

Konai

Sören and Britten Årsjö

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

We, the authors of this paper, are Sören and Britten Årsjö. We are a Swedish couple working as translators/linguists here in Papua New Guinea (PNG) with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) since 1972. Between 1973–91 we worked among the Ama (Sawiyanu) people in the East Sepik Province completing a translation of the New Testament in the Ama language in 1990. We are still keeping an eye on the literacy program there with a yearly visit.

We did a sociolinguistic survey over the Strickland Plain in August 1991. This survey covered four languages, including Konai (Årsjö1991). We started our second translation program among the Konai people in May 1994. The Konais number about 500 people, and they live in the Murray River area west of the Strickland River, which is located in the northwest corner of the Western Province of PNG. In the just over two years we have worked among the Konais, we have actually lived in the language area for sixteen months. We live in the village of Dahamo at an altitude of 100 meters, where the only airstrip in the area is located. Immediately to the northeast of Dahamo there is a northwest/southeast mountain range with an elevation of 400 meters.

The eight Konai villages¹ are very much spread out with six to twelve hours' hiking distance between villages. Three of the villages are located in the northern extreme of the Fly River/ Strickland River plain, and the other five are in the foothills of the main East–West mountain range of PNG, here called the Victor Emanuel Range.

There are two theories regarding the linguistic classification of the Konai language (Årsjö1995a):

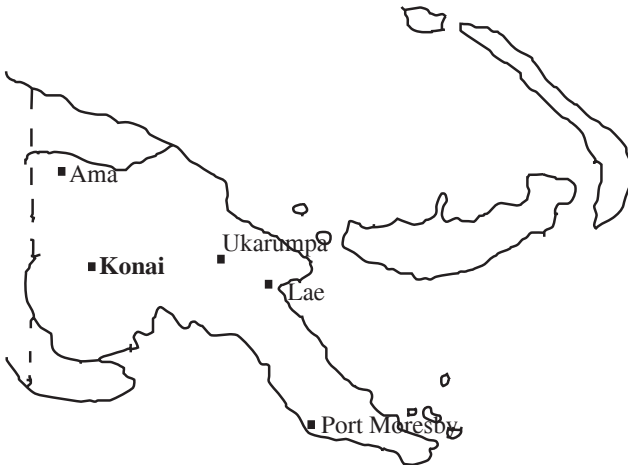
¹ We have not included the village of Guamosi here. It is a Kubo village, but they have a lot of contact with Dahamo, so quite a few of the people there can also use Konai.

Theory 1:

Papuan, The East Strickland *Family* of the Central and South New Guinea *Stock* of the Trans-New Guinea *Phylum*. (McElhanon & Voorhoeve 1970)

Theory 2:

Papuan, The Strickland Plain *Sub-Family* of the Bosavi Language *Family* of the Central and South New Guinea *Stock* of the Trans-New Guinea *Phylum*. (Shaw 1986)



Map 1: Map of PNG with the Konai area marked.

1.2 Methodology

The village of Dahamo has been in existence for about thirteen years. It has grown up around the airstrip, which was opened in 1987. The work on the airstrip had then been going on for about four years. Dahamo is definitely the main centre of the language area. There are groups of houses (“corners”) representing most villages of the language group. Not all “corners” are clearly defined; some are a mixture. Quite a few people of all ages have started to refer to Dahamo as their “real” home village. People from all the other Konai villages visit Dahamo regularly.

The data for this paper was collected during the first two years of living at Dahamo. The means has mainly been observation but also casual conversation with people living or visiting here at Dahamo. We have kept a diary for our village stays, where we have marked the anthropological information, and we have then pulled that information out into a separate file (Årsjö1994–96).

Due to the long distances between villages and the terrain (and the fact that we are not getting any younger) we have only visited the village of Edolo in addition to Dahamo itself. This took place during the survey in 1991.

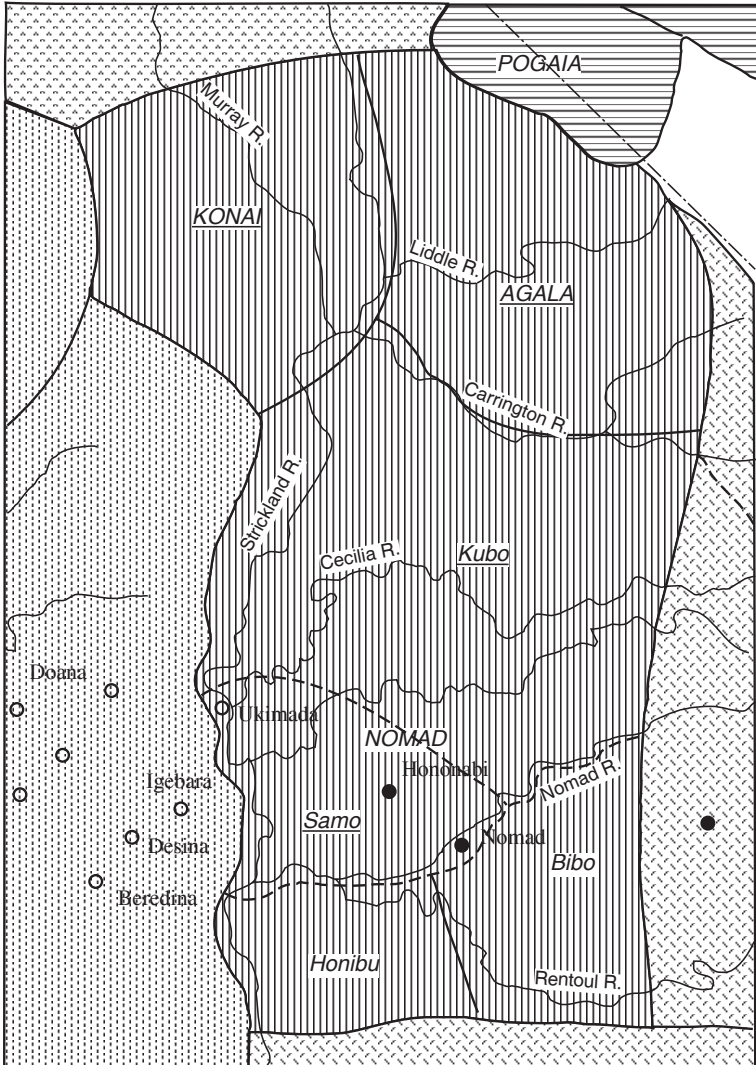
We do, however, repeatedly meet people from all the other villages of the language area. They are mostly younger men, but it is not unusual for whole families to come for fairly long visits to Dahamo. This is especially true for festive seasons like Easter, Christmas, and school graduations.

1.3 Maps

1.3.1 Language Maps

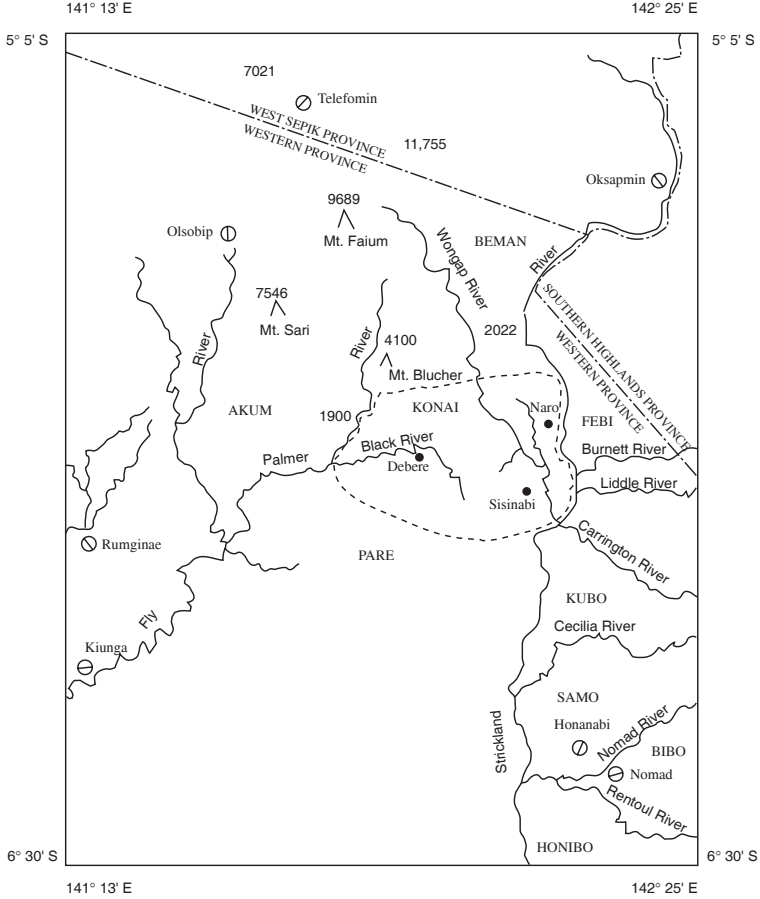
The map below is taken from Årsjö(1991). It has been slightly modified. North is to the top of the page.

Map 2: Map of the Strickland Plain Sub-Family.



The map below is taken from Pappenhagen (1981). North is to the top of the page. The scale is 1 cm = 10 km. It shows the geographical coordinates at the corners.

Map 3: Map of the Konai and adjacent areas.

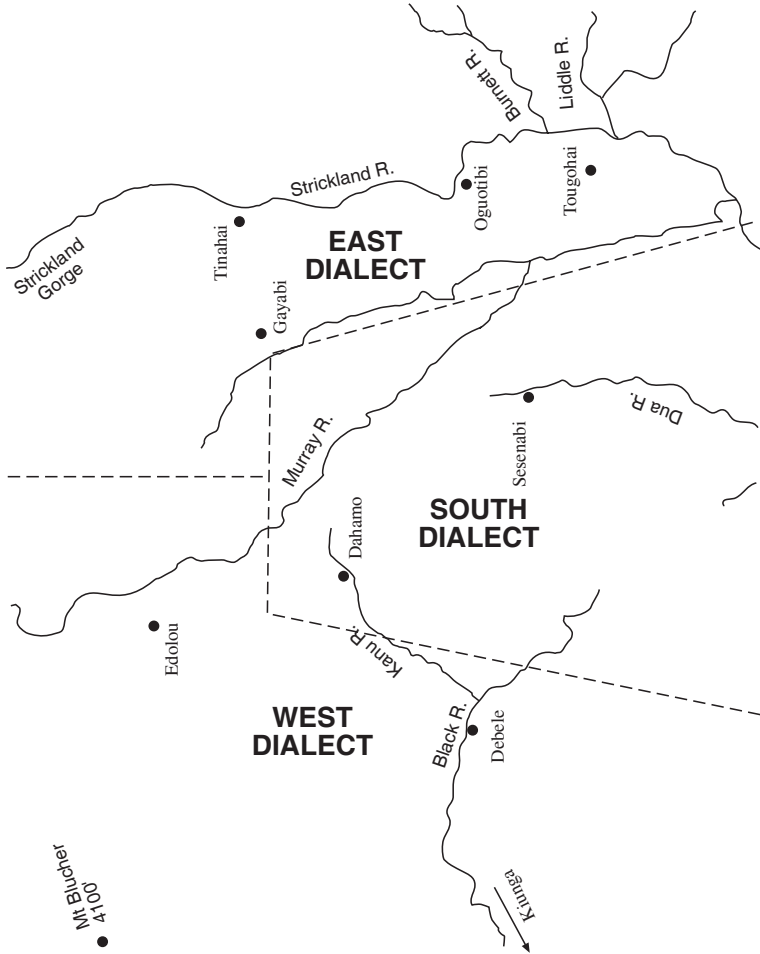


1.3.2 Dialect Map

The map below is newly drawn for this paper to show the dialect borders. North is to the left. The scale is 3 cm = 10 km.

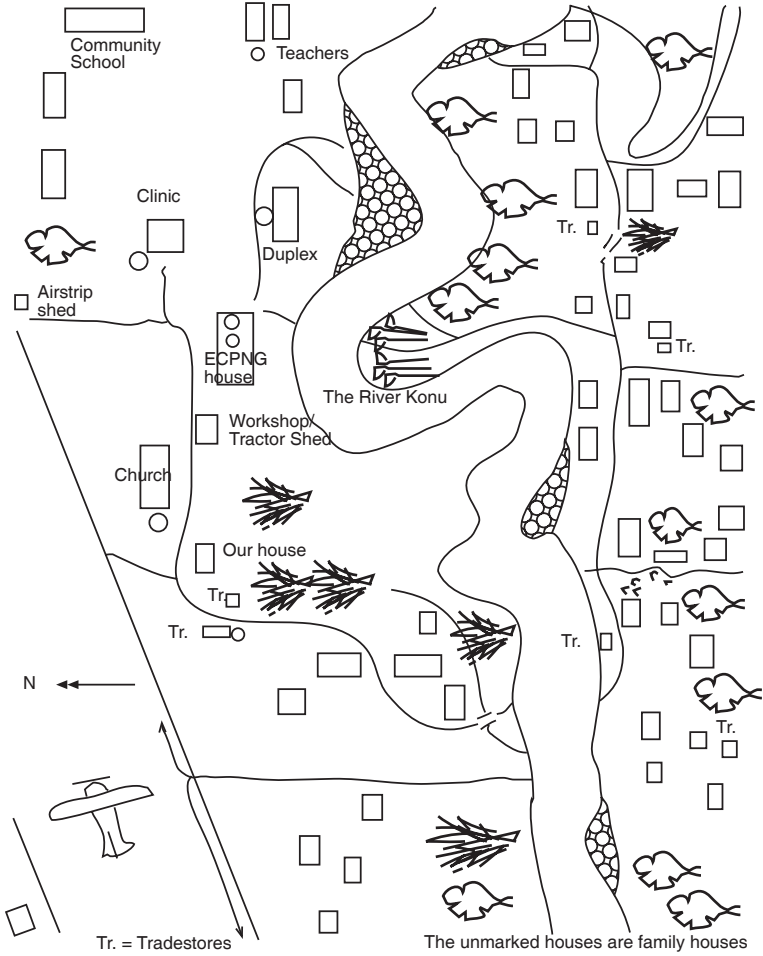
See Section 4.1.5 for a description of the dialect situation.

Map 4: Map of Konai dialects.



1.3.3 Village Map

Map 5: Map of the Dahamo village.



We will include here the number of family unit houses in each village:

Dahamo	36 houses	Oguotibi	7 houses
Debele	4 houses	Sesenabi	6 houses
Edolo	12 houses	Tinahai	12 houses
Gayabi	6 houses	Tougohai	5 houses

2 Structures and Facilities

2.1 Houses

2.1.1 Family houses

We have read (Pappenhagen 1981) and we have also been told that the Konais earlier lived in communal long-houses. As far as we know there are no long-houses around at all any more. People nowadays live in family unit houses. Some of them are quite big, up to 10 × 13 meters. Here at Dahamo all such houses are up on two meter high “kwila” (iron wood) stilts, they have a sago thatch roof, and walls are made of split “limbum” (black palm) (or sometimes hand-hewn planks) nailed horizontally. The floor is also made from split limbum, but this is usually a smaller, nicer kind than is used for walls. Nails are normally used, but the floor limbum is tied down with vines. There are several small windows with shutters. All houses have a large communal living room immediately at the entry, and smaller sleeping rooms along one or two walls. Sometimes inside walls are made from woven bamboo. The communal room has one or two fire pits built on a separate platform a foot or so lower than the floor. The sleeping rooms may also have a fire pit. There is a ladder leading up to a small porch with a door leading directly into the communal living room. Only one family house here at Dahamo has an iron roof with a tank or drum for catching rain water for drinking.

In the village of Edolo, visited in 1991, the only difference in building materials being used was that the walls were made of split “pangal” (sago leaf stalks). The rough, cut side of the pangal was turned outside, and it was tied horizontally to the studs. We did not see separate sleeping rooms there.

2.1.2 Missionary House

The ECPNG missionary house is a western style building with sawn timber, wooden floor, outside walls of sawn planks, inside plywood walls, and iron roof. There are two tanks. It is built high up on two-meter high kwila posts. It is not being used now except for an office that is also the radio room. We are in the process of trying to transfer some of the activities in the church to this house, especially clashing events.

2.1.3 Child Birth Houses

These houses are located about thirty minutes' walk from the village. They are much simpler and smaller buildings with no walls, and the floor only about a foot above the ground. There is a hole cut in the floor with the fire straight on the ground. The roof is still sago leaves, but it is not sewn: the whole leaves are just heaped on. In one corner of the house there is something like a playpen built. The mother sits there with her newborn child.

2.1.4 Garden houses

These houses are very similar to the child birth houses in style, but they are normally built higher above the ground. They have a slung hearth. They are frequently used for overnight stays.

2.1.5 Pig Houses

These houses are built on the outskirts of the different hamlets. They are small but sturdy buildings. They have a low limbum floor, roof of sago thatch, and the walls are hand-hewn planks. The pigs are locked in them overnight. They normally have a fire pit on the ground.

This type of house is also used by menstruating women. Sometimes an extra room is built on for this purpose.

2.1.6 Toilets

There are one or more toilets for each "corner" in the Dahamo village. The building materials can vary, but it is normally a small simple house with a dug hole, one meter deep, built over with logs leaving a smaller opening.

2.2 Community Buildings

2.2.1 The Dahamo Station

In this paper there are several references to the “station” here at Dahamo, e.g., station manager, station personnel, etc. Originally the use of the word “station” probably came from the fact that ECPNG had a mission station here at Dahamo. Nowadays schoolteachers and health workers are also included in the expression “station personnel”.

The houses belonging to the station would be the missionary house, church, workshop/tractor shed, school, teachers’ houses, clinic, health worker’s house, and airstrip shed. The former outside pastor’s house, where we live, would also be counted as a station house. On Map 5 (Section 1.3.3) the station houses are in the upper left hand corner and spreading to the river and down to the house marked “our house”.

2.2.2 Churches

The only church we have seen is here at Dahamo. It was built by an ECPNG missionary, so the frame is built from sawn timber. It has an iron roof with a water tank. Walls and floor are still split limbum. The walls are half walls. It is built on posts about one meter above the ground. There are no benches except for one on each side along the back wall. People sit mainly on the floor. The church is also used for Women’s Fellowship, Kisim Save classes², writers’ workshops, and community meetings.

Edolo, Oguotibi, Sesenabi, and Tinahai also have church buildings.

2.2.3 Schools

There is only one community school in the Konai area. It is located here at Dahamo. There is a double classroom with a teachers’ office built entirely from roofing iron on a cement pad. The frame is also of iron. There is also a third classroom in a bush-material building straight on the ground. A separate bush-material building is used for storage.

² Kisim Save (Tok Pisin for “gain knowledge”) is a non-formal education program run in Tok Pisin, mostly operating in the Sepik.

There are three teachers' houses. The headmaster's house is built from roofing iron, both roof and walls, on a sawn timber frame. It has a water tank. There is a separate cookhouse at the back. The second teacher's house is a typical bush-timber house. Roofing iron is placed on top of sago thatch. The third is actually a duplex where a teacher and the health worker live. It is built from a mixture of bush materials and sawn timber. It has an iron roof with a water tank. It does have some plumbing installed.

2.2.4 Clinic

The only clinic in the area is located here at Dahamo. It is also built from a mixture of bush materials and sawn timber. It has several rooms with a veranda as waiting room. It has an iron roof with a huge water tank attached.

The health worker lives in one half of the duplex mentioned above.

2.2.5 Workshop/Tractor shed

This is a three-room building built from mostly bush materials with an iron roof. The tractor and workbench share one room. One room was used for a diesel generator. The last room is a storage area, mainly used for power tools and chain saws.

2.2.6 Airstrip Shed

This is a small building built from bush material with an iron roof. It is used mainly to store tools for airstrip work. There is also place for a tractor trolley under the roof.

2.2.7 Feast Shelters

These are built quickly and are very temporary, with sago leaves for roofing, limbum for a low part floor, and no walls. Fires are straight on the ground. One house is built higher off the ground for storing the meat before distribution. The one we saw had a tarpaulin for a roof.

2.2.8 Burial Houses

A low sago thatch roof is built over the grave. The site is decorated with plants with colourful leaves.

2.3 Commercial Structures

The only thing that fits under this category in the whole area is trade stores. These are built very solidly, about a meter off the ground,

with limbum floor and walls. One has an iron roof with a small tank, while others have sago thatch. They have a porch with an opening in the wall, where the customers stand. The door to the store is normally extremely small. There are six trade stores in the village.

2.4 Utilities

There are two rivers in the village of Dahamo, one on each side of the airstrip. They are used for washing clothes and bathing.

The church, missionary house, clinic, headmaster's house, the "duplex" house, one trade store, and one village house have iron roofs with tanks or drums for drinking water. Most of the people here at Dahamo have easy access to rain water for drinking water.

There are 12V solar panels on our temporary house as well as on the missionary house and clinic.

Kerosene is sometimes available in some of the trade stores.

There are three short-wave radio transmitters in Dahamo, one in the missionary house for the ECPNG and MAF skeds, one in our house for SIL skeds and aviation, and one in the clinic for contacting the district government in Tabubil.

I guess the tractor and trolley with a slasher (for cutting grass) and some earth work tools can also be counted as utilities.

2.5 Medical

The only aid post in the area is here at Dahamo. The medical worker is called CHW, Community Health Worker, which we understand to be at least one step above an aid post orderly. The health care is organised by ECPNG with aid posts in villages, hospitals in Rumginae (with CHW training) and Balimo (with nurses training) (ECPNG 1991). The hospital that serves the Konai area is the one in Rumginae, which is about thirty minutes' flight from Dahamo. There are daily medical skeds. Compared to other provinces in PNG, the health care is excellent here in the Western Province.

3 Geography

3.1 Summary of Geographical Area

Refer to the maps in Section 1.3.

3.1.1 Extent of Area

Starting from the Strickland River–Murray River junction the Konai area stretches for about thirty kilometres to the north along the Strickland River, and then in a rectangle for about thirty-five kilometres to the west of the Strickland River towards the Palmer River. The Murray River cuts through the Konai area in a southeasterly direction and joins the Strickland River about twenty-five kilometres south of the village of Tinahai. In walking distance this means at least a two- or three-day hike from Dahamo via Edolo to Tinahai, the better part of a day's hike southwest from Dahamo to Debele on the Black River, and about the same to the southeast to reach Sesenabi on the Dua River.

The Konai area falls within the Blucher census division, which is part of the Tabubil district. The area is administered from the mining town of Tabubil. The local councillor also goes to Olsobip for council meetings.

The geographical coordinates for the village of Dahamo are 141° 58' East and 5° 45' South (personal communication with SIL Aviation).

3.1.2 Significant Population Centres

The village of Dahamo is definitely the main centre of the Konai area. It has the only airstrip, the only aid post, the only community school, the only permanent house structures, as well as the only expatriates. There are thirty-six family houses in six different “corners” with a population of 161 people.

The other villages are Debele (4 houses, 22 people) to the west of Dahamo, Edolo to the north (12 houses, 67 people), Gayabi (6 houses, 33 people) and Tinahai (12 houses, 72 people) to the northeast, and Sesenabi (6 houses, 33 people), Oguotibi (7 houses, 18 people), and Tougochai (5 houses, 15 people) to the east or southeast. Each of these villages have either a full “corner” here at Dahamo or at least a house where they can stay when visiting.

The total population of Konai speakers according to the figures above are then 421 people. These figures are from a census taken in May

1996. There is also a Kubo/Konai village, Guamosi/ Kamogato (9 houses, 27 people), situated right on the western bank of the Strickland River. From the previous ECPNG missionary we have had an estimate of 600–800 Konai speakers. After this census in May 1996 we have started to say/write “around 500 Konai speakers”. We are then thinking about the somewhat unclear border between Konai and Fembe in the east as well as the Kubo/Konai village mentioned above.

In the 1980 census all villages except Debele were listed as NS (not stated). Debele was listed as having 133 residents. Debele then included many people that now live here at Dahamo.

3.1.3 Travel

The only travel that occurs inside the Konai area is hiking over trails between villages. The distances were mentioned in Section 3.1.1. The trails are wet and muddy, so the rainy season from June–August should be avoided. There are fifteen to twenty meter long vine bridges across the Murray River in two places and one even longer across the Strickland River just south of Tinahai. The village of Tinahai is situated in the very rugged mountains surrounding the Strickland River (Pappenhagen 1981) just south of the Devil’s Race. The terrain here makes hiking very rough.

The travel routes never bypass any villages. The distances between villages are just about equal to a day’s hike, so people overnight in a village before continuing on.

The Dahamo airstrip was opened in 1987. We have seen Cessna 206s, Islanders, and a Twin Otter use the strip. It is officially 500 meters long, but an additional 120 meters at the take-off end has been in use since we came here in 1994. MAF is the most frequent user of the strip. They come in here once or twice a month.

People can also travel out of the area by hiking down to the mouth of the local Konu River where it enters the Black River. From there they can travel by canoe on the Black River, Palmer River, and Fly River to reach the town of Kiunga. A one-way fare is K 5. There should now be

money available from the provincial government for an outboard motor for the Konais.

3.1.4 Land Use

Most of the land is not really used at all. Around the villages extensive areas are used for gardening. Wild pigs and cassowaries are hunted.

People here at Dahamo can identify two landowners of the land surrounding the village. Before the airstrip was built there was only one small garden house in this area, yet the land here was owned by individuals.

In 1987–88 an oil company was based at Dahamo (Woodyard 1992). Oil was found but not in profitable amounts at this time.

3.1.5 Divisions Based on Geographical Features

The Strickland River forms a language border with Konai speakers to the west and Fembe speakers to the east. The people on the wedge of land between the lower Murray River and the Strickland River, where the villages of Tinahai, Gayabi, Oguotibi and Tougothai are situated, do however speak a dialect (the Eastern dialect) somewhere between Konai and Fembe (Dwyer 1991).

The Strickland River is also a division from the government's point of view as the east and west sides belong to different census divisions. The east side is part of the Nomad district and is administered from Nomad. The west side is in the Tabubil district.

3.2 Climate

3.2.1 Elevation

The elevation here at Dahamo is about 100 meters, and it would be about the same at Debele and Sesenabi. These villages are on the northern extreme of the Strickland–Fly Rivers Plain. The villages of Edolo, Gayabi, Tinahai, Oguotibi, and Tougothai are higher up in the foothills of the main mountain ridge at about 300–500 meters.

3.2.2 Temperatures

The temperature here at Dahamo can reach 32–33° C in the daytime and go as low as 22° C during the night. A more normal daytime

temperature is 27–29° C. The foothill villages would be somewhat cooler. You can feel a difference in temperature and humidity just by climbing the 400-meter ridge immediately to the north of Dahamo.

3.2.3 Rainfall and Seasons

We do not have any measurement of rainfall, but we can say that it is really never dry. The less wet period is October– December. The period with heavy rains but otherwise fairly nice is January–March. The wettest period is June–August with constant drizzly rain. It might not measure up to much, but you hardly ever see the sun. This is also the hardest period for the airstrip. It tends to be wet and soggy, not to say muddy, all through these months. We would guess at a rainfall of about five to eight meters a year.

4 Demography and Bilingualism

4.1 Demographic Charts³

It is not very easy to get this information from the Konai people. They are very humble and cannot say straight out about themselves that they are good at anything. You have to ask somebody else if so and so knows English, etc.

It should also be stated here that the majority of the Konai speakers are monolingual, i.e., Konai is their only language.

4.1.1 English

We had the first sixth grade graduation from the Dahamo Community School in December 1995. There were 20 students (17 boys, 3 girls) who graduated, and they can speak English at least a little. The present Grade 6 has 7 students (6 boys, 1 girl), and their knowledge of English is about the same. There is also a Grade 3 at the school with 21 students (13 boys, 8 girls), and they also know some English. If we compare attendance figures from 1991 (Årsjö 1991), we find that 27

³ We have chosen to write this section in prose. We do not think that we can get accurate enough information to record it in a statistical format.

children (23 boys, 4 girls) have dropped out along the way, so they would also have been exposed to some English. All of these children are from the villages of Dahamo, Debele, Edolo, Sesenabi, and Tinahai.

During the eighties, before the Dahamo school opened in 1990, some people (about ten in all) went to school at Rumginae. They would also have some knowledge of English. One of these is a lady, the others are men.

We have had a monolingual approach to language learning and have only had one man nominated for speaking English with. His understanding of English is good, but you do miss some of the things he tries to tell you. A handful of others have sometimes tried to use English with us.

4.1.2 Tok Pisin

When we were here for the survey in 1991 there were only a very few that knew any Tok Pisin at all. Since then Tok Pisin has come in quite quickly. About half of the men here in Dahamo would have some knowledge of Tok Pisin, and it would be less than that in the other villages. There are Kisim Save classes running both here at Dahamo and at Tinahai. For a large part it is seen as an opportunity to learn Tok Pisin rather than actually learning to read, although they seem to have had quite a good success even with the reading skill up at Tinahai.

When station personnel preach in church they use Tok Pisin, but it is always interpreted into Konai.

4.1.3 Aekyom (Awin)

This is the neighbouring language to the west and south which also covers the Rumginae area. In 1975 an Aekyom ECPNG pastor, Pastor Maroke, came to the village of Smipen, which is an Aekyom village to the south. He had heard about the Konai people and was interested in reaching them with the gospel. Encouraged by pastor Maroke quite a few people now living at Dahamo lived at Smipen between 1975–80, and later 1981–83 in the Konai village of Debele, when another Aekyom pastor was appointed for there. The Dahamo airstrip was started in 1983, and people began to settle here. There was also an Aekyom pastor appointed for Dahamo at that time. There have also been Aekyom pastors in the villages of Sesenabi and Edolo. The health worker here at Dahamo has also

frequently been an Aekyom man. Add also to this that a number of people from Dahamo went to school for six years in Rumginae, which is within the Aekyom area.

All this has led to the Konais according the Aekyom language a high prestige, more so in the past than now, when no Aekyom pastors are in any Konai villages any more. We would say that quite a few adult people, more men than women, in the villages of Dahamo, Debele, Edolo and possibly Sesenabi have some knowledge of the Aekyom language. Children are not learning Aekyom now.

There are also some marriages across the language border with Aekyom.

Aekyom is not at all linguistically related to Konai, but there are a few loan-words.

4.1.4 Fembe

Some people in the northeast villages of Tinahai, Gayabi, Oguotibi, and Tougohai can communicate with Fembe speakers on the east side of the Strickland River. Fembe is part of a chain of eight related languages belonging to the Strickland Plain Sub-Family (Shaw 1986). Seven languages run along the east side of the Strickland River with Fembe being the most northern. The Sub-Family then swings across to the west of the Strickland River to include Konai.

It has not been possible to decide if this knowledge of Fembe in the northeast area of Konai is inherent intelligibility as part of the language chaining, or if this is multilingualism. Konai villages further to the west of the Strickland River do not understand Fembe.

4.1.5 Dialects—Inherent Intelligibility

Refer to Map 4 in Section 1.3.2.

We would say that we have three dialect groupings within the Konai language. Each dialect is inherently intelligible to the other two groups. We would group Debele and Edolo together in the **Western** dialect

(89 people), and Dahamo and Sesenabi in the **Southern** dialect (194 people), and lastly Tinahai, Gayabi, Oguotibi, and Tougohai in the **Eastern** dialect (138 people). The differences seem to be mostly in vocabulary, but it is still only a very limited number of words that are different in the dialects. Hardly ever is it that the same word is pronounced differently, except for some pairs of letters like <d/l> and <a/o>.

The dialects tie in very closely with clan membership. This seems to heighten the fierce pride and possessiveness of one's own dialect. Everything but one's own dialect is "crooked". It is only one's own that is "straight" Konai talk. In addition to this the Dahamo dialect (the Southern dialect) is accused by the others of being mixed up with Aekyom words. We do not think this is really true, except to a very limited extent.

All communication between the dialect groupings takes place in Konai. They say they have no trouble understanding each other. We hardly ever hear any other language being used between Konai speakers.

4.2 Implications for Programme Planning including Literacy

We have chosen to allocate in the village of Dahamo, as it has the only airstrip in the area. It is also the most prestigious village with the only community school and aid post. The government councillor also lives here.

We are planning to invite people from all three dialect groupings to take part in any activities that we will have, e.g., writers' workshops, translation, teacher training, and literacy.

We have started to explain that all dialects are equally good. All of them are correct. One is not better than any of the others. We have also told them that we cannot produce different translations for all dialects. They will have to agree on some common grounds, i.e. most likely the Dahamo dialect (the Southern dialect), as that is primarily what we are learning. The Dahamo dialect is also the largest in terms of population. We will also invite our RAD to come out here and have a speech on this subject.

We have to guard against using Aekyom loan-words, as that seems to be the most critical irritant with the Dahamo dialect.

In an alphabet book we are working on right now we are including words from all three dialects. This is possible in literacy but harder in translation.

We are planning transfer classes for people that have already acquired the skills of reading and writing in either English or Tok Pisin.

5 Language

5.1 Languages Used

Languages in use in the Konai area are Konai, English, Tok Pisin, Aekyom, and Fembe. See Section 4.1 above for more details.

5.2 Language Domains

The only domain where these other languages are used is in contact with non-Konai speakers. We hardly ever hear anything but Konai being used between Konai speakers.

If Tok Pisin or possibly English is being used in church by station personnel it is always interpreted into Konai. Sometimes an announcement in Konai is interpreted into Tok Pisin for the benefit of the station personnel. Preaching in Konai is hardly ever interpreted into any other language.

There is a slight tendency for one or two people to pray in Tok Pisin rather than Konai.

English or Tok Pisin is used to read Scripture in church, as there so far is no Konai Scripture. The newly translated Christmas story is being read in Konai this year.

5.3 Language Attitudes

Some of this is already covered in Section 4.1.

5.3.1 Reported Language Attitudes

5.3.1.1 Konai—the mother tongue

Everybody is 100% positive to the mother tongue. For the majority it is the only language they know. It is definitely held in high esteem by themselves. As we said before there is a fierce pride in one's own dialect, but there is free communication between all dialects.

The Konai language is probably not held in very high esteem by neighbouring language groups. It is at least partly true that the Konais have been everybody else's "bush kanaka".

5.3.1.2 English

English is considered to be the language of the educated. It is in one way a good goal to strive towards, even if most people (even the Grade 6 graduates) realise that they will not have an opportunity to really use it enough to become fully fluent. Most people would say that English is a good language to know.

English started to affect the area in the late seventies, when the first children were sent to attend community school at Rumginae.

5.3.1.3 Tok Pisin

Tok Pisin has come in much later, probably in the late eighties. It is seen as a much easier language than English. You can pick it up without the formal schooling you need for English. Most people would again say that Tok Pisin is a good language to know.

Kisim Save classes are seen as an opportunity to learn Tok Pisin.

5.3.1.4 Aekyom

The reports from visiting Aekyom speakers are that most Konai adult men can use Aekyom. The Konais themselves say that that is true for the villages of Dahamo, Debele, and Edolo. Very few women can use it, but some can understand it. People in one "corner" here in Dahamo do not know Aekyom. Children do not learn Aekyom now.

5.3.1.5 Fembe

See Section 4.1.4 for a discussion on the language/dialect chaining.

The attitude to Fembe is different from the attitude to Aekyom. Aekyom is seen as a neighbouring language that some here can use, but

people feel much closer to Fembe speakers. The attitude is more like a family feeling. This is what we have been told.

5.3.2 Language Attitudes as Inferred from Behaviour

5.3.2.1 Konai—the mother tongue

For all practical purposes the mother tongue is used in all domains between Konai speakers. It is very, very seldom, at the most say once a week or so, that we hear an English or Tok Pisin expression being used between Konai speakers.

The possible problem with dialects might be a problem for translation, but it does not seem to have any bearing on communication with people from other dialects. Everybody happily chatters along in his or her own dialect with everybody else.

This bears out the reported high esteem for the mother tongue as well as the monolingual situation for the majority.

5.3.2.2 English

There is a very good attitude towards education. Most school age children here at Dahamo are going to school. Many from the other villages also send their children here for schooling. This was also obvious earlier, before the school here at Dahamo was established, when some people sent their children to school at Runginae.

English is sometimes used to communicate with non-Konai speakers, either verbally or in writing.

The observed data basically confirms the reported data in Section 5.3.1.2.

5.3.2.3 Tok Pisin

There is a great interest in Kisim Save classes both here at Dahamo and at Tinahai. Teachers have been trained at Koroba and Kalabo by CBC. Here at Dahamo it can be up to twenty-five adults, fairly evenly divided between men and women, participating all morning four days a week. A few try to practice it with us, which we have to discourage due to our monolingual approach to language learning.

Tok Pisin is also used for communicating with outsiders, verbally or in writing. Station personnel also use it when they participate in church, but it is always interpreted.

By and large the observed data confirms the reported data in Section 5.3.1.3.

5.3.2.4 Aekyom

When Aekyom is used in church by visiting pastors or a previous Aekyom APO here at Dahamo it is generally not interpreted. We are not sure what conclusions to draw from this. We are somewhat doubtful of the reports from Aekyom mother tongue speakers that all adult men would know Aekyom. We think they are too optimistic. The non-interpretation of Aekyom speech in church could either bear them out, or mean that nobody can interpret Aekyom into Konai. We have heard some men speak in Aekyom with visitors.

In December '96 visiting Aekyom pastors were consistently interpreted when speaking in Aekyom.

5.3.2.5 Fembe

We have not observed a Konai speaker communicating with a Fembe speaker. This is all reported data.

5.4 Language Prestige

It is really no question here but that Konai has the highest prestige. It is *always* used in internal communication, and the majority of speakers are monolingual. We have divided this up into languages and dialects, as they cannot be compared together.

5.4.1 Languages

Also here it only makes sense to grade English and Tok Pisin together. English definitely has the higher prestige of these two, but it will always be just a very few that will get enough practice to become fluent. Tok Pisin comes a close second. Tok Pisin is seen as a much simpler language to learn and use.

Aekyom is known only in the western part of the language group and Fembe only in the eastern part. They cannot be compared with each other. Nor can they be compared with English or Tok Pisin. They are used in totally different contexts.

5.4.2 Dialects

Here it is very clear that one's own dialect will always have the highest prestige. Everything else is "crooked" talk. The Dahamo dialect (Southern) and the Tinahai dialect (Eastern) have the most differences, but they are still well within the inherent intelligibility range. The Edolo dialect (Western) falls somewhere in between. This fits in perfectly with the geographical language/dialect chaining all the way from down south of Samo on the east side of the Strickland River.

5.5 Language Stability

The bilingualism with English and Tok Pisin will most likely continue to increase with more education and Kisim Save classes. Of course this does not mean that the mother tongue is at risk of dying. It will always be the primary language for internal communication, or at least it will be so for the foreseeable future. As we have said before, the mother tongue is still the only language for the majority of Konai speakers.

We also foresee that the knowledge of Aekyom will die out. The Konais now have their own airstrip, church, pastor and community school which was what earlier pulled them into Aekyom territory.

There will always be communication with Fembes up in the northeast corner of the language group.

6 Religion and Language

6.1 Chart of Religious Groups

Although three churches (see chart below) are represented among the Konai villages, there is no sense of competition between them. Believers from the different churches feel very much at one with each other. Visitors participate in the church services in the village they visit, even if their own village belongs to a different church. In one way you can say that people are not really aware of the fact that more than one church is represented in their language area. All believers are the same to them independent of their home village church background.

	ECPNG	CBC
Year each church arrived	1979	1984
What area of the language group do they work in	Dahamo, Debele, Sesenabi	Tinahai, Gayabi, Oguotibi, Toughohai
Are they:		
Mission administered	No	No
Partially mission administered	No	No
Locally administered	Yes	Yes
Names of present pastors	Motousi Si	Sande Behelia
Are the leaders:		
Expatriate	No	No
National from outside	No	No
National from inside	Yes	Yes
Number in each (%)	65%	25%
What language is used in:		
Reading Scr. in church ⁴	English, Tok Pisin	English, Tok Pisin
Reading S. out of church	Same	Same
Singing in church	Konai, Tok Pisin	Konai, Tok Pisin
Singing out of church	Same	Same
Preaching in church	Konai by insider Tok Pisin by outsiders with interpretation	More Tok Pisin used than in ECPNG
Praying in church	Konai	Tok Pisin, Konai
Praying out of church	Konai	Tok Pisin, Konai
Evangelism	Konai	Konai
Announcements	Konai Tok Pisin (for station personnel)	Konai

	Baptist
Year each church arrived	1994
What area of the language group do they work in	Edolo

⁴ Scripture is not yet available in Konai, except that the newly translated Christmas story was used in Konai at Christmas '96.

Are they:	
Mission administered	No
Partially mission admin.	No
Locally administered	From Bimen
Names of present pastors	Kevin Gabi (contact)
Are the leaders:	
Expatriate	No
National from outside	No
National from inside	Yes
Number in each (%)	10%
What language is used in:	
Reading Scr. in church	English, Tok Pisin
Reading S. out of church	Same
Singing in church	Konai, Tok Pisin
Singing out of church	Same
Preaching in church	Same as ECPNG
Praying in church	Konai
Praying out of church	Konai
Evangelism	Konai
Announcements	Konai

6.1.1 ECPNG

ECPNG (Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea) is the main church in the Konai area. It is a church established as the result of work done by APCM (Asia Pacific Christian Mission), formerly UFM (Unevangelized Fields Mission). The village of Dahamo, where the airstrip is located, and where we allocated in May '94, is the centre for ECPNG activity among the Konais. There is an ECPNG church building here as well as in Sesenabi. In Sesenabi there is no-one preaching regularly even though there is a deacon there. There also used to be an ECPNG church in Debele with an Aekyom pastor and later with a deacon from Dahamo, but there is nothing there now. This means that at least three villages would say they belong to ECPNG.

The Konai people were first reached by the gospel in the last half of the seventies. The ECPNG church in the Aekyom/Awin language to the west sent in evangelistic patrols and eventually placed pastors in three

Konai villages. There were seven Konai baptised by the early eighties (Prince 1991). In 1981, Vance and Patty Woodyard, workers with Pioneers (seconded via APCM to ECPNG), arrived, and some years later they started to work at Dahamo in the Konai area. They built the airstrip at Dahamo. The Woodyards left the Konai work in May '93 for a home assignment. Then there were a total of sixty-seven baptised Konai Christians. Motousi became the first ECPNG Konai pastor in October 1990. He has also attended two years of Bible School at the CMML school at Kalabo, Southern Highlands Province. There are also two deacons in the church here at Dahamo.

ECPNG as a whole is quite keen on working in the vernacular and providing mother tongue Scriptures. Quite a few of the APCM missionaries have done Scripture translation in the past. A large proportion of the SIL teams in the South West Region are working in ECPNG areas, with their blessing.

The Woodyards have done some translation in the first part of Genesis as well as some gospel passages and 1 John. There are members of a Translation Committee marked since that time. Individuals of the church here at Dahamo have expressed interest in the future translation program here, especially Sodipae, the Station Manager. Some have on their own initiative tried their hand in translating individual verses. We have edited John 3:16 and John 14:14. It was the first translation of Scripture into the Konai language that we have been involved in.

The ECPNG denomination is well organised in geographical groupings, but, since we allocated, we have not heard of anyone from here taking part in any of these more centralised church activities. The explanation for this seems to be lack of travel funds, so we have now (July 1996) set up an account in Rumginae for this. They are, however, part of the ECPNG radio network and are up daily on most ECPNG skeds. The Dahamo call-sign is B625.

The pastor and one deacon did attend a course in Rumginae in November '96.

6.1.2 CBC

Four villages along the western bank of the Strickland River at the eastern end of the language group, Tinahai, Gayabi, Oguotibi, and

Tougohai (two to three days walk from Dahamo), are connected with CBC (Christian Brotherhood Church), established by CMML (Christian Mission to Many Lands). Reggie Howard, from CMML, worked for five to six years during the late eighties in Fembe, a neighbouring language group to the east of Strickland River. These four Konai villages have some contact with Kalabo, SHP, where CMML has a Bible School. There is a local Konai man working as pastor in Tinahai and a local deacon in Oguotibi. Both of these places have a church building with regular services. The villages of Gayabi and Tougohai also belong to this grouping, but there is no regular work there.

The CMML missionary that used to work in the language group to the east of Konai did not work in the vernacular. However the CBC pastor at Tinahai and others from there, who regularly visit Dahamo, are asking questions about when the translation work will start, who will participate etc. etc. There are dialect differences, so they are concerned that the translation will contain the “straight” Konai talk (in other words their dialect). Men from Tinahai participated in two of the three Writers’ Workshops (with a translation component) that were held in the period April–June 1996. One man from Tinahai also attended one of the two Translators’ Workshops in October–November 1996.

6.1.3 Baptist

One village, Edolo, six to eight hours’ hiking to the north of Dahamo, has during the last few years until 1995 off and on had a Baptist pastor from the Bimen language group living there. Easter ’95 they had a baptism. A young man, Kevin, is considering pastor’s training at Bimen. Earlier there used to be an ECPNG church building in Edolo, but it is now replaced by a Baptist church. There is a local ECPNG deacon.

People from Edolo are also very frequent visitors here at Dahamo. They come to church with everybody else, if their visit covers a Sunday.

6.2 Indigenesness of Religious Groups

All of these three groups are more or less indigenous. The ECPNG people keep in contact with the denomination over daily radio skeds and occasional visits from Aekyom pastors. The CBC people go for courses to Kalabo or Koroba in the SHP where CBC has schools. The Baptist people are connected with Bimen as an outreach from there. Besides this they are self-“just about everything”, with self-propagating being quite weak right now.

We think everybody is content with the languages used in church. For the most part it is in Konai, as the majority of speakers are monolingual. Scripture is just starting to be available in Konai.

6.3 Attitudes of Religious Group Leaders

6.3.1 Use of Scripture in Local and Other Languages

There is very little Scripture available in Konai so far. What little there is, is met with quite a bit of enthusiasm from everybody. The ECPNG, CBC, and Baptist churches are all positive to Bible translation work, ECPNG most overtly so, but local Konais from the other two have expressed quite a bit of interest. It is ECPNG policy to have as much as possible in the local language.

There are no objections to the present Scripture readings in Tok Pisin or English. After all, they must read Scripture in some language in church. It has been expressed to us that it will be good when more Scripture is available in Konai, as some people find the other languages hard to grasp.

6.3.2 Literacy for Religious Group Members

There is a very positive attitude towards any sort of education. The people do want to learn new skills. There is no difference whether you are part of a religious group or not. The ECPNG pastor here at Dahamo and the CBC pastor at Tinahai are both running Kisim Save classes.

6.3.3 Literature in Evangelism

We are not sure here what exactly is meant by “literature in evangelism”. Anything that we can produce in Konai would be very welcome. We have also seen some Tok Pisin and English tracts and booklets.

6.4 Attitudes of Religious Group Members

There is really no difference in attitudes between leader and members to the three areas mentioned in Section 6.3. People reach a consensus and stick to it.

6.5 Perceptions of Literacy and Literature

6.5.1 Perceived Threats to Religious Groups

Mother tongue literacy and literature (including Scriptures) are not in any way perceived as a threat. This is not applicable in the Konai area.

6.5.2 Perceived Advantages to the Religious Groups

We have been told that it will be good to get more Scriptures in Konai, as people then will be able to understand the Word of God more clearly. With vernacular literacy they will also be able to read it for themselves.

7 Cross-Cultural Contacts and Change

7.1 Acceptance of Outsiders

There is no hostility to outsiders. They are very much more towards the other end of the scale, with an open acceptance of outsiders. Schoolteachers and medical workers are invited to preach in church on a regular basis. Visitors from other language groups are quite well looked after. Outsiders are not judged on the language that they speak. We are told that all this is quite a change from how things used to be in the past.

7.2 Influence of Outside Cultures

7.2.1 Economically

There has been quite an impact economically from the outside. There are now six trade stores here at Dahamo working with varying success. There are grants to be had from the provincial government for airstrip maintenance, sewing machines and material, outboard motors, clinic and school buildings, and maybe even shotguns for hunting in the future. In the late eighties there were oil exploration teams in the area on

two occasions with lots of local employment. Western clothing rather than traditional garb is now the norm, at least for men.

What we have *not* seen at all are cash-crops. Nothing seems to have happened in this area. There also are still very few that have regular outside employment.

7.2.2 Socially

The biggest change socially is the move from community long-houses to family unit houses. This has probably advanced the furthest right here in Dahamo, where there is an average of only four to five people living in each house.

In almost every church service somebody mentions the fact that earlier they never gathered together with everybody else like they now do in church. People still seem to marvel at this change even though Dahamo has had regular church services for something like thirteen years.

Women's Fellowship with Bible studies and sewing also falls under this category.

7.2.3 Politically

The Konai area now has its own councillor, who regularly goes out to Olsobip for council meetings. The councillor also has a "committee" (representative or deputy) in most villages. There is a local government short-wave transceiver at Dahamo with which they can communicate with Olsobip and Tabubil.

A shift in leadership and social structure can also be said to have occurred in that they have committees overseeing different areas. There is a station committee, a church committee, and a translation committee as well as a Parents and Citizens (P&C) committee. The special situation here at Dahamo as well as influence from mission and missionaries is obviously the reason for these committees, but we are also wondering if it might not have a traditional basis applied to the Dahamo situation. It seems to work quite well with these committee meetings, where a number of men meet to discuss different situations.

7.2.4 Linguistically

Even if the majority of speakers are still monolingual there are now people who can communicate in other languages. The Dahamo dialect (Southern) of Konai is also “accused” of using Aekyom loan words.

7.2.5 Ideologically

The biggest change of all has come about with the introduction of Christianity. They have gone from animism to a Christian lifestyle as a norm in about twenty years.

Education is seen as a high priority. Both adults and children are very faithful in attending both the Kisim Save classes (adults) and the formal school.

7.3 Social and Political Factors in Programme Planning

In our programme plan (Årsjö 1995) we have one part called Key Factors that would fit under this heading. The following eight points are copied from there.

7.3.1 Church situation

Opportunities: The ECPNG, CBC, and Baptist churches are all positive to Bible translation work among the Konais, ECPNG most overtly so, but local Konais from the other two are also positive.

Constraints: A potential constraint is that CMML missionaries usually do not work in the vernacular, but so far this does not seem to affect the local people’s interest in vernacular Scriptures.

7.3.2 Existing educational systems

Opportunities: We have the Community School, the Kisim Save Skul, the Tok Ples Prep School, and the DTP School (Discipleship Training Program). All four can be used for vernacular literacy, either fully or with a vernacular component. These existing schools give us access to people resources for both translation and literacy.

Constraints: The Kisim Save Skul could be a potential constraint as it could be competition to vernacular literacy, but we actually think we would be allowed to at least have a vernacular component in this class, or maybe even use its structure for vernacular adult literacy.

7.3.3 Existing infra-structures—leadership

Opportunities: Here we have the goodwill of the pastor, deacons, the station manager, the councillor and his “committees”, the two prep school teachers, and the station committees. These are all local men, and the pastor and the station manager are also important landowners. Britten has helped out in the Women’s Fellowship. We have also had good contact with all headmasters and teachers.

Constraints: The most influential leader, the station manager, is a very strong-minded man and might not take well to opinions that differ from his own.

7.3.4 Existing values and attitudes

Opportunities:

- Eager for education.
- Influence from Christianity for the last twenty years.
- People do not expect to get anything for nothing.
- No vices, i.e., no smoking, drinking, or chewing betel nuts. Keeps them healthy and alert.

Neutral:

- They are very humble and laid back.

Constraints:

- News travels slowly.
- Only one wife allowed for church workers. This may reduce the number of men available for translation and literacy.

7.3.5 Resources available

Opportunities:

- There are Grade 6 leavers available for translation and literacy.
- Church can be used for classes. The missionary house can probably also be used for this or any other community activities.
- The aid post with personnel will free us from medical work.

Constraints:

- No-one with higher education available.
- No cash crops or local industry, i.e., not a whole lot of money around.

7.3.6 Size of group and geography*Opportunities:*

- The Konais number about 500 people in eight villages.
- Access to Kiunga by hiking and canoe.
- Airstrip at Dahamo with regular flights by MAF and JAARS.
- ECPNG, SIL, and Local Government radios available at Dahamo.

Constraints:

- The villages are scattered over a very large area with up to three days' hiking over very rough terrain between villages.

7.3.7 Languages being used and attitudes to these*Opportunities:*

- Vernacular used in all contexts. They take pride in their own language/dialect.
- Enough knowledge of Tok Pisin (and perhaps English) for attending workshops and using commentaries and other translations.

Constraints:

- The biggest constraint of all is their fierce pride in their own different dialects. Everything else but your own dialect is incorrect.

7.3.8 Attitude to change

Opportunity and constraint: They seem to take to change as a duck to water. The last twenty years have seen a lot of changes in lifestyle and living situation without any negative side effects as far as we can see. In the long run we are not sure if this is good or bad. Will they take as easily to any possible future negative changes?

7.4 Innovation

It seems to us that “Innovation” is at least related to Section 7.2, i.e., many innovations are a result from influence from the outside.

7.4.1 Types of Innovation

See Sections 7.2.1–7.2.5.

7.4.2 Introducers of Innovation

Innovation is mostly introduced by outsiders.

7.4.3 Method of Introducing Innovation

The usual method is by example.

7.4.4 People’s Reaction to Innovation

People’s reactions are mostly favourable. They seem to take very easily to innovation and change. See Section 7.3.8 above.

7.4.5 Specific Examples of Reactions to Innovations

7.4.5.1 Favourable

All the things mentioned in 7.2 are seen as favourable. If an innovation is accepted as favourable more and more people start to do things in that way.

7.4.5.2 Unfavourable

There came a letter from a low-level provincial government official in Kiunga that all Konais ought to move to Kiunga, so they could have better access to government services. There was a village meeting about this, but everybody decided against it. They gave the main reason as shortage of garden ground.

7.5 Accepting Change

It seems to us that people here at Dahamo are the first Konais to accept change. Changes from the outside are coming in mainly through Dahamo with the airstrip. They are then spread to other villages through people living in the different village “corners” here. We feel that changes are adopted by consensus. There is no particular group that accepts changes first. We have not seen any negative side effects from changes so far.

There are of course inherent dangers with being too accepting of change. You can start to accept bad things as well. We are not sure if the

Konai people realise this. We include the following quote from Prince (1991) concerning the Konai people:

“It has not all been easy, however. Oil exploration teams, camped at the other end of the airstrip, have disrupted the community twice. The first time Christians were seduced by the money, beer and other things the visitors brought in, but their repentance has been sincere. Standing firm now, they are giving real leadership to the young Konai church at Dahamo.”

We do not see any remaining bad changes now from this period.

7.6 Language Form of Outside Information

Information from the outside comes into the Konai area through Tok Pisin, English, or Aekyom.

7.7 Specific Change Agents

The people and organisations that should be kept “in the know” regarding our programme are mainly the ones mentioned in Section 7.3.3. All the key factors in Sections 7.3.1 – 7.3.8 also give the answer to how they can share in decision making or contribute help.

8 Education

8.1 Children

There is only one Community School in the Konai area. It is located here at Dahamo. The school opened in 1990, so we had the first Grade 6 graduation in December 1995. The Headmaster is Mr. Durika Bogowela from the Gogodala language group and a second teacher is Mr. Kilton Mara from the Gizra language group. They are both here for their second school year.

The Headmaster also told us that the North Fly area would start to implement Elementary School in selected schools in 1997. In a two-class school like Dahamo all children between the ages of seven and eleven are supposed to start school, whenever there is a new intake.

Name of primary school: Dahamo Community School

Names of villages who send their children to this school:

Konai: Dahamo (6), Debele (6), Edolo(5), Sesenabi (3), Tinahai (2)

Aekyom: Hupen (4), Smipen (2)

School run by: Evangelical Alliance Agency School incorporated with ECPNG

Languages of villages: Konai, Aekyom (see above)

Language officially used for instruction: English

Language unofficially used for instruction: Tok Pisin for lower primary

Language children use with each other according to teacher:

English

Language children use with each other according to your own observation:

English, Tok Pisin, and Konai

Possible vernacular component: Somewhat doubtful. Surprisingly it was a new term for the headmaster. We could probably get a time for it, when we are ready for it.

Attitude towards vernacular: The headmaster has heard from other schools that vernacular prep school students are doing very well, when they enter the proper school.

Highest grade taught: Grade 6 and Grade 3 are taught in 1996. It should have been a new Grade 1 intake this year, but they are short of teachers here in Western Province.

Number of mother tongue teachers: None

Percentage of boys/girls of beginning school age: 22 students should have started Grade 1 this year. We do not know the percentage this would have been of beginning school age children.

Percentage of boys/girls completing grade 3: There are 21 children in the present Grade 3: 13 boys and 8 girls. This is the third Grade 3 class for the school. We do not know the percentage.

Percentage of boys/girls completing grade 6: There are 7 children in the present Grade 6: 6 boys and 1 girl. The graduating class in '95 was 20 children, 17 boys and 3 girls. We do not know the percentage.

Percentage of boys/girls completing grade 7: One boy (out of twenty students) was accepted to High School at Kiunga from the 1995 graduating class. No girls have completed grade 7.

Percentage of boys completing high school (grade 10): Two boys from the general area have completed Grade 10 at Kiunga.

Higher Grades completed: The two Grade 10 boys have the highest education in the area

The composition of the present two grades, Grade 3 and Grade 6, and last year's graduating class are as follows:

Village, Language	Grade 3		Grade 6		Grade 6 of '95		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Dahamo, Konai	4	1	1	0	6	1	13
Debele, Konai	0	4	2	0	1	1	8
Edolo, Konai	5	0	0	0	5	0	10
Sesenabi, Konai	0	1	2	0	3	0	6
Tinahai, Konai	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Guamosi, Kubo/Konai					0	1	1
Hupen, Aekyom	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Smipen, Aekyom	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total	13	8	6	1	17	3	48
Grand Total	21		7		20		48

It is interesting to note that in 1991, when the Grade 6 of '95 was a Grade 2, and the present Grade 6 was a Grade 1, the composition was as follows (Årsjö1991):

Grade 1: 13 boys/3 girls (compare present Grade 6, 6 boys/1 girl)

Grade 2: 33 boys/5 girls (compare Grade 6 of '95, 17 boys/3 girls)

Both the grades have decreased by about half over these five years. According to the Head Master one reason for children dropping out of school is the food situation.

Finally it can also be noted that the Aekyom and Kubo children attending school here at Dahamo all learn to speak Konai during their time here.

8.2 Adults

Here in Dahamo we would estimate that out of the approximate total of 150 people living here about two thirds (100 people) are illiterate. There are more women than men in this group. Of the remaining third (50 people), about half are semi-literate in English or Tok Pisin and Konai. It seems here that if one can read in either of the last two, one can also apply that knowledge to the other. The remaining 25 people can be said to be literate in the same three languages. A large part of this last group are Grade 6 graduates, who all are older than the normal thirteen years of age.

The reading preference is hard to say, as there isn't much reading material available in any language. It would probably be right to say that Tok Pisin is preferred over English. Recently produced vernacular booklets have also been quite popular.

In the age group of twenty-five to forty-year-olds, we would estimate that there are a total of fifty people here in Dahamo. Of these, about five are literate, two or three semi-literate, and the rest illiterate.

All of these figures are considerably lower in all the other villages with the possible exception of Tinahai where there has been quite a successful Kisim Save program.

The literacy rate for the whole language group we would estimate to be about ten to fifteen percent.

9 Literacy

9.1 Existing Literacy Programs

Here in Dahamo and at Tinahai there are Kisim Save classes run mainly by the local pastors. They were started by CBC at Tinahai and by ECPNG here at Dahamo. In both places they are for adults (here in Dahamo it can be up to twenty-five people participating). The program at Tinahai seems to have been quite successful, as we have heard a number of people from there, who do not have any other schooling, read Scripture in church here at Dahamo. We are more doubtful about the classes here at Dahamo, but it does give a familiarisation with what reading and writing is all about.

In 1995 there was also a prep school with eight children running here in Dahamo. The local station manager ran it, and he used the literacy books produced by ECPNG in the Konai language. It seems to have been at least partly successful.

There is talk about a Tok Pisin prep school starting up in Tinahai in the not too distant future.

9.2 Agencies and Individuals Concerned with Education

All of this has been mentioned in several other places in this paper, but we will list them here again for completeness:

Dahamo Community School with headmaster, teacher, and P&C.

ECPNG church with Pastor Motousi Si and deacons and Sodipae Dabaga and James Werema (prep school teachers)

CBC church with Pastor Sande Behelia and deacons

CHW (Community Health Worker)

9.2.1 Agencies Other than Schools and Churches

It is only the CHW that would partly fit here. He is a Samo man. He does not have regular classes but gives some teaching in various health subjects during clinic visits. We do not know what his attitude to vernacular literacy would be. CHWs do not usually stay for very long.

9.2.2 Administrative Structure of Churches

We do not really know about CBC, but the church at Tinahai is connected up to Koroba and Kalabo in the Southern Highlands, where CBC has training facilities.

ECPNG is divided up into districts. There is a Dahamo District that includes all Konai villages and some Aekyom villages.

9.3 Mother-Tongue Literacy

There definitely is an interest in reading and writing Konai. We have just had a series of three Writers' Workshops in April, May, and June

of 1996. The participants were from most villages and all were young adult men who could already read somewhat in some language. We had 10, 10, and 14 participants respectively in these workshops. The parents also encouraged the prep school classes mentioned in Section 9.1.

We have produced three Bible story booklets, one storybook, one alphabet book, and one bilingual dictionary with 1,329 entries so far this year. We have done twenty-five copies of each and all have sold out (thirty-five copies of the alphabet book). These books are now being read in the villages. Four more books were produced in two Translators' Workshops in October and November '96. See the Konai bibliography, Årsjö1996, the last four entries.

There are also English and Tok Pisin Bibles and tracts around that are being used.

We do not see much writing (except for the Writers' Workshops & Translators' Workshops). We are sometimes asked to type a hand written letter in English or Tok Pisin. These letters are for people outside the language group.

We also include here the Promotion Goals and Rationale as well as the Promotion Strategy Statement from our Program Plan (Årsjö1995b).

9.3.1 Promotion Goals and Rationale

SIL involvement in the Konai program is completed when...

Basic Skills

Goal: ... there is a local system in place for ongoing teaching of basic literacy skills for both children and adults.

Rationale: To ensure the use of vernacular Scriptures. To provide a bridge for becoming literate in a national language.

Functional Use

Goal: ... there is a local system in place to provide opportunities for people to use their literacy skills.

Rationale: To get a growing core of people being able and willing to read the vernacular Scriptures.

Literature Development

Goal: ... there are enough titles in print so that people have something to read when they so desire.

Rationale: For ensuring a functional use of literacy skills.

Distribution

Goal: ... there is a system for Discipleship Training Program (DTP) students (or evangelists) to promote vernacular Scriptures in all Konai villages through evangelistic outreaches.

...there is storage for books at Dahamo and people to promote and distribute them as needed.

Rationale: Scripture in Use.

Scripture in Use

Goal: ...(if there will be problems in this area) all the standard ventures have been tried out to promote the use of the vernacular Scriptures in church and by individuals.

Rationale: For the Konai people to hear and read the Good News and understand its consequences for their lives. For the growth of the church and the maturing of the individual Christians.

9.3.2 Promotion Strategy Statement

To promote literacy and the use of vernacular publications we plan to involve the local churches, the Discipleship Training Program (DTP), the Women's Fellowship, Kisim Save Skul, the Dahamo prep school, and the Dahamo Community School (in the future the Elementary School). The translation committee may have to be resurrected as the Tok Ples Committee to make decisions also in regards to literacy.

Literacy for adults and children will be undertaken under the auspices of the appropriate entity above.

An apprenticeship program for teachers will be set up, eventually to involve all Konai villages. Teacher training will be undertaken as needed, both locally as well as together with the others in the Strickland

Super Team (Ärsjö, SIL, Konai; Covington, ECPNG, Kubo; Smith, SIL, Samo). The trainers will be ourselves and possibly also the regional literacy team. Regional STEP courses⁵ may start in May '97.

Supervisors will be trained to test the students and report the results. They will also be trained to supervise the teachers and do some kind of evaluation of the students.

Material will be developed for basic literacy and fluency classes. The basic material will be our responsibility with help from consultants and the local people. We see the need of some kind of Multi Strategy Model approach in the development of the primers, and we are especially interested in Scripture primers. The fluency material will be written in Writers' Workshops run by us and/or the regional literacy team, sometimes together with the Strickland Super Team. Books to encourage reading may also be made from transcribed stories and Shell Books. Scripture help material, e.g., *How the Jews Lived*, and a hymnbook will be developed. This can be used in fluency classes and will also be good as Scripture-in-Use tools.

The distribution of the Scriptures and other books we see as the responsibility of the churches. We plan to train the DTP students (and/or deacons and evangelists) to do village checking and book distribution in their home villages. A place to store books will be arranged for in Dahamo and a person or persons trained to oversee it and sell the books. The money may be used to support the literacy program.

9.4 Language of Wider Communication (LWC) Literacy

The Kisim Save classes in Dahamo and Tinahai described in Section 9.1 would fit here. There certainly is an interest in these kind of classes, maybe more for learning Tok Pisin than actually learning to read, although that comes with it, too. We do not see it as an exclusive interest in only LWC literacy, at least not at all here in Dahamo. We sometimes get that impression from Tinahai, but still we did have participants from there in our Writers' Workshops and in one of the two Translators' Workshops.

⁵ STEP, Supervisor's Tokples Education Program, is a two-year course to train people to run literacy programs in their own language area.

9.5 Attitude toward Literacy

There is a good attitude to any kind of literacy and schooling for all age groups. This has been talked about in several places already in this paper.

9.6 Personnel and Education Resources

All the eight sub-points in Section 7.3 fit here also. See also Section 9.2. Some additional points:

We do not really think that there will be any local funds available for materials and supplies. There are no cash crops, and the only local supply of cash income is the airstrip maintenance. A yearly grant is provided for this from the provincial government.

Neither are we sure that the local people will give much help to literacy teachers. The local pastor and deacons are supposed to be paid that way, but even that does not seem to work out very well.

It will take some time and training before a literacy program can be run by the people themselves. If money for teachers will be necessary, we do not really see how it can ever be self-supporting. Our experience from the Ama program in the Sepik is that the total program is run by local people with only a yearly visit from us, but the nominal teachers' pay still comes from our pocket.

9.7 Local Definition of "Literate"

According to the local definition of a "literate" person it is not enough to recognise letters and sounding out words. He needs to be able to read with some fluency, maybe even to be able to read Scripture in church. We do not think he needs to be a good writer to be called a "literate" person.

10 Literature

10.1 Interest in Reading

There is not much available to read in any language. There are a few Bibles and other religious booklets and tracts in English and Tok Pisin, and a few older books and ten newer books in Konai. There are of course also school books in English, and the school also has a small library with English books and the newer Konai books.

There does not seem to be much reading for one's own edification. Scripture is read in church in English and Tok Pisin, with a preference for most for Tok Pisin. The new Bible story booklets in Konai have also all been read in church as well as in the homes. The old Konai primers have in the past also been read at home.

10.2 Language Domains

There are no other domains than the church, when it comes to reading, as reading is really only used there. Occasionally they do read at home, but there is no difference in language preferred.

10.3 Books

Not too many people own a book of any sort. Some, maybe ten to fifteen here in Dahamo, own a Bible or New Testament in either English or Tok Pisin. We have sold (or given out to co-authors and co-translators) the following Konai books: 25 copies each of three different Bible story booklets, 25 copies of a story book, 35 copies of an alphabet book, 25 copies of a Konai-English dictionary, 40 copies of the Christmas Story, and 40 copies of the songbook. Twenty copies each of the phrase book and the book of testimonies as well as ten more copies each of the Christmas Story and the songbook will be distributed in January. Some people also have the old primers.

10.4 Price of Literature

We do not know the price of any other books but the Konai books, but we suppose that a Bible or a New Testament cost between K 5-10.

We sold the A4 Bible story booklets (14 pages) for 20t and the A5 books for 10t.

10.5 Tape Players and Radios

There are not many of these around either. The few, maybe two or three, here at Dahamo usually do not have a regular supply of batteries. We have also fixed some broken ones.

11 Vernacular Literature

11.1 Vernacular Materials Produced

See Bibliography.

The non-instructional materials would include all books in the Konai bibliography except the Alphabet Book and Dictionary under Årsjö(1996) and the four primers under Woodyard et al. (1988). At present there are just a few copies available in the hands of Pastor Motousi of the 1996 titles. All other non-instructional books have been sold out. The Dabaga readers and the Woodyard Genesis 1–3 are in a somewhat different orthography than our books. It would need revision, if it would be reprinted. Some of the Woodyard materials are only in manuscript form.

Instructional books would include the four primers under Woodyard et al. (1988) and also the Alphabet Book and Dictionary under Årsjö(1996). No teacher's guides are available.

The four primers are still available in the radio room here at Dahamo. They are in a somewhat different orthography from the one we are using and without a teacher's guide we are not quite sure how they were meant to be taught. We are planning to make a new series of primers in 1997. The Alphabet Book can then be adapted into a Pre-Primer.

11.2 Titles Planned

No more titles are planned for the immediate future. We are planning to produce primers in 1997 as well as continue to produce computer copies of all translation we will be doing.

11.3 Materials and Titles Wanted

We have not really heard anything like that expressed here yet. It is our experience from the Ama program in the Sepik that people do not find it interesting to read stories from mother tongue writers about everyday subjects. Their motivation to learn to read is to be able to read the Scriptures, so that is what people want to read. Scripture background materials like *How the Jews Lived* are also acceptable.

11.4 Mother Tongue Writers

In each of the three one-week Writers' Workshops we had in April, May, and June of 1996, we produced a Bible story booklet to give the participants a feel of what translation is all about. In connection with this we also had them write the stories in their own words after having heard it told several times. In the April workshop we also produced a story booklet with ten native-authored stories on a variety of subjects. In the workshop in May we produced the Alphabet Book, where the participants choose key words for each letter in all its positions (Årsjö1996a).

In the two Translators' Workshops in October and November 1996 we translated the Christmas Story (thirty-eight verses from Matthew and Luke), produced a songbook, a phrase book, and a book of testimonies. The testimonies were native authored. The translation part also included village checking, back-translation, and consultant check (Årsjö1996b).

People still need more training in reading and writing Konai, but we could probably say that we have around ten men that can be trained to become Mother Tongue Writers.

12 Production, Promotion and Distribution

12.1 Local Means of Production

There are no local means of book production at present. The books we have done so far have all been done with our computer and printer right on the spot in connection with the workshop that produced them. We have so far done between twenty-five and fifty copies of each. We would like to see the people having a computer and printer of their own one day.

In our Sepik program we tried to introduce typewriters and silk-screens, but it never worked out really well. There are just too many steps

involved. If you teach silk-screening but print the stencils on your computer, it is still nothing the people can do on their own.

12.2 Prospective Means of Promotion

See Section 9.3.1 under Distribution as well as the last paragraph in Section 9.3.2.

We have so far sold books at the market and in the church. People have also come to our house after these occasions to buy books.

13 Orthography

See also Organized Phonology Data—Konai (Kalai) Language (Årsjö1995a).

13.1 Existing Orthographies

M. & J. Rule and V. & P. Woodyard of ECPNG developed the original orthography (1985, 1990a). We have done a lot of testing with both school children and adults and, after further discussions with the people, we have revised this orthography in a few places. We are now writing /o/ with <ou>. Before it was written <o:>. We are also using <p> in some loan-words as that is what people prefer. In other loan-words the <p> is replaced by <f>. We have kept underlining of the vowel to mark nasalisation, but we only write it on the last vowel in a word and interpret that as the whole word being nasalised. Earlier the interpretation was different and underlining used on all nasalised syllables.

The present orthography seems to be working well, and it is what we have used in the ten books we have produced.

13.2 Similarities (and Differences) Between LWC and Vernacular

Most things are quite similar between Konai and Tok Pisin. It is actually easier to mention some of the differences.

In Konai <n> is used in writing word initially whereas <l> is used word medially for the same phoneme. The people insist on writing this way. <p> is not part of the Konai alphabet, but it is used in some loan-

words. In Konai /o/ is written <ou> and /ɥ/ is written <o>. Nasalisation, written as underlining of the last vowel in a word, is of course another difference. We also have vowel harmony in Konai, where a central vowel is written the same as the following vowel. There also is a “bleed through” of <i> and <u> from one syllable to another both forwards and backwards. When this is manifested in verbs almost no-one actually writes it. In other word classes it is about fifty-fifty in who writes it and who does not.

13.3 Complex Linguistic Factors

Nasalisation, vowel harmony, and bleed through. See discussion above.

13.4 Status of Orthography

With the Konai OPD (Årsjö1995a) we have trial/tentative status of the present orthography.

13.5 Developers of Orthography

The Woodyards had been here ten years when the Rule et al. (1990) orthography paper was written. The Rules functioned as linguistic consultants for ECPNG at the time. We had been here one year when we wrote our OPD paper in 1995.

13.6 Disagreements over Orthography

There really are no disagreements over the present orthography.

13.7 Problems with Orthography

We are uncertain to what extent the vowel harmony should be applied. Sometimes a verb drops the last vowel when it takes a suffix starting with the vowel <a>, and according to the vowel harmony the central vowels in the stem should then also change to <a>. We are still investigating the people’s preference in these cases.

People are also divided in their opinions on writing the bleed through vowel or not.

14 Motivation

14.1 Spiritual Motivation

We would say that this is the main motivation for reading and for learning to read. It is shown by their interest in the Konai Bible story booklets and in Bibles, New Testaments and tracts in either English or Tok Pisin. Religious materials are really all you see in English and Tok Pisin. The Konai Alphabet Book has also proved to be very popular as they see that book as the first step in learning to read. The Christmas Story and the songbook have also been good “sellers”.

14.2 Letters

The only interest in letters is when it comes to writing applications for funding for different projects. They are usually directed to government officials in either Kiunga or Tabubil. We are usually asked to write these letters, possibly from a hand-written outline usually in Tok Pisin. We have not seen any letters written in Konai to “wantoks” in other places.

14.3 Groups Interested in Reading

We would say that an interest to learn to read and write goes right across the board for all ages and both sexes. We cannot pinpoint this interest to any special groups or individuals. This is maybe mainly true for Tok Pisin, as there have not been many reading materials available in Konai before now. We hope we will be able to transfer this interest also to Konai literacy.

14.4 Reasons for Wanting to Read

We would again say that the main motivation for wanting to learn to read is to be able to read Scripture and other religious materials. This is true for all three languages. See Section 14.1.

15 Attitudes to Education

15.1 Attitude of Traditional Leaders

We would say that the attitudes to any kind of education are only positive. This would apply to both adults and children. We have not heard any negative thoughts expressed in any way towards education.

15.2 Attitudes of Other Leaders

Other leaders have the same attitudes as the traditional leaders.

15.3 Educational Results Desired by Leaders

For literacy we would again say that the desired result is for the students to be able to read Scripture and other religious materials. For the prep school a desired result is also that the students will have a better chance in the community school. For the community school education another desired result is of course entry into high school, or, if that is not possible, employment.

15.4 Educational Methods Desired by Leaders

The present method for the Kisim Save classes initiated by the local pastor with a full morning of class in the church seems to fit them just fine. It might not be the best from an educational point of view, but it has been their choice to run the classes that way.

The prep school used to run from about 8:30 to 10:00 in the mornings. That was also initiated by a local leader.

The community school format is also fully accepted.

15.5 Life after School

When the first Grade 6 graduation occurred here at Dahamo in December 1995, there were plans for starting an ECPNG DTP school (Discipleship Training Program) here in the beginning of 1996. It was meant for the school leavers that did not get accepted to high school or got employment. Due to a leadership breakdown this did not come off, but it was still a good idea.

A number of school leavers took part in the series of three Writers' Workshops that we had in April, May, and June and the two Translators' Workshops in Oct. and Nov.

16 Traditional Methods of Teaching / Learning⁶

We are not sure that we know too much about this topic yet. In general we would say that a Konai child (this would probably be true for most children from most cultures) learns by being together with his parents, imitating them, and doing things together with them (a natural form of apprenticeship). A boy learns by spending time with his father and his mother's brother. A girl learns by being with her mother. It is all part of the upbringing.

Most likely there has been some sort of initiation teaching in the past, but so far we have not heard anything about that. That might have fit the following sub-headings better.

16.1 Consciously Taught Topics

We have a written native authored story about a boy making a garden together with his father. We are still not sure that topics like gardening are really consciously taught, it is more just part of everyday living. This also goes for things like fishing, hunting, house building, etc.

16.2 Students: Who and How Old?

In general we assume that the older teach the younger, but at least in introduced things like Kisim Save classes and church, the teacher or pastor quite often is younger than some of his "students". We have never seen a woman teaching an adult male.

There probably would have been a nice pat answer to this question, if we had known anything about initiation teachings.

⁶ The sub-headings under 16 seem to force a certain format on this subject that does not seem to fit the situation among the Konais.

16.3 Teachers

See above.

16.4 Period of Instruction

The period of instruction is basically all your childhood, as so much of traditional teaching comes with the normal child upbringing.

16.5 Teaching Methods

The method is to learn by observing and then later doing, i.e., apprenticeship.

16.6 Rewards of the Educator

As the educator normally is a parent or an uncle, the rewards come more in the areas of emotions and being satisfied, i.e., family pride.

16.7 Encouraging the Motivation to Learn

The motivation to learn how to fit in with the Konai village society is taken for granted. A child might object to certain things and maybe even refuse, but in the long run they learn to behave in the right way anyway. Spanking does occur when a child is not following the rules. Food can be used as a reward for good behaviour.

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