



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Apia, Samoa
28-29 January 2004*

AGENDA ITEM 7

**LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE PACIFIC REGION: ISSUES,
PRACTICES, AND ALTERNATIVES**

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Summary brief

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE PACIFIC REGION: ISSUES, PRACTICES, AND ALTERNATIVES

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the pertinent issues relating to language choices and offer some suggested pathways that could be considered by policy makers and education systems.

Background

2 The issue of what language to use by whom and at what level of the education system is a continuing challenge that Pacific countries address in different ways. The choice of a language is not easy, particularly in the multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual contexts of many Pacific countries. Decisions are based on a multitude of inter-related factors, which include political, economic, socio-cultural and educational factors.

3 However, educationally, it is clear, from studies around the world, that the mother tongue is the best medium for teaching a child. A World Bank commissioned study of 1994 found that a mother tongue medium is not only best educationally for the child but it is also critically related to the child's cognitive development and the effective learning of a second language.

4 Although Pacific countries recognise the importance of using a mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools, in reality, a variety of policies and practices are found, and in almost all cases, the mother tongue is used only as a medium of instruction in the first six years of primary education, if that. Pacific students are, therefore, required to learn a second language as the medium of instruction in schools. There are several difficulties that could arise in this situation. If the mother tongue is not strong, students will have difficulty in acquiring the second language, which will have negative impacts on their learning and educational achievement. A language also is not learned in isolation. It comes with the cultural values, beliefs, rules and conventions of its home

culture. The student is required not only to be literate in the language but in the culture of that language also. In addition, the schools are often modelled on western-forms of education, which originate from different value systems and have different rules of communications, and promote different teaching and learning strategies, which are different from the socio-cultural home contexts of most Pacific students. The results are weakened Pacific languages and communities that could suffer extinction and high failure rates in education for Pacific students.

5 If the twin goals of achieving national unity and modernity are to be realised, Pacific nations must seriously consider their most practical language options.

6 The most immediate is the training of teachers to be at least bilingually and biculturally competent in their own languages and cultures and those of their students.

7 Other options, however, could include teaching the two cultural domains (Pacific and western) separately within the school system. The other is to recognise the differences but to build bridges between the two by adapting the school contents, administrative procedures, teaching and learning styles, values, knowledge-systems, etc. to incorporate those of the home cultures. Another option is to keep separate the functions, with clear domains for usage, of the vernacular languages and those of wider communication. It has been found for example that mother tongues survive better in situations where the functions of the languages are kept separate than in situations where the languages are used indiscriminately in a number of overlapping functions.

8 Another option is for multilingual and multicultural nations to identify the basic values, beliefs, knowledge-systems and characteristics of their various communities and develop their education systems based on the common features shared by those communities whilst at the same time providing opportunities for the further development and strengthening of individual socio-cultural and language communities.

9 The language issue is, indeed, complex and the language choices that nations make depend on their visions and developmental goals, and the resources and commitment, they to have achieving them.

Recommendations

10 It is recommended that Ministers:

- (a) Note the contents of this paper;
- (b) Consider adopting national language policies as part of the education planning process; and
- (c) Request PRIDE to hold a follow-up regional meeting on language policy and practice for senior education officials.



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LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE PACIFIC REGION: ISSUES, PRACTICES, AND ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

1 The issue of what language to be used by whom for what purposes at what level of the education system continues to challenge Pacific member states. The purpose of this paper, then, is to explore some of the pertinent issues relating to language choices and offer some suggested pathways that could be considered by policy makers and education systems. Part I describes the Pacific language context, and some of the common reasons used by nations to justify language choices. The second part looks at the current language policies and practices in the formal education systems in the region, and in particular, in the context of the relationships between language and culture and teaching and learning. Part III offers some policy options for future educational developments.

PART I: The Language Context in the Pacific Region¹ and Nature of Language

Background

2 The Pacific² is often spoken of as the most linguistically complex region in the world³, with over a thousand distinct vernacular⁴ languages spoken by its inhabitants of less than 10m⁵. According to Mugler and Lynch, this represents one fifth of the world's languages and the linguistic situation is complex not only because of the number of languages spoken, but the 'number of different unrelated language families represented,

¹ See Annex 1 for basic language data on the countries of the region.

² Used here to refer only to the Pacific states of the Pacific Forum countries, but excluding Australia and New Zealand: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

³ Mugler, F. and Lynch, John (eds.). 1996. Pacific Languages in Education. Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva. Department of Literature and Language, Suva. Pacific Languages Unit, Vanuatu.

⁴ A vernacular language is defined by Mugler and Lynch as 'the language of a community, which is rarely used outside the community' (op cit:9).

⁵ 7.49m including Tokelau but 8.22m if Northern Mariana, Pitcairn Is, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia, Guam and New Caledonia are included. Compiled from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/wf.html#top>

the high degree of multilingualism, and the development of pidgins, creoles⁶ and similar contact languages' (1996:9). Most of these languages are found in the Melanesian countries: 800+ in Papua New Guinea, 65 or so in the Solomon Islands⁷, and an estimated 105 in Vanuatu. Because of the geographical nature of the region, the number of speakers of each language is small, averaging around 5,000-6,000. The vernacular languages with the largest numbers of speakers are Fijian, with 300,000+ speakers, Samoan, with 250,000+ speakers, and Enga (PNG) with around 200,000+ speakers.⁸ About 170 languages, on the other hand, almost all of which are found in Melanesia, have less than 200 speakers. In Vanuatu, there are 2 languages, which have but two speakers left. The point that is laboured here is that multilingualism is the norm in almost all Pacific countries, although, if a continuum were drawn, Melanesian countries, which are more multilingual, would be found at one end and Polynesian countries, which have far fewer languages and dialects⁹, would be found at the other end, with the Micronesian countries plotted in-between.

3 In addition, however, to the vernacular languages, indigenous to the region, the missionaries, traders, and colonisers who settled the Pacific region after European contact also brought their languages with them. They include English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Hindustani, Filipino, Korean, and German, some of which have become the lingua franca¹⁰ in some Pacific island states. English is by far the most important of the imported languages, followed by French, and both have become the official languages¹¹ of most Pacific islands nations as well as of regional organisations.

4 The early contacts between the Pacific vernaculars and the metropolitan languages have resulted in the development of pidgin languages, some of which have become the lingua franca in and between Melanesian countries, and some have developed into creoles, which are the first and only languages of some Pacific Islanders. In fact, the language with the largest numbers of speakers in the region is Melanesian Pidgin, with an estimated half a million speaking it as their first language and another two million who use it as a second language. With these many languages in the region, it is to be expected that the Pacific region is one of the most multilingual places of the world, with almost all of its inhabitants speaking two or more languages. Bilingualism and multilingualism are the norms and although the language of the school is often different from that of the home, it is just 'another language to learn' (Mugler and Lynch, 1996:5).

5 However, because of the complexity of the linguistic situation in the region, the issue of what language to use by whom for what purpose at what level of the education system

⁶ 'Pidgin' and 'creoles' are defined by the Collins Dictionary, 1986 Edition, respectively as 'a language made up of two or more other languages and used for contacts between speakers of other languages' and 'a language that has its origin in extended contact between language communities, one of which is generally European. It incorporates features from each and constitutes the mother tongue of a community.'

⁷ Other sources put it as many as 120 indigenous languages.

⁸ Mugler and Lynch, *ibid.*

⁹ 'Dialect' is defined as a 'form of a language spoken in a particular geographical area or by members of particular social class or occupational group, distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation' (Collins Dictionary, 1986 Edition).

¹⁰ 'Lingua franca' is defined by Mugler and Lynch as 'the language of one community, which is used by speakers of other vernaculars, to communicate across language boundaries' (*op cit*; 9).

¹¹ It is usually a language that has been designated by law or by Government to be used for all official or government purposes. More than one language could be designated as 'official' languages.

is an on-going concern that all Pacific member states are attempting to address in different ways. The choice of a language for a specific purpose is a decision that involves a variety of factors, which include not only considerations of political, social, cultural, economic, and educational factors, but an understanding also of the nature of language itself, its socio-cultural roles, particularly its roles in the socialisation process, and the development of cognitive systems.

a. Political Factors

6 The language choices that countries make, whether for national or educational purposes, are justified on a number of levels. At the political level the two main purposes relate to national unity, with its implications of identity and authenticity, and modernisation. In multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual nations, which often did not have a common, nationwide, ethnic and cultural identity, they had to create such an identity through national symbols that can lead to common mobilisation and involvement beyond pre-existing ethnic-cultural particularities. A national language¹² is often invoked as a unifying symbol and serves both the function of political integration and the strive for a unique and authentic identity. In the meantime, the continuing and efficient operations of government call for a different language policy, with 'efficiency' being the key word. The main purpose here is the establishment of cohesive and administrative efficiency within a divided social, linguistic, ethnic and cultural nation. The main concern is the maintenance of operations of government and ensuring strong links between the governed and the governing, and through those ties to promote the modern developmental goals of the nation. The first reason is basically socio-cultural while the second is political and the two rarely coincide.

b. Socio-cultural Factors

7 At the socio-cultural level, language is recognised as a social tool and that it performs a variety of critical functions, one of which is individual and group identification. Language is the means through which an individual is socialised into membership of a particular group. In this sense, the mother tongue is considered more important than any other symbol or expression of nationality. The language is, therefore, used as the most visible form of group identity and without it there is neither identity nor nationality. In such cases, the main concerns of countries are with language revival and maintenance, with matters of code selection and codification, standardisation and elaboration and with efforts to develop the language for both sentimental and instrumental functions. They often have a concern too with language 'purity' to preserve the authenticity of the national identity and its uniqueness but at the same time, language must also be the means of modernising a nation. Since language carry both 'communicative' and 'symbolic' functions, the complex interactions between the two in a way defines the limitation of the group, and only those who grow up within the community can fully translate the historical and cultural associations embedded in the 'communication' (Steiner, 1975).

¹² Defined as 'a language that is considered representative of a nation or nationality' [<http://ponce.inter.edu/vl/tesis/Sharon/chap1.html>]

The other important variables in socio-cultural factors are attitudes and motivations, which determine in many ways individual language choices.

c. Economic Factors

8 The modernisation of a country is usually equated with economic development and Edwards (1985:85) argues that language decisions are more often made "on economic (at least pragmatic motives) than is commonly supposed" and that decisions to adopt a language of wider communication (LWC), such as English or French, were made in the name of 'linguistic practicality, communicative efficiency, social mobility and economic advancement'. Such choices relate to the view that language is a resource and a 'product', which can be manipulated to achieve behavioural change. Thus, the language behaviour of groups of people is seen as a national resource in the same way as technical skills or numbers of workers and therefore, it is an important instrument to achieve certain results. Individuals and communities make language choices based on what Jernudd (1971) calls the 'concept of opportunity'. Thus, language, as a type of human capital, is useful in consumption or production activity and therefore, language choice is made in many instances in relation to the socio-economic power of the group and people use a particular language not because it is theirs or that it defines their ethnicity but because they profit from it. The issue of costs of languages choices have to be balanced against the gains and benefits to be made both in the short and long-terms.

d. Education Factors

9 Education and language are the two most common vehicles used by nations in their attempts to achieve internal cohesion and modernization. The answer to the question of what language to use at what level of the education system is usually a mixture of political, socio-cultural, and economic factors. Rarely is the answer based on purely educational considerations. Governments and politicians, or those who decide language policies are often biased towards national concerns but education systems, on the other hand, are focused, however, on the business of creating opportunities whereby individuals learn to develop their fullest potential. The language policies that, thus, interest national language planners are those that would best serve national *interests*; education *favours* those that would allow the individual some measure of control over his/her own destiny. The national planners are concerned with policies - the education system with implementation and with the factors that would guarantee to some degree a successful language programme, such as whether there is evidence of standardizations in the form of orthographies, dictionaries and grammars; whether there are language materials appropriate to the pupils and their particular conditions; whether there are trained language teachers; and whether there are support services and resources available. It is possible, of course, that the language aims of the nation, are congruent with those of the individual members of the society, and in meeting the interests of the nation, the needs of the individual are being served too. But it is possible that the two could conflict, and where this occurs, it is the individual needs that are more likely to be sacrificed.

10 However, the education services of nations are expected to serve too the needs of individuals but they pose conundrums for nations with limited resources. The costs of

language development, and indeed education as a whole, have to be measured against other forms of development within the nation. Within education itself, it is not just a simple matter of mother tongue education versus a LWC, but of language development *versus* other national goals such as capital investments (more classrooms, libraries, laboratories), teacher training, curriculum development, or primary education, or non—formal adult education versus the formal education system. The competing variables that have to be considered are so often complex that many nations have no choice but to base their educational language policies on expediency.

11 But individuals adopt a language for their own personal reasons, and at the national and school levels, these reasons can determine whether the individual participates positively to its successful acquisition or negatively to its failure. This is, in the final analysis, the least accountable variable in education and also one of the most commonly neglected features in language development.

Part II: Pacific Language Policies and Practices in the Context of the Nature of Language and its Relationship to Culture, Teaching and Learning

a. The Rationale for Mother Tongue Education

12 The use of vernacular languages or mother-tongues as the preferred medium of instruction in schools has come to be more or less universally accepted ever since the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951) supported it with an official statement to the effect that the best medium, psychologically, sociologically, and educationally for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Since, then, research has strongly supported and advocated the use of the mother tongue as the medium of education for the whole of primary education or at the least, in the early years of primary education, and to teach it both as a subject in its own right and as the foundation for successful second language acquisition.

13 More recent developments in the recognition of the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples have strengthened the political will of emerging nations to use their own vernacular languages as tools for education and transformation. For instance, Item 3 of Article 4 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities urged that “states should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.” Similarly, Article 15 of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms that “indigenous children have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State. All indigenous peoples also have this right and the right to establish and control the educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Indigenous children living outside their communities have the right to be provided access to education in their own culture and language. States shall take effective measures to provide appropriate resources for the purposes.”

14 These recommendations are based on the understanding that language is a manifestation of the underlying knowledge, beliefs, values, etc. of its cultural context. The choice of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is, therefore, based only partly on its educational efficacy. A major purpose is the desire to maintain and revitalise both the language and the culture associated with it. At the same time, as previously discussed in Part I, it is acknowledged that no society today can exist any more in isolation. All societies, irrespective of geographical location or political persuasion, have become part of the global community, particularly of a market-driven economic system. The recent enormous strides forward in information and communications technologies have shrunk the world even further, making it mandatory for any community wishing to participate as equals in the world community to master the tools of wider communication (language, as well as computer literacy) in order to develop the new relationships, networks and linkages necessary for survival and progress in the world of today and the future.

15 Educationally, the language of the school is chosen to assist in the improvement of access to and equity in basic education, the quality of teaching and student learning, the efficiency of the system by eliminating or reducing failure, and by preserving and revitalising the mother tongue.

b. Language Policies in the Region

16 In countries where there is relative language homogeneity, as is found in many of the Polynesian countries of the Pacific, such as Samoa and Tonga where there is one dominant vernacular language spoken by almost the entire population, the mother tongue is accorded high status, is recognised as the national language and the official language co-jointly with English, and further, is officially designated as the medium of instruction for all or a part of primary education. It is taught as a subject not only at primary but also at secondary level and beyond and is often used unofficially alongside English as the language of instruction, as teachers code-switch between the two in attempts to clarify new or complex concepts and ideas. However, in countries where there is not one or two but hundreds of vernacular languages, as is the case in Melanesian countries, the issue of what language to use in the school is highly complex and the decisions, therefore, as to what language to use by whom for what purpose at what level of the education system are often made on grounds other than educational.

17 To assist Pacific countries develop appropriate language policies which are likely to promote increased access to and equity in basic education and to improve the quality of teaching and learning and hence, educational achievement, the World Bank commissioned a draft paper in 1994 (Dutcher et al) as part of a development strategy on language in education. This paper reviewed the international experience in “The Use of the First and Second Languages in Education” and found the following to be true according to current research:

- *Children require at least 12 years to learn their first language.*
- *Children do not learn second languages more quickly and easily than adults.*
- *Older children and adolescents are more skilled than younger children in*

learning a second language.

- *The development of the child's first language with its related cognitive development is more important than more exposure to a second language.*
- *Children in school settings need to learn academic language skills, as well as social communication skills.*
- *Children learn a second language in different ways, depending on their culture, their group, and their individual personality.*

17 From the review of the literature, the paper concluded that:

- *Development of the mother tongue is critical for cognitive development and as a basis for learning the second language.*
- *Teachers must be able to understand, speak, and use the language of instruction, whether it is their first or second language.*
- *Parental and community support and involvement are essential to all successful programs.*

18 From this review, the mother tongue is confirmed as, indeed, the best medium for teaching a child, particularly in the early years of education since it is also clear that children do not master their first language until they are at least 12 years of age and that it is critical for both cognitive development and successful second language acquisition. There is an even more compelling social and cultural reason for its use in schools: to avert language and cultural loss and to assist in the process of maintaining and promoting cultural identity, particularly for small, vulnerable languages and their cultures, which are in grave danger of being lost. It has been estimated that by the middle of the twenty-first century, more than three quarters of the world's small minority languages would have disappeared. It is already seen that 2 of the languages in Vanuatu have only 2 speakers left. It is also clear that unless parents and communities are actively engaged in the education process, which means giving recognition and respect to the cultures and languages of those communities, where these differ from that of the school, and according them appropriate status within the formal school system, students will continue to underachieve in schools in the absence of such partnerships.¹³

19 In the region, Pacific member states have adopted a variety of language policies. These language policies vary from country to country depending on each country's linguistic heritage, its political goals and visions for itself and its people, its educational philosophy and ethos, socio-cultural context, colonial history, and economic capabilities. The use of the mother tongue as a medium of education can be plotted along a continuum with Tokelau and the Polynesian countries, such as Samoa and Tonga, at one end and the Solomon Islands, where no vernacular is used at all at any level of the education system, at the other end. The Melanesian, Micronesian and the remaining Polynesian countries are found in-between these two extremes as demonstrated in the Table in Annex 2.

¹³ Taufe'ulungaki (1987) found, for instance, that language attitudes to the Tongan language was progressively less positive according to age, with the youngest age groups demonstrating the least positive attitudes but conversely the highest positive attitudes towards English, which is increasingly related to performance, where secondary students do better in English than in Tongan in the Tonga School Certificate Examination. The 1996 Census of NZ also found that only 20% or so of Niueans and Cook Islanders born in NZ could still speak their vernacular languages.

20 The table shows that apart from two countries, namely, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, the official language policies of Pacific countries recognise the importance of using vernacular languages as a medium of instruction particularly in the early years of primary education. This is nowhere more strongly evident than in Papua New Guinea, where the Government has made the courageous decision to use mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the first six years of basic education and where community support has been very strong. For instance, the PNG Trust Inc, formed in 1989 by community organisations, “has conducted training with the support of communities so they could design their workbooks and story-books in more than 300 of the 869 plus languages of PNG” (Abare and Manukayasi, 1996: 144). As the authors stated “people thought, and many still think, that 100 per cent literacy is impossible in PNG because of the hundreds of languages... We, PNG Trust, have proven that the number of languages is inconsequential in the literacy equation.” (op cit:145-146).

21 The table also demonstrates the clear differences in the official language policies of countries and actual classroom practices, in which teachers and students throughout the region have been regularly found to code-switch between the official medium of instruction and a language of mutual understanding in attempts to ensure that classrooms interactions are meaningful and lead to quality learning and achievement.

c. **Culture and Its Relationship to Language Use**

22 ‘**Culture**’ has been defined in a number of ways. In its most restricted sense, it was traditionally defined as the ‘creative activities of cultural elites, the highest intellectual achievements of human beings, music, literature, art and architecture.’ Thaman (1998), from a Pacific’s perspective, defines ‘culture’ as a ‘shared way of living of a group of people, which includes their accumulated knowledge and understandings, skills and values, as expressed and constructed in their language, which is perceived by them to be unique and meaningful.’ Bisch (1996: 121), from a western perspective, uses ‘culture’ to apply to the ‘values, beliefs, languages, arts and sciences, traditions, institutions and ways of life by means of which individuals or groups express the meanings they give to their life and development.’ ‘Cultural identity’ applies to all cultural references through which individuals or groups define and express themselves and by which they wish to be recognised; cultural identity embraces the liberties inherent to human dignity and brings together, in a permanent process, cultural diversity, the particular and universal, memory and aspiration.’ ‘Cultural community’, then, ‘is a group of persons who share those cultural references that comprise a common cultural identity, and which they wish to preserve and develop, as essential to their human dignity, in the respect of human rights.’ In this universal sense of ‘culture’, both Pacific and western perspectives acknowledge that language is embedded in culture.

23 Thus, all communicative acts, both verbal and non-verbal, take place within a socio-cultural context. The socio-cultural context determines, to a large extent, not only the communicative conventions adopted but the meanings and interpretations of the interactions. Differences in the ways groups think and act are more than a matter of using different words or performing different actions for the same purposes. The behaviour of

people varies, and the beliefs, values and assumptions that underlie behaviour, which are culturally determined, differ as well. Culture influences both behaviour and the psychological processes on which it rests. Culture determines the value systems of a group, its world view, the nature and structure of knowledge, and how it creates shared meanings, transmits knowledge, skills and values, and these are articulated and manifested through the group's language. Language is, indeed, the universal instrument for transmission, promotion and transformation of culture. In other words, language cannot be used in isolation as merely a tool of education divorced from its underlying foundation, the culture of its speech community.

24 There are several cultural elements which have direct bearing on language and communicative behaviour and which have implications for formal education and classroom interactions: the value and belief systems of a group, and the informal learning strategies usually employed by the group in traditional education contexts. The value and belief systems of any cultural group determine not only the speech rules governing use of language and its purposes, but also the learning strategies commonly used by the group for purposes of cultural transfer and transformation. For example, in western societies, the individual and his rights, his competence, skills, and products are highly valued. But, in addition to cultural values, each culture has its own beliefs about knowledge, which are linked to the key values of the culture and these, in turn, influence the way knowledge is created, validated, transmitted and used.

i. Western Systems

25 Thus, in western culture, in correspondence with the value of individualism, knowledge is believed to be an open system, with distinct forms that are hierarchically structured, through which human experience is articulated and made intelligible. Education is a process whereby knowledge is transmitted but through the acquisition of knowledge the mind itself is transformed and this is considered too an end in itself.

26 The central function of education, then, from this perspective is the introduction of pupils to those forms of thought and knowledge which society values. Language is seen as a key player in the development of thinking and understanding and in the transmission of these to succeeding generations. How schools transmit knowledge is based on the previously stated assumption that knowledge has distinct irreducible forms, which provide the basis for subject divisions, and competence in a subject is gained serially and learning is seen as an ordered progression through a hierarchy of knowledge and skill, mediated through language.

27 The point that is stressed here is that it is from their value and belief systems that cultural groups develop rules governing behaviour, including those for communicative interactions, teaching and learning strategies, which are, in turn, consistent with their value and belief systems. In western-style schooling the key value of individualism drives the emphasis in classrooms on individual performance and achievement. Thus, the individual and his/her learning needs become the focus of classroom activities and competition is a strategy that is often used to promote and enhance individual success in

verbal and non-verbal interactions, question and answer routines, and the performance of tasks. Verbal direction and instruction in which explication, elaboration and expansion, which gradually progress into increasingly abstract and decontextualised use of language, become the major classroom teaching strategy.

28 This western view of knowledge and education has come to be accepted without question as universally applicable to all accounts of all possible forms of education, rationality or thought. However, in more recent years, Keddie (1977: 9-22) among others, have argued that such an assumption is ethnocentric since both knowledge and education are 'no more (but no less) than the socially constructed outcomes of the practices of members in particular socio-cultural contexts' (Jenks et al, 1977: 4). In fact, rationality and knowledge are concrete features of the practices of all societal members and are, therefore, culturally based.

ii. Pacific Systems

29 In Pacific cultures, which value respect, generosity, loyalty, cooperation, sharing, humility, and fulfilment of mutual obligations, among others, the nature, forms and structure of knowledge are perceived differently, which, in turn, give rise to different speech rules and communicative behaviour and consequently, teaching and learning strategies. The thinking of Pacific islanders is said to be right-brain dominated, which tends to be creative, holistic and spatial; divergent instead of linear logical; interpersonal, which favours group activities, spoken over written language, and demonstration and doing rather than verbal direction; and kinesthetic, which lends itself to physical activities. Such thinking styles are manifested in a number of ways in Pacific cultures¹⁴.

30 The Aborigines (the Yolingu) of Milingimbi in Arnhem Land, for example, have certain beliefs about knowledge: it is a closed system and a commodity and knowing is a privilege reserved for those with appropriate status within the community. Speech is used mainly as a means of developing and maintaining social relationships rather than for organisation of activities and for giving instructions. In this cultural context, the key learning strategies are: observation and imitation rather than oral or written instruction; personal trial and error rather than oral instruction and demonstration; performance in real life rather than practice in contrived settings; mastery of context-specific skills rather than learning decontextualised and generalisable principles; and learning is person-oriented which relies more on the nature of the relationship between participants in the learning process rather than on the nature of the knowledge being learned (Harris, 1980, as reported in Ninnes, 1991).

31 In Polynesia, knowledge is validated by corroboration and consensus rather than by the status of the individual bearing the knowledge and skepticism of new knowledge is the norm (Levin, 1978). Some cultures, such as Tongan, make a clear distinction between knowledge (*'ilo*) which is acquired through learning (*ako*) and wisdom (*poto*), which is the 'beneficial use of *'ilo* or knowledge' (Thaman, 1998). Clearly, knowledge is not expected to be achieved for its own sake but only if it is worthwhile and benefits others.

¹⁴ Annex 3 provides an overview of some of the differences found between western and Pacific cultures.

Three basic contexts have been identified for informal learning in Polynesia: the desire for social cohesion through the maintenance of good relationships, which takes the form of cooperation; closed knowledge systems, which affects the way knowledge is viewed and linguistic rules for knowledge transfer and use of questions and answers; and, the significant role of peer group in fostering learning.

iii. Learning Strategies

32 These contexts give rise to certain learning strategies: observation, participation and imitation (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1979; Jordon et al, 1981). Lesa (1981), for example, in his study of the learning styles of Samoan students reported that '62% identified with the participant learning style and another 21% identified with the collaborative learning style. Both of these styles characterise 'group' learning. Thomas (1978, 1979) in a number of studies of Samoan, Fijian, Cook Islands, Maori and Pakeha children reported parallel findings as did Levin (1978) in her studies of Tahitian children. Thomas found, for example, that there is a high degree of sensitivity to social cues and the emotional tone of the interaction, low intensity of communication between parents and children, as parents were less involved in looking after children and a high degree of interaction between family members besides mother and father. Whereas Pakeha children were predominantly individualistic and competitive, Pacific Island children demonstrated sharing and cooperative behaviour. Similar findings were found by Ninnes (1991) in the Western Province of the Solomons. Knowledge systems are closed and new knowledge arises from and is validated by external sources such as ancestors, and dreams.

33 The common learning strategies that emerge from this specific cultural context are: observation, imitation, listening, participation, and asking. The questions are information seeking-type and to seek technical advice. In the Pacific, then, where behaviour is mostly governed by the need to maintain group harmony, the values of cooperation, good relationships, consensus, and respect lead naturally to congruent learning strategies, such as the preference to working in groups, interacting with peers, and learning through observation, imitation and doing. These are in stark contrast to classrooms where the stress is on teacher-directed individual achievement, competition, inquisitiveness, extended verbal interactions and decontextualised pupils participation.

d. Language and Classroom Interactions

34 One of the major reasons for the attention paid to the vernacular and its role in classroom interactions is the search for solutions to the continuing high failure of Pacific Island children not only in mainstream classrooms in developed countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States, but, of more serious concern, in their own Pacific-controlled schools. Jordon, Au and Joesting (1981), for example, reported that according to the Stanford Achievement Test of 1978, "45 per cent of Hawaiian students in grade 4 performed below average in reading, compared to 23 per cent nationally [and] at grade eight, 69 per cent were performing below average (Thompson and Hannahs, 1979)." In New Zealand, Churchward (1991) wrote, "There have been many attempts to address the problem of the Maori education crisis. Many of these attempts to initiate

change were aimed at changing the Maori individual. This was usually because the 'problems' were deemed to arise from the pupils 'Maoriness.' Reports from around the region show that Pacific schools are not doing much better. In Fiji, for example, Mr. Rogovakalali, the Divisional Education Officer West told participants at a recent conference that 30 per cent of primary school pupils drop out before they reach Year 8. He said that in the "light of findings of the effectiveness of primary education, head teachers should view with concern the plight of children who have gone astray during their primary education." He called for programmes that would cater for the following: "school code conduct, communicating in other languages, respect for the environment" and for families to participate in the education of their children (Fiji Times, 1999).

35 Similarly, the Pacific Islands Literacy Levels Study (Withers, 1991) found that although overall 71.9 per cent of the selected sample of primary pupils were considered to have achieved literacy in two languages (vernacular and English/French), there were relatively high percentages of primary pupils in some countries who have *not* achieved basic literacy in their own vernacular languages, which give rise to speculations about the quality of learning in the schools and the language policies adopted by those countries, despite the assurance from the literature that for many Pacific Islands children the language of the school was 'just one more language to learn' (Mugler and Lynch, 1996).

i. Classroom Communicative Conventions

36 The classroom represents a special socio-cultural context with its own communication conventions, which are teacher controlled and directed. Classroom discourse presents children with the challenge of learning new rules for communication. The use of formal language, teacher control of verbal exchanges, question-and-answer formats, and references to increasingly abstract ideas characterise the classroom environment. To the extent that these new rules overlap with those that children have already learned, classroom communication is made easier. But children whose past experience with language is not congruent with the new rules will have to learn ways to make meaning before they can use language to learn in the classroom. However, it should be noted that the culture of the school has unique features, which make it quite distinct and different from that operating in the larger society, even in western societies. Children from such cultures still have to learn to adapt too to the culture of the school, although the degree of difference is less, of course, than that between the cultures of non-western societies and western-style schools.

37 Pacific children will bring to the school the values and belief systems of his/her home culture, including beliefs about knowledge, his/her own language, including the speech rules of his/her culture, his/her own learning system and his/her own style of thinking. The traditional culture of non-western students will have profound effects on their learning performance in western-style classrooms. These effects are seen in communication patterns between teachers and students, in the way students respond to classroom management practices, in the way students interact with each other and in the way students approach learning tasks.¹⁵ Where these differ from the expectations and

¹⁵ Ninnes, 1991.

practices of western-style classrooms, breakdowns in communication occur, with subsequent failure of learning. These are, in addition, to the difficulties that arise from teaching the children in a language other than their mother tongue.

38 Jordon et al (1981) have basically argued that the difficulties encountered by Pacific Island children in western-type classrooms, to which their failure in the school system could be largely attributed, is not so much the language which they bring to the school, which, in the case of the Hawaiian children, is, in fact, fairly congruent with that of the school, (as was the case with the Maori children in the Cazden (1988) report), but to the “existence of differences in communicative conventions” which are culturally determined. Thus, the many instances found of miscommunications between classroom teachers and Hawaiian students are due to the fact that the “classroom is an interface between two different sets of values, those of the Hawaiian subculture and those manifested in the state-run school system.” To be successful in the classroom, the child must know not only the content of the correct answer, which is transmitted through language, but to present that answer in a way that will be socially acceptable to the teacher. Children who enter school from a different cultural background and speaking a different language from that of the school must learn not only the academic content and the ability to express himself/herself in the language of the school but a new set of communicative conventions at the same time.

ii. Appropriate Teaching and Learning Strategies

39 Studies of teaching-learning interactions in the Pacific suggest that Pacific children learn and respond more effectively to teaching strategies, which employ interactions congruent with those in the children’s cultures. The KEEP programme in Hawaii was successful because it incorporated a number of features of communication, teaching and learning common in Hawaiian culture:

- it allowed children to teach and learn from peers.
- it emphasised the importance of *mutual participation* in learning situations.
- learning involves actually engaging in the task or skill to be learned, rather than talking *about* how to perform the task, with the main primary teaching technique used being personal demonstration and learning is primarily through participation, observation and imitation.

40 Verbal competence is considered differently from culture to culture as well as how children acquire verbal competence. Children in Polynesia develop competence through elicited imitation whereas western children usually do so through expansion (Jordon et al, 1981).

41 In summary, most Pacific Island children learn best in teaching strategies using strong peer orientation, and affiliation, cooperation and mutual task performance, where the operations learned are clearly related to the final goal. The studies discussed previously have highlighted the differences in the norms of their cultures and those of mainstream societies or those practised in western-style schools. Obviously Pacific children learn to communicate and participate, teach and learn, in patterns and conventions which are quite

distinct and different from those of western-style schools and these differences are in turn the manifestations of the distinct values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour integral to those cultures. These have obvious implications for structuring the teaching and learning in Pacific classrooms but particularly for teacher training, both pre- and in-service training, of Pacific teachers for Pacific classrooms.

e. Implications for Teacher Education and Training

42 Meaningful classroom interactions in Pacific classrooms and, hence, effective learning, occur where teachers capitalise on the wealth of experience, knowledge and skills the children bring with them from their home cultures to the learning process and deliberately use those values, beliefs, world views, knowledge, speech rules and learning systems to organise their classrooms, communicate with and teach their students. Thomas (1978) found in his studies that the students showed dramatic gains in classrooms where teachers were using cooperative and interdependent learning groups. They improved their school achievement and attitudes to school, the teacher and other children. Commenting on the brain drain, which Thomas (1978) believes is partly attributable to the competitive and individualistic learning styles taught in western-style schools, he said that one possible answer to the problem is removing the extreme emphasis on individualistic and competitive orientation from “imported” education systems, and retaining instead the knowledge necessary for any Pacific country to remain viable and internally controlled and developing the “Pacific way” as an effective technique for the transmission of knowledge. It is worth reiterating that one of the main aims of adopting a vernacular or mother tongue medium of instruction is to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of community languages and cultures, which define individual and group identities.

Part III: Some Policy Options and Actions for Future Language Developments

43 While the adaptation and adoption of culturally congruent communicative behaviour and learning styles have been effective in improving educational achievement and learning in Pacific classrooms, it should not be forgotten that the purpose is not merely educational but it pertains to the larger picture of cultural survival. Such adoptions should not lead to the destruction or demise of Pacific cultures in the quest for successful western-type schooling. To avoid this undesirable outcome, several alternatives have been proposed in the literature.

a. 'Both-ways Schooling and Two-ways Approach'

44 Harris (1980), for instance, suggests the ‘two-way’ and ‘both-ways’ schooling. In the former, he recommends a complete separation of the two cultural domains, Aboriginal and Western, which means teaching the two separately in the schools without any reference to the other.

45 In the ‘both-ways’ alternative, recognition is given to the significant differences between the two cultures but the emphasis will be on developing bridges between them. Ninnes (1991) proposes how the ‘both-ways’ model could be further modified as an

adaptive model whereby the home culture is adapted to the school system, such as the content to suit local culture; the administrative procedures to suit local decision-making processes, for instance, of consultation and consensus in the Solomons; the time-orientation to suit indigenous values and needs, that is, the school accommodates itself to local, seasonal, and culturally important events and behaviours through a process of consultation, cooperation, and flexibility, which is enhanced by local control of the schooling process.

46 In this process of adaptation, classroom learning can be viewed as a role play and certain learning behaviours are overtly taught within particular contexts, such as the analytical, abstract, probing and deductive thinking required in science classes in contrast to the unquestioning concrete contexts in which indigenous learning occurs. Students need to clearly understand the value of their own culturally-defined ways of learning and thinking and to be taught the contexts in which the contrasting western method is appropriate and useful.

b. Diglossic Bilingual Approaches

47 Such strategies seem fairly similar to what has proven effective in maintaining small vulnerable languages at risk. The 'two-way' approach is comparable to diglossic bilingual situations in which the uses to which the two contending languages are put are quite separate with very little or no overlaps in language function (Ferguson, 1972; Giles, 1977). Where the functions of the two languages have been kept separate with clear domains of usage for both, vernacular languages have been found to fare better than in bilingual situations where both languages are used indiscriminately in a number of overlapping functions. Inevitably the LWC, over time, gradually encroaches on the functions previously dominated by the first language, thereby threatening its survival and could in the long-term spell its demise. It would also appear from the studies discussed that children are quite flexible and versatile in acquiring and adapting to new learning strategies and can also keep the contexts of such learning separate.

48 For instance, in the Thomas (1979) study Fijian students could be quite individualistic and competitive in the classroom but revert easily to cooperative performance of tasks in informal education contexts outside of school. He also found in his other studies that the more urbanised (and presumably more westernised) Pacific families are, the more readily do the children adapt to western-style learning strategies, such as competition, but it should be noted that this achievement is made at the cost of their own cultural identities.

c. Building on Commonalities

49 On the other hand, where Pacific cultures exhibit traits that are similar to western-style behaviours and values, students tend to cope better in schools. Howard (1970), for instance, in his study of Rotuman children found that one of the possible reasons that could account for their ability to adjust better and do well in western-style schools in comparison with other Fijian students is the fact that children orient more strongly toward adults than their peers as sibling care-taking is not used as much in Rotuman society as in

other Pacific cultures. In the Ninnes (1991) study, he found that while asking questions is a normal learning tool in informal educational contexts in the Solomons, students refrain from using it in the classroom where knowledge is considered sacred.

50 What is clear from the literature is that schools should base their teaching approach to the multicultural classroom on the already proven pedagogical base of building on the students' repertoire of existing knowledge, skills and experience to add on new skills and knowledge. Such a strategy would be very much along the lines that Cummins (1979) and Swain and Lapkin (1991) use the term 'additive' education. This is a bilingual language learning strategy in which the acquisition of a second language is a process of building on the existing competencies of the child in his/her first language, which minimises detrimental or negative effects on the first language. Instead, second language acquisition becomes a mutually enhancing process for both languages. Similarly, when formal education is contextualised and acculturated, school attainment is significantly raised while failure is minimised.¹⁶

d. The Critical Role of the Teacher

50 The role of the teacher, then, and the school, in promoting and adopting culturally appropriate teaching-learning strategies that could enhance learning and by implication, his/her education and training, is absolutely critical. The teachers that are needed to teach in Pacific schools must, at worst, be proficient in the language of instruction and, at best, also competent in the mother tongues of the children, and have understanding of and familiarity and empathy with the cultures of those languages. In other words, it is not an unrealistic expectation for Pacific teachers to be literate in the cultures of the children in her/his class, if the school goals are to ensure those children succeed in school and the survival of their cultures and languages. Troike & Saville-Troike (1982) writing on the subject said:

Being a teacher has never been simple. Being a bilingual teacher is at least twice as complex. Preparing a bilingual teacher must certainly take account of this complexity if it is to adequately fulfill its purpose.

If the teacher is the principal figure in the educational process, mediating between the learner and the curriculum, his/her role becomes even more central in a bilingual program. For here the teacher must serve not only to represent the adult world and interpret the world to neophyte learners from the same or closely similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, but must represent and interpret a different cultural world through the means of the learner's language at the same time attempting to teach the language which is the medium of that other cultural world. Training should minimally serve to prepare the teacher to handle these complexities" (1982:199).

51 Troike & Saville-Troike argue that the teacher training programme is directed to a certain extent by the ethos of each society and, therefore, of necessity different in each case in order to conform to the particular requirements of each society, but they maintain

¹⁶ Thaman, 1998. This is what Thaman calls the 'culturally inclusive curriculum', which would include the most important elements from all contributing cultures in a particular nation that each cultural group wishes others to know or understand about their culture.

that the training of all bilingual teachers will require training in all these four skills in both languages:

1. language proficiency,
2. linguistic knowledge,
3. cultural knowledge, and
4. pedagogical competencies.

52 They also identified three basic requirements:

1. They must be able to communicate with students in a language they understand.
2. They must themselves know the content of instruction.
3. They must be able to transmit their knowledge to students (op cit.:217).

53 The training of teachers is, therefore, critical for what teachers practise in their classrooms is influenced not only by their education and training but also by their personal beliefs in particular practices which are in turn partly inculcated by their education and training and partly by the kind of educational ethos held by their societies. Franklin (1984) in a naturalistic study of literacy in bilingual classrooms demonstrated that literacy instruction varied in accordance with the literacy instruction beliefs held by teachers. From the results of her study, she argued that the literacy failure of children in schools is largely attributable to the literacy practices of teachers which are in turn the manifestation of their beliefs which are derived from those of the larger society; beliefs and practices which fail to build and expand on the children's extensive existing knowledge but which instead impose too many constraints on the children's learning in order to force them to conform to the literacy strategies which accord with the beliefs and practices dictated by the teacher and the school.

54 The argument can be extended to include all pedagogical activities in the classroom. The implication is that how teachers create a learning environment, how they interact and communicate with their students, the language they use, the questions they ask and the responses they expect, their methods and classroom organisation, the pacing of the lessons, the activities designed, the time allocated to tasks and how those tasks are executed and evaluated, etc. are all derived from the teacher's personal repertoire of pedagogical attitudes and beliefs.

55. One of the oft held beliefs is the notion that the language the child brings to school is deficient and is, therefore, partly responsible for his/her lack of success in school. This has been disputed by many studies. Barnes et al (1971) demonstrated that children from working class backgrounds were not handicapped by the fact they did not speak the standard dialect required by the schools but by the ways in which the teachers use language in the classroom, their methods of teaching, their failure to capitalise on the children's language experiences and cultural mores. Edwards (1979) believes that any "speech related difficulties encountered by disadvantaged speakers are of a social or sociolinguistic nature" (1979:137). He further argues that:

The attitudes, values and lifestyles of certain social groups may cause them to perform relatively poorly in situations governed by the standards and conventions of other groups. The disadvantaged thus suffer real difficulties, but these are not

caused by intellectual deficiency or by cultural deprivation; rather, the problems are the result of the low-prestige group, with little social power, having to accommodate to the mainstream society. Disadvantage is therefore only possible where groups of different status interact, and where comparisons are drawn from the perspective of the higher-status group” (ibid: 138).

56 One of the most regrettable aspects of such attitudes is that teachers and the school systems have succeeded in transferring such attitudes to the speakers themselves so that they too believe in their inferiority and handicaps. One of the strategies that has worked well is for schools to enable children with such disadvantages to add on to their linguistic repertoire a socially acceptable dialect or language. Nor must his/her other activities be made to suffer in the process of acquiring this dialect or language. The training of teachers capable of such understanding is again a crucial factor. Teachers should be trained to be flexible and open in their approach, sensitive to the needs of students from other languages and cultures, to observe and note how children from such cultures interact and learn, and draw from the vast array of valid teaching-learning strategies, approaches and techniques that would suit the needs of particular pupils in his/her class.

57 In many Pacific classrooms, teachers are forced to teach in a language s/he is not competent in to students who are forced to learn in a language s/he is unfamiliar with in a classroom and school context which are alien to his/her society and culture. In such situations the educational attainment of the children is limited not only by the teacher’s competence in the language of instruction but also by his/her understanding of the children’s cultures and willingness and ability to use appropriate cultural behaviour for teaching and learning purposes. However, it should be stressed that each child is unique with different learning needs, even in classrooms where there is congruence between the language and culture of the home and that of the school. There is an immense body of teaching methodologies, resources, and techniques that the effective and caring teacher could choose from to ensure that students’ needs within the classrooms are met, irrespective of their linguistic, social, economic or cultural background.

e. Framework

58 Given, then, the complex relationship between culture and language and culture and teaching-learning strategies, the following principles are offered to provide a conceptual framework for the education and training of teachers to try to bridge the gaps between the children’s cultural backgrounds and school objectives. Institutions responsible for the education and training of Pacific teachers should include the following values, beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitudes among the array of those with which teachers must be equipped to be effective in the classroom:

- To establish a basis for communication with the children teachers must negotiate and develop shared meanings with the children within the classroom. To achieve this goal successfully, teachers need to be proficient in the first language of the children or a language common to both. If this is not possible, the teacher could still promote mutual understanding and effective learning through the development of interactive styles and contents that are familiar to the children

and by using culturally appropriate styles of classroom organisation, communicative conventions and patterns, teaching and learning. These entail understanding of the children's cultures and their relationships with language development and acquisition and how language is used for teaching and learning purposes.

- School learning is most likely to occur when values reinforce school expectations. Parents and other community members must view school achievement as a desirable and attainable goal if children are to build this into their sense of self. Interpreting the school's agenda for parents is one of the most important tasks for teachers. But to be successful in this role, it is assumed that teachers are literate in the children's cultures and can employ appropriate strategies for building bridges of understanding between the two.
- When differences exist between the cultural patterns of the home and community and those of the school, teachers must deal with these discrepancies directly. Teachers and children must create shared understandings and new contexts that give meaning to the knowledge and skills being taught. At the same time, the teachers must ensure that in the classroom the children's cultural values, beliefs, knowledge, speech rules and learning systems are recognised, valued and built upon. Learning mediated by teachers who are culturally sensitive and literate, affectionate, interested, and responsive is likely to be more effective than learning mediated by an adult who is perceived as uncaring and ignorant of the values of the communities from which the children come.
- For children from different racial and ethnic groups, meanings of words, gestures, and actions may differ. Assessment of learning outcomes presents a formidable problem when children misunderstand the teacher's requests for information or demonstrations of knowledge and skills. Formal assessment should be delayed until teachers and children have built a set of new meanings and later such assessments must be sensitive to cultural differences and the values such cultures bestow on various matters, which could be completely different from school expectations and goals.
(Adapted from: Bowman, 1990)

59 Teaching and learning obviously can never be standardised in a bi-or multi-cultural community. But caring and competent teachers can use their linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills to make the new context of the school meaningful to students whose cultures hold different values and practices from those of the school to safeguard the self-confidence of children and their pride and security in their own languages and cultures which are integral to their development of a positive sense of self and individual and group identities.

60 Institutions in the region responsible for the training of teachers must provide their teacher trainees with the following minimal skills and knowledge:

- high competence in the language of instruction.

- where this differs from the mother tongues of the children, competence in the language of the children or at least in a language common to both.
- knowledge of the values, and belief systems of the children's home languages; how knowledge is derived, created, validated, transmitted and used in those cultures; management and decision-making procedures specific to those cultures; the speech rules of those communities; the teaching and learning strategies of those cultures and the learning systems the children bring with them.
- understanding of the differences that could exist between these cultures and that of the school.
- competence in selecting appropriate teaching and learning strategies and styles that the children could add on to their existing repertoire which would enhance their concept of self, and maintain local cultures and languages and improve their scholastic attainment.
- ability to create the contexts in which the new knowledge and teaching and learning strategies could occur in the classroom and developing the bridges between the different cultures.
- sympathetic and positive attitudes toward the different cultures.
- competence in appropriate assessment and evaluation procedures that take into account cultural differences.

Conclusion

61 The language choices and decisions that Pacific countries make, which, in turn, would determine educational language policies and practices, depend on their own visions and developmental goals, which would include internal cohesiveness and unity and external participation in the modern global community. What is becoming increasingly clear is that the two are not diametrically in opposition. Language can be both the tool to strengthen individual and group identity leading to high self-esteem and self-confidence, the prerequisites to effective learning, and the acquisition of additive education. By promoting and developing mother tongue education, cognitive development will be enhanced and a sound basis will be provided for the acquisition of a second language, the vehicle of modern development and participation in the world community.

Recommendations

62 It is recommended that Ministers:

- (a) Note the contents of this paper;
- (b) Consider adopting national language policies as part of the education planning process; and
- (c) Request PRIDE to hold a follow-up regional meeting on language policy and practice for senior education officials.

Annex 1: Language Fact Sheet of the Pacific Region¹⁷

Member States	Article I. nd Area Sq. Km.	La	Est. July 2003 Population	Literacy Rate	Languages	Ethnic Group
Cook Islands		240	21,008	95%	English, Maori	81.3% Polynesian 7.7% Part European 7.7% Polynesian/ Melanesian
Federated States of Micronesia		702	108,143	99 % (91%/88%)	English, Truk, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Kosrean, Ulithian, Woleaian, Nukuoro, Kapingamarangi	9 Micronesian/ Polynesian Groups
Guam		549	163,941	99%	Chamorro, English, Japanese	Chamorro 37%; Filipino 26%, White 10%, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, 27%
French Polynesia		4,167	262,125	98%	French and Tahitian	78% Tahitian, 12% Chinese, French, 10%
Fiji		18,270	868,531	93.7% (95.5%/91.9%)	English, Fijian, Hindustani	51% Fijian, 44% Indians, Other, 5%
Kiribati		811	98,549	92%	English, I-Kiribati	Micronesia/ Polynesia
Nauru		21	12,570	NA	Nauruan/English	58%, Other 26, Chinese 8, European 8
New Caledonia		19,060	210,798	91% (92%/90%) 1976	French, 33 Other Melanesian languages	42.5% Melanesian, European 37%, Wallis 8.4%, Polynesian 3.8%, 3.6 Indonesian, Vietnamese 1.6, Other 3%
Niue		260	2,145	95%	Niuean and English	Polynesian and about 200 Europeans.
Northern Mariana		477	80,006	97% (97%/96%) 1980)	English, Chamorro, Carolian	Chamorro, Carolian, Others, Micronesian, Japanese, Filipino, Korean
Palau		458	19,717	92% (93%/90%) 1980	English, Palauan, except in Sonsoral (it is Sonsoralese and	70% Palauan, Asian 28%; Other 2%

¹⁷ Compiled from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/wf.html#top>; ADB.2003. Poverty: Is it an Issue in the Pacific? Office of Pacific Operations and Pacific Islands Forum 2004 Diary.

				English), Tobi (English and Tobi) and Angaur (Angaur, Japanese and English)	
Pitcairn	475	47	NA	English, Pitcairnese	English, Polynesian mix
Papua New Guinea	462,840	5,295, 816	66% (72.3%/59.3%) 2003	English, Pidgin widespread and Motu in Papua	Melanesian, Papuan, Negrito, Micronesian, Polynesian
Republic of the Marshall Islands	181.3	56,429	93.7% (93.6%/93.7%)	English, Marshallese, Japanese, 2 RMI dialects	Micronesian
Samoa	2,944	178,173	99.7% (99.6%/99.7%) 2003	Samoan, English	Samoan – 92.6% Part – 7% European – 0.4
Solomon Islands	28,450	509,190	30%?	Pidgin, English, 120 languages	Melanesian – 93% Polynesian 4% Micronesian – 1.5% European - .8% Others - .7%
Tonga	748	108,141	98.5 (98.4%/98.7%) 1996	Tongan, English	Polynesian
Tokelau	10	1,418	NA	Tokelauan, English	Polynesian
Tuvalu	26	11,305		Tuvaluan, English, Samoan, Kiribati	96 Polynesian 4 Micronesian
Vanuatu	12,200	199,414	53% (57%/48%) 1979	English, French, Pidgin, 105 local languages	98% Melanesian 2% Others
Wallis and Futuna	274	15,734	50% (50%/50%) (1969)	French, Wallisian, Futuna	Polynesian

Annex 2: Language Policies in the Pacific Region

Table 1: Summary Table of the Use of Pacific Vernacular Languages in Education

Country	Vernacular Languages						
	Vernacular Language	Primary Education		Secondary Education			Post-Secondary Education
		Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Years 1-2	Years 3-5	Years 6-7	Years 1-3
Tokelau	Tokelauan	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject		
NZMaori*	Maori	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Subject
Samoa	Samoan	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Subject <i>Medium+</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>
Tonga	Tongan	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Pending <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>
French Polynesia	Multiple	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject
Micronesia	Multiple	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject
Fiji	Multiple	Medium/Subject	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>
PNG*	Multiple	Medium/Subject	Medium/Subject				
Cook Islands	Maori	Medium/Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject		
Tuvalu	Tuvaluan	Medium/Subject	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject <i>Medium</i>	Subject (F4) <i>Medium</i>		
Vanuatu	Multiple	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>				
Solomon	Multiple	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>				

Note:

NZMaori*: This refers only to the *kura kaupapa Maori* schools.

Medium+: This denotes the difference between official language policy and actual practice in the classrooms. Teachers of the region continue to use or code-switch between the officially designated language of instruction and the language that the students and the teacher mutually understand.

This table was compiled from information obtained from the Withers PILLS Report (1991) and from Lynch and Mugler (1996).

Annex 3: Possible Differences Between Pacific Cultures and Western-Style School Culture

Subject	Formal School Practices and Expectations	Pacific Cultural Practices and Expectations
Key Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual rights and freedoms. • Independence. • Justice - Equality and access. • Privacy. • Competition • Consumerism. • Scientific-rational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation. • Consensus. • Respect. • Generosity. • Loyalty. • Sharing. • Humility. • Reconciliation. • Fulfilment of mutual obligations. • Reciprocity. • Maintaining good relationships.
Underlying Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create personal wealth and individual well-being. • To develop economic capital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain good relationships and strong communities. • To develop social capital.
Beliefs About Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open system with change being a key value. • Reducible forms, becoming more and more specialised. • Hierarchically arranged and serially learned. • Validated through tests. • Process more important than product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic. • Closed and change incrementally over time. • Polynesia: validated through consensus, collaboration and scepticism. • Solomon Islands: validated by external sources such as ancestors and dreams. • Knowledge therefore personalised and debate and criticism are taken personally and cause shame. • Schools are regarded as knowledge sources rather than as sources of intellectual experience, therefore, passive knowledge is valued over active knowledge construction. • Knowledge objectified with emphasis on product. • Humility and respect culturally valued which restrict overt demonstration of knowledge or expertise in front of elders.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left brain. • Linear logical. • Objective. • Rational. • Sequential. • Individualistic. • Problem-solving. • Abstract. • Analytical. • Empirical. • Deductive. • De-contextualised. • Critical. • Looks at parts. • Temporal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right brain. • Divergent. • Random. • Holistic. • Synthesising. • Interpersonal. • Concrete. • Context-specific. • Cyclical. • Intuitive. • Subjective. • Spatial.
Sociolinguistic Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use verbal directions and explanations a great deal and expect verbal feedback. • Decontextualised increasingly abstract verbal communication that usually involves language extension, and challenge through a combination of restating, modelling, supporting, linking, shaping and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High sensitivity to social cues and emotional tone of interaction, especially in non-verbal behaviour. • Less verbal interaction. • Explanations at the beginning but non-verbal feedback such as looking at teacher, silently

	<p>adding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and Answer Routines, with questions being directed at individuals, the answers to which the teacher already knows and one student is expected to respond at any one time. • Teachers pay more attention and reward verbal seeking for help by students. • Teachers try to draw students into negotiations and explanations. • Teachers expect students to look to teacher as main source of interaction. 	<p>approaching teacher and standing close by, changes in facial expression, making various noises, looking away from task and scratching head.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of group response to questions. • Speech mainly for maintaining good relationship. • Interact and orient more toward peer group rather than adults. • Talking back to teacher signals lack of respect. • Calling on individual students to answer questions is considered in some cultures as 'putting the child on the spot' and 'verbalising knowledge is a kind of showing off'. • Volunteering answers considered showing off and currying favour with teacher.
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader and teacher directed and controlled. • Individualistic and competitive, with individual achievement emphasised. • Individual performance closely monitored and supervised by management/teacher. • Discipline applied through negotiation and explanations. • Organisation, etc. managed and administered through rules and principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory and level of participation determined by needs and desires of individuals. • Group work preferred: cooperation, sharing and interdependent learning groups are core behaviours. • Shared function and role flexibility with degrees of freedom to arrange work responsibilities and schedules. • Supervision of children by adults is non-intrusive, giving rise to feelings of competence and autonomy on part of children. • Interaction with older siblings or peers rather than adults. Strong orientation toward peers. • Discipline usually applied through peers or older siblings. With adults, listen respectfully and then withdraw from scene. • Organisation, etc. managed, etc. through trust and respect.
Learning Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic. • Verbal directions. • Competitive. • Expansions. • Abstract. • Reflective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal and interdependent: cooperation and sharing. • Little verbal direction. • Observation. • Demonstration. • Listening. • Memorisation. • Participation. • Imitation. • Repetition. • Asking to solicit information. • Learn by doing. • Concrete and active.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top down. • Hierarchical and vertical. • Authoritative. • Linear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral. • Bottom-up. • Consensual. • Cyclical.
Assessment and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic. • Verbal. • Written. • Abstract. • Decontextualised. • Rational logical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and production. • Non-verbal feedback. • Real-life and context-specific.
Education Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System de-contextualised and removed from real life. • Knowledge fragmented into compartments. • Overemphasis on rights and individuals. • Concentration on economic capital with little attention to social capital. • Prioritising analytic, numeric, linguistic and factual intelligence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System integral part of communities. Learning and teaching part of real life. • All knowledge are inter-related and connected. • Values, duties and responsibilities as members of communities. • Good relationships are communities 'real' wealth on which economic and political capitals

		<p>are dependent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equally important are athletic, intuitive, emotional, practical, interpersonal and musical intelligences.
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language of instruction and literacy emphases - English or a metropolitan language Left-brain emphases - logical thinking, analysis and accuracy. Emphases on the 3Rs - pronouncing syllables, writing the alphabet, and counting numbers. Individual achievements and competition. Graduates who can crunch numbers, analyse facts, argue logically, find problems, and implement logical solutions. Translates in business into emphasis on the bottom line - through organising, managing, inspecting and controlling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise vernacular languages and children's prior knowledge and values. Right-brain emphases - aesthetics, feeling, creativity, skills of imagination, and synthesis. Systems thinking, which is intuitive. Group learning - group IQ higher than that of the individual. Collective vision - sum total of the vision of the group. Graduates who can think intuitively and creatively, have strong cultural values and feelings, and use their senses and imagination. Increasing the bottom line through creativity, collective vision, good relationships, and sensitive service.

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