Community and Family Based Language Policy:  
An Angor Case Study

By Robert Litteral

Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) tops the list of nations in the world in the 1) number of languages with over 800 (Grimes 2000), 2) in language diversity in terms of linguistic groups, and 3) in the number of languages used in basic education. In 1980 a basic vernacular education movement started with two languages under the policy of the North Solomons Provincial government. That movement has grown until today there are over 350 language communities using vernacular languages for basic education under the national education policy. This could be one of the most amazing language planning success stories of the 20th century! And if it continues, it could go down in the annals of language planning successes along side the story of the revitalisation of the dead language Hebrew to become the vibrant language of a modern state.¹

PNG not only tops the list of nations in terms of language diversity but also is high on the list of those with endangered languages. However, PNG’s pro-vernacular language policy has introduced a new element into the environmental study of language maintenance and death. Consequently the country is becoming

¹ Just as the revival of Hebrew is credited to the persistence of one man, ben Yehudah, much of the success of PNG’s vernacular language development is due to the supportive efforts of one organisation, the PNG Branch of SIL International. Members of the PNG Branch of SIL have produced five PhDs and numerous MA's in the area of literacy, vernacular education and language development. SIL PNG members assisted with the initial provincial program in the North Solomons in 1980, had members seconded to the NDOE from 1989 to 2001 and assist with numerous language development programs today. Over 50 work-years have been provided by SIL members to the national and provincial governments’ vernacular education programs through secondment of literacy personnel. Many more work-years have been contributed by individual members to specific language programs.

[Robert and Shirley Litteral started working among the Angor people in 1965. The Angor New Testament was dedicated in 2001. Robert and Shirley have also worked with SIL International in various literacy projects as literacy consultants.]
an even richer environment for research on language viability and vernacular
language development. PNG’s vernacular education experience (Litteral 1999) challenges some of the academic wisdom concerning language and education
(Bull 1955, Fasold 1985).

In this paper I will look at 1) community and family language policy, 2)
introduce parameters for analysing this policy, and 3) provide a case study of the
Angor language community in order to illustrate the parameters and to make
comparisons with other language communities. The parameters can assist in
planning for language development and in the study of language viability. The
anecdotal data used for this paper was obtained primarily from informal, chance
communications.

Classical language planning (Rubin and Jernudd 1971) and sociolinguistic
discussions of language problems generally focus on national level language
issues such as national and minority languages. This focus was reflected in most
of the lead articles of The Language Planning Newsletter. Much less attention
has been given to community oriented language policy and planning. Discussions
of language policy in PNG before and after independence in 1975 (McElhanon
1975, Brammall and May 1975, Dutton 1976) assumed the national government
should develop a top-down language policy. Some emphasised meeting national
needs through national language(s) while others emphasised meeting individual
and community needs through local languages. I proposed a combination of the
two (Litteral 1979). In contrast to the top-down approach, what resulted in PNG
in terms of basic education practice was a bottom-up network where communities
and provinces developed pro-vernacular policies. This spread to eventually cause
a change in education policy at the national level.

A Case Study of the Angor

Background

The Angor language community is located in the Amanab sub-district of the
Vanimo-Green district of the Sandaun Province of PNG, which borders the Papua
Province of Indonesia. The Angor number under 1000 in the main dialect with
approximately 500 more speakers in a western dialect. Another mutually
unintelligible language or dialect, Amao, lies to the south. The Angor first had
sustained contact with the outside world in the late-1950s although they saw
military aircraft during World War II and had occasional contacts with bird of
paradise hunters. My wife Shirley and I began our association with the Angors in
1965 and have interacted with them approximately 25-30% of the time since
then.

Community and Family Based Language Policy Robert Litteral
The Sandaun Province has approximately 100 languages and the Amanab sub-district is probably the most linguistically complex area in the world with nine different linguistic groupings among its 21 languages (Loving and Bass, 1964). Three of these nine (numbers 75, 76 and 77 in Figure 1.) are isolates, that is, languages with no known linguistic relationship to other languages.

![Figure 1: Languages of North Sepik area including northern part of Amanab sub-district (Angor is 74)](image)

**Initial literacy**

After providing a tentative Angor alphabet, we taught three young Angor men to read in late 1968 and early 1969. This introduced the written medium to their previous oral-only communication repertoire. Literacy classes for adults were started in 1973 and the first Angor authored materials were duplicated in the same year. In 1975 Angor leaders requested literacy for their children because there was no school in the area. We trained a teenager who left school in Grade 2 to teach children basic literacy and numeracy skills. On a simple to complex continuum for skills for language development, the Angor community made a qualitative change from oral to written language and by 1975 had progressed to the teaching stage. The classes stopped when we went on a study leave. In the late 1970s adult literacy classes were expanded to more villages and both native

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2 One of these men, Waf Skayu, went on a labour contract for two years in 1971 and during that time taught several Angor co-labourers to read Tok Pisin.

3 Litteral (1978) describes the Angor communication system before and after contact.
authoured texts and translated materials were produced. Shirley produced the original primers using the Gudschinsky eclectic literacy method. One Angor man had minimal training as a supervisor.

The continuum below will be used to analyse vernacular development. The continuum progresses from more passive activities to more active ones requiring more skills and organisation. For example reading a language requires more skill than hearing it and producing reading material requires more skills than what is involved in teaching. Hearing a vernacular language is the most passive skill and where it is not accompanied by speaking, children may lose the language. This has been the case of many migrant languages where children heard but did not speak their parents’ language. The assumption is that the further a community is along the activity continuum, the stronger the vernacular is and the greater the probability that it will remain viable. The reverse is also assumed. The lower the vernacular is on the activity continuum in a contact situation, the greater the chances of language death.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hear-Speak-Read-Write-Teach-Materials-Supervise-Train-Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2: Language Development Continuum**

In 1965 the Angor were at level 2 as they had no written language.
In 1969 a few Angors were at level 4 as they could read and write.
In 1975 the Angor had attained level 5 as one Angor was teaching others to read and write.
In 1977 they had attained level 7 as they were supervising classes and producing literacy materials.

During this period all funding for the literacy project was external, either from SIL or an aid grant. We paid the expenses for the initial literacy in the early 1970s and USAID covered the costs for the materials and adult literacy classes of the late 1970s.

**Community based vernacular basic education**

When an Angor community leader, Sani Amafin, heard of the Tok Ples PriSkuls (TPPS) **Village Vernacular Preschools**, or kindergartens, that started in the North

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This continuum is tentative at this stage and I would appreciate suggestions for improving it to make it a better diagnostic tool. Terry Crowley, after the oral presentation of this paper, suggested that evaluation be added. This will be considered in future development of the continuum. In Litteral (1984) I discuss formal evaluation by experts and informal evaluation by the community.

**Community and Family Based Language Policy**

Robert Litteral
Solomons Province in 1980, the next year he asked us to help start one in Angor. Using the Gudschinsky eclectic type primer developed for adults and with the assistance of an infant and maternal welfare sister from New Zealand, Judith Watkins (nee Lesley), we trained Angors who had completed Grade 6 at a government school eight miles away to become teachers. There were three classrooms at the central village, Biwan, with over 100 students ranging from age six to adults. Some were too old to enter community school in 1983 and some were permitted to enter Grade 1 as teenagers. Students from distant villages stayed in dorms or lived with relatives while those from nearby villages walked to school each day. After we went on leave in 1981, the teachers completed the first year without assistance and began a second year. The activity level remained at level 7 (supervising) for the first year but extended to level 8 (training) with training and lesson plans as they started the second year without our assistance.

The community assumed responsibility for most costs except for materials and training which were covered by SIL. Community responsibility included classrooms, teachers’ pay and housing for boarding students. They provided financial assistance for teachers through fund raising activities. There was no formal board or committee providing oversight.

In 1983 the government opened Angor Community School at Biwan village and over 80 students from the TPPS divided into two classes began Grade 1. One of the two community school teachers was an Angor with six years teaching experience. He considered the students who had come into Grade 1 after TPPS as comparable to Grade 3 students that he taught before who had only English education (Litteral 1986). This provided an informal evaluation of the program. After the community school opened, community attention went to it and less attention was given to the TPPS. The community school used the classrooms that the TPPS had used and vernacular classes were moved to houses. There was no continuing vernacular education in the community school other than some time for reading Angor each week.

In 1984 the community acquired a portable sawmill and used income from it to pay the teachers. When the sawmill was not available for several months in mid 1985, the teachers quit when there was no pay. The community no longer felt responsible to raise funds to assist the teachers.\(^5\) There were no TPPS schools in Angor from July 1985 through 1989. When the original TPPS students took  

\(^5\)At the same time TPPS schools that had started in the Amanab language failed due to a lack of community financial support. An investigation in 2001 by one of those TPPS students, Atie Wiyam, who had gone on to high school, found that the leaders felt the schools were SIL schools and that SIL should pay the salaries.
the national Grade 6 exam in 1988, 48% were selected for positions in high school, much above the national average of 15% for rural community schools. Nation-wide 30% of Grade 6 students were selected to attend provincial high schools.

**Provincial sponsored Tok Ples Pri-Skuls**

The national government responded to the growth of TPPS throughout the country, both provincial and community sponsored, and in 1989 developed a national literacy policy that encouraged TPPS as non-formal education. A Language and Literacy Section was established in the Curriculum Development Division of the National Department of Education (NDOE) and three members of SIL, myself included, were seconded to NDOE as volunteer technical advisors.

Under this policy provinces and communities were responsible for salaries and the NDOE assisted with training courses and subsidies for materials and local training. Financial assistance for the teachers was the responsibility of the local communities and the provincial government. The TPPS system was still non-formal education and not part of the national formal system.

At the beginning of 1990 the Sandaun Provincial government and the NDOE cosponsored a TPPS training course at the government centre of Amanab with participants coming from both the East Sepik and Sandaun Provinces. A community school teacher was assigned to be the Sandaun provincial literacy coordinator and received his only training in vernacular literacy during this workshop. Most of the teachers were men who had originally attended TPPS in 1981-2 and some had attended two years of provincial high school before they were forced to leave because their communities could not afford the airfares and school fees for so many students.

This workshop used the Multi-Strategy method developed by Faraclas and Stringer (1987) with Mary Stringer as the presenter. We helped with the workbooks for teaching sounds and the Angors wrote all the stories for the whole language component. The provincial literacy coordinator was assigned to the Amanab sub-district for that year and provided some supervision and training for the Angor teachers and those from some other languages. Due to his lack of experience in teaching in the vernacular, he only provided advice in the areas of administrative and classroom procedures and assisted with materials production. In March 1993 we returned to the USA because of Shirley’s health and were no longer able to give much assistance to the Angor program.

This program had extensive Angor input up through level 7 (supervising) with some involvement in training and curriculum also. The community was dependent on outside funding from the provincial and national governments but
assisted with buildings and maintenance. The new national department of Provincial and Village Affairs paid salaries for TPPS teachers in 1993 and part of 1994. When this funding ceased the Angor teachers continued teaching without pay but stopped in July 1995 when many community school teachers went on strike. They reasoned that if community school teachers were getting paid and they went on strike, they could justifiably strike also as they were not getting any pay.

Angor Elementary Schools

Education reform was being planned when I was still with the NDOE in 1992. In the reform vernacular basic education became a part of the formal education system. A new level called Elementary was introduced where the language of instruction was to be that of the community. There are three elementary levels: E-Prep (kindergarten), E-1 and E-2. Instruction is in the language of the community with oral English introduced in the second half of E-2. The ideal was for the elementary system to gradually replace the existing TPPS schools. In Sandaun Province they were started in the provincial capital using Tok Pisin rather than where there were successful vernacular TPPS programs already operating in the rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Prep-E 2</th>
<th>Vernacular</th>
<th>Bridging to English in E-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Primary</td>
<td>G 3-5</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Primary</td>
<td>G 6-8</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Vernacular Maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Education Reform Structure

In many cases the TPPS teachers, although performing well, did not become elementary teachers because provincial education personnel preferred those who had completed high school and none of the TPPS teachers had. Too often the result was teachers with higher educational qualifications but with lower qualifications with respect to knowledge of the vernacular and culture. There has been some dissatisfaction with the elementary training because the foreign advisors who established the training program had little or no experience with vernacular education in PNG. The resultant training emphasis is on psychological and education theory and practice and on curriculum development. Very little effort is given to producing vernacular books or on how to teach them which had been the emphasis in the TPPS program. Some teachers begin teaching without any teaching materials. Jimmy Livai, a medical orderly supervisor with training as a teacher aid, said the difference between the elementary system and the TPPS system is that the elementary schools emphasise education whereas the TPPSs emphasised language and culture. In the Abau language area south of the Angor
area many parents wanted to return to the old TPPS system after the new elementary system was introduced (Yekou 2000). Maggie Guria (2003), a vernacular education trainer with the NDOE’s Curriculum Development Division, was concerned about the elementary schools in the Keapara and Karo language areas in her home area because they were teaching basic literacy and language skills but were not developing the curriculum to its full potential in language and culture.

The Angor went without basic vernacular education for their children for seven years before the elementary schools started in their area. The provincial plan for introducing these schools in the Angor area kept being delayed from the original date of 1998. Three men who had attended the original Angor TPPS in 1981-2 were chosen to receive training in January 2002. After six weeks training they became E-Prep school teachers on a trial basis. Their training included child development, organisational skills, classroom management and curriculum development with little attention given to materials production or teaching in the vernacular. They began classes with very little in terms of materials, equipment and teaching aids and had little practice in teaching in the vernacular. As of November 10, 2003 they had not received any pay nor had they received any materials or funds to produce books.

In August 2003 two Angor men completed the Supervisors Tokples (Vernacular) Education Program (STEP). This course consists of five one-month modules taught over a two-year period with village assignments between modules. In this training program there is a mentor for the participants of each language group to ensure that they understand assignments and to assist with their village assignments. Because the elementary teachers had so few books, the STEP participants held two workshops to help the elementary teachers develop their curriculum and lesson plans, produce books and to practice teaching them. In the two workshops they produced 11 Big Books and in the second one each teacher also received five small copies of the stories in the Big Books.

Each elementary school has a board of management that controls the school. The communities are generally satisfied with the schools and teachers, but are unhappy that the government has not paid the teachers, has given no financial assistance for materials and has not provided them with the elementary materials kits. In some elementary schools in some other language areas the teachers

6According to Dulson Berry, an Au language elementary teacher who attended the last two modules of the STEP course held in the Sepik area, the transportation of materials kits to isolated rural areas is difficult. So some teachers from schools with easy access to the provincial capital have more than one elementary materials kit for their classes whereas others like the Angor teachers have none.
teach in vernacular and Tok Pisin or just Tok Pisin. The Angor boards of management have insisted on no Tok Pisin in the elementary classrooms - only Angor until English is introduced in the latter part of E-2.

The Angor communities have progressed to Level 9 on the language development continuum as the STEP graduates are now training teachers and the teachers are developing their own culturally based curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Organising Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Reading and Writing</td>
<td>External funding, no internal organising body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>External funding (SIL), no internal organising body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Supervising</td>
<td>External funding (USAID), no internal organising body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Internal funding</td>
<td>Internal funding, no internal organising body, Consensus decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>No internal funding</td>
<td>No internal funding, program ceases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>No internal funding</td>
<td>No internal organising body, External funding (provincial and national governments), No internal organising body Supervision by provincial literacy coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Level 9</td>
<td>No external funding</td>
<td>No external funding, program ceases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Level 9</td>
<td>Some external assistance</td>
<td>Some external assistance (training), more expected Board of management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provincal supervision &amp; training, internal training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Angor Community Language Development

**Angor formal education activities in the home**

In our interactions with Angors, we learned that some parents were teaching their children to draw pictures and read and write in the home. Earlier the man that requested Angor TPPSs in 1980 taught his son to read and write Angor at home when the TPPSs stopped. He had a chalkboard in his home.

The present generation of young Angor parents have an advantage that few in PNG have. They began their formal education in their own language and, unlike their parents, they are literate. Other Angors indicated that they were teaching their children at home and came to us requesting small chalkboards. Since the government had not provided funds to purchase small chalkboards for the school, I suggested the parents buy them and have the children take them to
and from school each day. Now many parents have bought them and are teaching their children at home before they enter elementary school. They expect their children to read and write before they begin E-Prep classes.

Home schooling is a growing trend in some developed countries. Unlike home schooling, the Angor parents see their role as preparing their children for formal education and complementing the activities of the school. Although I am aware of some PNGean parents involved in formal education type activities with children in the home, especially among the Westernised elites, I am not aware of it being practiced on the scale that it is among Angors.

The Ministerial Philosophy of Education Report (NDOE 1986) states that education is to be culturally relevant and appropriate. The Education Reform was based on the philosophy of that report. Keruwa and Waters (2001) discuss how the home and school can interact with the school playing a role in enculturation. Nagai (2001), as an educational anthropologist, observed parents teaching their children traditional skills and trained vernacular teachers to use cultural assessment practices in the classroom. What the Angor parents are doing is in a sense adding to this: bringing activities that are generally associated with formal education into the home.

The same vernacular activity continuum can be used for analysing the use of Angor in the home. Some Angor homes are at Level 5 where parents are not only reading and writing Angor in the home, they are teaching their children these skills. Other homes are at Level 2 where they are only teaching their children to hear and speak Angor. The combination of vernacular elementary education and education activities in the home points to future viability for Angor.

I would like to apply a medical analogy to language viability7. There is treatment for illness, prevention of illness and health promotion. Most people think of health care primarily in terms of treatment. Some utilise preventative measures such as malaria prophylaxis and immunisations. Fewer are involved in health promotion where lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise promote health.

Applied to the issue of language death and maintenance, situations where the vernacular is little used in the home and community are like a sickness needing treatment. In some areas of PNG parents are hoping that TPPSs or elementary schools will cure the situation and keep the language alive. Research will be needed to determine if this treatment is successful. In the Urat language community of the East Sepik Province, Tok Pisin is replacing the vernacular. A TPPS teacher said he was teaching the vernacular in the school but used Tok Pisin with his children in the home. Will the TPPS be able to cure the loss of the vernacular when it does not have support in the home?

7 I appreciate Dr. Howard Searle for introducing these concepts to me in 1987.

Community and Family based language policy Robert Litteral 37
Elementary schools in Angor are like preventative medicine. They in themselves should prevent the language from dying out as long as the parents continue to use the language in the home. Using Angor for education activities in the home is like health promotion. It is a conscious effort involving a life style change that should strongly imprint the vernacular in their children and ensure the future viability of Angor. Children are enjoying learning with their parents. Bauyan (2002), the president of the Angor Community School Board of Management, bought an extra chalkboard because his children were arguing over who could use the one that he had.

Some parents in the Amanab language north of the Angor are also teaching their children in their homes using the vernacular. Jimmy Livai (2001) discussed the possibility of having a TPPS for one year before children entered E-Prep so the children could have more instruction in their language and culture. The parents were in agreement with the concept but it did not eventuate because of the problem of obtaining financial assistance for teachers. He and the principal of the Baibel Tisa Trening Skul (Bible Teacher Training School) at Amanab station both have had some training in childhood development and are planning to develop a curriculum for parents teaching their children in the home. They want to help parents so that they do not try to teach children beyond their maturational abilities. They also want education in the home to continue to be enjoyable for the children.

In other areas where the vernacular is being replaced by Tok Pisin in the community and home, some parents have chosen to use the vernacular in their homes. Eddy Yanambe (2003) of the Miniden language is using Miniden in his home. Other PNGeans living outside their home area are sending their children back to live with relatives so they can learn the vernacular in the elementary school (Ben 2003).

The concept of teaching in the home is not given much consideration by literacy planners and aid agencies supporting literacy. But when one is guided by community development principles rather than outside funding, which can lead to dependence, instruction in the home is a valuable, overlooked development asset. In 1910 J. O. Fraser, a missionary with the China Inland Mission, began living with the Hwa Lisu in southwestern China. Eventually literacy became an expected behaviour for Christians. He said that it was the responsibility of Christians to teach others and for family members to teach other family members. When a young American missionary, Jenny Fitzwilliam, went to work with the Lisu in the late 1920s, she wanted to start schools. Fraser discouraged it saying education was primarily the responsibility of the family. The Lisu became one of the most literate minorities in China and their rate of literacy surpassed that of the rural Chinese of the area (Fitzwilliam 1987).
Comparisons of language policies
Community language policies

Community language policy can counter general language attitudes. A group of approximately 200 speakers of a dialect of the Manam language living on the coast of Madang Province, a province with many small languages, is surrounded by the larger Mauwake language. The community of the dialect of Manam expects women who marry into their language group to learn their language, otherwise they are ostracised (Voth 2003). On the other hand, the larger Mauwake community is switching to Tok Pisin. The reason they give is that many women from other languages marry into their community and the simplest communication solution for them is to use Tok Pisin (Jarvinen and Kwan 2000). For the Manam dialect, language is a core value. For Mauwake, it is not (Smolicz 1979) The Mauwake community has attempted to revitalise their language through TPPS.

The small Frok language community on the coast of East Sepik Province has chosen to use their language in elementary schools while many of the surrounding languages are using Tok Pisin. Tok Pisin is also spoken in the community. But their community practice is Level 6+ with respect to their elementary school.

The Mamamura and Wahai villages of the Dra language in the Amanab sub-district of Sandaun Province are in transition. According to a survey by Ismoie Wosania, in the villages around the Kamberatoro mission station the children are predominantly using Tok Pisin. Mamamura and Wahai villages are distant from the mission station. A nongovernment organisation is providing the elementary schools with Tok Pisin materials. But the Local Level Government (LLG) ward member from Wahai has asked for assistance to start using the Dra language in the elementary schools. The LLG member from Mamamura stated that his community had already stopped the NGO’s Tok Pisin elementary schools and wanted to follow government policy and use Dra (Ria 2003).

In the Kilakila community near the capital, Port Moresby, the vernacular Motu, the pidgin Hiri Motu and Tok Pisin are used in the village with Hiri Motu the dominant language. However, the elementary school is in English. Like many language communities on the north coast of PNG where Tok Pisin has or is becoming dominant in the community, the LWC (Language of Wider Communication) of the area, Hiri Motu has become dominant (Peter Kivori 2003). Unlike the North Coast villages where the LWC, Tok Pisin is used in elementary schools, in Kilakila English is used. Being near the capital where the economy

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4 Technically this is contrary to language policy for elementary education. The policy states that the language to be used in elementary is a language known by the students and the teacher which is not the case with the Kilakila children.

Community and Family based language policy Robert Litteral
is based on employment, the people want their children to learn English well so they can get jobs. The language they use in the elementary school is not the language of the home.

In the Urat language area of the East Sepik Province Tok Pisin is the dominant language of the children and has been for many years. A TPPS teacher stated in a report at the STEP training course in Wewak that he teaches Urat in the school but uses Tok Pisin in the home with his children. The education level for vernacular is six but the level in the home is zero. Longitudinal studies will be needed to determine if elementary or TPPS schools are effective in language revitalisation without supporting family policy.

In the Karo and Keapara area of the Central Province on the south coast where the capital, Port Moresby, is located the vernacular is strong. Most of the people are bilingual/bi-dialectal.9 The local language varieties are used in the elementary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angor:</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urat</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kilakila:</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urim:</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast:</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Comparison of language development in communities
Dark shading is vernacular, light shading is language of wider communication

9It is difficult to distinguish what are different languages versus different dialects in PNG. Linguists have used percentages of shared vocabulary as a basis for distinguishing between dialect and language. The speakers of the speech varieties use subjective criteria for their evaluations. In the Karo and Keapara situation the person who provided the information, Maggie Guria (2003), used the terms ‘language’ to distinguish the two language varieties.
Comparison of two sub-districts: Amanab and Ambunti

Ambunti is a sub-district in the East Sepik Province and Amanab is one in the Sandaun Province. In the Ambunti district Tok Pisin is generally used in the elementary schools (Marten 2003). The elementary coordinator for the area previously worked for an NGO that supported Tok Pisin literacy and education. Rather than developing vernacular materials, Tok Pisin materials are given to the elementary schools. Like Kamberatoro above, the practice of NGOs in the area influences language use in the elementary schools. The East Sepik educational establishment is viewed by some as being supportive of vernaculars in theory but weak in the area of practice. Although the New Testament has been translated into many of the languages in the district and considerable vernacular materials published, they have had little influence on present education practice.

The Amanab sub-district is generally pro-vernacular. There have been two elementary coordinators who have encouraged vernacular elementary development. Vernacular TPPSs developed by SIL date back to the early 1980s and the majority of the elementary schools today are using the vernacular. Four languages in the sub-district have New Testaments and translation programs are in progress in four more. People from other languages in the sub-district have requested SIL’s help in producing alphabets and developing vernacular education programs.

The Baibel Tisa Trening Skul (Bible Teacher Training School) is the training institution for the largest Protestant denomination in the sub-district, the Christian Brothers Church. The present leadership is pro-vernacular and desires to introduce literacy training into their program.

In 1990 the Sandaun provincial government wanted to develop a ten year plan that would include providing alphabets for all the unwritten languages of the province. It was unable to implement the plan due to lack of expertise and follow through planning.

Comparison of NGOs

Klaus (2001:109) speaks of the importance of NGOs in Papua New Guinea for implementing the education reform. He writes as if they are assisting in vernacular development but in many cases the opposite is true. Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea (BTA-PNG), Pioneer Bible Translators (PBT) and Papua New Guinea Trust are all involved in vernacular language and education development. SIL alone has contributed many work-years to assisting vernacular education, with volunteer secondments at the national (30 work years) and provincial levels and many work-years of assistance in over 100 language programs. Waters (1997) found
that those provinces that had had significant NGO support in establishing vernacular plans and training programs were in a much better position to benefit from and build on the supportive climate for vernacular education that was current at the time of her survey in 1994.

Before World War II many missions established local languages of wider communication (LWC) for their ministries when they began working in the PNG area. Tolai, Suau, Dobu, Motu, Gogodala, Wedau, Jabem, Kate and Graged were all used as LWCs for the churches. After World War II Tok Pisin spread rapidly and began to replace the ecclesiastical languages in the former New Guinea area. Many NGOs used Tok Pisin for their ministries because it was difficult to try to work with the many languages in their areas. Some NGOs have introduced Tok Pisin elementary schools in their areas as they have personnel with educational expertise but without experience in vernacular languages.

Conclusions

Papua New Guinea with its many languages, linguistic diversity and languages in transition, has much to offer in the understanding of language maintenance, death and revitalisation. The present education reform theoretically supports universal basic education in the vernacular and should change the dynamics of language viability but the implementation is inconsistent with policy in many situations. Government, NGO and community education practices influence the implementation of the national policy with some supporting it while others use languages of wider communication instead of vernaculars. There is growing interest with individuals and communities to have initial education in their vernacular languages. However, at present there is a problem of insufficient government personnel with adequate training to implement the national vernacular education policy.

Not only community and government policies influence language viability. Family policy is the crucial factor in language maintenance or death. Some families of the Angor community have a policy that includes teaching children to read and write the vernacular in their homes. This promotes effective education, affects language viability and influences language policy in the community. Whether this grows by networking to influence other language communities as their vernacular basic education did in the 1980s remains to be seen.

A continuum of language development provides a means of analysing language practice in the home, community, NGOs and government schools. It provides a means of planning for families and communities who want to improve their children’s education and strengthen their languages and cultures.
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