

ICLDC4, University of Hawai'i, 27th February 2015

Extensive Writing: A way to foster metalinguistic awareness and literacy development

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Vanuatu Relative to Rest of World

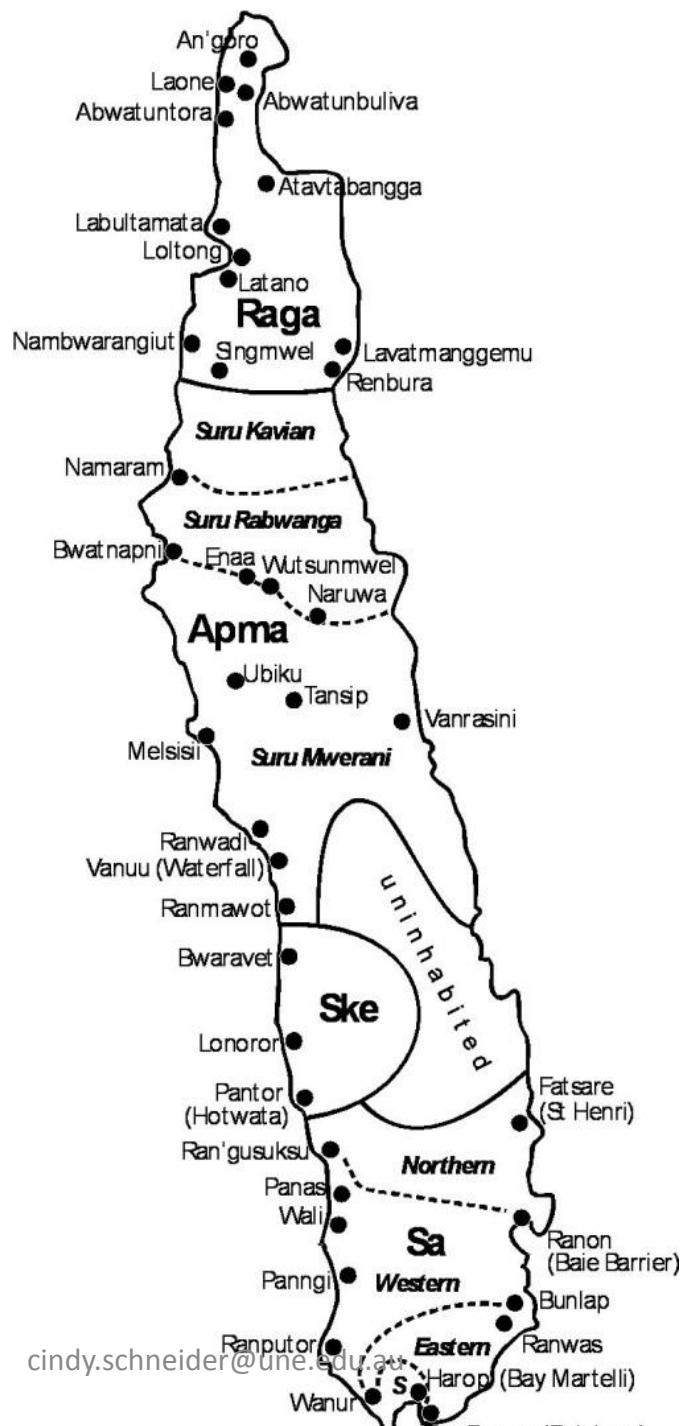


Vanuatu



Languages of Pentecost Island

(Reproduced from Gray 2012: 38)



Indigenous language literacy: The challenges

- How to help children read / write in L1?
- How to deal with variation in a mixed dialect classroom, where code-switching is prevalent?
- How to stem dialect loss?

Vanuatu Education Sector Program

Expectations of Teachers (15/10/2012)

- “- be able to help children develop in their mother tongue and later transition to English or French”
- “- understand the basic principles of child language acquisition and how they can help children learn language”

Vanuatu Education Sector Program

Expectations of Teachers (15/10/2012)

- “- have command of a particular vernacular language in spoken and written forms and be able to adopt standardised speech patterns and **consistent spelling** of that language”
- “- be able to **make and use teaching and learning materials**”
- “- be able to **make up / adapt songs, rhymes, etc** for literacy (and numeracy) in the language”

The SK Orthography Workshop



Results

Language Translation.

THEME : NAKAMAL MO JIF.
Wunis bi Subu

NARONG WUNIS, ba babep NU Tei kin
at mate NAIHAOL.

LELEN WUNIS, kina ah tema bawo TEN
NARONG.

KINA RONG ba tevaauh se mate
NAIHAOL.

It Ah Wunis ram si ban eh, ba subu ini

RAM si Ah ram git ili wunis

TONG kina ne biap idong, ba hasi rong,

TONG kina ne biap ENTENEM, ne

gita inga ugoa ka bama bales bi

kam Ling TAMAT ...

Wunis bi Subu

- Naaka Wunis bwa ratkep tei kina ad
naaigol.

- Lelen it le WUNIS, lelen neeu kina
ad naaigol, ba kinarong te vaavo
naaigol se.

- Lelen Veninada nia Wunis ram
si itnan ba subu te ratbwulong
niai ramgit ili Wunis orong

- entorai kina bwasal idaa.
bwasia, entori kinarong bwasal ili
veninan bi mawu ini bwan bwama
bwalee bi ram Ling tamat nan.

MARIE NOEL. MATAN.

Pchanel. TABI

INGNAS. BULE

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Examples of Variability

	Text1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6	Text 7
'before, first'	<i>vawoo</i> <i>vawo</i>	<i>bawo</i>	<i>bawoh</i> <i>vawoh</i> <i>bawo</i>	<i>vaavo</i>	<i>bawo</i> <i>vawo</i>	<i>bawoo</i>	<i>vawo</i>
'meeting house'	---	<i>wunis</i>	---	<i>winis</i>	<i>wunnis</i>	<i>wunis</i>	<i>wunis</i>
'very, long ago'	---	<i>naihgol</i>	<i>naihgol</i>	<i>naaigol</i>	<i>na ih gol</i> <i>naih gol</i>	<i>nahingol</i> <i>nahi ngol</i>	<i>naigol</i>
'thing'	<i>kina</i>	<i>kina</i>	---	<i>kina</i>	<i>kina</i>	<i>kina</i>	<i>gina</i>

Bislama writing

PUTUM SLIPER
OUT SIDE
BEFORE YOU
ENTEREM HOUSE
↑
THANKS

BUP LICK NO LICK
TREM WAS YOUR CONSERVATION
ERIA • LEWANI = → LEVASLEBOER
Envaroment I blong blokem of animal
olsem:
NAMARAE
NAURA
GRABE
AND SEL.....



Implications of these results

- Is it **necessary / desirable / realistic** to impose **standardised spellings** in language communities with no tradition of literacy?
- L1 literacy is an **important skill** – later applied to **acquire literacy in major languages**

L1 Literacy Development

“On the elementary school level, ... children acquire the skills of literacy when they read and write extensively, talk about language and about what they read and write, have abundant time for independent reading and writing, receive constructive feedback on their writing, ask their own Qs, formulate and test their own hypotheses, are not afraid of making mistakes, are encouraged to become serious authors, and are immersed in literate activities across the curriculum. [...] students ... who become fluent writers before having to focus on correctness ... become more successful academic readers, writers, and learners.”

(Rorschach & MacGowan-Gilhooly 1993, p57)

ESL Research

→ Implications for Vernacular Literacy

- 1. Extensive reading/writing** research in ESL studies (Rorschach & MacGowan-Gilhooly 1993: 4; Herder & King 2012: 128)
 - Writing without fixating on 'correctness'
- 2. Field recordings/transcription** (Heath & Mangiola 1991)
 - Student as researcher: transcribe, analyse



Bridging the Divide between Fieldwork and Pedagogy



	1	2	3	4	
FIELDWORK	STUDENTS record / transcribe natural spoken text	STUDENTS record / transcribe scripted sources: interviews, context-focused situations	STUDENTS translate 'shell' books	TEACHERS translate 'shell' books for children	PEDAGOGY



Cline of Linguistic Autonomy



Benefits

- Develops **fluency and self-confidence**
- Authentic texts **relevant and meaningful** to students' lives
- Builds **learner autonomy**: The more students invest in the program, the more they get out of it
- Teachers freed from **unrealistic burden of 'correcting'** students' spelling
- Doesn't require teacher to **speak same dialect** as student
- Reading/editing natural texts **increases awareness** of variation, dialect differences, code-switching practices
- Builds **language corpus**
- **Enriches linguist's understanding** of native speaker intuitions
- Non-teacher linguists can **engage with teachers in meaningful way**

Challenges

- Far removed from conventional teaching methods: difficult to get teachers and policy makers on board
- Language 'purists' in the community may be ideologically opposed

Four Take-home Messages

1. Not always realistic / desirable at the outset to impose **standardised spellings** on language communities
2. Research in L1 + ESL pedagogy can be reinterpreted to indigenous language contexts

Four Take-home Messages

3. Existing research finds:
 - (a) **extensive R/W** highly beneficial;
 - (b) **students-as-researchers** gain metalinguistic awareness
4. Pedagogy / Fieldwork operates on a continuum – learners progress from one end to the other as they gain fluency and competence



Thank you!
Komudak!
Mahalo!