

7.4.2.2. NEW GUINEA PIDGIN TEACHING: LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE CHURCHES

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7.4.2.2.1. GENERAL REMARKS

When considering the policy of churches on the subject of Pidgin teaching, it is very difficult to give any policy that is followed wholly by any one church. For example, within the Catholic Church there are various missions, each one following its own programme if any programme at all. This is not true for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea, known as Elcong or ELCONG (now renamed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG)), for it has a fairly standard programme throughout the whole church. The evangelical group of churches largely follow their own system whilst all but one synod of the United Church do very little indeed in the way of Pidgin teaching. The Anglican Church and the Seventh Day Adventists are much the same, except for very isolated individual efforts on the part of some missionaries.

7.4.2.2.2. TEACHING IN PIDGIN

7.4.2.2.2.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea really is the main church carrying out teaching IN the Pidgin language. Some dioceses of the Catholic Church also have a programme. Also some individual priests, brothers, sisters, in other areas (for example West Sepik and Manus), as well as a few Protestant missionaries are engaged in this type of work but, it must be repeated, as individuals.

7.4.2.2.2. THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
(ELCONG, NOW ELCPNG)

Elcong have a long established policy from before World War II. Their policy extends to a couple of vernaculars as well, but it is mostly in Pidgin covering the provinces where they work, viz. the Morobe, Madang, Eastern and Western and Southern Highlands, and the Chimbu Provinces. They have a full range of textbooks that they have developed, covering the ten-year programme that is offered. They do not run this stream of education in competition with the national education system where up till now English has been the medium of instruction. Wherever a congregation feels the need to open a school and agrees to pay the teacher, and if a teacher is available, then the programme can start.

These teachers receive minimal payment for their work so as not to be a burden on the communities they serve. For this reason some of them speak from time to time in a disgruntled way, when they compare their salaries with those of teachers in the national education system. Some teachers in the national system have had fewer years of schooling and less teacher education than some of the Elcong teachers, but because they are in the English stream they are paid by the government and comparatively handsomely.

The Elcong system is to have a series of schools run by the various congregations at the congregation or village level. There are almost 500 teachers teaching in these schools. In most, the language of instruction is Pidgin and the textbooks cover a normal range of subjects and are in Pidgin also.

Then there is a selection at the end of the four years and the young people go to a 'circuit' level school for two more years. There are about 70 teachers involved at this level. This brings the child to the end of his primary equivalent schooling in Pidgin.

There is then a further selection into secondary equivalent education of four years at the 'district' level. Here there are 50 teachers involved. At the end of these further four years of schooling quite a number of young people go into medical training or teacher training for the Pidgin stream. Elcong runs two colleges to train these and there are 12 lecturers involved.

The following table gives an idea of the selection involved:

Enrolment in village schools over four years	14,732
Average enrolment per year in village schools	3,683
Enrolment in circuit schools over two years	1,532
Average enrolment per year in circuit schools	766
Enrolment in district schools over four years	913
Average enrolment per year in district schools	230

This represents quite a high wastage rate - from an average enrolment of 3,683 in the village school to an average enrolment of 230 in the district school. It is therefore NOT to be wondered at that many feel the teachers produced are first-class, doing a first-class job. Some educationalists are quite convinced they are better teachers than those in the national education system.

Elcong states that it believes the education of the children of parents in Elcong is a vital responsibility of the church and that this can best be carried out in the vernacular and/or Pidgin. (This by answer to a questionnaire sent to all the churches.) They further add: 'We regard this programme to be a major benefit to the church and the country as a whole. We expect it to become of greater importance to the country in the future'.

7.4.2.2.2.3. THE SWISS EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD MISSION

The Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission also use the Elcong programme and material and have some students up to the ninth year now. Their teachers in the programme are mainly missionaries and they have about 200 students in all, covering the Western Highlands, Chimbu, Eastern Highlands and the Madang Provinces. This church also believes it has a responsibility to the children of its church members. And this church also runs a very vigorous stream of education within the national system.

7.4.2.2.2.4. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church in the Madang and to a lesser extent in the East Sepik, Southern Highlands and the Chimbu Provinces, for a period similar to Elcong, have been running catechist schools. The graduates of these schools have been involved in teaching in village schools for some decades now. The church in Madang very strongly believes that these schools have played a quite strategic part in preparing people to live in general, often in other parts of the country, and also to work for the country.

Until about 20 years ago, the Madang people who obtained salaried government employment as policemen, medical workers, interpreters, etc., and who worked as domestics or on plantations were people who had been to a village school taught by a catechist. The average length of time spent in such a school was about four years, although younger students often spent many more years than that in it. At the schools, the students certainly learned literacy in Pidgin but also other subjects such as mathematics, social studies, and general knowledge were taught in addition to the main subject of the Bible. The result of the literacy was the complete breakdown of isolation when men went away to work. An ever-increasing volume of correspondence began to flow both ways - village to work-place, and work-place back to village. As church services began to be held in Pidgin, this was a tremendous help also. As the Elcong textbooks were printed, these also began to be used.

The present catechist training centre in Madang was opened in 1964, but prior to that there had been another. Present training covers a two-year course. There are also in-service courses of six months running at the same centre for catechists from the field to attend to bring them up to date in content and methods. These courses are continuous.

Here the church pays the catechists, but expects the people who go to school in the catechist centres to make a contribution to the church in kind (produce of some kind) as even today there is very little ready money away from the coast in the Madang Province. The catechists again are paid a minimal amount and are expected to work their own gardens as well. Their work is mainly in the mornings and the evenings.

For some years now the Madang Archdiocese has not kept any statistics at all for these catechist centres. They believe there could well be about 300 such centres in the province so there would probably be upwards of 10,000 involved in the programme. When the East Sepik and Chimbu dioceses and to a smaller extent the centres in the Southern Highlands are taken into account, it can be seen that the impact of these Pidgin centres has not been inconsiderable, and is also continuing.

7.4.2.2.3. TEACHING OF PIDGIN

7.4.2.2.3.1. GENERAL REMARKS

The above section has been talking of teaching IN Pidgin mainly, though it has included teaching OF Pidgin as well. There is another group of churches who are vitally involved in the teaching OF Pidgin which includes some teaching IN Pidgin as well. In the main, however, it is Pidgin literacy that is taught to speakers of Pidgin. And this group all seem to use the same series in their programmes - the *Kisim*

Save series of readers - *Gaining Understanding of Knowledge*. These were basically prepared in the Sepik by the Christian Missions in Many Lands and printed by Kristen Pres (of Elcong). It is a graded series of readers designed to make the student a proficient reader of the language with the Scriptures and such other Pidgin material as is available, such as *Wantok*, the Pidgin newspaper produced by the Catholic Church at Wewak, in view mainly. Although Sepik Pidgin may have been the base for the work, the series is highly acceptable in areas other than the Sepik also. In the West Sepik Province the Catholic Church is using the series as well as the evangelical churches there - CMML, the South Seas Evangelical Church and the Assembly of God Mission. Several churches in the Highlands and Madang are also using the same series.

From returns to the questionnaire mentioned earlier, it would appear that in various places various lengths of time are taken to finish the course, but the average seems to be about three years. By this time the readers should be quite fluent and able to write well, mostly in letter form. The course covers comprehension of the passages read. It would be fairly accurate to assume that in many cases the course goes well beyond learning how to read, and covers quite a lot of New Testament reading and comprehension. Very often graduates of the courses go into pastor schools and, in turn, become teachers in the same centres. From figures received, it would seem some 3,000 people over the three years are being instructed (at the time of writing); or an average of about 1,000 a year are becoming literate in Pidgin through this series.

7.4.2.2.3.2. TEACHER TRAINING

Most churches involved seem to train their own teachers. Indeed, the South Seas Evangelical Church runs what it calls Nu Gini Tisa Trening Kolis at Brugam in the East Sepik Province. Here it trains pastor/teachers for various churches who ask them to do so and the training course covers some teaching of several subjects IN Pidgin as well as literacy methods of teaching. They learn to teach some subjects similar to the Elcong course and in places use the Elcong material as well.

Mostly the teachers are paid by the churches for which they work and the students are expected to pay some school fee either in cash or kind and this forms the basis of the funds needed to run the course. The fees are to cover the cost of the materials as well as the teachers' meagre salary.

7.4.2.2.3.3. ATTITUDES OF SOME CHURCHES

7.4.2.2.3.3.1. General Remarks

In the East Sepik, these churches said in early 1974 that:
 the Pidgin programme is preparing the young people much better for their village life than the present English education stream. We believe this programme will expand rapidly. In 1974 we anticipate opening ten new schools as well as continuing in existing ones.

7.4.2.2.3.3.2. The Assembly of God

The Assembly of God sees the programme as essential for the development of the church, for they write:

We are pursuing this programme for several reasons:

- (1) we saw the need to educate those who could not attend a primary school in the education system;
- (2) we wanted as many as possible to be able to read the Word of God;
- (3) when literate, those who have a strong Christian testimony can be considered for Bible School training for the ministry and for church leadership (this training is also given in Pidgin);
- (4) it provides a regular contact with the people in general. Many adults have also been reached through the work done among the children in the literacy programmes.

7.4.2.2.3.3.3. The United Church

The United Church in the Highlands also have their literacy (in Pidgin) programme as a strong point in their policy. Many of the people there would like to branch into a full programme such as offered by Elcong. At the moment, however, it is confined to literacy.

7.4.2.2.3.3.4. Pidgin in Pastor Training Institutes and Bible Schools

A number of churches also use Pidgin as the language of instruction in their pastor training institutes, or in Bible schools where people attend to learn more about the Bible for themselves. Such centres are scattered all over Papua New Guinea, and can be found almost anywhere. The evangelical churches in particular with their stress on the value of the Word of God for the individual person have lots of these. They are also tending to work more together now than ever before.

7.4.2.2.3.3.5. Pidgin Teaching Course (Christian Missions in Many Lands)

Recognising that there are many many places in the country where churches are working, but where Pidgin is not spoken very much, the

Christian Missions in Many Lands has realised that a literacy programme is not enough. In some areas a course is needed to teach Papua New Guineans to speak Pidgin before teaching them how to read and write it. They have therefore quite recently been involved in the preparation of tapes, charts to go with the tapes, and teachers' manuals to go with the tapes and charts. This would be regarded as a preliminary course to be followed by the *Kisim Save* course. It is a course with tremendous possibilities as a number of churches working in the Papuan side of the country are also interested. Highlands churches where Pidgin is being spoken more and more are also keenly interested.

7.4.2.2.3.3.6. Churches Education Council of Papua New Guinea and the Teaching of Pidgin

The Churches Education Council of Papua New Guinea has been interested for some time in the teaching of Pidgin and called a meeting of Papua New Guinean Heads of Churches at Lae on 15 August 1973. A group of educationalists were also present as consultants. The purpose of the gathering was to find out if the churches were interested in mounting a united effort in implementing a Pidgin stream of education which could also be put into Hiri Motu or any major vernacular if need be, for those currently denied access to any formal education.

There were never any official minutes of that meeting produced; but the following statement was issued, as compiled at the meeting itself:

1. The committee of indigenous church leaders recognises the amount of basic education being given to some 40,000 children by about 1,000 teachers in Pidgin and other vernaculars. It recognises that such basic education is a vital contribution to the development of Papua New Guinea, and seems to be within the scope of present educational thinking as indicated by statements of the Minister for Education.
2. The present situation demonstrates the great need for developing a common four year primary curriculum in Pidgin which can also be translated into other major vernaculars and adapted to regional needs.
3. The committee recognises that over 50% of school age children in Papua New Guinea are not involved in the national education system and are in need of some opportunities for basic education. The availability to churches and government of suitable Pidgin and vernacular curriculum materials might well aid in the solution of this problem.
4. This committee supports the idea that a four year primary Pidgin curriculum be developed with the following objectives:
 - (a) to develop within the student the desire and the will to be a more useful and concerned member of his changing community, aiding in the development and growth of the nation;

- (b) to encourage students to understand and to be proud of their traditional society, and to make their own contribution to the preservation, transformation and development of traditional culture;
 - (c) to develop in the student the basic tools of communication, such as reading, writing, listening, etc.;
 - (d) to develop in the student basic knowledge in the fields of number, social studies, health, science;
 - (e) to provide basic instruction in the Christian faith.
5. The committee therefore recommends that the Churches Education Council appoint a permanent committee whose functions would be:
- (a) to be responsible for the co-ordination of a curriculum development project fulfilling the objectives of (4) above (this would include such specific questions as teacher education; and who should actually prepare the materials);
 - (b) to develop a formal request to be sent to a donor agency, to be presented through the Churches Education Council to the Melanesian Council of Churches, for funds for (a);
 - (c) to be in close communications with the churches and through the Churches Education Council with the National Education Board and the Minister for Education.
6. The committee recommends that the Churches Education Council circulate points 1-5 to all churches for information. Churches should be invited to respond as to:
- (a) the desire of their church congregations for such a project;
 - (b) their willingness to participate in the project as they may be able to.
7. The churches should be advised that materials resulting from this project would only be available after four or five years. In the meantime, churches and government are advised to make use of materials already being produced by individual churches.
8. The committee would like to stress to the Melanesian Council of Churches that the request for funds for this project under 5(b) should not affect individual churches in their requests for funds to donor agencies for related on-going programmes.

The Churches Education Council appointed such a permanent committee as requested under point (5) of the above statement. At the time of writing, this committee has had its initial meeting and is beginning to function. The churches are responding showing a goodly measure of interest in the project, as requested under point (6) of the statement.

7.4.2.2.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Should the government decide on a definite policy of universal education, the churches will most likely forego their plans for a primary type education. They will probably divert their efforts into the adult

education field, IN and OF Pidgin and Hiri Motu. In the meantime their efforts will continue and the churches will continue making their marked contribution in the field of education in Papua New Guinea.

