This means that if several languages of instruction are used in a given polity, the total population speaking those languages as their L1 is counted. The estimates indicate that in Laos less than half and in Thailand less than 60% of the population have access to education in L1. In Cambodia, only less than 10% of the citizens do not have access to L1 education, due to a relatively small proportion of population belonging to ethnolinguistic minorities. The sixth column provides the total number of languages spoken in each polity based on the data in the Ethnologue (2005).

Table 5 The use of vernaculars in various systems of education

	Vernaculars used in primary education	*Vernaculars used in non-formal education (primary or other level)*	*Vernaculars used in adult education as the language of literacy*	*Vernaculars used orally in classes*	*Vernacular-based bilingual education*	*Languages used as L1s in bilingual education*
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Brao, Krung, Mnong, Tampuan
Lao PDR	No	No	No	Yes	No	–
Thailand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	–

Table 5 highlights the use of vernaculars in different systems of education. Columns one, two and three indicate the use of vernaculars in different systems: primary, non-formal (at any level) and adult education, respectively. Column four indicates whether vernaculars are used orally in classes to explain subject matter. Finally, the last two columns indicate whether L1-based bilingual education is provided (column 5), and which, if any, languages are used as L1s in bilingual education (column 6).

As Kosonen (2005) shows, local languages are used in literacy and basic education in most Southeast Asian polities, but the extent varies significantly. However, none of the three polities discussed above, or any Southeast Asian polity for that matter, provides as well developed education in vernaculars as, for example, the People's Republic of China. In China, larger LWCs, as well as some smaller vernaculars, are used at various levels of education, in some cases up to the university level (Blachford, 1997; Geary & Pan, 2003; Jernudd, 1999; Kosonen, 2005; Malone, 2003; Postiglione, 1999; Zhou, 1992).

In the last decade the use of vernaculars has increased in Cambodia and Thailand. In both countries vernacular languages are used more widely in non-formal than formal education and this again is a common trend in the region (Kosonen, 2005). Consequently, it is possible that a gradual process towards potential L1-based bilingual education is taking place beginning in non-formal education and later moving into formal schooling. Such a process occurred for example in Papua New Guinea where community and NGO efforts in non-formal adult and pre-primary education were later adopted in the government's formal system and this has led to a major education reform and a change in the national language policy (Klaus, 2003; Nagai, 2001; Siegel, 1997).

Of the three polities discussed in this paper, Cambodia is closest to having L1-based bilingual education for some ethnolinguistic minorities. These efforts are still pilot projects, although promising ones. The new education law may provide support for further application of the positive experiences arising from these pilots. Nonetheless, for most people in the region, bilingual education still means education in the national language together with second language studies of English, or in some cases French or Chinese, and totally omits education in local languages. Bilingual education of this kind can be found in all three polities,

but not to the extent of some other Southeast Asian neighbours such as Brunei, the Philippines and Singapore (Kosonen, 2005).

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the use of vernaculars in literacy and basic education in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. In many ways the three polities have much in common. Yet, they have chosen different approaches to the education of ethnolinguistic minorities, particularly the use of vernaculars in education. In all three polities, in comparison to the dominant populations, ethnolinguistic minorities benefit less from the education services currently provided. It seems that the present emphases on language planning and literacy development may even widen the educational gap between the minority and majority populations. In all three polities there are still pockets of mainly monolingual minority communities in which the national language is hardly ever used, particularly if a government school does not exist nearby.

Of the three polities discussed in this paper, Laos is the only one not using vernaculars in education at all. The use of vernaculars in Cambodia and Thailand is more common than in Laos. Even so, it is still limited to a number of pilot projects and small-scale efforts mainly by NGOs. Nonetheless, anecdotal evidence shows that vernaculars are used orally in education in all three polities. Increasing oral use of vernaculars in basic education, particularly if officially recognised and authorised, may pave the way for strong forms of bilingual education (Benson, 2004).

Cambodia may be more open than the other two polities to address the issue of minority education, as only about 10% of the population are not Khmer. The Lao and Thai cases are different as the ethnolinguistic populations are much bigger.

As Laos is still working hard to unify the nation and create a national Lao identity, the centralised government may not want to empower minority communities by allowing the use of vernaculars in education. The present one-party-government may not see ethnolinguistic diversity in a positive way, and thus, may be reluctant to acknowledge the need for vernacular literacy. Language-in-education policies are often based on the political, social and economic agendas of the groups that hold the power, and in language planning these agendas may be more important than the educational agenda (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). Language planning for literacy also determines the status and functions of various languages spoken in a polity (Liddicoat, 2004). In multilingual settings, such as Laos, the linguistic groups in power may use language planning for literacy to retain their privileged position, as 'medium-of-instruction policy determines which social and linguistic groups have access to political and economic opportunities, and which groups are disenfranchised' (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004: 2).

Thailand has changed its approach to education in vernaculars in recent decades. Due to strong and fairly successful nation-building activities, most people living in Thailand consider themselves Thai, irrespective of the ethnolinguistic background. Thus, this may be a reason why nowadays greater

cultural and linguistic diversity is tolerated. Democratisation of the political climate since 1992 has facilitated more open acceptance of diversity.

In his discussion on literacy and language selection, Liddicoat (2004: 6) identifies four forms of literacies, i.e. national literacy, vernacular literacy, local literacies, and biliteracies which are relevant to vernacular language contexts. In the three Southeast Asian polities discussed in this paper, there is a strong focus on the national literacy, i.e. literacy in the standardised version of the official language, with little focus on the other types of literacy. In Laos, national literacy is the only literacy currently recognised by the government. In Thailand, local and international NGOs and civil society organisations have worked to some extent also on vernacular and local literacies and very recently also some government agencies have shown interest in vernacular literacy and biliteracy. Likewise, in Cambodia the main focus is on national literacy. Nevertheless, vernacular literacy and biliteracy have attracted attention since the late 1990s, although not yet in the three largest minority languages. Literacy is, therefore, generally conceptualised in all three polities as a process tied to the national language. This, however, is a common perception in the whole region (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). In Cambodia and Thailand, this conceptualisation has started breaking only recently as a result of some local level initiatives which use vernaculars as the language of literacy and the medium of instruction in schools. Yet, this is not yet sufficient to allow all ethnolinguistic minorities to enjoy full benefits of literacy and basic education. This is related to the conceptualisation of literacy. If the currently prevailing perception of literacy as tied to the national language only does not radically change, vernaculars as languages of literacy will continue to be ignored. On the other hand, if literacy is perceived as a set of processes independent of a particular language, and biliteracy and multilingualism among the ethnolinguistic minorities are seen as beneficial, more support for literacy and basic education in vernaculars is likely. Yet, currently in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand vernacular literacy, if acknowledged at all, is mostly perceived as a bridge to the national language, having little or no value in its own right.

The cases of Cambodia and Thailand show that the introduction of a broader conceptualisation of literacy, i.e. literacy beyond the national language only, can be initiated by small-scale pilot projects and NGOs. Such activities demonstrate how vernaculars can successfully be used as the languages of literacy, eventually leading to biliteracy. In other words, language planning at the grassroots is possible and a change in the conceptualisation of literacy at the national level does not necessarily have to be a 'top-down' process stipulated by centralised government agencies.

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Literacy in Pidgin and Creole Languages

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**Pidgin and creole languages are spoken by more than 75 million people, but the vast
majority of their speakers acquire literacy in another language – usually the language
of a former colonial power. This paper looks at the origins of pidgins and creoles and
explores some of the reasons for their lack of use in formal education. Then it describes
some language planning efforts that have occurred with regard to instrumentalisation
and graphisation of these languages, and the few cases where they are actually used to
teach initial literacy. The paper goes on to discuss how speakers of pidgins and creoles
more commonly acquire literacy in the standard European language officially used in
formal education. It concludes with a short section on the role of pidgins and creoles in
newspapers, literature and other writing.**

Keywords: pidgin, creole, literacy, education

Introduction

This paper looks at literacy in pidgin and creole languages – more specifically,
at the acquisition and use of literacy by speakers of these language varieties. It
begins with some background information, describing the origins of pidgins and
creoles, and the different settings in which they are used.

Background

Pidgins and creoles[1] are languages that develop in situations where groups
of people who do not share a common language have to communicate with
each other – typically as the result of trading or large-scale population move-
ment. In such contexts, people first develop their own individual ways of
communicating, either by simplifying their own language or by using words
and phrases they have learned from another language, similar to
interlanguage in second language acquisition. If the groups remain in contact,
certain communicative conventions may emerge and individual variation is
reduced. The result is then a new language – a pidgin. The lexicon of the
pidgin is derived from the various languages originally in contact, with the
majority of words usually coming from one particular language, called the
'lexifier'. However, the grammar is different from that of the lexifier or any of
the other contributing languages, and also formally less complex, having a
much smaller total lexicon and little if any morphological marking of gram-
matical categories.

This kind of pidgin is normally restricted to use as a medium of inter-group
communication, and would not be considered a vehicle for literacy. However,
in some cases, the use of a pidgin has been extended into wider areas – for
example, as the everyday lingua franca in a multilingual country. As a result,
the language becomes lexically and grammatically more complex, and it is
called an 'expanded pidgin'. An example is Melanesian Pidgin with its three
dialects: Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea (spoken by over 4 million), Pijin in

Solomon Islands and Bislama in Vanuatu. Another example, Nigerian Pidgin, has over 30 million speakers. Both these expanded pidgins are lexified by English.

As the result of population movement, a new community might form, made up of people whose parents or grandparents came from different countries and spoke different languages – for example among the children of plantation slaves or indentured labourers. This community may also have a new variety of language as their mother tongue – a creole. A creole develops when an existing or developing pidgin is adopted by children as their first language, or it may be the result of the lexifier language changing drastically as it is learned by new groups of people in a new environment. Like any other vernacular language, however, a creole has a full lexicon and complex grammatical rules, and is not at all restricted in use, having a full range of informal functions. Examples are Jamaican Creole and Hawai'i Creole (both lexified by English), Cape Verde Creole (lexified by Portuguese), and Haitian Creole (lexified by French), the creole with the most speakers – over 7.3 million.

In this paper I will treat expanded pidgins and creoles together as one kind of vernncular, for convenience abbreviated as P/C (pidgin/creole).[2] There are at least 76.8 million speakers of P/Cs (see Siegel, 2002 for sources). They are spoken by indigenous populations in at least 50 countries or territories and by immigrants in many other places – for example, there are approximately 1 million speakers of Haitian Creole in the USA (Joseph, 1997: 281).

In some countries, P/C speaking communities are a minority – for example, those speaking Northern Territory Kriol in Australia, and Gullah and Louisiana Creole in the USA. P/C speaking immigrants, especially from the Caribbean, are also minorities in the USA, Canada, Britain, the Netherlands and other countries. In some places, P/C speakers are the majority in a particular state or territory, but a minority in the country as a whole – for example, on San Andres Island, which is part of Colombia, and in Hawai'i, which is a state of the USA. However, in most places where a P/C is spoken, its speakers make up a majority of the population as a whole – for example in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the Pacific; Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean; Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Central African Republic in Africa; and in Belize, Suriname, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in the Caribbean region.

Yet in most of these places there is no official policy for teaching literacy in the P/C – despite its being the majority language. Instead, the language of education in almost all cases is the standard form of a European language – English, French, Portuguese, Spanish or Dutch – usually a former colonial language that has remained an official language of the country. In the sections that follow, I first discuss some possible reasons for this state of affairs. Then, after describing language planning efforts that have taken place, I give an account of the programmes that do exist for teaching literacy in P/C languages, and explore some reasons for their existence. I go on to relate how literacy is taught to P/C speakers in other contexts, and conclude with a description of the current use of P/Cs in reading and writing.[3]

Lack of Literacy Teaching in Pidgins and Creoles

Like other languages, P/Cs are valued by their speakers in the private domains of family and friendship. Speakers often have positive attitudes towards their language as a marker of solidarity and local social identity, as reported for Hawai'i Creole (Sato, 1991; Watson-Gegeo, 1994); Australian Kriol (Siegel, 1998) and Dominica Creole French (Fontaine & Leather, 1992). However, unlike other languages, P/Cs are rarely valued in public formal domains, and, as a result, they generally suffer from overall negative attitudes and low prestige (see e.g. Mühleisen, 2002; Rickford & Traugott, 1985; Winford, 1994).

There are several possible reasons for the low prestige of P/Cs. First, it may be attributed to their history. Each P/C-speaking country or territory was formerly the colony of a European power. Those in control and those with economic advantage spoke the European language. The P/C-speakers who later became the educated and well-off elite were those who acquired the European language. When they became leaders, they supported the European language remaining as the official language. Thus, as the language of the former colonial power and the current leaders, the European language is seen as the key to upward mobility and economic success. In contrast, the P/C, as a language of former slaves or indentured labourers, is often associated with repression and powerlessness.

In addition, as the new languages of relatively recently formed speech communities, P/Cs suffer from comparison to the official languages. First of all, the European languages have long historical traditions and bodies of literature, whereas P/Cs do not (Alleyne, 1994). Second, European languages are clearly standardised in both orthography and grammar, and have many dictionaries and grammar books, whereas most P/Cs do not have a widely recognised standard grammar or orthography, although some dictionaries and grammatical descriptions have been written by linguists.

Most significantly, however, P/Cs are often not considered to be legitimate languages, but rather deviant and corrupt forms of their lexifiers. This is especially true in situations where a P/C coexists with the standard form of its lexifier as the official language. This view is reinforced by the fact that, at least superficially, the P/C and the standard share the same lexicon. It is thought that the P/C does not have its own grammatical rules and, consequently, the way it is spoken is considered to be the result of performance errors rather than language differences. This lack of autonomy is exacerbated in countries like Jamaica and Guyana where there is a creole continuum – a cline of varieties ranging from what is called the *basilect* (furthest from the lexifier) to the *acrolect* (closest to the lexifier), with intermediate varieties, the *mesolects*. In such cases, there seems to be no clear dividing line between the lexifier and the creole.

Hawai'i Creole is a good example of a P/C with a history of denigration by teachers, administrators and community leaders. In publications starting from the 1920s, it was consistently labelled with negative terms such as 'lazy', 'ungrammatical', 'faulty', 'sloppy', 'slothful' and 'ugly'. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was even considered a speech defect. In 1962, a major local newspaper compared it to the language of animals in an editorial entitled 'Why Not Just Grunt?' (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* 13 February 1962).[4] Such extreme statements are now getting harder to find, but the language is still commonly referred to as a corrupt form of

English, as indicated by this extract from a letter to the editor of the same newspaper: 'It's broken English. And when something is broken, you fix it.' (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 12 October 1999).

Thus, in most P/C contexts, the general public, including educators and administrators, believe that their own language is a deviant form of the standard and therefore not suitable for education. Such attitudes have been reported for many P/Cs, such as Carriacou Creole (Kephart, 1992), other varieties of creole in the Caribbean (Alleyne, 1994; Winford, 1994), Krio in Sierra Leone (Fyle, 1994), Nigerian Pidgin (Elugbe, 1994), Hawai'i Creole (Sato, 1985), Torres Strait Creole (Shnukal, 1992) and Tok Pisin (Nidue, 1988).

But even when P/Cs are recognised as legitimate languages, some educators, administrators and even linguists still argue that using them in education would be both impractical and detrimental to students. These arguments have to do with issues such as lack of standardisation and fear of interference with acquisition of the standard form of the European official language, learning of this standard being the ultimate goal of the education system everywhere P/Cs are spoken (see Siegel, 2002).

Language Planning for Pidgins and Creoles

In some countries and territories where P/Cs are spoken by the majority, language planning efforts have been carried out to expand the use of these varieties into literacy and education. With regard to status planning, the aim has been to increase both the status and functions of the P/C so that it is used in official contexts alongside the existing official language (instrumentalisation). Many of the arguments for such expansion are socio-political, pointing out that a large proportion of the population is disenfranchised by not knowing the established official language. The use of the P/C in formal education, government and other official domains would give people greater access and allow them to participate in decision-making processes, thus counteracting neo-colonialism and elitism (see e.g. Bebel-Gisler, 1981; Devonish, 1986.)

With regard to corpus planning, the major efforts have been in codification: choosing a 'standard' variety of the P/C to be used for these wider functions and developing a writing system for it (graphisation). However, because of the socio-political underpinnings of language planning efforts, and the lack of perceived legitimacy of P/Cs, as described above, the codification of a P/C has two goals not usually found in other contexts: (1) choosing a variety of the P/C that would be accessible to the majority of speakers of the language, and (2) making the P/C autonomous from its lexifier so that it is perceived as a separate, legitimate language. Thus, codification in P/C contexts does not involve developing a 'standard' in the usual sense of the term (Siegel, 2002). In other language contexts, the standard is based on a prestige variety used by the social elite and usually found in an established literary tradition. In addition, the standard language is often modelled on an already established standardised language used in the community (such as Latin in Europe). In contrast, a P/C normally does not have an established literary tradition. The prestige variety of the P/C is the form closest to the lexifier, and the established standard is often the lexifier itself – and both are generally spoken by only a small elite class (see Sebba, 1997).

Obviously, the goals of accessibility and autonomy would not be accomplished by developing a standard form of the P/C on the basis of the lexifier.

This is most relevant to the choice of orthography. There are basically two types of orthography used for P/Cs: etymological and phonemic. An etymological orthography is based on the conventional spelling of the lexifier language – for example in Hawai'i Creole: *They stay coming for talk with that old bugger.* 'They're coming to talk with that old guy.' A modified etymological orthography distinguishes some of the salient linguistic features of the P/C, especially in pronunciation (Winer, 1990). So the same example from Hawai'i Creole with modified etymological orthography would be: *Dey stay coming fo talk wit dat ol buggah.*

A phonemic orthography is based on the sounds that actually occur in the P/C without any reference to the lexifier, ideally with one symbol for each phoneme. So the Hawai'i Creole example would be: *Dei ste kaming fo tawk wit daet ol baga.* An intermediate phonemic orthography basically has one symbol (or digraph) for one phoneme, but in some cases it uses the spelling conventions of the lexifier – for example: < ou > for /u/ in French-lexified creoles (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1994) and < oa > for /oʊ/ as in *boat* in the English-lexified Belize Kriol (Decker, 1995).

It is the phonemic orthography that appears to meet the language-planning goals of accessibility and autonomy for P/Cs. First of all, it is well known that a phonemic writing system is easier to learn when acquiring literacy because of its consistency and because new readers tend to decode sound by sound. In contrast, the etymological orthography preserves the inconsistencies and historical forms unrelated to pronunciation that are found in the lexifier language. Thus the phonemic system is more suitable if the P/C is to be used for teaching initial literacy, which is a usual goal of language-planning efforts in P/C contexts.

Second, with regard to the goal of autonomy, the phonemic orthography (including the intermediate type) clearly makes the written form of the P/C look distinct from that of the lexifier. In contrast, the etymological orthography (including the modified type) reinforces the view that the P/C is a deviant variety of the lexifier. (For a more detailed discussion of orthographic issues, see Mühleisen, 2002; Sebba, 1997.)

Phonemic orthographies have been developed for many P/Cs. Haitian Creole has had several since the 1920s, all surrounded by vigorous ideological debates (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1994). The current official system, *òtograf IPN* (Institute Pédagogique National) is an intermediate phonemic orthography developed in the mid-1970s and made official in 1980. This system is now widely used in Haiti, although some, such as Métellus (1998), still promote a more etymological alternative. In the Caribbean, orthographies based on the Haitian IPN model were developed for the French-lexified creoles of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the mid-1970s and for those of St Lucia and Dominica in the early 1980s. These are in general use, although alternatives have been proposed (e.g. Bernabé, 2001; Hazäel-Massieux, 1993).

In the Indian Ocean, a phonemic orthography was developed for Seselwa in the Seychelles in 1976 (Bollée, 1993), but this was later amended to be more similar to that of Haitian Creole (Baker, 1991). At least four different phonemically-based orthographies have been devised for Mauritian Creole, but none of these has achieved official recognition. However, the Mauritius Ministry of Education

has recently released a proposal for a standard orthography that appears to have wide acceptance (Hookoomsingh, 2004).

With regard to English-lexifier P/Cs, Tok Pisin had several different phonemic orthographies in use from 1935 to the 1950s, when standardisation efforts began. Although it is not officially recognised, the orthography used in the Tok Pisin translation of the New Testament, published in 1968, has become the de facto standard (Romaine, 1992; Wurm, 1985). General agreement on an informal standard orthography for Bislama emerged around 1995, but makeshift spellings are still widely used (Crowley, 2000). A translation of the New Testament that appeared in 1993 and the work of Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group have promoted a standard phonemic orthography for Pijin, but it is also not yet widely used. In Africa, the orthography used in the Sierra Leone Krio dictionary (Fyle & Jones, 1980) is generally recognised as the standard for Krio. In the Central African Republic, the government implemented an official orthography for Sango in 1984.[5] In Australia, a phonemic orthography was developed for Northern Territory Kriol from 1973 to 1976, primarily for use in education (Sandefur, 1979). It is widely used, but with some variation in spellings.

A phonemic orthography for Jamaican Creole (which could be adapted for other English-lexified creoles in the Caribbean) was devised by Cassidy (1961, 1993), and one for Hawai'i Creole was devised by Odo (see Bickerton & Odo, 1976). These orthographies are used by linguists (whom they were developed for) but rarely by others. Instead, nearly all literature in the English-lexified creoles of the Caribbean, and in Hawai'i Creole (including the recent translation of the New Testament), uses different modified etymological orthographies rather than the phonemic ones. An intermediate phonemic writing system using some orthographic conventions from English was developed with wider consultation for Belize Kriol in the mid 1990s and seems to have more acceptance (Decker, 1995). An intermediate phonemic writing system for Sranan in Suriname using some orthographic conventions from Dutch became the official orthography for the language in 1960, but was never widely accepted by the general public. The same is true for the more phonemic, modernised orthography using international conventions that became official in 1986 (Sebba, 2000).

Regarding creoles lexified by other languages, Papiamentu has two official orthographies, both widely used: an etymological one used on Aruba and a phonemic one used on Curaçao and Bonaire (Kouwenberg & Muysken, 1994). In Africa, the government of Cape Verde decided to officially support a unified orthography for Cape Verde Creole in 1998 (Gonsalves, 1999).

A final feature of language planning for P/Cs is that government-sponsored language-planning organisations are not very common. However, there exist three for Papiamentu: two in the Netherlands Antilles – Instituto Lingwistiko Antiano, which has been in existence for over 20 years (Dijkhoff, 1993), and Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma (FPI), which was founded in 1998 – and one in Aruba – Instituto Pedagogico Arubano (Pereira, 2004). Agencies in other countries are Lenstiti Kreol in the Seychelles (Bollée, 1993) and the National Kriol Council of Belize. Non-government organisations also exist that conduct some language-planning or -promotion activities – for example: the Folk Research Centre in St Lucia (Frank, 1993), Komité pou Etid Kwéyòl in Dominica (Stuart, 1993), the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (O'Donnell, 1992), and the

Literacy Association of Vanuatu (Crowley, 2000). One of the newest language planning agencies is the Jamaican Language Unit, established in 2002 in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the University of the West Indies in Kingston. One of the responsibilities of this agency is to 'formally propose and popularise an official standard writing system for Jamaican [Creole]' (Devonish, 2002). One way this is being done is through the Jamaican Language School Literacy Competition for primary school children in Grades 5 and 6. Entries have to be in the Cassidy writing system, and workshops on this system have been held for teachers of these students from all over the country (Devonish, 2003).

The Use of P/Cs in Teaching Literacy

Formal education

There are only four countries or territories where the P/C has been officially designated as the medium of instruction for the early years of primary school, and is therefore the medium for acquiring initial literacy. In the Seychelles, Seselwa has been the language of education for Grades 1–4 for more than 20 years (Bollée, 1993; Mahoune, 2000). More recently, its use has been extended for some subjects for up to five more years. The Seychelles has two other official languages: English and French. English is used as a teaching language for some subjects starting in Grade 3, and French is introduced in Grade 6.

In Haiti, a presidential decree issued in 1979 allowed the use of Haitian Creole in schools along with French, and in 1982 the Ministry of Education issued its own decree reorganising the education system so that the creole became the medium of instruction and an object of study in primary school. However, the government did not attempt to implement this education reform until 1989 (Howe, 1993: 294). Haitian Creole was made an official language along with French in the 1987 constitution, and it is now used in primary education throughout the country.

In the Netherlands Antilles, which includes the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire, the official language is Dutch but at least 80% of the population speak Papiamentu, a creole lexified by Portuguese and Spanish. A law passed in 1982 allowed Papiamentu to be used as a language of instruction in the first two years of primary school, but it was not implemented (Dijkhoff, 1993: 2). In 1983, Papiamentu was introduced as a subject of study in all grades in all schools, but only for half an hour a day. In 1993 a new educational plan was issued, making Papiamentu the language of instruction throughout primary school (Appel & Verhoeven, 1994: 73) (but see below).

Papiamentu is also spoken on the island of Aruba, geographically close to Curaçao and Bonaire and also a former Dutch colony, but now with separate political status. The parliament decided that as of September 2000 the educational language would be Papiamentu instead of Dutch (Ferrier, nd).

These four places may seem like the success stories of language planning in P/C contexts, but the full story is something else. First of all, in all four situations, the programmes are transitional – meaning that literacy in the P/C is not seen as an end in itself but rather as a means of acquiring literacy in the European official language(s), which are used for higher education and government. Secondly, in each location, there is still a good deal of resistance to the use of the local P/C as

the language of literacy. In the Seychelles, Mahoune (2000) reports that people 'subconsciously associate development with French and English', that there is a growing tendency to use these languages rather than Seselwa, in public functions, and that people who actually write the standardised creole are very few. A web site on the situation in Haiti includes the following observations:

> Although experts agree that it is easier to become literate in one's first language, implementation of the education reform has been slow. Many sectors of the population do not see the value of becoming literate in Creole. This attitude is even found among the poor, who tend to view education as a means of escaping poverty rather than as a means of learning; as a result, they are especially concerned that their children learn French. While the reform had sought to make Haitian Creole the language of all primary grades, the government was forced under pressure to limit its use to the first four grades only. (http://www.culturalorientation.net/haiti/hlang.html)

In the Netherlands Antilles, after the implementation of the education plan making Papiamentu the language of instruction, there was a dispute about freedom of choice that went to the courts. Since then, schools can be either bilingual (Papiamentu and either English or Dutch) or all Dutch (Christie, 2003: 57). Nevertheless, the official policy is still to strongly support Papiamentu as the language of education. The following reaction to this is found on a satirical web site:

> Our government has decided it is an elitary [*sic*] thing to have schools in Dutch; maybe because those pupils have it much easier in higher education in foreign countries. So all but five schools are in Papiamentu now, never mind the flood of protests. One result is that 300 (15%) of the pupils have been turned away, many weepingly, against 200 accepted at the five remaining schools in Dutch. (http://www.vrcurassow.com/2dvrc/stateofaffairs/circus.html)

The only other country where the local P/C is widely used in formal education to teach literacy is Papua New Guinea. A total reform of the nationwide education system began in the early 1990s. This changed the six years of primary schooling in the medium of English to three years of Elementary School followed by six years of Primary School. The language of instruction and initial literacy in Elementary School is chosen by the community; English is introduced in the second or third year of Elementary School and becomes the medium of instruction in Primary School. Although exact figures are not available, many communities, especially in urban areas, have chosen Tok Pisin for their schools (Ray, 1996). Also, at least in one rural area, in the Sepik Province, there are at least 26 Elementary Schools using Tok Pisin (Wiruk, 2000). Also, in Papua New Guinea's current National Literacy Policy, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu (another pidgin language, though not so widely spoken as Tok Pisin) are recognised as the two national languages. One of the National Goals of the policy (Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2000) is: 'All Papua New Guineans must be encouraged to become print literate in their own language and one of the two national languages'.

It is interesting to examine why P/Cs in the five places discussed above are

widely used in teaching initial literacy, while in other places this is not the case. The most obvious factor seems to be autonomy. This is clearest in situations where the lexifier language of the P/C is different from the official language, as in the case of Papiamentu, where the lexifier language is Spanish or Portuguese while the official language of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is primarily Dutch. Autonomy can also exist where the lexifier and the official language are the same if there is no continuum between it and the P/C. This is the situation in Haiti, the Seychelles (which also has the advantage of one of the official languages, English, being different from the lexifier, French), and Papua New Guinea (see Siegel, 1997a). Thus these locations contrast with places like Jamaica, Guyana, and Hawai'i, where there is not a clear dividing line between the P/C and the official language used for advanced education. However, of course, many P/Cs are not used in education even when they have clear autonomy – for example Sranan, an English-lexified creole in Suriname, where Dutch is the official and sole educational language (Sebba, 2000; St-Hilaire, 1999).

Another significant factor is the existence and acceptance of a separate phonemic orthography, as found in all five locations. The lack of an accepted orthography in Suriname may be one reason for the lack of use of Sranan in formal education in Suriname, despite its autonomy.

Finally, the designation of the P/C as a national and/or official language may also be important. However, again, this does not necessarily mean that such a language will be used in formal education. For example, Bislama is the national language of Vanuatu, but it is not used to teach initial literacy in government schools, and at one time its use was even banned in schools by the Ministry of Education (Lynch, 1998).

Other programmes

There are some other, less widespread, examples of the use of P/Cs to teach initial literacy in formal education – again, all transitional programmes.

In Australia, a bilingual programme with Northern Territory Kriol and English began at Barunga School in 1977. It was among other bilingual programmes involving Aboriginal languages run by the Northern Territory Department of Education. Kriol was used for teaching reading and writing from Grade 1 until English was introduced in Grade 4 or 5. After that, Kriol was restricted to subjects about cultural heritage (see Siegel, 1993). Unfortunately, this bilingual programme, along with others, was terminated by the Territory government at the end of 1998. Also in Australia, the Home Languages Project began in 1995 at Injinoo School in north Queensland. In this project, pre-school and Year 1 children have been taught to read and write in their home language, a variety of Torres Strait Creole (Turner, 1997).

In the Caribbean, an experimental 'trilingual' programme using Islander English (or Creole) was started on San Andres Island, Colombia, in 1999 (Morren, 2001).[6] The creole is used as the medium of education in the two pre-primary years of school and Grade 1. Oral English is introduced in Grade 1, and oral Spanish (the official and national language) in Grade 2. English is used for reading and writing and to teach some subjects from Grade 2. Spanish is similarly used from Grade 3. By Grade 4 all subjects are taught in English or Spanish.

On the island of Guadeloupe, there is an experimental (non-governmental)

elementary school run by Dany Bebel-Gisler. Education is primarily in the local French-lexified creole (Gwadloupéan), and French is taught as a foreign Language from around Grade 3 (Faure, 2000). There are also other experiments involving teaching Gwadloupéan as a subject to older students in junior and senior high schools.

Finally, in the USA there have been bilingual programmes in Massachusetts, New York and Florida for immigrants speaking Haitian Creole (Zéphir, 1997) and Cape Verde Creole (Gonsalves, 1996). In Massachusetts, however, the bilingual education law was overturned by voters and scrapped by the state government in 2003 (de Jong-Lambert, 2003).

In each of these cases, the P/C used is autonomous from the official language. The importance of this factor is clearly seen with regard to the bilingual programmes in the USA. Programmes exist for creoles lexified by French and Portuguese but not for those lexified by English (such as Jamaican Creole), which are just as widely spoken by immigrants.

Non-formal education

The use of P/Cs is more frequent in teaching initial literacy to pre-school children and to adults in non-formal programmes run by the government or by non-government organisations (NGOs). In Haiti, the government established adult literacy programmes in Haitian Creole in the 1960s and the Roman Catholic Church sponsored similar programmes in the 1980s (Library of Congress, nd). In the Seychelles, the School of Adult and Continuing Education at the National Institute for Education has an Adult Literacy Unit that deals specifically with teaching in Seselwa (Mahoune, 2000). Adult literacy programmes using other French-lexified P/Cs are carried out by NGOs in countries where the official language is only English: Dominica (Stuart, 1993) and Mauritius (UNESCO, 2003). With regard to English-lexified P/Cs in Melanesia, pre-school and adult education programmes in Tok Pisin and Bislama, and adult programmes in Pijin, are run by many different NGOs (Siegel, 1996). Adult literacy in Haitian Creole has also been taught in Florida in the USA (Dade County Public Schools, 2001), and in other French-lexified Caribbean creoles in the United Kingdom (Nwenmely, 1996).

Again, the P/Cs that are used in non-formal education are generally those that are autonomous from their lexifier, and which have an accepted phonemic orthography. Thus, these appear to be necessary although not sufficient conditions for the choice of a P/C as the language used for teaching initial literacy.

Studies of Pidgin and Creole literacy programmes

There has been only a small amount of research done on the use of P/Cs in teaching literacy, and this is described in detail elsewhere (Siegel, 1993, 1999a, 1999b). Briefly, there have been rigorous evaluations of the bilingual programme using Kriol in Australia (Murtagh, 1982), the education reform using Seselwa in primary education in the Seychelles (Ravel & Thomas, 1985), and a pre-school programme teaching initial literacy in Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea (Siegel, 1997b). There has also been a study of teaching literacy in Haitian Creole to Haitian immigrants in New York (Burtoff, 1985). All these studies show that learning literacy in the P/C had no negative effects on the subsequent learning of

English (the official language, or one of the official languages, and the goal of formal education in each case). In fact, students who learned initial literacy in their P/C eventually had better literacy skills in English than students who learned initial literacy in English. Also, the two studies that looked at performance in other subjects such as mathematics (Ravel & Thomas, 1985; Siegel, 1997b) showed that students who acquired literacy first in the P/C outperformed those who acquired it first in English.

Two experimental studies in the Caribbean region have dealt with older creole-speaking children (Grade 5–6 and junior high school) who had reading problems in the educational language, English. In each study, a small group of children were for the first time taught literacy in their own vernacular – Carriacou Creole English (Kephart, 1992) and Lucian French Creole (Kwéyòl) (Simmons-MacDonald, 2004). In both cases, this led to a marked improvement in the children's literacy skills in English.

There are also some reports that give an indication of the success of programmes using P/Cs to teach initial literacy. The first primary school in the Netherlands Antilles with Papiamentu as the language of instruction, the Kolegio Erasmo, added a four-year high school in 1997, Skol Avansá Integrá. Arion (2003: 1) reports: 'Passes of the High School are high and promising (82% in 2001; 95.2% in 2002) compared to the national average score of around 70%.' Regarding the experimental trilingual programme on San Andres Islands, Morren (2004) presents the preliminary results of an Islander English diagnostic reading inventory administered to children after they completed first grade. These indicate that the programme has been successful in teaching the various skills needed to become a successful reader.

Literacy Acquisition in the Standard Language

Other than the few exceptions described above, P/C-speaking children have to acquire literacy not in their own language but in the standard European language that is officially used in the formal education system. Thus, they have to acquire both literacy and a second language (L2) in their first few years of school. As described above, except for a few countries such as St Lucia and Suriname, the official educational language is also the lexifier of the P/C. This is called the 'lexifier L2' situation by Craig (1998). As also described above, in such situations, both educators and the general population consider the P/C to be a substandard form of the lexifier/official language – in other words, a dialect rather than a separate language. Therefore, learning the official language is considered to be second dialect acquisition (SDA) rather than second language acquisition (SLA), and the standard form of the lexifier is considered a D2 (second dialect) rather than an L2. This is similar to the 'dominant D2' situation, where the D1 (first dialect) is an ethnic, social or regional variety with marked differences from the standard – for example African American English (AAE, or Ebonics) in the USA (Siegel, 2003).[7] These considerations affect the nature of special educational programmes for P/C-speakers when they have existed.

Speakers of P/Cs are most often considered to be merely poor speakers of the standard language. At best, teaching of the standard occurs as if the students' vernacular does not exist – what Craig (2001: 66) refers to as the 'English-as-the-

mother-tongue tradition'. This occurs in creole-speaking countries in the Carib-bean region where English is the official language, such as Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. At worst, students are urged to give up the 'bad habits' they display in speaking their vernacular and replace them with the 'good habits' of the standard – in other words, eradication of the P/C.

However, after P/Cs and social dialects became recognised as legitimate, rule-governed varieties in the 1960s, methods from foreign language teaching (FLT) and teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) began to be employed to teach standard English to speakers of other 'dialects'. This became known as teaching standard English as a second dialect (SESD). Following the audio-lingual approach popular in the late 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis was on habit formation and oral fluency, with teaching focused on particular grammati-cal structures. Contrastive analysis of the L1 and L2 (or D1 and D2) was done to determine which structures should be taught, and pattern practice and drills were used to teach them. This method was used for programmes with P/C speakers in the Caribbean (see Craig, 1966, 1976) and in Hawai'i (Crowley, 1968). Some modestly successful results were reported for these methods – for exam-ple, by Craig (1967) for Jamaican Creole, and Crowley (1968) and Peterson *et al.* (1969) for Hawai'i Creole.

On the other hand, other researchers, such as Torrey (1972), reported only very limited positive results, and the problems of the uncritical use of FLT and TESOL methods became apparent, as pointed out by scholars such as Politzer (1973). These had to do with both the ineffectiveness of the teaching methods themselves (Kochman, 1969) and the special characteristics of contexts where the standard language is being taught to speakers of lexically related vernaculars such as P/Cs (for more recent criticisms, see Malcolm, 1992).

The biggest factor goes back to the problem of autonomy. As pointed out long ago by Stewart (1964), in FLT and TESOL, two different autonomous linguistic systems are easily recognised. The learners' L1 often has its own dictionaries and grammars, just like the L2. However, in SESD, because of similarities with the standard, the learners' vernacular is most often not recognised as a separate vari-ety of language. This leads to both teachers and students thinking that there is only one legitimate language involved, and that the learners' vernacular is just 'sloppy speech'. For this reason, the P/C is not even allowed in the classroom. Thus, students are clearly disadvantaged by not being allowed to express them-selves in their own variety of language, a factor which has a negative effect on cognitive development and school achievement (Feldman *et al.*, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 2002; UNESCO, 1968).

Another popular FLT/TESOL methodology used in P/C contexts was the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach of the 1980s and 1990s, which emphasise language function and use in real-life situations. This approach has been used in the Caribbean, but with little success (Craig, 1998, 2001). Again, some problems exist with the methods themselves, but in this case problems are also caused by linguistic factors. As Craig (1966, 1976, 1983, 1988) has observed, in most foreign- or second-language-learning situations, learners have little if any familiarity with the target language. However, in situations where the stan-dard variety is the target, learners already recognise and produce some aspects of it as part of their linguistic repertoires. Also, unlike learners of a separate

language, P/C-speakers learning the standard variety often have no communicative reason to keep using the target (that is, the standard) in the classroom. Craig (1998: 12) points out that in such situations, 'learners can all retain their normal language usage for performing communicative tasks, and there is no need to learn anything new'. In addition, because of the similarity between the P/C and the lexifier, the learner might not be aware of some of the differences that do exist. Thus, as Craig noted years ago (1966: 58), 'the learner fails to perceive the new target element in the teaching situation'.

One educational programme aimed at P/C speakers that has had more success is the Kamehameha Early Education Programme (KEEP), which was started in the 1970s for ethnic Hawaiian children, mostly speakers of varieties of Hawai'i Creole. In teaching reading, the programme took a conversational approach, making use of discourse strategies and participation structures similar to those in a speech event found in Hawai'i Creole called 'talk-story'. It was found that this approach facilitated learning to read in standard English (Speidel, 1987).

The Hawai'i English Programme, which ran through the 1970s to the early 1980s, was a more far-reaching programme that also respected the students' home language, which at that time was mainly Hawai'i Creole. This programme, as described by Rogers (1996), was different from others in that it made specific use of the creole in several ways. Firstly, it looked at particular features of the language in comparison to standard English. Secondly, some stories written in Hawai'i Creole were included and children were sometimes given the choice to read either these or others in standard English. Thirdly, there was a unit on dialects that looked at dialect diversity outside Hawai'i, as well as containing activities, described by Rogers as follows:

> These activities encourage elementary school students to view HCE [Hawai'i Creole English] as a complete and legitimate language form, to undertake some simplified linguistic analyses of HCE, and to witness dialectal flexibility in local role models. (Rogers, 1996: 233)

This programme was a forerunner of later programmes using what has become known as the 'awareness approach'. In this approach, students' P/C vernaculars are seen as a resource to be used for learning the standard, rather than an impediment. This approach has two or three of the following components. In the socio-linguistic component, students learn about different varieties of language – such as regional dialects, pidgins and creoles – and explore the history and politics of language that led to one particular variety becoming accepted as the standard. This component helps both teachers and students to realise that all vernacular varieties of language are legitimate and that no variety is intrinsically better than another, even though some may have more practical benefits in some contexts. In the contrastive component, students examine the grammatical and pragmatic characteristics of their own vernaculars to see how they are rule-governed and how they differ systematically from the standard. Sometimes translation or role-playing activities are used. This component helps students to notice (and eventually learn) differences that they may not have realised exist. In the accommodation component, teachers may make use of aspects of students' language and culture, as in the KEEP programme or in having

students study literature or song lyrics written in the P/C. Sometimes students may also be given the freedom to express themselves in their own varieties.

Programmes using the awareness approach have been developed for P/C-speakers mainly in countries where they are a minority, namely Kriol speakers in Western Australia (Berry & Hudson, 1997; Catholic Education Office, 1994) and English-lexified creole-speaking immigrants from the Caribbean in Britain (ILEA Afro-Caribbean Language and Literacy Project in Further and Adult Education, 1990), Canada (Coelho, 1988, 1991) and the USA (Fischer, 1992; Menacker, 1998). (For more details on these programmes and research evaluating some of them, see Siegel, 1999a, 1999b.)

Some changes in the direction of awareness programmes are slowly starting to occur in lexifier L2 settings. In Hawai'i, a recent grammar of Hawai'i Creole (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003) was written as a resource for teachers to help them bring the language into the classroom. In the Caribbean, Craig's (1999) valuable resource for teaching standard English in creole (and minority dialect) contexts includes awareness activities. Christie (2003: 46) reports that according to the recent Reform of Secondary Education in Jamaica, 'students should be allowed to express themselves freely, employing whatever variety makes them comfortable in the classroom and outside'. Also, the CAPE syllabus 'Communication Studies' in Jamaican high schools includes a 'Language and Society' module that focuses on the linguistic situations in Caribbean countries and their historical background, as well as on aspects of the grammar of Creole vernaculars as compared to English (Kouwenberg, 2002).

Use of Pidgins and Creoles in Literacy Activities

The actual use of different P/Cs as written languages varies greatly from place to place. In the few places where a P/C is the language of initial literacy, it seems to have fairly common use in reading and writing. In the Seychelles, novels and short stories in Seselwa appeared in the late 1970s, and today popular fiction in the creole ranges from historical and detective novels to science fiction. More functional materials such as research reports and government leaflets are also written in Seselwa, as are most articles in local newspapers and magazines (Mahoune, 2000). Popular writing in Haitian Creole began to come out in the mid-1970s, and today there is a substantial body of literature in the language in novels, shorts stories, plays and poetry (St Fort, 2000). Papiamentu is used in daily and weekly newspapers and in magazines. Tok Pisin is used in at least one newspaper, and in many government publications. These languages are also found in news reports and other materials on the Internet.

The use of written materials in other P/Cs is more restricted. Members of various Christian churches utilise some P/Cs for religious services and reading translations of the New Testament. In addition to Haitian Creole, Papiamentu and Tok Pisin, these include Hawai'i Creole, Bislama, Solomons Pijin, Cameroon Pidgin, Sranan, St Lucia Creole and Sango. While English-lexified P/Cs in Africa, the Caribbean region and Hawai'i are not generally found in the print media or government publications, they are commonly used in literature. For example, poetry, short stories and plays have been written in Nigerian Pidgin and Cameroon Pidgin (Todd, 1990: 75–7). Throughout

the Caribbean, English-lexified creoles are used in stories, especially in dialogue, and also in songs, poems and plays (Winer, 1990). Jamaican Creole is also widely used in cartoons and comics, and since the 1990s it has been used in stories as the voice of first- and third-person narration. In recent years, Hawai'i Creole has also become a literary language, with the appearance of many popular short stories and poems and several novels using dialogue in the language (Romaine, 1994; Schultz, 1998).

Whether or not the growth of writing in these P/Cs indicates an increase in prestige is an open question. On one hand, negative attitudes toward P/C literature prevail in some countries, such as Guyana (Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001). On the other hand, Mühleisen (2002) argues that the expanding use of Caribbean creoles for referential functions in novels, rather than only for expressive functions as in the past, is an indication of greater prestige.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that, whatever their use in religious and secular literature, literacy in these P/Cs depends on previous literacy in the official European language. Since these P/Cs are not languages of education, their speakers must have learned literacy first in the European language and then transferred the literacy skills to the P/C. This explains why literature in these P/Cs is written mostly in etymological orthographies, based on European languages, rather than in phonemic orthographies, which would make acquisition of literacy easier.

It is difficult to find information about the more personal use of P/Cs – for example, in writing letters. With regard to Vanuatu, however, Crowley (2000) reports that, except for secondary-school leavers who use English or French, most people use Bislama for this kind of writing. The fact that they do not learn literacy skills in Bislama explains why, when they do use the language for writing, they do not follow the standard orthography. Instead, they are highly influenced by the orthography of their first language of literacy, either English or French.

Conclusion

In summary, with regard to literacy, every P/C is still subservient to a standard European language. Despite language planning efforts to increase the status and use of P/Cs and develop autonomous orthographies, the vast majority of speakers of these vernaculars still learn literacy in the official standard and use an orthography based on this standard if they do write their own language. The few P/Cs that are used to teach initial literacy in the formal education system may be exceptions, but even these are not considered worthy by many of their own speakers – as we have seen for Haitian Creole and Papiamentu. Although the prestige of some P/Cs may be increasing, most have a long way to go before they are fully recognised as legitimate vehicles for literacy.

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Notes

1. Note that *pidgin* and *creole* are technical terms used by linguists, and not necessarily by speakers of the languages. For example, speakers of Hawai'i Creole call their language 'Pidgin', and speakers of Jamaican Creole call theirs 'Patwa' (from *patois*).
2. Another reason for using the abbreviation P/C is the controversy in the field about whether particular languages are a pidgin or a creole. For example, Melanesian Pidgin is considered by some creolists to be a pidgin because it is a second language rather than the mother tongue for the large majority of its speakers. It is considered a creole by others because it has some native speakers and its grammatical features are just as complex as those of clearly recognised creoles.
3. For another overview, see Simmons-McDonald (2004).
4. This information comes from a position paper written by a staff and student interest group at the University of Hawai'i (Da Pidgin Coup, 1999: 6–8).
5. http://www.isp.msu.edu/AfrLang/Sango_root.html.
6. In this article, Morren talks about the program being in existence on all three islands of the archipelago: San Andres, Providence and Santa Cataline, but in later work (e.g. Morren, 2004), he mentions only San Andres.
7. Teaching standard English in both the dominant D2 and lexifier L2 situations has been labelled Teaching English to Speakers of a Related Vernacular (TESORV) by Craig (1999).

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The Consequences of Vernacular (Il)literacy in the Pacific

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Recent arguments have suggested that literacy in the Pacific does not give added status to vernaculars and that it should be discouraged because it is not part of traditional cultures, thereby inevitably weakening these languages, leading ultimately to the replacement of a huge number of languages by colonial languages. This discussion disputes this interpretation, arguing that as these cultures have changed since colonial contact, literacy has been fully incorporated into many local cultures. Any attempt to discourage vernacular literacy represents an attempt to turn back the clock to a romantic but no longer existent past, and possibly even serves to weaken languages.

Introduction

Linguistic ecologies (Mühlhäusler, 1996: 1–8) differ in the extent to which literate expression is a component of the interconnected system of languages and linguistic subvarieties used by people in a given location. In the linguistic ecology in which I am participating right now, written English is now very much an essential requirement. Anybody who cannot write in English in an English-speaking part of the world is labelled as 'illiterate'. There are many ways in which such people's functioning in society is restricted, and the term itself has become something of a synonym for 'ignorant', with people described as illiterate often being presumed unable to express themselves even orally.

There are other societies in which writing is completely unknown, so there can obviously be no individuals who are disadvantaged by their inability to read and write. Such societies are increasingly few in the modern world, though written varieties did not traditionally constitute part of the linguistic ecologies of any parts of the Pacific area. (For the purpose of this discussion, I take the 'Pacific' to refer to Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and, to a lesser extent, Aboriginal Australia.) In yet other linguistic ecologies, literacy may be restricted to just one small group within society, such as a political power group, an educated elite, or a restricted religious circle. This is still the case in many modern Third World societies, and it was also true of European societies in medieval times (and indeed even more recently in history).

Of course, linguistic ecologies can change over time, including the place that literate forms occupy in the interrelationships between languages and language varieties. An ability to read and write in English-speaking societies was very much the exception in past centuries, but it is now the *in*ability to read and write which is the exception. Given that language planning involves the idea that changes in the form or content of languages, as well as the uses to which they are put, are actively promoted by some kind of agency (or agencies) – or even individuals – rather than simply being the result of a spontaneous response to inter-

nal pressures, it is possible to view the transition from an oral to a literate culture as a language planning issue, given that agencies (or individuals) are very often involved in the initiation or propagation of such changes.

It is my intention in this discussion to examine the transition in the Pacific from societies in which literacy was traditionally not part of the linguistic ecology to linguistic ecologies which are increasingly dependent upon literacy in some form. These are developments which in many cases have taken place within the last century and a half, and which are still ongoing. This means that the final outcomes of the accession to literacy have not yet become manifest, and there is still considerable potential for debate as to what patterns of literacy should be promoted (or even if it should be promoted at all).

The agencies which were responsible for the introduction and propagation of vernacular literacy in the Pacific – for the most part in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – were generally Christian missions, while literacy in metropolitan languages was generally promoted by state educational systems. In more recent times, the state, as well as a variety of non-government organisations – including missions – and to a much lesser extent even academic linguists, have also been involved in the promotion of vernacular literacy. I propose to examine a number of questions relating to the impact of that literacy in Pacific has had on the linguistic ecologies of this region. In particular, I will critically examine views that literacy in Pacific vernaculars should be actively discouraged because of the damage that it is said to have brought about in these seemingly fragile linguistic ecologies.

Oral and Literate Cultures

In the extensive literature concerning the effects of the transition of societies from orality to literacy, many studies concentrate on the supposed cognitive effects of the establishment of literacy within a society. Goody (1987) argues that the relative permanency of writing, as well as its ability to be removed from the context in which it is produced, has led historically to the development of new ways of thinking which emphasise logic and reason, and similar ideas have also been expressed by Havelock (1982), Ong (1992) and Olson (1994).

By way of contrast, thought processes in oral societies are related to the fact that messages are transient, which allows information to be forgotten or revised, with the concomitant lack of distinction between mythology and factual history. According to this point of view, an oral culture is not conducive to the development of critical thinking. The work of Goody and his followers points to the advent of literacy as an intellectual revolution that led to Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy in Greece, and, ultimately, to the spirit of scientific inquiry which has become the basis for much of western European culture.

Some scholars, however, dispute this interpretation of the impact of literacy. Scribner and Cole (1981) argue that it is not literacy as such which leads to logical thinking; rather, it is formal schooling which produces this effect. Literacy and schooling are obviously frequently intertwined and previous studies on the effect of literacy on thinking have not paid sufficient attention to separating out these two factors.[1] They argue – on the basis of a study carried out in a society in which

vernacular literacy is acquired outside of the context of the school whereas literacy in English is acquired in school – that it is only school-based literacy which produces the kind of cognitive effects mentioned in the opening paragraph, while vernacular literacy produces a quite different set of cognitive results.

Quite apart from the problem of ascribing to literacy a single set of cognitive effects, there is an additional problem with the view that literacy changes the ways in which people think, in that it is often quite difficult to make a simple distinction between 'oral' cultures on the one hand and 'literate' cultures on the other. We face difficulties as soon as we attempt to categorise societies in this way, as we are clearly dealing here with a continuum rather than an absolute distinction:

> The differing norms governing literacy practices . . . demonstrate the impossibility of any monolithic . . . simple oral/literate divide. (Foley, 1997: 433)

Different societies use literacy in different ranges of contexts and for different sorts of purposes, and even within English-speaking societies, there is no simple distinction between 'written' and 'spoken' language, as evidenced, for example, by the ways in which newly emergent email apparently straddles the boundary between the two. Since there is clearly no single universal notion of literacy, it becomes pointless to try to find a single set of cognitive outcomes of the acquisition of literacy. Clearly, then, any attempt to examine the impact of literacy needs to be sensitive to the fact that different kinds of literacies operating in different kinds of social contexts may have quite different sets of consequences.

I have referred to these views concerning the possible cognitive effects of the 'literate revolution' to emphasise the fact that literacy is widely seen as potentially having great impact on entire societies. Literacy in the modern world is widely viewed as a skill to be promoted worldwide for its supposed positive benefits. A frequently cited UNESCO report of 1953, for example, encouraged the promotion of vernacular literacy – and vernacular education – throughout the world with the following words:

> We take it as axiomatic that every child of school age should attend school and that every illiterate should be made literate. We take it as axiomatic, too, that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil . . . (cited in Le Page, 1997: 4)

Literacy practitioners and proponents of a wide variety of ideological persuasions in the Pacific encourage vernacular literacy for a wide variety of reasons. Members of organisations such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics promote literacy in local languages with the ultimate goal of giving people access to the Bible and associated literature in their own language. Some others argue for the value of vernacular literacy because it promotes pride in the local language and culture in the face of some other more dominant culture (Dixon, 1980: 88; Stringer & Faraclas, 1987: 7). Some argue that vernacular literacy provides the best bridge to literacy in a language of wider communication (Siegel, 1996: 10), while others promote vernacular literacy as an 'access resource' to enable people who do not understand a major lingua franca to gain access to information in their own language so that they can make informed decisions about their own future (Lynch, 1979: 5–9).

Despite the widespread assumption that illiteracy is a social 'problem' to be overcome, we should always be careful to examine our beliefs about the nature of that problem, as well as the long-term impact of any solutions that may be offered to overcome it, particularly in the light of the views of Goody and others that literacy may radically change people's ways of thinking, and thereby also their cultures. Le Page (1997: 15) urges that academics and literacy practitioners should:

> turn a critical eye upon ourselves . . . to evaluate the effectiveness with which money is spent in our activities . . . [W]e will be guilty of *la trahison des clercs* if we fail to confront the gulf which often appears between academies . . . and what is actually happening in the real world.

Dixon (1980: 86–7) repeats the earlier warnings of Coomaraswamy (1949) that the introduction of literacy into a non-literate society is potentially destructive if it is carried out in such a way that it confers power on certain individuals over others, or if literacy does not serve to promote local cultural values in the face of introduced values. Arguably, of course, the introduction of literacy will inevitably transform the nature of power relations within a society (though it could hardly be expected that power relations could ever remain static anyway, with or without introduced literacy).

In the light of such comments, we should welcome questions such as those posed by the Communication Research Institute of Australia (1990) about the potentially negative effects of literacy promoted by outsiders for speakers of the indigenous languages of the Pacific, as well as recent contributions such as Mühlhäusler (1987; 1990; 1996) and Tabouret-Keller *et al.* (1997), as they aim to make us think critically about many past and current practices in the area of vernacular literacy, as well as the future implications of literacy practices.

Some writers have recently presented views that are in sharp contrast to the views of many academics, and probably most – if not all – promoters of vernacular literacy in the Pacific, though they have offered a rather different perspective on the impact of literacy to the views of Goody. Mühlhäusler (1987; 1990; 1996; 1998; 1999) has been writing along these lines consistently for more than a decade, and Charpentier (1997) has recently expressed views that overlap in part with those of Mühlhäusler, questioning widely held assumptions about the value of vernacular literacy in the Pacific (as well as literacy in Melanesian Pidgins) for the damage that this 'foreign' cultural practice causes when oral cultures are transformed into literate ones. They argue that, ultimately, this damage will be reflected in a massive loss of linguistic diversity throughout the region, culminating in a wholesale shift to metropolitan languages of the kind that sadly seems to be nearing completion in Australia.

I propose to critique their idea that vernacular literacy in Pacific societies should be discouraged because it is 'foreign', and that it is therefore necessarily destructive of local cultures. I see the effects of literacy as much less predictable – and potentially therefore also as having a positive effect – in line with Foley's (1997: 433) observation that there are no universal effects of literacy on all societies. The rejection of vernacular literacy by Mühlhäusler and Charpentier as a foreign imposition represents little more than a resurgence of naïve neo-colonial romanticism.

Pre-literacy, Literacy and Illiteracy in the Pacific

The Pacific represents the world's most diverse area linguistically, in terms of the number of languages per head of population, the number of languages according to land area, the number of distinct linguo-genetic groupings, and also the number of different linguistic varieties spoken by single individuals and within communities. In terms of absolute numbers, there are well over 1200 indigenous languages spoken in Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Australia,[2] representing at least a fifth of the world's languages. These languages belong to the Austronesian and Australian groupings, as well as a variety of so-called 'Papuan' groupings in parts of Melanesia (Lynch, 1998: 27–40).

True writing never developed spontaneously anywhere in the Pacific prior to European contact. The closest to an indigenous script is found in the rongorongo tablets of Easter Island, but these were apparently inspired by the sight of early Europeans writing, even if the written symbols were themselves not based on European writing systems. The pre-colonial Pacific was, therefore, 'pre-literate' (Gudschinsky, 1973),[3] in the sense that the distinction between literacy and illiteracy had no relevance whatsoever in the 'linguistic ecologies' (Mühlhäusler, 1996: 1–8) of the region. In a pre-literate society, the fact that nobody could read or write – or even knew of the existence of such practices – meant that no members of those societies could be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by lack of this knowledge.

Of course, things have changed radically over the last couple of centuries. One of the earliest results of contact with Europeans was the deliberate introduction of vernacular literacy, based on the Roman alphabet, which was for the most part associated with the active spread of Christianity by European missionaries of a variety of denominations and speaking a variety of European languages. Reading and writing were taught from the early 1800s to speakers of several Polynesian languages, and also Fijian. These people often rapidly became vigorous practitioners of this new skill. So enthusiastic about literacy were Māori in New Zealand in the early 19th century, for example, that a higher proportion of Māori were reportedly literate in their own language than was the case among contemporary British settlers in English (Pybus, 1954: 16).

Vernacular literacy was also introduced – generally somewhat later – into some speech communities in Melanesia, though to this day there is a substantial number of languages in Melanesia for which there are still no written literatures, and where no writing systems have ever been developed (Franklin, 1977; Tryon, 1979). Attempts to promote vernacular literacy in Aboriginal Australia in the nineteenth century were limited to only a tiny handful of exceptional cases. The vast majority of languages for which writing systems have been developed in Australia involve developments from only the 1970s (Dixon, 1980: 86–96, Hartman & Henderson, 1994; Gale, 1997).

The nature of the advantages of being literate in Pacific societies has varied over time, and varies also from society to society. For instance, in societies that came to be influenced by so-called 'cargo cult' thinking, literacy was often seen as a guarantee that people would come to share in the wealth that they saw being hoarded selfishly by colonial Europeans (Lawrence, 1964; Lindstrom, 1993); and Lindstrom (pers. comm.) reports that cult leaders have sometimes pretended to

Table 1 Illiteracy rates in various South Pacific politics (1994)

Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu	1%
Samoa[4]	2%
Kiribati	7%
Nauru	10%
Fiji	13%
Vanuatu	36%
Papua New Guinea	48%
Solomon Islands	77%[5]

be able to read because of the power that this is seen as conferring upon them. Nowadays, of course, vernacular literacy is generally promoted as a way of ensuring earlier success in formal education, as a way of giving greater prestige to languages that have to varying extents been undervalued by their speakers in the face of colonially introduced languages such as English, or as a way of providing people with access to information that they need in order to make informed decisions about their lives in a largely decolonised Pacific (Lynch, 1979; Crowley, 1989; Mugler & Lynch, 1996).

However, as soon as literacy is introduced into a linguistic community, we have to accept that illiteracy is introduced along with it, given that it is seldom the case that everybody in that society acquires an equal command of the new skill. Many people never learn how to read or write, either through lack of opportunity, lack of motivation or need, or because of learning disabilities. Even in a supposedly highly literate nation such as present-day Australia, for example, the International Literacy Year secretariat in 1990 estimated that more than a million people out of a total population of about 17 million experience basic literacy difficulties, leaving them unable to function fully in a society that requires them to be able to read safety instructions at work, or to follow written instructions for taking medicines (Communication Research Institute of Australia, 1990).

Illiteracy is widely assumed to be a significant social problem in the modern Pacific, though detailed and reliable figures on the extent of the problem are surprisingly difficult to come by. In fact, the interpretation of statistics on illiteracy rates is often complicated by the fact that literacy can be measured by different investigators in different ways and against different sorts of criteria (Siegel, 1996: 9; Le Page, 1997: 13–14; Gerbault, 1997: 143–44). Gudschinsky (1973: 5), for example, defines literacy very broadly as follows:

> [A person] is literate who, in a language that he speaks, can read and understand anything he would have understood if it had been spoken to him; and who can write, so that it can be read, anything that he can say.

Such a definition does not distinguish between vernacular literacy and literacy in a metropolitan language, and it does not attempt to deal with the complicated question of how competent one must be in a metropolitan language before one is considered to be literate in it.

However, the urge to quantify rates of illiteracy is powerful, and Siegel (1996: 9) cites the United Nations Development Programme illiteracy rates – of probably varying reliability and interpretations – for a number of South Pacific polities on the basis of 1994 figures, presented here in increasing order of magnitude of the problem (Table 1).

The Transition from Orality to Literacy

I now propose to examine in more detail issues relating to the transition from an oral tradition to a literate one by concentrating on the situation that we find in Vanuatu, an independent republic located in the south-west Pacific, though reference will be made from time to time to parallels in other parts of the Pacific. Charpentier (1997) is sharply critical of widespread assumptions that vernacular literacy in Vanuatu is something to be promoted. He argues strongly that oral traditions should continue to be transmitted only orally, and that literate transmission of this kind of information is illicit. Relating to his own period as curator of the local Cultural Center in Vanuatu in the 1970s, he indicates that he insisted on maintaining a record of traditional stories on tape (and in local vernaculars), rather than in writing (or on tape in the major language of wider communication, Bislama) (Charpentier, 1997: 227–28). This, he argues, was to ensure the primacy of an orate culture over a literate one, thereby ensuring continued control by speakers over spoken texts that are considered sensitive, and which must never be told to unauthorised persons (such as women, outsiders, or people of inappropriate social rank).

In reality, however, what we are dealing with here is not a simple dichotomy between orality and literacy. In an oral society, transient oral expressions of a story told in a traditional context are under the control of the teller. However, with both written and tape-recorded expressions of a story, the teller surrenders control of a permanent representation of that story to an archivist, and a recording of sensitive material and its subsequent handling (or mishandling) is identical, whether it is recorded on tape or in writing. Just as a recorded tape in a local vernacular can be placed in an archive under the kind of restricted listening options that Charpentier himself set up as curator, so too can written transcriptions of these texts (or the equivalent spoken text recorded in Bislama rather than local language). Neither literate representation of a text, nor representation in a language of wider communication, necessarily makes that text more public if the same protections are applied to texts in all media. If some individual inappropriately makes a written text public, or inappropriately broadcasts a story in Bislama over the radio, it would be just as feasible for someone to play the contents of a vernacular text recorded on tape to an inappropriate person. And of course a tape recording 'fixes' a story in terms of content in exactly the same way as writing it down does, as well as allowing that story to be removed from the original context of its production.

Charpentier also seems to assume that all spoken texts require equal protection from illicit transmission. While accounts of initiation or mortuary rites (and probably other topics as well) may well need to be restricted in the way that he describes, there are many other texts which are surely meant to be heard widely. Certainly, my own vernacular recordings of stories on Paama in Vanuatu (and

more recently, Erromango, also in Vanuatu) have mostly involved the kinds of stories that were traditionally told by old people sitting around the fire at night to as many people as would have been willing to listen, in the absence of movie theatres, VCRs, radios and cassette players. These were the entertaining stories about, for example, how the giant fruit bat acquired large wings from taro leaves, or why the fruit bat hangs upside down in a tree while his friend the parrot perches upright.

Because it is recognised that times have changed and many people no longer spend the same amount of time listening to stories at night, people generally seized upon the opportunity of my presence to have these kinds of stories recorded on tape. In fact, I found that older people generally insisted on telling only such stories, despite my expressed willingness to record any kind of narrative, including even stories relating to modern times.

Charpentier (1997: 228) claims that writing in the vernacular is regarded by some in local communities as 'useless' because writing is not part of the local tradition. However, my own experience tells me that for far more people, writing stories in local languages is, in fact, very highly valued.[6] Overseas researchers in Vanuatu are now obliged to produce written materials of this nature (or some other material that is of value to the local community) as part of the legally binding contract that they sign with the Vanuatu Cultural Center, which is now run by a local person, under the guidance of an entirely local Board of Management, with responsibility to the local Minister of Culture. The positive attitude of communities to vernacular literacy and vernacular education is further illustrated by the fact that when the Vanuatu government recently moved to set up pilot projects on initial vernacular education in primary schools located in sixteen different language areas, Ministry of Education staff had to turn down requests from many communities whose members wanted to be involved (Enoch Léon, pers. comm.). Janet Stahl (pers. comm.) also reports that the local branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics receives more requests for assistance in the development of vernacular literacy programmes than the organisation is able to respond to immediately.

For the people among whom I have conducted linguistic research, I have long adopted a policy of responding to people's requests to make recorded stories public in written form, where these stories were intended from the outset to be heard in public. Accordingly, Crowley (1980) represents a substantial collection of stories in Paamese, while Crowley and Mael (1984) is a smaller collection of Paamese stories aimed at a younger audience, and finally, Crowley (1997) is a similar collection of stories arising out of my research on the Erromangan language. All of these publications have been made available in large numbers, either at no cost, or minimal cost, to members of these local communities.

Members of the local community were centrally involved in the production of these materials. The originally taped stories were transcribed by myself with the close assistance of members of the Paamese and Erromangan communities, who invariably had quite firm ideas about which features of the taped transcriptions belonged in the written text, and which aspects of the transcriptions required 'editing'. False starts and factual errors were eliminated on local insistence, while very often efforts were made to find vernacular equivalents to loanwords in the written form which were initially passed without comment in the spoken form.

The identity of the protagonists in a story sometimes became obscure in the transcription – presumably because of the lack of intonational or gestural clues – so the written version was sometimes felt to require the addition of extra information.[7] The transcriptions were also often felt to 'drag' when read out, prompting people to edit down the amount of head-to-tail linkage that predominates in Melanesian narrative style.

Charpentier (1997: 228) makes specific reference to the stories that I produced and distributed in this way on Paama,[8] commenting that while these stories were well received and widely read, this was nevertheless the work of a European. He comments further that:

> No initiative of this sort has ever come from a Melanesian intellectual. Moreover, it was done in a context of thorough disacculturation [sic]. Literacy, a European concept, seems only to succeed in Melanesia where European thinking has totally submerged and erased the local cultures. This is again an example of the passage of one world to another; belonging to both is seemingly impossible. (Charpentier, 1997: 228)

Apart from the fact that my co-editor in Crowley and Mael (1984) is himself a Paamese with a Masters qualification and teaches at the University of the South Pacific – hence surely qualifying him as an intellectual – Charpentier seems to be unaware of a whole series of similar sorts of vernacular stories that have been produced in Vanuatu under the sole authorship of local people (Viralalao, 1981; Carlot, 1983; Buli, 1985; Mabonlala, 1986), as well as jointly authored Luwi *et al.* (1988). Mühlhäusler (1996: 240, 246) also writes critically of vernacular literacy, seemingly on the assumption that this is something that is promoted only by manipulative and unthinking Europeans.

Siegel (1996; 1997; 1998) and Mugler and Lynch (1996) document in considerable detail the many and varied kinds of involvement of local people and local communities in literacy both in local vernaculars Pacific-wide, and languages of wider communication such as Melanesian Pidgin, making it very clear that these activities are nowadays often largely – or exclusively – instigated by, and under the control of, local people. The government of Vanuatu has recently also adopted an educational master plan in which the intention is to teach initial literacy in vernaculars throughout the country.

Charpentier and Mühlhäusler's failure to acknowledge the work of indigenous people in the Pacific in the area of vernacular literacy and education effectively denigrates the published work of indigenous people such as Abare and Manukayasi (1996), Léonard (1996), Pukoki (1996), and many others, as well as those who have been actively involved in academic research (e.g. Masing, 1992) and in formulating and implementing policies regarding vernacular education and vernacular literacy projects.

The Indigenisation of Literacy

Implicit in Charpentier's statement quoted in the previous section is the claim that successful vernacular literacy entails complete acculturation. If we consider, for example, that literacy in Samoa has been very successful (given my reference to a 98% per cent literacy rate), is Charpentier claiming that Samoan culture has

been totally submerged and erased, and that Samoans today are completely europeanised? While a Samoan brought back in time from 1769 would probably hardly recognise Samoa today, it is surely insulting to modern Samoans to claim that they have no distinct culture of their own. They have, in fact, a vibrant culture which is very different from any European culture, with many of these differences exhibiting direct continuity from the culture of 1769 (and earlier), despite the very obvious recently introduced and innovated elements. Cultures do not collapse and die only to be replaced by another culture, any more than Latin died, only to be replaced by French.[9]

The final sentence in the quotation from Charpentier in the previous section states that there can only be either traditional Melanesian culture or a modern European culture, implying the impossibility of accommodation from one to another. Mühlhäusler also makes assertions based on a similar kind of premise. For instance, he opposes the promotion of vernacular literacy, despite frequent arguments that this could be seen as 'empowering' languages, thereby helping to ensure their preservation. The notion of 'empowerment', he argues, is not characteristic of traditional Melanesian cultures: 'the very notion of empowerment is one that is absent from the traditional Melanesian language ecology' (Mühlhäusler, 1996: 264).

European linguists and educators who set out to promote vernacular literacy are, in his terms, trying to change the '*ordre naturel*' (Mühlhäusler, 1996: 264), a notion which is dangerously close to being based on an assumption that there is only one unchanging way of being Melanesian, which derives only from the period prior to colonial contact.

Mühlhäusler and Charpentier are therefore taking a position of extreme naïveté which would be rejected outright by any informed anthropologist. The view that Melanesian societies are not characterised by power relationships and asymmetries must be dismissed instantly given the amount of human effort that is devoted to achieving and maintaining status, as well as the practice of sorcery to acquire and maintain power (Tonkinson, pers. comm.).

In Australia, there is a reasonably widespread view, especially among those who resist Aboriginal claims for recognition of, or restitution for, wrongs committed against indigenous people since initial contact, that you are either a 'traditional' Aborigine or you are not a real Aborigine at all. In this light, Tonkinson (1998) comments:

> There is a notable tendency among non-Indigenous Australians to limit Aboriginal 'tradition' to the past and to things 'cultural', and to declare it inauthentic if it includes components that clearly post-date the European invasion . . .

This results in Aborigines facing:

> the unending task of resisting attempts on the one hand to cut them off from their 'heritage', and on the other to bury them within it as 'a thing of the past'. (Beckett, 1988: 221)

However, Tonkinson (1998) responds that:

> Aboriginal religion . . . contains a variety of mechanisms for absorbing
> contemporary innovations and changes into the timeless and comforting
> verities of the Dreaming.

This view is reinforced also by the statement of Hezel (1992: 496) about Pacific
cultures that:

> sometimes astonishing transformations . . . have taken place as what was
> originally a foreign introduction has been configured to the shape and form
> of the island cultures that embraced it.

and Carucci (1993) describes a Christmas on Ujelang in Micronesia that has
become very different indeed from the Christmas of any of the missionaries who
introduced it.

What these quotations mean is that 'traditional' cultures can and do incorporate new elements, as had always been the case, of course, prior to colonial
contact. People in the Pacific – perhaps especially Melanesians – were early, and
enthusiastic, cultural and technological and cultural importers and experimenters (Tonkinson, 1994: 32; Huffman, 1996) and there are extensive discussions in
the literature of lexical borrowings in pre-contact times associated with introduced technologies and cultural practices (e.g. Lynch, 1994).

This openness to innovation was maintained with enthusiasm after colonial
contact. For instance, new horticultural species and varieties were constantly
being tried out as people travelled to new places, and people must have travelled
considerable distances – no doubt going to some trouble – carrying new plant
stock to experiment with back home, as evidenced, for example, by names in
Erromangan for recently introduced yam varieties such as *wailu* (from Houaïlou
in New Caledonia) and *amprim* (from Ambrym, an island in Vanuatu some
distance to the north), and names for taro varieties in the language of Aneityum
such as *intal-imari* (from Mare, in the Loyalty Islands) and *intal-pages* (from the
Banks Islands, in the extreme north of Vanuatu). New fruits such as mangoes and
papayas, as well as sweet potatoes, are so widespread in Vanuatu today that
many mistakenly think that they are indigenous to the country. Beyond Melanesia, the Māori in New Zealand became such proficient growers of introduced
potatoes that they established a lucrative trade to Australia in the first half of the
19th century (Sinclair, 1988: 35), and they even set up their own shipping fleet to
conduct this trade independently of European settlers.

Ideas, as well as things, were also transported from afar, such as *nelki viti*, a
thatching style on Erromango named after Viti, the Fijian name for Fiji. Even entire
social structures have been borrowed, such as the pre-colonial introduction of the
graded society to Ambrym (Tonkinson, 1994: 40). Far-reaching cultural innovations – including the post-contact introduction of Christianity and the cash economy – have taken place in such a way that Melanesians have succeeded 'in
retaining both their subsistence base and their cultural integrity, despite drastic
transformations in the content of that culture' (Tonkinson, 1994: 33).

While many new technologies and cultural practices were introduced in the
Pacific, these often involved considerable innovation in how they were incorporated into local cultures. Guitars and other Western musical instruments were
accepted into Pacific cultures from very early on, yet the vibrant, distinctive and

varied 'stringband' styles of music to be found throughout the region today unde-niably represent innovative (and constantly evolving) local styles, not European styles. In fact, the ukulele represents a Hawaiian adaptation of the guitar, which has since been borrowed back into European culture as a new instrument.

Cricket was introduced to the Trobriands in Papua New Guinea, where it became a very different game altogether. Originally introduced as a way of chan-nelling aggression into less violent pursuits, it became a substitute for traditional battles, and teams are now made up of entire villages, rather than the eleven-member teams of the clubs of English villages. We are not dealing with 'tradition' here in the traditional sense, though we are certainly dealing with what we could refer to as 'neo-traditions', or perhaps even better as 'proto-tradi-tions' (Tonkinson, pers. comm.).

It is not difficult to see the connection between these proto-traditions and liter-acy. Gerbault (1997) describes a variety of pedagogical approaches to the promo-tion of literacy, pointing out that the most successful literacy campaigns worldwide have been those that go beyond simply the mechanical aspects of teaching the values of the letters and how to read them, but which extend to make literacy relevant to the life-concerns of illiterate people, as formulated in Freire's (1972) famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> In [Freire's] view, the educator/teacher's efforts coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking: education is of a 'problem-posing' nature; it is the action and reflection of people upon their world in order to transform it. (Gerbault, 1997: 146)

Literacy must, then, become incorporated into people's cultures in order to be successful. This means implicitly that while literacy has been introduced from outside, successful literacy becomes indigenised. This kind of thinking also underlies the 'critical literacy' approach that is currently being propagated in Papua New Guinea by the locally staffed and run PNG Trust (Faraclas, 1996).

Besnier (1995: 114), in his very detailed ethnographic examination of the tran-sition from orality to literacy on the atoll of Nukulaelae in Tuvalu, argues convincingly that:

> [L]iteracy was not merely 'imposed' on Nukulaelae society in the late nine-teenth century from the outside as a foreign technology and sociocultural construct. Nukulaelae islanders were not the powerless recipients of a liter-acy ideology, the passive witnesses to the introduction of literate technolo-gies, as incipiently literate societies are often portrayed to be . . . Rather, they took an active role in empowering literacy . . . by constructing it and adapting it to their communicative repertoire, and providing it with a culturally specific meaning – a process which may have begun very early in their post-contact history.

I see no reason to suspect that Nukulaelae islanders are different in this respect in any significant way from any other non-literate societies in the Pacific that have undergone the transition from orality to literacy. Mühlhäusler (1998: 223), in response to criticisms from Siegel (1997), acknowledges the possibility that people may adapt literacy to their own cultural ends, though he 'remains

convinced' of his anti-literacy position, without offering any new evidence for his conviction.[10]

Cultural Prescriptivism

A wide range of views have been expressed over the past few centuries about how an outsider should view somebody else's culture. In the 1700s, the view of the 'noble savage' held that people in the Pacific were living idyllic lifestyles unfettered by the corrupting influences of cities, money (and presumably also literacy) (Schütz, 1994: 3–12). The development of ideas of biological evolutionism in Darwin's *Origin of the Species* fuelled pre-existing ideas around the theme of social evolutionism, whereby these noble savages were demoted from being our childlike superiors to the bottom of the evolutionary rung, with primitiveness no longer to be hankered after, but despised.

Whether idealising or demonising the 'savage', exponents of both of these points of view were guilty of what we might call 'cultural prescriptivism', as both traditions allow for the formulation of absolute statements about what we consider to be 'proper' behaviour, or beliefs, or use of technology, by members of a community other than our own. In the context of 20th-century cultural relativism, of course, we no longer call people 'savages', nor do we describe societies as 'primitive'. Modern anthropology is primarily concerned with examining how societies react to, and incorporate, new elements, rather than postulating diffusionist explanations of change in 'primitive' societies which were supposed to 'improve' through contact with more 'advanced' peoples (or become extinct, as was supposed to have happened with, for example, the Tasmanian Aborigines).[11]

The views of literacy that I have critiqued in this discussion are for the most part highly romanticist, if not primitivist, and are, in the modern context, arguably dangerously ill-informed. Discouraging vernacular literacy among speakers of Pacific languages because it is not 'traditional' seems, in principle, just as prescriptivist (and far-fetched) as discouraging the wearing of Western clothing by Pacific Islanders, encouraging the abandonment of Christianity in favour of traditional religions, or even making absolutist value judgements about the practice of 'cannibalism, of the worst sort' (Dixon, 1988: 7).

It seems likely that the arguments of Mühlhäusler and Charpentier on the issue of vernacular literacy will remain unheard by people in the know.[12] At the same time, we need to be cautious, as these kinds of views have the kind of simplistic appeal that might be seized upon by less well-informed outsiders,[13] and some of Mühlhäusler's views have been widely reported in the Australian press. So far, Pacific educators and literacy practitioners have been totally uninfluenced by these views, though I do have a concern that in the future, linguistically ill-informed neo-colonial expatriate advisers may convince Pacific governments to abandon vernacular literacy and education programmes for these sorts of reasons, in favour of policies promoting only metropolitan languages, which must surely be far more damaging to local vernaculars.

Mühlhäusler's recent writings have been dominated by his use of ecological metaphors, despite the fact that metaphors can at best only illustrate points that are difficult to understand, without actually constituting proof of the arguments

(Crowley, 1999: 90). Although it goes against my better judgement, I will now present an ecological metaphor myself. During the 19th century in New Zealand, a number of species were regrettably introduced from Britain, including rabbits, stoats and cats, all of which have had disastrous ecological effects in their originally predator-free new environment.[14] Rabbits proliferated and have devastated much of the dry country. Cats have gone feral and, along with stoats, have spread, preying on the defenceless flightless ground-nesting indigenous birds of the country, with many becoming extinct or endangered as a result.

One might think that the simplest solution might be just to get rid of all of these introduced species. Farmers, in particular, have agitated for some years for the introduction of a virus that would eradicate the rabbits, and such a virus was recently brought in illegally from Australia. While this virus successfully kills rabbits, in doing so it also reduces what has become a major food source for stoats and wild cats, forcing them in some areas to prey on the already severely threatened flightless birds, which have now suddenly become even more threatened.

The point here is that while we might decry the ecological changes of the 19th century, the traditional balance has now been irrevocably altered in New Zealand. Any attempt to return to the past is likely either to fail (how, for example, could every stoat, cat and rabbit be eliminated at the same time?) or to have unfortunate consequences elsewhere in this new ecology. We can no longer go back to a rabbit-less, stoat-less and cat-less ecology in New Zealand, any more than we can expect to persuade speakers of Pacific languages to revert to the exclusively oral cultures of the 18th century (and to abandon literacy in English at the same time).

Vernacular Literacy: Re-evaluating the Consequences

It is not easy to see the direct applicability of views of the consequences of vernacular literacy expressed by Goody and his followers for the Pacific region. Quite apart from the general problem of the apparent lack of an absolute distinction between oral and literate cultures, it seems clear that the predictions that they make about what happens following the introduction of literacy in terms of the development of critical scientific thinking are not borne out by observation of literate practice in this region.

Although I have argued that the negative impact of vernacular literacy in the Pacific that has been proposed by some has been overestimated, I would not want to argue that the results have necessarily been completely positive (or even neutral). Lynch (1979: 14) and Crowley (1989: 127–28), for example, argue that there have been some negative outcomes from the kind of mission-promoted literacy in the Pacific involving a limited range of printed materials around religious themes with a validity that may not be questioned. Such literacy has arguably had precisely the opposite outcome to that proposed by Goody (1987), Havelock (1982), Ong (1992) and Olson (1994), with modern Melanesian literates often being especially resistant to reading critically because for several generations now the written vernacular word has represented divinely inspired Truth.

However, Charpentier and Mühlhäusler make rather different sorts of predictions about the outcome of vernacular literacy in the Pacific, concentrating on the effect on the viability of Pacific vernaculars, rather than the supposed cognitive

consequences. The views of Charpentier on the ultimate impact of the introduction of vernacular literacy intersect with those of Mühlhäusler (1996: 212–40) when he states that 'It would seem that by being written these languages enter into a competition against the "big" languages with literary traditions' (Charpentier, 1997: 229). This, they claim, will result in the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity in the Pacific, leading ultimately to monolingualism in English (Charpentier, 1997: 231; Mühlhäusler, 1996: 269–310). Mühlhäusler provides his argument with rather more substance, claiming that vernacular literacy has inevitably led to transitional literacy in the metropolitan language, and after that ultimately to complete replacement by that language.

Something like this can be shown to have happened historically in some cases in the Pacific. Mühlhäusler (1996: 215–21) points out that *Māori* in New Zealand was initially incorporated into the education system as the sole language of literacy, though this changed to a transitional system, and eventually led to a completely monolingual system operating through the medium of English.[15] However, there is obviously no reason why events must inevitably unfold in the same way everywhere (Crowley, 1999: 91–92). It should be just as possible to design and implement literacy programmes where literacy in both a vernacular and a language of wider communication are intended to be complementary (Hornberger, 1997; 1998), and where vernacular literacy programmes reflect local rather than regional, national or international concerns (Faraclas, 1996).

In any case, Mühlhäusler does not mention the fact that the situation regarding *Māori* in New Zealand in the past and that of Melanesia today are radically different. In much of Melanesia to date, there has been little or no initial vernacular literacy, while substantial numbers of people have been introduced to literacy only in a metropolitan language. Surely the sudden imposition of literacy only in a metropolitan language – to the deliberate exclusion of vernaculars – must promote the growth of that seed of doubt in people's minds about the lack of value of their own languages, as suggested by Dixon (1980: 87–88). Any attempt to actively discourage vernacular literacy as some kind of possible counterbalance to English-only literacy must be regarded as destructive rather than supportive, despite the claims of Mühlhäusler and Charpentier.

Another point to which neither Mühlhäusler nor Charpentier have given sufficient acknowledgement is the fact that in most of Aboriginal Australia, thoroughgoing language attrition has taken place without any prior attempt to introduce vernacular literacy. Mühlhäusler's (1996: 230–33) attempt, for example, to generalise from his conclusions about the impact of vernacular literacy among the Diyari in South Australia is based on only a single atypical situation. If vernacular literacy is such a destructive force, why did Bandjalang, Uradhi or the Tasmanian languages – and scores of other languages in Australia – suffer such serious language attrition, where no attempts were ever made to instil vernacular literacy? This simple observation proves that a whole range of other interrelated factors – including depopulation, change in marriage patterns, resettlement in linguistically mixed groups, immigration, forced separation of children from parents, education and literacy taught exclusively through English, and even public ridicule – must have been far more important in bringing about language shift than simply teaching people to read and write in their own languages.[16] Any attempt to lay major blame on literacy as a causal factor in

language loss must first of all ensure that all other variables are factored out, and Mühlhäusler and Charpentier make no attempt to do this.

Lest I stand accused of being oblivious to any threat to the future viability of Pacific vernaculars, I would like to indicate that I have for a long time been pointing to inequalities in the linguistic ecologies of the region, and reporting on suggestions for action designed to overcome some of the threats that are presented to these languages (Crowley, 1984; Crowley, 1989: 122–26; Crowley, 1995: 41–42; Crowley & Lynch, 1985). Where I differ with scholars such as Mühlhäusler and Charpentier is in my perception of the precise nature of the threat – and especially of the role of vernacular literacy – and of the steps that might be taken to overcome this threat.

In Crowley (1999: 89–90), I indicated that I felt that Mühlhäusler (1996) has overstated his special insight in his recurring use of ecological metaphors in discussing the current linguistic situation in the Pacific. Indeed, one could even argue that his characterisation of the differences between his approach and that of other linguists has been exaggerated almost to the point of caricature. In the face of criticism in Siegel (1997) and Crowley (1999), Mühlhäusler (1998; 1999) has elevated his approach to the status of a separate paradigm, which he seems to feel provides him with immunity to criticism from any other 'paradigm'.

I agree entirely with Mühlhäusler (1999: 257) that the time lag between cause and effect can vary greatly, and that the effects of some changes to a linguistic ecology may take several generations – even more – to manifest themselves. Rehg (1998: 336–40) expresses views about the short-term future of Pohnpeian that are in large part consistent with my own evaluation of the current situation in most of the Pacific. His longer-term prognosis is less optimistic and less certain (Rehg, 1998: 340–42), and given that none of us can predict the future with certainty, I am also prepared to concede the possibility that linguistic diversity in the Pacific cannot be guaranteed indefinitely.

However, if there does turn out to be massive linguistic attrition in the Pacific in the future, I am convinced that vernacular literacy programmes will not be the major culprit. In fact, it may even be the lack of vernacular literacy which helps speed up the demise of some languages.

Vernacular Literacy and Language Planning into the Future

There is at the moment a very wide range of language planning activities relating to Pacific vernaculars which are carried out at the instigation of, and under the control of, speakers of these languages, and with varying degrees of support and encouragement of foreign linguists (whether in the academic or missionary traditions). These activities include the use of Pacific vernaculars as languages of formal instruction in schools at various levels, the development of new terminology to allow these languages to express concepts in the modern world without resorting automatically to vocabulary from other languages, the development of new writing systems and the promotion of adult literacy at the community level, the compilation of monolingual dictionaries, the recording of oral tradition in written form, the encouragement of creative writing in Pacific vernaculars, and translation into these languages. Pacific Islanders who are involved in these kinds of activities should not be accused of acting to encourage the loss of their

own languages through the promotion of vernacular literacy, nor should they be discouraged from making use of the expertise of professional linguists in promoting these kinds of activities.

While the promotion of vernacular literacy can, by itself, obviously not brace a language against all possible future threats from a metropolitan language, there are other perfectly legitimate reasons for encouraging literacy in Pacific vernaculars. This enables speakers of these languages to be provided with information in their own languages about their own histories, cultures and traditions, as well as information that will enable them to make informed choices about their future place in the world, effectively empowering their speakers.

Finally, being taught initial literacy in one's own language rather than in a language that is foreign for a child has potential educational benefits down the line. This is one of the primary motivations behind the current push for the official adoption of a policy in Vanuatu of fostering initial vernacular literacy, the argument being that children who are taught initially in their own language will understand content more effectively. Not only this, it is felt that they will continue to develop a knowledge of their own language in the cognitively highly important early years, rather than being forced to switch to a foreign language before their linguistic competence in their first language is fully developed.

Makers of language policy in the Pacific should therefore be further encouraged to promote vernacular literacy, as long as programmes can be structured in such a way that they promote local rather than exclusively national or international interests, as well as fitting in with, rather than disrupting, local power relationships. Those who seek to oppose efforts to promote vernacular literacy appear to be uninformed about the extent to which literacy can be – and in many cases already has been – incorporated into indigenous cultures, while at the same time oversimplifying the ways in which languages are used into a simple two-way dichotomy between orality and literacy.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. In fact, schooling itself should not necessarily be seen as the same kind of process in all societies, particularly in the context of the mission-based schooling of much of the Pacific until relatively recently (Besnier, 1995: 56–61).
2. Since initial colonial intrusion in Australia in 1788, two-thirds of the estimated original 250 languages have either disappeared completely, or they are in the final stages of language shift (Schmidt, 1990: 1).

3. Gerbault (1997: 143) – and others before her – prefer the term 'non-literate', which I recognise as being less value-laden than 'pre-literate', which implies an inevitable transition to literacy.
4. Formerly officially known as Western Samoa.
5. This particularly high figure for Solomon Islands seems impressionistically to people familiar with Melanesia to be far too high, particularly in relation to Papua New Guinea's much lower illiteracy rate.
6. Charpentier (1997: 227) also states that: 'Resistance to writing in the vernaculars has been manifest to this day in the face of scholars wanting to transcribe the oral tradition . . . Such an approach was long felt to be a reprehensible interference, forced acculturation.' I find myself puzzled by this claim given my own directly opposite experiences, where I have felt considerable pressure to produce written texts of oral tradition.
7. See Facey (1988: 19–33) for a discussion of similar issues in the production of written texts out of taped speech on Nguna in Central Vanuatu.
8. However, his reference to Crowley (1990), rather than either Crowley (1980) or Crowley and Mael (1984), is somewhat curious, given that Crowley (1990) deals exclusively with the history and development of Bislama.
9. Latin, of course, gradually became French (as well as Italian, Spanish, and all of the other modern Romance languages).
10. In fact, Mühlhäusler 'remains convinced', 'remains confident' or 'sticks to his comments' (Mühlhäusler, 1998: 219, 220, 223) in response to a number of Siegel's (1997) major criticisms, though in not a single case does he directly answer the substance of the criticisms levelled at him.
11. The 5000 or so people who identify as Tasmanian Aborigines like to point out that they are most definitely not extinct.
12. Despite more than a decade of Mühlhäusler's writing on these issues, there has been either a fairly resounding silence regarding his point of view from fellow Pacific specialists, or published comment ranging from the critical to the damning (Lynch, 1996; Siegel, 1997; Rehg, 1998; Crowley, 1999; Kulick, 1999). In Mühlhäusler's (1998; 1999) rejoinders to critical reviews, he has not been able to produce a single citation in the way of support from any Pacific language specialist.
13. Roberge (1999) is more open to Mühlhäusler's views, though his own lack of familiarity with the Pacific has not enabled him to critically assess the content of Mühlhäusler's arguments.
14. The lack of predators was, in fact, why many of New Zealand's indigenous bird species did not maintain the ability to fly.
15. In any case, while Māori became the sole language of education, as well as being severely eroded within Māori society, the language did not disappear completely, and it now has a significant place once again within the education system of New Zealand, with significant numbers of students taking their entire primary and secondary schooling through the medium of Māori, and some now even taking complete university degrees in the language.
16. Clammer (1976: 71–100) also sets out oversimplistically to ascribe a large number of social changes to the introduction of literacy in Fiji, without considering the possibility that the acceptance of literacy was just one aspect of a complex set of outcomes arising out of the situation at the time, rather than itself being a single cause.

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Literacy in a Dying Language: The Case of Kuot, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

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Kuot is a language in a critical situation. Most adults of lower middle age and older are full speakers but children are not learning it. In other words, it will become extinct in a few decades if nothing is done; but it is not too late if the community decides to turn it around, and do so fast. Thus far, the community has shown little interest. Into this situation, vernacular elementary education was introduced. While the community expects this to work for language survival, the aim of the education policy is the eventual transfer of literacy skills to English. This paper describes the tensions between these conflicting goals, and the various components that make up the specific situation of Kuot, including vernacular literacy, orthographic considerations arising from the language's precarious situation, and the eventual extension of the internet era to Melanesia.

Keywords: vernacular literacy, orthography, education, Papua New Guinea, Papuan languages, language death

Vernacular Education in Papua New Guinea

> Papua New Guinea is the only country in the world to recognise over 800 languages as official languages of the education system. (Peter M. Baki, Secretary for Education, in PNG Department of Education, 2003a: iv)

> Students learn best when they use their own language in ways that are meaningful, practical and relevant to them. This means that students in Elementary will learn first in their own languages, languages they already speak. (PNG Department of Education, 2003b: 13)

Since 1993, Papua New Guinea (PNG) has gradually implemented an ambitious education reform in which respect for the diverse cultural values of PNG is stressed. Teaching in all subjects, especially in the first years of schooling, is to start from the children's pre-existing knowledge and skills in very practical ways, and to centre on community activities and values, whenever possible. Oral styles and genres are given as much space as written ones, and the relevance of education for village life as well as the labour market is considered. The policy therefore clearly reflects a local literacy focus as well as a national literacy focus (cf. Liddicoat, 2004). Prior to the implementation of the reform, English was the medium of instruction at all levels (probably together with Tok Pisin, although its use was officially discouraged) from the time of independence in 1975. The school system was modelled on the Australian one and did not have very much relevance for a newly independent nation largely made up of smallholders who are only peripherally involved in the monetary economy. Since independence, however, support for an education system based on local conditions and carried out in vernacular languages has grown, and today children are taught in their first languages for three years (Elementary Prep, 1 and

2), and are gradually introduced to English from the second half of the third year (Elementary 2), until English is the only language of instruction from Grade 6.[1]

The fundamental idea behind the reform is that children be taught in their first language until they have basic literacy and numeracy. The elevation of the vernaculars to languages of instruction is welcome. English is considered a difficult language for many people in the Pacific, as it has a very different structure in both its lexicon and its grammar from local languages. It also has a relatively opaque relation between sounds and letters, making it suboptimal for the purposes of introducing the principles of reading and writing. It is, therefore, more logical for learners to be taught English before it is used as a medium of teaching. Although the new curriculum is grounded in community life, the purpose of vernacular literacy is transitional, providing a more efficient route towards the ultimate goal of literacy in English. There appear to be no efforts being undertaken to encourage vernacular literatures or other activities that might help to make the rationale of *vernacular* literacy clearer. If the goal had been sustainable vernacular literacy, considerable additional requirements would have to be met. Carrington (1997), for example, notes that '[a]mong the principal considerations would be the absolute necessity for a community to perceive literacy in its vernacular as valuable' (p. 85), and according to Crowley (2000, 379), '[l]iteracy must, then, become incorporated *into* people's cultures in order to be successful. This means implicitly that while literacy has been introduced from outside, successful literacy becomes indigenised'.

PNG with a population of only 5 million people has over 800 languages and 435 of these are already in classroom use (Josephs, 1999; Litteral, 2004). Making so many languages mediums of instruction is a daunting prospect. Most of the languages have no traditions of writing, which means that there are no written genres to use in education, and few natural occasions for using reading and writing skills in the vernaculars. It also means that for many of the languages the first obstacle is developing orthographies and coining vernacular expressions for the novel concepts needed even in elementary education and the production of school materials such as readers in all these languages (Liddicoat, 2005). These issues will be discussed in more detail below. Even when all the necessary corpus planning has been achieved, it is not easy to find and educate teachers for languages whose speakers number only in the hundreds (and often several teachers per language are needed as villages may be dispersed across large areas).

The Language Situation in the Kuot-speaking Region

Kuot

Kuot is a non-Austronesian isolate language with about 1500 speakers, spoken in New Ireland Province (Lindström, 2002, in preparation)[2]. Kuot speakers reside in around 10 villages along both coasts of New Ireland (see Figure 1), living by a combination of swidden agriculture, fishing, hunting, and cash cropping (mainly copra, cocoa and vanilla). All of the languages in the province, with the exception of Kuot, belong to the Oceanic branch of the large Austronesian
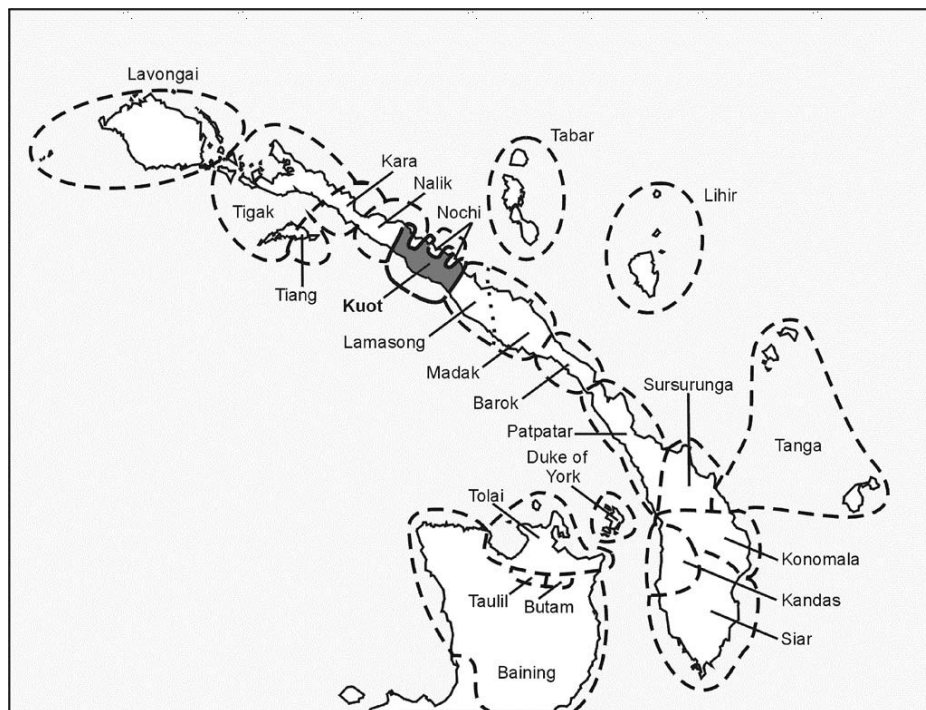
Figure 1 New Ireland language map (with part of New Britain). The shaded area shows the location of Kuot

language family, and Kuot is generally considered enormously difficult by its neighbours, because it has very different and quite complex morphological structures and is richer in lexical distinctions in some areas. For this reason, Kuot is something of a 'secret language'; in fact the possibility of speaking about some-body who is present often motivates even those who normally never use the language to do so.

All speakers of Kuot are fluent in Tok Pisin and often understand, and some-times speak, one or more neighbouring languages. Their neighbours, by contrast, sometimes only understand Kuot and rarely speak beyond a few phrases ('good morning, give me a betel nut'). Church services are conducted in Tok Pisin (partly because the pastors are often non-Kuots), although a hymn book with translated United Church hymns is sometimes used. The Monday morning village meetings – a weekly event in all PNG villages – also take place in Tok Pisin.

Dialectal variation in Kuot is small. For historic reasons, villages on opposite sides of the islands speak similarly, with dialectal differences occurring as one moves along the coast. There are no sharp dialect boundaries; rather, sets of features are anchored at either end of the area and extend variously through the territory. The differences are mainly lexical, with a few constructions and small phonological and morphological items having a similar distribution. Mutual intelligibility is not a problem.

Most damning for the future of Kuot is the fact that the children's play language is Tok Pisin. Adults of about 35 years of age and older are fluent in Kuot, and played in Kuot when they were children; people of intermediate ages have varying competence depending on their particular personal history. Tok Pisin is used with children even in families where both parents are full Kuot speakers, and it has become the first (and only) language of the majority of Kuot children, starting with the generation now aged approximately 18. Children are often passive bilinguals and understand Kuot reasonably well but for the most part are not able to speak it.

Tok Pisin and the decline of vernaculars

Many languages of PNG, like Kuot, are threatened today. Communities are small and mobility has increased steadily ever since the first 'blackbirders' arrived in the 19th century to find contract labour for faraway plantations. The workers brought back an English-lexified pidgin known in PNG as Tok Pisin, which they had used to communicate with foremen and workers from other places. The knowledge and use of Tok Pisin spread and it became a general lingua franca in large parts of PNG. Within PNG too, plantation workers were shipped between regions, and some would stay on after the end of their contracts, often marrying locally. They might learn the language of their new home community, but often the means of communication would remain Tok Pisin. Despite the increased mobility, however, many people still spend most of their lives within a few kilometres of where they grew up, some never leaving their province.

Today, Tok Pisin has come to be used in many situations in village life, often because there is someone present from outside, whether the next-door language or a different province. The widespread knowledge of Tok Pisin in many areas of PNG means that there is no longer a need for multilingualism in order to speak with members of neighbouring linguistic communities. More-over, the intake areas of schools frequently include more than one language area, and very often the children will communicate with each other in Tok Pisin. In urban areas, children of mixed marriages have been growing up with Tok Pisin as their only language for a few decades now and Tok Pisin has become a creole, developing to cover the whole range of meanings and func-tions of a fully fledged language. Today, Tok Pisin is also becoming the first language of children in many rural communities, gaining on the vernaculars even in the home.

Kuot, Tok Pisin, and speaker attitudes

In the main, Kuot speakers do not seem to be emotionally attached to the Kuot language. If you casually remark that 'I reckon this language is about to die', most people will just reply 'it looks that way, doesn't it'. Some express a little sadness about this fact, but there is no great concern. In New Ireland generally, language seems to have little identificational import. Languages, and the groups of people defined by them, did not even have names until the 1950s when the Australian administration introduced language and group names. Group identi-fication was (and is?) associated mainly with the units of village and clan (where a clan often has members in more than one linguistic unit, although it will be

associated with a particular location, which will be part of a single language area).

It is possible that attitudes to Kuot are influenced by an implicit association of the language with pre-Christian times and practices. Many people take a very negative view of the recent heathen past and it is quite possible that their indifference to the future of their language stems from an association of the language with the lives of their ancestors. Christian missionaries became active in New Ireland in the 1870s and today the dominant religion is Christianity. Many traditional ceremonies are no longer performed, which means that oratory skills have no arena of use and that songs particular to those occasions are also being lost. The fact that Kuot villages no longer have men's houses has removed an important context for story telling.

For Kuot speakers, Tok Pisin does not seem to be associated with the sorts of language attitudes found elsewhere in PNG, in particular attitudes associated with progress, modernity, the independent state of PNG, and other similar positive values. Kulick (1992), who did find such associations in the village of Gapun in another part of PNG, notes that '[a]lways, the shift away from the vernacular language begins generations before the first monolingual speaker of the new language is produced by the community' (p. 248). It may, therefore, be that Tok Pisin did carry urbane connotations for Kuot speakers at an earlier time. However, it must be noted that the people who would have held such views did speak Kuot to their children, and that it is the present generation, for whom no such connotations have been established, who are giving it up.[3]

A further factor in the decline of Kuot is the poor understanding of the mechanisms of language transmission among Kuot speakers, which they appear to share with most of humanity. The need for active contexts of use and the fact that children must grow up speaking a language for it to survive are not widely recognised. In the words of Fishman:

> Ultimately, nothing is as crucial for basic RLS [Reversing Language Shift] success as intergenerational mother-tongue transmission. *Gemeinschaft* (the intimate community whose members are related to one another via bonds of kinship, affection and communality of interest and purpose) is the real secret weapon of RLS. (Fishman, 2001: 458–9).

Rather than seeing language maintenance as active language use, the community's understanding of the situation is reflected in utterances such as 'ah but now you are writing our language down in that book [so it will be preserved]' (speaking of my linguistic reference grammar) and 'ah but now the kids are being taught it in school'.[4]

There are some exceptions to such attitudes. In Okoiok, a small settlement of around six families near Bimun, a man of lower middle age has decided that the language must live and that children must speak it. The means of achieving this goal is to chase the children with a cane if they speak Tok Pisin. This may not give them the best connotations for Kuot, but is successful insofar that there are small children in the village who do not know Tok Pisin. As soon as they are five or six years of age, however, these children go to Bimun to play, and Tok Pisin takes over. Children a little older in that settlement do speak Kuot but with massive proportions of Tok Pisin loans. This in itself

would not necessarily be problematic, for as long as the children have the morphological structure of the language, they could always replace lexical items if they wished for a 'purer' language. However, the structure of the Tok Pisin lexicon is much less fine-grained than that of Kuot, and these children appear not to be learning many of the lexical distinctions of their language. For example, Kuot has more than 15 verb stems corresponding to 'break' and related meanings in English, depending on what is broken and how, and these are all subsumed under a single word *bruk/brukim* in Tok Pisin. Moreover, all loan verbs go into a single class, and the large-scale replacement of indigenous verb stems with Tok Pisin stems means that the morphological patterns of smaller classes appear to be inadequately learnt. This all means that it would not be a matter of simply swapping Tok Pisin stems for Kuot stems, but a matter of acquiring numerous lexical distinctions as well as morphological patterns.

Kuot's Oceanic neighbours seem to be less threatened, in spite of the fact that they are virtually identically configured in terms of size, history, culture and livelihood. On the north-east coast, the smallest language of this area, Nochi, is spoken in two villages. These villages are close to Kuot villages, and the Kuot children there speak Nochi and Tok Pisin, not Kuot. the nature and substance of the fine line separating life and death for these languages remains elusive. The only obvious difference is the fact that the Oceanic languages belong to a single language family, which makes it relatively easy to learn one if you know another. Kuot, by contrast is quite different, with obligatory marking of gender, irregular but obligatory marking of plural on nouns, different inflection patterns for different classes of verbs and adjectives, agreement marking of objects on transtive verbs, and various other features that are typically not present in the neighbouring languages. In the absence of any generally recognised criteria, I hesitate to suggest that Kuot is objectively more difficult for an adult to learn. But it is at least conceivable that Kuot speakers have been used to adapting to neighbours' languages for centuries, just a little bit more than vice versa, so that the tendency for a Kuot speaker to default to Kuot is that bit weaker than for a speaker of Nochi, Madak or Nalik to default to their languages, and that this weaker tendency is enough to tip the tables.

As regards Tok Pisin vis à vis English, quite a number of young and middle-aged Kuot people are quite confident in English, but it is my impression that for most, speaking English is like wearing a special coat – you put it on, as it were. English is the language of school, and the language for speaking with occasional whites. Speaking Tok Pisin, on the other hand, involves no alternations whatsoever to the normal self. Tok Pisin is the language of equals.

Literacy levels

The adult (that is aged 15 and over) literacy rate in PNG was 64.6% in 2002, according to the Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 2004a). The literacy rate is defined as follows: 'The percentage of people [. . .] who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement related to their everyday life'. (United Nations Development Programme, 2004b). In the census figures for 2000, the literacy rate of 56.2% is available broken down by language, showing that literacy in Tok Pisin leads at

45.2%, followed closely by vernacular languages (41.7%) and English (40.4%) (National Statistical Office of Papua New Guinea, 2003).

The national literacy figures are low, but it is my impression that actual New Ireland figures may be much higher. Even the generation who hardly attended school because of the war have basic reading and writing skills: the old men and at least some of the old women will read from the Bible in church, and some have worked on the Bible translation committee led by the SIL team Kyung-Ja and Chul-Hwa Chung. Assuming that every member of the post-war generations is literate is probably exaggerated given that daily life in the village does not often involve the display of reading and writing skills, but illiteracy does not appear to have been an issue in appointing office-keepers in church or tally keepers at games at big holidays, and so forth. The exercise books with notes from Bible study classes that people sometimes take to church attest to quite fluent writing at least among people aged around 45 and below.

Contexts of literacy

The relatively high level of literacy in the Kuot community does not mean that it is a literate culture. On the whole, written information is distrusted and people find it easier to relate to spoken information, because they know some-thing of the speaker. The only printed material in most homes is portions of the Bible (in English, Tok Pisin or, of late, the New Testament in Kuot), perhaps some election campaign posters (mostly in Tok Pisin), and the family members' health books (in English); there may be some school books (typically in English) and a torn copy of the Air Niugini in-flight magazine (also in English). There is little care taken to preserve books or other written materials, or to keep records. There are few uses for writing in a PNG village setting. The storekeeper might post a sign saying 'No credit whatsoever!' (in Tok Pisin) and people occasionally make shopping lists when going to town. If you want to send someone a message you tell someone going that way to tell them; as there is no mail delivery in rural areas, you would have to send someone anyway. There are also few occasions for reading in the way Westerners read: alone with a book. Solitude is not culturally encouraged – for the most part only mad people and sorcerers would seek it. And at least in the Kuot area (coastal and hot), life is lived outdoors, near the house or in the open-walled cooking house, in the constant company of anyone else who is about. It would take quite a lot of determination to find the social and physical space to read.

The church is the most important context for adult literacy, while for children school is the most salient context. Since the establishment of vernacular elemen-tary education, children in or near villages that have elementary schools attend them. After second grade they go to community primary school, which has a larger intake area; in the case of Bimun, the nearest school is in the next language area. For those who continue past Grade 8, there are presently five high schools in New Ireland, offering Grades 9–10, and one offering Grades 11–12. Grade 10 or 12 leavers sometimes find employment in office work or can go on to higher education at the national level.

Although Tok Pisin is discouraged at all levels of education, locally, [5] it is a natural means of communication between children of different languages (and these days also among children of the Kuot community). Somehow, some writ-

ing conventions for Tok Pisin have developed, such as writing words of reduplicated form (e.g. *kaikai* 'food', *liklik* 'little') in 'squared simplex form' (*kai*^{2}, *lik*^{2}). I suspect this has evolved primarily in letter-writing between school friends in high school when separated in holidays or after leaving school.

The only printed materials in Kuot are the New Testament (Chung & Chung, 2001) with parallel Kuot and Tok Pisin text, two earlier Gospils, and a hymn book (Kuot Hymnbook Committee, 1994) with hymns translated from Kuanua (the language of the Tolai in New Britain, formerly a mission language of the Methodist church), all produced by the SIL team Chul-Hwa and Kyung-Ja Chung and translation teams led by them. They also produced some literacy materials for the informal vernacular pre-school that preceded the education reform. It does not appear that any materials written in Kuot were initiated entirely locally, although some may exist; there are some letters, and some stories written down by elders for the use in the vernacular elementary school.

An entirely new context for interacting through text may appear if UNESCO's vision of 'Information and Communication Technologies for every Pacific Islander' (UNESCO, 2002a, 2002b) is realised. This still seems some way into the future for a place like Bimun village, given that the nearest steady power supply and telephone line are more than 100 kilometres away in the provincial capital of Kavieng.[6] If and when the internet does become generally accessible, it is clear that literacy has to involve more than encoding and decoding language as text. With the masses of information on the internet, users need the skills to locate information and to evaluate its accuracy and relevance. To participate actively in the world as mediated by the internet, they further need to know how to communicate via e-mail, and preferably also how to create web sites to express themselves, their business ventures for instance in the lines of tourism or agricultural produce, cultural activities or any other of the many topics to which the internet is suited. With computers in mind, it becomes apparent that literacy is a complex phenomenon. Liddicoat (2004), speaking of a regional literacy strategy in Queensland, Australia, expresses this more advanced notion of a literate person eloquently:

> . . . the strategy constructs the literate subject as a person who is a sophisticated user of texts who engages with literate practice as a decoder of text, as a maker of meanings, as a purposeful user of information and as a text analyst bringing critical thinking skills to literate work. (Liddicoat, 2004: 9)

While there is a big technological threshold to be overcome to access a computer-based medium, requiring what is sometimes known as computer literacy or technological literacy,[7] the internet provides a platform for vernacular language use. When it comes to using an unfamiliar written form of a vernacular language, personal communication by e-mail is particularly suitable, as it is an informal and unsupervised form of communication and expression.

Language Planning and Vernacular Education in Kuot

Kuot in schooling

Most Kuot children speak Tok Pisin as their first language, rather than Kuot and the *National Curriculum Statement* is quite explicit about the possibility of using Tok Pisin as the language of elementary education:

> This language [the students' own language] may be one of the 800 plus vernacular languages or a lingua franca (Motu, Tok Pisin, English). They will use the language they most commonly use to speak to communicate ideas to others, to learn to read and to listen to other people's ideas in all areas of the curriculum. (Department of Education, PNG, 2003b: 17)

Several schools in other parts of the country have decided on Tok Pisin as the language of instruction (Siegal, 1992). Yet communities in the Kuot-speaking area have chosen Kuot to be the language of instruction in the elementary schools. This is not entirely surprising, because the policies regarding language in education are expressed in such a way that there is a clear expectation that the norm will be for the vernaculars to be used. The stage preceding the present education reform was known locally as *tok ples priskul* in Tok Pisin, i.e. vernacular preschool. These preschools were established through the 1980s in various areas by provincial governments, in cooperation with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (Litteral, 2004). The term *tok ples* from (English 'talk' and 'place, village') can mean 'language' generally but is most often interpreted as 'vernacular language' and the term *tok ples skul* is still used in the context of first language programmes. It appears that the local people interpret *tok ples skul* as a school where the vernacular is used, and that language maintenance is part of the purpose of such schools. This means that the community's conception of the purpose of education in the vernacular is that it is a means of language maintenance. The purpose inherent in the policy, however, is as a means of achieving literacy as such, via L1, with the ultimate goal of literacy in English. These conflicting expectations represent a challenge for the success of the programme, perhaps especially in terms of the success of literacy development.

The result of using Kuot as a language of instruction is that children are still taught in a language they do not speak, but now it is Kuot rather than English. Since many of them are passive bilinguals in Kuot and hear it often, and since the semantic organisation of the Kuot lexicon ties in with their everyday life (and has many overlaps with Tok Pisin), it is probably less problematic for learning that the use of English. However, although vernacular education may have some marginal effect on language survival, it is evident that Tok Pisin would be the obvious choice from the point of view of content learning. Tok Pisin is the L1 of these children, and, in the words of the policy makers, is 'the language they most commonly use to speak to communicate ideas to other', which lets them 'use their own language in ways that are meaningful, practical and relevant to them'. The government aims for the policy could, therefore, be fulfilled if Tok Pisin were used, but it would be contrary to community expectations for the programme.

The community decides on the language of instruction, selects a teacher and supports him or her through training. They select a plot for the vernacular school building and they build and maintain it. The school house if often built from bush materials and located in the village or near the church (if the church is separate from the village), although children from several villages may attend. The community further contributes to the school by writing texts and coming into school to tell the children stories, talking of traditional practices, or showing skills such as carving mini canoes and weaving baskets.

The Kuot area faces a number of implementation problems, which also affect the nature of the programmes being offered. There are only two elementary schools operating on the west coast and one on the east coast, for the 10 or so villages in the Kuot-speaking area, which covers more than 30 kilometres of coastline, and not all children can attend for practical reasons. The teacher in the east coast school is not a fluent Kuot speaker and does most of his teaching in Tok Pisin limiting the impact of Kuot and the potential for language maintenance. On the west coast, the situation is slightly better. The teacher in Bimun Elementary School – Delvin Molongas – is very positive about the effects of vernacular education, and says it 'opens the children's minds' and that children who have come through elementary school invariably perform well when they go to primary school. According to Delvin, non-speaker children start speaking within weeks of joint the classes.

In the middle of 2004, Delvin had 21 children in her school: six in Prep, six in Elementary 1, and seven in Elementary 2. There is only one small classroom, and the different grade groups sit separately on the sand-covered floor and are given separate tasks to perform during the day from 8.00 am to midday. All the children participate together in some tasks. The use of Tok Pisin is banned, Kuot being enforced even during breaks. Activities seem to follow the official curriculum and its intentions quite well, with emphasis on oral skills in addition to reading and writing, and methods based on local conditions and practices as far as practicable. Some examples of activities are:

- talking in small groups on a set topic, with a spokesperson to report the discussion to the class;
- telling and/or acting out stories prompted by pictures drawn from a deck of picture cards;
- drawing own stories, with writing depending on the grade level;
- beginning maths by counting leaves, stones, etc;
- drama;
- singing songs (often translated from English);
- playing games (chasing/catching games, games of throwing stones into tins, etc.).

The materials used – whether printed or stencilled – have a range of different origins. Much material was provided by AusAID, the Australian government's overseas aid programme, and these materials are typically provided in Tok Pisin and/or English and translated into the vernaculars by the teachers during their training. Among AusAID materials in Bimun Elementary school are six big books, with illustrated stories, and maths books. There are also literacy materials for an earlier vernacular school project by the Chungs, with illustrations by local people, as well as stories provided by community members. There is also a cassette tape with stories of different types and lengths, which I collected during field work.

On the whole, these activities accord well with the intentions and objectives expressed in *Elementary Syllabus*, under the heading 'Teaching and Learning':

> Elementary education is based on the children's own languages and cultures. The classes should have an integrated curriculum which is organ-

ised under the following subjects – Language, Cultural Mathematics and Culture and Community. […]

Teachers should be encouraged to develop activities using a range of teaching methods, materials and other support resources that are relevant and appropriate to students' cultural and language needs. Students should work as individuals and in groups.

Some students learn best through such activities as reading on their own, working in small groups, talking with peers, observing, drawing pictures, writing stories with others and finding information for themselves. Most students use a combination of these. (Department of Education, PNG, 2003a: 6)

Effects of Kuot in school

In the few years since the introduction of elementary education in Kuot, the ability of children who attend it to express themselves in Kuot has increased – although it began from a very low base and remains limited. These children begin school at age five or six, and by then have missed out on several formative years in terms of language acquisition. After a few years of speaking it for a few hours a day in the elementary school programme, they still have very low proficiency in all areas of language (vocabulary, morphology, grammar, range of constructions). For example, in 1998, the Kuot competence of the children of my host family consisted of a few set phrases and about 10 or 15 nouns.[8] They would play a game, asking each other how to say 'dog', 'chicken', etc. in Kuot. When asked what the word for many dogs or many chickens would be, they had no idea. In 2004, they occasionally still played a game with the language, consisting in speaking it to each other – at one point a 14-year-old and his cousin decided to speak only Kuot for two days, and his younger siblings (aged about 9 and 10) joined in for some of the time. They were able to produce very limited sentences and these were full of mistakes, primarily in terms of inflectional categories, and number and gender agreement, but also in the choice of words and actual forms of stems. The response of adults to the faulty language produced by the children is not particularly supportive ('you nitwit, that's not how it's said, you don't know how to speak this language'). As an illustration to the ongoing decline of the language, the youngest child in the family, aged five and not yet in Prep, does not even have passive competence; she could not understand her older siblings and would not participate in the language game.

It would appear that learning to read and write through the medium of Kuot is not going to make a difference to the long-term survival of the language. Kuot is not a language that the children feel at ease speaking, and it would take much more to achieve fluency. The school's impact might be greater if the community followed up by using Kuot with the children outside school, but since that is not the case, speaking Kuot remains a game-like activity which children engage in at particular times when instructed to do so or when the fancy takes them. Thus, language maintenance expectations of the community are not really being fulfilled – largely because of the low level of active maintenance support from community members themselves outside school. For Kuot children, school is the only domain for using Kuot at all, and only for the three years from Prep to Elementary 2 and there remain few authentic reasons to use either written or

spoken Kuot outside the classroom. It has often been noted that a language will not survive if it is only used in school, e.g. by Fishman:

> . . . *languages are not their own rewards*. If they remain functionally locked away in the schools, they may be learned (youngsters have an amazing ability and capacity to learn 'useless' matters which they never need again, once their schooling is over), but they will not accomplish the wonderful goals of communication with neighbours far and near [. . .] – and much, much less will they accomplish RLS [Reversing Language Shift] – unless they are linked to 'real life'. . . . (Fishman, 2001: 471)

A school programme cannot, therefore, be the sole vehicle for language maintenance and is of limited use in a context of language death unless supported by language use in other domains. While the community's maintenance goals are not being met by the programme, neither are the literacy goals of the education policy, as literacy is developed in a language in which the children are at best passive bilinguals (or extremely basic-level active bilinguals), and the children do not develop very good levels of proficiency in either oral or literate forms of Kuot.

Corpus planning for Kuot

In developing a vernacular language programme in a non-literate culture, there is a substantial amount of preparatory work which is needed and there are many considerations to be taken into account when developing a written form of a language, and putting it to use in new areas. Liddicoat (2005) discusses the many aspects of corpus planning, i.e. the actions of language planners to fix a standard for the written form of a language, in the process of extending the uses of a language into new domains. Corpus planning is divided into two processes: codification, developing a standard form of the language, including a system for writing the language ('graphisation'), a standardised grammatical ('grammatication'), and a standardised vocabulary and terminology ('lexication'); and elaboration, the development of linguistic resources for communicating new topic areas and genres, such as school subjects, official documents or literary genres.

It is useful to split up the creation of a written language into its component parts, each to be considered carefully for the potential consequences of every decision that goes into each part. There are many reports of negative unintended consequences, perhaps particularly in unwittingly creating a status variety (the standard) and thereby also less prestigious varieties (those not selected for the standard language) (e.g. Liddicoat, 2000). In other cases, an unwieldy orthography, or one based on a flawed analysis of the language, has meant low acceptance from speakers (Rehg, 2004). In addition, standardisation is not seen as top priority by all. Charpentier (1997: 233) argues that concepts of standardisation may not be culturally relevant: ' . . . perhaps norms are in fact less important than we Westerners, conditioned by our very standardised written languages, might assume. After all, our own standardisation is only a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; [. . .] for the vernaculars each scribe and each publishing house had their own conventions in Europe until printing had been established for at least two centuries.' (p. 233) He notes that the Vanuatu pidgin

speakers of whom he writes are very tolerant of orthographic variation, creatively spelling novel terms as they have perceived them over the radio. The audience appeared not to be at all disturbed by the variation caused by the influence of French or English schooling, respectively, on the writing. Rehg (2004), as the result of long experience of literacy efforts in healthy languages of Micronesia, with a particular focus on Pohnpeian, argues that language standards need to evolve over time. He gives the following continuum of evolution:

(1) Illiteracy → (2) Preliteracy → (3) *Laissez-faire* Literacy → (4) Standard Language

Explaining the stages, he writes:

> Stage (2) occurs when a preliminary writing system exists for the language, but is controlled by relatively few speakers and is used for limited purposes, such as signing one's name. Stage (3) arises when many speakers know how to write the language, and they employ writing for a variety of functions, but no widespread agreement exists concerning how words are to be spelled or perhaps even what letters are to be employed. Stage (4) typically emerges when there is widespread literacy, and, perhaps most important, when there is a substantial amount of material being published in the language. Thus, in planning for the development of a standard language, it might be preferable to establish incremental goals, rather than to try to impose a comprehensive set of standards in one fell swoop. (Rehg, 2004: 510)

In terms of writing activity, Kuot is between Rehg's stage (2) and stage (3), however; the Kuot people do not write much (in any language) and so making judgements about the forms of Kuot they use is difficult. On the other hand, Kuot is now a language of instruction in schools, which would imply a higher level of standardisation, such as (4). The introduction of the vernacular education policy therefore appears to bypass stages of 'organic' development of language standards in societies, such as the Kuot community, where literary practices are not an integrated part of daily life.

The obvious difference between Kuot and the languages considered by Rehg is that Kuot is a dying language and in this context, Rehg's argument about standardisation would appear even more to the point:

> . . . promoting mastery of the standard spelling system for these languages should be de-emphasised in favour of encouraging people to produce written materials that serve the needs and aspirations of the community. (Rehg, 2004: 511)

In practical terms, for Kuot, this would mean that there should be a usable orthography that people approve of and accept; i.e. one part of Liddicoat's (2005) graphisation, need and decisions also need to be made for where to make word boundaries and how to treat phonological processes that occur across such boundaries, for the production of school texts. However, this orthography need not be strictly enforced in student texts or in the writing of speakers. If an authentic context for literate practice arises, it would be counterproductive if someone

who was inspired to write in Kuot was deterred because school children or others said they cannot do it properly. Since most children leaving Grade 2 to go on to Primary school have rather limited proficiency in spoken Kuot, they are not likely to suffer from not being able to write it according to a well-defined set of rules.

The level of standardisation required in initial stages of the development of literate practice, therefore, has to be determined with regard to the particular situation and ecology of each language. Standardisation of orthography (and of other elements of the language) would seem to be more crucial for a language where official and administrative uses are foreseen, and where the vernacular is to be used in education at higher stages than elementary school. Should there be efforts to revitalise Kuot and texts start to be produced in any number, the matter of standardisation can be reconsidered. A non-standardising approach also neatly sidesteps the problem of choosing a standard lexicon and grammar for the written language, for the time being. Both the Chungs and I have worked in the southern part of the Kuot territory, and when I visited villages in the north the inhabitants expressed some concern that they and their variety of the language had been neglected. Leaving the issue open means everyone can use the variety they feel most comfortable with, and since the dialectal differences are not great this will not impede mutual understanding.

There is also the issue of what wider consequences may arise from putting a language into writing at all. This is an area of much disagreement. Mühlhäusler (1996) argues that the introduction of literacy as such into a society has radical consequences: linguistic diversity is lost; thought patterns are changed; society is restructured; and if it is literacy in the vernacular, it heralds language shift to the 'metropolitan language' – dire consequences indeed. Charpentier (1997) is also pessimistic regarding the effects of vernacular literacy: 'It would seem that by being written these languages enter into a competition against the "big" languages with literary traditions' (p. 229). He argues that once speakers move on to literacy in languages like English or French, they will compare their own language to the body of world literature and find their own language (to which he ascribes low prestige across the board) deficient and lacking. In response to these ideas, Crowley (2000) denies that there is a simple, automatic causal correlation between literacy as such and the decline of vernaculars, nor are the changes in society, thinking etc. over the last century attributable to the introduction of literacy alone. He argues that the whole history of white contact, mission activities, (at least partial) monetary economy and so forth are responsible for such developments. He further points out that cultures are not, and have never been, static and discrete entities, and that Pacific Islanders have often enthusiastically embraced novelties and incorporated them into their own cultures, literacy included.

However, the idea of being able to compare Kuot to languages with much larger bodies of written work in many genres, thicker dictionaries and so forth, and finding Kuot inferior in various respects, could be a real problem (cf. Liddicoat, 2000). This may in fact be what has happened in implicit ways, for oral and written varieties alike, as part of why people have gradually started abandoning the language. However, as Crowley (2000) argues, it is impossible to foresee the consequences of introducing or not introducing any particular item into a

language ecology, and providing added channels of expression could equally well have positive effects.

Developing an Orthography for an Endangered Language

Developing a functioning orthography is a central part of corpus planning, and this section examines the orthography developed to write Kuot from the (often conflicting) points of view of practicality, phonological fit, and acceptability. Some of the features that compete in orthography design are:

- linguists' interests in an orderly system reflecting the phonology;
- the need for a practical orthography (at least for school);
- acceptability to speakers;
- the media where the orthography will be used;
- transferability to writing systems used for other relevant languages;
- (for Kuot) the precarious situation of the language.

Rehg (2004) makes a number of important points regarding orthographies for small languages, some of which are:

- the single most important consideration in the design of a spelling system is the likelihood of its being accepted;
- if it's not broken, don't fix it;
- a phonemic transcription and an alphabet are not the same thing;
- avoid unfamiliar symbols; when feasible, use digraphs rather than diacritics;
- variability is acceptable, particularly in a 'young' orthography.

The first point is that unless speakers accept the writing system, they will not use it as intended, no matter how beautifully designed. The second point is related, and states that this goes both for new orthographies and reforms to old ones. The third point argues that linguists should not become fixated on phonological analyses, as these are often quite abstract creations and writing systems have different requirements – among them those mentioned in the fourth point, which relates to matters such as readability, writing media, and transfer to other languages present in the region. The last point, on standardisation vs. variability, has been discussed above.

There is an orthography in use for Kuot, developed by the SIL team Chul-Hwa and Kyung-Ja Chung during the 1980s in the context of translating the New Testament and associated materials. The orthography uses the Roman alphabet with what may be called 'standard values' for the sounds corresponding to each letter. From a strictly linguistic point of view the system would appear to have problems in terms of both overspecification and underspecification of sound–symbol relationships. For example, in Kuot the grapheme <v> [9] is used, although the sound /v/ is derived from /p/ by regular processes and both could be written with <p>: a case of overspecification, where the orthography gives more information than is strictly necessary in terms of the phonological analysis. The use of digraphs, such as <ng> for the velar nasal /ŋ/ can represent either /ŋ/ or /ŋg/: an underspecification, since the orthography does not distinguish between speech sounds which are distinct in the language. In Kuot, there is also a phonemic distinction between /a/ and /ə/, but both are written as <a>; another

Table 1 Kuot phonemes, allophones and letters

Phoneme	Allophone	Symbol
p	β ~ v	p, v
t	r	t, r
k	γ	k, x (g)
b	^{m}b	b
d	^{n}d	d
g	ŋg	g
m		m
n		n
ŋ		ng
f		f
s		s
l	n	l, n
r		r
i		i
e		e
a		a
ə		a
o		o
u		u

case of underspecification. Nonetheless, the orthography works quite well and is accepted by speakers, except in one respect, the treatment of an allophone of /k/, which will be discussed below.

In principle then, following Rehg's (2004) recommendations, the best solution would be to leave the Kuot orthography as is, except for amending the point where speakers are dissatisfied. Overspecification would not appear to be a problem if the system captures a useful distinction for users, and speakers of many languages tolerate underspecification. Speakers know their language and can fill in the missing information in the written form from their knowledge of the spoken form. However, Kuot is not the healthy language that Rehg has in mind in his discussion. In this perspective, underspecification becomes a problem, because it means that a pronunciation may not be retrievable if the language is being revived, as the user may not be a full speaker. It is necessary to find a compromise between a user-friendly orthography and one that avoids underspecification. It will be useful to look at the phonemes, allophones, and the characters used to write Kuot, given in Table 1, before resuming the discussion. Most require no explanation, and those that do will be discussed below.

There are a number of tensions between the phonemic system and the orthography, if one keeps in mind the discussion so far.

The voiceless stops lenite into voiced fricatives (/v~â, r, γ/) when they appear between vowels, including across word boundaries. It would be possi-

ble to write only <p, t, k> but people are used to representing the speech sounds /v, r/ with the symbols <v, r>. Moreover, /r/ is a phoneme in its own right, as well as an allophone of /t/, and speakers would need to be able to undertake a phonological analysis to determine if the sound were an allophone of /t/ or the phoneme /r/.

The representation of the allophone /ɣ/ has been problematic, and has been a source of speaker dissatisfaction. In Chung's work it is usually rendered <g>, but <g> also represents the phoneme /g/, which has quite different properties, and this is a case of underspecification that has not been well received. Insofar as people themselves write Kuot, they have used <k> . Neighbouring languages have equivalent phonological processes, and use <x> to represent /ɣ/.[10] After consultations with teachers in two of the elementary schools and some elders who were members of the (now defunct) Bible translation committee, who all welcomed it, <x> was adopted into Kuot in September 2004. There is a potential problem with the use of <x> in tranfer to English, where <x> has a different sound value (/ks/). However, the Kuot use does adhere to established practice in neighbouring languages, making it a regional orthographic feature.

Another reason to write the lenited sounds with separate symbols is the fact that unlenited /p, t, k/ do sometimes occur between vowels. These are phonologically double (/pp, tt, kk/), which blocks the lenition process, both across word boundaries and sometimes stem-medially. There is no extra length added; the doubling is noticeable only because there is no lenition. To be explicit about the difference between lenited and unlenited, it would be possible either to write <lukkuan> (pronounced /lukuan/) 'village' and <lukuan> (pronounced /luɣuan/) 'house', *or* <lukuan> 'village' and <luxuan> 'house'. Since doubling the consonant in the spelling gives an erroneous impression of length, and since there is already a tendency to write the lenited versions using different graphemes from the unlenited versions, and because using <x> (etc.) ties in with regional practice, the use of a separate grapheme here is quite satisfactory.

Whether lenition across word boundaries should be indicated in writing is a matter that has not yet been resolved. On the one hand, constancy of form seems desirable, so that a morpheme like *pam* ('our') is always <pam>; on the other hand, people may feel that indicating lenition everywhere it would occur in speech gives the text more fluency. An illustration of this phenomenon across a word boundary would be the following:

aia	*pam*	[aia**v**am]	*aia-p*	*pam*	[aia**p**am]
forefather	our		forfather-PL	our	
'our forefather'			'our forefathers'		

The voiced stops are optionally prenasalised. If the nasal is written, it can lead to the <ng> ambiguity discussed above, when the intended phoneme is <g> , so the simple stop will be consistently used, for example <kudat> for the word 'fence', variously pronounced /kudat ~ kundat/. In the long run, this should be part of the spelling norm for Kuot; but at present it is perhaps more important that people write than that they leave out the nasals in these cases.

The nasal velar is written with the only digraph in the writing system, <ng> . As set out above, there may be confusion with prenasalised /g/, but the digraph has the advantages of using familiar symbols present on a standard keyboard, and corresponding to Tok Pisin and English usage allowing transferability between orthographic systems (cf. Liddicoat, 2005).

The distinction between /l/ and /n/ is partly phonemic and partly allophonic in Kuot. They contrast in syllable-initial position, but /l/ is disallowed syllable-finally and the contrast is neutralised there. For example, a form like /kin/ 'well, spring' usually becomes /kilip/ in the plural. The linguist might want a consistent representation of the stem (either <kin> or <kil>) but this is a level of abstraction where, again, the phonological analysis is too abstract to be useful in a writing system. It is not problematic to the speaker, who will simply write what he or she would say. Kuot plural formation has much irregularity, and plural forms will have to be given in full throughout a dictionary, so the variation will be obvious there.

The last item for comment is the central vowel /ə/. It too is a sound which is in a partly phonemic and partly allophonic relation with another sound, this time /a/. Both are represented with <a> and speakers seem happy with this. The functional load of the distinction is quite low; that is, there are not very many cases where confusion would arise from using <a> for both.

The orthography as presented here is apparently adequate for the needs of Kuot writers; however, from the point of view of developing a dictionary for a dying language, it would seem unsatisfactory not to represent the pronunciation more fully – if words that are falling out of use are to be accessible, it is essential that the pronunciation is reflected as fully as possible. The solution to this problem involves a number of considerations. The neighbouring Madak language Lavatbura-Lamusong has the same set of vowels and uses <a> for /ə/ and <aa> for /a/. The advantage is that standard characters are used – following Rehg (2004) in using a digraph rather than a diacritic or an unfamiliar character; the drawback is that it gives an erroneous impression of length. Since the distinction seems to have low salience to Kuot speakers, one way would be to use <a> for both in the general orthography but use a diacritic in the dictionary to indicate /ə/ pronunciation, e.g. <ạ>, so that pronunciation can be retrieved. As speakers are used to considering /ə/ and /a/ as equivalent in writing, they would be alphabetised together. The dot would be like stress marks in many dictionaries: a guide to pronunciation but not intended to be reproduced in writing. A problem arises if people should want to make this distinction in their own writing and find no way of reproducing the diacritic on typewriters or computers. A solution would be to use a more common diacritic, such as a circumflex (<â>), but these are generally more salient and may run an even greater risk of unintentionally becoming prescriptive simply because they are so noticeable. The dictionary solution, if understood by speakers as normative, would mean introducing a diacritic into the orthography, which Rehg (2004) recommends against. However, given the low level of writing activity in the Kuot-speaking community, and the established practice of using <a> for both sounds, it is unlikely both that a demand for a way of distinguishing them will arise, and that diacritics will be adopted into the general orthography.

Issues in Developing an Orthography

This section will examine the Kuot orthography in the light of Rehg's (2004) criteria discussed earlier.

The orthography in use for Kuot may be underspecific in some areas (<a> for both /a/ and /ə/), and overspecific in others (writing the allophones of /p, t, k/), but it is accepted by potential users and by those who do make use of Kuot in its written form (the first of Rehg's points above). Changing an orthography that is accepted may be problematic in itself, no matter how linguistically elegant a suggested alternative may be (Rehg's second point). For Kuot, therefore, it has been decided to keep the practice of writing both /ə/ and /a/ with <a> . In the same vein, rather than introducing an unfamiliar symbol <ŋ> , the digraph <ng> is retained, which also helps transfer to other relevant languages. Lenited allophones of /p/ and /t/ remain written with <v> and <r> , and speakers' dissatisfaction with the allophone of /k/ has been resolved by the introduction of <x> . The use of a symbol for the allophone of /k/ also allows parallel treatment of the three voiceless stops in representing their allophones with separate characters.

Baker (1997) argues (against Rehg's fourth point above) that modern technology allows for all the diacritics and special characters that we may want for an orthography, so that we need not be limited to typewriter symbols. For Kuot, this could mean using /ə/ and /ŋ/, moving a little closer to the phonology than with the present orthography. However, Baker's argument seems to overstate the case for the ability of modern technology, which often effectively restricts the choice of characters because of incompatibilities in systems, especially in the use of e-mail. E-mail seems to be particularly important in considering an orthography for vernacular use as, if internet access becomes as widespread, e-mail could be one of the more important areas where speakers of small languages use their languages in writing. It is possible to imagine Bimun people communicating with children in high schools in other parts of the island and with their teachers; with community members working in mines and offices or in clerical education elsewhere in New Ireland or PNG, with sick relatives in hospital; with people in other villages with whom they are organising a funeral, church activities, cultural events and other activities; with the hardware store or copra buyers in town and in other contexts. While not all these communications would take place in Kuot, it would be unfortunate to exclude the language from this arena by designing an orthography that is not reproducible in ASCII. Rehg (2004) notes that e-mail is much used in Micronesia, and that a major reason why letters with diacritics are unsuccessful is that people find them more difficult to type than digraphs. Hence, the issue of transferability applies not only to transfer between the orthographic traditions of different languages, but also to transfer between media – handwriting, typewriter, print, different computer programmes, and between computers in a connected world.

The considerations are relevant for determining a workable and acceptable orthography for writers of the language; however, they may be less useful if language maintenance (and possibly language revival) work is going to rely on written language as a record of the spoken language. The reason to insist on more specification in the Kuot dictionary than in the general orthography is, as indicated, that the language is severely threatened, and the number of fluent speakers will decrease over the coming decades. If there is a movement to revi-

talise the language, it would be unfortunate to have a dictionary that does not provide full information on pronunciation of words that are being forgotten. For this reason, the dictionary needs to indicate stress, which is unpredictable in Kuot, and somehow identify those instances of <a> which are to be pronounced /ə/. The tentative solution is proposed for the dictionary is an <a> with a discreet diacritic.

Regarding dictionaries, what has been discussed here is a multidictionary; one that strives to include the entire vocabulary resources of the language. However, it should be emphasised that there is more than a single format for dictionaries. Liddicoat (2005: 13–14) points out that different formats are needed for academic contexts and educational contexts, as well as for different purposes within any particular language community. A multidictionary would have much more information than children in Prep and Elementary school need, and could be quite daunting. In order to support vernacular education, therefore, it would be useful to produce a smaller, preferably illustrated dictionary for school, omitting pronunciation markings, perhaps word class information, and other information that may be considered superfluous or irrelevant for literacy development. Small thematic dictionaries have also been considered, and a preliminary version of an illustrated dictionary showing all the terms for parts of a house has been circulated and met with approval among speakers.

An orthography is necessary for literacy, but there are complex issues surrounding it which impact on orthographic design. The orthography has to be developed before other corpus planning issues can be taken into consideration. The important thing in the context of vernacular education is that there is a spelling system which can be used to develop literacy, that it is adequate for representing the spoken language in written form, that it is acceptable to speakers, and that it is suited to the range of literate contexts in which it may be used. However, where the language is dying, there are competing demands made on orthographies, dictionaries and other materials and multiple solutions may be required for vernacular literacy to achieve the goals of both literacy development and language maintenance.

Conclusions

The PNG education reform is ambitious and well designed in many respects, stressing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country and anchoring education in local practices. The idea is for the children to develop their knowledge and social identities from the familiar to the unknown. However, the 'localist' stage in education is transitional: vernacular literacy is a point of departure, not an objective in its own right. Thus, the policy aims to use vernaculars as vehicles for developing literacies which will ultimately be used in other languages, especially English. The policy does not therefore contain measures explicitly designed to maintain languages or cultures, nor is this the aim of the policy. The policy implicitly assumes that the languages being used in vernacular education are the actively transmitted first languages of students. In contexts of language death, however, vernacular language programmes are subject to local understandings of what is meant by vernacular and of the aims and objectives of vernacular language education. In a dying language, where school is

seen as the arena for halting or reversing a process of language shift, maintenance issues can easily take over from developing literacy skills.

In the case of Kuot, while the policy stresses that the first years of education should be in the children's first language, which in this case is typically Tok Pisin, a local reinterpretation of the concept of education in the vernacular has been as a maintenance policy for the threatened community language Kuot. This changes the context of implementation as well as the possible outcomes: instead of a transition from L1 literacy to L2 literacy, Kuot children develop literacy in a culturally traditional L2, which most of them do not speak, as a precursor to L2 literacy in English, which they also do not speak. The viability of the vernacular language programme is potentially undermined by a mismatch in conceptualisations. An education programme designed as a transitional literacy development programme is unlikely to meet a community's language maintenance objectives, while the acquisition of a culturally traditional language in the school context is unlikely to meet government objectives of accelerated literacy development through L1 and the transfer of literacy skills to other languages. Moreover, schooling is not enough to keep a language alive (Fishman, 2001) – a language needs a whole range of real-world contexts of use where it has relevance to the entire community.

In other words, the maintenance expectations of the Kuot community are not being met, nor is the education policy implemented as intended. In Kuot, vernacular language education is required to do double duty and there are competing aims and objectives for the programme. In developing materials for the vernacular, the range of aims and objectives needs to be considered and this becomes clear in the context of developing an orthography; an orthography for developing literacy and an orthography for recording a language for future generations involve very different assumptions, which in turn may be in conflict with linguists' understandings of appropriate orthography. In the Kuot case, the tensions between aims and objectives have been resolved through the use of multiple solutions: an orthography designed for use in reading and writing with both underspecification and overspecification, and an orthography for recording the language in a dictionary which reduces the underspecification. In addition, for linguists using an orthography for academic communication about the language, a third writing system is needed which reduces overspecification and brings the written representation of the language more closely into line with the phonology itself.

Notes

1. The new grade structure of the school system is the following: Prep: Grade 0; Elementary: Grades 1–2; Lower Primary: Grades 3–5; Upper Primary: Grades 6–8; Lower Secondary: Grades 9–10; Upper Secondary: Grades 11–12. The old Community Schools which offered Grades 1–6 are being extended to Grade 8, and Provincial High Schools which previously taught Grades 7–10 or 9–10 will provide education until Grade 12 (Kale & Marimyas, 2003). However, Upper Secondary is available in New Ireland only at Namatanai Secondary School so far.
2. Most of what follows is based on observation during a total of 25 months of linguistic fieldwork, mostly spent in Bimun village on the south-west coast, near the border to the Madak (Lavatbura-Lamusong) language area.
3. Charpentier's (1997) statement that 'in Oceania [. . .] the omnipresent pidgins have the slums as their cultural reference' (p. 231) is absurd from a New Ireland perspective.

'Slum' is not a concept and there is no reason to associate a language one uses on a daily basis with any such alien and empirically unattested notion.

4. An example of a language where community attitudes have effected a reversal of language shift is the Wuvulu language in Manus Province in PNG, of a similar size to Kuot. The language was in a difficult position some 25 years ago, with Tok Pisin gradually replacing Wuvulu as the dominant play language of children. Today the language has revived through a change of community attitudes and behaviour, coupled with renewed appreciation of traditional values and practices more generally, alongside Christianity (Kristian Lagercrantz, p.c.).

5. The *National Curriculum Statement* (PNG Department of Education, 2003b), which covers all grades from Prep to Grade 12, does say that '[s]tudents are encouraged to use their own languages both in and out of the classroom' (p. 14), but, perhaps because the vernaculars are locally defined as first languages for education purposes, Tok Pisin is not used in school contexts in this area.

6. Various technical possibilities for spreading internet services have been explored (see Zwimpfer, 2003).

7. In the *National Curriculum Statement* (Department of Education, PNG, 2003b) computing is mentioned for the lower and upper secondary school only, in the Culture and Community learning area (pp. 31, 34), among many other topics to be covered within that area. A UNESCO (2002c) report on the development and use of internet infrastructure in Pacific member states identifies a number of obstacles for internet use, including computer and internet access, bandwidth, as well as relevant skills.

8. There are also a number of Kuot plant and fish names and so on which are used in Tok Pisin, as that language does not have great resources in those areas, but children's knowledge of such terms cannot count as Kuot competence, since they have been acquired in a Tok Pisin context.

9. The following conventions will be used throughout this paper: / / indicates a speech sound, whether a phoneme or an allophone; <> indicates a grapheme of the written language.

10. In the International Phonetic Alphabet, /x/ stands for a voiceless velar fricative, while it is here being used for a voiced one (/ɣ/). Since in these languages, there is no contrasting voiceless velar fricative and <x> has no other uses, this is in fact a very good solution to the problem.

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Vernacular Literacy in the Touo Language of the Solomon Islands

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The Touo language is a non-Austronesian language spoken on Rendova Island (Western Province, Solomon Islands). First language speakers of Touo are typically multilingual, and are likely to speak other (Austronesian) vernaculars, as well as Solomon Island Pijin and English. There is no institutional support of literacy in Touo: schools function in English, and church-based support for vernacular literacy focuses on the major Austronesian languages of the local area. Touo vernacular literacy exists in a restricted niche of the linguistic ecology, where it is utilised for symbolic rather than communicative goals. Competing vernacular orthographic traditions complicate the situation further.

Keywords: vernacular literacy, Solomon Islands, Touo language, language planning, orthography

Introduction

Vernacular literacy is an important part of language planning in the multilingual countries of the Pacific (e.g. Crowley, 2000a; Faraclas, 1996). For a range of political and economic reasons Solomon Islands is however less advanced in developing vernacular literacy programmes than are many of its near neighbours. Vernacular literacy in Solomon Islands is not typically an objective of government language planning, but rather of church and community organisations. This decentralised, grass-roots approach to vernacular literacy planning presents particular challenges for small languages, especially those which are significantly different from other vernaculars of the Solomons.

This paper will examine the contexts which affect vernacular literacy for one particular community in the Solomons – the Touo people of the New Georgia archipelago. The Touo language (henceforth Touo[1]) is spoken by the indigenous people of the southern part of Rendova (see Figure 1). Touo is a non-Austronesian isolate, one of four such isolate languages spoken amongst the 70+ Oceanic Austronesian languages in the central Solomon Islands.[2] Adult Touo speakers are typically multilingual, able to speak one or more other indigenous languages of the Solomons, as well as Solomon Island Pijin, and usually some amount of English. Touo vernacular literacy exists only in an ad hoc, prestandardised way, and has little chance of having any institutional support, even if it were decided in the community that this would be desirable, since the economic situation of the Solomon Islands is dire. The possibility of vernacular literacy in these circumstances is a small but important part of a general campaign of cultural and linguistic preservation (Terrill, 2002).

In order to understand the context for vernacular literacy in Touo, this paper
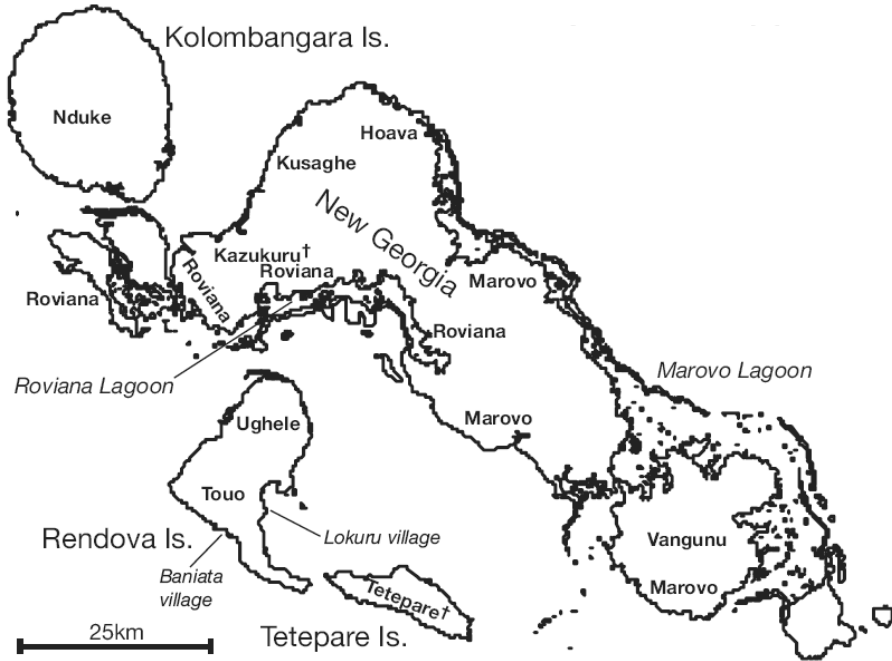
Figure 1 Languages of the New Georgia archipelago

will present a survey of the domains of use of each of the major languages used in the community from a diachronic perspective, along with a survey of the different multilingual literacies currently in place. While the functions of literacy within a swidden agriculturalist society are limited to a small number of domains, a complex post-colonial history has produced differential uses of literacy in the various languages current in the community. Within the linguistic ecology of the Touo-speaking world, the vernacular is central to important areas of cultural activity, but in these, vernacular literacy has only a very minor role.

Historical Context

Rendova Island is situated to the south west of the New Georgia archipelago in the Solomon Islands, across a narrow (yet deep and dangerous) channel from the busy Roviana and Marovo lagoons. The northern end of the island is inhabited by speakers of Ughele, an Austronesian language closely related to Roviana, Marovo and the other Austronesian languages of the area. The elaborate cultures of pre-contact New Georgia (Aswani & Sheppard, 2003) were influential, as is evidenced by large-scale borrowing of Austronesian vocabulary for ritual and technological items.

Touo people consider themselves, and are considered in the region, to be a people apart. This is partially because of isolation: navigation to the southern end of Rendova Island is for people accustomed to the gentle lagoons of Roviana and Marovo, but more significantly, Touos are different because they speak a genetic

isolate language in an area with a cluster of closely related Austronesian languages.

Prehistoric language dispersals

It is not known when the ancestors of the Touo people came to Rendova. Even the dating of the initial human settlement of the Solomons is under question. There are archaeological sites in the central Solomons from 6000 years before present (BP), but the central Solomons were intermittently linked by land to areas known to have been already populated for more than 20,000 years before that (Spriggs, 1997). The Austronesian language family spread across the Solomons from about 3000 BP (Kirch, 1997). The neighbours of Touo are all from the Meso-Melanesian Linkage, a division of the Western Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian (Lynch *et al.*, 2002). It is generally accepted that the non-Austronesian languages (including Touo) of Island Melanesia are remnants of pre-Austronesian linguistic diversity. Nothing more specific is currently known about the past geographic distribution of Touo, although there are reasons to think that Touo and some of the other non-Austronesian languages of the Solomons were in closer contact in the past (Dunn *et al.*, 2003; Dunn *et al.*, 2005; Ross, 2001; Todd, 1975; Wurm, 1972, 1975).

The nearest language to Touo which might have been non-Austronesian is the poorly documented Kazukuru, a language spoken by the former inhabitants of inland New Georgia. The Kazukuru people had all migrated to the coast early in the 20th century, and have assimilated linguistically with the local Austronesian languages (Waterhouse & Ray, 1931). A few word lists exist, but while they are not clearly Austronesian in origin, the quality is such that it is not certain that they are non-Austronesian either. The nearest living non-Austronesian language to Touo is Bilua, spoken nearly 100 km to the NW on the island of Vella Lavella.

The Touo people are aware that their language is very different from most Solomon Island languages. Most Touo people speak one or more Austronesian languages, and are aware how much knowledge of one Austronesian language helps with learning another. Speakers of Austronesian language exposed only to other Austronesian languages expect a minimum level of intelligibility from any other indigenous language – but with non-Austronesian languages this does not occur. The Touo language is frequently said (by Touos and non-Touos alike) to 'be like Chinese' (apparently the archetypal unintelligible language for many Solomon Islanders). The other non-Austronesian languages of the Solomon Islands have similar reputations in their regions.

European contact

European contact added another linguistic layer over the local language ecologies. European contact was sporadic from the 17th century, and regular contact only developed when the South Sea whalers began to resupply in the Solomons (most intensively from the 1820s to the 1850s, with landings recorded from around 1800 to 1887; Bennett, 1987). However, whalers preferred the relative safety of the smaller islands, and few direct contacts were made with the New Georgia archipelago. The level of intergroup hostility prior to contact is unclear, but was probably quite high, and it seems that people already lived in fortified

ridge-top villages. However, despite the low intensity of contact, major changes in social structure were underway from the earliest contact period. Depopulation from epidemics of introduced diseases contributed to the undermining of the traditional social order, and new power structures developed, leading to an apparent increase in inter-island conflict. This is in part the result of the growing availability of metal tools which decreased the amount of time a man had to spend on garden labour (primarily land-clearing), eased the production of war canoes, and put a premium on captured labour. Blackbirding (recruitment or abduction of indentured labourers for the Queensland and Fiji plantations) was in some cases carried out through Islander middlemen, who preyed on their neighbours.

The protectorate and the missions

The British Solomon Island Protectorate was declared in 1893 in response to pressure from the Australian colonies. The strategic significance of the Solomon Islands was the desire to limit the spread of the German colonies in the Bismarcks and Bougainville, as well as fear of French expansion from New Caledonia, which would threaten access to the imported Melanesian labour that Queensland sugar plantations were dependent on (Bennett, 2000). Labour recruiters stimulated violence between island communities, as a labourer's wages were much less lucrative than trading food or acting as an intermediary between the recruiters and less advantageously situated communities. The government and British Navy succeeded in suppressing headhunting by the late 1890s, and the worse excesses of the labour recruiters were eventually controlled. Between 1870 and 1910 about 30,000 mostly male Solomon Islanders went as labourers to Queensland, Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia. The linguistic legacy of this period is Solomon Island Pijin (Keesing, 1988). Solomon Island Pijin is, despite its name, a creole. It is mutually intelligible with Bislama (one of the national languages of Vanuatu), and with Tok Pisin (especially the varieties of Tok Pisin spoken by the islanders of New Britain, New Ireland, and Bougainville).

Up until the 18th century most Touo villages were located on defensible ridge tops in the inland of Rendova. After the suppression of headhunting, people resettled on the coast (this was government policy, generally acceded to for the improvements in quality of life brought about by improved communications and easier access to trade and maritime resources). There were two main villages, Baniata on the westernmost point of Rendova, and Lokuru on the east coast. It is easily possible to walk from one to the other in half a day. Communications with the rest of the New Georgia archipelago are more difficult. Baniata faces the open sea, and even today it is a serious undertaking to get to the Roviana lagoon using a motor canoe. Lokuru is in a slightly more sheltered position, but there is still a stretch of open water to traverse before crossing the reef to the calm water of the Roviana and Marovo lagoons. Other inhabitants of the New Georgia archipelago see the Touo people as a bit wild and a bit frightening.

During the protectorate, much of the governance of local communities was carried out by the missions. The Methodist Mission was founded in 1902, not long after the suppression of headhunting by the protectorate government. The mission was founded on the Roviana lagoon, and Roviana became the mission

lingua franca. The decision to use Roviana was easily made as Roviana and the other Austronesian languages of New Georgia have a degree of mutual intelligibility. People of Lokuru village on the west of Rendova petitioned to join the mission in 1910. According to Touo stories this request was accompanied by a gift of 1000 sacks of copra – the story is told tongue-in-cheek, 'our ancestors tried to buy religion!', but the Methodist Mission worked to ensure that islanders got fair prices for their copra, and access to this institutional support must have been appealing (note also that collective production of 'gift copra' for churches was an established practice). Roviana was immensely influential, both as a liturgical language, and as the language of the mission-run schools and hospital.

Early in the 20th century labour recruitment ended from Australia, with Fiji following soon after. The focus of labour recruitment moved to plantations within the Solomons, and there was a considerable amount of (usually temporary) internal migration for plantation work up until the Second World War, and then again to a lesser extent afterwards. Many of the older Touo men alive today worked on plantations on Tetepare and the Russell Islands.

Post Second World War

The Solomon Islands was the centre of heavy fighting in the Second World War, during which most of the colonial infrastructure was destroyed, and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate never again became economically self-sufficient. The Solomons became independent in 1974 as Britain was in the process of divesting itself of its former colonies. Independence was granted by fiat, rather than as a result of national aspirations from the grass-roots, and the seeds of its failure in the Solomons were already present from the beginning in education, economics and intergroup relations (Bennett, 2002). In the early 1960s there were no secondary schools in the Solomons, and when independence was granted in 1974 there were only six, five of which were run by missions. Revenue loss from the decline in commodity prices, and corruption in the exploitation of natural resources put the fledgling state under increasing financial strain. Services deteriorated, and ethnic tensions arose in Honiara between the native Guadalcanal people and the swelling population of outsiders (founded after the war, Honiara had a population of 5000 in the 1960s, to about 50,000 today out of a total population of 400,000). Western Province was usually better off, with more natural resources, fewer people, and a relatively successful tourism industry bringing economic opportunities to people on the village level. However, in 2000 ethnic conflicts over land around the capital city ended in a coup and almost all state functions ceased effective activity until an intervention by regional powers succeeded in returning some stability to the country in 2003.

Touo and its linguistic context

Touo is substantially different from the languages which surround it and the immediately apparent difference between it and the Austronesian languages is the lexicon. The New Georgia Austronesian languages are all members of a single low level grouping, and are lexically very similar to each other. People of the New Georgia archipelago are generally aware of the scale of the lexical differences between Touo and the neighbouring Austronesian languages (for the most part without, of course, being aware of 'Austronesian' as a linguistic

Touo			
	t	k	
ᵐb	ⁿd	ᵑg	
m	n	ŋ	
f	s		h
v	z	ɣ	
	r		

Roviana			
p	t	k	
ᵐb	ⁿd	ᵑg	
m	n	ŋ	
	s		h
v	z	ɣ	
	r		
	l		

Figure 2 Consonant inventories: Touo and Roviana

classification); Touo speakers are also aware of broad typological differences between Touo and the other languages in the area. Within the Touo speech community V-final word order is widely recognised as being particularly distinctive and exotic. However, the most frequently offered examples of Touo linguistic distinctiveness are phonological differences in the vowel system – and these differences create particular difficulties for the adaptation of orthographic principles used with Austronesian languages in the region.

Touo phonology is in many ways typical of the languages of the Western Solomons. Touo, like the languages of New Georgia, is a CV language and there does not appear to be anything particularly unusual about Touo prosody. Speakers of other local languages have never reported to me any impression that Touo sounds strange (beyond the obvious lack of interpretability). The only areally unusual feature is that there is no distinction between /r/ and /l/. Figure 2 contrasts the segmental inventories of Touo and Roviana: apart from the /r/~/l/ distinction this is nearly identical as Touo /f/ and Roviana /p/ are not in systemic contrast, and there are many examples of phonetic [p]~[f] alternation in the region. More significant deviations from the regional norm are found in the vowel phonology. Touo has a six-vowel system rather than the five vowel system found in the other New Georgia languages, and Touo has phonemic breathy voice on initial vowels. Breathy voice is a prosodic phoneme contrastive with modal voice, but is phonotactically restricted: it only occurs on word-initial syllables without an onset (i.e. V-only syllables). It is quite difficult for non-native speakers to hear and produce, and are prized as shibboleths.

The phonemic contrast between /s/ and some form of /z/ is characteristic of the Western Solomon Islands (the phonetic value varies between [z] ~ [dz] ~ [dʒ] ~ [tʃ] both within and between languages).

Conflicting Touo Orthographies

Writing systems already exist for a number of languages in the Solomons and the writing conventions used in these languages follow a limited number of patterns. These patterns are widely known, and are readily applicable to other Oceanic languages. For the most part they are obvious: vowel symbols have their 'continental' (i.e. approximating their IPA) values, consonants which have a corresponding English phoneme use the English grapheme, and non-contrastive

prenasalisation is ignored in writing. Beyond this, for regionally common phonemes without obvious correspondences to English there are two traditions. One uses English-like digraphs (typically 'ng' for /ŋ/, 'gh' for /ɣ/), and the other uses English graphemes in novel ways ('q' for /ᵑg/, 'g' for /ɣ/, 'n n̲' or n n̄ for /ŋ/).

Languages from a single island group or a single church typically use one of these systems or the other. Despite the Austronesian languages of New Georgia all being so similar, both traditions of writing are current, and are distributed according to the areas of influence of the two original missions (Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist). Touo is spoken at the junction of these two areas of influence, and Touo society is itself divided into Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist religious communities. Given that there are a few already familiar ways for writing indigenous languages of the Solomon Islands, it would be desirable that Touo literacy practices followed these as much as possible.

In a regional perspective the only atypical aspect of the Touo consonant inventory is that it lacks an /r/~/l/ distinction. In practice this doesn't pose a problem for native writers, although there is little agreement on which of the two graphemes should be used. The real difficulty here is the sectarian one. Unschooled writers of Touo automatically turn to the conventions of their own church language. Members of the Christian Fellowship Church in Baniata, and members of the United Church in Lokuru uniformly write /ᵑg/ as 'q', /ɣ/ as 'g', and /ŋ/ as 'nn̄', following the Roviana orthography (established on the basis of an earlier Fijian orthography, Schütz, 1985). Members of the Seventh Day Adventist communities in Lokuru and Baniata always write /ᵑg/ as 'g', /ɣ/ as 'gh', and /ŋ/ as 'ng', following Marovo. Touos themselves do not seem to consider this variation a problem. While the various congregations live closely together, there is a strong tradition of separate organisation within villages, and it is expected that members of the different churches will do things in different ways. A linguist trying to force acceptance of one writing tradition over another faces the near certainty of alienating half the speech community, and there does not seem any solution except to produce materials intended for the entire speech community in two versions. The production of community language materials in the Touo vernacular, therefore, currently has to go ahead using two different sectarian writing traditions.

Writing the vowel system does not pose sectarian problems, but there are ideological problems none the less (the following is discussed more fully in Terrill & Dunn, 2003). Touo has a six-vowel system with /i e a ɔ o u/ – already unusual in a region of five vowel systems /i e a o u/ – but it also has the breathy versus modal voice contrast in initial vowels. Touo speakers are conscious of the contrast, and there is a small set of minimal pairs which have entered local folklore as illustrations of how difficult Touo is. (There are many minimal pairs in the language, but only a small set are used for this purpose.) There is no obvious symbolic representation for the /ɔ/ vowel, nor for the breathy voice quality. After community consultation (documented in Terrill & Dunn, 2003) a convention has been decided, 'yV' (where V is any vowel) for the breathy voice vowels, and 'w' for the /ɔ/, which is in use in the development of a community dictionary (note that 'y' and 'w' are not used in local language orthographies). Touo language consultants are mostly able to understand and use these conventions with minimal instruction. However in the few examples of spontaneous

vernacular writing which have been observed – graffiti, copies of hymns, private genealogical notes – people just write the five vowels of the Austronesian orthographies of Roviana, Marovo, etc. collapsing /ɔ/ with /o/ and ignoring the breathy voice contrast.

Multiple Literacies: Policy and Practice

Use of particular languages in particular domains results in differential importance of literacy in each language (Liddicoat, 2004; Street, 1994). On Rendova Island the cultural niche for literacy is small, and with several candidate literacies already, it is also crowded.

Literacy and school

English is the national language and the official language of schooling. Schools come under a national curriculum, and are supposed to be taught entirely in English. The language of school literacy is therefore English and this is the privileged language of literacy for the country as a whole. However, since the British administration was always quite small, and education under the Protectorate was under-developed, English is not very well established in the Solomon Islands. School teachers and students, especially those from the provinces, do not have much opportunity to use English outside the classroom. In practice, this means that the classroom is the most multilingual environment that many young Solomon Islanders are exposed to: in the earliest classes teachers who speak the local language (frequently not the case, especially in non-Austronesian areas) tend to use it informally as a way of bridging the gap to the English curriculum. Otherwise, Solomon Island Pijin is used, as the unofficial but universal language of inter-ethnic communication (Lee, 1996). Since teachers themselves have little exposure to English, the English produced in the classroom is strongly influenced by Solomon Island Pijin. In fact, despite having no official status, most children learn to speak Solomon Island Pijin during their school years and in no small part during classroom hours.

Literacy and church

Since independence the churches have remained important institutions, although resources (especially international aid) are increasingly channelled through the state, rather than the quasi-state apparatus that the missions previously maintained. Church affiliation is an important part of the social identity of Touo people and, for the most part, all members of a residential and family group will have the same religious affiliation. Historically, religious conversion has followed the lead of the head of the family, and so religious affiliation closely follows family and tribal affiliations. As a result, the Touo community is divided along religious lines and the two major Touo villages are each divided in a hibiscus hedge marking the religious divide (in Lokuru the divide is between Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) and United Church (UC); Baniata is divided between SDA and Christian Fellowship Church (CFC)). The smaller villages tend to follow a single main religion.

The various religious denominations have different approaches to language use and therefore promote different literacies. The SDA church founded a

mission in the Marovo Lagoon in 1914. The language of the SDA church is English, although the position of the mission in the Marovo Lagoon has had the effect of increasing members' exposure to Marovo as well. Hymns and liturgical readings are in English, sermons are in Solomon Island Pijin (although it may be the case that local clergy would use Touo). Members of the SDA Church on Rendova are likely to speak some Marovo learnt when working or studying with church-related organisations on the Marovo Lagoon. The Methodist Mission (now known as the United Church) was founded in 1902 in the Roviana Lagoon. The Roviana language was the mission lingua franca, and Touo members of the UC on Rendova tend to speak good Roviana. Roviana was used in mission schools and hospitals, hymns are sung in Roviana, and church business is carried out in Roviana. Roviana is still strong along the Roviana Lagoon: people greet strangers in Roviana (even obvious foreigners), public notices are written in Roviana, and even resident foreigners tend to learn some Roviana as well as the ubiquitous Solomon Island Pijin. The third local denomination, the CFC, is an indigenous revival church, which split from the Methodist Mission in the 1950s. The CFC uses Roviana to an even greater degree than the UC, since it is the language of the founder of the church, the Holy Mama, and of the Spiritual Authority (his son, the current leader). The Spiritual Authority is credited with supernatural powers, and is extremely influential in New Georgia. He receives considerable cachet from being a 'man from the village', not corrupted by Western education. As the church is one of the main domains for literacy practice for most Touo people, the language of church fills an important literacy niche. In the main churches, the language is English, with support from Solomon Island Pijin or the Austronesian language Roviana, and there appears to be little opportunity for developing Touo literacy in these contexts.

It seems that there may be a possible niche for Touo literacy in the few instances of other churches which have been founded more recently on Rendova. Typically these have been brought to the village by a villager who has been converted at a rally, or during a period of residence away from the island, and the initial membership is mostly limited to the close kin of the founder. The South Seas Evangelical Church in Lokuru is probably typical of these. Touo is the natural language of communication for this group, since the religious leader is a Touo speaker and kin to all the members; however written church materials supplied by the parent organisation are all in English. It seems unlikely that the vernacular language focus of these churches is temporary: if they should prove successful enough to attract a larger membership, members of the church hierarchy from off the island will move to the village to carry out church functions and will use other languages, especially English or Solomon Island Pijin for this.

In general the churches do not seem to be interested in supporting vernacular literacy for Touo. The CFC has Roviana as a unifying language, and the other churches need English to communicate with their international parent organisations, and seem to have little interest in vernacular literacy in any indigenous language.[3] Even if these churches were more interested in vernacular literacy, Touo and other minor languages used by the churches would have less priority than the languages used by the majority of their members.

Literacy and *Kastom*[4]

A possible domain for Touo literacy appears to be developing in the context of traditional practices of land tenure, which on Rendova is highly fraught. Probably this is always the case: it is unquestioned in most Solomon Island societies that nobody has the right to gain advantage in any way from land or sea without compensating the owner (Hviding, 1996). People are particularly agitated about land tenure on Rendova because a foreign company is methodically logging the island, and the titular 'traditional owner' of tribal lands gains great, if short-term, advantage from this. In this environment, anything which can bolster prestige has political value, and value can certainly be extracted from the prestige of the written word. Old men typically maintain a notebook in which they keep notes on genealogy and tribal membership. I have seen cases where the mere act of writing down in a notebook that a particular person is the traditional owner of a tract of land is enough to get some serious consideration for what otherwise seems to be regarded a risible claim. Even when confined to linguistically marginal genres such as listing of personal and tribal names, vernacular literacy is evidently a powerful potential source of social influence. It appears that in the practice of recording genealogies the Touo people are indigenising literacy (Crowley, 2000b), although to a limited extent, and are integrating literate practice and the ideologies which surround it into traditionally valued practices.

Conclusion

Literacy, and particularly vernacular literacy, seem important to me. It is obvious that professional scholars working in linguistics are likely to have a high esteem for the written word, and that linguistic fieldworkers have a vested interest in vernacular languages. For many, linguistic scholarship is a vocation, and important aspects of the fieldworker-linguist's identity are built around concern for the many small and endangered languages of the world. A neutral perspective is difficult to achieve in these circumstances. The contrarian views of Mühlhäusler have been salutary (e.g. Mühlhäusler, 1996). Of particular concern to the practitioner is the claim that vernacular literacy ends up being transitional to literacy in the metropolitan language, leading ultimately to the replacement of the indigenous language. Touo vernacular literacy is unlikely to be such a Trojan horse. Touo people are already taught English literacy in school, and many are able to write Roviana and Marovo, and these writing systems are occasionally adapted for writing Solomon Island Pijin (graffiti, notices about credit in shops) and Touo (genealogical notes, song lyrics, canoe names). If vernacular literacy is to have a role, it will either have to be created afresh, or it will take over functions of other literacies of the community.

However, in spite of work developing the orthography and some minimal contexts for Touo literacy, the current social and political system does not really seem to support the development of literacy in Touo. At the policy level, literacy is constructed as being in English and there is little likelihood of vernacular literacy becoming a language planning objective for education. Even if there were to be a supportive policy, the economic situation in the Solomons makes it unlikely that resources could be made available to implement a vernacular literacy programme, and small isolate languages such as Touo would not appear to be a

priority for funding. Finally, the ecological niches for literacy in the region are few and the languages used are strongly established; in schools the focus is on English, in the churches it is either English or an Austronesian vernacular. This means that the perceived need for local literacies in Touo is limited, and is restricted to a small number of symbolic actions rather than having a primarily communicative goal.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. This language was previously known in the linguistic literature as Baniata.
2. Not including the languages of Bougainville, which is geographically the same archipelago, but a different country (PNG), nor Santa Cruz, which is the same country but geographically separate.
3. In this respect the churches are quite unlike the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which has vernacular Bible translation as a major goal.
4. *Kastom* is the word for 'traditional belief and law' in Solomon Island Pijin.

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Is it Aulua or Education Dressed up in *Kastom*?[1]: A Report on the Ongoing Negotiation of Literacy and Identity in a Ni Vanuatu Community[2]

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This paper reports on two critical incidents in the progress towards implementing a vernacular language programme in the village school at Aulua, Malakula, in Vanuatu. In stage one of the fieldwork, (2000–1) an orthography was created by a committee. An element of the second stage of the project (2004–5) was a workshop to create the primers and reading material for the Class 1 curriculum. In both stages, issues regarding history, identity and locality were raised. In the first phase, the committee managed to weave these elements into the orthography. In the second, while subject matter for materials met local requirements of exploring local customs and histories, local discourse patterns of narratives were absent. This absence can not simply be justified by the transference of oral performance to written discourse.

Keywords: Aulua, literacy, narrative, orthography, Vanuatu, vernacular education

Introduction

Language is a possession of the cultural group who speak it; a point which cannot be forgotten when transforming a culture into a literate one. For this reason the development of literacy and its tools should not represent an intrusion into the community but rather a continuation and extension of the linguistic and cultural practices already in place. This paper explores two critical stages in a project to develop vernacular language education in the Aulua locale in Vanuatu where these forces were allowed to sculpt the tools of literacy – giving a distinctive shape to the orthography and the materials created to teach it. These materials were imprinted with local understandings of history and identity and demonstrate that vernacular language projects can and must represent the culture they put down on paper. Before examining the efforts of the orthography committee and the materials workshop, we will set the context of the vernacular project in its linguistic and political context.

Vanuatu is a country celebrated for its linguistic diversity. The population of about 200,000 is home to an estimated 80 languages (Crowley, 2000: 47). Not one of these indigenous languages acts as a lingua franca across the nation. Instead English and French, the languages of the co-rulers of the Condominium of the New Hebrides, a political entity that ceased with Vanuatu's independence in 1980, are the official languages. Alongside these so-called metropolitan languages, the English-based creole, Bislama has the status of the national language. This language is almost universally known and acts as the day-to-day vehicle of communication between people from different language backgrounds. All three languages – Bislama, French and English – can be heard in the media and in the

parliament. Despite having national language status, however, Bislama is reso-
lutely disallowed from the classroom, where the constitution prescribes the offi-
cial languages for use but not the national language or local vernaculars
(Crowley, 2000: 50).

Despite this situation, the idea of vernacular language education has experi-
enced both community and governmental support since the time of independ-
ence, but the complexity of the language situation has made it a slow and difficult
task for a developing nation. The assistance of the World Bank saw the drawing
up of an Education Master Plan (1999) that sought to introduce vernacular
languages to the early years of education – kindergarten and at least Class 1 of
primary school, as a bridge to learning in the metropolitan languages (Crowley,
2000: 79). However, a change in government in 2004 saw the abandonment of the
original master plan, although not a loss interest in vernacular education among
local communities.

The aims of any vernacular literacy programme are not simply to provide a
bridge to learning in another language, but also to support a local community
and local identity.

> Language is vital to local custom and values. Vernacular languages should
> have a place throughout the basic education system. They should not be
> seen just as tools to achieve literacy skills and then put aside. They should
> be regarded with more dignity and importance as the only true gateway to
> our Melanesian values and traditions. (Tamtam, 2004: 61)

In extremely multilingual settings such as Melanesia, the identity work of
vernacular education is felt to be of particular importance (Nagai, 1999; Nagai &
Lister, 2003). When developing literacy practices in a school-based program the
community needs to participate, guide and direct the development of key
components of the curriculum to reflect the local identity and culture, and this
need for community involvement is felt very strongly by Ni Vanuatu parents,
communities and educators, as is evidenced by the contributors to the *Rethinking
Vanuatu Education Together* conference held in 2002 (see Sanga *et al.*, 2004). As a
result of the emphasis on local identity and culture, although the understanding
that children will achieve better through first language education remains a
powerful argument, it may not necessarily be the primary motivation for estab-
lishing such a program in this setting.

For most Ni Vanuatu, education is completed at about the age of 11, either due
to lack of places at high school, or, particularly in the case of rural families, an
inability to meet the fees for secondary school. The short period of education of
most Ni Vanuatu is all the more reason that both aims of vernacular education –
educational development and cultural identity – must be stressed and an empha-
sis on learning in one's own language is seen as crucial to the individual and the
community they belong to:

> Vanuatu must contextualise its education system so that it is grounded in
> the cultures of its local communities. Local knowledge and wisdom must
> be part of the educational experience. The use of local resources and appro-
> priate materials that are familiar to the local communities empowers the

community to own and administer education. (Niroa, 2002, cited in Baereleo, 2004: 224)

Education for those who finish at the end of year six needs to contain some orientation towards the village and not be something that feels irrelevant or foreign to the participants (Niroa, 2004: 26). For this reason, the vernacular literacy project undertaken by the Aulua community strove to make sure that the education that will be offered through Aulua is *kastom* oriented, rather than taking the form of a foreign education 'dressed up' in local tradition.

The traditions of the Aulua community and its language are rooted in the south-east corner of Malakula, the island which has the most complex linguistic ecology in Vanuatu. Malakula is home to an estimated population of 30,000, who may speak as many as 30 languages. The Aulua locale is centred on the village, Lanvitvit, known to outsiders as Aulua, and the villages of Aserukh and Lambulbatuei. Besides these three major villages, which lie along the coast, there are a number of smaller hamlets, including tiny villages housing families who have returned from coastal settlements to the mountainous interior and the clan village traditions of their ancestors. On the surface, the answer to the question 'who are the Aulua speakers?' seems obvious – the inhabitants of the Aulua language locale. However, some people are considered more Aulua than others. This is the result of the complex history of Aulua as a language community.

The history of Aulua as a language community in some senses begins with the missionaries. It is the opinion of many locals that there was no recognisable Aulua community prior to the arrival of Missionary Leggatt at Aulua Bay in 1887, which at the time was part of the lands of a single *nasara* or clan. As prosetylisation began to succeed, the clans living in the mountains moved down and built coastal villages. These men from *antap* ('on top') brought with them their clan dialects and the current language appears to be the result of some minor dialect levelling. Memories of these clan differences and their linguistic shibboleths, however, have not faded. Various people claim various places or groups within the Aulua locale as the real Aulua/Aulua speakers. Few traces of the clans' dialectal differences remain, though there are members of one extended family that do speak a noticeably different version of Aulua. To make matters more complex, in Lambulbateui and its satellite village Seson (Sasun) the Aulua language has been influenced by contact with another language – Surua Hole, now extremely moribund with only two first language speakers left – and certain lexical items in the Aulua of these villagers are drawn from Surua Hole, allowing the speakers of Lanvitvit and Aserukh to claim that the people are not good speakers of the language.

The Presbyterian Church, the initiator of these social and linguistic changes in south-east Malakula, divided the island into various regions called 'sessions'. The Aulua session does not map exactly onto the original linguistic community, but covers all of the Aulua speaking area and also encroaches on the next language locale to the south, Vartavo. The villagers of Vartavo are speakers of Burmbar language, but because of the long history of Aulua as their religious and educational centre, Burmbar–Aulua bilingualism is the norm for the 100 or so inhabitants of Vartavo. The religious links set up by the missionaries have been

maintained through the session boundaries. In addition, education was origi-
nally provided by the Aulua mission to children from much of the south-east of
the island, making the language one of wider communication during the
missionary period (Crowley, 2000: 61). Today the school in Aulua Bay, at almost
the geographic centre of the Aulua locale, provides education to all the children
of the session including the Burmbar speaking children of Vartavo. Because of
these intimate ties, the local project committee set up for the second period of
fieldwork (2004-5) insisted that the people of Vartavo be included in the develop-
ment of literacy in Aulua[3] and the chiefs of the session and the project committee
insisted that the spoken Aulua and the narrative histories of Vartavo also be
collected for the project.

The Orthography

The first period of fieldwork was undertaken in the summer of 2000–2001 and
aimed to develop a phonological inventory for the language from which an
orthography could be developed. Over a three-month period, data was collected
in the form of wordlists from inhabitants of the three major villages via Bislama
and from these lists a phonology of the language was produced. This phonology
was compared with the orthographic system developed by the missionaries and
by using an extensive, though incomplete, copy of the missionary translation of
parts of the New Testament, it was possible to ascertain the likely phonetic
values of the original missionary orthography by matching the contemporary
vocabulary with the biblical. The missionary orthography and its phonetic
values are set out in Table 1.

There has been some reorganisation of the phonemic inventory since the 1880s
when Leggatt began the translations and the labiovelar nasal and fricative have
now been entirely lost. In addition, most of the population have merged the
(prenasalised) bilabial trill with the (prenasalised) bilabial stop. Only a few of the
older speakers have retained this sound, though even for them its distribution

Table 1 Missionary graphemes and their phonetic equivalents

Vowels					
missionary	*a*	*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*
phonetic value	a	e	i	o	u

Consonants								
missionary	$\tilde{b}$	*p*	*b*	*t*	*d*	*nr*	*k*	*c*
phonetic value	ʙ	p	b	t	d	$^{n}d^{r}$	k	g
missionary	$\tilde{m}$	*m*		*n*				*g*
phonetic value	m^{w}	m		n				ŋ
missionary	$\tilde{v}$	*v*		*s*			*h*	
phonetic value	Φ^{w}	Φ		s			γ	
missionary	*w*			*l*	*r*			
phonetic value	w			l	r			

Table 2 The phonemic inventory of Contemporary Aulua

Vowels					
	a	e	i	o	u
Consonants					
prenasalised stops		^{m}b	^{n}d	$^{n}d^{r}$	^{ŋ}g
plain stops		b	d		g
nasals		m	n		ŋ
fricatives		Φ	s		γ
liquids			l,r		

differs from the New Testament with many vocabulary items giving evidence of the merger. The segment does appear to be more frequent in the speech of the older generations of the bilingual elders of Vartavo than elsewhere.

As an experiment, I also informally tested a few of the elders who claimed to know the orthography by asking them to read from the translation of *Luke*. Their reading was laboured and full of hesitations and false starts. For most of them, their reading of the English translation was marginally better; however all were far more comfortable reading the Bislama version. The problem with the missionary orthography, apart from their lack of practice in using it, appears to have been the way it represented the prenasalised stops. It is possible that the missionaries did not understand that the prenasalisation of stops is a common pattern in the Oceanic languages of Melanesia, so it is impossible to tell whether the combination of the graphemes such as <g> and <c> where conceptualised as digraphs or as merely as sequences of graphemes. This is of issue at word boundaries were the nasal element is often missed in the translation. Further, in word-final position the combination of a nasal and stop in the Bible translations is usually restricted to the nasal and a voiceless stop, which creates the suggestion of more phonemic contrasts than really exists. This confusion can be made clear by examining the phonemic inventory of Aulua (see Table 2).

Contemporary Aulua has only a two-way contrast in the stop series. That is, nasalised stops contrast with plain stops, and voicing is generally conditioned by environment. In final position the stop element is devoiced by most speakers, but fully voiced intervocalically. In initial position the stop element is devoiced, and the nasalisation is very short and light, almost to the point of inaudibility. These distribution rules, known inherently by speakers, seemed to cause problems when speakers tried to interpret the series of nasal and stop combinations of the mission orthography. With the outright loss of two phonemes, and another, /ʙ/, in its final death throes, it was clear a new orthography would be advisable.

A committee for developing a new orthography was formed and included representation from the church, the three major villages and the kindergarten teachers.[5] Meetings were established to discuss the process of developing a new orthography, and at the final meeting, the committee was presented with a range of possible writing systems. Three orthographies were presented to the committee: a revised missionary orthography, a Bislama-based orthography, and a new

Table 3 The 'new' missionary orthography

Vowels					
grapheme	*a*	*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*
phoneme	a	e	i	o	u

Consonants						
grapheme	*p*	*b*	*t*	*d*	*nr*	*k*	*c*
phoneme	p	b	t	d	$^n d^r$	k	g
grapheme	*m*		*n*				*g*
phoneme	m		n				ŋ
grapheme	*v*		*s*				*h*
phoneme	ɸ		s				γ
grapheme	*w*			*l*	*r*		
phoneme	w			l	r		

orthography that was nicknamed the 'short system'. After much discussion of these and adaptation the decision was made.

Possible orthographies

The 'new' missionary orthography

The original missionary orthography was modified to reflect the changes in the phonemic inventory discussed above: the labiovelarised stop, nasal and fricative have been lost and the now superfluous graphemes with tildes were, therefore, removed. A subtype of this orthography was also developed which removed the allophonic representations of the earlier version, collapsing <mp> and <mb> as <mb> , <nt> and <nd> to <nd> and <gk> and <gc> to <gc> . This revised missionary orthography is shown in Table 3.

The Bislama style orthography

In Vanuatu, the government has suggested that, where new orthographies for vernacular languages are being created, they should be modelled on the standardised Bislama orthography and such an orthography was therefore developed (see Table 4). It should be noted, however, that the idea of a Bislama-based orthography is problematic as, outside the government ministries, people are not clear on what the standard is and Bislama as produced in the media utilises a number of competing spellings, some more phonemic, some more reliant on spelling norms of the lexifier language, even within the same document. Crowley (2000: 101–2) reports the Bislama word for 'republic' as written '*ripablik, repablic, ripulic, republik, republic, repablique, ripublique, republique* (and this does not exhaust all possibilities)'.

Because it is based on a phonemically very different system, the Bislama-based orthography maintains the use of a large number of digraphs and even adds a trigraph to depict the segment / ^ʔg/. However since the velar fricative is not a phoneme in the creole, the Bislama spelling system could not help with its representation. Looking at the government produced maps of the island, it

Table 4 The Bislama style orthography

Vowels						
grapheme	*a*		*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*
phoneme	a		e	i	o	u

Consonants						
grapheme	*p*	*mb*	*t*	*nd*	*ndr*	*k*	*ngg*
phoneme	p	b	t	d	$^n d^r$	k	$^{\eta}g$
grapheme	*m*		*n*				*ng*
phoneme	m		n				ŋ
grapheme	*v*		*s*				*kh*
phoneme	Φ		s				γ
grapheme	*w*			*l*	*r*		
phoneme	e			l	r		

seemed that the digraph <kh> is used to represent /γ/ as in the village name Aserukh /aseruγ/. When compared to the modern missionary version, there are few real differences. The Bislama velar fricative digraph contrasts with the single letter <g>, which is possibly an influence from the orthographies developed for Samoan. Both systems rely heavily on digraphs to represent the unit phonemes of the language, but the missionary digraph for the prenasalised velar stop would seem preferable to the Bislama system's trigraph. Given that Aulua is a language where the prenasalised stops in the bilabial and velar places of articulation have a very high frequency and that verbs undergo a fair amount of affixation and reduplication, the use of digraphs and or trigraphs would produce very long sequences of letters, which may make words seem daunting to new readers.

The short style orthography

The short style orthography (see Table 5) was developed directly from the phonemic inventory identified for the language. From a linguist's perspective the closest correspondence between the phoneme set and orthography would be the ideal, as would an orthography where there is a simplex grapheme to phoneme correspondence for ease and clarity or reading. The missionary orthography (potentially) relied on seven digraphs; roughly a third of the number of symbols had complex symbols. The number of digraphs could be reduced by encoding only phonemically relevant distinctions. Restricting the orthographic representation to the phonemic level rather than the allophonic level found in the missionary system reduced the need for the digraphic representations and it was possible to produce a writing system for the language that reduced the number of diagraphs almost to zero.

In this orthography, the voicing of stops, for example, which is only conditioned by environment is not signalled; however, the nasalisation is. What would be a voiceless stop in an IPA system represents the non-nasalised phonemes, where <b>, <d>, and <q> represent nasalised stops. The only digraph necessary

Table 5 The short style orthography

Vowels					
grapheme	*a*	*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*
phoneme	a	e	i	o	u
Consonants					
grapheme	b	d	dr	q	
phoneme	^{m}b	^{n}d	^{n}d^r	$^{\eta}$g	
grapheme	*p*	*t*		*c*	
phoneme	b	d		g	
grapheme	*m*	*n*		*g*	
phoneme	m	n		ŋ	
grapheme	*f*	*s*		*x*	
phoneme	Φ	s		γ	
grapheme		*l, r*			
phoneme		l, r			
grapheme	*w*				
phoneme	w				

in this system was for the prenasalised stop with a trill release, $/^n d^r/$. There were spare letters in the Roman alphabet available, but <z> , <h> , or <j> seemed inappropriate because learners of Aulua in the school setting were also expected to acquire literacy in a metropolitan language where the sound assigned to these spare letters would be unrelated or dissimilar to that of the prenasalised trill. It was, therefore, felt that this sound could best be represented by a digraph. To develop an appropriate diagraph a number of candidates were proposed that symbolised some aspect of the sound that a reader would need to reproduce – graphemes which include an initial nasal were considered, but I preferred the possibility <dr>, as this digraph combines the grapheme representing the prenasalised alveolar stop and the grapheme for the trill. For the velar fricative, I thought that <x> could represent this phoneme, as it nicely matched the orthographic – phonetic symbol overlap.

   At the orthography committee, the three orthographies were presented and discussed. The committee quickly agreed that the missionary orthography over-differentiated the allophonic variations, and the less symbols the better. For example, considering the missionary spellings *mbuagk* 'taro' and *mbuagc viti* 'Fijian taro', members could not hear the difference in the production of the two forms of 'taro'. The Bislama writing system was also rejected on a number of grounds. Aulua children were not taught to write Bislama at any stage at school. As Baynham and Masing (2000: 196) note, literacy is taught in the school languages – French and English – and then individuals transfer this privately to develop literacy in Bislama, which is also enhanced by frequent exposure to religious texts in the language. The committee could not see the point of having the spelling systems of the two languages conform if Bislama remained outside the

Table 6 The final orthography

Vowels					
grapheme	*a*	*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*
phoneme	a	e	i	o	u

Consonants			
grapheme	*b*	*d*	*nr*	*q*
phoneme	$^m b$	$^n d$	$^n d^r$	$^\eta g$
grapheme	*p*	*t*		*c*
phoneme	b	d		g
grapheme	*m*	*n*		*g*
phoneme	m	n		ŋ
grapheme	*v*	*s*		*h*
phoneme	ɸ	s		γ
grapheme		*l, r*		
phoneme		l, r		

classroom. Further they felt that since the sound /$^\eta g$/ is 'repeated' frequently series of the trigraph <ngg> made words look long and clumsy. They also voiced preference for the simplex <g> over <ng> for the velar nasal for the same reason.

The short form of the orthography stirred great interest in the committee. They agreed that the words looked shorter and clearer, and with practice they found that the nasality of the symbols <b> , <d> , and <q> was not difficult to remember. However, while they agreed in principle with the short form orthography, they were not entirely happy with it and the committee redesigned the spelling system to include elements of the missionary orthography. They preferred <v> to <f> and reinstated <h> as the velar fricative, which was from missionary times but also conformed to the one sound – one symbol principle. The members disliked <dr> stating that the sound had nothing to do with <d> , and reinstated the missionary orthography <nr>.

The orthography above (Table 6) was adopted for Aulua with one change made in 2005, <k> was substituted for <c> . In redesigning the short orthography and adopting this for future literacy work, the committee remade their orthography according to a local style, imbuing it with a local identity and a local history. The Aulua people very much identify with the Presbyterian mission, and are immensely grateful to Leggatt and the missionaries who followed him for bringing them out of the 'darkness'. One of the things that the missionaries brought was the gift of vernacular literacy and the recent attempts to create a village literacy program were seen as a continuation of that early gift not as something that was beginning from scratch. This was marked through elements of continuity between the orthographies.

Materials Development

The second stage of fieldwork for the project was conducted from November 2004 to April 2005. Part of the data collection for this stage was the amassing of narratives from all over the Aulua district. Narratives were collected from every

major village and many of the hamlets, and from every age group, from the youngest contributor at six years of age to the oldest at 95. These narratives were to be the basis of a text collection to be published with both the Aulua and the academic community as audience, together with a grammar and dictionary

Most of these oral stories were rich and complex in terms of both narrative and linguistic structure, but were never intended to be used directly as materials for the classroom. Narratives of clan origins, histories, and fables were to be the basis of a corpus of spoken language upon which the grammar would be based, and which would also provide vocabulary items that may not come up in everyday talk. To develop materials, interested members of the community were invited to participate in a workshop to draw on their knowledge of Aulua culture, their personal expertise in everyday tasks and their own lived experience to create the readers for Class 1 students. The workshop was attended by 26 villagers including three chiefs, a number of elders and the majority of the kindergarten teachers from Aserukh, Lambulbateui, Lanvitvit and Vartavo. The workshop was led by Helen Tamtam from the University of the South Pacific, Kalite Wenjio, a consultant who had been a key player in the implementation of the vernacular literacy program on nearby Uripiv Island and myself. A two-day workshop is a short time for developing materials; however, the village was engaged in the preparation for the arrival of a 400 strong delegation of Presbyterian women and could not set aside additional time. It was felt that a series of shorter workshops over the year 2005 would be more suitable for the community's time commitments, as the workshop participants were primarily women whose responsibilities to home and garden would not be met if they attended a workshop that lasted longer. Nonetheless, the workshop produced 14 finished readers and four more near complete stories.

Day one of the workshop included practice with the new orthography, a discussion on the nature of stories, followed by a guided writing exercise. Apart from the members of the orthography committee and a few of the elders who were surprisingly proficient, although not completely accurate in writing in the older missionary orthography, most of the workshop team experienced writing in their own language for the first time at the workshop. The approach taken to the teaching of the orthography was basically the phonics method promoted by SIL. Participants were not expected to achieve perfect control of the orthography from these short sessions, but it was felt that practising writing would promote a sense of ownership of the orthography and encourage the team to write in their own language rather than dictate their stories. There was a discussion of the types of story and their structure, giving them basic examples from very short texts in Bislama (under 100 words). This discussion outlined the different type of story that the community would be familiar with, *kastom storian* a term encompassing folktales, narratives, histories, Bible stories, etc. It gave participants key ideas about the importance of the beginning, the middle and the end of stories, and demonstrated these with short texts in Bislama written for literacy practice in that language. In self-selected groups, the participants then began to write stories in Aulua guided by the Bislama stories they had discussed and by picture books created in other languages. These stories were copyedited and put together. Participants then began free writing and illustrating their own stories,

some choosing to remain in groups, while others wrote their own stories. These stories were edited overnight.

Day two started with further practice with the orthography, a tutorial on editing and free writing and illustrating. The tutorial recapitulated the principles of capitalisation and sentence structure, and introduced editing as a way of enhancing the clarity of stories. The afternoon session was free writing and illustration with all the edited texts being copied by the authors and the books bound.

One of the surprising aspects of the stories produced at the workshop is how little their style matched the oral narratives collected in the field. Despite the fact that some of the participant writers had told oral versions of the same stories, linguistically, they differed remarkably. It seemed at first that Aulua speakers, who were mostly inexperienced in writing their language, had innate ideas about a written discourse style for their language. Features that consistently appeared in oral performances were removed and missing in the written stories were many of the discourse features signalling narrative opening and closing and aspect markers which indicate the duration of events. To illustrate these differences, consider the following story written by one participant of the workshop who had also given a much longer account of the same story in an oral recording in Aulua and Bislama.

> A Turtle Hunting Story
> 1. *Asmaq   ni,   a   Bugus   bav   a   Sivug   arasuahani   nahetubu*
>   man   here   PM   Bugus   with   PM   Sivug   3pl-row   canoe
>   'This man Bugus and Sivug are rowing the canoe.'
>
> 2. *Araqlo   nevia   morkon   nuta,   Honovet.*
>   3pl-look   turtle   near   place   Honovet
>   'They were looking for turtles near Honovet.'
>
> 3. *Qaresele   bohol   idoh   eni,   nahsen   Nabluh   Marta*
>   deep.place   one   3sg.exist   there   name   Hole.of   Eel.
>   'There is a deep place there called the Eel Hole.'
>
> 4. *Nabog ho   araben   morkonahani   nuta   ni   nahetubu   inron*
>   when   3pl-go   near-to   place   this   canoe   3sg-overturn
>   *bibatihte   bimo   nuta   ni   ibebe.*
>   because   before   place   this   3sg-holy
>   'When they got near to the place the canoe overturned because before this place was sacred.'
>
> 5. *Bugus   bav   Sivug   orometah   oroqela*
>   Bugus   with   Sivug   3dl-scared   3dl-cried.out
>   'Bugus and Sivug were scared and cried out.'

This story in many ways is an excellent example of the readers for Class 1 vernacular education. It is a story clearly grounded in the Aulua area – Honovet is a cliff that dominates the northern end of the locale. The story concerns a local (abandoned) traditional practice – the hunting of turtles – and describes traditional beliefs regarding sacred places that must not be trespassed. In the oral version, the storyteller also explained the sacred place is home to a clan ancestor and therefore tabu.

Structurally however, the story has lost some of its identity. The beginning of this story does not match the typical structure of an Aulua narrative. The opening sequence of 75% of all oral narratives excluding life histories, direct explanation of customs and recipes began with a sentence containing the verb *–doh* 'to exist, stay, remain'. Such opening sequences are equivalent to the formulaic 'once upon a time, there was . . . ' in English narratives. However, only one of the readers produced at the workshop contained an opening sequence including a form of the verb *-doh*. If an oral performance of a story were to begin with the characters performing some event such as paddling a canoe, the narrative would appear to begin at the middle. Similarly, the endings of oral narratives, as collected, are formulaic, and, although there are a number of constructions, *nrisvarene imka eni*, 'the story finishes here', is the most common. Without this 'signature' ending the story would also appear to end in the middle in an oral telling. The author of the turtle hunt story has, therefore, shorn away the typical discourse structures bracketing an Aulua story when transferring the story from the oral to the written mode. At the syntactic level, there are also some characteristic elements missing. Events such as paddling in this story are usually accompanied by a (zero-marked) verb – *ben*, 'to go' – that indicates durative aspect. In the oral version of the story told by the writer, and in other narratives collected from him, he readily uses this construction, as in the examples below:

6. *orosua   ben orobitahe   nuta bohol ho   nahsen Honovet*
   3dl-paddle DUR 3dl-reach   place one   COMPL name   Honovet
   'They paddled and paddled (until) they reached a placed called Honovet.'

7. *Ibis   anamedoh luvha sikarav anabeve ben ben ben ben*
   3sg-enter SS-IMM-stay middle garden SS-dig   DUR DUR   DUR DUR
   'He went into the garden and stayed in the middle and dug and dug and dug

8. *Hova ilig   nahab ren punsuq; iqan   iqan   ben ben ben*
   Rat 3sg-put fire   in   rubbish 3sg-eat 3sg-eat dur dur dur
   anabitahe   Noka
   SS-reach   Crab
   'Rat lit the rubbish and it burned and burned and burned until it reached Crab'

As can be seen in examples 7 and 8, *ben* can be reiterated it to indicate the length of duration of an action. This construction, used heavily in the oral performances of Aulua tales, is entirely absent from the turtle hunting story and indeed in all stories written for Class 1.

While it is natural that there will be differences between the written and oral codes of a language, most languages have developed discourse rules of their own to mark out the differences in code and genre. However, it appears that what happened at the workshop in the Aulua community was an unconscious transfer of the rules of the discourse of another language. The writers made their stories, which so clearly describe the identity and culture of their community – one of the major goals of vernacular education – conform to outside norms regarding written language. It may appear that the short texts in Bislama were responsible for this transference. While no story was a direct translation of the Bislama model,

the brevity of the stories and directness of their construction and the lack of Aulua formulaic components may have been perceived as part of the model by the Aulua writers. However, although it did not appear in the sample texts at the workshop, the creole does utilise the verb *go* to mark the durative aspect of an event, as the following examples from Crowley (2004: 104) demonstrate:

9. *Pasta i toktok gogo be mifela i sidaon kwaet nomo.*
'The pastor spoke on and on but we sw just sat quietly.'

10. *Pasta i toktok gogogogogogogo.*
'The pastor droned on and on and on and on and on.'

However, it may not be simply transfer from the workshop samples which has an effect here. The work of Tamtam (Masing, 1992; Tamtam, 2004) indicates another reason why this may have happened. Her work on documenting literacies in Lambulbatuei, shows that the dominant text type in that village is religious materials in English and Bislama (Masing, 1992: 51). Only 21 of the 637 books in the community were written in the vernacular, and of these none were on secular matters. The intimate connection between community, history and literacy is nowhere more strongly felt in Aulua as in the church and the only regular literacy event that most members of the community participate in is the Sunday morning service. The language of the church is predominantly Bislama; sermons and prayers are performed in the creole, and hymnals and Bislama Bible translations are for many the only reading event. The Bible translation presents elements of the (spiritual) history and cultures of the Middle East in the discourse forms of Middle Eastern culture, which do not conform to the presentation style of historical and cultural narratives in a Melanesian setting. Clearly there has not been any chance to develop distinctive ways of writing Aulua. It seems then that that the writers were modelling the written form of their narratives not on their own oral performance of the stories but from borrowed models encoded in Bislama familiar from other literacy events and based on other written genres, as well as the Bislama stories presented at the workshop. It seems that we have fallen into a trap here of focusing on content. We made sure that the values, traditions and local geographies became part of the vernacular curriculum, but we did not focus on cultural patterns of discourse and the possibility of transferring them into the new written code. Though the old adage that every good story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, we did not explore what exactly these elements might look like in Aulua. The inclusion of the bracketing structure of the oral narratives in the written version of narrative discourse would go some way to ensuring the inclusion of the distinctive narrative style is developed in written discourse as well. At a grammatical level, the inclusion of the durative marker, *ben*, may also go some way in enhancing the identity of the narrative as local.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined two key incidents in the development of a literacy program at Aulua, Vanuatu – the development of an orthography and a workshop to prepare reading materials – both of which demonstrate elements of local identity and culture. The new orthography decided upon by the committee rejected the elements of a linguist's one phoneme–one grapheme standard and

preserved some elements of the missionary system to connect with the intense feeling of respect for the Presbyterian mission's role in the development of the Aulua community. The contents of the materials created by the workshop for Class 1 were rich in the values and identities of the Aulua locale: however, inattention to the particular structures of Aulua discourse and grammar robbed the stories of a true Aulua flavour and promoted external discourse models. This demonstrates that attention to discourse structures and details of genre within the culture must be considered and included when creating materials for vernacular education.

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Notes

1. *Kastom* is a term in the creole, Bislama, capturing the meanings 'tradition, traditional knowledge, customary practice'.
2. I am grateful for the funding for this documentation project provided by the Marsden Grant. I would also like to thank the Aulua orthography committee, the participants of the materials workshop, and particularly the author of the turtle hunting story. I am also indebted to Helen Tamtam for all the fruitful conversations on vernacular education and documentation in her home community.
3. In fact the chairperson of the committee was from Vartavo.
4. At that time there were no Aulua speaking teachers working at the school.

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Bridging the Gap: The Development of Appropriate Educational Strategies for Minority Language Communities in the Philippines

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There are more than 6000 languages spoken by the 6 billion people in the world today – however, those languages are not evenly divided among the world's population – over 90% of people globally speak only about 300 majority languages – the remaining 5700 languages being termed 'minority languages'. These languages represent the ethnolinguistic diversity of our world and the rich cultural heritage embedded within cultural communities. Within the Philippines, language-in-education planning reflects issues associated with the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse nation. This paper examines language policy and planning at national level as it relates to elementary education for ethnolinguistic minorities. It includes a case study of one innovative community based approach being implemented by a northern Philippines language community to provide multilingual education using the first language of the learners as a foundation for quality language education in the national and international prescribed languages of instruction in the Philippines.

Keywords: language planning, vernacular literacy, Philippines, linguistic diversity, multilingual education

Linguistic Diversity in the Philippines

Kaplan and Baldauf (1998: 355) describe the Philippines as 'linguistically heterogeneous with no absolute majority of speakers of any given indigenous language'. Grimes and Grimes (2000: 598) list 168 living languages within the Republic of the Philippines. McFarland (1980) suggests that there are 120 languages spoken in the country while Dutcher (1982: 6) describes the linguistic situation as comprising 'from 70–150 mutually unintelligible vernacular languages'. However, approximately 90% of the population (Sibayan, 1974: 25) speak one of the eight major languages – Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bikol, Waray, Pampango and Pangasinan (see Table 1 for full list of major indigenous languages).

Table 1 Major indigenous languages of the Philippines and numbers of speakers

Tagalog	16,911,871	Waray (Waray-Waray)	2.400,000
Cebuano	14,713,220	Pampango	1,897,378
Ilocano	8,000,000	Pangasinan	1,164,586
Hiligaynon	7,000,000	Maguindanaon	1,000,000
Bicolano	3.500,000	Tausug	651,000

Source: Grimes and Grimes (2000)

While the Philippines is a linguistically diverse nation, policies for literacy development in education have focused primarily on a bilingual approach using only Filipino and English. For learners from minority language contexts, this is problematic as they often enter school without oral skills in either English or Filipino, and the languages of school are foreign. In order to provide optimum educational opportunities for learners from minority language communities, it would appear that a structured use of the home language on entry to school, systematically progressing to the languages defined in the Bilingual Education Policy would provide a firmer foundation in language education for minority language students. Although minority language education programmes are supported in a number of policy documents, current practice in the Philippines indicates that these are generally in initial stages of development or localised and not yet widely implemented. This paper will review policies related to language education for minority language communities in the Philippines and present a case study of a first language education programme in order to examine the process for establishing a viable multilingual education programme in the Philippines context.

Language and Education for Minority Language Communities

Information from intergovernmental agencies, such as UNESCO and other UN-related groups, indicates that there is increasing social and political support for multilingual education. International agencies have, for a number of years, recognised the close link between language and cultural identity. Articles 14[1] and 17[2] of the 1994 UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 1996 UNESCO Barcelona Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights both promote the desire to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of ethnolinguistic communities and the need to provide educational structures which will help maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community. Education should be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity. The UNESCO paper 'Education in a Multilingual World' affirms that:

> While there are strong educational arguments in favor of mother tongue (or first language) instruction, a careful balance also needs to be made between enabling people to use local languages in learning, and providing access to global languages of communication through education. (UNESCO, 2003: 7)

The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, promoted an expanded vision of basic education, calling for a learning environment in which everyone would have the chance to acquire the basic elements which serve as a foundation for further learning and enable full participation in society. This implies equity in access to education for all, irrespective of language, and strategies which meet the diverse learning needs of children, youth and adults from all communities within a nation. EFA initiatives espouse broad and deep partnerships between government agencies, NGOs and civil society.

Research and experience (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000; Dutcher, 2001; Dutcher & Tucker, 1996; Kosonen, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Thomas &

Collier, 1997, 2002) have shown that quality language education occurs most effectively when the learner begins to read and write in their first language – the language of the home and community – and when the learner transitions in a structured manner to other languages of wider communication used for education in the nation. Use of the first language in education has been shown to facilitate acquisition of literacy skills and provides the foundation for continuing self-learning. Studies in the Philippines by Bernardo (1998) provide evidence that cognitive maturity and resultant critical thinking skills are advanced by the initial use of the first language as medium of instruction in the early grades of elementary education.

International documents such as those discussed above can indicate trends and approaches adopted elsewhere and give direction for national policy, and, if multilingual education including the use of minority languages is to become an integral part of the formal system of education in the Philippines, it would appear that there is a need for significant policy change at national level. This paper considers the development of appropriate educational strategies for the linguistically diverse nation of the Philippines in the context of both the position of international agencies and also the history and nature of language policy in the Philippines.

Philippine Language Policy

Historically, Spanish was the primary language of instruction during the Spanish colonial period, which began in 1565 and, at this time, the public use of vernaculars in any domain was forbidden. Later, the Educational Decree of 1863 ordered the teaching of Spanish, however, for political reasons, the teaching of the Spanish language was not widely implemented. As a result, even after 300 years of Spanish colonialism, the Spanish language had not been widely propagated. The American 'conquest' of the Philippines in 1898 brought a new system of public education with an emphasis on the English language (Act. No. 74, 21 January 1901). Brother Andrew Gonzalez comments that, although:

> President McKinley's rhetoric at this time recommended the use of local languages, efficiency and expediency and ease for the foreign teachers turned the system into a monolingual system. (Gonzalez, 2001: 4)

In fact, from the time that widespread education became established in the Philippines (1900) until 5 December 1939, classes in all schools in the country were taught monolingually – using English only and the use of Philippine languages was not permitted in the schools (Sibayan, 1985). At that time, almost 85% of Philippine trade went to the United States and by 1932, the language of business had become English, although the judicial language was still Spanish. English remained the sole medium of instruction in schools until 1954 apart from a brief period during Japanese occupation when *Niponggo*[3] took the place of English.

The 1935 Philippine constitution (article 13, section 2) stated plans for 'the development and adoption of a common language based on one of the existing native languages'. Tagalog was proclaimed as the basis of the national language and Commonwealth Act No. 570 declared this Tagalog-based language as one of

the official languages of the Philippines, along with English. In 1959, Education Secretary Jose Romero issued a Department Order stating that the national language would be called *Pilipino*[4] to distinguish it from its Tagalog base and give it a national identity. The 1973 Constitution designated *Pilipino* as the new national language and as an official language, along with Spanish and English. The 1987, post-People Power I Constitution declared Filipino (now spelt with an F) as the national language as well as one of the official languages along with English and Spanish was dropped as an official language. The 1987 Constitution (in force as of 1994) also stipulated the creation of a new language body, *Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino* (Commission on the Filipino Language). Three Constitutions (1935, 1973, 1987) have therefore decreed that the national language is Filipino; however, there seems a clear intent that English should remain as an official language.

Language in education

In 1974, the current official policy on bilingual education in the Philippines was instituted by Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) Order No. 25 and subsequently revised in 1987 as DECS Order No. 52s (Quisumbing, 1987). This policy states that Filipino and English are the official languages of literacy for the nation, while allowing for the use of the local vernaculars initially as 'transitional languages' for initial instruction and early literacy up to Grade 3. In the revised 1987 policy, community languages were elevated to the role of 'auxiliary languages'.

The purpose of the policy was that the Philippines should become a bilingual nation with a population competent in both English and Pilipino (Gonzalez & Sibayan, 1988). This has been seen as a more realistic interpretation of the 1957–1974 practice which gave freedom to school administrators and teachers to choose and develop their own curriculum to suit local conditions and needs (Gonzalez, 1998). Education policy from 1957 until the early 1970s provided for the use of the vernaculars as media of instruction in Grades 1 and 2, with the teaching of English as a separate subject from Grade 1, and the shifting to English as the medium of instruction from Grade 3 on to college. The vernaculars were to be auxiliary media of instruction in Grades 3 and 4, while the national language was the auxiliary medium in Grades 5 and 6. However, this approach was highly dependent on the availability of materials in the local vernaculars and, in a country with limited educational resources, it was perceived to be difficult to produce materials in a large range of minority languages. The revised 1987 Bilingual Education policy, focusing on Filipino and English was seen as logistically and pedagogically more manageable, although some (e.g. Gonzalez, 1998) described it as a compromise solution, developed to incorporate the demands of both nationalism and internationalism. The Bilingual Education policy has continued, using both Filipino and English but in the process, local languages have been neglected although on paper they continued to be an accepted auxiliary medium of instruction (Gonzalez, 2001: 5).

The teaching methodology described in the 1987 revised language policy prescribes that the teacher use either Filipino or English, depending on the curriculum content: English for English language classes, Science, and Mathematics while Filipino is used for all other subjects. However, observation has

shown that teachers initially use the official language (either English or Filipino) for the curriculum matter and then repeat the same content using the vernacular to ensure that the students understand the material or they may codeswitch within the same utterance (Gonzalez, 1998; Young, 2002). In practice this often means that local languages are used to explain the curriculum to students rather than using them intentionally as the media of instruction. This approach is particularly prevalent in Grades 1 and 2, although it seems to diminish as students progress through the educational system and become more familiar with Filipino and English. In 2004, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo initiated a return of the English language as the primary medium of instruction in schools. One of the main reasons indicated for such move is to regain the competitive edge of Filipinos in the international labour market, the country being a top supplier of labour force, particularly in the field of information and communications technology, which are viewed by the government as foundations for future development.

Language-in-Education Policy in the Philippines

Issues relating to multilingual education and, specifically, the use of vernacular languages in elementary education, are of significant interest in a nation as linguistically diverse as the Philippines. Former DECS Undersecretary for Programs and Projects, Isagani Cruz, says:

> There is no question that the language policy of the Department of Education is a question mark. Enough emotion has been uselessly spilled by nationalistic or xenophobic and by misguided or colonially-minded Filipinos on this issue . . . (Cruz, 2004: 61)

An examination of a chronology of language policies of the Philippines (Brigham & Castillo, 1999) reveals pendulum-like swings from one language to another – with the inclusion of Filipino, English, regional languages and the learners' first language in various proportions and for differing purposes. There have been frequent efforts at incorporating vernacular languages into the curriculum of the Philippine elementary education curriculum and innovations such as attempts at vernacularisation (1903–9) and vernacular experiments in the Visayas region from 1948 to 1954 are particularly significant in relation to the social and political climate of those years. More recently, in April 2000, the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Educational Reform (PCER) were published, giving renewed impetus for the national use of linguae francae and vernaculars. The preamble to Specific Proposal Seven of the reform agenda reads:

> While reaffirming the Bilingual Education Policy and the improvement in the teaching of English and Filipino, this proposal aims to introduce the use of the regional lingua franca or vernacular as the medium of instruction in Grade One. Studies have shown that this change will make students stay in, rather than drop out of, school, learn better, quicker and more permanently and will, in fact, be able to use the first language as a bridge to more effective learning in English and Filipino as well as facilitate the development of their cognitive maturity. (PCER, 2000: 60)

In the spring of 2001, consultants appointed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) examined the feasibility of implementing the innovation described in Proposal Seven and the infrastructure required to support the successful expansion of pilot programmes that were in place. This study found that the elements which teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders considered important included teacher training in the use of the pedagogical idiom of the vernacular, materials development in vernacular languages and the development of strategies and approaches for optimising the skills that students have developed in the linguae francae or vernacular languages in learning Filipino and English.

In the last decade, Secretary Andrew Gonzalez instituted (DECS Memo No. 144 s. 1999, expanded by DECS Memo No. 2433 s. 2000) the use of the linguae francae in an attempt to implement a national bridging programme from the vernacular to Filipino and later to English to develop foundational literacy skills (Cruz, 2004). In his role as DECS Undersecretary for Programs and Projects, Isagani Cruz expanded the use of the linguae francae by adding more schools to the initial pilot phase of the project and adding more languages (DECS Memo No. 153 s. 2001), in effect expanding the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy to a 'still-unnamed and unacknowledged Multilingual Education Policy' (Cruz, 2004). The Basic Education Curriculum (DECS Order No. 25s 2002) as implemented by Secretary Raul Roco maintained a focus on the central role of language in education and retains the multilingual policy begun in the expansion of the Regional Lingua Franca Program.

Attitudes towards other vernacular languages

The major languages of education – English and Filipino – are frequently discussed in the literature relating to languages in education; however, there is comparatively little written about the many vernacular languages of the Philippines. This may itself be indicative of the value assigned to the languages of the provinces and the cultural minorities by language policy developers. During the early part of the 20th century, a push for English in education led to a flourishing of 'Speak English Only' campaigns, which led to:

> a feeling of insecurity/inferiority for those, largely the uneducated, who continued to speak their native languages. English was the language of the educated (the elite) and so the language came to represent a dividing line between the elite and the masses. (Brigham & Castillo, 1999: 48)

Dr Clemencia Espiritu (Brigham & Castillo, 1999: 25) surveyed teachers' attitudes to the use of vernacular languages in the classroom as recommended in the 1991 Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) and discovered that teachers were not in favour of a recommendation concerning the use of the vernacular in the three early grades as it would promote regionalisation. It would seem that the divisions found in the earlier part of the century may still exist.

The linguistic diversity of the Philippines, mixed with cultural, ethnic and economic diversity, leads to a complex situation, particularly when viewed in relation to issues of nationalism/nationhood and economic development (PCER, 2000; Sibayan, 1985). Sibayan suggests that minority language communities are marginalised politically, socially and educationally:

> Threatened with the loss of his ancestral land . . . to 'unscrupulous lowlanders' or to the government or to multinational corporations . . . unable to get a school education or to receive news in his own language through radio or newspapers and magazines and deprived of the privileges that the majority enjoy, the member of the linguistic minority, wherever he may be in the Philippines, lives a life that should be entitled to all the possible help and understanding from non-governmental and governmental organisations and individuals. (Sibayan, 1985: 527)

In another article, Sibayan suggests a socio-political argument against literacy in the vernacular:

> In a democracy, all citizens should have an equal opportunity to rise and the present language for attaining the better life, because it is the language for a good education and a good job, is English. The poor should have access to the language that provides for these opportunities. (Sibayan, 1999: 291)

However, the UNESCO October 2002 position paper 'Education in a Multilingual World' suggests that the process of beginning education in the community language of the learner enhances educational opportunities and that literacy for lifelong learning will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture.

The Lubuagan Kalinga First Language Component

The Lubuagan[5] Kalinga First Language Component project is a response to the need for piloting innovative approaches to literacy and education for minority language communities. Over the last century, many people who speak minority languages have become aware of the rapid changes that are taking place in the world outside their communities. They would like to have access to new information and technologies and to government education programmes. However, such ethnolinguistic communities often face two major problems – the community language is not used as the medium of instruction in government programmes and the curriculum is culturally distant from the worldview and experience of the learners. Therefore, in order to succeed in the education system, learners are often forced to sacrifice both their linguistic and cultural heritage in favour of national and international language education.

The municipality of Lubuagan lies in the province of Kalinga in the Cordillera mountains of northern Philippines. Lubuagan and its surrounding barrios have a population of around 12,000 situated in parts of two different valleys, hosting one school district with 13 elementary schools. There are also two private high schools and one public high school, opened in 2002. Lubuagan is a monolingual municipality with few 'outsiders' residing in town. Newcomers who move to the area for business purposes or through marriage learn and use Lilubuagen. The language of wider communication in the northern Philippines, Ilocano, is primarily used when one travels outside the language area. Therefore, the children in Lubuagan usually begin school speaking Lilubuagen but no other language.

The Lubuagan Kalinga First Language Component is a pilot project for multilingual education among a minority language community in the northern Philippines, which has been implemented within the formal educational system in

partnership with the Department of Education at local, regional and national level. This pilot project has demonstrated that there are strategies that can be developed in order to use community languages as a foundation for effective, quality education in the national and international prescribed languages of instruction. The Lubuagan Kalinga First Language Component project aims to incorporate cultural content and the use of the learner's mother tongue in order to optimise use of the knowledge and skills learners bring to the formal education context.

Developing the project

In 1998, in cooperation with the Provincial Superintendent of DECS,[6] an initial three year pilot programme was implemented to address the use of Lilubuagan in school and develop a structured method of bridging from the local language to the national and international prescribed languages of instruction. The starting point of the project was the work of Greg and Diane Dekker, members of SIL International, who lived and worked in Lubuagan from 1987 to 2000, analysing Lilubuagan phonology and grammar, and working together with members of the local community to begin production of local language literature (Dekker, 1999). Through discussion with members of the Lubuagan community, they identified challenges in the educational practice within the government schools affecting the achievement of children from the Lubuagan community. On this basis, the complex processes of developing a systematic and sustainable approach to developing the first language component project involves a number of significant factors (see Figure 1).
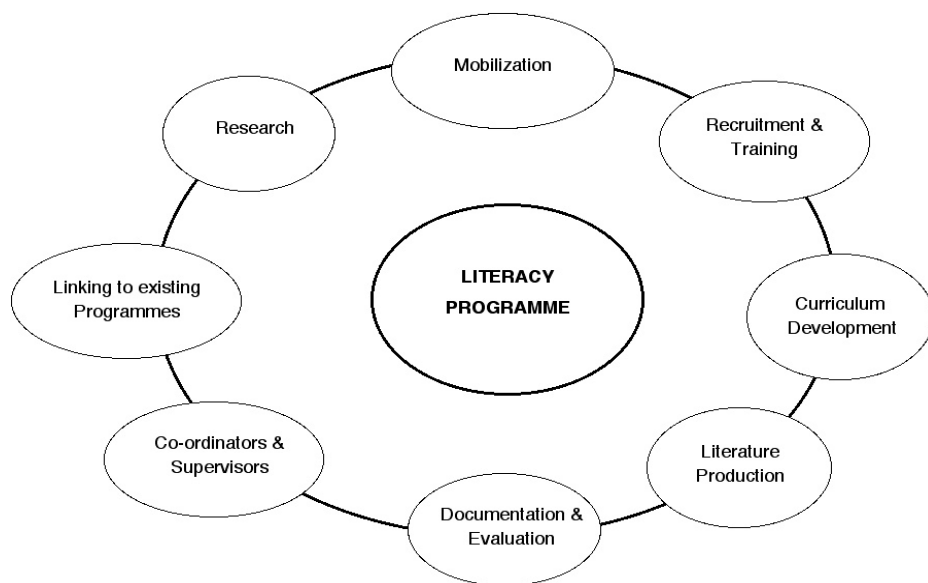
Figure 1 Components of a sustainable multilingual education programme (based on Malone, 2004: 8)

Figure 1 indicates some of the factors that should be considered when implementing a systematic and sustainable approach to first language education. Each component needs to be considered in the local context and in relation to the leadership that is available within the community. In developing the Lubuagan Kalinga First Language Component programme, therefore, the community had to consider each factor within the cycle of programme development and determine the means by which they could address the issues within the community. Some of these issues will be discussed below.

Community mobilisation

In 'The Treasure Within', the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century, published by UNESCO, Delors (1994) says:

> Local community participation in assessing needs by means of a dialogue with the public authorities and groups concerned in society is a first and essential stage in broadening access to education and improving its quality.

For a multilingual, community-based literacy programme to succeed it needs to be a community-managed programme where the skills and motivation for the continuation of the programme lie with community members. In mobilising a community for participation in a language development initiative such as a multilingual education programme, minority language speakers themselves must be convinced that the programme will meet the needs of learners in their community. It is important that strengths and skills are identified within the community and that the language community can also identify agencies that can help support the innovation. It is important to wait until the participants are ready to be involved and give their own response rather than rush people towards a decision. The challenge is often waiting for the moment to 'move'. At one point a significant Lubuagan community leader said, 'We do not give our input because this is so new and different and we need to think about it'.

Beginning in 1997, SIL International conducted a series of personal consultations and meetings in Lubuagan with teachers and parents. Through relationships that had been built within the community, the Dekkers were able to share information and ideas about first language education as the foundation for improved quality education. They shared stories of what was happening in neighbouring language communities and sample materials from Tuwali Ifugao, another mountain community where first language educational approaches were being piloted (Hohulin, 1993, 1995; Young, 1999). They shared theoretical studies that gave credibility to the approach that was being discussed. Through both formal and informal dialogue, they learned the concerns of the community regarding language and culture change issues. However, it required a young teacher named Rose, working in a private school in the mountain town to be willing to take a risk – she was offered the opportunity to take a course at an Institute of Technology for MA credit that included a component focusing on multilingual education strategies. Rose tried this innovative approach in her classroom – she used the mother tongue of the students as the basis for teaching Filipino and English, the national languages of education. The general opinion of the school

administration was that the children in this class demonstrated the best results (in standardised tests) for 25 years.

As the community vision grew, it was realised that, if there was to be community participation and ownership, then the leaders needed to be the ones to be the decision makers. Within the Philippine local political system, there are committees at local level addressing community social and economic needs and so it seemed appropriate to the community that they form a steering committee of educated people who brought particular skills and expertise to the group. The community selected people of influence and good reputation to be members of the committee in order that they would have a voice in the area for bringing such innovation to the education system. The steering committee launched a series of district-wide teachers' seminars on the First Language Component (FLC) bridging programme. The intent of these seminars was to share information and case studies related to first language education in the Philippines and in other parts of Asia, raising awareness in the minds of teachers, parents, community leaders and other key stakeholders of the potential of first language education and the inclusion of culturally related content in the elementary curriculum (Dekker & Dumatog, 2004). Awareness-raising for local teachers focused on affirming the teachers' cultural identity through shared reflection and shared insights on restoring or remembering one's lost cultural identity and unlocking the rich resources of the Lubuagan language by writing traditional stories in the vernacular that relate to the cultural world of the community. The teachers and those involved with the local steering committee also organised singing contests, word context contests, and riddle contests, demonstrating to the community the richness of the Lubuagan language and culture (Dekker & Dumatog, 2003).

The impact of the development of a community based steering committee was to place the ownership for the local level innovation in the hands of teachers and community leaders who were concerned about both the educational achievement of children and the maintenance and vitality of the local language. However, it is noteworthy that community mobilisation was not contiguous with the initiation of the educational innovation. Nearly two years after the formation of the steering committee, it was agreed that the pilot project should begin and the framework for implementation of the project was established. The issue of sustainability of literacy and language development programmes is a complex, multifaceted topic. The good start made by many literacy-in-development programmes needs to be maintained and developed on a sound methodological base in order that community based literacy is not simply a 'sprint' but an effective marathon. Educational innovation begun before the community is ready to respond may be self-defeating. Demand, as much as delivery, must be people driven, involving community members (Young, 2003).

Implementation of the First Language Component

The FLC programme was initiated in 1998 in five schools: Pudpud, Mabilong, Dongoy, Uma and Ag-agama. The curriculum followed the Philippines Department of Education curriculum in subject matter with language adjustments to include the first language (Dekker & Dumatog, 2003). Table 2 shows the curriculum developed for the project and the allocation of teaching for the three languages and for the various content areas.

Table 2 Lubuagan Kalinga First Language Component curriculum

	Lilubuagen *4½ hours per day*	*Filipino* *1 hour per day*	*English* *1 hour per day*
First semester	Language development through study of grammar, vocabulary, concept development integrated into reading, writing, culture study	Listening skills in Filipino taught through TPR – 6 weeks	Listening skills in English taught through TPR – 6 weeks
	Reading 80 minutes per day	Oral Filipino continued through listening comprehension, vocabulary building, and conversational skills	Oral English continued through listening comprehension, vocabulary building, and conversational skills
	Writing 45 minutes per day		
	Study of indigenous culture including arts, music, oral language styles, etc. 1 hr weekly	Oral Filipino through grammatical comparison between Lubuagan sentence structure and Filipino	
	Math 45 minutes per day	Bridging to reading Filipino at end of semester	
	Science 45 minutes 3 days a week		
	Social studies 45 minutes twice a week		

The most important consideration in the design is that a child's cognitive and affective development is closely related to the intimate relationship between the learner, his first language and his culture milieu.

Decisions about teaching methodology reached by the steering committee in the Lubuagan programme were based on the following premises:

- by using the students' first language in the classroom to teach literacy skills as well as subject content, the students' cognitive skills would be developed (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000);
- by teaching concepts in the first language, the students would be exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1991, 2000) and enabled to develop concepts further.

Separating content learning, new language learning, and acquisition of literacy skills would enable the students to focus on one discipline at a time. Thus,

basic literacy skills and content were to be mastered through the first language, and Filipino and English were to be taught as foreign languages, rather than used as media for learning subject matter or acquiring literacy skills. In the Filipino or English language lessons, content already mastered in the mother tongue would be used in order to focus on acquisition of additional languages.

Teacher training

Grade 1 teachers in the five schools which were identified as pilot schools were equipped with both an understanding of the theoretical underpinning of a multilingual approach in the classroom and pedagogical implications of implementing such a strategy. Part of the rationale for identification of pilot schools included the willingness of the teachers to be involved in the pilot programme, to be trained in participative strategies using the first language and to implement the innovation within their classes. Such participation is crucial in the planning, execution and management of innovative approaches to education in minority ethnolinguistic communities. This participation should include training in skills, promoting access to resources and institutional development. If foundational skills and knowledge are retained only by the initiator of the programme, it will never be sustainable, particularly if the programme initiator is an outside agency – either a government agency or an NGO. From the beginning, local people should be seen – and see themselves – as co-workers in the achievement of a vision for change internal to their context. From the outset, the philosophy of the partner organisation in innovation should be as an equipper of others to become interdependent workers.

Most public school teachers in Lubuagan have limited access to in-service training and refresher courses (Dekker & Dumatog, 2003). This lack eventually results in a significant loss of passion for teaching and it is a constant struggle to sustain and improve children's interest, attention, and comprehension. Participation in the planning and development of an approach to education using community language and cultural resources has produced motivation for professional growth and there are an increasing number of requests for seminars and workshops addressing issues associated with language in education.

Orthography development

Critical to effective development of instructional materials and literature for the development of reading fluency is an unambiguous writing system. Greg and Diane Dekker worked together with partners in the community to develop an orthography based on descriptive linguistic research and community input. Such participatory research and collaboration in the process of linguistic research encouraged the local teachers and community leaders to identify strongly with the orthographic choices that were made.

Curriculum development

The languages and cultures of the communities of the Philippines and issues of national language policy impact directly upon the development of appropriate curricula for literacy education in these communities. The indigenous peoples of the Philippines are communities bringing ideologies, values and cultural systems to the educational process that defines them as distinct from

mainstream Filipinos. Such cultural information integrated into the curriculum strengthens the connection that the learner can make between their community worldview and the culture of the classroom. Simple exposure to experiences does not lead to learning. The cultural activities of the community are incorporated into the learning process, making the children aware of and involved in what is happening in the community. This cultural content is related directly to the children's real-life experiences and builds on what they know rather than on expecting them to memorise information from textbooks, which have mostly urban-based, and thus alien, content and context. The teacher takes advantage of actual cultural objects or appropriate visual aids when introducing cultural events or information. In addition, when local cultural events are incorporated into the curriculum, students and teachers can participate together in field trips rather than merely focusing on foreign concepts included in national level textbooks. Thus, curriculum development for the Lubuagan First Language Component incorporated principles noted by Hohulin (1995) when describing a first language programme in the Ifugao province of the Philippines:

- a child's cultural model of the world should be used for helping him to process perceptual information, understand concepts, and form new ones;
- new concepts and skills should be built on existing knowledge structures rather than bypassing them by using a rote-memorisation methodology.

The teachers in the pilot schools and members of the steering committee worked together to identify themes and topics on which the the curriculum content could be based, ensuring that curriculum reflected what was familiar, relevant and interesting to the learners (Malone, 2004). The teachers used these themes to organise classroom activities and as a guide for the development of instructional materials. The development of a community calendar by the teachers proved useful when choosing themes for teaching. The calendar showed how activities in Kalinga were related to changes in the seasons, natural environment and other areas important to local people.

The pedagogical approach adopted in the Lubuagan pilot schools incorporated an adapted multi-strategy method (Stringer & Faraclas, 1987). Based on the global-linear model, the multi-strategy method accommodates both global and linear learners teaching basic literacy skills via two main approaches:

- the story track incorporates strategies from interactive whole language approaches, a holistic approach where the teacher emphasises the meaning of words and sentences in the context of a 'story', that is, any kind of text, and the creative aspects of writing an interesting 'story' for others to enjoy reading;
- the workbook/primer track emphasises parts of words and sentences, and the mechanical or technical aspects of writing such as correct spelling and clear handwriting.

The story track accommodates holistic learners – working from the top of the language hierarchy down to the word level, while the workbook or primer approach can accommodate linear learners – working from letter level up the hierarchy toward the story level. Many people learn to read without fluency and understanding and to write without creative expression. Fluency, understand-

ing, and creative oral and written expression are actively taught as a basic part of the multi-strategy method at every stage from the beginning to the end. As learners begin to express their thoughts in writing each day, they develop the power to communicate original thoughts so that others can read, understand, and enjoy. Dekker and Dumatog (2003) noted that the Lubuagan teachers identified a constant struggle to sustain and improve children's interest, attention, and comprehension of reading material in a second or third language However, the multi-strategy method is participative, involving an increased amount of oral interaction between students and teacher and has a strong focus on the development of oral language. The development of oral language is a strong value within a structured bridging programme.

Materials production

The availability of appropriate literature and instructional materials is a constraint often identified in the development of a localised curriculum and Sibayan (1985) notes that some of the problems associated with effective bilingual education among the linguistic minorities in the Philippines are related to a lack of reading and instructional materials in the language. The Council for the Welfare of Children (1999) report states that schools must change to serve the Filipino child – locally developed learning materials using vernacular language are suggested in order to maintain pupils' interest in the curriculum. This would serve to build the children's perception of the value of their language, increase their self-esteem and promote continuing involvement in the education process. Baguingan (1999) highlights the significant financial investment and teacher training required preparing instructional materials for the many languages of the Philippines (Young, 2002).

Initially, the quantity of reading material was minimal and teachers had to write stories on flip charts to give the students more opportunity to read. The teachers of Lubuagan prepared a series of bilingual traditional stories of Lubuagan for use as a reader by students in the elementary school. These stories reflect the culture and lifestyle of the students and encourage comprehension development and reflection on the content by including familiar situations and increased contextual clues. These books have been successfully used with both early elementary children and non-readers in the upper grades of elementary school to motivate and interest the students. Some of the stories included in the readers were written by the teachers themselves, while others were written by members of the Lubuagan community at writers' workshops. In addition, the multi-strategy method described above uses children's experiences to develop experience stories for shared reading. Each experience story adds to the corpus of reading material that is available in the classroom.

Evaluating the project

If the model developed in the Lubuagan Kalinga community is to be considered for adoption in other minority language communities, there appears to be a need for a detailed evaluation of transitional education strategies and the ways in which these impact on children's early educational experience. In association with the Department of Education in Kalinga, other educational agencies in the Philippines and the Lubuagan Kalinga first language education programme

described above, SIL International is beginning a 10-year longitudinal study to examine the impact of a structured approach to language education, bridging from the learners mother tongue to the national and international languages of education. The critical question, motivating this extensive research project concerns the educational outcomes for Lubuagan students. Will the introduction of first language literacy and interactive instructional strategies in the Lubuagan educational system improve educational outcomes for Lubuagan students? Included in the study are an examination of general academic performance, language acquisition issues and participatory measures. In the Lubuagan first language education programme, interactive strategies are incorporated. An attempt will be made within the study to assess whether interactive strategies independent of language of instruction improve educational outcomes or whether the addition of a firm foundation in the home language provides the basis for a strong bridge to improved literacy skills in the additional prescribed languages of instruction.

The high attrition rate, especially in non-Tagalog speaking parts of the Philippines attests to the failure to meet the educational needs of a significant percentage of the population. At a presentation to the Congressional Oversight Committee on Education, Acuna and Miranda (1994) confirmed that the children from the poorer areas of the country are those less well served by the educational system. More recently, the Philippines Education for All (1999) report stated that, although the Philippines has had few problems or deficiencies with respect to access and participation in the primary education level, the children who have been left out are precisely those in the hard-to-reach areas and marginalised communities. Through tracking learners over their school careers, researchers will measure whether the first language bridging programme and the interactive teaching strategies employed in the classroom raises the persistence of students in school and results in a higher proportion continuing to High School.

Conclusion

Learners from the ethnolinguistic minorities in the Philippines often enter school to experience an environment where the language of instruction and the environment of the classroom are alien. In order to offer these children optimal conditions for learning, it would seem important to incorporate their home language and pre-school experiences into the curriculum. From this firm foundation, a strong, sequential bridge is built from the mother tongue to the prescribed languages of instruction within the Bilingual Education policy. The need for appropriate language education for minorities in the Philippines has been recognised in policy, as shown above, but neglected in practice. Pilot programmes such as the Lubuagan First Language Component indicate that community based innovations using the language of the learner can be successfully developed. Strengths of the Lubuagan project include consultation with the community leading to active involvement of community members in the planning, development and systematic evaluation of the programme.

Offices involved in language planning and policy development are located in a number of Philippine institutions. Interagency dialogue is essential to promote a unified approach to the use of the first language in education. For the Philip-

pines to respond effectively to the demands of globalisation and the responsibilities of Education for All, it is necessary for educational, social and economic agencies to cooperate in an analysis of research findings on the impact of first language education and the implications of a review of language policy issues in the Philippines.

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Notes

1. Article 14: Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalise, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. States shall take effective measures, especially whenever any right of indigenous peoples may be affected, to ensure this right and to ensure that they can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.
2. Article 17: Indigenous people have the right to establish their own languages. They also have the right to equal access to all forms of non-indigenous media. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity.
3. i.e. Japanese. During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, *Niponggo*, along with Tagalog, was declared an official national language.
4. *Pilipino* was the spelling of the name of the national language used until Constitutional reform in 1987 ratified the spelling as *Filipino*.
5. Lilubuagan is the term used for the language; Lubuagan is the place name.
6. Now, Department of Education.

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Literacy and Language-in-Education Policy in Bidialectal Settings

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The acquisition, fostering and further development of literacy in bilingual situations has been widely studied but similar issues in bidialectal settings where nonstandard and standard languages coexist have not attracted sufficient attention. This is the second of a series of studies investigating the use of nonstandard languages or dialects in the Cyprus educational setting. The first paper (Pavlou & Papapavlou, 2004) examined teachers' attitudes towards the use of the Greek Cypriot dialect (GCD) in primary education and their own linguistic behaviour inside and outside class. The present paper reviews the current language policy in Cyprus in relation to literacy acquisition and development and (1) investigates primary teachers' views on the use of GCD and how this usage affects students' literacy acquisition (i.e. linguistic performance, educational attainment, and psychological welfare), (2) examines how teachers view the adequacy of GCD as a linguistic system, (3) delineates those factors that shaped teachers' attitudes towards GCD, (4) discusses the relation between dialect use and ethnic identity, and (5) explores teachers' stance on language policy matters.

Keywords: literacy policy, non-standard languages, biliteracy, Greek, Cyprus

Introduction

One of the main goals of education is the acquisition of literacy skills by the learners which will then allow them to access and use information, develop intellectual skills, express themselves through the medium of language and finally better understand themselves and their social and cultural environment. It is commonly accepted and supported by UNESCO that education is most successful, and therefore, the above-mentioned goals can be most effectively achieved, if it is conducted in the learners' home language. Therefore, the issue as to whether children who speak nonstandard languages or dialects should be educated in a standard language and thus be denied access to education through the medium of their home language has concerned researchers for many years. The literature on this issue is complex, diverse, and contentious and the subject, in many ways, even to this day, remains unresolved (see Cheshire *et al.*, 1989; Driessen & Withagen, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1997; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Sonino, 1986).

The arguments for and against the use of nonstandard dialects in education can be summarised as follows. Those in favour of nonstandard languages argue that children should be given the opportunity to use and practise in school the language they speak in their home environment, and be given the chance to develop their own identity and strengthen ties with their own cultural tradition. Cripper and Widdowson (1978), who are strong proponents of first language education have the following to say about nonstandard languages and dialects: 'Dialects . . . express a way of life and sense of cultural identity just as much as do more prestigious language types' (Cripper & Widdowson, 1978: 197). In addi-

tion, the authors argue that 'by conducting education in the standard version of the language one might change the values of the learners, which bind them to their background and thereby cut them off from their cultural heritage' (Cripper & Widdowson, 1978: 197). Similarly, Romaine argues that, ' . . . it can easily be shown that nonstandard varieties of language are just as structurally complex and rule-governed as standard varieties and just as capable of expressing logical arguments as standard speech' (Romaine, 2000: 214). Furthermore, James (1996) reviewing several studies (Garrett *et al.*, 1994; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Ramirez & Yuen, 1991; Swain, 1996) advocates the use of nonstandard languages. The arguments for the 'beneficial' use of nonstandard languages or dialects in education (especially when these nonstandard languages or dialects are the students' first language) focus on the enhancement of children's cognitive development, on the fostering of literacy in the most efficient and resourceful way, on the development of a positive self-image and self-esteem, and on the appreciation of one's cultural values.

The inclusion of nonstandard languages or dialects in education finds further support from experts engaged in research on multiple literacies, biliteracies and local literacies (Hornberger, 2002, 2004; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984, 1994). In particular, Street (1994) advocates that ' . . . local languages and literacies have a positive and constructive contribution to make to world development and change, whilst the uniformity assumed by mindless pursuit of a single language and a single literacy is damaging and impoverishing for all of us' (Street, 1994: 10). Moreover, Street points out that

> whilst language and literacy are frequently closely connected with local or regional identity, international co-operation in many areas, especially education, is encouraging the spread of a limited number of major international languages and literacies . . . , sometimes at the expense of these local languages and literacies. (Street, 1994: 9)

This practice is also observed on national and regional levels where standard languages and literacies are promoted, thus ignoring local or regional or nonstandard dialects and literacies.

Research on the effects of language attitudes on language planning and literacy are very limited in the Cyprus context. One study (Papapavlou, 2004b) indicates that while participants (Greek Cypriot university students) do not appear to question the linguistic adequacy of the Greek Cypriot dialect (GCD), they admit that the use of Standard Modern Greek (SMG) poses several problems for Cypriot children. While participants acknowledge the numerous beneficial effects that the use of the dialect in the classroom could bring about, they unanimously reject the introduction of the dialect as a medium of instruction and rather propose the introduction of bidialectal education in state schools (which they understand to be an equal or nearly equal exposure and use of both SMG and GCD in the classroom). Thus, bidialectal education, or multiple literacies, is seen as a way of elevating the status of the dialect, enriching speakers' confidence and self-esteem, appeasing national sensitivities and securing equal competencies in both codes.

On the other hand, those promoting the use of standard languages (e.g. Di Pietro, 1973; Gupta, 1994, 1997; Kroch, 1978; Phillipson, 1992 and others) believe that in some language situations primary education in the home language

(nonstandard dialect) may not be desirable for many reasons. These and other investigators bring to the foreground of their argumentation that standard languages normally secure equality, provide empowerment for individuals and present equal employment opportunities for all citizens. They argue that individuals who are taught in a nonstandard language have limited opportunities in professional, socio-political and economic endeavours, especially when competence in the official language of the state is required (which, in most cases is the standard language). Thus, such a situation may 'privilege' certain individuals due to their mastery of the standard form and deny access to key positions for others because of language barriers. Further to these arguments, proponents of the use of standard languages bring in some 'practical' problems that should be considered seriously when nonstandard languages are used in education. Some of these are (1) changing the whole school curriculum, (2) rewriting material in the nonstandard form, (3) developing appropriate grammars and dictionaries, and (4) re-education of teachers to teach in the nonstandard form. Such attempts usually require large investments in terms of time and money and thus governments are normally reluctant to implement such language policy reforms.

Current Language Policy in Cyprus

Since the present study deals with the role of nonstandard languages and dialects on literacy acquisition, and since this subject involves issues of language-in-education policy and planning, it is imperative that we take a look at the language policy in Cyprus before presenting the results of the current study.

The language policy in Cyprus can be characterised as a covert policy as it has never been clearly articulated in an official declaration or decree, nor is it presented in any specific, official, governmental document. Nevertheless, it is widely known among educators that the language of instruction at all levels of education is the *Koini Neoelliniki* or Pan-Hellenic Demotic Greek (SMG) due to the fact that the national curriculum in Cyprus is, to a large degree, a replica of the one used in Greece. The declared preference and almost exclusive use of SMG in education erroneously assumes that the native language of Greek Cypriots is SMG; however, the language children *use at home* and bring to school is the GCD. Although SMG may not be considered as a different or as a 'foreign' language for Cypriot children, it is though a code that is not felt to be their own natural 'native' way of communicating with each other or with their parents and so is not actively used before entering school. In other words, Cypriot children recognise SMG as the language used in 'other' Greek communities (Ioannidou, 2002; Papapavlou, 2004a, Papapavlou & Pavlou, 1998; Yiakoumetti, 2003).

Since the language policy is not overtly stated, the role and use of GCD remain, to a large extent, unclear and it can only be deduced from various official publications and circulars sent out periodically to schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In one of these documents, namely the *Analytic Curriculum for the Lyceum* (2000),[2] regarding the issue of language and language varieties, it is stated that the main objective of language lessons should be for students to acquire an awareness of their national language (that is, SMG). However, students also study Greek dialects in a course on geographical language varieties the major intention of which is for students to be made aware of the horizontal

division of the Greek language and its differentiation in the various places where the language is used. This aim, of course, as stated in the document, is not to encourage students to speak the various dialects or idioms but rather to help them understand the *dialects* (understood as having greater differentiation from Demotic Greek) and *idioms* (having lesser differentiation) that compose *Koini Neoelliniki* and enrich it. In other words, as stated in the document, students should learn to appreciate and respect the sources that enrich their language. In this way, urban dwellers' negative attitudes and disrespect towards idioms and dialects would be eradicated and students who have as their home language a certain idiom or a certain dialect would not be made to feel that they speak an inferior or degenerate language. In addition, the authors of the document state that the teachers' attitudes are expected to contribute decisively in influencing students' perceptions of nonstandard varieties of Greek, especially when they do not characterise the idiomatic or dialectal features of the students' language as expressive mistakes. Positive perceptions could also be reinforced if teachers during class time provided explanations as to how the expressions students use function in the dialect. It would be equally beneficial if teachers used these differences between SMG and GCD as facilitators in order to encourage students to search for equivalent and corresponding linguistic elements in *Koini Neoelliniki*. A similar emphasis of language variation is found in the course on social language varieties, the main aim of which is to make students aware that oral and written language are affected by such factors as social class, education, age, sex, profession, ideology, etc. Students should recognise that, as in all languages, in *Koini Neoelliniki* there are also several stylistic levels and registers.

Finally, in the course on the literature of Cyprus, and especially in the section covering the poetic works of Macheras, Michaelides and Lipertis, it is stated that one of the many aims of this part of the curriculum is to teach students to recognise and appreciate the uniqueness of this poetry, which is mainly attributed to the 'Cypriot linguistic idiom', and the creative strength of these literary men. In a further document, the *Anthology of Cypriot Literature* (2002), used in the Lyceum, it is suggested that Cypriot literature should be thought of as being part of general Greek literature. The authors of the document believe that the aim of covering various Cypriot literary works is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the aspirations and struggles of Cypriot Hellenism.

While the documents above acknowledge the existence of both standard and nonstandard forms of Greek in the Cypriot context, they do not deal with the role of GCD in education. The one document that makes direct references to the present language policy on GCD in schools is a circular from the Ministry of Education and Culture entitled *GCD and Koini Neoelliniki*, which was circulated to all schools in August 2002. This document states that the official language of the Republic of Cyprus is *Koini Neoelliniki* which, it says, constitutes the common language for all Greeks. In Greece, as well as in other Greek-speaking communities worldwide, several dialects, such as the Cypriot and the Cretan dialects, are respected and maintained in addition to the use of *Koini Neoelliniki*. GCD may, therefore, be used in Cypriot schools to the extent that it facilitates and enhances effective communication. The document also reiterates the basic aims of other educational documents and states that the aim of language lessons is for the student to become aware of the social and geographical variations of the Greek

language and gain knowledge about his or her linguistic tradition by reinforcing the diachronic elements of the language currently in use. The Ministry of Education and Culture, the document reiterates, shows respect and affection towards all works of Cypriot literature as many of these works, mainly written in GCD, are true masterpieces that can contribute to Cypriot self-awareness and understanding of Cypriot culture. For these reasons, the Ministry incorporates them in the curricula and encourages the study and promotion of such masterpieces for the literary empowerment of Cypriot students.

The document continues by stating that both teachers and students are generally expected to use *Koini Neoelliniki* in the classroom. It also states that GCD should be treated respectfully and may be used on special occasions such as in theatrical performances and school events. The use of GCD is also legitimate, according to the document, when students face difficulties in oral discourse, especially in the lower grade levels of elementary school. All of these recommendations, the document states, should be carefully thought out and should not undermine the cultivation of *Koini Neoelliniki* which is the national and official language of Cyprus.

The widespread use of the dialect for oral communication among Greek Cypriots is well attested in another document entitled *The Teaching of Greek as a Foreign Language* (Council of Europe, 1996: Threshold, Volume A, Appendix C). The document attests to the fact that learners of Greek as a foreign language in Cyprus come into contact with the local dialect, especially as a means of oral communication. Therefore, it is considered necessary to provide learners of Greek as a foreign language in Cyprus a description of the basic differences between the dialect and the standard. In order to meet this need, a committee comprised of members from the Ministry of Education of Culture (Cyprus) and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Greece) has prepared an appendix which provides some background information on the dialect, clarifies the current linguistic scene in Cyprus and illustrates the major characteristics of the dialect (lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic and pragmatic) by providing numerous examples in each category (such examples can also be found in Pavlou & Christodoulou, 2001). Finally, it is strongly emphasised in this document that Greek Cypriots are privileged to be able to express themselves in Standard Greek and the GCD itself.

Thus, it may be deduced from these documents that, although Cypriot students are not encouraged to speak their dialect in the classroom, there is an indirect admission that their home language is indeed GCD and that it can be appropriately used in certain situations (for example, in theatrical plays and school functions and for providing explanations of difficult concepts to younger learners). In general, the various documents suggest that the dialect should be respected, and that it can be creatively exploited for the enrichment of Cypriot students' linguistic awareness and language competence.

The education authorities, however, choose to ignore the reality of actual classroom practices concerning the role and use of the dialect in the classroom. Moreover, the authorities do not appear to be concerned as to whether changes in language policy are needed and this lack of interest is evident from the fact that no official discussions have taken place recently. The lack of serious concern with language policy and literacy matters is further evidenced by the recent work in the Ministry of Education and Culture (Cyprus). The Ministry recently commis-

sioned a seven-member committee comprised of academics from Cyprus and Greece with the mandate of reviewing the present education system of Cyprus. The aim of the review was to generate recommendations for the restructuring, reformulation and modernisation of the system and language issues legitimately fall within the scope of such a review. The committee, after a year's work, in August 2004, published a 360-page document, which included 18 chapters. Although the document addresses numerous issues and is very comprehensive, no mention of any kind is made about language policy and planning relevant to issues such as literacy in the home language, language of instruction, and so on. Moreover, no relevant recommendations are presented regarding the need, if any, for re-examining the existing policy. While the committee provides specific recommendations for the restructuring, reformulation and modernisation of the system (having as models several European systems of education), there is no reference to literacy issues and to language policies followed by other European states or the various directives of the EU, which recommend respect for minority languages and dialects and their inclusion in school curricula. Since the entire educational system is currently under review, one would have hoped that this would have been an opportune time to address the role of GCD in education.

As a way of considering the status of GCD and its implications for literacy development and schooling in general, in the current study an attempt is made to investigate primary school teachers' opinions on the students' use of GCD in class and whether this usage has any effects on students' literacy acquisition in terms of linguistic performance, educational attainment and psychological well-being, examine teachers' views on the adequacy of GCD as a linguistic system and the factors that have shaped their attitudes towards GCD; look into perceptions of the relationship between dialect use and ethnic identity; and explore the role that teachers could play in language policy matters.

Method

The study collected information from 133 Greek Cypriot elementary school teachers who were randomly selected from 14 schools in the major urban centre of the island, Nicosia, using a questionnaire, the use of which for attitudinal studies is aptly justified by Cargile *et al.* (1994).

The four-part questionnaire was prepared for this study (see Appendix). Participants were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements by using a five-point Likert scale. Statements in Part One of the questionnaire focused on teachers' attitudes towards the use of GCD by students in the classroom and the teachers' own linguistic behaviour inside and outside the classroom. The second part of the questionnaire examined teachers' opinions on students' use of GCD and how this usage affects students' literacy acquisition. The third part investigated the opinion and attitudes teachers hold towards GCD and the fourth part focused on teachers' understanding of the relationship between dialect use and identity, as well as their views on language policy matters.

The completed questionnaires were tabulated and analysed statistically. For statistical purposes, for all parts of the questionnaire the responses for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' are represented as a combined value labelled 'agree' and for

'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' labelled 'disagree'. The value 'uncertain', however, remains unchanged.

Results and Discussion

Attitudes towards the use of GCD in the classroom and teachers' linguistic behaviour

The study[2] of attitudes and linguistic behaviour, reported in detail in Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004), revealed several interesting findings. Teachers consider it their duty to correct pupils when they use the dialect in class (more so in writing than in speaking). Because of repeated corrections, children are often made to feel, perhaps unintentionally, that their own natural way of speaking is erroneous, substandard or impolite. As a result, children appear uneasy when using their native code and gradually come to believe that this code is incorrect, unintelligent and improper, in other words, they speak *xorkadika* 'peasant-like talk'. Teachers appear to be less strict over the use of the dialect in class in certain domains, such as when it is used for being humorous, or witty, or for complaining or chatting on everyday issues. On the other hand, teachers prefer to use SMG when reprimanding students, as this is the code that represents officialdom and authority. Teachers also find the use of the dialect more appropriate when it serves such purposes as joking, counselling a student, using humorous expressions and when they need to provide explanations for concepts that students have difficulty comprehending. While SMG predominates in class, the great majority of teachers confess that they often use GCD with colleagues outside the classroom. Apparently, feelings and intentions are normally perceived as more sincere and honest when expressed in the dialect while the use of the standard form immediately signifies the existence of a distance between speakers.

Overall, these results have implications for the ways in which literacy is developed in Cypriot schools. When teachers express negative attitudes towards dialect forms and dialect use, they inadvertently create an unfavourable environment which may prevent students from expressing themselves freely in their native code, especially those who feel much more comfortable in the local dialect, because such contributions are treated as language errors. SMG and GCD are not seen as components of students' language abilities and GDC, and practices constructed using GCD, may be stigmatised. Consequently, this negative environment may affect students' communication since it discourages them from speaking and practising their language skills, and from being intellectually active and creative. Such mental inertia is not conducive to the enhancement of literacy in the most effective way.

Teachers' evaluation of students' use of GCD in class

The second part of the questionnaire examined teachers' opinions on students' use of GCD and how this usage affects students' literacy acquisition. Figure 1 shows teachers' opinions on eight issues relating to the effects of GCD usage on the mastery and use of SMG, how correcting and reprimanding students' GCD usage affects their self-confidence and finally whether users' place of residence (rural vs. urban) and family environment has any adverse effects on scholastic achievement.
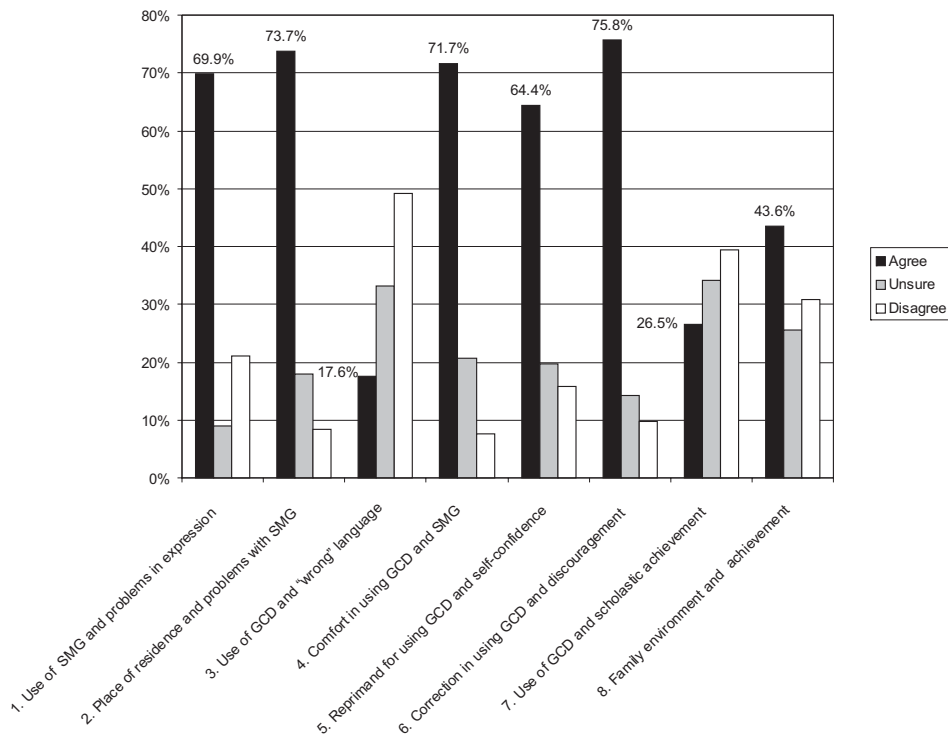
Figure 1 Teachers' evaluation of students' use of GCD

As can be seen from Figure 1, the majority of teachers (75.8%) agree that students are discouraged when repeatedly corrected for using GCD in class and 73.7% agree that students from rural areas encounter far more serious problems when expressing themselves in SMG rather than students from urban areas. Also, a large number of teachers (71.7%) agree that students feel much more comfortable when using GCD rather than SMG in class and 69.9% think that students encounter far more serious problems when expressing themselves exclusively in SMG. Also, 64.4% agree that students' self-confidence is negatively affected when reprimanded for using GCD in class. On the other hand, almost half of the teachers (49.2%) disagree that when students express themselves in GCD they are considered to be using an unsophisticated and 'coarse' language. Furthermore, 39.4% of the teachers disagree that the encouragement of GCD usage in class and in the family environment (30.8%) leads to lower levels of scholastic achievement.

Globally, the results of Figure 1 reveal that teachers recognise the detrimental effects that repeated corrections may have on students' linguistic behaviour and are also aware that students' place of residence (rural vs. urban) plays a major role in mastering SMG. In addition, teachers appear to be familiar with the fact that students experience problems in expressing themselves in SMG, that they feel much more comfortable when using GCD and that their self-confidence is affected if they are reprimanded for using it in class. However, teachers do not

seem to be in agreement that GCD is an unsophisticated and 'coarse' language and finally, teachers do not accept that the use of GCD in class and with family members adversely affects students' scholastic achievement.

If a wider definition of literacy is adopted, that is, one that goes beyond the ability to read and write and includes a person's capability of accessing and using information, the results of this section imply that students may be perceived as having imperfect or substandard literacy because they are evaluated, by teachers and by the educational system itself, against the linguistic standards of SMG and not GCD. The use of GCD is seen in deficit terms and rural students are seen as having a greater language deficit than urban students. If students were allowed to express themselves in whatever code they felt most comfortable with, and without the fear of being repeatedly reprimanded, then they might have much more to talk about and in a more heartfelt way, and thus their verbal abilities would be judged as more elaborated, (cf. Bernstein, 1971; Labov, 1969) than they currently are, when use of the home language is seen as an error.

Teachers' evaluation of and attitudes toward GCD

The third part of the questionnaire investigates teachers' opinions and attitudes towards GCD and the results appear in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows teachers' opinions on the adequacy of the GCD as a linguistic system in comparison to SMG.

Figure 2 shows that 68.1% of the teachers believe that GCD is equally effective as a means of communication as SMG and an almost equal number (65.7%) consider GCD to be an autonomous and fully-fledged system of communica-
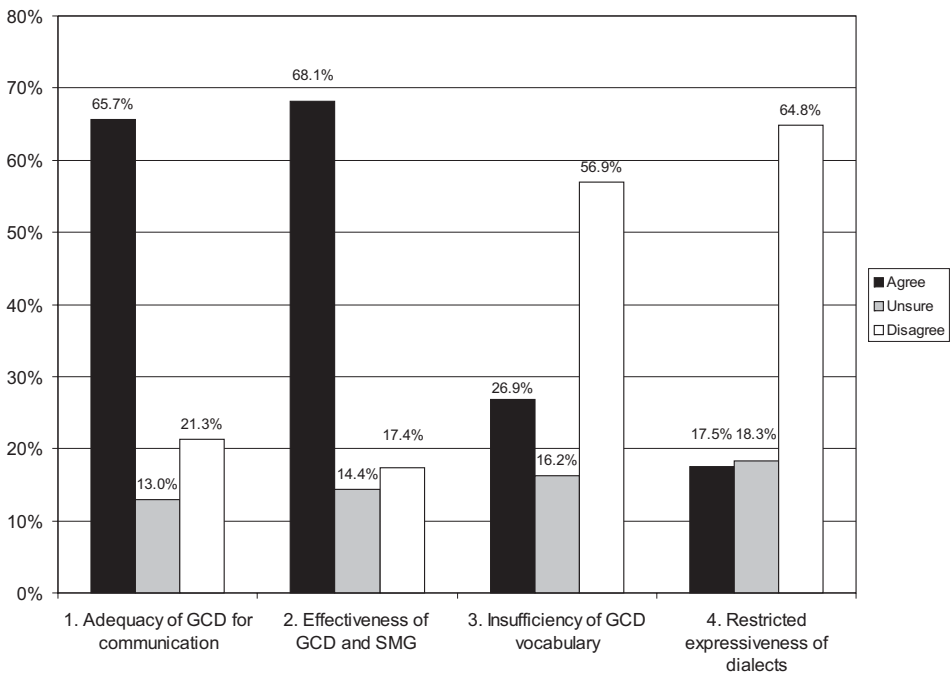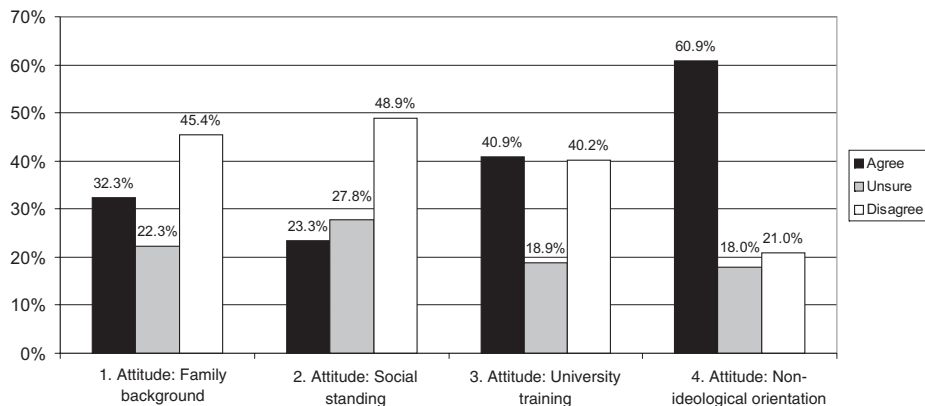

Figure 2 Evaluation of GCD: Linguistic aspects

Figure 3 Evaluation of GCD: Attitudes

tion. The number of teachers who disagree with these two views of GCD is rather small (17.4% and 21.3% respectively) but, even so, this result does show that almost a third of the teachers question the dialect's status as a fully-fledged language, reflecting a negative perception of the variety. Furthermore, 64.8% of the teachers disagree that GCD is less expressive than SMG and more than half (56.9%) do not accept that the vocabulary of GCD is limited and insufficient for accurate, effective and thorough communication. However, again it cannot be ignored that a third of the teachers have reservations about the dialect's potential to meet speakers' expressive needs and to provide them with the requisite vocabulary for thorough communication, reflecting a deficit view of GCD. Overall, Figure 2 reveals that a large number of teachers do not hold negative attitudes towards GCD since they do not appear to question the effectiveness of the dialect as a means of communication nor do they believe that the dialect is less expressive than SMG. On the contrary, more than half of the teachers consider GCD to be a fully-fledged language with sufficient vocabulary to ensure accurate, effective and thorough communication, although such views are not universal.

As a majority of teachers do not question the dialect's effectiveness as a means of communication and further admit that it is not less expressive than SMG, it would appear that the variety could have a legitimate place in school contexts. It is therefore problematic that authorities in Cyprus insist on maintaining and glorifying a national language at the expense of local dialects, rather than accommodating both. Such approaches to language planning in education make it obvious that language policies and issues relating to literacy are more the result of political and ideological considerations rather than purely linguistic assessments.

Figure 3 presents teachers' self-assessment of the degree to which four factors (family background, social standing, university education and ideological orientation) may have shaped their attitudes towards GCD. As we can see, a large number of teachers (60.9%) disagree that their ideological orientation is directly related to their attitudes towards the use of GCD in class. About half of the teach-

ers reject the suggestion that their own social standing (48.9%) or family background (45.4%) have shaped their attitudes towards the use of the GCD in class. From the data it appears that education may be the most important factor in affecting teachers' attitudes: 40.9% of the teachers agree and 40.2% disagree that their attitudes towards the use of the GCD in class are directly related to the education they received as university students. The results for the impact of education are rather unsurprising since teachers are trained to use the official language of the state, SMG, and are also expected to impart feelings of patriotism and national pride through this medium. Teacher education is therefore constructed as learning to teach and teach in SMG.

Teachers' views on language and identity

The fourth part of the questionnaire focuses on teachers' understanding of the relationship between dialect use and identity, as well as, their views on language policy matters; these results are shown in Figures 4 and 5. Figure 4 presents teachers' opinions on the impact of dialect use on local culture and identity. Figure 4 shows that three out of four teachers (73.5%) agree that the use of the local dialect contributes positively towards the enrichment of the local culture. A little over half of the teachers (55.4%) believe that the encouragement of GCD usage in class leads to the reinforcement of a Cypriot identity, and a much greater number (72.5%) do not accept that promoting a Cypriot identity may distance Cypriots from a broader Greek identity. Therefore, from these results one may conclude that teachers are very much aware of the valuable effects that the dialect may have in enriching the local culture and in fostering a Cypriot identity and that they are not seriously concerned that the development of a Cypriot identity would isolate Cypriots from the broader Greek identity. Since it is well known that language and identity influence each other (Edwards, 1985), it is not unreasonable to conclude that Cypriot language planning may be having an effect on perceptions of identity, by undermining perceptions of the value of GCD, and consequently of the identity of those who use it. If people want to influence identity, Pool suggests, they might 'consider language planning as a means' (Pool, 1979: 6).
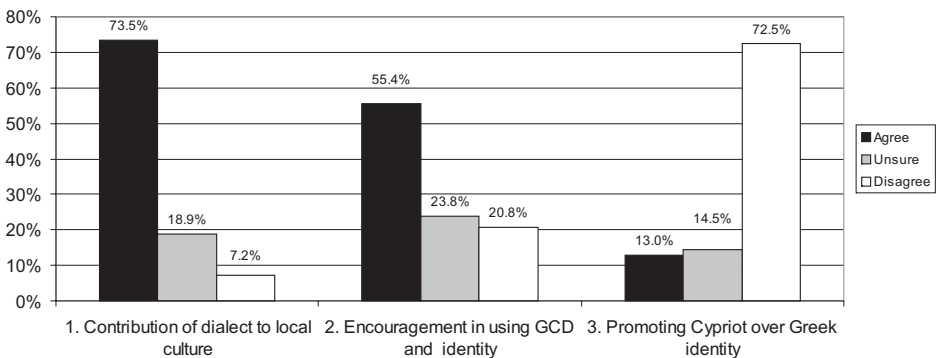

Figure 4 Views on GCD: Identity

Teachers' views on language policy matters

Figure 5 presents teachers' views on current language policy matters and delineates those factors that should be taken into account when language policies are decided upon. Figure 5 shows that three out of four teachers (74.7%) declare that a language policy should be based on linguistic criteria rather than on ideological considerations and a large number of teachers (63.6%) believe that the language variety to be used for instruction should be explicitly stated in a future language policy. On the other hand, only 37.7% of the teachers agree that the language of instruction should be the students' home language; that is, GCD, while 40.0% of the teachers are unsure about this issue, and 22.3% disagree, showing a lack of consensus on this issue. Only 39.8% believe that teachers should be consulted in choosing the language variety to be used for classroom instruction, whereas 31.3% of the teachers are unsure about this issue, and 19.1% disagree. It is evident from the results shown in Figure 5 that while teachers are very much against the use of ideological criteria in the development of a future language policy, they do not take a clear stand on the use or non-use of the dialect as a medium of instruction, nor do they appear to be strongly in favour of actively taking part in selecting the language variety to be used in education. This means that, although teachers recognise that the use of SMG poses problems for some students and may consider GCD to be a fully developed language and have generally positive attitudes towards it, they are unlikely to be advocates of its use in education.
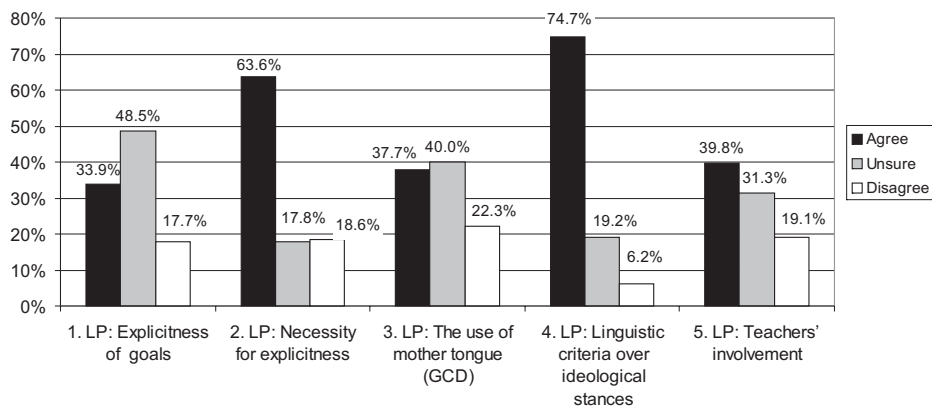

Figure 5 Views on GCD: Language policy (LP)

Concluding Remarks

In many places in the world, and Cyprus is no exception, there is often a tension between local and national literacies because language and literacy are closely associated with local and national identities. As a consequence, local languages and dialects are usually excluded from education for reasons such as the effects of past colonisation, the presence of heterogeneous ethnic groups,

linguistic pluralism, ethnic allegiances and loyalties to motherlands (other speech communities that share the same language and culture) and ambivalences in ethnic identity. It appears that nations such as Cyprus, with ethnocentric cultures and long histories, tend to promote national literacy in a single prestigious language variety, while nations with less ethnocentric tendencies may be more likely to advocate multiple literacies.

The overall implications of this study allow us to make the following remark. If oracy is seen as part of literacy then we can say with certainty that Cypriot children entering school have certain literacy practices that are neither appreciated nor utilised by the system. When literacy skills, based on the students' home language (even if this is not the standard language) are exploited early on by the system and when teachers modify their negative attitudes towards the dialect, then it is strongly believed that subsequent schooling could definitely support the development of students' linguistic and intellectual skills. Such a proposal receives support from research in other settings. For example, Romaine points out that several studies have shown that the use of home language in early literacy is effective even in cases where the vernacular is a nonstandard variety. She provides the case of Norway and Sweden where studies revealed 'the advantage of teaching children to read first in their own variety before switching to the standard' (Romaine, 2000: 223). Language planning in Cyprus currently focuses on the use of SMG only and this raises a question about the role and use of the students' own variety in education, and the impact that decisions about these may have on their literate lives and identities.

As an initial investigation of the role and use of GCD in education, in this study an effort was made to obtain information about primary teachers' attitudes towards GCD (its adequacy in meeting pupils' communicative needs, its probable use in education and its effects on linguistic performance, educational attainment and ethnic identity), and identify the factors that shaped teachers' attitudes towards GCD and their role in literacy and language policy matters. Such information can be important and valuable prior to introducing any changes in language policy, no matter how necessary these changes are deemed to be for educational purposes. While the policy in Cyprus regarding the use and role of the dialect remains rather unclear, any future changes in policy would be dependent on teachers (and to a lesser degree the general public)[3] becoming more receptive towards GCD as an appropriate language of classroom use, because without support from teachers, greater and more systematic use of GCD in schooling is unlikely to succeed.

The results obtained through the use of questionnaires shed light on a number of relevant matters. In terms of teachers' assessment of students' use of GCD, it can be argued that teachers are very much aware that repeated corrections of students' GCD usage has detrimental effects on their confidence and self-esteem and that students, especially from rural areas, feel more at ease and express themselves much more freely when using GCD rather than SMG. Interestingly enough, and contrary to public opinion (Papapavlou, 1998, 2001), more than half of the teachers who took part in the study do not find GCD an unsophisticated and coarse language, nor do they accept that its use in class and in the family environment has any adverse effects on students' scholastic

achievement. Also, more than half of the teachers do not appear to hold negative attitudes towards GCD and this is evident from the fact that teachers do not question the effectiveness of GCD as a means of communication and consider it to be a fully-fledged language. They also reject the notion that the dialect is less expressive than SMG. The positive attitudes towards GCD can also be seen in the fact that the majority of teachers recognise the valuable effects that the dialect has on the local culture and on fostering a Cypriot identity. Although the majority of teachers are positive, however, a substantial minority of teachers do not share these views.

Furthermore, it appears that the attitudes teachers hold towards GCD, whether positive or negative, stem much more from their education as teachers rather than from their family background, social standing or ideological orientation. Although one may have expected ideological orientation to play a more significant part in shaping teachers' attitudes towards GCD in a highly politicised place like Cyprus (where even football matches and beer brands are seen in this way), this is not borne out from the data. Finally, it is evident from the results obtained that teachers are very much against the use of ideological criteria when planning for innovations in language policy, but they do not take a clear position on the use or non-use of the dialect as a medium of instruction in primary schools. This uncommitted stance towards such a highly sensitive issue (or should we say politicised matter as language planning) is perhaps expected in a place like Cyprus where forces beyond linguistic concerns are at play in the everyday lives of Greek Cypriots. It may be that, at the formation of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, language planners avoided presenting an overt language policy since such an attempt would have sparked off heated debates and probably conflicts among different parts of the Cypriot population who have differing ideological and political orientations.

It is hoped that examining language attitudes, their decisive role in language planning and consequently their impact on literacy, will be of great help when changes in language policy are contemplated in educational reforms. As can be seen, additional thorough studies on this matter could enhance the successful implementation of language policies in places where the use of local dialects and nonstandard languages is not fully appreciated, the advantages of their use are deemed doubtful and their endorsement in the educational arena is cautiously and sceptically viewed.

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Notes

1. The questionnaire included 14 five-point Likert scale statements (for the actual questionnaire, see Pavlou & Papapavlou, 2004: 258) focusing on teachers' attitudes towards the use of GCD by students in class and teachers' own linguistic behaviour inside and outside class. The questionnaire for the remaining parts is reproduced in the Appendix.
2. The secondary education in Cyprus is divided into two cycles: (1) the Gymnasium (for

three years) is compulsory for students who completed six years of primary education and (2) the Lyceum, for three years, preparing students for higher education.
3.   On language and attitudes in Cyprus see Papapavlou (1998, 2001).

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Appendix: Questionnaire (Parts 2–4)

(Note: The original questionnaire distributed to primary school teachers was in Greek. This is a translation of the original.)

Instructions

The questionnaire consists of four parts. Firstly, please provide the personal information requested and then indicate your agreement or disagreement to certain statements by using the Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Simply circle the number of your choice at the end of each statement.

Personal Information

Sex: ___ Male ___ Female
Nationality: ___ Cypriot ___ Non-Cypriot
Total teaching experience: ___ years; in rural areas ___ in urban areas ___
Grade level you are teaching now: ___
Do you hold an administrative position now? Yes ___ No ___

Part 2: Teachers' evaluation of students' use of GCD in class

1. Students encounter serious problems when expressing themselves exclusively in Standard Modern Greek (SMG).	5	4	3	2	1
2. Students are discouraged when repeatedly corrected by their teachers when using the Greek Cypriot dialect (GCD) in class.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Students from rural areas encounter far more serious problems when expressing themselves in SMG rather than students from urban areas.	5	4	3	2	1
4. When expressing themselves in GCD in class, students are usually considered to be using unsophisticated and 'bad' language.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Students feel much more comfortable when using GCD rather than SMG.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Students' self-confidence is negatively affected when reprimanded for using GCD in class.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Encouraging the use of GCD in class leads to lower levels of scholastic achievement.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The use of GCD in the family environment affects adversely a student's scholastic achievement.	5	4	3	2	1

Part 3: Teachers' evaluation of and attitudes towards GCD

1. The GCD is an autonomous and fully-fledged system of communication.	5	4	3	2	1
2. The GCD is equally effective as a means of communication as SMG.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The vocabulary of the GCD is limited and insufficient for accurate, effective and thorough communication.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The GCD, like all dialects, is less expressive than SMG.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My attitudes towards the use of GCD in class are directly related to my family background.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My attitudes towards the use of the GCD in class are directly related to social standing.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My attitudes towards the use of the GCD in class are directly related to my education as a university student.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My attitudes towards the use of the GCD in class are directly related to my ideological orientation.	5	4	3	2	1

Part 4: Teachers' views on identity and language policy matters

1. The use of the local dialect contributes to the enrichment of the local culture.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Encouraging the use of GCD in class leads to the reinforcement of a Cypriot identity.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Promoting a Cypriot identity may distance Cypriots from the national (Greek) identity.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The goals of the current language policy are explicitly stated.	5	4	3	2	1
5. There ought to be an explicit language policy regarding the language variety to be used in education.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The language variety chosen for instruction in schools should only be the students' home language (i.e. GCD).	5	4	3	2	1
7. A future language policy should not be based on ideological considerations but rather on linguistic criteria.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The language variety to be used in education should be decided on in consultation with teachers as well.	5	4	3	2	1