Language Development Strand

Unit 2: The Nature of Language

Module 2.1 Language Families

Student Support Material

Acknowledgements

PASTEP

Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Project

Unit outline

Unit	#	Modules
Unit 2 **The Nature of Language**	**4.1**	**Language Families** **(Core)**
	4.2	Spoken and written language (Core)
	4.3	Language structure (Core)

Icons

📖	Read	or	research
✎	Write	or	summarise
☞	Activity	or	discussion

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Module 2.1 Language Families

Rationale

The language situation in Papua New Guinea is one of the most complex in the world. There are over 850 indigenous languages spoken right across the country; there are pidgin/Creole languages spoken, as well as English. A major change in education policy now includes Elementary schools where children are taught first in their vernacular language or Tok Pisin, and where the transition to English only education takes place over several grades. Teachers are now encouraging children to become competent speakers, readers and writers in their first language. For this reason it is crucial that you as trainee teachers have an understanding of your own language affiliation and of the complexity of the situation you are likely to encounter in classrooms.

This Module aims to assist you to understand the linguistic situation and to help you to become familiar with some basic linguistic terms. It also aims to foster the pride you have in your own vernacular languages, and in Tok Pisin which is now widely used throughout the country. As well, information about English and its place in the linguistic picture of PNG is included.

Section 1: What is language?

1.1 Introduction

This Module is the first in *Unit 2, The Nature of Language*. First, you are asked to define what language is before being introduced to information about the complex linguistic situation in PNG. Then, through a study of language groups in your own country, you are introduced to terminology used in discussing issues such as language families, language relationships and different language varieties. This information provides the basis for later work in the TLM Units 4, 5 and 6.

☞ 2.1 Activity 1

In groups, define what is meant by language.

Present your findings to the whole class.

Try to compose a common definition from all the items given.

"Language is what all humans seem to have an innate predisposition to learn; 'a language' is a particular example of this ability located in a specific sociocultural group".

Because we all use language every day, we take it for granted. We seemed to learn our language so effortlessly, and we use it so unconsciously, that we tend to overlook what an extraordinary phenomenon language really is, and what it does for us in carrying out our everyday activities.

Research with animals shows that they also use systems of sound and visual signals to communicate messages. That is, they use non-verbal means of conveying meaning. However, human language is a verbal means of conveying meaning. It is a highly complex and inter-related system of:

- sounds
- words, as well as other signals such as body language (gestures, facial   expressions, body posture)
- systems of stress and intonation
- bound together in structured ways (grammar) to create and express the meanings its speakers intend, and share

☞ **2.1 Activity 2**

Discuss:

- *Why do we use language?*
- *What do we use it for?*

Make a list of all the daily activities for which we need language (To help with this, think of all the conversations you have had so far today with other people (don't forget talking to yourself !)

Then, group the items you have written down, under two main headings:

- *Exchange of information in our daily lives. For example, "What time does the PMV go to town?"; discussing an assignment topic etc.*
- *Social interaction, i.e. using language for social purposes. For example, making arrangements to meet other students for a friendly football game etc.*

Then discuss how you would 'get your meaning across' if you did not have language to help you.

1.2 Language is communication

Language is one form of communication along with other forms of communication in a culture, e.g. sign language; dance; visual arts of other kinds, music etc.)

But it is much more than that. As you can see from Appendix 1, recent definitions of language now include aspects of language as speech, and language as communication, and there is a major emphasis on the social nature of language. That is to say that people talk to each other to get things done in their daily lives.

Language is both speech and communication, but it is also much more than either of these.

- Language is rooted in a culture
- Language is a social practice of each particular culture.

What do we mean by these two statements?

1.3 Context of situation

Exchanges of messages (i.e. people talking to each other) always take place within a context, a setting, such as:

- a market place
- the clinic
- a political rally
- the take-away food shop
- the bride price exchange.

That setting influences what is likely to be said and done, how it is said and done, and who the participants are likely to be.

☞ **2.1 Activity 3**

> *Talk about (and role play) what you might say and do in some of the above contexts. Discuss (and list) the differences and similarities between them.*

1.4 Context of culture

Furthermore, the context of culture in turn influences:

- what the participants can do in each situation
- who the participants are
- how they carry out the activities
- the tools they use
- how they talk about the activities

For example, in each of the settings listed above, what is said and done, and how it is said and done, is both similar to and different from what will take place in a similar situation in other cultural groups.

Now, think about what is said and done, and by whom, in each of the settings above in, say, Australia, or India. How might they be different from or similar to the same situations in PNG?

So we could say that each situation where we exchange messages of particular kinds is embedded, or located, in a particular cultural context.

For example, explain how you would talk about a bride-price exchange ceremony in your cultural group to a person who has only been in your community for a short time.

Compare aspects of the ceremony with the giving of brides in some Australian or other cultural groups.

☞ 2.1 Activity 4

For discussion:

- *Did you have problems comparing with other cultures? Why?*

- *What do you need to know to be able to compare the practices of one cultural group with those of another. (Talk about values, beliefs, practices of each culture).*

From these activities, you can see how inseparably language is bound up in culture, and culture is 'realized' (built up and made real) by its members, through language. It follows that children born into a cultural group learn the ways of behaving, believing, of doing and being in the world, that all the other members of their social and cultural group also follow. And they learn this tremendous body of information through interaction, that is, largely through doing and talking with members of their social group, through everyday activities that are embedded in specific situations located in heir culture.

Below is a diagram that helps to explain the interrelatedness of language, situation, and cultural context, in the ways we have been discussing.
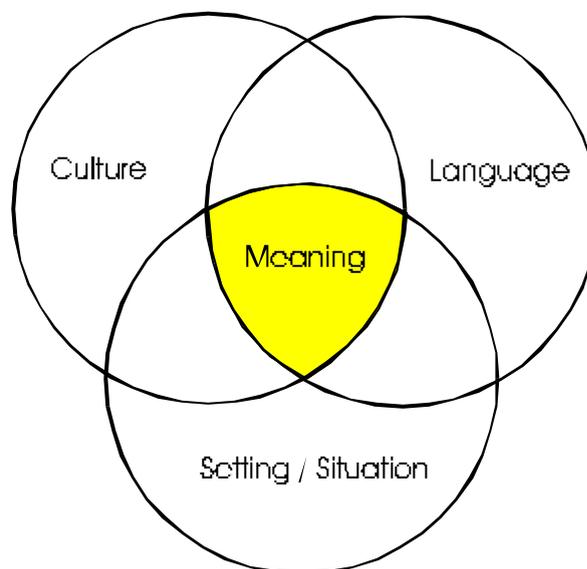
The interaction between language, culture and situation and meaning.

From our discussion of what we mean by language, situation, culture, we move on to a discussion of some of the particular languages of Papua New Guinea.

Section 2: An Overview of the Languages of PNG Including Some Pacific Languages

2.1 Introduction

☞ 2.1 Activity 5

Questions to answer:

a)   *What is the name of the first language you learned to speak?*

b)   *Does the name of the language mean something? (For example, an Aboriginal language called Yolngu Matha means 'the people's language/tongue')*

c)   *Where is your language primarily spoken?*

d)   *How many speakers of the language are there?*

e)   *Is your language closely related to any other languages nearby?*

f)   *Are there related dialects of that language?*

g)   *Are there other speakers of your language in your College class group?*

h)   *Are there speakers of other closely related languages in your group? What are the names of their languages? What is their geographical location?*

The Pacific area is one of the most linguistically complex regions in the world. This is true for two reasons:

- there is a large number of distinct and unrelated language families located in the area; and
- there are a very large number of languages spoken in this area.

About one-quarter of the world's languages are spoken in the Pacific region, but they are spoken by less than one per cent of the world's population. Below are listed the number of languages in each country or region of the Pacific.

Area	Number of languages
West Papua (Irian Jaya)	about 250 languages
Papua New Guinea	about 800 languages
Solomon Islands	about 60 languages
Vanuatu	about 100 languages
New Caledonia	about 30 languages
Micronesia	about 15 languages
Fiji and Polynesia	about 20 languages
Australia	about 200 languages

The figures for Australia refer to Australian Aboriginal languages and their speakers. There were probably about 200 of these languages spoken at the time of first contact with Europeans, though many of these have since died out.

Altogether, then, about fifteen hundred languages are (or were) spoken in this area, by about five million people (1997).

Compare these figures with a single language such as English, which has over 350 million native speakers, and another 1000 million people who speak it as a second language.

The languages of the Pacific area, excluding the Australian languages, belong to two quite distinct language types: Austronesian and non-Austronesian (also known as Papuan). Each of these will be discussed below.

2.2 The Austronesian Languages (AN Languages)

(The word 'Austronesian' comes from two Greek words meaning *southern islands*.)

Many of the languages of this very large area are related, and belong to a single language family. This family is known as the Austronesian family of languages. This means that they all share certain similarities, in their grammar, vocabulary, morphology and phonology. The reason they share these similarities is that they all derive from a common ancestor language, called a 'proto-language'. Linguists have named this ancestor language Proto-Austronesian.

The Austronesian language family has about 1200 or more member languages, all of which are related to each other. Some of these languages are located in the Pacific area, as follows:

- all the languages of Polynesia (including New Zealand Maori) and Fiji
- all the languages of Micronesia
- all the languages of Vanuatu and New Caledonia
- almost all the languages of the Solomon Islands
- around one-quarter of the languages of Papua New Guinea and West Papua (Irian Jaya)

In the regions of Papua New Guinea and West Papua (Irian Jaya), the Austronesian languages are mostly located in coastal, near coastal and island areas. However, there are two points at which AN speakers have penetrated further inland. One is in the Madang area and the other is in the area inland from Yule Island, west of Port Moresby.

 It is believed that the AN languages are immigrants into PNG. It seems, then, that only in these two locations, have the immigrant speakers managed to gain sufficient foothold on the mainland to

permit their movement inland. The AN speakers appear to have been seafarers, and therefore were more interested in coastal travel and contacts than the groups who lived further inland, and in the mountains. There are no Austronesian languages along the western part of the south coast of PNG, nor along the south coast of West Papua (Irian Jaya). Austronesian languages are also found further west, in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and Taiwan, for example.

People who have studied the Austronesian languages believe that the Austronesian family had its origins in the west, somewhere around Taiwan or on the nearby Asian mainland. The speakers of that early Austronesian language, and the language descendants of that language moved eastwards, reaching and settling the New Guinea area about 5000 years ago. Some of the speakers then moved further east into the rest of the Pacific, reaching Fiji and western Polynesia about 3000 years ago.

The AN languages in PNG fall into two related, yet in many ways contrasting groups. Practically all the AN languages on the mainland of PNG fall into the first group, while most of the AN languages on the smaller islands around New Guinea belong to the second group. The ancestors of this second group are thought to have migrated from Indonesia to somewhere in the New Britain and New Ireland area, and may have radiated out from there. This sub-group of languages typically has a S-V-O sentence order, as in English, while the languages of the first group have a S-O-V sentence order. There are other differences which mark them out as different from each other, and from the NAN languages that are spoken in the rest of the country.
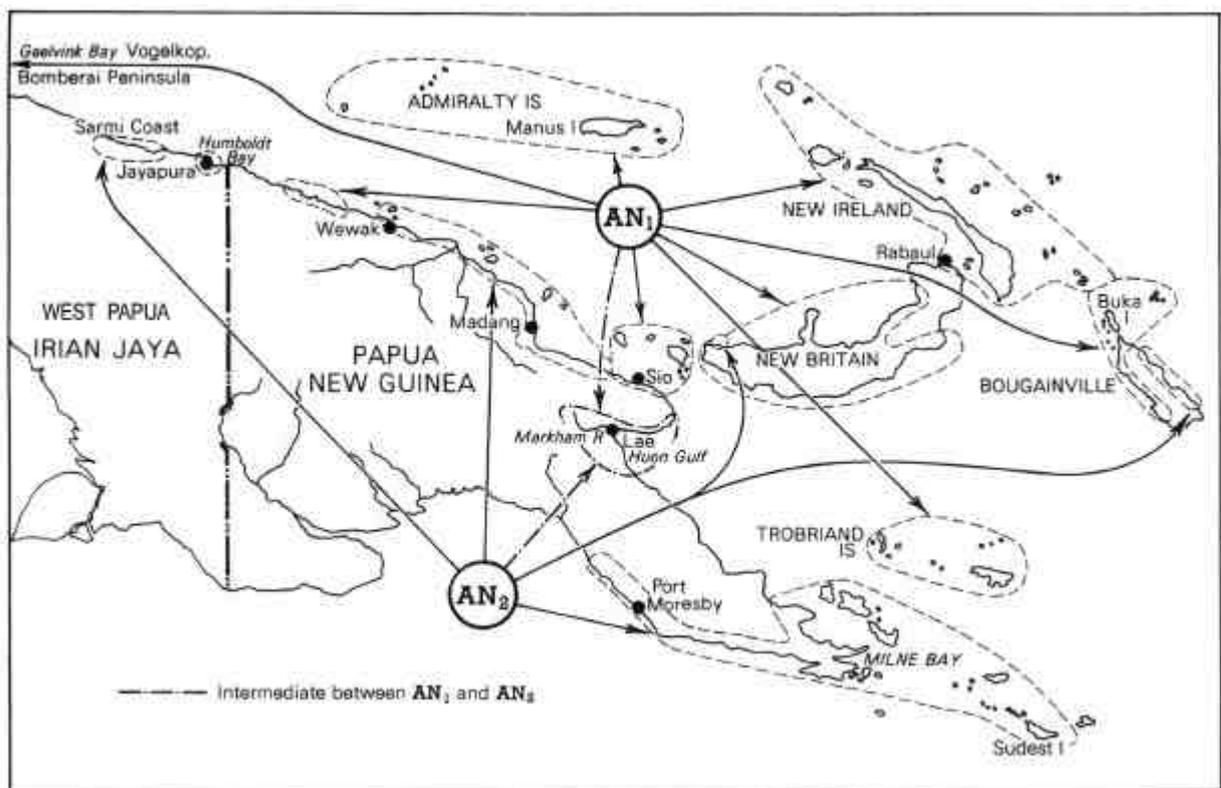

Figure 2: Austronesian Languages, New Guinea

2.3 Non-Austronesian Languages (or NAN Languages, a.k.a. Papuan Languages)

These languages have been in the New Guinea area very much longer than the Austronesian languages. At least some of them may have entered the area as immigrant languages in the not-too-distant past but still well before the AN language speakers arrived. Some NAN languages are assumed to have been in the New Guinea area for tens of thousands of years. From the time the languages were first studied, their distribution, classification and grouping, nature and possible origin have caused many linguistic headaches.

About 800 distinct languages are counted as Papuan, with uncounted dialects. Almost all of them are on the island of New Guinea itself, either PNG or West Papua (Irian Jaya). However, they spread from as far west as Timor, and as far East as New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville, with a few appearing even as far away as the Solomon Islands chain.

Because of its great size compared to the other islands, it is on the mainland of New Guinea that the greatest number of NAN languages are found. It is estimated that between one-sixth and one-seventh of all of the languages of the world are concentrated on this tiny fraction of the surface of the earth, the greatest concentration of languages met with anywhere in the world! Nor do there seem to be more than superficial connections with any languages spoken outside PNG, such as Australia or Asia.

The NAN (Papuan) language situation has long been known as one of the most lexically diverse and complex areas in the world. Up until the '60's and '70's, linguists believed that the NAN languages were mostly unrelated to each other, and were simply hundreds of very different, complex languages with small numbers of speakers. Further, it was believed that these languages showed no links to each other or to any languages outside the area. Only a very few languages showed some resemblance to each other.

However, research over several decades has simplified the linguistic picture. It could be shown that a large number of languages were, in fact, interrelated. Furthermore, some of these interrelated languages had quite large speech communities, some of over 100,000 speakers.
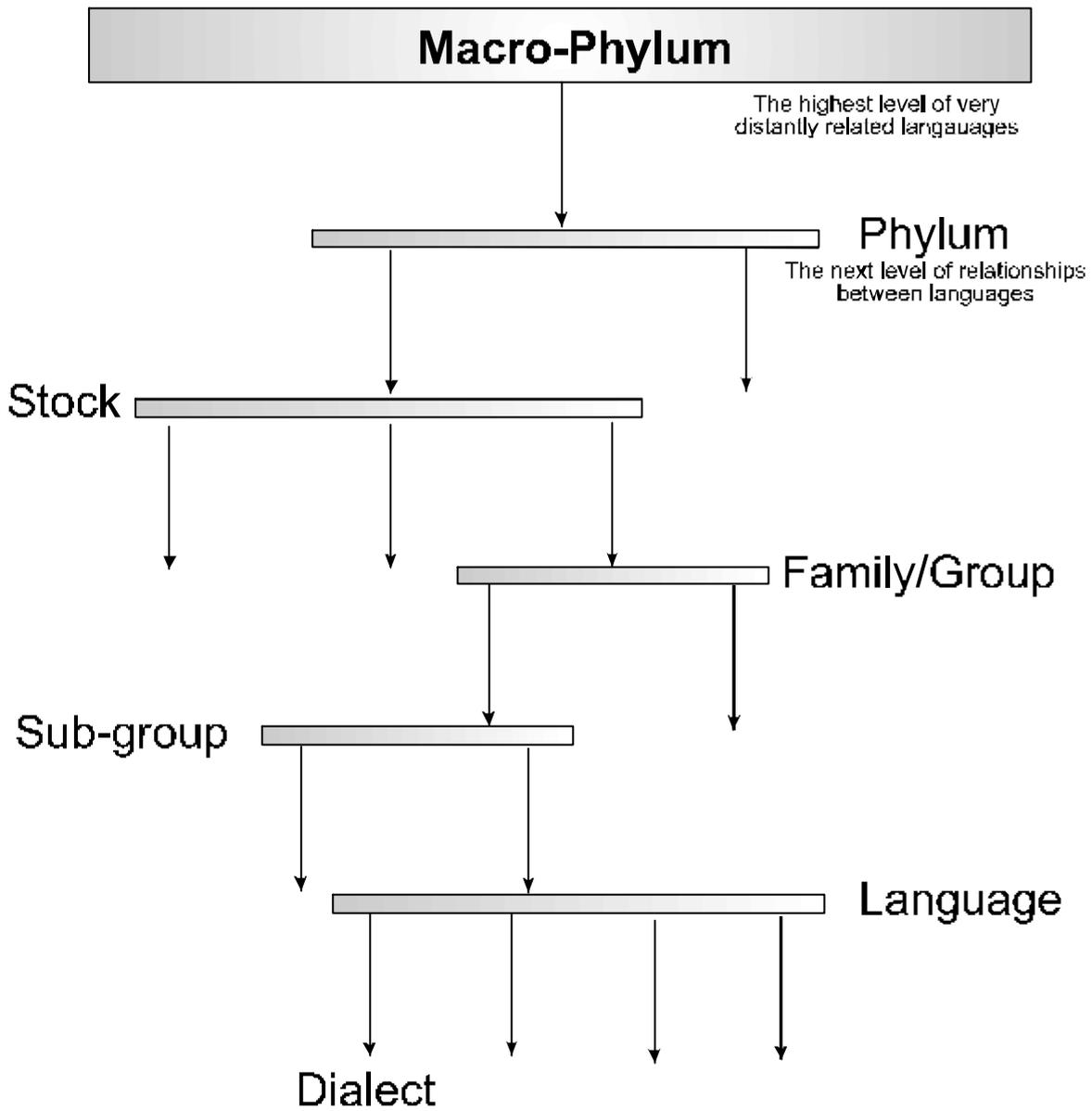
Figure 3: The relationship levels of languages and associated terminology.
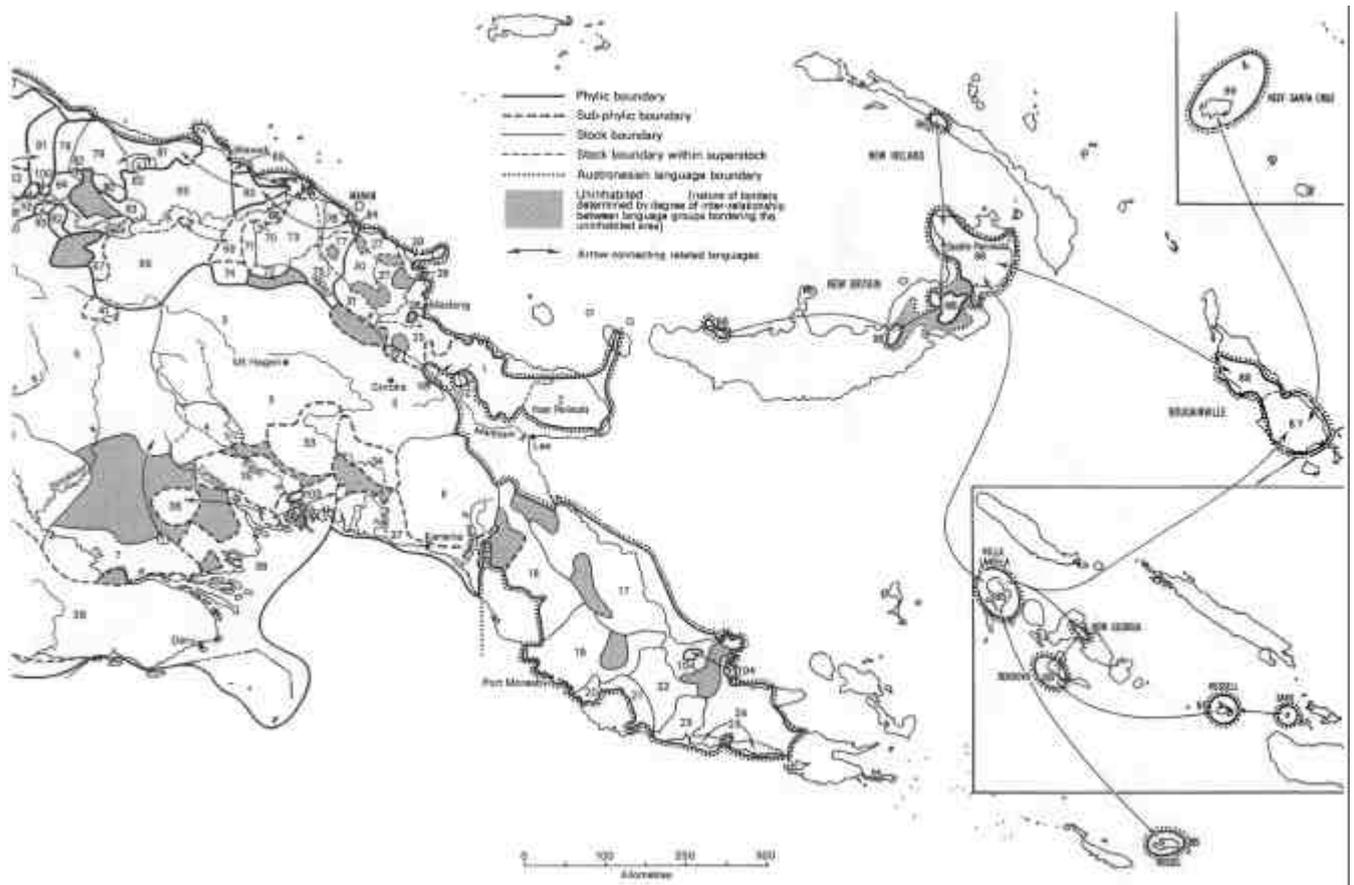
Figure 4: Language relationships in PNG.

On the basis of ongoing research, linguists were able to establish that there were some distant relationships existing between even more groups of these languages across the area. As a result of such study, it was possible to suggest that there was in fact one very large phylum, called the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, which accounted for 493 languages, or 70% of all the languages in the NAN group. The total number of speakers of this phylum represented 82% of all speakers in the NAN group. There are four other large phyla and a number of minor phyla along with some isolated languages that make up the total languages included in the NAN languages of this area. The list of phyla is below.

Phylum name	Number of languages	Map legend
Trans-New Guinea	493	A
West Papuan	24	B
Sepik-Ramu	98	C
Torricelli	47	D
East Papuan	28	E

Minor Phyla include: Sko Phylum level stock (F); Kwomtari phylum-level stock (G); Arai phylum-level Family (H); Amto-Musian phylum-level Stock (I), and several others in West Papua.

With all of the research carried out, it was now possible to identify six or more NAN languages/ groups that did not at that time fit into any of the other language groupings. Continuing linguistic research may yet establish that these languages also relate in some way to the major phyla that have been identified.
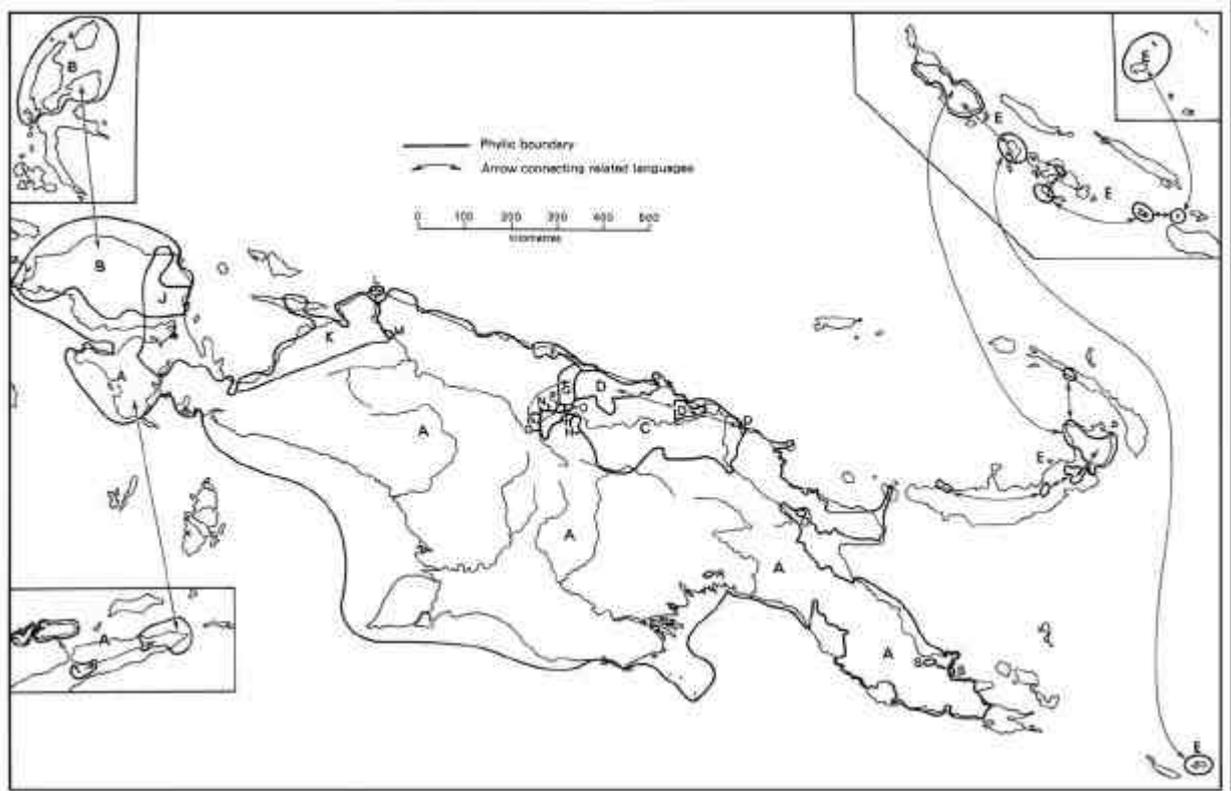
Figure 5: Locations of phyla in New Guinea.

☞ 2.1 Activity 6

After reading the information above, and checking with the maps of PNG, answer these questions:

a)   *Is your first language an AN or a NAN language? If you speak other languages, are they AN or NAN?*

b)   *If your language is AN, does it belong to the first or second group of AN languages? How can you tell?*

c)   *Do you know the name of the family of languages it belongs to?*

d)   *Can you work out which Language Phylum it belongs to? (Refer to the Languages Map and the list of Phyla to help you.)*

e)   *Are there oral histories that tell how your ancestors came to the place where your language is spoken? Share this information with a fellow student/the class*

f)   *What is the Sentence Order of a simple sentence in your language?*

☞ **2.1 Activity 7**

Use the following list of vocabulary in English, and write the word in your language.

A list of words for the common core vocabulary

Body parts	**Family**	**Numbers**
Head	Mother	One
Forehead	Father	Two
Hair	Child	Five
Eyes	Brother	Ten
Ears	Sister	Twenty
Mouth, tongue	Maternal grandmother	One hundred
Teeth	Maternal grandfather	
Leg	Paternal grandmother	
Foot	Paternal grandfather	
Skin		
Blood		
Breath		
Cough		
The environment		
Moon	Mountain	Stone
Sun	Road, path	Pig
Stars	Tree	Possum
Clouds	Branch	Bird
Rain	Bark	Spider
Wind	River	

- *Compare your list with others in your class.*

- *Look for correspondences and similarities between your list and the lists of other students*

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2.4 Pidgin and Creole languages of PNG and the Pacific area

In this section, we consider the growth and development of pidgin and creole languages.

☞ 2.1 Activity 8

Test your knowledge by answering the following questions to show what you already know about the topic.

a)   What is your definition of a pidgin language?

b)   What is your definition of a Creole language?

c)   Is a Creole language different from a pidgin language?

d)   How is a Creole language different from a pidgin language?

e)   Why is a study of pidgins/Creoles important for an understanding of the language situation in PNG?

f)   Answer True or False:

> *1.   A pidgin is a simplified form of language   _____*

> *2.   Pidgin languages are languages without a grammar _____*

> *3.   Pidgins are a broken form of English   _____*

> *4.   Creole languages are "real" languages _____*

> *5.   Pidgins and Creoles can be used as languages of instruction _____*

Now read the information below. As you read the information provided, check the answers you have given.

Definitions

1.   A pidgin is 'an auxiliary language which arises to fulfil certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language' (Lynch)

2.   A pidgin is 'a language which is native to none of those who speak it, and which is reduced in structure and vocabulary when compared with the language or languages from which it has derived' (Wurm, 1966)

Using these definitions, we can list the criteria which define a pidgin language, thus:

A pidgin language is:

- an auxiliary language (a 'supporting', or 'back-up' language)
- native to none of the people who speak it (nobody's first language)

- reduced in structure (grammar)
- reduced in vocabulary (not many words)
- derived (drawn from) from some other languages
- useful between groups of people who have no common language.

Where did the label 'pidgin' come from?

There are a number of theories covering the origin of the word 'pidgin'.

1. Pidgin is a Chinese corruption of the English word business.

2. A Chinese corruption of the Portuguese word for business: occupacao

3. Derived from the Hebrew word for trade or exchange: pidjom

4. Derived from a South Seas pronunciation of the English word beach since trading often took place on the beach: beachee

5. Derived from a South American language: the word for Indian: pidian.

Any of these could account for where the word originated.

How do pidgin languages develop?

When two or more groups of people speaking different languages come together for some specific purpose (such as work, trade, etc.), there are different ways of solving communication problems. For example,

- Everyone uses sign language (but this has very limited potential)
- Everyone learns the language of one of the groups. For this to happen, the contact between the groups needs to be long-term. Further, one of the groups of speakers is usually economically and politically dominant as in some kinds of colonial situations.

A new, simplified language develops, using some aspects of at least two of the languages involved in the contact situation. This new and simplified language is called a pidgin language. There are certain social conditions that exist for a pidgin language to develop. These are:

- The situation must be multilingual or bilingual. That is, speakers of at least two languages, and usually more than two, must come into contact. In the case of Melanesian Pidgin, this situation occurred when European traders and explorers came into contact with pacific Islanders who themselves spoke a large number of languages.
- There is limited, or restricted, contact between the groups. Say, for example, colonial traders wanted to trade for beche-de-mer or copra or pearl shell. The trading cycle meant that there would only be contact yearly or slightly more often. The contact would not last very long either. As well, the people engaged in the trade would only need to talk about certain things that centred around the trading. All that is necessary for these meetings would be a very simple language. In the early stages of the development of Melanesian pidgin, the contact between Europeans and Pacific Islanders was very similar to this.
- This social contact remains stable over a period with no sudden increase or decrease in the amount or nature of the contact. With Melanesian Pidgin, the contact between

outsiders and Islanders remained stable until the beginning of the 'blackbirding' era, when it dramatically increased. This had repercussions for the developing trade language.

Summing up: A pidgin language develops where two groups of people:

- can't understand each other
- need to be able to talk to each other
- have a reason for needing to talk to each other
- build a language from the resources available, i.e. each other's languages
- their need to communicate has to last quite a long time.

What kind of language is it that the speakers invent to meet this new contact situation?

We could say that only a simple language is needed, so that the language is easy to learn, since everyone who speaks a pidgin language speaks it as a second language.

But what is a 'simple' language? There is a process involved in simplifying language. This process is called the pidginisation, or simplification process, and involves some or all of the following:

- The sounds that are used are those which are common to all, or most, of the languages involved in the contact situation. In the case of Melanesian Pidgin, some of the difficult sounds of English were replaced by the simple 's', e.g. six = sikis, shoe = su, church = sios etc.
- The grammar system is simplified. Many prefixes and suffixes are left off. Tenses are very simple:

English	Torres Strait Creole	Tok Pisin	Australian Kriol
S/he understands	em sabe	em i save	im sabi
S/he doesn't understand	em no sabe	em i no save	im no sabi
S/he understood	em bi/bin sabe	em bin save	im bin sabi
S/he didn't understand	em no bin sabe	em i no bin save	im no bin sabi
S/he will understand	em go sabe	em bai save	
S/he will not understand	em no go sabe	em bai i no save	

- Pronoun systems are made simpler, e.g. in Melanesian Pidgin mi can mean 'I', 'me', or 'my'.

English	Tok Pisin	Cameroon Pidgin
I go	mi)	a)
You go	yu)	yu)
He/she/it goes	em)	I)
We go	yumi) go	go
	mipela)	wi)
You go	yupela)	wuna)
They go	ol I)	dem)

- A very small vocabulary is needed because the language is used only in a limited set of social situations such as trading, plantation work etc. Fine distinctions in meaning are not needed in the kind of communication situations that the pidgin is used for. An example from Tok Pisin is that the word gras means not only 'grass', but also 'hair', feathers', 'fur'.

- Some people refer to pidgin languages as mixed languages because most of the vocabulary comes from one language, and the grammar may be derived from one or some of the languages in the contact situation.

Thus, if we were to define what we mean by a pidgin language, we would probably say something like the following:

> "A Pidgin language is a reduced or simplified version of an 'ordinary' language, which develops in a situation of limited or restricted contact between different groups of people who have no common language, and who all use the pidgin as a second language".

Where do pidgin languages start?

A pidgin language can develop anywhere speakers of two or more languages meet; it is native to none of the speakers, and the languages can be of any type. For example:

1. Pidgins can be modifications of indigenous languages:

   a. Hiri Motu had its origins in the Hiri trading expeditions of the Southern Papuan coast. It was later taken up and used by the Administration for a police language in the pacification of Papua.

   b. Chinook Jargon had its origins in American Indian languages. It was an indigenous response to the trading opportunities of the Pacific Northwest of the American continent.

   c. Swahili developed from indigenous African languages when African traders travelled the length and breadth of Africa for trading purposes.

2. Pidgins can develop from a combination of indigenous languages and the languages of colonising nations:

   a. Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malay were based on a pidgin which grew out of the Dutch colonial trading in the (then) Dutch East Indies and local languages

   b. St. Lucia in the Caribbean has a language which has French as a parent language

3. Pidgins can be based on English and indigenous languages

a. Torres Strait Creole is a language which owes approximately 80% of its vocabulary to English. It grew out of the contact situation between sailors and traders of the pearling and beche-de-mer industries in far northern Australian waters adjacent to Papua New Guinea.

b. The Kriol language is another English-based pidgin derived from Aboriginal languages and English, with approximately 70,000 speakers from North Queensland, the north of the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia.

c. Tok Pisin is an English-based pidgin with vocabulary taken largely from English with other languages included; its grammar follows that of Pacific area languages.

d. Solomon Islands Pidgin and Bislama, spoken in Vanuatu, are both dialects of Melanesian Pidgin, along with Tok Pisin.

All the linguistic evidence indicates that pidgins have always developed when people speaking mutually unintelligible languages (i.e. groups who want to speak to each other for a specific purpose but who cannot understand each other's language), come into contact with one another. People who study these languages maintain that they may develop through several stages. These stages are summarised below.

1.   A trade jargon

The earliest stage in the development of a pidgin is that of a 'trade jargon'. This language variety is made up of a very few words simply to carry out the speakers' purposes in trading for a few items. It lasts only as long as the trading partnership is maintained, and is very unstable. That is, speakers will stop using it when the trading opportunities cease.

The next stage of development can be characterised by two kinds of pidgin:

2.   Types of pidgin

a. 'restricted' pidgin

– one stage further advanced, say, than a 'trade jargon'. This language variety develops when the speakers of two or more languages come into relatively superficial contact, but with the contact re-occurring over time. Such a variety tends also to be unstable, reflecting the superficial nature of the initial contact. Since the pidgin is not the first language of any of its speakers, their primary language is always available to meet the functional language needs of that community, while the pidgin is maintained for limited cross-cultural interaction.
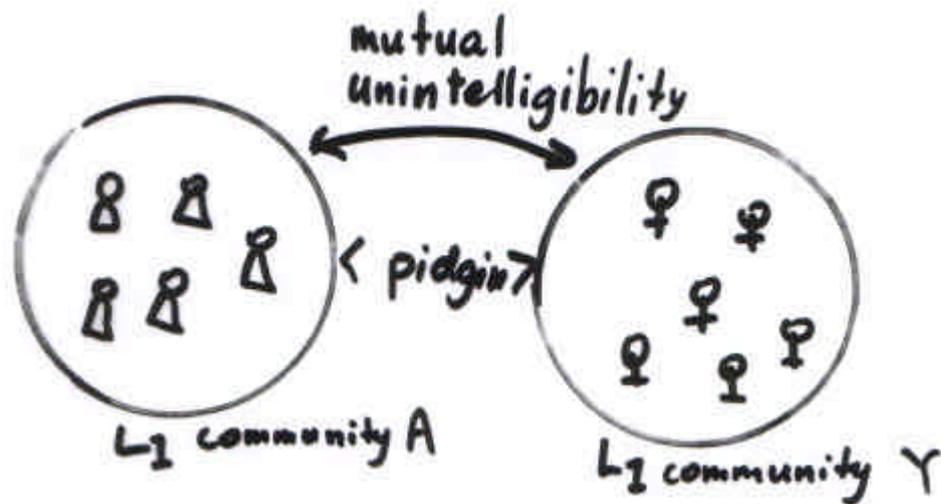
Figure 6: Mutual unintelligibility

b.   an 'expanded' or 'extended' pidgin

Let's say that the initial contact between the two contact groups extends over a long period, so the new language variety has time to become stable.

Then, let's say that one or other group of speakers finds it increasingly useful in new situations such as a:

- trade language
- church language
- literary language e.g. for poems newspapers, plays etc.

Every time the speakers of a pidgin language use it to meet a new communication need, such as a new situation for its use, the closer it becomes to developing into a Creole. In some cases, for example, the pidgin is adopted as a lingua franca:

- Where a dominant (colonising, imperial power) group finds the developing language useful in intergroup communication as, e.g. the Germans in New Guinea, and the Australians in Papua with Hiri Motu, or
- The indigenous group of speakers finds the language useful in more situations than just the original contact situation, e.g. Torres Strait Creole, Tok Pisin and Kriol of Australia. These situations may include contexts such as:
  - politics and administration
  - education
  - health

When a pidgin language serves as a lingua franca in ever-increasing domains of usage, its structure is further expanded to allow for increasingly finer differentiation of meaning. It can thus sustain more and more complex communication in a wider range of situations.

As with the pidgin/Creole languages of the Pacific area and Australia, the developing language may become the language of everyday use in a multilingual community.

In PNG, Tok Pisin became the language of everyday use in a multilingual community. The speakers required the language to cope with every communication situation, and continually created new and finer ways of constructing different meanings for these new situations.

3.   The stage of Creolization

The next stage in the development of a pidgin occurs when the language becomes the mother tongue of a speech community. When this takes place, the language is termed a 'Creole'. Think of this in relation to the PNG situation and Tok Pisin:

-   even before Independence, and increasingly after Independence, people from all parts of PNG moved to other areas for employment or education, or other reasons
-   this movement of numbers of people increased the chances of couples from different language groups, who did not speak each other's first language, marrying and establishing a family unit.

Since neither person could speak the other's language, the sensible solution to this 'mutual unintelligibility' was to use Tok Pisin in everyday interaction.

☞ 2.1 Activity 9

Students discuss the following situation: When children were born into the families described above, where couples spoke languages different from each other, what language would the children hear in use every day?

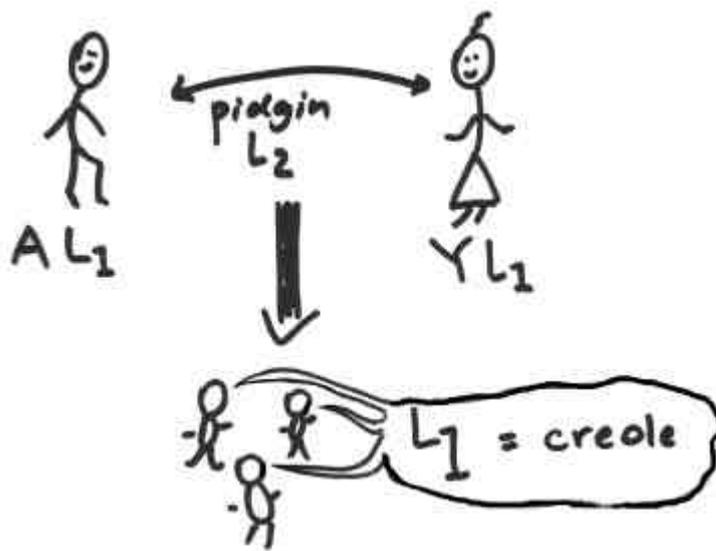*What language would they learn to speak as their first language?*

Figure 7:

Now the situation arises that these speakers, young as they are, want their first language (our examples are Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu) to be capable of serving all the language requirements of

everyday situations. So, they innovate, so that the language they speak meets all of the communicative and functional load of anybody's first language.

There are four categories of expansion when a Creole develops out of a pidgin language. These are:

- Expansion of the sound system – sounds that were dropped out may be built back in, as in:

    shu instead of su for shoe

    jaj instead of sas for judge

    choch instead of sios for church

- Expansion of the vocabulary system – new words come in every day to express concepts for which there was previously no word; politics, computers, education have all had an effect on Tok Pisin.
- Expansion of the grammar system – the grammar becomes more complex with addition of words such as sapos, bikos, nomata; verb tenses increase and carry finer meanings.
- Expansion in registers (see Section 4.5 for an explanation of what is meant by the term 'registers').

Thus, the main distinction between a pidgin and a Creole is clear: a pidgin is no-one's first language, whereas a Creole is the first language of a group of speakers, and a language of equal standing as anybody's language.

4.   Decreolization

This term is used when speakers of a Creole language such as Tok Pisin continue frequently to borrow words from the 'lexifier' language, that is, the language from which most of the vocabulary was originally borrowed. In the case of Tok Pisin, English is the lexifier language. Thus, every time vocabulary is drawn from English, there is the chance that Tok Pisin becomes more like English. The possibility is there that Tok Pisin eventually will become like a dialect /sociolect of English if borrowing from English continues for several generations of speakers.

☞ 2.1 Activity 10

Discuss:

- *Do you consider that it is important to be concerned about such borrowing?*

- *Some possible strategies for slowing down the borrowing of words from English into Tok Pisin.*

- *The strengths/limitations of using Tok Pisin as a language of education.*

☞ 2.1 Activity 11

Having read the information above, give short answers to the following:

- *Describe the main stages through which a pidgin/Creole language may develop*

- *In what way can a Creole develop from a pidgin?*

- *Explain the difference between a 'restricted' and an 'elaborated' (or expanded) pidgin.*

- *What is your explanation of the term 'lingua franca'?*

- *What linguistic basis do we have for describing pidgins as 'simplified' languages?*

- *Give two reasons why some pidgins that arose to meet limited communication needs, died out*

- *Linguists refer to a pidgin as 'nobody's first language'. Why?*

- *Suggest reasons why Tok Pisin has become so widely used.*

- *Is Tok Pisin a lingua franca? Give reasons for your answer.*

Answer True or False to the following: T   F

- *A Creole language is an entirely different language from a pidgin …………*

- *A pidgin is a simplified form of language ………..*

- *Pidgins can result from the mixing of vernacular languages and English ……...*

- *Creoles are not 'real' languages …...…*

- *A pidgin is by definition one of the languages of a group of speakers ……..*

- *Tok Pisin is a Creole language ………*

2.5 National and official languages

What are National and official languages?

A language is recognised as an *official* language, mainly because it is recognised by the State as the language to be used for all official purposes and adopted by the National Government for the administration of the nation's daily affairs.

A National language is recognised by a Government because a mass of people use that language to communicate with one another, despite their linguistic backgrounds.

Section 3: The Indo-European Family of Languages

There are many language families located around the world. For example, English, which is one of the largest world languages, is also a member of a family of languages, as are PNG languages. The name given to the family of which English is a part is the Indo-European family of languages, although we could probably also refer to it as a phylum.
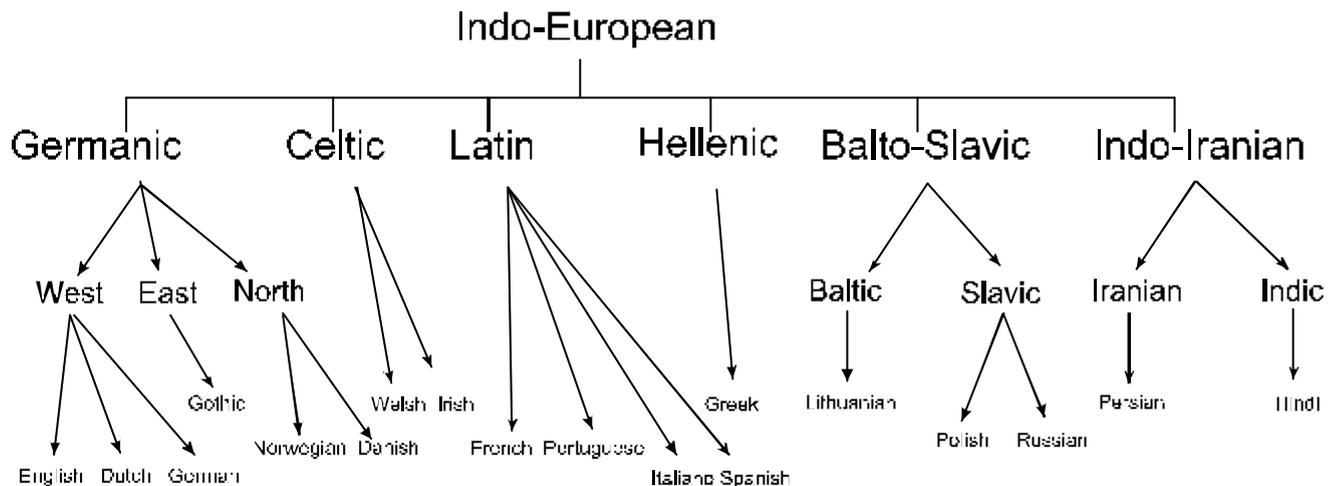
Figure 8: Indo-European family of languages

Can you locate English on the chart? Try and describe its relationship to the Indo-European group. You should say something like:

> "English is a language closely related to the Dutch and German languages and belongs to the Western Sub-group of the Germanic branch of the Indo European Family/Phylum". You could also add that "its closest modern relatives are … (Dutch and German). Why could you say that?

It is interesting to compare words from, say, English and German that clearly shows how closely related they are, at least at vocabulary level, even though they sound very different from one another when spoken:

English	German
Man	Mann
Night	Nacht
Mother	Mutter
Father	Vater

English, along with many languages of the world, is a very 'mixed' language because it has borrowed words from other languages. This borrowing shows the effects of history on a language when:
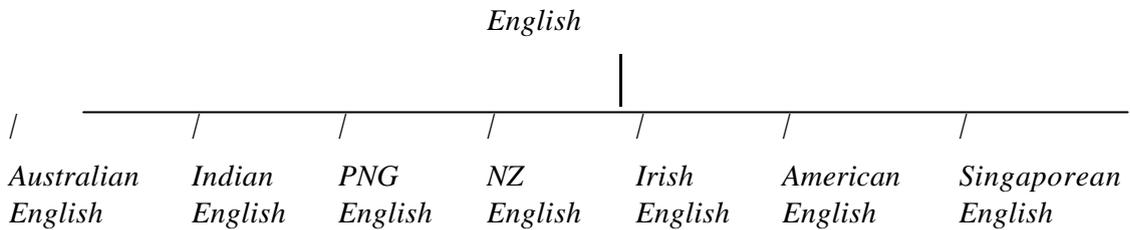
- Groups from other parts of the world invaded the British Isles, they brought with them different languages, which became mixed with the local languages

- Groups migrated to Britain from other countries, they brought with them customs, cultures and languages which had an effect on the language(s) of Britain.

- Britain was a world colonial power, members of the British Empire travelled far and wide and learned new customs and new items of culture, and the languages associated with them. When these people returned to their own country and language group, some words etc. of these languages were adopted into their mother tongue.

Here are some examples of borrowing into English from other languages:

English	Other language
vodka	Russian
pizza	Italian
anorak	Inuit/Eskimo
kayak	Inuit/Eskimo
plaza	Italian
amour	French
blitz	German
wigwam	American Indian
tomato	South American
sputnik	Russian
toreador	Spanish
tofu	Turkish
Molotov cocktail	Russia
bilum	PNG

English, and each of the languages shown on the diagram of Indo-European languages, could itself be further grouped into dialects, thus:

English

|

/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Australian English	*Indian English*	*PNG English*	*NZ English*	*Irish English*	*American English*	*Singaporean English*

We could also call these dialects, 'World Englishes'. Each of these World Englishes has its own internal variation along geographical and social lines. For example,

American English

|

/	/	/	/	/
New York	*Massachusetts*	*Carolina*	*Texas*	*etc.*
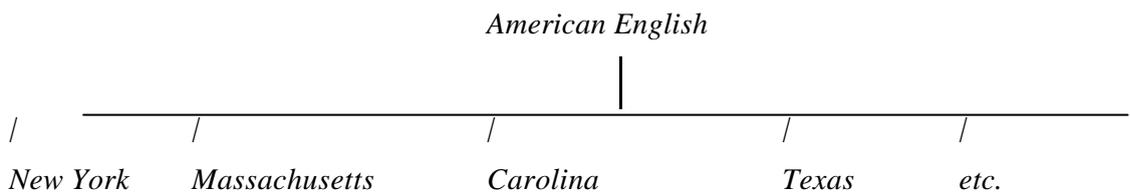
We could call each of these 'geographical' dialects of American English. These terms will be explained shortly under the next topic.

Section 4: Language Variation and Change

Within every language there are considerable amounts of internal variation. That is to say that speakers of the same language may well speak that language differently. One form of internal variation we define by the term 'dialect', which is a form of a spoken language or way of speaking, used in a part of a country (a geographical dialect) or by a class of people (a social dialect).

What kinds of variation might we expect to find within a language?

- the sounds
- the prosody (stress, intonation, pitch) i.e. the 'music' of the language
- vocabulary
- syntax (grammar)

Any or all of these aspects of language may differ between dialects, but there will be least variation in the grammar.

☞ 2.1 Activity 12

Listen to speakers of three or four different dialects of English speak for 3-4 minutes on the same topic.

Discuss as a class/group what the main differences between their 'Englishes' are, using the list of possible variations above. In which category are there most differences? Why might this be?

What kinds of dialects are there?

4.1 Geographical/regional dialects

One criterion for the determination of dialect variation is: where you come from. As you can see from the Activity above, 'where they come from' determines the variety of English that an Irish/Australian/American/New Zealand person will speak.

This kind of variation is not restricted to English. In many language communities of the world, it is the region of origin which determines which variety of language(s) an individual may speak. Why is that?

Is that statement true of Papua New Guinean dialects of a language? For example, are there different dialects of Motu? Enga? Melpa? Kuanua? Others?

☞ **2.1 Activity 13**

Discuss the following question and brainstorm possible answers:

- *Languages in isolation tend to become less and less like each other. What could be the possible reasons for such isolation?*

- *One linguist has suggested that a dialect is a "potential new language". When would a dialect cease to be a dialect and become a quite different language? What would change, how much and for reasons as they grow apart? Think of this question in relation to the PNG language situation.*

4.2 Sociolect (or social dialect) difference

We referred above to the fact that social class can also affect the variety of a language that people speak. In some societies, people of higher socio-economic classes often speak differently from people that are lower on the socio-economic scale. The following factors or collections of factors usually help to determine a person's social class:

- the same or similar educational institutions, qualifications and experiences
- living in certain suburbs, and not others
- sharing similar leisure activities – the arts, sports etc
- sharing similar occupations – 'white collar' vs 'blue collar' vs. labourer, etc.

In general, then, people who share a common life-style and daily experiences, tend to speak alike. A group which perceives itself to be a close social unit will tend to express its solidarity by the use of linguistic conventions which set it apart from other groups. Language can be used to exclude, and to include – to separate "us" from "them".

In Australia, there are no geographical dialects, although there are minor variations in vocabulary and intonation patterns. But three sociolects have been identified. These are:

- broad Australian English, associated with working-class Australian speech
- general Australian English, associated with middle-class Australian speech

☞ 2.1 Activity 14

It is possible to identify both geographical dialects and sociolects in Tok Pisin. Using the criteria from this section, see if you can identify geographical dialects and a sociolect of Tok Pisin. Justify your reasoning with examples.

4.3 The 'standard' variety of a language

In some instances, one dialect emerges as a lingua franca (i.e. a common language) often through political muscle or economic advantage. That variety becomes more prestigious than others – it becomes the 'standard', as in 'Standard Australian English' – whatever that is!

For a number of reasons, the variety becomes an institutionalised 'norm' (the way that particular language 'ought' to be spoken). It comes to be used:

- in the mass media
- in teaching the language to foreigners
- by persons of a certain social class.

By default, any dialects which do not conform to this norm come to be designated as 'non-standard' varieties.

However, researchers have demonstrated that there is nothing inherently 'good' or 'bad' in any one language variety. All are equally 'rule-governed' (have a definite grammar) and are able to express any and all ideas of the speakers, including academic concepts and issues.

4.4 Idiolect

No one person speaks exactly the same language as another person. Each person's language varies because nobody ever has exactly the same experiences as anybody else. Even siblings in the same family have had experiences that differ from each other's, and have talked with different people in different ways.

☞ 2.1 Activity 15

Think of experiences you have had that might account for some of the differences in your speech from those of another person your age in your language group.

4.5 Register

Within language, a term is used to express variation in the language of each speaker to meet the requirements of differences in:

- **field**: what is going on at the time
- **tenor**: the relationships between the speaker/hearers
- **mode**: whether the talk is spoken or written.

Register is the term used to refer to this variety of language that is defined according to its use in social situations. Every speaker of any language usually controls very many registers that have been learned through social interaction with other members of their cultural group.

4.6 Genre (text types)

☞ 2.1 Activity 16

To give you an idea of the notion of register in action, consider the following:

You have an accident in the PMV in which you are travelling back to College. How would you relate the incident?

- *In conversation with a friend at College*
- *Reporting to a policeman what happened*
- *Letting your lecturer know why you were late to class*

What is likely to be different in each situation? (Degree of formality; slang language vs. 'standard language'; spoken vs. written?) What is likely to be the same?

Test your findings:

You have a discussion about your planning for teaching practicum

- *With your lecturer*
- *With your supervising teacher*
- *With the children in the grade*
- *With your young child*

What is likely to be different? Why? Relate your findings to the categories of Field, Tenor, Mode.

☞ **2.1 Activity 17**

Test your knowledge of what you have learned in the preceding pages by answering these questions.

- *What kind of language variation are we talking about when we use the term 'geographical/regional dialect'? Give an example.*

- *In what ways is one geographical/social dialect likely to be different from another?*

- *Why is it possible to speak of a geographical dialect as a 'potential new language'?*

- *Why is the standard dialect likely to be the prestigious variety in a community?*

- *Are some language varieties better than others? Give a reason for your answer.*

Summarising

When we consider language variation and its social distribution, we need to keep four distinct factors in mind:

- Different varieties of language exist side by side in every speech community
- Different varieties are used by different sections of each community, at different times, for different reasons and social purposes
- Differing social values may be attached to them.

The social context of language use and the role relationships of participants in a language situation result in variation in language use, both spoken and written. Our final topic is on code-switching and code-mixing in bilingual/multilingual communities.

Section 5: Multilingual Communities, Code-switching and Code-mixing

5.1 Introduction

There are over 800 languages, two pidgin languages and English spoken in PNG. With so many languages, it is not surprising that many people are bilingual, and a great number are multilingual.

Before PNG was colonised by Australia and Germany, there was less likelihood that Papua New Guineans would be multilingual. This was for three main reasons:

- the mountainous terrain discouraged a lot of movement and travel between groups
- the languages spoken by neighbours could be, and very often were, very different. Therefore, it was harder for people to learn each other's language unless they had strong reasons for doing so, i.e. trade, intermarriage, etc.
- there were social and political reasons why groups did not want to be in contact with each other.

Once the country was colonised, certain changes took place that favoured the learning of other languages by people from many parts of the country. Some of these changes were:

- Labourers from many different places met each other on plantations and other workplaces
- Making and keeping the peace between warring groups meant that people could move around the country and live in different places from their own. They could marry people from other places and live somewhere different, too.
- A number of lingue franche (plural for lingua franca) came into being and were supported by the Administration (e.g. Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu) and the churches (e.g. Yabim, Kote)
- The pidgin languages (Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu) were easy to learn, and people had a sense of pride in being able to speak them
- Colonial languages were taught in schools in many parts of the country. This meant that children coming to school speaking a vernacular language learned English, and became at least bilingual.

For all of these reasons, there were many more situations in which people were likely to learn one or more languages besides their own. We could ask, "can people today speak more languages than their grandparents and great-grandparents could?"

☞ 2.1 Activity 18

Fill out the following table for each of your grandparents, and yourself. (Mm = mother's mother)

Person	Language	Speaks it very well	Speaks it well	Speaks not very well
Mm				
Mf				
Fm				
Ff				
Yourself				

Compare your chart with those of others in the class.

Can you see a pattern in the table that fits in with the information you read above?

How do people know which language(s) to use?

In multilingual situations, it is features of the context (or situation) that influence wh ich language it is appropriate to use in a given situation. For example, fill out the table below for rules about which language to speak in which situation:

Situation	Which Language would you use? Give reasons for your answer. Under what conditions might you do something different?
You go to the local market and meet a person from the same language group as yourself, selling buai.	
You go to the local market and meet a person from your class at College who does not speak your first language.	
You meet an ex-teacher who happens to be Australian at the market.	
You go to the doctor for a consultation.	
You get pulled over by a policeman for speeding.	
You are having morning tea in the office where you work. You are discussing a political program you saw on the TV news with a woman from Rabaul and a	

man from Bereina.	

After completing this table, you should be able to see that there are unspoken rules about which language you would use in different situations.

Can you suggest some general rules of 'good language manners' that multilingual speakers follow without being aware of them? Discuss these with other class members, and draw up a list.

5.2 Code-switching and code-mixing

Because people were increasingly able to speak a number of different languages, a new phenomenon called 'code-switching' (sometimes referred to as code-mixing), arose. This term refers to a speaker switching between two or more languages in the same conversation. Here are some examples:

Ol Morobe I autim tiket bilong en long wanem on the grounds that em I no understandim. Em I ignorant bikos em I no ritim dispela pepa.

Mi no kisim diswan ia. Yu/you draw/dro pato? (duck)

All persons and government bodies (are) to endeavour to achieve universal literacy in Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu or English and in tok ples or ita eda tano gado (vernacular).

Code-mixing is generally used to refer to the phenomenon of a person who has less than native-like competence in either or both of their languages trying to use both languages to convey meaning.

Glossary

Context   what is 'with the text' (i.e. the language produced), what is going on at the time that is being talked about, and who is talking.

Field   one of the categories that describe language variation according to 'user', in a discussion of Register : 'what is going on at the time'

Ideology   tacit or overt theories that lie behind almost all human interactions and uses of language

Language family   a group of languages that are genetically related, i.e. That can be traced to a common proto-language

Lingua franca   a language that is used to communicate across language boundaries.

Mode   another of the categories that describe language variation according to 'user', whether the talk is spoken or written.

Proto-language   the ancestor language of a family of languages – the 'first language'.

Register   a term used to describe language variation according to speaker. There are three sub-categories of Field, Tenor and Mode, q.v.

Tenor   the third of three categories used to describe language variation according to 'user': the relationships between the speaker/hearers

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I am indebted to the following publications for the information I have collated for this module. In some cases, I have quoted from them verbatim; in other cases I have paraphrased or expanded on their ideas.

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Appendix 1: Definitions of Language

To assist you in this process, examine the following definitions. Determine which definitions or parts of definitions you agree with.

Some definitions of language for discussion

1. Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are, in the first instance, auditory, and they are produced by the so-called 'organs of speech' animal communication, if communication it may be called, as brought about by involuntary, instinctive cries, is not, in our sense, language at all.

    Edward Sapir, *Language* (1921), p. 9.

2. Language is an organised system of linguistics symbols (words) used by human beings to communicate on an abstract level.

    a. Language is basic to all communication through words.

    b. Encompasses all forms of expression.

    N. E. Wood, *Delayed Speech and Language Development* (1964), pp. 6-T

3. Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.

    General definition quoted by:

    R. Warchaugh, Reading: *A Linguistic Perspective* (1969), p. 34.

4. Language is a system of conventional symbols used for communication by a whole community.

    A. C. Gimson, *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* (1970), p. 3.

5. Language ... [is] human vocal noise (or the graphic representation of this noise in writing) used systematically and conventionally by a community for purposes of communication. Occasionally language is used for purposes other than communication-for example, to let off steam ... or as a vehicle for our own thoughts when no one else is present. But such uses of language are secondary.

    David Crystal, *Linguistics* (1971), p. 243.

6. Language: the sum total of explicit and implicit systems used by the individual to structure the environment.

M. H. Cameron & Marie T Saunders, *Language and Speech* (1977), p. 217.

7.   Language refers to the particular set of symbols that allows for intelligible communication in a culture. Language skills include the ability to speak, write and to comprehend the symbols of one's language.

P. Mussen, J. Conger & J. Kagan,

Child Development and Personality (1979), p. 199.

8.   Language is for negotiating meaning, building understanding and relationships and the activity of using language for any of these purposes, always involves creating what is technically called a text-a stretch of language which is coherent and meaningful.

F. Christie, *Factual Writing in the First Years of School*, (1987). p. 207.

9.   Language, the possibility of making meaning is the essence of being human. It is at the centre of individual empowerment. Through it, instead of simply being subject to the structures and activities that define the indifferent societal system, one interacts with and participates in the creation of the system. Through it one engages in the continual, active process of being.

B. Courts, *Literacy and Empowerment* (199 1), p. 137.

10.   Whenever language is used, it is used in events-events that capture and create relationships among people and between people and objects (material and otherwise) in the culture. What is learned when people learn language includes all those relationships that were parts of the events carried out through language use.

C. Edelsky, *With Literacy and Justice for All* (199 1), pp. 80-1.

11.   The fundamental task of every language is to link voice to meaning7--to provide words for the expression of thoughts and feeling. Language is therefore like a coin whose two sides are expression and content ... Content encompasses what we are attempting to say: expression encompasses the way we articulate this content and language is the mental code that links the two.

E. Finegan, N. Besnier, D, Blair & P Collin,

Language: Its Structure and Use (1992), pp. 3-4.

12.   Languages are not purely linguistic entities. They serve social functions. In order to define a language, it is important to look to its social and political functions, as well as its linguistic features. So a language can be thought of as a collection of dialects that are usually linguistically similar, used by different social groups who choose to say that they are speakers of one language, which functions to unite and represent them to other groups.

J. Holmes, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (1992), pp. 141-2.

13.   All people put language to certain types of use and in so doing they all learn a
        linguistic system which has evolved in the contexts of such language use. But which
        parts of the language system they deploy and emphasise ... are significantly
        determined by the culture-by the system of social relations in which people are
        positioned and the roles they learn to recognise and adopt.

L. Unsworth, *Literacy Learning and Teaching* (1993), p. 149.

14.   Language is a symbolic system linking what goes on inside our heads with what goes
        on outside. It mediates between self and society. It is a form of representation, a way
        of representing the world to ourselves and to others.

D. Barton, *Literacy* (1994), p. 46

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Teaching.* OUP: Oxford