Talking around the texts:

literacy in a multilingual Papua New Guinean community

Cindy Schneider

University of New England, Armidale NSW, Australia

This paper examines the role of literacy as it is practiced in a multilingual community on the Gazelle Peninsula in East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea. [1] Ethnographic observational fieldwork and semi-structured interviews reveal how literacy plays out in six common domains of everyday life: public discourse, home, school, church, health care, and government. Following Street (1984, 1995), an ideological framework is used to explore the unique cultural context of literacy in this community. It is found that: (a) the community venerates external standards of literacy, at the expense of local practices; nevertheless, (b) literacy practices reflect the multilingual skills of the general population; and (c) literacy events provide an opportunity for oral discourse and social bonding. It is also argued that the community would benefit if local literacy practices were recognised and validated on their own merit. [2]

[1] Fieldwork in Malabonga was originally funded by La Trobe University, and later by an internal grant from the University of New England. I would like to express my gratitude to Thomas Kalas and Saraim Kolis and their family for hosting me during my stay at Salem. Also special thanks for assisting me with my research goes to: Thomas Kalas, Joel Kalas, Saraim Kolis, Michael Kalas, Bethlyne Kalas, Sister Kubak John, D. Semi, Eli Woda, Mume Dina, Pastor Liethe Kepas, Deli Alois, Shirley Roderick, Hane Ephraim, Kesia Aminio, Sion Peni, Warkia Peni, and all the teachers at the elementary and primary schools in Malabonga and Gaulim, particularly Rody John.

[2] The author would like to thank the editor and the three anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article. Any errors or omissions are of course my responsibility alone.

Keywords: literacy practices; language usage; multilingualism; ideological literacy; language planning

1 Introduction

This paper examines the role of literacy in a Papua New Guinea (**PNG**) community. The community in question encompasses the villages of Malabonga, Ivere, and Gaulim (hereafter referred to collectively as 'Malabonga'). Malabonga is located on the Gazelle Peninsula in East New Britain Province (ENBP). New Britain is a large island located east of the New Guinea mainland, to the southwest of New Ireland and due west from Bougainville.

The Malabonga community is heterogenous and highly multilingual. There are four indigenous languages spoken there, as well as Tok Pisin (a *lingua franca* of PNG) and English (used symbolically). Following the current section's exploration of the sociolinguistic and educational context in Malabonga and PNG, Section 2 introduces a variety of theoretical concepts that are relevant to the way literacy is practiced in this community. After an explanation of methodology in section 3, these practices are then outlined. The salient characteristics of this homegrown form of literacy are highlighted in Section 4, and an argument is made in Section 5 that localised literacies such as the ones practised in this community deserve to be recognised and validated on their own terms. Section 6 then concludes the paper.

1.1 Sociolinguistic context of PNG and Malabonga

PNG's geography and history have both contributed to the country's complex linguistic situation. Rugged terrain has helped to isolate groups of speakers from each other, such

that there are about 850 indigenous languages spoken across the country (Lewis et al 2014). In addition, English has a firm foothold inside the country's powerful institutions. This is due to Britain's administration over what is now the southern half of PNG from 1885, and Australia's subsequent administration over the whole of PNG from 1902 until independence in 1975 (Central Intelligence Agency 2013). To quote an extract from PNG's National Policy on Information and Communications (section 3.1): "The Independent State of Papua New Guinea recognises English as its *official language of international communication and commerce*, with Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu as *official languages of convenience*. The use of these three languages shall be based on their intelligibility, appropriateness and acceptability in any given domain of communication" (Evans 2001; emphasis mine). Hiri Motu is spoken in southern New Guinea and will not be discussed in this paper. English and Tok Pisin are explored in more detail below.[3]

Despite the significance of English on the national scene, in rural areas like Malabonga this language is rarely heard and few people are confident in using it. It is never spoken in informal settings nor is it heavily used even in official contexts. Health clinics and schools, for instance, display posters on their walls in Tok Pisin as well as in English, and it is Tok Pisin or one of the indigenous languages, and not English, that are the common languages of communication between health workers and patients. At elementary schools, English is only taught informally as a subject, where the teacher calls out English phrases and the students repeat, for example. In primary school, English is used to some extent for communication in class, but rarely outside of the classroom. Nevertheless, in all official domains, national language policy maintains that

[3] ISO codes for English, Tok Pisin, and Hiri Motu are eng, tpi, and hmo, respectively.

English is supposed to be used. Therefore, all formalised interactions and any official paperwork such as health forms, certificates, teaching resources, and so forth is primarily in English.

Of course, Tok Pisin plays a crucial supporting role to English. An English-lexified creole spoken throughout the northern half of PNG, it is widely used on the Gazelle Peninsula. An alphabetic spelling system for Tok Pisin (based on the Roman alphabet) was developed by the pre-Independence government in 1955, with slight modifications thereafter (Verhaar 1995). A number of dictionaries and grammars of Tok Pisin have been produced over the decades (cf. Dutton & Thomas (1985), Murphy (1949), Mihalic (1969, 1971, 2006), Verhaar (1995), *inter alia*). These standardisation efforts might suggest that Tok Pisin has a reasonably high status in the community. However, this is only partially true. While Tok Pisin is taught as a subject in urban schools where students come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, it is not normally taught in rural areas like Malabonga (cf. section 3.2.3). So although written Tok Pisin has been standardised to some extent, there is still variability in spelling conventions across individual writers.

Moreover, since Tok Pisin is a regional lingua franca, it has no special allegiance to any particular language or cultural group. This contributes to its strength, but also to its ambivalent status. It is not a language of aspiration, like English is, but neither does it have the heritage value of indigenous languages. It is truly, as described in the above quote, a ‘language of convenience’.

The situation of Tok Pisin in PNG is similar to that of Solomon Islands Pijin (Pijin), another dialect of Melanesian Pidgin closely related to Tok Pisin. Jourdan and Angeli (2014: 277) describe Pijin as a “language of solidarity and equality” and “a key element

of the Solomon national identity", despite its lack of official status. Since, as in PNG, only English literacy is taught in Solomon Islands schools, people (especially youth) value Pijin as a bonding language, but do not feel it worthy of being written. They regard it as 'broken English'. On the other hand, the population take a very pragmatic view of English, seeing it as an international language and for this reason important to learn. This is also the case in PNG.

Malabonga is also home to four indigenous languages of PNG. Firstly, there are two local varieties of the Baining language family, Kairak and Ura. The Baining languages belong to the larger Papuan (non-Austronesian) family.[4] There is also a community of Taulil speakers in Malabonga; Taulil is also classified as Papuan (Stebbins 2011: 2-3). In addition, Kuanua, an Austronesian language spoken mostly along the coastline, is used by a small group of old migrant settlers in the area.[5]

During my stay in PNG, I lived in the Kairak section of the Malabonga community. Kairak is transmitted to children as a mother tongue. However, its vitality is challenged by the close proximity of other significant language communities. For example, one can walk from the Kairak-speaking area to the Taulil-speaking vicinity in about ten minutes. Likewise, the other Baining language, Ura, is spoken in Gaulim, a village that can be reached by foot in about fifteen minutes. Furthermore, there are a few Kuanua-speaking families (referred to as the Tolai people) who bought land in the area several decades back, and they continue to sustain their own language and culture in the midst of the wider Papuan heritage environment. Intermarriage between Kairaks and members of neighbouring communities is not uncommon. Men also marry women from other

[4] Papuan languages are alternately referred to as 'non-Austronesian' languages, because much is yet to be learned about them.

[5] ISO codes for Kairak, Ura, Taulil, and Kuanua are ckr, uro, tuh, and ksd, respectively.

provinces around the country. Depending on the family, children born of these mixed marriages may learn Kairak from one parent; however, in cases where neither parent has a good understanding of the other parent's mother tongue and use Tok Pisin with each other, the children learn Tok Pisin as their mother tongue.

Gaulim which, as previously mentioned, is close to the Kairak-speaking area, is home to the Gaulim Teacher's College. This is a national institution that welcomes teachers and trainee teachers from all over the country. These individuals, many with spouses and young children, add to the linguistic melting pot of the region.

The complexity of the local linguistic scene is reflected not only in people's homes and on the streets but also in schools, churches, and at public gatherings, where Kairak, Ura, Taulil, Kuanua, Tok Pisin, a smattering of English, and any combination of these can be heard. In addition, many people own televisions and radios, with broadcasts mostly in English, but also in Tok Pisin. In other words, the linguistic climate could be characterised as highly multilingual at both an individual and a societal level.

1.2 Language and education: policy and practical reality

Starting in the 1980s, literacy teaching around PNG became increasingly decentralised. The English-only policy originally set in place by Australian colonial administrators eventually gave way to a policy that favoured community languages in elementary schools. In 1989, PNG's National Language Policy was endorsed by the central government (Litteral 2000; Gerry 2011: 81-82). The policy states that children are to be taught in the vernacular from 'Prep' (kindergarten) up to and including Year 2. The idea behind the policy is to give students the opportunity to become literate in their mother tongue before transitioning to English.

The reality is that community languages receive little practical support from the central government and local teachers must produce their own literacy materials for teaching the vernacular. Teachers must also prepare students for the transition to an 'English-only' (in theory, at least) Year 3 classroom. So, although elementary classrooms are meant to study the vernacular, in practice, teachers start preparing their students for English well before Year 3 – from this author's observations, as early as Year 1.

As noted in Section 1.1 above, Tok Pisin receives no formal attention in Malabonga schools (with one exception; cf. section 3.2.3). However, since it so widely spoken, it is introduced to all students as a matter of course. Section 3.2.3 looks at specific examples of Tok Pisin usage within elementary school classrooms.

UNESCO (2008: 9) estimates that the literacy rate in ENBP is 70.6%. As for the Gazelle District of ENBP, PNG's National Research Institute (2010) reports its literacy rate to be 85.2%. Most children matriculate in elementary school at some stage in their childhood (with 76.5% of 6-14 year olds enrolled in school). However, they progressively drop out after completing elementary and primary school and only a tiny minority ever complete high school. In Malabonga, only one student finished high school in 2011. Realistically, this means that most people possess only basic literacy skills and that fluency in written or spoken English (the language of education and government) is the privilege of just a small minority. Greaney (1996: 10-26) outlines a number of practical obstacles to autonomous literacy that commonly arise in developing countries like PNG. Factors include: inadequate school instruction; adverse school factors; lack of reading materials; gender inequalities; inadequate health provisions; adverse home circumstances.

2 Theoretical background

The sections below review a number of theoretical strands relevant to the literacy practices to be discussed in section 3.

2.1 Literacy, social development, and effect on the individual

Early studies contrast the effects of literacy on the development and organisation of 'simple' societies as opposed to 'advanced' ones (cf. Goody 1968: 1). Goody and Watt (1968) argue that the 'intellectual differences' between simple and complex societies can be attributed at least in part to their non-literate and literate traditions, respectively. What is evident in these earlier works is an assumption that the introduction of literacy leads traditional societies to adopt the intellectual, educational, and socio-political models of western societies (Akinnaso 1992: 71). Under this conceptual framework, literacy – the autonomous skill of reading and writing – is viewed as a practical tool for fostering developmental change, where 'developmental change' is viewed through the lens of western civilisation. Others have argued that it is simplistic to view literacy as a static and autonomous first-world skill that inculcates a certain 'world view', a western ideology, into the recipient society. Rather, literacy is dynamic and organic and its uses and effects depend upon the social context in which it operates. This will be discussed in the next section.

What of the relationship between literacy and the development of the individual? Coulmas (2013: 1) puts it rather succinctly: "In our day and age, reading and writing are indispensable for participation in society, and there is no evading the fact that literacy skills are a major determinant of one's life chances." Breaking down this premise, we could postulate that while literacy confers advantage, non-literacy confers disadvantage.

Graff and Duffy (2010: 50) go so far as to suggest that literacy skills, or lack thereof, may even provide a convenient excuse for the perpetuation of social and economic inequality. Rogers (2010: 137) observes how in less-developed societies, literacy materials are visible in public places such as post offices, clinics, police stations, churches, schools, shops, and so forth, but not in other places. He notes that this teaches citizens "to whom literacy belongs and to whom it does not belong, who is excluded, which kinds of literacy practices belong to which contexts and kinds of people." He suggests that certain literacy contexts have an aura of exclusivity that effectively shut out less-skilled readers and writers from these contexts. Although lower-level literates normally work around the 'exclusion zone' by recruiting others to assist with literacy tasks when necessary, such coping strategies nevertheless may perpetuate a sense of incompetence and low self-confidence in the individual.

2.2 Viewing literacy within its social context

Up to this point, 'literacy' has been framed in its most conventional sense, that is, as an autonomous skill whereby an individual is able to read and write – independently and unaided – any single given language (the significance of 'single' will be unpacked in sections 3 and 4). Yet for the past few decades, the organic, contextualised nature of literacy has been well recognised in academic circles. Any tradition, transplanted to a different culture and context, will take on a life of its own. Just as oral language adapts to the local context (the global varieties of English are a testament to this), so too do literacy skills. Like spoken language, literacy has a social currency and the way people use their skills is closely aligned with culture, values, and belief systems. It therefore follows that what literacy is, exactly, will be conceptualised in different ways,

depending upon the people, the place, and the time period involved – that is, the context in which the literacy is situated (Barton & Hamilton 1998; Prinsloo & Breier 1996; Street 2010: xiii). Street (1984) refers to this as 'ideological literacy'. Along these lines, Barton and Hamilton (1998; 2000) outline a social theory of literacy, which is reproduced in Figure 1 and annotated with numbering.

(1) Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
(2) There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
(3) Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible, and influential than others.
(4) Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
(5) Literacy is historically situated.
(6) Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.

Figure 1: Literacy as social practice (Barton & Hamilton 2000: 8)

'Practices' (1) refer to a set of social and cultural habits vis-à-vis literacy; that is, how people actually use literacy in their everyday lives and the cultural assumptions that underlie these habits. Literacy 'events' refer to activities in which reading and writing has a role. What constitutes a literacy event will vary from one speech community to the next (Heath 1986). Moreover, different aspects of people's lives require different types of literacy (2). For example, writing an essay for a school assessment requires a

different skillset from applying for a job. Sending a text message to a friend is a different type of literacy yet again. Taking this example a bit further (3), it seems clear that the essay, the job application, and the text message occur under different auspices: the first a highly visible form of literacy, with its value endorsed by the education system; the second a very practical type of literacy and important for earning an income, yet often ignored by the educational system; the third an important bonding mechanism, yet typically viewed by school administrators as a distractor from academic development.

Despite their varying statuses, each of the above types of literacy has an important purpose to serve (4), or they simply would not exist as a genre. Writing an essay is a way of participating in a nation's pursuit of educational advancement; sending a CV and job application to a potential employer conforms with the work ethic of modern society and is a means to an end; and sending a text message helps to establish and reinforce social relationships. This leads to the next point (5), which is that literacy rolls with the times. While the practice of essay-writing has been prioritised at the tertiary level since 1806 (Davidson & Tomic 1999: 163), written job applications have only been in existence since perhaps the 1950s. Text messages are an even more recent instantiation of literacy, having become widespread only within the past decade or so. Indeed, as practitioners of literacy, members of society are constantly adapting to its new forms, typically without receiving any formal tuition, or perhaps with minimal tuition (6). Thus, every form of literacy is unavoidably subsumed within some type of social context.

2.3 'Talk around text': literacy and orality

All literacy events are socially embedded. Nevertheless, at first glance, reading and writing would seem less of a 'social' activity than speaking is. Traditionally, reading is construed as a solitary activity; i.e. the reader of a text is only vicariously connected to the writer and therefore does not need to respond overtly to the text. On the other hand, spoken language by definition involves at least two people and therefore requires interaction (Simons & Murphy 2006: 218).

However, it is easy to find counter-examples, such as an email or text message demanding an instant response. Conversely, a speech delivered to a large group of people may require no verbal response at all from the audience. Therefore, the writing-speech dichotomy can be reconceptualised instead as a distinction between the 'situation-dependent' (interaction dependent upon immediate context) and the 'text-based' (interpretation of text based upon non-situational cues) (Simons & Murphy 2006: 221). Both writing and speaking can fall under either category. Writing is normally text-based, but can also be situation-dependent. Speaking is prototypically situation-dependent, but can be text-based.

The same type of literacy event can be more or less situation-dependent versus text-based, depending upon the community in which the event occurs. In her well-known study in the Piedmont Carolinas (United States), Heath (1983) observes a number of cultural differences between the literacy practices of two rural working class communities. Heath's notes on one of these communities, Trackton, are particularly relevant here. She writes: "In almost every situation in Trackton in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretations of meaning, talk is a necessary component" (Heath 1983: 196). She continues: "For

Trackton adults, reading is a social activity; when something is read in Trackton, it almost always provokes narratives, jokes, sidetracking talk, and active negotiation of the meaning of written texts among the listeners. Authority in the written word does not rest in the words themselves, but in the meanings which are negotiated through the experiences of the group" (Heath 1983: 196). In Trackton, then, reading is more a situation-dependent activity than a text-based one.

Heath furthermore notes: "Reading was a public group affair for almost all members of Trackton from the youngest to the oldest. […] [T]o read alone was frowned upon, and individuals who did so were accused of being anti-social. […] In general, reading alone […] marks an individual as someone who cannot make it socially" (Heath 1983: 191). Such 'talk around the text' does not mesh well with traditional school-based traditions of literacy, where reading and writing are framed as solitary activities. Heath (1983: 235) suggests that the cultural differences between the home and the school environments in Trackton are one reason why Trackton students do not excel academically. Thus, the cultural practices of a community can create academic disadvantage, if home practices fail to reinforce what is practiced in the school.

2.4 Multilingual texts

Culture affects not only the 'consumption' of literacy, but also its production. Multilingual texts are a case in point. While formal school-based writing requires a strict separation of codes, most writing occurs in informal contexts, and since the majority of societies and individuals in the world are multilingual, their writing reflects this.

Vaish (2010: 124) defines a 'biliterate text' as "an artefact, for instance a road sign, piece of writing in the classroom, an advertisement on the street or graffiti […], in which there is written or symbolic (as in an image) evidence of two or more languages or cultures." A 'hybrid text' is "a subset of biliterate texts in that it has an aesthetic, creative nature, is usually not grammatically acceptable and is popular in sites like advertising and popular culture." She equates hybrids to the written equivalent of code-switching in spoken language. She points out that while bilingual texts are discouraged in the classroom, they are produced in texts that children themselves produce. She points out that biliteracy exists in the workplace (Vaish 2010: 126-128) and proposes that such biliteracy practices be back-mapped into schools, so that children can learn them in a formal way.

Sebba (2007: 118-126) describes the approach taken towards spelling in Jamaica, where Jamaican Creole is the lingua franca, while Standard English is taught in school. In Britain, where many Jamaican migrants have settled and raised their children, people do write Jamaican Creole. Sebba (2007: 121) calls this an 'unregulated' spelling space. He breaks down the spelling variability of Jamaican Creole into four categories: (1) Jamaican Creole words that are not cognate with a standard English source word; these are spelt with great variation; (2) Jamaican Creole words which derive from English but have a distinct grammatical function in Jamaican Creole; these are often respelt in a distinctive fashion; (3) words with English cognates, but differing phonemically; lots of variation in spelling, with spelling changed to show phonemic difference; and (4) words that are cognate and do not differ phonemically from English, sometimes spelt in non-standard ways in Creole (Sebba 2007: 122-123). Sebba (2007: 106) explains how, once people have learned literacy in a language, it is easier for them to use the

conventionalised system, transferred over to another dialect, than it is to decode new sounds to account for dialectal variation. Hybrid spelling systems such as Jamaican Creole tend to fly under the radar of literacy studies and have not been well researched.

3 The research project

3.1 Methodology

Over a period of eight months in 2007 and 2008, I was living in the Malabonga community, working with Kairak speakers on the documentation of their language. During this time I spent a good deal of time walking around the area, getting to know as much as possible about the linguistic, social, and environmental context of Kairak speakers. I also led a Kairak orthography workshop for school teachers and other interested community members. (This was followed by a second workshop in 2011.) Thus, my initial observations of literacy practices and literacy events of individuals and families in Malabonga were informal in nature. I was fascinated by what I noticed and, upon return to PNG in 2011, I systematically recorded the literacy practices of the community, photographing and filming literacy events as they occurred. The observations are ethnographic and opportunistic: ethnographic, because the literacy events occur in their natural social context; and opportunistic, because I could only note down events as I encountered them.

The qualitative aspect of the study is supplemented by literacy interviews. In September 2011, I interviewed fifteen people in the community about individual and institutional literacy practices. Eleven individuals report on their own reading and writing activities; these interviews are outlined in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 summarises in more detail another four interviews with representatives of institutions: a nursing sister at a local

health clinic; a pastor of an evangelical church; a teacher and student at an adult literacy school.

3.2 Domains of investigation

Details of the observations and interviews are discussed in the following sections, which are categorised by domains. Literacy has more obvious applications in some contexts over others, but it will be seen that localised interpretations of literacy are evident across a range of functions.

3.2.1 Literacy in the streets ('public' literacy)

There are few examples of public literacy in this rural community. Although some churches and primary schools do have external signage, there are no advertising billboards and few signs of any sort. The Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs) that shuttle people to/from Kokopo, the region's commercial centre, display a bus number, and each PMV has a 'name' written across the front that gives some clue as to the identity or personality of its driver. For example, *Las Bon* ('Last Born') is driven by a man who is youngest among his siblings.

The photo in Figure 2 shows an example of signage at the local cocoa wholesaler. This is a typical example of local writing: English words embedded within Tok Pisin syntactic structures. The lexical items are written using English spellings, but the grammatical elements are written using the Tok Pisin orthography. The nouns (*Wednesday, Sept, price per kilo, management, days, work, Mon, Wed, Friday*) and the set expression *thank you* are all Tok Pisin loanwords from English. Although they are not pronounced the same way in Tok Pisin, the writer has chosen in this case to borrow spellings wholesale from English. The word *toksave* 'announcement', sufficiently

distinctive from any English word, warrants its own spelling. Similarly, Tok Pisin *stat* differs enough from English *starting* to be spelt in the way that speakers perceive it to be pronounced. The phrasal syntax is Tok Pisin where, for example, the topical noun phrase *price per kilo* precedes the resumptive pronoun *em*; a literal translation for *price per kilo em bai 70t* would be 'Price per kilo it will be 70 toea.' *Days blo work,* literally 'days of work' or 'days for working', is also a typical Tok Pisin syntactic structure. *Blo* in Tok Pisin, also written *blong* and *bilong*, indicates a possessive relationship between two noun phrases.

[insert Figure 2 about here]

3.2.2 Home

Kulick and Stroud (1993: 169) did a comprehensive survey of the reading materials possessed by every household in a Sepik (PNG) village and found that seventy percent of the literature in homes was held by the families of three men who conducted religious services in the community and that ninety-eight percent of all literature held in the community was religious: hymn booklets, the New Testament, Bible stories, prayers, and liturgical instructions. These figures resonate with my own observations of the quantity and type of literacy material possessed by Malabonga residents. Literacy is not an activity that features heavily in most homes. This community, typical of indigenous communities worldwide, has no tradition of reading or writing. Appendix 1 shows that some older members of the community (Participants 6-8) do not read or write at all. However, younger people generally do have basic skills in reading, writing, and numeracy. Their utilisation of these skills is generally limited to reading the Bible and

the occasional newspaper if they are so inclined and writing up lists. However, mobile phones have become very popular. This new technology does present people, especially young people, with the opportunity to read and write for pleasure through the sending and receiving of text messages. This is where the greatest growth in literacy practices appears to have occurred and is likely to continue to grow. Appendix 1, which outlines the self-reported literacy practices of individuals, shows that text messaging is a constant across almost all of the respondents who can read and write. Respondents generally report that their text messaging is in three languages: Tok Pisin, English, the vernacular, and/or a mixture of these. It is unknown at this stage how the languages are incorporated into the text messages; further research is required.

Participants 1-5 (Appendix 1) come from a single, well-educated nuclear family that has a high standing in the community. Their more elaborate literacy practices relative to the others reflect that status. Their reading and writing habits relate to their educational, employment, and community activities: working on school assignments; preparing teaching materials; keeping records of farming practices; reading and writing legal and policy documents (relating to land claim issues); writing for others who cannot; recording minutes of meetings.

3.2.3 School

The Bainings are beginning to take education more seriously than they did in previous decades. Participant #1, a community leader, claims that until recently the Bainings had no strong motivation to go to school because they have always had their own land and resources. By contrast the Tolais, relative newcomers to the Gazelle Peninsula, have less land, but they have gone to school. As a consequence, Participant #1 estimates that 50-65% of Tolais are ‘educated’, in comparison to only about 5% of Bainings. The

Bainings can now see that the Tolais are one of the wealthiest groups in PNG and they recognise that education and being literate can lead to social and economic advancement. Therefore, most Bainings now view schooling as a conduit to progress. Malabonga Elementary School, which serves Prep, Year 1, and Year 2 students, is situated within the Kairak-speaking area. The three teachers in this school are native Kairak speakers and many children are also Kairak-speaking. However, a neighbourhood of Taulil speakers live literally next door to the school, so for the sake of convenience, many Taulil parents send their children to this school, even though it is a Kairak school, with a focus on Kairak literacy. There is a general relaxed acceptance towards this type of situation and a long history of it. For example, Participant #7, a man in his 60s or 70s, went to the first school established in the Malabonga area. This was a Tolai school, and as a Kairak-speaking student, he received literacy instruction in Kuanua.

Even though the Taulil children do not necessarily speak Kairak, much of the interaction in Malabonga Elementary classrooms occurs in Tok Pisin, which the children do speak. The teachers constantly switch between Kairak and Tok Pisin, so if the children do not understand one language, they will understand the other. A similar situation arises in Ura-speaking elementary classrooms in Gaulim, which non-Uramot children attend. There is also one elementary school, 'Main', which is rather unique as a designated Tok Pisin-speaking school within a rural area, and here children are formally taught literacy in Tok Pisin.

Whatever the language of the elementary school, the pressure to transition students to English is such that teachers teach English literacy alongside the vernacular. At Malabonga Elementary, students learn the Kairak and English alphabets together. As

noted above, although Tok Pisin is the one language that everyone can speak and is used in writing, there is no formal instruction in Tok Pisin (except at Main school, mentioned above). Instead, it seems to be assumed that children will acquire Tok Pisin literacy through exposure.

Students are therefore officially and unofficially exposed to three written languages simultaneously from an early age. The photo from Figure 3 is taken from the Grade 1 classroom at Malabonga Elementary School. This is a poster that was obviously produced within PNG, as the illustrations are culturally accessible to local students. The wording is in English and the Kairak translations, written in red letters next to the English words, demonstrate teachers' efforts to expose students to both English and the vernacular.

[insert Figure 3 about here]

Figure 4 shows a locally-produced poster about gardening. This is a nice example of how speakers normally juxtapose English with Tok Pisin; the stage is set in English (in this case, with the theme word 'garden'), but then the theme is elaborated upon in Tok Pisin. Such code-switching is observed to play out frequently, both orally and in writing.

[insert Figure 4 about here]

While in theory, each language variety (English, Tok Pisin, Kairak) has its own distinctive orthography, the use of three codes can have interesting and unexpected

consequences. In Figure 4, Lines 2 and 3, the word ‘garden’ is spelt as <gadān>. The Kairak word for garden is *lat*. The Tok Pisin word for ‘garden’ (pronounced [ˈga.dən]) is normally written as <gaden>. The a-macron <ā> (used in Lines 2 and 3) features in the Kairak alphabet, but not the Tok Pisin alphabet. Thus, Lines 2 and 3 appear to be a mistake, where the teacher transcribed Tok Pisin pronunciation using the Kairak orthography. This spelling error points to the incredibly complex task that teachers and students alike grapple with when teaching and learning, formally and informally, not one or two, but three written codes.

Teachers and students seem to accept the complexity of the literacy-learning context. There is the assumption that some students will excel in this environment and others will not. Those who are more capable are expected to support those less able. For example, in a Grade 4 classroom that I visited in Gaulim (20 September 2011), where students were taking turns in reading aloud in English, the teacher said to one student, of another: “She cannot read [...] I know she cannot read, so you read for her.” This comment, to my mind, resonates with the way members of the Trackton community participate in literacy activities (cf. Section 2.3). It reflects the cultural acceptance of a sort of shared ‘community literacy’; reading is not the solitary activity that traditional dominant western ideology assumes it to be.

In 2008, four chapters of the New Testament were published in the Ura language. While all copies sold out at the book launch, it soon became apparent that few people could actually read the Bible in Ura. In response, in 2010 a free school was opened in order to teach literacy in Ura. Its size and scope quickly ballooned: the student population doubled between 2010 and 2011; places were made available for children (whose parents could not afford the fees of conventional schools); and literacy-learning in Ura

expanded on to the learning of Tok Pisin and English reading and writing. This clearly demonstrates a strong desire within the community to become literate. More detail about the school is provided in Appendix 2 (Participants 13 and 14).

3.2.4 Church

The church is an important institution not only in PNG, but all across Melanesia. Christianity predominates, with more than 95% of the PNG population professing to be Christians, according to Central Intelligence Agency (2013). Until recently, the Catholic and United churches predominated in Malabonga, but lately a number of newer evangelical churches have made significant inroads into the community. When I visited in 2011, a strong evangelical movement was well underway. Entire families were abandoning their religions or origin in favour of newer denominations such as Apostolic Grace.

All churches are highly multilingual, both orally and in writing. The churches I visited had notices on the wall and notes on the chalkboard. All of these were written in English, sometimes with additional notes in Tok Pisin. An example of a typewritten timetable is given in Figure 5. It is completely in English, with the exception of the Tok Pisin *malolo* ‘thanks(giving)’ activities occurring on Days 1 and 2. This preference for English in timetables is unsurprising, as there is no sentential syntax in a timetable; it is comprised simply of a list of noun phrases denoting activities, times, and performers of the activity.

[insert Figure 5 about here]

Informal code-mixing between English and Tok Pisin, written on the blackboard and more reflective of actual speech, is shown in Figure 6. The latter is linguistically very similar to what is shown in Figure 2; English noun phrases are again embedded inside a matrix of Tok Pisin syntax. The Tok Pisin word *bilong* is a possessive marker and *olgeta* means 'all' here.

[insert Figure 6 about here]

However, the church accommodates more than just English and Tok Pisin. Since in earlier times, Kuanua speakers inhabited the coast and were thus more accessible to missionaries, the first Bible translations on the Gazelle Peninsula were for Kuanua, according to Participant #9. There are also hymn books in Kuanua. Although church materials are provided nowadays in both Kuanua and English, only a fraction of church attendees would be able to read either language. Yet people do not have a problem with this. The community has developed its own strategies for coping with (a) low autonomous literacy skills at the individual level; and (b) the multilingual context. As in the Trackton community, literacy in local churches is treated as an open community event – a social activity. This allows those without basic literacy skills to be involved. Since the aim of churches is to attract as wide a following as possible, community literacy is therefore particularly important in the context of religion.

A skilled pastor, for example, will simultaneously and seamlessly read aloud from the Bible in English, paraphrase in Tok Pisin, and improvise in an indigenous language. At the Apostolic Grace service I attended, the visiting pastor (Participant #15) read aloud from an English Bible, which provided the basis for her teaching. Churchgoers may or

may not have understood this. However, she then paraphrased the same text in Tok Pisin and followed this up with a generous amount of personal elaboration in her own language, Kuanua. The fact that the English and Kuanua were only partly accessible to her audience did not matter. The value of the original English reading was its authority: the written word. Tok Pisin was used to convey the actual message, in a language that everyone could understand. The function of Kuanua, on the other hand, was affective – an example of expressing personal enthusiasm and deep emotions in the mother tongue. Such skilful manoeuvring between languages and modalities thus provides the latitude to acknowledge the authority of the written word, while also addressing the practical need to bridge the literacy gap, convey information, and heighten the emotional intensity of the sermon. Schieffelin (2007: 145-146) observes a similar practice in the Bosavi community (Southern Highlands, PNG), where pastors read Tok Pisin texts aloud, then translate into Bosavi, adding textual and cultural interpretive information to make the text more meaningful for members of the congregation.

As another example of the fluidity across languages and spoken/ written genres, Participant #11, a part-time pastor, claims to write his sermons in English and Tok Pisin, but then to preach aloud in Tok Pisin and Kairak. He mixes languages, just like the Kuanua-speaking pastor. Along the same lines, a Sunday school teacher (Participant #10) works from an English book, but then uses Tok Pisin to actually explain the concepts.

These are examples of how literacy is mediated from the written to the spoken in one's immediate context. But the same process occurs across hierarchical levels of the church. For example, the Apostolic Grace church newsletter, written in English by the Head of Ministry in distant Mt Hagen (Enga Province), is sent to local pastors around the

country, who read it and pass on the message orally, in Tok Pisin and local languages (cf. Appendix 2, Participant 15).

3.2.5 Health clinic

As in other domains, the health clinic at Gaulim puts an idealised, institutionalised form of literacy on display, but then mediates it, making it accessible to the general population. Posters, mostly written in English, reveal the clinic's status as an official arm of the government, although there are also posters in Tok Pisin. The clinic sends records, reports, referrals, and other forms to the government every month. Participant 12 in Appendix 2 indicates that all written communication with health agencies is in English.

Patients attending the clinic consult with a nurse in a semi-private setting. There are long queues to see the nurse. When the patient's turn comes around, they sit down in the screening room and the nurse interviews the patient. Then the nurse records the ailment and treatment program (medicine, dosage, etc) in English in the patient's health book and sends the patient to another room to get medicine. If the patient cannot understand what is written, the nurse explains it. Here again, official literacy practices are mediated by localised, culturally appropriate compromises. Public information sessions to raise awareness of malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and hygiene are given in Tok Pisin, because there are people from many language groups. Sometimes explanations are given in Kairak.

In September 2011, the Malabonga Elementary School held a walkathon to raise money for the Gaulim Clinic. The sponsor form for the walkathon was written in English – except for the information about how to deposit funds into Kokopo Bank, which was in Tok Pisin. This choice of languages is interesting, and suggests that those who designed

the form wanted to ensure that the real message (‘this is how you can give us your money’) was clearly written in a language that literate people could understand. Also, in contrast to the officiousness of English, the use of Tok Pisin is a ‘friendlier’ way to ask for money. Thus, the code-switching on this hospital form reflects the sophisticated and functionally-motivated code-switching that occurs in spoken language.

3.2.6 Government

The government is an institution that people like to be associated with, because it is equated with power. It is unusual for individuals to receive correspondence from the government in PNG. Most people have low literacy skills and the government is well aware of this. If the government does need to communicate with a community, they write a letter to one individual in that community, asking that person to broadcast the relevant information to everyone else. An example of such a letter is given in Figure 7. This letter is interesting for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the use of English in the letterhead, the subject line, and in the job title of the sender is a signal that the letter has institutional authority and should be taken seriously. The body of the letter, however, is in Tok Pisin. This is presumably because the sender knows that communication in Tok Pisin (not English) maximises the likelihood that the recipient will be able to read and understand the letter. The intention here is genuine communication. The only word in the body of the letter that is written in English is *Census*; this is then promptly translated into Tok Pisin *kauntim long ol man na meri* (‘counting of men and women’).

[insert Figure 7 about here]

Another interesting feature of the letter is its use of the Tok Pisin orthography, as opposed to other examples of locally-produced Tok Pisin we have already seen which borrow wholesale from English spellings. It could be that the symbolic use of English spelling in Malabonga confers authority on what is essentially a communication in Tok Pisin; on the other hand, a letter from the government has inherent authority and therefore an anglicised spelling system is unnecessary. Also, unlike the signwriters in Malabonga, the letter writer with the government job presumably grew up in an urban area where Tok Pisin literacy is taught in school.

What is also interesting is that the recipient has displayed this letter in the front room of his house, in the same way that a certificate or a school award might hang on someone's wall in a western country. Clearly, then, this letter functions as a sort of status symbol, as it demonstrates that the recipient has a high standing in the community and that he is also literate.

4 External values vs. local practices

Due to the perceived link between literacy and power, English reading and writing are held in a high regard in Malabonga. Since PNG languages themselves have little or no tradition of writing – indigenous literacy has no historical precedent of its own – the local community very much depends upon an imported model for inspiration (a "schooled literacy" (Cook-Gumperz 2006: 35)): one where children learn to read and write texts, in English, which may or may not be socially and culturally appropriate for the local community. Teachers and parents are inclined to overlook the question of relevance and instead embrace this institutionalised form of English. Although vernacular literacy is also taught, this is clearly a secondary priority in relation to the

much more aspirational goal of literacy in English. At any rate, even vernacular literacy is a new concept for a community that had never previously read or written their language. In other words, for lack of a more appropriate model, local communities aspire to a western model of literacy (cf. Cook-Gumperz 2006: 6; Collins & Michaels 2006: 262).

This is not how it was meant to be. In 1949, UNESCO declared that "The needs and resources of the local community should be the basis of the fundamental educational programme. No attempt should be made to reach arbitrary conclusions about a minimum standard of education applicable to all countries and all peoples" (UNESCO 1949: 18-19). However, in order to know how communities can best profit from literacy, one must first examine the manner in which the community uses literacy in everyday contexts. So how can local literacies be characterised in Malabonga?

4.1 Local literacy is a low profile activity

As much as literacy is a symbol of prestige and power and despite the fact that individuals aspire to become literate, the fact remains that the reading and writing are not salient practices in the community. This situation is what Edwards (2010: 86) characterises as 'aliteracy': being literate, but not engaging in literacy practices (or only to a very limited extent). Edwards' use of the term assumes a western context, where people with functional literacy skills prefer instead to watch TV, for example. Along similar lines, Heath (1983: 198-199) describes how in the Trackton community, reading and writing events are strongly motivated by their functionality. In other words, people in Trackton do not normally 'read for fun' – they read if and when it is necessary.

The term ‘aliteracy’ applies in Malabonga, too. Literacy is not embedded within the traditional culture and parents do not socialise their children into literacy in a manner akin to their middle-class counterparts in western countries. Few people demonstrate an intrinsic motivation to use literacy in their everyday lives. (An exception to this generality is Participant 1 in Appendix 1, who does spend significant amounts of time engaged in research and writing.) Instead, people spend their leisure time visiting with each other or watching television. They do not read books.

That said, there are few books to read, or anything else for that matter. Aside from text messages (which are certainly on the rise) and the existing religious books and pamphlets that everyone is already familiar with, there is little else available in the form of reading material, save the odd newspaper brought in from town. Therefore it could be argued that the aliterate character of the community as a whole is due in part to the few opportunities available to actually exercise these skills.

4.2 Local literacy is a shared practice

Solitary reading, in particular, is not a part of Malabonga’s cultural life. As with the Trackton community in the Piedmont Carolinas, it is rare to come across an individual sitting alone and reading or writing. Heath (1986: 98) demonstrates how Trackton children face an alien context in the classroom, where they are expected to interact with texts, compared with at home, where their interactions are with other people. This is the same in Malabonga.

The Malabonga community, largely unaccustomed to much literacy, instead uses familiar strategies to negotiate the foreignness of written signs, forms, notices, and texts. The examples from section 3 demonstrate how literacy is treated as a shared

social practice in this community. This reflects a more general spirit of cooperation in the culture, where people are expected to help one another. Duranti and Ochs (1986) make a similar observation about Samoan culture. People who possess stronger autonomous skills assist those who struggle with reading and writing. This then allows for social inclusion, and keeps less-skilled readers from falling between the cracks.

4.3 Local literacy is highly multilingual

It is common to code-switch and code-mix in writing; this reflects the spoken reality on the ground. We can contrast this with Sebba's portrayal of how Jamaican Creole writers seemingly try to differentiate Jamaican Creole from Standard English (cf. section 2.4). Sebba (2007: 126) argues that non-standard spellings generated by writers of Jamaican Creole amount to an 'informal ideology' of language creation, whereby writers unconsciously use non-standard English spellings in Jamaican Creole writing to subvert and challenge the conventions of Standard English spelling.

However, the Jamaican Creole writers are poets living in Britain and are presumably highly literate. In contrast, the autonomous literacy skills of Kairak writers of Tok Pisin are not well developed and one of two things may be happening. One possibility is that writers are simply following the path of least resistance: Tok Pisin words cognate with English words, even if phonemically distinctive, are close enough that writers are happy to use English spellings if they know them. From readers' perspectives, too, this may in fact be simpler; Sebba (2007: 105-106) points to the problems of idiosyncratic phonetic spellings for readers of Alsatian. For writers of Tok Pisin who have been educated in English but not Tok Pisin literacy, referring to standardised spellings of English words may in fact be an easier task.

The other possibility is that writers consciously or unconsciously choose to embed English spellings within their writing so as to lend more status to their message. If this is the case, then writers' motivations are actually the opposite of Jamaican Creole writers' in Britain; rather than subverting English writing conventions, writers are acquiescing to conventional notions of what writing is supposed to be like. Whatever the motivation, the resultant hybridised text serves the needs of the community, but unfortunately is not legitimised by the community.

5 Discussion

It has been argued that literacy is highly valued in Malabonga because of its perceived association with powerful institutions that are external to the local community. The type of literacy that local teachers, parents, and school children aspire to is a monolingual, school-based, institutionalised form of literacy that is difficult for most students to attain under the present circumstances.

There is a mismatch between these ideals and the reality of literacy as it is commonly practiced in the community. Most people simply do not engage with literacy in the way envisaged by policy makers in Port Moresby and as idealised by the community itself. Instead, literacy activities in Malabonga are multilingual, socially-constructed, and still relatively rare in occurrence (despite an increasing interest in literacy acquisition). This is problematic: "[H]istorical experience confirms that a language which remains the property of a small elite cannot provide the basis for a national culture" (Prah 2010: 34, quoting Moore 1969). Social exclusion is something that literacy development is ostensibly meant to address. Yet the lack of recognition of localised instantiations of literacy, the way it is practiced at the grassroots level, actually perpetuates this

inequality. In other words, community literacy has a credibility problem; it is not fully acknowledged or appreciated by those who make use of it. It is taken for granted. This in turn perpetuates a sort of self-created underclass of literacy 'fringe-dwellers'.

One solution to this problem is for a broader view of literacy to be embraced by governments and local communities alike. Rogers (2010: 140) recommends that members of the community who sense that 'literacy is not for people like me', but who nevertheless practice literacy in innovative but not formally-recognised ways, be made aware of the ways that they are indeed interacting with written texts in a less conventional way. This would be a way of recognising and authenticating local literacies. Chitrakar and Maddox (2010: 193) describe how in Nepal for example, 'wall newspapers', posted to public walls and contributed to by local community members, displayed a diversity of languages and scripts and was a way of validating community-generated writing at the local level.

As the conventional entry point for literacy learning, local schools would also need to embrace this broader view. Heath (1983) and others observed in the early 1980s how classroom teachers were assuming a middle class background of students entering the classroom. Since that time, many useful recommendations have been made about how literacy lessons can go halfway in meeting students with the skills they enter school with, thus becoming more culturally inclusive and meaning-oriented in the way that literacy is taught.

However, such innovations in literacy pedagogy move slowly between western and third world contexts; Stein (2010: 314) notes that literacy pedagogy in South African schools is "mainly in the form of highly directed skill and drill teaching." Further to this, she follows Prinsloo (2004) in suggesting that, in the absence of school activities

that draw on children's experiences of the world, "the children's chances of developing careers as successful readers and writers were limited by the narrowness of their school experience, rather than by their home experiences". She reviews a variety of innovative literacy development initiatives in South Africa that do contextualise the curriculum to local cultural and family contexts (Stein 2010: 311-317). Similar initiatives are needed in PNG to assist small rural schools like Malabonga Elementary to capitalise more fully on their existing literacy practices.

There is also a dearth of discussion in the literature about what to do when the teachers themselves do not come from the middle-class background that government policy makers, even in developing countries, seem to assume (but cf. Stein 2010: 317). Teachers at Malabonga do not themselves enter the classroom from a reading culture. Therefore it is important to implement programs that help teachers to become aware of, and to further develop, their own literacy practices.

Another difficulty is English, the target language. It is very difficult to teach or learn English, a foreign language to which citizens have little meaningful exposure. Tok Pisin (or Hiri Motu) would provide the basis for a more practical and meaningful education, especially for those students who leave school after only a few years. Unfortunately, this would be a difficult objective to attain. Jourdan and Angeli (2014: 282) note how, in the Solomon Islands, "Pijin has acquired obvious SOCIAL legitimacy […] Yet many Solomon Islanders still refuse it any LINGUISTIC legitimacy." At this point in time at least, the same could be said of Tok Pisin's status in PNG.

6 Conclusion

While PNG's educational policy of vernacular literacy until Year 2, with subsequent transition to English, is obviously culturally sensitive in spirit, there are many practical problems with implementation of the program. These derive primarily from the assumption that communities like Malabonga engage with literacy in the same sorts of ways that middle class communities in western countries do. This is clearly not the case. Street (1996: 5) points out that the status quo of delivering standard models of literacy in an inappropriate way to local populations has already been shown to not work. Alternative models, appropriate to local literacy contexts, require more attention from policy makers. The first step on this journey is to first recognise and validate the variation.

References

Akinnaso, F. Niyi (1992). Schooling, language, and knowledge in literate and nonliterate societies. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34(1), 68-109.

Barton, David & Mary Hamilton (1998). *Local literacies: reading and writing in one community*. Abington: Routledge.

Barton, David & Mary Hamilton (2000). Literacy practices. In David Barton, Mary Hamilton & Roz Ivanič (eds.), *Situated literacies: theorising reading and writing in context*, 7-14. Abington: Routledge.

Chitrakar, Roshan & Bryan Maddox (2010). A community literacy project: Nepal. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy*, 2nd ed., 191-205. New York: Springer.

Central Intelligence Agency (2013). *The world factbook. East and Southeast Asia: Papua New Guinea.* Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pp.html>, accessed 24 September 2014.

Cook-Gumperz, Jenny (2006). The social construction of literacy. In Jenny Cook-Gumperz (ed.), *The social construction of literacy*, 1-18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Collins, James & Sarah Michaels (2006). Speaking and writing: discourse strategies and the acquisition of literacy. In Jenny Cook-Gumperz (ed.), *The social construction of literacy*, 245-263. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coulmas, Florian (2013). *Writing and society: an introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davidson, Catherine & Alice Tomic (1999). Inventing academic literacy: an American perspective. In Carys Jones, Joan Turner & Brian Street (eds.), *Students writing in the university: cultural and epistemological issues*, 161-170. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Duranti, Alessandro & Elinor Ochs (1986). Literacy instruction in a Samoan village. In Bambi B. Schieffelin & Perry Gilmore (eds.), *The acquisition of literacy: ethnographic perspectives, vol. 21,* 213-232. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Dutton, Tom & Dicks Thomas (1985). *A new course in Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin).* Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Edwards, John (2010). Reading: attitudes, interests, practices. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 85-93. New York: Springer.

Evans, John (2001). *PNG national policy on information and communications – extracts*. Papua New Guinea: PNGbuai.com. <http://www.pngbuai.com/000general/info-policies/PNG-policy-info-com.html>, accessed 24 September 2014.

Gerry, Lawrence K. (2011). The need for a better education in indigenous languages: a case for Alekano. *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia* 29: 80-86.

Goody, Jack (ed.) (1968). *Literacy in traditional societies*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, Jack & Ian Watt (1968). The consequences of literacy. In Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in traditional societies*, 27-68. London: Cambridge University Press.

Graff, Harvey J. & John Duffy (2010). Literacy myths. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 41-52. New York: Springer.

Greaney, Vincent (ed.) (1996). *Promoting reading in developing countries*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Heath, Shirley Brice (1983). *Ways with words: language life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, Shirley Brice (1986). What no bedtime story means: narrative skills at home and school. In Bambi B. Schieffelin & Elinor Ochs (eds.), *Language socialization across cultures*, 97-124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jourdan, Christine & Johanne Angeli (2014). Pijin and shifting language ideologies in urban Solomon Islands. *Language in Society* 43: 265-285.

Kulick, Don & Christopher Stroud (1993). Conceptions and uses of literacy in a Papua New Guinean village. In Brian V. Street (ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*, 30-61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig (eds.) (2014). *Ethnologue: languages of the World*, 17th ed. Texas: SIL International. <http://www.ethnologue.com>, accessed 26 September 2014.

Litteral, Robert (2000). Four decades of language policy in Papua New Guinea: the move towards the vernacular. *Radical Pedagogy* 2(2).

Mihalic, Francis (1969). *Introduction to New Guinea Pidgin*. Milton, Queensland, Australia: Jacaranda Press.

Mihalic, Francis (1971). *The Jacaranda dictionary and grammar of Melanesian Pidgin*. Milton, Queensland, Australia: Jacaranda Press.

Mihalic, Francis & Australian National University, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Pacific Linguistics (2006). *Revising the Mihalic project Tok Pisin collaborative on-line dictionary*. Canberra: Australian National University. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-67828>.

Murphy, John J. (1949). *The book of Pidgin English: being (1) a grammar and notes, (2) an outline of Pidgin English, (3) a Pidgin English – English dictionary, (4) an English – Pidgin English dictionary*. Brisbane: Smith & Paterson.

National Research Institute (2010). *Papua New Guinea district and provincial profiles*. Boroko, PNG: National Research Institute. <http://www.nri.org.pg/research_divisions/cross_divisional_projects/Web%20Version%20Profiles%20Report%20140410.pdf>, accessed 24 September 2014.

Prah, Kwesi Kwaa (2010). Language, literacy and knowledge production in Africa. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 29-40. New York: Springer.

Prinsloo, Mastin (2004). Literacy is child's play: making sense in Kwezi Park. *Language and Education* 18(4): 291-304.

Prinsloo, Mastin & Mignonne Breier (eds.) (1996). *The social uses of literacy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rogers, Alan (2010). Informal learning and literacy. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 133-144. New York: Springer.

Schieffelin, Bambi B. (2007). Found in translating: reflexive language across time and texts in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea. In Miki Makihara & Bambi B. Schieffelin (eds.), *Consequences of contact: language ideologies and sociocultural transformations in Pacific societies*, 140-165. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sebba, Mark (2007). *Spelling and society: the culture and politics of orthography around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simons, Herbert & Sandra Murphy (2006). Spoken language strategies and reading acquisition. In Jenny Cook-Gumperz (ed.), *The social construction of literacy*, 218-244. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stebbins, Tonya N. (2011). *Mali (Baining) grammar: a language of the East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Stein, Pippa. 2010. Literacies in and out of school in South Africa. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger, *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 309-320. New York: Springer.

Street, Brian (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Street, Brian (1995). *Social literacies: critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London, New York: Longman.

Street, Brian (1996). Preface. In Mastin Prinsloo & Mignonne Breier (eds.), *The social uses of literacy*, 1-9. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Street, Brian V. (2010). Introduction to volume 2: literacy. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger, *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, xiii-xxix. New York: Springer.

UNESCO (1949). *Records of the general conference of the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization. Fourth session: resolutions*. Paris. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001145/114590e. pdf>, accessed 24 September 2014.

UNESCO (2008). *National report on the state-of-the-art of adult learning and education in Papua New Guinea: a situation analysis*. <http://www. unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/National_ Reports/Asia%20-%20Pacific/Papua_New_Guinea.pdf>, accessed 19 September 2014.

Vaish, Viniti (2010). Biliteracy and globalization. In Brian V. Street & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, vol. 2: literacy, 2nd ed.*, 119-130. New York: Springer.

Verhaar, John W.M. (1995). *Toward a reference grammar of Tok Pisin: an experiment in corpus linguistics*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.

Author's address

Cindy Schneider

Discipline of Linguistics

School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences

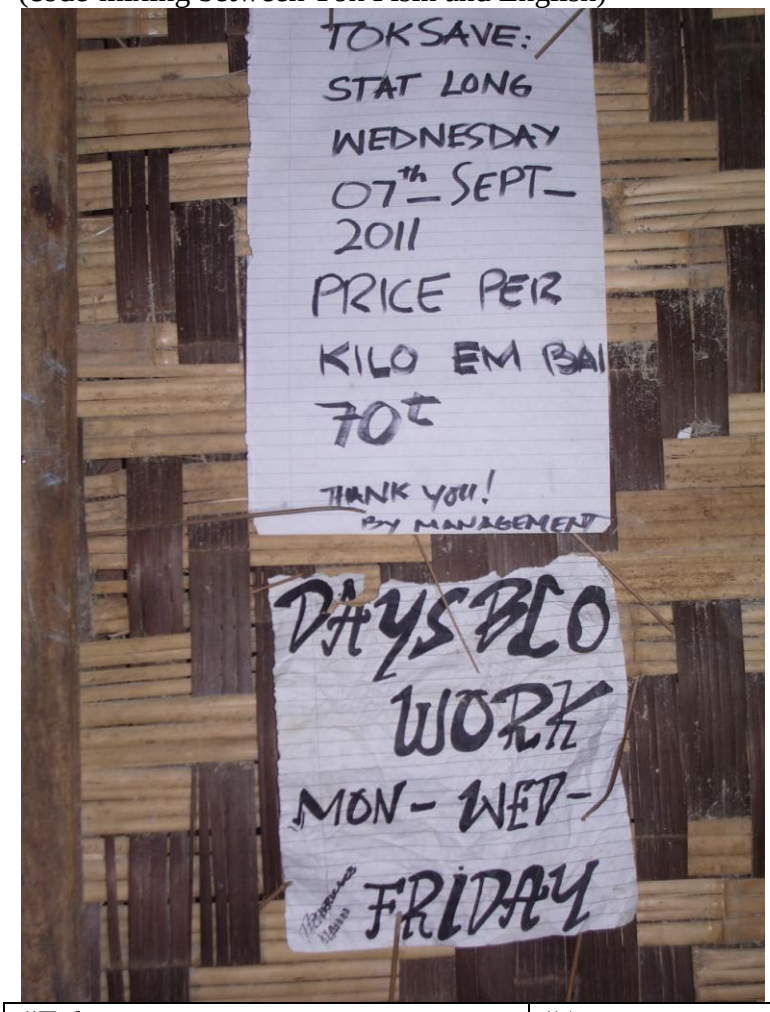
University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Australia

cschnei3@une.edu.au

Figure 2: Sign posted at the cocoa wholesaler: Prices offered and Days of operation (code-mixing between Tok Pisin and English)



"Toksave:	**"Announcement:**
Stat long Wednesday 07-Sept-2011	Starting from Wednesday 07 September 2011
Price per kilo	Price per kilo
em bai 70t.	Will be 70 toiea.
Thank you!	Thank you!
By Management"	From the management"
"Days blo wok	**"Work days:**
Mon – Wed- Friday"	Monday – Wednesday – Friday"

Figure 3: Poster in Grade 1 classroom, Malabonga Elementary School (English with Kairak translations)

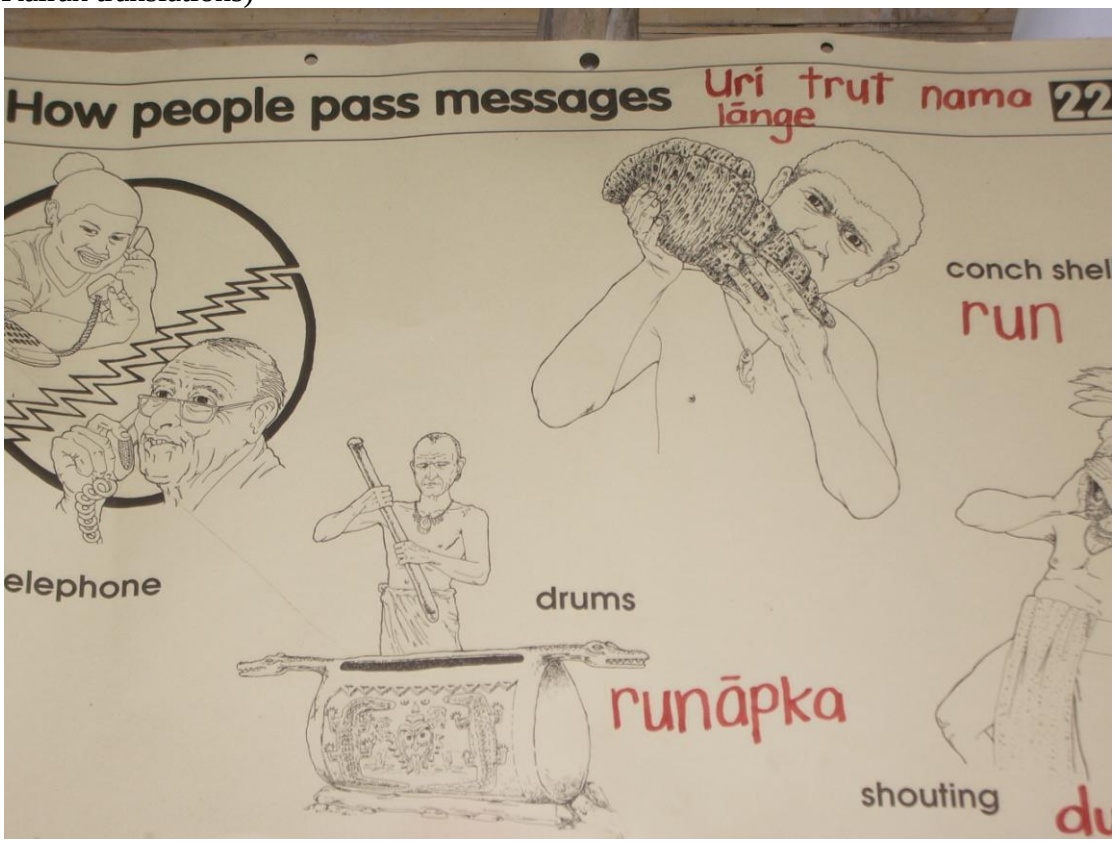
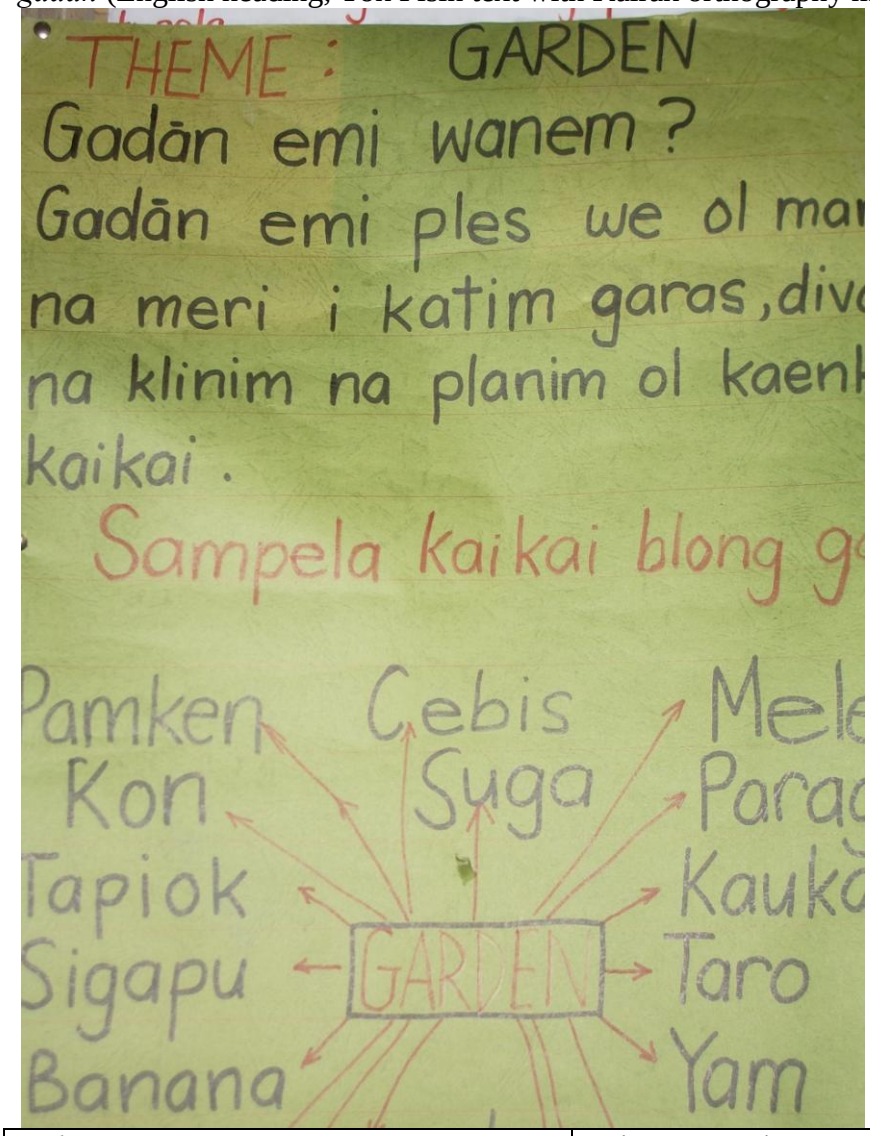
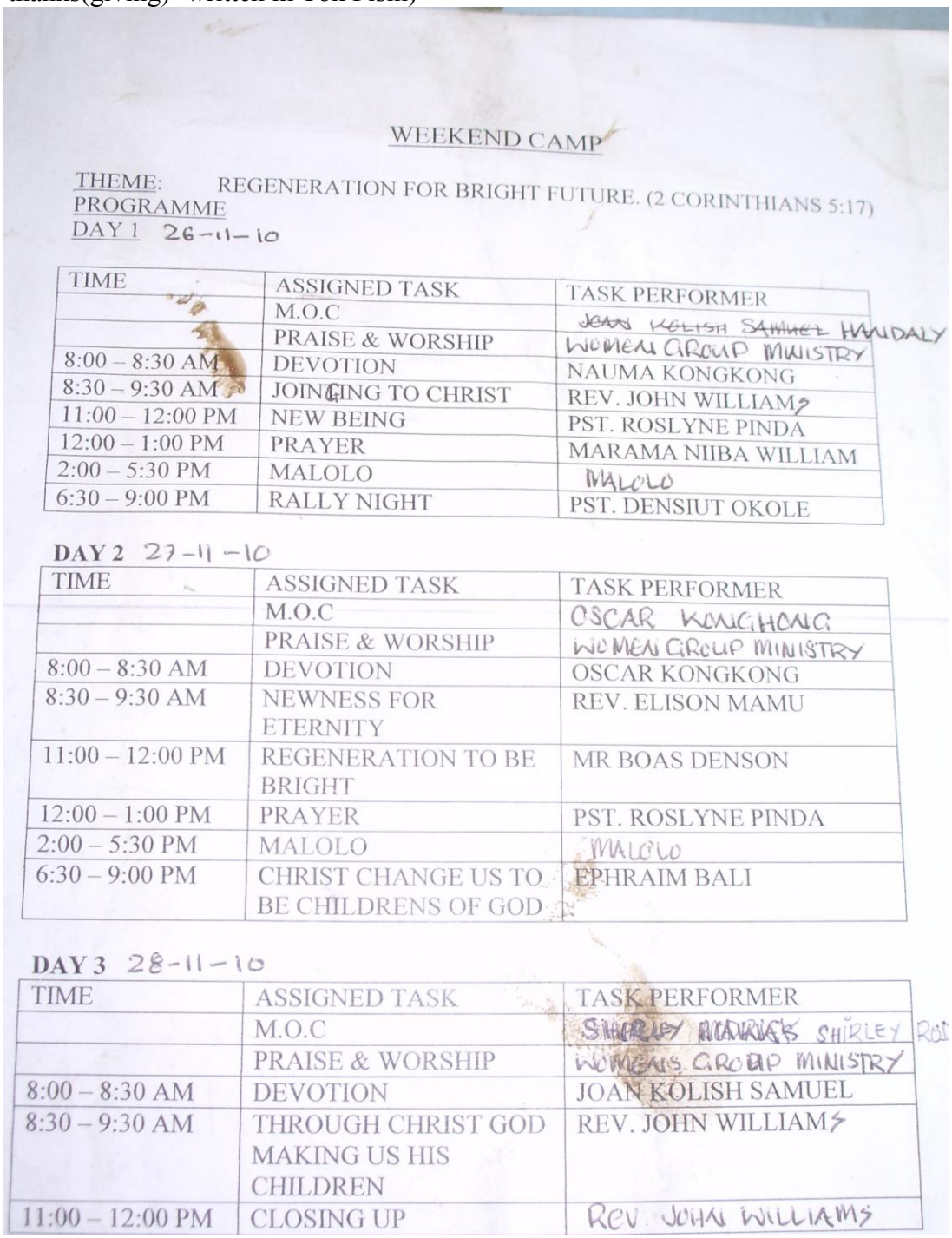


Figure 4: Poster in Grade 1 classroom, Malabonga Elementary School*: Garden, gaden, gadān* (English heading, Tok Pisin text with Kairak orthography mistakenly included)



"Theme: Garden ***Gadān** emi wanem?* ***Gadān** emi ples we ol man* *na meri i katim garas, …* *… na klinim na planim ol kaenk(aen)* *kaikai* *Sampela kaikai blong g(aden)* *Pamken Cebis Mele(n)* *Kon Suga Parag(?)* *Tapiok Kaukau* *Sigapu Taro* *Banana Yam"*	"Theme: Garden What's a garden? The garden is a place where men and women cut the grass, … and clean and plant all kinds of food Some food from the garden: Pumpkin Cabbage Melon Corn Sugar (?) Tapioca Sweet Potato Sigapu Taro Banana Yam"

Figure 5: A notice at Malabonga United Church (English, except for *malolo* 'thanks(giving)' written in Tok Pisin)



WEEKEND CAMP

THEME: REGENERATION FOR BRIGHT FUTURE. (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)
PROGRAMME
DAY 1 26-11-10

TIME	ASSIGNED TASK	TASK PERFORMER
	M.O.C	JOAN KOLISH SAMUEL HAUDALY
	PRAISE & WORSHIP	WOMEN GROUP MINISTRY
8:00 – 8:30 AM	DEVOTION	NAUMA KONGKONG
8:30 – 9:30 AM	JOINING TO CHRIST	REV. JOHN WILLIAMS
11:00 – 12:00 PM	NEW BEING	PST. ROSLYNE PINDA
12:00 – 1:00 PM	PRAYER	MARAMA NIIBA WILLIAM
2:00 – 5:30 PM	MALOLO	MALOLO
6:30 – 9:00 PM	RALLY NIGHT	PST. DENSIUT OKOLE

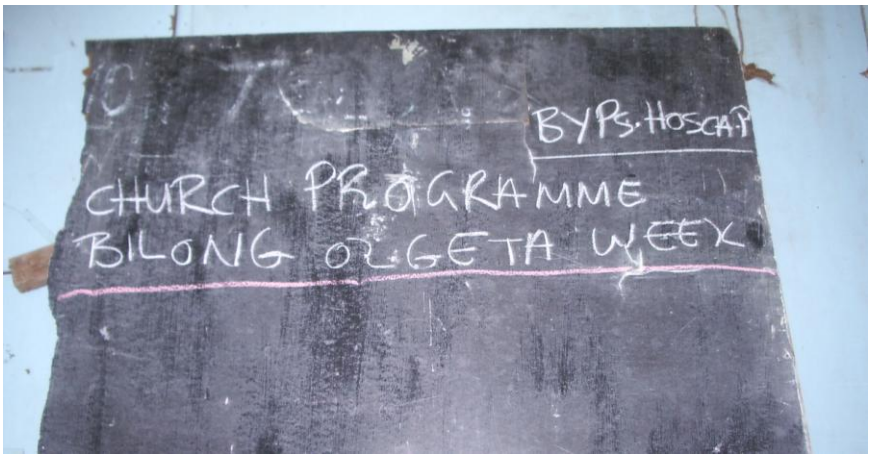
DAY 2 27-11-10

TIME	ASSIGNED TASK	TASK PERFORMER
	M.O.C	OSCAR KONGKONG
	PRAISE & WORSHIP	WOMEN GROUP MINISTRY
8:00 – 8:30 AM	DEVOTION	OSCAR KONGKONG
8:30 – 9:30 AM	NEWNESS FOR ETERNITY	REV. ELISON MAMU
11:00 – 12:00 PM	REGENERATION TO BE BRIGHT	MR BOAS DENSON
12:00 – 1:00 PM	PRAYER	PST. ROSLYNE PINDA
2:00 – 5:30 PM	MALOLO	MALOLO
6:30 – 9:00 PM	CHRIST CHANGE US TO BE CHILDRENS OF GOD	EPHRAIM BALI

DAY 3 28-11-10

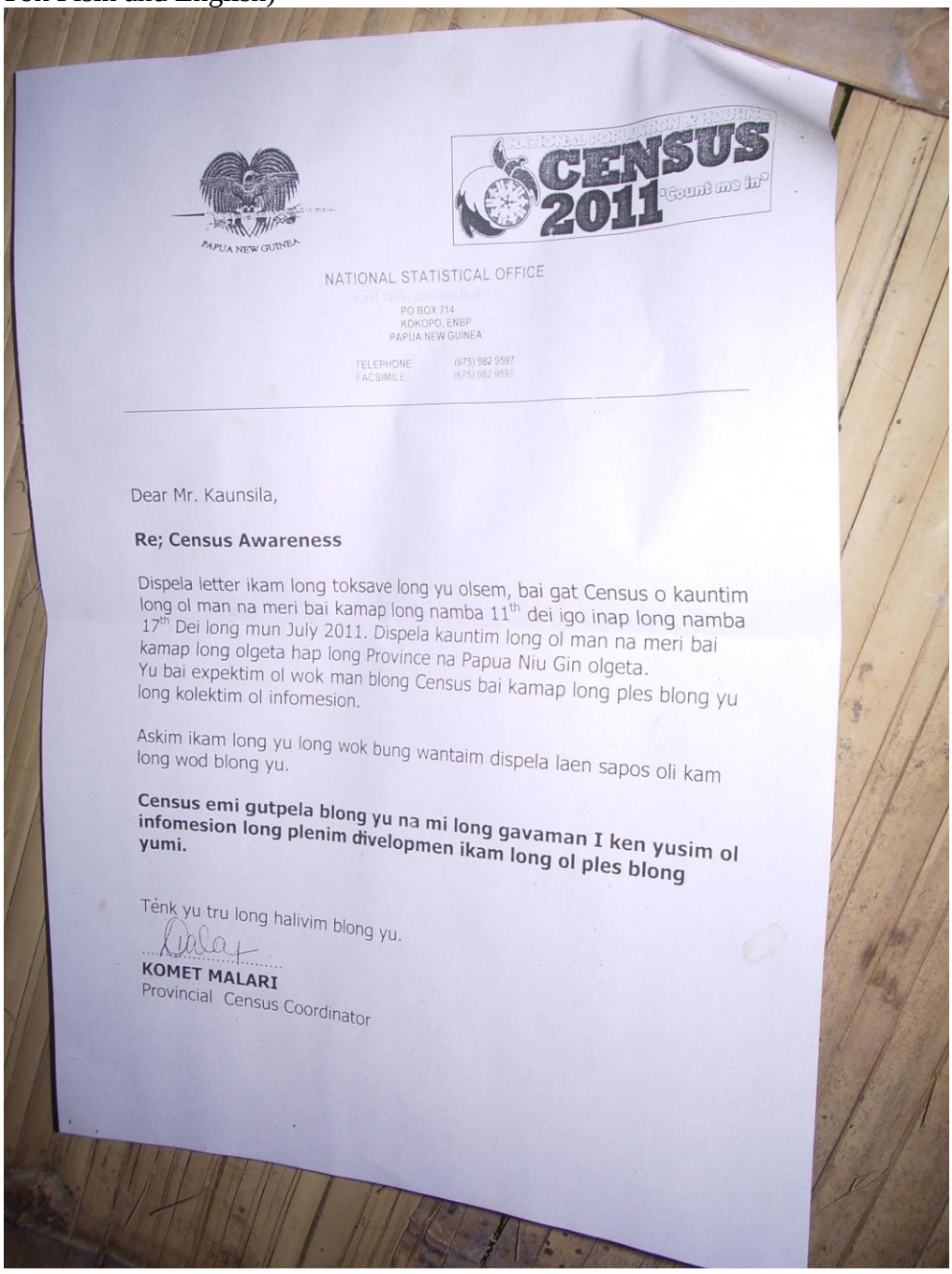
TIME	ASSIGNED TASK	TASK PERFORMER
	M.O.C	SHIRLEY PATRICKS SHIRLEY
	PRAISE & WORSHIP	WOMENS GROUP MINISTRY
8:00 – 8:30 AM	DEVOTION	JOAN KOLISH SAMUEL
8:30 – 9:30 AM	THROUGH CHRIST GOD MAKING US HIS CHILDREN	REV. JOHN WILLIAMS
11:00 – 12:00 PM	CLOSING UP	REV. JOHN WILLIAMS

Figure 6: Malabonga United Church: Announcements board (code-mixing between English and Tok Pisin**)**



"By Ps. Hosea P *Church Programme* *Bilong olgeta week"*	"By Pastor Hosea P "Church Program For all weeks"

Figure 7: A letter from the government about Census Week (code-switching between Tok Pisin and English)



"Dear Mr Kaunsila,	"Dear Mr Councillor,
Re: Census Awareness	Re: Census Awareness
Dispela leta i kam long toksave long yu olsem,	This letter is to let you know
bai gat Census o kauntim long ol man na meri	There will be a Census, or counting of men and women
bai kamap long namba 11th dei igo inap long namba 17th Dei long mun July 2011.	from the 11th until the 17th July 2011.
Dispela kauntim long ol man na meri bai	This counting of men and women will

kamap long olgeta hap long Province na Papua Niu Gin olgeta.	occur all over the province and all over Papua New Guinea.
Yu bai expektim ol wok man blong Census bai kamap long ples blong yu long kolektim ol infomesion.	You can expect census takers to come to your village to collect information.
Askim ikam long yu long wok bung wantaim dispela laen sapos oli kam long wod blong yu.	It is requested that you cooperate with these people if they come to consult with you.
Census emi gutpela blong yu na mi long gavamen I ken yusim ol infomesion long plenim divelopmen ikam long ol ples blong yumi.	The Census is important – the government can use the information (collected) to make development plans for our community.
Tenk yu tru long halivim blong yu.	Thank you very much for your assistance.
(signed) Komet Malari	Komet Malari
Provincial Census Coordinator"	Provincial Census Cooordinator"

APPENDIX 1

Literacy practices of eleven people in the community. Most of the reported reading and writing activities occur in English (*E*). Additional languages are noted thus: Tok Pisin (*TP*); Kairak (*Kai*); Kuanua (*Kua*). Everyone in the community is engaged in subsistence farming, but in the first column, additional relevant information about participants is included.

Participant	Sex	Age	Level of education	Self-report of regular reading activities	Self-report of regular writing activities
1 (community leader)	M	50s	Year 12	· Newspaper · Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)* · Reads for others · Legal and policy documents · Historical documents	· Letters · Stories · Writes for others · Minutes of meetings · Contributes news to radio broadcast (*TP*(?)) · Speeches (*TP*(?)) · Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)*
2 (studies computing)	M	30s	Year 10	· Newspaper · Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)* · Bible · Study materials	· Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)* · Study materials · Minutes of meetings · Letters · Shopping lists · Notes from Bible
3 (Year 1 teacher)	F	50s	Year 8 + secretarial school	· Bible · Newspaper · Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)* · Reading to/with class	· Text messages *(TP, Kai, E)* · Writing school reports; creating teaching materials *(TP, Kai, E)*
4 (cocoa grower; bachelor)	M	Late 20s	Year 9 + certificate in agriculture	· Text messages · Newspaper · English subtitles to Asian language DVDs · Subtitles in E, TP, other PNG languages in music videos	- Farming: writes dates/times of days he sprays/prunes cocoa trees *(TP, E)* · Records income and expenses *(TP, E)*
5 (Year 12 student)	F	Late teens	Year 12	- Text messages *(TP, E, Kai)* - School texts - Bible *(TP, E)* - Newspaper, magazines	· School assignments · Text messages *(TP, E, Kai)*
6 (homemaker)	F	50s	Year 4	· Does not read	· Was taught to write in Taulil, but does not write
7 (makes and sells brooms)	M	60s or 70s	Attended first school in the area, run by Tolais; there were no grades but he studied for many years	· Used to read Bible and hymns *(Kua)* but no longer (poor eyesight)	· Does not write
8 (used to sell taro at market;	F	70s	No schooling	· Does not read	· Does not write

now stays at home)					
9 (Tolai family; husband is an auto mechanic)	F	30s	Year 6	- Newspaper - Text messages *(TP, E, Kua)* - Bible *(Kua)*	- Writing up invoices - Shopping lists *(E, TP)* - Letters (?) - Text messages *(TP, E, Kua)*
10 (Sunday school teacher with Uniting Church)	F	Late 20s/ early 30s	Year 9	- Sunday school book - Timetable for women's volleyball games	- Record sheet of volleyball wins / losses
11 (occasional pastor with Apostolic Grace church)	M	30s	Year 10	- Bible - Other religious books	- Notes from Bible - Text messages *(E, TP, Kai)* - Church sermons *(E, TP)*

APPENDIX 2

Interviews with individuals representing a health clinic, a school, and a church.

Participant	Sex	Summary of interview
12 (nursing sister at health clinic)	F	Tuesdays and Fridays are antenatal day, for pregnant mothers. The clinic gets about 60 patients on antenatal day. On other days, there are 30-50 patients; 20 on a slow day, or 70 on a busy day. People come with all kinds of problems. Some people like to get medicine. When a sick person comes, the nurses ask them what the problem is. They sit down in screening room, check them, examine them, ask questions, ask "where are you sick?", etc. Then they write the treatment for them, and send them to another room to get medicine. The nurse writes the complaint, and the treatment, in the health book. They write everything in English, and sometimes in Tok Pisin. Some people can't read or write. If not then the nurse explains what the problem is, and what the treatment is. If there are Tolai or other nurses who don't speak Kairak, then patients go to the Kairak nurse and she explains their situation to them. If the nurse speaks in Tok Pisin and the patient doesn't understand, the patient goes back to the Kairak nurse for explanation. Every month the clinic sends records/reports of sicknesses to the Kokopo Health Office. All reports, records, and forms are written in English. When referring patients to the hospital, they write the referral in English. The clinic gives public information sessions about malaria, HIV, TB. They give information about HIV/AIDS, hygiene to antenatal mothers. This information is delivered in Tok Pisin, because attendees come from many language groups. Sometimes explanations are given in Kairak. General rule of thumb: Write in English, speak in Tok Pisin.

Participant	Sex	Summary of interview
13 + 14 (adult literacy teacher + student)	F + F	Adult literacy school opened in 2010. They started the school to help teach people who couldn't read or write. There are many people who can't read/write. They go to church and there's a bible in Ura, but people can't read it. So the school was originally started to help people to read the Ura Bible. However, since they started the school, many children and young adults who finished their education in years 6, 8 or 10 come to school to upgrade their standard in Tok Pisin, and some subjects in English. Now the school caters to women, men, youth, and children, and it teaches in all three languages. Some kids come to school. Parents can't afford to pay school fees. So they go to adult education school, because it is free. Next year they might charge a little bit of money. Some children are Ura; others are Taulil or Tolai. Teachers have great desire to help students from all over the place. But they can't accommodate everyone. Last year (2010) there were 50 or 60 students in the school; in 2011 there are close to 100 students. Students who have learned to read and write at the school feel a lot of pride and happiness. School is trying to formalise a "bridging program" into further education – formal recognition of the adult education certificate so students can transition to primary school or high school, or vocational education. Volunteer teachers work on Tuesdays and Fridays. They built the school house. They receive no funding from the government but they have invited government officials to graduation [in 2011] in an attempt to get government support for their bridging program. KA finished her formal education in 1975. She finished grade 6. She became a mother and stopped school. She had forgotten everything she'd learned. She didn't know how to give change (in business transactions). She really wanted to go back to school to learn how to read, write, and count money. Now she knows how to write again. Before this, *emi stap nating* 'she was idle'. KA is learning the Uramot alphabet but says it's hard. She's also in the process of learning Tok Pisin alphabet and the English alphabet at the same time. Things she can do now that she couldn't do before: she can count now. She has a real focus on counting. She'd also like to learn about computers now. She is very happy about this school.
15 (evangelical preacher – a Tolai woman and Kuanua speaker)	F	LK is a woman pastor. She was chosen by God. God reveals the calling of his pastors, regardless of whether they are man or woman. Sometimes it's useful to have a woman pastor, because it can be hard for women to approach a male pastor with some of her problems, eg, pregnancy, domestic violence, etc. But if a woman has a problem and her pastor is male, then the male pastor, along with his wife, will sit down and talk to the woman. **SWITCHING BETWEEN LANGUAGES**. LK writes things on board in English, then explains in the local language so people can understand. People don't always understand English. She switches between Tok Pisin and Kuanua. She has experience in switching, and knows when to do it. If she senses people don't understand, she switches to a more local language. If they don't get English, then they understand Tok Pisin. If they don't understand Tok Pisin, then she switches to the vernacular. If they're tired, they need to be motivated in another language. She preaches about the David & Goliath battle, and use it as a lesson for night time. She wants people to listen, obey, and implement the word of God. **NEWSLETTER**. The Head of Ministry (the 'Spiritual Father') in Mt Hagen is the leader of the church. He picks up messages from the spirit of God. He publishes a

		newsletter in English and sends this out to pastors in different parts of the country. The pastors read the newsletters and pass the word on to congregations in local languages. If some people can read English then they can read the newsletter themselves. The pastors read and explain to the congregation: “This is what is happening; this is what God is doing here”. The Spiritual Father travels around to different places (Moresby, Hagen, Enga, sometimes ENBP).