# Language endangerment in the Sepik area of Papua New Guinea

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## 1. Language diversity and language endangerment in Papua New Guinea

The island of New Guinea is probably the most linguistically diverse and complex linguistic area in the world, with over 1,000 languages spoken over an area of 900,000 km$^2$ (that is, one language every 900 km$^2$: Foley 1986: 8). Seventy-five percent of these languages belong to Non-Austronesian families often referred to as 'Papuan' (see Foley 1986: 1-3; Dixon 1991a: 245)[1]. The state of Papua New Guinea (independent since 1975) features about 830 languages (Nekitel 1998; Ford ms; Landweer 2000), with the number of Papuan languages exceeding 600 (see Foley 1986: 1-3; Dixon 1991a: 245). Its official languages are English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu (also called Police Motu). Tok Pisin is currently the most important language spoken in most provinces. English is less dominant, but is widely gaining ground, especially in West Sepik (Sandaun) province and a number of other Coastal provinces (see Sankoff 1980: 126-70). Hiri Motu is even more restricted (for instance, it is not known at all in either of the two Sepik provinces).

Bi- and trilingualism in Tok Pisin and English is quickly expanding. According to materials in Sankoff (1980: 129-30), in 1971 the percentage of Papua New Guineans age ten and over who are unable to speak any of the official languages was 17.6% in East Sepik and 35.9% in Sandaun. Now the number of people with no knowledge of at least one official language would be negligible.[2]

Within New Guinea itself, the Sepik river basin (which includes East Sepik and West Sepik, or Sandaun, provinces) is linguistically the most complex area with about 200 languages (cf. Foley 1988: 167-8; 1986). This language density is unparalleled anywhere else; some estimate it to be as many as one language in every 200km$^2$. The Sepik river basin displays cultural as well as linguistic diversity and fragmentation, perhaps more so that other areas of New Guinea, for instance, the New Guinea Highlands. Reasons for this include the time depth of human habitation, geographic diversity, lack of accessibility of the terrain, patterns of language contact and concomitant language attitudes (see Foley 1986).

The impact of European colonisation on the peoples of the Sepik brought about a number of drastic changes to traditional life and practices, undermining the set of beliefs within which traditional languages were used and transmitted. With the advent of Australians in the Sepik area, around the 1920s, many exceptionally bloody initiation rites, some of which involved homicide, were virtually forbidden (Harrison 1990, 1993). Tuzin (1976) reports how peace following the end of World War II interfered with traditional warfare patterns among the Ilahita Arapesh. This obviously implied less bloodshed, but also put an end to a traditional male activity. As Tuzin

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[1] The term 'Papuan' is a rough denomination which covers over sixty genetically unrelated language families and a fair number of isolates of the area not demonstrably related to any other established language family in the world; it is used rather as a matter of convenience (similar, perhaps, to terms like 'Paleo-Siberian' or 'Amazonian').

[2] Tuzin (1976, based on research conducted in 1969-72) reported that back then everyone under forty knew Tok Pisin. This obviously implies that now everyone under seventy would know Tok Pisin. The rampant spread of Tok Pisin was documented by Nekitel (1998) and Kulick (1987, 1992a). See §4.1.

(1976: 321) put it, in the case of Ilahita Arapesh village, 'military pressures which held the community together have ceased to exist, and the village is beginning to fragment'.

Christianity had an equally disruptive effect on the traditional patterns of cultural reproduction: cf. Tuzin 1976: 234, on the 'disruptive Christian conversion' of a family member as a 'stress' that upset the initiation and intermarriage system. Christians, especially of Protestant denominations, are reluctant to take part in traditional ceremonies. The senior member of one of the households in Avatip, the centre of the Manambu-speaking community, refused point-blank to take part in the annual yam ritual procession. As a devout Seventh Day Adventist Christian, he considered this inappropriate. Only five men took part in the procession, all of them over fifty. In other Manambu villages the ritual does not take place anymore (as I was told) simply because there are no more men fit or willing to do it. An all-Manambu soccer match is held instead: needless to say, only English and Tok Pisin are spoken then. Christianity became a way of escaping painful and onerous initiation rites.[3] The ensuing cultural contraction invites a concomitant contraction of the language.

The fall in child and infant mortality rates create excess population, upsets the traditional patterns of authority and provokes out-migrations especially of younger men. Those young men who remain in villages are often carriers of coveted and valued economic modernisation. As Tuzin (1976: 293) put it, 'economic and political modernisation is a serious threat to the authority of the old men, for their juniors are finding power and authority in new spheres of relevance. The pronouncements of the old men are growing weaker because, in the opinion of many youthful men, the [traditional] Cult is dying. The same process is affecting differential village prestige in modern activities.' In addition to this, prestige tends to be associated with success in the world outside the village. As a result, bright children (especially boys) who achieve reasonable results at school strive to leave the village and pursue further studies in towns where they also try and get jobs and establish families. The outcome of this can effectively be termed a 'brain drain' from the grass-root communities. We return to this under (h) in §2.3 and in §4 below.

We start with a brief overview of the linguistic picture in the Sepik basin, focussing on genetic diversity and problems of diglossia, the expansion of lingue franche and language endangerment (§2). The disruption of traditional patterns of multilingualism is addressed in §3. In §4, we present a case-study of Manambu, and how it is affected by encroaching language obsolescence. Some conclusions and prospects are summarised in the last section, §5.

## 2. Linguistic picture of the Sepik basin: an endangered diversity
### 2.1 Languages and their studies
The Sepik basin shows truly amazing linguistic diversity. Of the eight well established families (Foley 1986), the Ndu family is spoken by the largest number of speakers; there are also several score isolates.[4] Putative larger genetic groupings require further study.

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[3] Such rituals involved penis and mouth bleeding for men (see Lewis 1980, with a focus on Gnau (Torricelli, Sandaun province) and a mention of other groups such as Kwoma, Iatmul, Wogeo, Abelam and others); for women, they involved ritual enclosure during the first menstruation, fasting and beatings.

[4] The well established families include (Foley 1986): LOWER SEPIK (Yimas, Karawari, Angoram, Chambri, Murik, Kopar), LOWER RAMU (Watam, Kaian, Gamay, Bosmun, Awar, Kire, Mikarew, Tangu and Igom: Foley 2000a), SEPIK HILL (Alamblak, Bahinemo, Kaningra, Kapriman, and a few others), SKO (Sko, Sangke, Wutung, Dumo/Vanimo, Krisa, Rawo, Puari, Warapu, Ninggara), BORDER FAMILY (Waris, Imonda, Kilmeri); GRASS FAMILY (Kambot, Adjora, Aion, Banaro, †Gorovu), RAM (Awtuw, Karawa, Bouye: Feldman 1986), KWOMTARI (Fas, Kwomtari) and NDU (Abelam, Boiken, Iatmul, Sawos, Manambu, Kaunga, Yelogu, Ngala). TORRICELLI family is somewhat problematic (Foley 1986: 241-2): further studies are required to convincingly demonstrate the genetic

The major problem for the linguistics of the Sepik area is the lack of in-depth grammatical descriptions and dictionaries. The few full grammars include that of Yimas (Foley 1991), Alamblak (Bruce 1984), Feldman (1986), Fortune (1942) and Conrad and Wogiga (1991). There are also a number of in-depth partial studies, such as Dobrin (1999) on Arapesh. Foley (1986) is a major account on the state of the art of linguistic studies (including scientifically proven genetic relationships among Papuan languages); further advances in the classification of the Sepik languages are in Foley (2000). Donohue (2002) is a major contribution to the comparative study of the Sko languages. The only book-length description of a Sepik language family so far is a sketchy overview of the Ndu family by Laycock (1965).

The languages of the Sepik basin are in urgent need of linguistic work.[5] The reasons for the scarcity of linguistic work are simple. The Sepik basin is known as one of the most unhealthy malaria-infested areas in the world. Access to most areas is difficult; cities, government stations and sometimes even villages may be dangerous (for instance, an atrocious attack by local bandits (called 'raskols') made Don Kulick abandon his work in Papua New Guinea altogether and switch to a different area). And even a research visa to work in East Sepik Province costs significantly more than for other areas.

**2.2 Language endangerment**
In Papua New Guinea on the whole, about twenty five-languages have over 20,000 speakers (Ford ms: 2). Of these, two, Boiken (35,000) and Abelam (or Ambulas: 33,000), both from the Ndu family, are spoken in the Sepik area.

Over 230 languages of Papua New Guinea are spoken by 400 people or less; about 190 have under 401-1000 speakers, 130 have 1000- 2000 speakers, over 80 have under 2,000-4,000, and a further 132 have 4,000-20,000 speakers.

A few languages are known to have become extinct during past decades, among them Gorovu (Grass family) from East Sepik; and about 30 have an unknown number of speakers. Most of the Sepik languages are not taught at school, and many are endangered in different ways.

Impending language endangerment may have to do with cultural attitudes. In many Sepik cultures, language was traditionally considered on a par with material goods — spells, incantations and even names and individual words being traded and bought (see Harrison 1990).

The emphasis on exchange and value assigned to outside goods, both material and non-material, was called 'importing culture' by Mead (1938). 'Importing cultures' are by definition open to outside influences, and may ultimately create favourable conditions for language shift. In contrast, a tendency towards preservation of the 'status quo', and existing values and objects, will support the continuing adherence to one's own customs, carrying forward the emblematicity of language and traditions (Foley 1986). Currently, the delicate balance between the two tendencies may tip towards yielding to the pressure of the dominant mainstream values of the consumer society. The Iatmul culture of the Middle Sepik was described by Bateson (1936) as a complex

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relationships of languages such as various Arapesh languages including Ilahita, Bumbita, Mountain Arapesh, Southern Arapesh, Cemaun Arapesh, Olo, One, Au, Yil, Kombio, Kamasau, Monumbo and maybe others). According to Foley (1997, 2000), LOWER SEPIK and LOWER RAMU may be distantly related. ISOLATES include Abau, Busa, Nagatman, Iwam, Yessan-Mayo, Kwoma and Kwanga. Kwoma could be distantly related to the Ndu languages. A few Austronesian languages, such as Sissano, are spoken on the coast. Foley (2000b) appears to group together what he has previously recognised as a number of distinct language families; however, he has not yet published the detailed justification for it.
[5] According to the recently issued map of the SIL presence in Papua New Guinea, fewer than fifty teams are working or have worked on Sepik languages.

interplay between the receptiveness to innovations and the preservation of traditions; this created an elaborate and rich culture. At present, this receptiveness, coupled with an enthusiastic response to the demands of the tourist industry, and the physical and social mobility of the Iatmul, has resulted in the drastic expansion of its 'importing' aspects. These are overwhelming the tradition which is, by and large, being forgotten. Numerous Iatmul move to towns (such as Wewak, the capital of East Sepik Province; or government posts such as Ambunti) where they may live as squatters struggling to make ends meet. The process of cultural reproduction has virtually stopped; even old skills such as carving are being forgotten by younger people. Consequently, many children are now not learning the language. Even with as many as 12,000 speakers, the language may be facing endangerment.

The latest sociolinguistic survey in the Sepik basin was conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1980 (Loving 1980), just five years after the country became independent. It covered seventeen languages. In spite of a variable but on the whole pervasive degree of bilingualism in Tok Pisin, all the languages were considered viable (and recommended for opening SIL translation programs). However, since nowadays there are hardly any villages left in the Sepik area where no-one would know any Tok Pisin, it is far from clear whether all these indigenous languages are still robust. There are two types of situation.

A. BALANCED AND STABLE DI- OR TRI-GLOSSIA.
Di- or tri-glossia involves Tok Pisin and often also English as the languages of the government, local council, missions and schooling, with the vernacular used in day-to-day communication in other circumstances (including homes). The tendency towards a triglossic situation in Papua New Guinea was first identified by Sankoff (1980: 35). If the di- or tri-glossic situation is stable, the vernacular is not endangered, as appears to be the case with Kilmeri (Border family: Brown 1980 and Claudia Gerstner-Link, p.c.), Abau (isolate: Martin 1980: 218 and Cindy Farr, p.c.) and Yessan-Mayo (isolate: own observations).[6]

A strong indigenous language may be spreading at the expense of others. Watam (Lower Ramu: Foley 1997), spoken by 700 people in three villages, is used by all generations. The fact that all speakers are bilingual in Tok Pisin does not appear to affect Watam's vitality. On the contrary: Foley reports that children of Koper village (originally speaking the Lower Sepik language Kopar, now with no real speakers under fifty) attend the Community school in Watam village; these children are now largely bilingual in Watam.

In the situation of growing prestige and economic opportunities associated with proficiency in Tok Pisin, such polyglossic relationships between languages may turn out to become unstable. Wom (Torricelli family: Moeckel and Moeckel 1980) had 2,500 speakers spread over five villages. Besides diglossic relationships with Tok Pisin, the Wom speaking villages preserved traditional patterns of multilingualism in Urat Southern Arapesh and Bumbita Arapesh (Torricelli). But even at the time of the survey most speakers regarded Tok Pisin as the language of economic opportunities and numerous parents did speak Tok Pisin to their children

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[6] Further examples, from the 1980 SIL survey, included Pagi (Border family, 1,100 speakers) spoken not very far from Vanimo, the capital of Sandaun province (Brown 1980), Mehek (isolate; over 4,000 speakers), Kwanga (Torricelli family, about 700), Siliput (isolate, below 300) (Bugenhagen 1980), Heyo (Torricelli family, 1,700) and Pahi (isolate?, 566) (Hutchinson 1980). Stable diglossia was observed for a few languages with a low number of speakers: Busa (150) and Nagatman (about 500), both isolates spoken in East Sepik Province (Graham1980), then spoken in very remote areas with no access to roads.

— this is indicative of a tendency towards destabilisation, at least in the long run. (Moeckel and Moeckel 1980 predicted that the language may be strong for at least two generations.) [7]

B. DESTABILISED DIGLOSSIA.

Diglossic relationships between languages are becoming destabilised with the growing knowledge of Tok Pisin whereby Tok Pisin is encroaching into every sphere of life at the expense of the vernacular. (To what extent this also happening with English requires further investigation.) Then, the vitality of the vernacular is threatened. Situations of this kind form a continuum: from people being fully proficient in Tok Pisin (and possibly also having some knowledge of English) and in the vernacular, to the vernacular becoming virtually unknown to anyone below certain age.

At the time of the SIL survey, all speakers of Yahang (1,116) and Beli (1,400) (both from Torricelli family: Cooper 1980) were bilingual in Tok Pisin. School children were reported to use Tok Pisin among themselves, and young people were at least equally proficient in the vernacular and in Tok Pisin. Tok Pisin was quickly gaining ground as the main language. Presumably by now, both languages have become endangered.

Numerous communities in the Sepik area with a small number of speakers have effectively undergone language shift. Children tend to acquire Tok Pisin rather than the vernacular as the first language, and full competence in the vernacular is only found among adults. A classic case of such shift is Taiap (isolate spoken in Gapun village, spoken by about 100 people) documented by Kulick 1987, 1992a, b; also see Kulick and Stroud 1990). Language socialisation in Taiap involves the conceptualisation of Tok Pisin as a symbol of modernity and sought-after prosperity, while the vernacular is associated with 'backwardness'. A somewhat similar example is Yimas (Lower Sepik: Foley 1991: 4-6) spoken by about 250 people in two villages.[8]

Similar processes of rapid language shift have been observed for languages with seemingly large number of speakers. Murik (1,200, Lower Sepik) is not learnt by children any more, and neither is Abu' Arapesh (with over 5,000 people: Nekitel 1985). Cemaun Arapesh (Lise Dobrin, p.c.) has less that 100 fluent speakers, while Tok Pisin is employed by everyone. Makopin

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[7] A somewhat similar example is Kombio (Torricelli family: Baker and Baker 1980), with about 2,545 speakers (spread over 31 villages) all bilingual in Tok Pisin, with many children growing up bilingual. The vernacular seemed strong at the time of the survey; however, even then 'the drain of educated young people from the area, and the pressures of economic development which requires the use of Tok Pisin' posed an imminent threat to the vernacular (Baker and Baker 1980: 69). A similar situation was described for Namie (isolate, Sandaun province, 3,500 speakers: Pappenhagen and Pappenhagen 1980).

[8] Foley reports that everyone under forty is at least bilingual in Tok Pisin, which does affect their Yimas. Many young children grow up with Tok Pisin as their first language, and they may not acquire Yimas at all. Foley (1991: 5) concluded that 'it is perhaps too early to say that the Yimas language is dying, but it must be admitted that the prognosis is not good.' Other small communities where language shift is under way include Ngala (Ndu: 140; cf. Newton 1971), Kaunga (Ndu: 230), Kopar (Lower Sepik: 250) and Ningerra (Sko: 400).

(Northern Arapesh, Torricelli family: Nidue 1990: 65-6) is currently spoken in a situation of a relatively stable triglossia; however, with the increasing number of young people learning Tok Pisin, its survival within the next fifty years is problematic. At least some languages of the Sko family are either not being acquired by all children, or their acquisition is incomplete — this is the case with Dumo (also known as Vanimo, Sko family: Andrew Ingram, p.c.).

      For languages not in immediate danger of language shift a further question arises: how do the languages change in the situation of bilingualism with Tok Pisin and its growing dominance? This issue has not been dealt with except by Foley (1991) and (1997), for Yimas and Watam, and Ingram (forthcoming), for Dumo. A language may not as yet be severely endangered, but still show unmistakable signs of impending extinction. We will see in §4 how processes of language shift are affecting Manambu (Ndu), a seemingly healthy language, and how one can discern signs of language obsolescence even among some fluent speakers.

**2.3 What facilitates language loss?**
In Papua New Guinea, there are no documented instances of the 'sudden death' of a language (see the classification suggested by Campbell and Muntzel 1989). 'Sudden death' occurs when all speakers have been exterminated or died of a disease, as, for instance, the Arawá people from Southern Amazonia (Dixon 1999). Neither do we have any attested examples of 'radical death' whereby a rapid language loss is associated with genocide or severe political repressions.[9] Natural catastrophes, such as floods, tidal waves or earthquakes, presumably also play a role in language extinction: we can recall a catastrophic tidal wave in the area around Aitape, West Sepik (Sandaun) Province, which dealt a severe blow to the population of Sissano, an Austronesian language with a Papuan substratum. (The exact extent of damage inflicted upon the language, spoken by over 4,000 people, is not known.)

      Most instances of language obsolescence are those of 'gradual death', that is, the loss of a language due to a gradual shift to the dominant language with intermediary stage of bilingualism, and gradual contraction in spheres of usage of the erstwhile vernacular. The effects of 'gradual death' on Manambu are discussed in §4.[10]
A number of factors contributing to gradual language obsolescence and loss include:

(a) NUMBER OF SPEAKERS.
We have seen above that in most cases language groups with small numbers of speakers are more prone to language shift than larger languages. Languages with fewer than fifty speakers have hardly any chance of survival (similar cases are found all over Papua New Guinea; cf. for instance, Smith 1992a, on the imminent extinction of Susuami, an Angan language from Morobe Province). One of the reasons for the vitality of the Mehek language (Bugenhagen 1980: 93) is that it is numerically the dominant language in the area. However, we have seen above that language shift may occur in large communities — such as Arapesh and Murik. Factors which contribute to a language's vitality may include its use as a lingua franca (Iatmul in the Middle

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[9] Indications are that, before European contact, inter-tribal warfare did result in extinction of tribes and of languages. Traditional accounts of tribal wars, such as the clashes between the Manambu and the unidentified group called Giñap-Kwalap, may point in this direction: see Harrison (1993).

[10] Another type of language death is termed 'bottom-to-top' death (Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 185): here, the languages first goes as a means of communication at home and continues to be used just in ritual contexts. This has not been documented for any Papuan language (we will see numerous examples to the contrary: ritual registers tend to disappear even in what can be considered 'healthy' languages).

Sepik area could be the case in point). An indigenous language spoken by a small group of people is sometimes considered a barrier to inter-group communication: Kulick (1987, 1992a) reported this for Taiap, an isolate generally not known to people outside the village; see similar observations on Busa, by Graham (1980).

(b) PROXIMITY TO TOWNS, MISSION CENTRES, MARKETS AND MAIN VEINS OF COMMUNICATIONS SUCH AS ROADS OR RIVERS.

Yessan-Mayo and Warapu (Sko family), both spoken far inland and away from main roads, are being learnt by children and not displaced by Tok Pisin. The frequency of code-switching in the Manambu-speaking Malu village located close to the government post Ambunti is higher than in Avatip which is further away. Proximity to schools may be an additional factor. A striking situation was described by Cooper (1980) in his survey of three Torricelli languages — Yahang (1,116), Beli (1,400) and Laeko-Libuat (518) all spoken in the Nuku district of Sandaun province in remote areas with no proper roads and rugged walking tracks between villages. Speakers of Yahang and Beli were bilingual in Tok Pisin, school children used Tok Pisin among themselves, and young people were at least equally proficient in the vernacular and in Tok Pisin. In contrast, children in Laeko-Lubuat always spoke their vernacular among themselves. The language with the least number of speakers appeared to be the least endangered. The reason for this was simple: there were no schools in Laeko-Libuat villages, and due to communication difficulties children did not get much schooling and thus remained largely unaffected by Tok Pisin.

However, in quite a few cases language shift has occurred or is taking place in isolated communities — for instance, in Gapun and in Womsis village (where Abu' Arapesh is not being learnt by children any more). Then, other factors are at work — see below.

(c) LENGTH AND/OR INTENSITY OF CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS.

In spite of being a long way away from major roads, Abu' Arapesh is severely endangered. One reason for this is a prolonged and quite intensive contact with European invaders: the Arapesh have had contact with German and then Australian colonial administration since the late 1800s. German priests of the Divine Word began establishing contact with the Abu' in the mid-1930s, recruiting men to attend schools (Nekitel 1985, 1992: 52). Arapesh men worked for alluvial gold prospectors and land surveyors in the 1920s and 1930s, and during World War II, numerous men were recruited into the Allied forces. The result was a continuous influx of Tok Pisin into the community. In recent years, the number of inter-ethnic marriages among the Abu' has drastically increased, and so has the number of Abu' who leave their native village to attend schools or get jobs (Nekitel 1998: 54-5).

The situation in Gapun is somewhat different. Tok Pisin was first brought to the Gapun village in the 1950s by young men returning from plantations (men have not left the village since 1960s), and was subsequently incorporated into the communicative repertoire of the villagers (Kulick 1992b: 20). Numerous scholars (including Mead 1931, Sankoff 1976, 1977, Laycock 1979) observed that men coming back to their villages from plantation work immediately started teaching the newly acquired Tok Pisin to their fellow villagers to 'bolster their reputation and display their connection with the outside world'. In Gapun, Tok Pisin became integrated into the cosmological system and became the symbol of 'maleness'. Its use in oratorical speeches was crucial for the impending language shift: Tok Pisin virtually became a coveted asset associated with modernity and *save*, literally 'knowledge'. This connection was strengthened each time white men had contact with the villagers: priests spoke it, and posts of authority were available

exclusively to Tok Pisin speakers. This ultimately undermined the vitality of Taiap (the isolate language indigenous to Gapun), creating a favourable environment for an impending language shift.

(d) LANGUAGE PRESTIGE, LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE AND ITS EVALUATION AS 'EASY' OR 'DIFFICULT'. Language isolates are often considered 'very difficult' by outsiders, and even by speakers themselves; Kulick (1987, 1992a) reports that the Gapun villagers consider Taiap more difficult to acquire than Tok Pisin. Abu' Arapesh (Nekitel 1998) is often judged by the villagers as 'difficult': those Abu' who do not speak the language often 'excuse' themselves by saying that Tok Pisin is 'easier' to learn. Along similar lines, Kuot, the only non-Austronesian language of New Ireland, surrounded by Austronesian languages, is judged to be 'difficult' (Lindström 2002); the language is not being learnt by children and is obviously endangered. In contrast, Musom, an Austronesian language spoken in Morobe Province (Smith 1992b), surrounded by closely related Austronesian languages, is not considered particularly hard; the language appears to be in a healthy state.[11]

Language etiquette — that is, rules of language choice and attitudes to linguistic diversity — may play a role. The loss of Abu' Arapesh (Nekitel 1998) goes together with a linguistic norm whereby one avoids speaking a language not understood by visitors, lest one be suspected of practicing magic. With the influx of outsiders, this means pervasive use of Tok Pisin. The 'tolerance of linguistic diversity' among the Taiap speakers in Gapun is contributing to the loss of the vernacular.

Language prestige is also a factor. All the papers in the sociolinguistic survey by Loving (1980) stress how people are proud of their language. Along similar lines, Smith (1992b), in his discussion of the apparently healthy situation of Musom, an Austronesian language of Morobe Province, stresses the importance of pride in one's language and identity, and 'an ideology that newcomers must adapt to village norms of language and culture' (p. 119). In contrast, speakers of Kuot (Lindström 2002) do not attach any particular importance to their language. The Gapun villagers speakers associate their vernacular Taiap with 'backwardness', and Tok Pisin with modernisation and economic prosperity. Such lack of prestige for an individual language may ultimately have to do with colonial attitudes. In the case of Abu' Arapesh, these were generally negative (possibly also because the newcomers were incapable of learning this dauntingly complex language). The Abu' who knew no Tok Pisin were viewed as 'backward' *bus kanaka*, or 'bush dwellers'. One can hardly expect a language to survive in this adverse environment. (Further examples of prestige as a mechanism for language loss versus maintenance in Papua New Guinea can be found in Landweer 2000: 12-13).

(e) PRESENCE OF SCHOOLING IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE.
We have seen above how schooling in Watam is enhancing the spread of this language. A well-planned and well-executed teaching program at the primary school level is extremely important for language maintenance (Nidue 1990 considers this crucial for the survival of Makopin Arapesh). In contrast, a non-user-friendly orthography may be detrimental to the language (see §4.4).

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[11] One indigenous language can be evaluated as more or less difficult than another. Teketay, a very proficient speaker of Manambu (and bilingual in Tok Pisin), confessed to me that she had never been able to learn her mother's language, Chambri, because it was 'too hard'.

(f) DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION.
In the case of balanced di- and tri-glossia, the vernacular is kept for ritual purposes and for communication outside government, school and so on. However, the introduction of Christianity most often results in the abandonment of indigenous religions, thus reducing the domain of language use. (Cases where the indigenous language has been adopted in Christian worship have been also attested: see Cahill 2000.) The reduction of the domain of use goes together with cultural obsolescence and contraction. For instance, the obsolescence of traditional name-debates in the Manambu communities goes together with the loss of a special speech register, highly influenced by Iatmul (see Harrison 1990). That men often leave the village (at least temporarily) to work on plantations affects the traditional parent-child interaction: a male child loses the opportunity of learning skills and 'male' knowledge from his father, unlike back in the old days. Now paternal influence consists in expanding one's competence in Tok Pisin. This is related to the following three factors, (g)-(i):

(g) INFLUX OF OUTSIDERS.
Due to improved communications, the indigenous population tends to relocate more often than in the past. A man may import a wife from another indigenous group. This inevitably leads to the spread of a local lingua franca, and of Tok Pisin. The effect of 'foreign' women on the PNG local communities has been amply documented by Nekitel (1998); and is also the case in Manambu villages (see §4).

(h) OUT-MIGRATIONS OF EDUCATED PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY.
Loving (1980) mentioned this as a major cause of endangerment for Kombio, as well as for Abu' Arapesh. Another disruptive factor for language transmission and conservation is the 'brain drain': whereby the most gifted children — some of whom have acquired substantial cultural knowledge from their respected and equally gifted parents — move out of the villages, acquire a Western-style education and eventually settle down in urban centres. In the Manambu context, this represents a major threat to the linguistic and cultural continuity; see below.

The outmigration creates a substantial diaspora in urban centres whose role is hard to evaluate. Gewertz and Errington (1999) report cases where urbanised people sever their links with their 'backward' grass-root families. In other cases, representatives of the diaspora maintain close links with their 'home' in the villages.[12] The urban Manambu offer material support to their families — not infrequently providing them with medicine and also material goods such as radio, batteries and even solar panels, resulting in an increase of the role of Tok Pisin and English in the villagers' lives. The urban Manambu often facilitate the 'brain-drain'. On the other hand, they also play a role in perpetuating mortuary rituals; many of them take ardent interest in language maintenance and culture transmission, and in community-based language programs. We return to this in §4.

(i) MATERIAL WEALTH OF THE VILLAGE, ACCESS TO A STABLE ECONOMIC BASE AND THE
PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS.
An important factor which enhances the vitality of some indigenous languages (see Bugenhagen 1980: 93, on Mehek and Siliput) is to do with the maintenance of the traditional and self-sufficient patterns of subsistence agriculture: 'competence in Tok Pisin and English is not needed

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[12] I have heard many Manambu in Port Moresby refer to their villages as 'home'.

for this sort of existence. Thus, motivation to drop the vernacular and just speak Tok Pisin and/or English is lacking'. Communities which are dependent on economic transactions involving Tok Pisin are in danger of losing their language. As Landweer (2000: 15) put it, 'dependence on an economic system requiring use of a non-vernacular language' puts the vernacular in jeopardy. In addition, being 'open' to tourists and 'selling' their culture could also be a factor in rapid language and cultural loss among the Iatmul of the Middle Sepik (Pauline Laki, p.c.).[13]

Language obsolescence and the general simplification of a language situation goes together with the disruption of traditional multilingualism — this is the topic of the next section.

### 3. Disruption of traditional multilingualism

Traditionally, multilingual patterns of communication were a norm rather than an exception throughout the world. This is particularly true of the Sepik area where multilingualism was corroborated by well established trade patterns (see Sankoff 1980, on varied patterns of multilingualism and polyglossic patterns in Papua New Guinea, with a focus on the New Guinea highlands; also see an overview in Dorian forthcoming). Small languages spoken by a few hundred speakers were especially prone to be multilingual — this was the case with Ngala and Yelogu, the smallest language of the Ndu family.[14]

Under pressure from the newly arisen di- and triglossic situations, these traditional patterns are ultimately getting lost. A study by Kulick and Stroud (1990) showed that men over fifty (Generation I) typically spoke two to five languages besides their native Taiap (these included Adjora, Kopar, Buna, Murik, Watam and Angoram). Most men between 25 and 48 (Generation II) knew just Taiap and Tok Pisin; some also knew Adjora and Kopar. Representatives of Generation III, aged between 10 and 23, knew either Taiap and Tok Pisin or just Tok Pisin; while the youngest ones knew just Tok Pisin, and some understood Taiap.[15] Speakers of Semaun Arapesh were traditionally bilingual with Boiken (Ndu); now Semaun Arapesh is severely endangered and Boiken is not being learnt (Lise Dobrin, p.c.).

Representatives of different clans of the Manambu group of East Sepik had traditional trade links with several different groups, including genetically related Iatmul, Kaunga, Wosera, Sawos and unrelated Chambri, Yessan-Mauo and Kwoma (see Harrison 1990: 23; and 70-2, for a list of clans with corresponding partners). Additional language knowledge involved traditional trade partners. Older people (between 60 and 80) still retain knowledge of Iatmul, and some people of Kwoma; those between 30 and 50 years of age have hardly any knowledge of any of these. Instead, they acquired good proficiency in Tok Pisin (see data in Aikhenvald 2002).

Traditional multilingualism is replaced by newly emerging bilingual patterns. An increasing number of children grow up monolingual in Tok Pisin (possibly with passive knowledge of Manambu). The overwhelming majority of urban Manambu under twenty have at most passive knowledge of the language (I am aware of a just couple of exceptions). Those who have lost fluency in their parents' vernacular may have snippets of knowledge; some know a few greetings, some kin terms, or names for flora or fauna. They may even use these to parade their

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[13] To what extent the 'importing cultures' of the Sepik area are therefore more open to endangerment remains open.
[14] Also see studies of traditional multilingualism in other areas of New Guinea, by Thurston (1987: 30-2); Bradshaw (1978) and Clifton (1994); and a summary by Foley (1986: 29-30).
[15] A slightly different situation obtained for women of Generations I and II: those over 60 would know just Taiap, those from Generation II would know Taiao and Tok Pisin; some also knew Adjora and Kopar; similar results to the males obtained for Generations III and IV.

identification with their 'grass-roots' (inasmuch as is needed). They can be called 'symbolic' users of the language.

In the language situation of 'importing culture' (Mead 1938) where non-material objects — including incantations, spells, names and even simple words — can be traded on a par with material goods (see discussion in Harrison 1990), breakdown in traditional exchange patterns and multilingual knowledge goes together with stylistic reduction, contraction and loss of the lexical (and often grammatical) wealth of the language itself; we return to this in §4.

The disintegration of traditional trade partnerships and other interrelations results in yet another 'loss' for linguistic diversity: the obsolescence and disuse of traditional trade pidgins and linguae franche. Iatmul, a well-established lingua franca over the whole Middle Sepik, has practically lost its status as such. Pidgin Iatmul, and other trade-languages such as Yimas-Arafundi pidgin (Foley 1991) and Kwoma-Manambu are no longer actively used, and often not even remembered. I showed a short passage in Kwoma-Manambu pidgin — published in Bowden (1997: 337-9) — to a few Manambu speakers of various generations; the 'mixed language' was greeted with mirth, but no-one would admit to ever using it. This is concomitant to cultural contraction and loss.

Traditional multilingualism tends to be replaced by new diglossic and triglossic patterns with Tok Pisin and English.[16] This, typically unstable, relationship more often than not results in the dominance of the two linguae franche and the loss of the vernacular.

We now consider the effects of language obsolescence on Manambu,a Ndu language from East Sepik Province.

## 4. Incipient obsolescence: the case of Manambu

The linguistic situation of the Manambu is described in §4.1. In §4.2, we analyse linguistic consequences of language obsolescence. Extensive borrowing and code-switching are addressed in §4.3. The Manambu revival movement and its effects are discussed in §4.4.

## 4.1 The linguistic situation

Manambu is currently spoken by about 2,500 people, over a thousand of whom reside in Avatip (about an hour by canoe with an outboard motor from Ambunti). The remainder occupy the villages of Yuambak, Malu, Apa:n and Yuanab (Yambon). Between 200 and 400 expatriates live outside the villages in Port Moresby, Wewak, Lei, Madang and even Rabaul. Just like elsewhere in the Sepik area, every Manambu has passable knowledge of Tok Pisin. (I have encountered a few old ladies who prefer not to speak Tok Pisin if they can help it, claiming that they do not speak it well.)

The older generation of Avatip dwellers (over fifty) communicate between themselves and with their children and grandchildren in Manambu; when they talk to their grandchildren they occasionally intersperse their Manambu with Tok Pisin commands. Their children (between fifty and twenty) who 'succeeded' in life reside outside the village. Many are married to non-Manambu speakers, and consequently speak no Manambu at home. Neither do their children speak or understand Manambu.

Those who remain in the village do speak Manambu well and employ it in their homes, with two caveats. Firstly, those who are married to non-Manambu typically do not speak

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[16] Attempts to introduce other lingue franche mostly failed. For instance, in the Sepik area, Boiken was selected by Catholic missionaries as a lingua franca; it failed to catch on simply because people refused to learn yet another local language (McElhanon 1979: 284; Foley 1986: 31).

Manambu at home, and their children grow up as first-language learners of Tok Pisin. For instance, the headmaster of the local school (who comes from the family of W, a very important man in his clan, and is himself quite knowledgeable in the traditional lore) has two wives (following the Manambu custom), both outsiders. One speaks rudimentary Manambu, the other one does not; consequently, their children speak nothing but Tok Pisin.

Secondly, educated members of the community and church activists also tend to over-use Tok Pisin in their homes, at the expense of Manambu. This is the case in the family of one of the local schoolteachers. The younger generation vary in how proficient they are in Manambu. Children who have at least one non-Manambu parent usually do not acquire the language at all (there are just two exceptions I am aware of). Those who grow up in Manambu households learn Manambu and Tok Pisin as their first languages.

As soon as they go to school, their exposure to Tok Pisin grows exponentially. Avatip has a primary school which is basically run in Tok Pisin and English (though I was told that teachers do occasionally revert to Manambu). After grade six, those children who wish to go on studying and whose parents are affluent enough are sent to a school in Ambunti, the government post; some go to Brendy high school in Wewak. They come home for holidays; but their proficiency in Manambu dwindles for lack of practice.

An additional problem is the 'brain drain' mentioned above: the most gifted children from knowledgeable, wealthy and well-established families get 'sucked' into the mainstream educational system. As a result, the intergenerational transmission of the language is interrupted. It should be pointed out that, in traditional times, men with most traditional knowledge (viewed largely in terms of genealogies, names and totemic terminology) had most power and wealth. With the advent of Europeans, they also acquired political power in the newly established institutions. Their children were usually selected to be sent to schools outside the village; many of them acquired good education and privileged positions in the Papua New Guinea establishment (such as Commandant of Murray Barracks in Port Moresby, Chief of Military Staff, Military Advisers, Military Attache; numerous important posts in the public service, including the National Research Institute, are occupied by the Manambu).

Take the late W, the most acknowledged wise man (*simbuk)* of his clan, appointed *luluai* (Tok Pisin for 'village chief') under the Australian administration. He had two wives. His only daughter from his first wife, an extremely bright girl with outstanding cultural knowledge, was selected to go to Brendy high school in Wewak; she then worked in the public service and for Radio Australia. Now married to a Manambu man, she is a great partisan of the Manambu cultural revival. None of her three children can speak the language. W had two sons and one daughter from his second wife: both sons got an MA in England and occupy important posts in the public service. At least one of them is an extremely elaborate and proficient speaker of Manambu. But their city-educated children know no Manambu. W's daughter lives in a squatter settlement in one of Papua New Guinea's big cities; the rest of the family have lost touch with her. The school headmaster, W's adopted son, is very keen on acquiring cultural knowledge, and is a proficient Manambu speaker; but, as mentioned above, no Manambu is spoken in his family. This, in a nutshell, illustrates language shift and loss in one of the most respected families of the community.

In the village, Manambu is hardly spoken outside the home. Tok Pisin is the main language of the village council, and of the churches. Avatip has churches of at least five different Christian denominations. Church allegiances are now becoming more important than clan connections. Even during meetings for ritual purposes, if a group discussion arises, people

between fifty and thirty tend to switch to Tok Pisin. (I witnessed such switches during speeches at the traditional mortuary ceremony, KEkEtEp; see §4.4 and Figure 1 below.)

When children and teenagers speak among themselves, they use hardly any Manambu. They may use it when speaking to their parents. However, much parent-child communication involves Tok Pisin and even English, or, at best, code-switching. The following is typical of mother-child interaction. The little girl does not want to let go of the string bag her mother is making. The mother, a proficient Manambu speaker, starts off with Manambu, and then carries on using English and Tok Pisin, as she gets more and more annoyed. Here and elsewhere Tok Pisin words are underlined; English words are double-underlined.

(1)  *kur-tukwa*   *da-n*      *ada*      *naughty*     *yu*      *stupid* *idiot*
     do-PROH       go.down-SEQ sit:IMPV   naughty       you      stupid  idiot
     *bai*  *mi*  *pait-im*    *yu*       *nogut*        *tru*
     FUT    I     hit-TRANS    you        bad/strong     really
     'Don't do (it), sit down, naught, stupid idiot, I will hit you really strongly'


Then she hits the girl; the girl cries, and the mother soothes her saying *Sori, mi sori* (sorry, I am sorry) in Tok Pisin. The incident is over. This kind of language socialisation is reminiscent of the Gapun village, as documented by Kulick (1987). Here, similarly to Manambu, code-switching and language mixing does vary with the speech genre. But the variation is in degree, not in kind. This is indicative of the fact that language shift from the vernacular to Tok Pisin is under way.

Contraction in language knowledge has to do with the disruption of patterns of traditional multilingualism where it existed, extensive lexical and structural borrowing from newly emergent majority languages, and extensive reliance on Tok Pisin and even English. As a result, younger people may develop a simplified register which is often frowned upon by elders, and at the same time used by those who have political power in the village. We address this issue below.

**4.2 Linguistic consequences of language obsolescence**
The difference between language change in 'healthy' and in endangered or obsolescent languages very often lies not in the SORTS of change, which are often the same (Campbell and Muntzel 1989). Rather, it lies in the QUANTITY of change, and in the SPEED with which the obsolescent language changes. As Schmidt (1985: 213) pointed out, 'one distinguishing feature of the Dyirbal death situation is that vast amounts of change are compressed into a short timespan of about 25 years'. Language obsolescence frequently entails a general breakdown in language structure resulting in allophonic and morphological variation, regularisation and even new allomorphs (such change is often individual and sporadic, termed 'discontinuous' by Tsitsipis 1998: 34). Stylistic, rhetorical and expressive loss in language shift results in lexical and even in grammatical reduction (cf. Woodbury 1998). The types of changes observed in Manambu follow the general principles of change in language obsolescence summarised by Campbell and Muntzel (1989), Dixon (1991b), Sasse (1992) and Aikhenvald (2003: Chapter 11) and are discussed below.

A. Overapplication and variability of phonological processes.

In language obsolescence, what were obligatory phonological rules may come to apply optionally, thus resulting in phonological variability. Manambu has complicated phonetic rules concerning the prenasalisation of voiced stops and the fricative. All voiced stops and the voiced fricative *j* are prenasalised in the word-initial, intervocalic and word-final position; that is, *bal* 'pig' is pronounced as [$^m$bal], *yab* 'road' as [ya$^m$b], *ab* 'head' is pronounced as [a$^m$b], *abawapwi* 'headdress, hat' as [a$^m$bawapwi], and *Julie* as [$^n$Juli]. If a word contains an initial stop or fricative and a non-initial nasal or voiced stop or fricative, the latter is not pronounced as prenasalised: *John* is pronounced as [Jon] (not *$^n$Jon), and *JagEr* 'garfish (also used as a name)' as [ja$^n$gEr], not *$^n$ja$^n$gEr. Younger people and especially children tend to lose prenasalisation in all contexts: one hears [gwal] instead of [$^n$gwal] 'paternal grandfather', [gra-tukwa] instead of [$^n$gra-tukwa] 'don't cry' or [ja:p] rather than [$^n$ja:p] 'shell valuable'. A similar phenomenon has been observed in Yimas, where younger speakers tend to merge *n* and *N* in initial position (Foley 1991: 39).

B. Morphological reduction and obsolescence.

Incipient morphological obsolescence in Manambu concerns the frequency of some grammatical systems. Manambu has several ways of marking negation; in particular desiderative is negated differently from any other form. Younger speakers avoid using the desiderative negator *ata* replacing it with an analytic construction involving the general negator *ma:*, also used in the meaning 'no'. A Traditional Manambu construction is *wEn ata yE-kEr* (I NEG.DES go-DES) 'I don't want to go'. Younger speaker of Manambu may say *wEn yE-kEr ma:* (I go-DES NEG), *wEn yEyak* (I go+RED+DAT) *ma:* (NEG) or *ma: wa-na-wEn* (NEG say-PRES-1sgBAS) 'I don't want to go; I want to go — no; I say no' instead.[17]

C. Morphological regularisation.

Similarly to a number of other Papuan languages (Comrie 2001), Manambu distinguishes two forms of the verb 'give': *kwatiya-* 'give to nonthird person' and *kui-* 'give to third person'. Younger people and even some older speakers who over-use Tok Pisin (see (9)) tend to generalise *kui* for all circumstances.[18] The allative-instrumental case in Manambu has two allomorphs: -*Vl* if the noun contains an *r* (e.g. *ar-al* (lake-ALL) 'to a lake', *tEkEr-El* (bench-ALL) 'with a bench'), and -*Vr* in all other environments. Younger speakers are often unaware of this distribution; one hears *ar-ar* 'to a lake' and *kar-ar* 'with a car'.

D. New morphological variability, and creation of new allomorphs.

This is a frequent consequence of language obsolescence, and it often also has to do with the insecurity of younger people with respect to the choice of a correct allomorph. Manambu has three numbers: singular (unmarked), dual and plural, shown on agreeing modifiers and on verbs.

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[17] Along similar lines, in Yimas, morphological obsolescence and reduction may go together with the development of analytic structures under the influence of a lingua franca (Tok Pisin most of the time). Traditional speakers of Yimas mark negative imperatives with a prefix, while younger speakers prefer an analytic construction with *pack* 'don't' following a verb inflected with the irrealis suffix (Foley 1991: 275). If there is a choice between a synthetic and an analytic structure, younger speakers opt for the latter. In Yimas, 'all speakers, sometimes, and younger speakers (under 30), commonly' avoid using complicated synthetic negative constructions 'by simply using the proclitic *ina* 'not' before a positive verb'. This proclitic is borrowed from the Tok Pisin *i no* 'negative'.

[18] Similarly, in Yimas with its complex noun class system, younger speakers tend to use the most frequently occurring allomorph of the number and noun class marker replacing the other allomorphs with it (Foley 1991: 139, 145).

Among the nouns, just kinship terms have overt number markers. The number marking is different in these two cases. As shown in Table 1, the choice between two plural allomorphs on kinship nouns, *-bƐr* and *-g$^w$*, is unpredictable. The allomorph *-g$^w$* is somewhat more frequent, while the allomorph *-bƐr* is homophonous with the dual marker on verbs and agreeing modifiers.

**Table 1. Number marking in Manambu**

| NUMBER | MARKING ON AGREEING MODIFIERS AND VERBS | MARKING ON KINSHIP NOUNS |
|---|---|---|
| DUAL | ***-bƐr*** | ***-vƐti***, e.g. *amæy-vƐti* 'mothers (du)' |
| PLURAL | ***-di*** | ***-Ɛg$^w$***, as in *kagrƐs-Ɛg$^w$* 'father's sister's children (pl)', *gwal-Ɛg$^w$* 'father's fathers (pl)', *ñaj-Ɛg$^w$* 'father's brothers (pl). <br><br> ***-bƐr***, as in *amæy-bƐr* 'mothers (pl), *asay-bƐr* 'fathers (pl)', *away-bƐr* 'mother's brothers (pl)' |

I have noticed variation in the choice of the two plural allomorphs among younger speakers for such terms as sg. *ñap*, pl. *ñap-a-bƐr*, *ñap-ag$^w$* 'mother's older sister'; sg. *ñasap*, pl. *ñasap-bƐr*, *ñasap-ag$^w$* 'father's older brother'; sg. *g$^w$al*, pl. *gwalug$^w$-bƐr*, *gwal-ug$^w$* 'grandchild; father's father'; sg. *babay*, pl. *babay-bƐr*, *babay-ug$^w$* 'mother's parent' and a few others. In one case double plural marking was given as an alternative: sg. *ma:m*, pl. *mam-Ɛg$^w$*, *mam-ug$^w$-bƐr* 'older sibling'.

There was no confusion in marking dual on kinship terms; note that the dual marker *-vƐti* is obviously related to the number '2' (*vƐti*), known to everyone. The only exception is the irregular dual of *ñan* 'child', *ñƐdi* (plural *ñanug$^w$*). Younger speakers regularise this form, by adding *vƐti* 'dual; two' to it: *ñƐdi-vƐti*, lit. 'child:DU-two' 'two children'.

Stylistic reduction and obsolescence of traditional knowledge affects number marking. The archaic plurals *tak$^w$ag$^w$* (woman/wife+PL) 'women', from *ta:k$^w$* 'woman, wife', *lanug$^w$* 'husbands' (*la:n* 'husband) and *tƐdig$^w$* (*tƐd* 'co-wife, woman of same generation') 'co-wives' only occur in *namai* 'foiled love songs'; and they are not known to younger people (or people who have lived outside the Manambu speaking area for a long time). Other forms which contain the plural marker *-Ɛg$^w$* tend to fall into disuse. One rarely hears plurals of address forms, such as *kupuyug$^w$* 'sorry (plural adressee)'; this is replaced with *kupuyai* 'sorry (singular addressee)'.

Some speakers develop new, spurious allomorphic variation. Manambu has two purposives: different-subject purposive marked with *-kƐk* following personal cross-referencing, and same-subject purposive *-kƐkƐk* (with no person marking). M, a fluent speaker who uses a lot of Tok Pisin in her home, tends to pronounce *-kƐkƐk* as [-krƐkƐk] thus applying a spurious change.

E. SYNTACTIC CALQUING.

Younger speakers' Manambu displays some syntactic calques from Tok Pisin. One such calque concerns structures with verbs describing physical states. The typical structure is 'I, cold is' as in (2a), 'I, hunger exists' as in (3a), and 'I, pins and needles exist', as in (4a) (note that the verbs are different in each case). Younger speakers opt for a different structure, with first person marked on

the verb mirroring a corresponding construction in Tok Pisin (and in English), cf. Tok Pisin *mi hangri*. That is, instead of the third person singular feminine suffix on the verb, they now use first person suffix. What was literally, 'I, hunger she-exists' is replaced by 'I, hunger I-exist'. Examples are under (2b-4b). In each case, the personal pronoun is optional.

Traditional Manambu

(2a)  *(wEn)  nEkEr  tay-na*
      I        cold     EXIST-PRES+3fem.sgBAS
      'It is cold', 'I am cold' (lit. 'I cold exists')

(3a)  *(wEn)  ka:m        yasE-na*
      I        hunger       EXIST-PRES+3fem.sgBAS
      I am hungry' (lit. 'I hunger exists')

(4a)  *(wEn)  bag              say-na*
      I        pins.and.needles    EXIST-PRES+3fem.sgBAS
      'I feel pins and needles' (lit. 'I pins and needles exist')


Young people's Manambu

(2b)  *nEkEr  tay-na-wEn*
      cold     EXIST-PRES-1fem.sgBAS
      'I am cold'

(3b)  *(wEn)  ka:m           yasE-na-wEn*
      I        hunger          EXIST-PRES-1fem.sgBAS
      'I am hungry'

(4b)  *bag             say-na-wEn*
      pins.and.needles    EXIST-PRES-1fem.sgBAS
      'I feel pins and needles'

G. DIALECT MIXING AND DIALECT LEVELLING.
When a language becomes restricted in its use, speakers tend to spontaneously mix forms from what were previously distinct dialects, without realising that they belong to different linguistic systems. Sometimes speakers may not even be able to tell which form comes from which dialect.
     In the Manambu context, dialect mixture is reinforced by the mobility of speakers. In particular, those Manambu who live outside the villages freely mix with each other, and often 'pick up' one another's speech habits. Dialect variation in the Manambu-speaking communities is not great. The language is spoken in five villages; of these, Yuwabak is considered an 'extension' of Avatip, and there are hardly any differences; similarly, Apa:n is an 'extension' of Malu. Yuanab (or Yambon) stands apart. In spite of being further away from the government station Ambunti, it has always been more open to outside influences than the other villages; it underwent a strong influx of Iatmul migrants and Iatmul influence (see discussion by Harrison 1990; see

Aikhenvald forthcoming, on Iatmul influence on the Yuanab vowel system). Yuanab was the only Manambu village to have welcomed SIL missionaries in the early sixties.[19]

The Yuanab dialect does have a number of marked differences from Avatip and Malu. One difference between this and other varieties lies in the r/l distinction: the Yuanab variety does not distinguish *r* and *l*; so *Ñaula* 'Iatmul' is pronounced as [Ñau|a]; and *salyakEn* 'stretching out' comes out as [sa|yakEn]. This difference is the only one that appears to be consistently maintained; and is also held to be emblematic for those who come from Yambon. However, in the speech of the Yuanab Manambu who live outside the area the two sounds *r* and *l* are interchangeable: they have become allophones in free variation. There used to be minor lexical and grammatical differences, which are nowadays difficult to retrieve. For instance, the word for 'dark' is *g/a-gE/* (black+LG-black) in Yuanab, and *gla-ka-gEl* (black+LG-INTENS-black) in the Avatip and Malu varieties; in actual fact one hears both forms in Avatip and in Malu.

The varieties spoken in Malu and in Avatip are very similar; minor lexical differences include
• Avatip *ba:g,* Malu *arEp* 'bush knife';
• Avatip *saku,* Malu *sapwi* 'give birth';
• Avatip *ya:l bu rEpE-na* (belly already be.full/enough-PRES+3fem.sgBAS), Malu *ya:l bu kapE-na* (belly already full-PRES+3fem.sgBAS) '(I) am full'. An alternative expression in Avatip is *ya:l bu waprukE-na* (belly already overflow,overfull-PRES+3fem.sgBAS) 'I am very full indeed'.

In actual fact, these items are used interchangeably by those living in Avatip and in Malu (though at least some Manambu purists, most of whom reside outside the villages, make it a point to never use expressions from a different dialect). For instance, an Avatip man spontaneously said: *arEp kao tE-na-d* (bush knife sharpness have-PRES-3masc.sgBAS) 'the knife is sharp', using the form *arEp,* from the Malu variety.

As a result of on-going levelling of dialectal differences, speakers are often unable to distinguish which forms belongs to which dialect. There are several ways of referring to being thirsty. Avatip speakers reject *kwa:l yas-* (throat feel-) as being either Malu or Yuanab; *gu yas-* (water EXIST-) is judged to be better, but still not quite right (it is said that this form must be Malu). I was advised to say *gu kE-kEr* (water eat-DES) 'I want to drink water' or, with a somewhat different meaning, *kwal gu-a-k wurtEpE-na* (throat water-LG-DAT long-PRES+3fem.sgBAS) 'I am very thirsty', to avoid any confusion. The speakers themselves used the first three forms interchangeably.

Dialect levelling does not always imply language attrition — it is, for instance, a well-known fact that the spread of radio and television results in the levelling of dialect differences in just about every language, including English. Neither does dialect levelling necessarily imply 'death' of a particular dialect — it may imply the creation of a new system incorporating features of several dialects, and thus be similar to 'koineisation' (a similar situation for Koiari, a not-yet-endangered Papuan language, was reported by Tom Dutton, p.c.). But in a situation of incipient language attrition, dialect mixture and dialect merging may lead to disruption of lexical and grammatical rules, and thus to the development of new variability.

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[19] Most Manambu speakers maintain that a major drawback of the first version of the Bible in Manambu, published in 1979, was due to it being based on the Yuanab variety; the revision of the translation is being currently done by Ken Nayau from Yuambak, in collaboration with other knowledgeable Manambu, mostly from Avatip.

F. STYLISTIC REDUCTION AND LOSS OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

Language attrition often entails 'stylistic shrinkage' (see Campbell and Muntzel 1989: 195) which goes together with cultural obsolescence. Stylistic reduction has been noted for numerous languages of Papua New Guinea. For instance, the knowledge of a ritual 'pandanus' language used by a number of peoples of the Southern Highlands province during the harvest of pandanus nuts has decreased during past thirty-forty years, as Franklin and Stefaniw (1992) report for Kewa and Imbongu (Kewa has about 25,000 speakers, and Imbongu has 16,000; neither of these languages are in any immediate danger of becoming extinct). Stylistic reduction often predates language obsolescence. For instance, the oratorical style *sesade kwanif* associated with the ritual food exchange in Abu' Arapesh was dying out in the 1960s, long before children stopped acquiring the language (Nekitel 1985: 182). Similar observations on Ilahita Arapesh can be found in Tuzin (1976).

In the case of Manambu, stylistic reduction goes along several lines. Firstly, the breakdown in the transmission of traditional knowledge and in the continuation of rituals brings about a lack of access to certain genres. One such genre is name-debating, *sE saki*. The fact that at least some of the best people go off to towns to pursue a career of European-based education means that, even if they have traditional knowledge themselves, they do not transmit it to their children. Neither do many of those who do remain back in the village. Two traditional speech styles, songs of foiled love affairs (called *namai* and *sui*) and funerary laments (called *gra-kudi* (lit. cry-language)) involve the deployment of Iatmul-based 'shadowy' lexicon and of totemic terms relating to the clan of the man or a woman mourned. Simon Harrison, during his work with old men in the 1980s, managed to get them to sing *namai* without any hesitation. My own experience with oldish women singing *namai* in 2001-2 was that many of them showed signs of hesitations in the choice of appropriate terms. During various funerary feasts (*kEkEtEp*) held at the village at this time, only few very old women knew how to sing *grakudi* properly which was a cause of worry to some members of the community.

**Table 2. Examples of 'other side' lexicon in Manambu[20]**

| EVERYDAY USAGE | MEANING | 'OTHER SIDE' COUNTERPART | ORIGIN |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ñab* | Sepik river | *tEmgun* | ? |
| *amæy* | mother (also classificatory) | *ñamEy* | Iatmul |
| *asay* | father (also classificatory) | *ñas* | Iatmul |
| *ma:m* | elder sibling | *ñamun* | Iatmul |
| *ñamEs* | younger sibling | *suab* | Iatmul |
| *ñan* | child | *badi* 'young' | Manambu |
| *away* | maternal uncle | *waw* | ? |
| *ñE* | sun; day | | |
| *ba:p* | moon | *ba:p* | Manambu |
| *gu* | water, river | *ka:r* | ? |
| *sual* | story; lie | *kama:l* | ? |

These genres require the use of totemic equivalents for numerous words, referred to as 'other side', or 'shadowy' lexicon. The knowledge of the highly Iatmulised 'other side' lexicon (see

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[20] Some kinterms, e.g. *gwal* 'father's father', *yæ:i* 'father's mother' and *kajal* 'brother's wife', are the same in both registers. My estimate is that the 'other side' register may have traditionally contained several hundred words; at present, few people have complete knowledge of it.

Table 2) is virtually non-existent among younger people; and this results in drastic lexical reduction. While one could possibly argue that the knowledge of the 'other side' lexicon implied a certain amount of diglossia, this diglossia is on its way out at present.

The loss of traditional knowledge and styles may affect the knowledge of appropriate areas of lexicon, and also of grammar (cf. Foley 1991: 240, on how the usage of tenses changed in younger peoples' Yimas, under the influence of Tok Pisin and English-based schooling). In the Manambu context, the loss of knowledge of personal names may entail obsolescence of certain morphemes. One such class of morphemes is gender markers. Masculine and feminine genders in Manambu are marked on agreeing modifiers (adjectives 'small' and 'big', demonstratives and relative clauses) and on verbs, but generally not on nouns. The exception are proper names which do bear gender markers. The fewer names people actually know, the lower the frequency of the markers.

G. LEXICAL REDUCTION AND OBSOLESCENCE.

Younger speakers frequently face problems of word retrieval and incipient lexical obsolescence. This involves time words, numerals, and especially Manambu personal names (and also terms for flora and fauna and verbs of manipulation). Most speakers of Manambu can count up to ten in the language; younger speakers find it hard to count beyond ten; some can count up to twenty. But those who do count further tend to regularise the system, as shown in Table 3 (forms which younger speakers use and which differ from the traditional ones are in bold). Needless to say, younger speakers were much more comfortable counting in Tok Pisin.

**Table 3. Counting from 11 to 20**

| TRADITIONAL MANAMBU | TRANSLATION AND GLOSS | YOUNGER SPEAKERS | TRANSLATION AND GLOSS |
|---|---|---|---|
| *tabEti mæn nak* | 11 (ten(=hand+two) leg one) | *tabEti mæn nak* | ten(=hand+two) leg one |
| *tabEti mæn vEti* | 12 (ten leg two) | *tabEti mæn vEti* | 12 (ten leg two) |
| *tabEti mæn mugul* | 13 (ten leg three) | *tabEti mæn mugul* | 13 (ten leg three) |
| *tabEti mæn ali* | 14 (ten leg four) | *tabEti mæn ali* | 14 (ten leg four) |
| *tabEti mænEb* | 15 (ten leg+also) | ***tabEti mæn tabab*** | 15 (ten leg five) |
| *tabEti mænEb nEmnEm nak* | 16 (ten leg+also add one) | ***tabEti mæn abun*** | 16 (ten leg six) |
| *tabEti mænEb nEmnEm vEti* | 17 (ten leg+also add two) | ***tabEti mæn abEti*** | 17 (ten leg seven) |
| *tabEti mænEb nEmnEm mugul* | 18 (ten leg+also add three) | ***tabEti mæn abumugul*** | 18 (ten leg eight) |
| *tabEti mænEb nEmnEm ali* | 19 (ten leg+also add four) | ***tabEti mæn abali*** | 19 (ten leg nine) |
| *du-a-mi nak* | 20 (man-LG-tree one) | ***du-a-mi*** | 20 (man-LG-tree) |

Traditional Manambu had a complex system of time words, including terms for today (*nEbEl*), yesterday (*na:l*), the few days before yesterday (*nagEs*), tomorrow (*sEr*), the day after tomorrow (*mu*), two days after tomorrow (*dEpuña*), and three days after tomorrow (*pastok*). Younger speakers have difficulties in remembering the last two.

Younger people are often ill at ease with kinship terms. Word-retrieval problems result in the increased frequency of the catch-all *ma:gw* 'what's its name' — we will see an example of this in (7). Many young speakers do not know their own Manambu names, let alone those of their peers. This varies — the daughter of Gaia whose household is very traditional was reluctant to give me her Christian name, while children of most other women had difficulties remembering their Manambu names. In the culture where personal names are an important part of one's knowledge and are considered on a par with material wealth such obsolescence is tragic.

Lexical obsolescence results in a drastic increase in loans from Tok Pisin (including nonce, or ad hoc loans) and code-switches, especially since speakers of Manambu do not have any inhibitions against loans. We discuss this in more detail in §4.3. Problems in word retrieval result in a growing INSECURITY OF YOUNGER SPEAKERS, another common consequence of language obsolescence. Urban Manambu who have lost their fluency and village teenagers who are insecure of themselves prefer to answer in Tok Pisin when addressed in Manambu, to avoid potential communication problems, and also for fear of being ridiculed for their mistakes (similar tendencies are reported for Abu' Arapesh by Nekitel 1998).

## 4.3 Borrowing and code-switching

Extensive code-switching between Manambu and Tok Pisin (and occasionally also English) is an obvious result of growing proficiency in Tok Pisin. Code-switching and borrowing results in lexical reduction and impoverishment. Numerous idioms and expressions simply fall into disuse (see Aikhenvald forthcoming).

Using a Tok Pisin construction may result in levelling distinctions which are present in the vernacular. For instance, Manambu has several ways of saying 'I am lazy, fed up, unwilling (to do something)'. These are:
• *sEp* (skin) *jina* (lit. skin is tired) 'I am tired and fed up';
• *sEp sakwina* (lit. skin is overtired) 'I am tired';
• *sEp væt yina* (lit. skin goes heavy) 'I am very tired, unwell'; and
• *kwasEk yinawun* 'I am unwilling (to do something)'.

Tok Pisin has one word, *les* 'tired, unwilling, dislike', which covers all these distinctions. Young people and children often use *les* in combination with the functionally unmarked auxiliary *yi-* 'go; say': one hears *les yinawEn* instead of any of the four combinations above. The following example comes from spontaneous conversation with M, who refused a cup of tea, saying:

(5) <u>les</u>    *yi-na-wEn*       *gu*    *kEkak*
     tired   go-PRES-1sgBAS     water   eat/drink+RED+DAT
     'I don't want to drink water' (or 'I am fed up with drinking water')

Similar processes of lexical simplification in a situation where there is no obvious language shift may involve semantic extension of an existing word to follow a Tok Pisin pattern. Watam (Foley 1997) has two verbs *kari* 'dislike' and *Nase* 'be tired' corresponding to single lexeme *les* in Tok Pisin. Younger speakers of Watam use *Nase* to cover both meanings.

A Tok Pisin loan or code-switch may have a different function, that of filling a lexical or grammatical gap, by introducing a modal verb *mas* 'must', a disjunction *o* 'or'; or a verb *laik* 'like' or *save* 'know'. Manambu does not have a word for 'like' or 'want'. The latter meaning is expressed with desiderative mood. Younger speakers find it easier to say *wEn ma: <u>laik</u>* (I NEG like) 'I don't like' rather than *wEn ma: wa-na-wEn* (I NEG say-PRES-1sgBAS)'I am saying no'. Note

that the latter form is in fact ambiguous between 'I don't want', 'I don't like' and 'I refuse' (say 'no' to). Here, the introduction of Tok Pisin results in a resolution of potential ambiguity.

The Manambu lexicon is very precise in the meaning of verbal lexemes associated with carrying, striking, hitting, splitting and numerous traditional activities. In other areas one word is employed where Tok Pisin would use two. One such word is *kE-* 'eat, drink, consume (e.g. smoke)' (note that the word for 'chew', e.g. betel nut, is different). Mothers often use the Tok Pisin word *kaikai* 'eat' or *drinkim* 'drink' when urging children to eat or to drink. Along similar lines, *laku* means 'know' and 'understand'. And one frequently hears *wEn save ma: tE* (I know NEG have:NEG) 'I don't know, I have no knowledge' rather than *wEn laku-n ma: tE* (I know/understand-SEQ NEG have:NEG) 'I don't know/understand, I have no knowledge/understanding'.

The word *sual* is used for true statements and for lies. The two meanings are easily distinguished by context, and by occurrence in different constructions: for instance, *sual kur-* or *sual taka-* means 'to lie'; an expression *mEya sual-a* is a sign of appreciation meaning 'this is a real story, full truth'. However, it is not uncommon for somebody to exclaim *giaman-a* (from English *gammon* 'lie') 'this is a lie' rather than resorting to a possibly ambiguous *sual-a*.

Newly arising instances of polysemy in Manambu may be due to a pre-existing lexical gap. In this language with a rich oral tradition, the word *ñEg* 'leaf' came to be used to also mean 'book, script', 'letter' (even the Gospel was originally translated as *God dE-kE lap-a ñEg* (God he-POSS+fem.sg banana-LG leaf), literally God's little banana leaf, since feminine gender has connotation of smallness: Aikhenvald 1998). With growing literacy, only purists use *ñEg* in all these meanings: people would often replace *ñEg* with *ᵐbuk* (Tok Pisin *buk*), or with *pas*, the Tok Pisin for 'letter'. Similarly, the verb *sukw-* 'carve' came to be used in the meaning of 'writing' and also 'recording'. A Tok Pisin word is often inserted for disambiguation, and it may even follow a Manambu word, as in (6):

(6)  *ñEnak*      *ñEg*   *pas*   *suku-kE-tua*              *raiti-kE-tua*
     you.fem+DAT letter  letter  write/carve-FUT-1sg+3fem.sg write-FUT-1sg+3fem.sg
     'I will carve, write you leaf, letter'

The frequency of code-switching varies according to generation, sex and degree of exposure to Tok Pisin in different environments. Women of all ages code-switch the least, provided they speak Manambu at home most of the time, and do not participate in church and council activities. Yuayab (who spent quite a few years living in Wewak before coming back to the village) and Damel, both between thirty and forty years old (with about six years of education each), are proficient in Tok Pisin, but hardly ever lapse into it when speaking Manambu; the same holds for Gaia and Kudapa:kw (aged between forty and fifty). Teketay, who claims to have learnt Manambu as a second language (her late mother being Chambri), is an elaborate story-teller with no trace of code-switching, just like older ladies, Gemaj, Yabukwi, Wimali, Maguniwai and Walinum. M is a church activist; and her husband is a Iatmul (with a limited proficiency in Manambu). They speak Tok Pisin in their home most of the time; as a result, she does a lot of code-switching.

Unrestricted code-switching is prevalent in the speech of school-age children who are exposed to Tok Pisin at school and in playgrounds. This is illustrated with the following excerpts from stories told by Tanina (eight) and Ryan (twelve). Tanina starts her story with a code-switch and then corrects herself.

(7) *wanpela*     *ta:kw*     *ma:gw*     *ta:kw*     *nak-a-l*
<u>one</u>     woman     what's.its.name     woman     one-LG-3sg.femBAS
*lE-kE-bEr*     *na:*     *vEti*     *vEti*     *kisa-bEr*     *twins-a-bEr*
she-POSS-du     daughter     two     two     get-3duBAS     twins-LG-3duBAS
*takw-a-ñidi-a-bEr*     *ata*     *ma:gw*     *ata*     *kwa-bEr*
woman-LG-child:DU-LG-3duBAS     then     what's.name     then     stay-3duBAS
*kwa-di*     *dey.*     *Kwa-de-k*     *wanpela*     *du*     *nak*
stay-3plBAS     they.     Stay-3sg.masc-DS     <u>one</u>     man     one
*ap-a-yab-E-m*     *kiya-d*
bone-LG-road-LG-LOC     die-3sg.mascBAS
'One woman, what's its name, there was one woman; her two children came up, they were twins, girls, then, what's its name, then they stayed (dual), they stayed (plural). After they had stayed (singular), one man died on the main road.'

Besides the higher-than-normal use of *ma:gw* 'what's its name', this piece demonstrates a few ungrammaticalities. Tanina hesitates in her choice of dual or plural. Unlike an adult Manambu speaker, she uses third singular masculine form in a subordinate clause where a plural form (*kwa-da-k*) would be more appropriate. In (8), Ryan uses a Tok Pisin word and then corrects himself:

(8) *a*     <u>*lapun*</u>     *ta:kw*     *a*     *apau*     *ta:kw*
DEM:FEM     old     woman     DEM:FEM     old:FEM     woman
*lE-kE*     *wiyam*     *yE-ku*     *sE*
she-POSS+3sg.fem     house+LG+LOC     come-SS     sleep
*kwa-d*
lie-3masc.sgBAS
'That old woman, having arrived in that old woman's house, he slept.'

Code-switching is pervasive in the speech of most men, especially council members, school teachers and the like. The following is the beginning of a story about the origin of one of the clans (called Valiyik) volunteered by S, the most knowledgeable man of his clan and a member of the local council. In the first line S hesitates in deciding which form of the verb 'give' to use: he first uses the form 'give to third person', and then switches to a more appropriate 'give to second person' form (since he was addressing the audience and giving the story to his addressees).

(9) *kE*     *ma:j*     *aka,*     *kE*     <u>*stori*</u>
this+fem.sg     story     here     this+fem.sg     story
*aka*     *kui-kE-tua,*     *wEn*     *ñaj*
here     give.to.third.p-FUT-1sgTR+3fem.sg     I     father's.brother
*kE*     <u>*stori*</u>     *aka*     *brak*     *kwatiya-kE-tua*
this+fem.sg     story     here     2du+DAT     give.to.non.third.p-FUT-1sgTR+3fem.sg
*KE*     <u>*wini-ba-l*</u>     *maj*     *aka*     *wa-kE-tua*
this+fem.sg     win-1pl-3fem.sg     story     here     tell-FUT-1sgTR+3fem.sg
*ya*     *kEp*     <u>*orait*</u>     <u>*wini-ba-l*</u>     *aka*
EMPH     only     all.right     win-1pl-3fem.sg     here

*KE-di gal-a-di*      *gal-a*      *wa-bana-di*
this-PL black-LG-3plBAS      black-LG      tell-1plPRES-3pl
*a*      *kEta*      *wuka*      *Valiyik*
DEM+3fem.sg      now      this.very.here+FEM      Valiyik
*wa-bana*      *tasol*      *ma:*    *gal-a-di.*
tell-1plPRES+3fem.sg      but/because      no      black-LG-3plBAS
'This story here, this story, I will give, I am father's brother, I will give this story to you two, I will tell the story of how we won, just, all right, how we won. These are (representatives) of black clan, we call them black, now we call them Valiyik, but no, they are representatives of 'black' clan.'

The same story, told by Walinum (about sixty), a traditional speaker with immense cultural knowledge of the attributes of her clan, has little code-switching. In contrast, urban Manambu men and women code-switch a lot, no matter whether they are housewives, like L, the wife of an important military man in Wewak, or whether they are working. The following extract from a story told by A, an educated speaker (in her early forties), illustrates further code-switching, this time also between Tok Pisin and English. A has an important job in Port Moresby; needless to say, her children know no Manambu.

(10)    *gaman*      *patrol*      *deya-di*      *tim-a-d*
       government      patrol      they-3pl      team-LG-3masc.sg
       *policeman*      *nak*    *tanim tok*      *nak*
       policeman      one    interpreter      one
       *tanim tok*      *tE-kwa-dE*      *du*      *nak*
       interpreter      stay-HAB-3masc.sg      man      one
       *wa*      *a-di*      *tEp-a*      *du*      *a-di*      *ñan-a-di*
       and      that-PL      village      man      that-PL      we-LG-3pl
       *patrol bokis kago*    *atawa*    *yat-a-yi:-kwa-di*
       patrol box      cargo      thus      carry-LG-go-HAB-3pl
       *yata-da-kEb*      *ata*    *wa-tay*      *tayir*
       carry-3pl-SEQ:HAB      then    say-BEFORE    before+ALL
       *twenty six*      *mails* *wa-da-di*      *kEta*    *bE*      *kilometers*
       twenty six      miles    say-3plTR-3plBAS      now    already      kilometers
       *wa-n*      *nEsE-dana*        *sEkEr*      *a*
       say-SEQ      count-3plTR+3fem.sgBAS      time      that+fem.sg
       *ata*    *wa-tay*      *twenty six twenty*      *atawa* *mails* *wa-da-di*
       then    say-BEFORE    twenty six twenty      then    miles    say-3plTR-3plBAS
       *sEkEr*    *bas*    *gaman*      *steʃen-Eb*      *tE-tay*
       time    first    government      station-AT      stay-BEFORE
       *a-di*      *kwasa-di*      *trakta* *atawa* *kur-En* *kray-da-kEb*
       that-3pl      small-PL      tractor    then    do-SEQ    get-3pl-SEQ:HAB
       *tri*    *o*      *for*    *mail*    *samting*      *trakta-sap*
       three    or      four    miles    something      tractor-BY.TRANSPORT
       *yi:-tay*      *ya:kia* *wur-sEda-da-kEb*      *ya:kia*
       go-BEFORE      OK    load-DOWN-3pl-SEQ:HAB      OK

'The government patrol team, one policeman and one interpreter, and people from the village carrying the cargo, as they said before, 26 miles, now they count it in kilometers. So they used to go 26, 20 miles, from the government station, these small tractors, three or four miles by tractor, then they would unload things,OK'.

Among the village Manambu there is little code-switching with English. One established loan from English deserves special mention: saying *excuse* is a conventional way of obliterating one's gaffe or culturally inappropriate behaviour. For instance, walking in front of an important man is offensive — unless one says *excuse.*

Code-switching within a multilingual context comes in a variety of guises (see Clyne 1987, 1991; Gumperz 1982, Poplack 1980 on types, functions and constraints on code-switching). Code-switching may obey strict rules, as is often the case in situations of di- and polyglossia (see Ferguson 1964, Fishman 1967, 1999, Schiffrin 1998) which imply stable functional differentiation of languages in distinct domains. Code-switching may depend on the communicative situation without involving diglossia as such (see Chapter 8 of Aikhenvald 2003). In situational code-switching, the domain determines the language used: for instance, in the context of the Sepik area, Tok Pisin would be expected at the meetings of the local council, and Manambu during the discussions concerning mortuary rituals. Alternatively, code-switching may be unrestricted (Landweer 2000: 7): the language choice may change without any functional differentiation or consistency, simply because speakers are more proficient in one language than in the other. Similar patterns were discussed by Kulick (1987) for Taiap (and see Nekitel 1992: 56, on extensive code-switching in Abu' Arapesh as indicative of the growing lack of language proficiency).

Unrestricted code-switching is thus concomitant with lexical obsolescence and insecurity of those speakers who do not have sufficient exposure to the vernacular. Frequent individual unrestricted code-switching is an indicator of speakers effectively losing allegiance to the vernacular (Landweer 2000: 7), and is in itself disquieting.

## 4.4 'Discourse of nostalgia', and the 'Manambu revival' movement

A notable feature of the language attitude among the Manambu is the discourse of 'nostalgia'. When I first arrived in the village and started explaining what I was doing, the general response was: yes, we do need a linguist, because our language will or might die (*ña-na kudi kus-Ekna* (we-LG+fem.sg language finish-FUT+3fem.sgBAS)). This attitude goes together with strong preference for 'the old ways' of speech, has some similarities to what Hill (1998) described as the 'discourse of nostalgia', for the bilingual communities around the Malinche volcano in central Mexico. Like speakers of Nahuatl, speakers of Manambu contrast the linguistic 'purity' of 'long ago' with 'the language mixing' of 'today'; they also strive to be as close as possible to the 'long ago' ideal in their language monitoring.

Obsolescence of the true Manambu language is an object of concern for most senior people in the village. A number of purists — most of whom are successful middle-class urban dwellers — would try their best to exclude Tok Pisin and English loans and instead invent indigenous terms.

To some extent, there is a tradition of doing so: quite a few newly introduced items do have established Manambu equivalents. For instance, the rifle is called *jarkañ* (a term for bamboo shoot originally used as a storing tube), and *jarkañ lE-kE väi* (bamboo.tube 3fem.sg-POSS+3fem.sg spear, lit.'bamboo tube's little spear') is the word for 'bullet'. Another word for long

piece of bamboo *kañgu* is used to refer to policeman (by reference to policemen carrying a long bamboo-like rifle on their shoulder). Note, however, that A, a purist herself, 'forgot' to use this word in (10): it was easier for her to say *policeman,* in English. The word *kabak* 'stone' is used to refer to large sums of money; *kayik* 'carved image; ghost' is widely used to refer to photographs, *wali-gus* (white-paddle) for outboard motor, *sa:n* 'shell valuable' for money and *jElEg* for a ten-kina note (this word was used to refer to ten shell valuables strung together). Villagers do occasionally use Tok Pisin words where a Manambu innovation exists: one hears *marasin* instead of *tEkE-mi* (fruit-tree) for 'medicine', but they tend to correct themselves.

Manambu purists go much further in suggesting lexically 'pure' innovations covering educational, financial and religious terminology, e.g. *kalipa-dE du* (teach-3masc.sg man) 'male teacher', *sa:n warapwi-dana tamiy* (money change-3pl area) 'stock exchange', *du-awa kwa-mar-na ta:kw* (man-COM lie-NEG.SUB-PRES+3fem.sg woman, lit. 'woman who does not lie with men') 'virgin', *God ma:j krayin kalpa-di* (God speech carry+SEQ teach-3pl, lit. 'teachers carrying God's speech') 'disciples' and even *NEma-dE Du* (big-masc.sg man) 'The Christian God'. None of these innovations have caught on so far. The discourse of nostalgia among many city-dwelling Manambu speakers extends to Tok Pisin (*wali kudi*, lit. 'white language'). They lament that not only do their children have no knowledge of Manambu (and little desire to acquire this knowledge); they do not even speak or understand Tok Pisin.

It is too early to evaluate the effects of language engineering by this group of purists. Conservative purist attitudes toward loanwords are known to have hampered efforts to maintain endangered languages; 'unrealistically severe older-speaker purism can discourage younger speakers' (Dorian 1994; similar points were raised by Hill and Hill 1986: 140-1). And Hamp (1989) suggested that if a minority language survives next to a larger dominant language, it has to allow for a certain amount of borrowing of morphemes. On the other hand, a certain amount of purism may stop otherwise unlimited borrowing and code-switching with Tok Pisin.

There appears to be a certain amount of language consciousness and resistance to borrowings among some young villagers. One of the urban Manambu, when she visited Malu village, asked a boy to tie her canoe for her, using a Tok Pisin root *pas* 'tie': *val a-pas* (canoe IMPV-tie) 'tie the canoe!' The boy corrected her, saying *a-pas ma:, a-taw-tak a-w* (IMPV-tie NEG IMPV-tie-go.down IMPV-say) 'not "apas", say "tie" in Manambu'. Since this urban Manambu is known to be a purist and an authority on Manambu culture, the boy could have just been trying to get his own back, demonstrating that he knows enough to correct the 'authority'. But opportunities like this no doubt enhance the language awareness of speakers.

Commands in the vernacular appear to have overtones of persuasion rather than direct coercion, as if appealing to solidarity rather than simply imposing one's authority — see the sequence of commands in (1) where the Tok Pisin and English commands were more threatening than the ones in Manambu. Gumperz (1976), in his analysis of repetition in commands in Spanish and English among Mexican Americans, suggests that the repetition of the same command has to do with the distinction between solidarity and authority. If one repeats in Spanish a command one has given in English, one is appealing to the addressee to comply on the basis of solidarity. Repeating in English a command previously given in Spanish implies appealing to authority. That is, being able to manipulate two languages — Manambu and Tok Pisin — simultaneously in one conversation becomes an art, serving a multitude of pragmatic and communicative functions. Code-switching can then be used as a marker of 'group identification', and becomes effectively a type of skilled performance (cf. Myers-Scotton 1995), at least for those who maintain their fluency in the vernacular. In itself, this could be a factor favourable for language maintenance.

There are further indications that speakers do value Manambu and are not prepared to just let it go. Within the urban communities, Manambu is employed as a sort of 'secret language' and an in-group means of communication emblematic in itself. One frequently hears mothers shouting at children *tƐp-a kudir a-y* (village-LG language+ALL IMPV-say/go), *wali kudi wa-tukwa* (white language speak-PROH) 'Say this in the village language, don't speak white language (Tok Pisin)!' Children who are proficient in Manambu feel valued.

Greeting and farewelling someone in Manambu involves citing the totems of the addressee's father and mother; and many speakers make it a point to learn at least some correct greetings, since this is seen to enhance their status in the community. (Even ardent Christians, including the current SIL consultant 'in charge' of the revised Bible translations who otherwise reject traditional rituals as 'heretical', adhere to these traditional patterns as emblematic of their identity as Manambu and of their place in the village clan and kinship system.)

I mentioned above how spontaneous and unrestricted code-switching permeates speeches during the KEkEtEp mortuary ritual. The written notice reproduced in Figure 1 below announces the proceedings of the ritual, and is in itself indicative of the two opposite tendencies: to preserve the indigenous emblematic terminology and to code-switch into Tok Pisin (with distinct elements of English) when declaring a meeting.

The mortuary payment KEkEtEp works roughly as follows. The mother's side ('left-hand side') pays the bride price for the man while he is alive. After the person dies, this is repaid by the father's side ('right-hand side') to the mother's side (see detailed description and analysis in Harrison 1990). Nowadays, payment includes shell valuables, but most importantly, money. How the money is to be divided is obviously the subject of much discussion and often grievances; that is, European introduced-realities play an important role in the traditional ritual. This may also account for the vitality of KEkEtEp as opposed to initiation and other ceremonies which are falling into disuse.

In the notice below, translations are in notes. Note the English spelling of the word *family* (spelt as *famaly*): the Tok Pisin word is *famili*. The numbered words are personal names and are not translated below.

**Figure 1. Notice on KEkEtEp mortuary payment (from a picture taken in Avatip, East Sepik Province, PNG, 18.12.01)**

AWAY MAMAI blong late Thomas Takendu[1]

| AMB KUAL[2] | AKITAMB[3] |
|---|---|
| 1 Kumbikalu | 1 Ambawawi — famaly[5] |
| MAPATAMB (Rait han)[4] | |
| 2 Gumbui Yapan | 2 Gwandikambai — famaly[5] |
| 3 Minaitauk | 3 Lumawandim — famaly[5] |
| 4 Sauntauk | 4 Suputiwi |
| 5 Miambasaun | 5 Maliwai |
| 6 Yuanhian— famaly[5] | 6 Yandiki & Awiwaung |
| 7 Yuandu | 7 Panwalimang & Donna |

Taim blong ol kandre long toktok em long 3:00 PM[6]

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1. Relatives (lit. mother's brother (and) mother's younger sister: Manambu) of (Tok Pisin) late (English) Thomas Takendu.

2. 'also are' (lit. too stay+3fem.sg: Manambu)
3. Left hand (Manambu)
4. Right hand (Manambu; Tok Pisin form in brackets)
5. family (English, misspelt)
6. Time for the maternal uncles to talk is at (Tok Pisin) 3:00 pm (English)


This notice is unusual in yet another respect. All written communication by Manambu villages is conducted in Tok Pisin (occasionally with English admixture). A typical notice is *I gat kakaruk* 'There is chicken (for sale)'. And yet quite a few Manambu primers and even books have been produced by the SIL team over the years. The reasons why the villagers are reluctant to use the orthography suggested by the SIL have to do with several factors: the orthography is said to be 'too complicated': where Manambu has one sound, one has to write two letters (*yi* for what is pronounced as [i]*, uw* for [u], and *ny* for [ñ]), and 'inadequate': why should one write *i* for what is pronounced as [E], and *d* for what is pronounced as [$^{n}$d]? This shows how a problematic orthography may lead to a virtual reduction in the sphere of language use.[21]

## 5. Prospects for language maintenance — the worse off, the better?
We have seen that the unprecedented linguistic diversity in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea is under threat. Even languages with several thousand speakers (where such figures on their own might indicate potential viability) are displaying signs of obsolescence and decay — each language is 'retreating, contracting, as it gradually falls into disuse' (Dixon 1991b: 199). Massive code-switching is a precursor of the total demise of vernaculars in such cases as Taiap, Abu' Arapesh and eventually Manambu. As Drapeau (1995: 163) put it, for the Montagnais in Quebec, code-switching, instead of being 'construed as a manifestation of balanced bilingual competence on the part of middle-aged adults', instead may turn 'into erosion of lexical skills among the younger generation'. Additional simplification of the language situation is due to drastic reduction in patterns of traditional multilingualism replaced by the encroaching dominance of Tok Pisin and English.

What can be done to reverse this and what are the factors working against language shift? A number of cultural and economic trends in modern-day Papua New Guinea could be favourable to slowing down the process of language shift.

One of these is the poor state of economy of the country. In particular, roads are falling into disuse; communication by land is becoming difficult due to the threat of 'rascals' and the inefficiency of transport. Travelling by planes is expensive and also unreliable. As Dixon (1997: 104) remarked, 'improved communication, all over the world, is leading to the loss of language'. Drastic disruption in communication systems accompanied by a lack of cash (which in itself means diminishing access to such luxuries as radio, let alone television) may turn out to be beneficial for the vernaculars. This is also a factor in restricting in- and out-migration and the influx of people from other language groups and provinces; as a result, one may expect a slowing down in the spread of Tok Pisin. Since 'the only real way for a small language to survive is for its

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[21] This is reminiscent of how all written communication among Vaupés Indians of Northwest Amazonia is in Portuguese, even for those who usually speak Tucano (Aikhenvald 2003), because the orthography is judged to be 'too hard'. Since Tucano is the dominant language of the area, this may result in somewhat restricting its spread at the expense of other indigenous languages. Currently, the work on the Manambu language by the author in cooperation with Pauline Laki who has chosen the orthographic symbols, such as *ñ* ('n with a snake on top') and *E* ('an upside down e') has provoked positive reactions.

speakers to remain in isolation from the rest of the world' (Dixon 1997: 146), economic disasters may prove less detrimental to the traditional ways of life and languages than they will be for urban populations and the global economy.

The movement to establish indigenous language schooling has been successful to a varying extent in different areas of Papua New Guinea. But most villages simply do not have the human and other resources to teach in the vernacular; the — often rudimentary — teaching is conducted in Tok Pisin and English, even in remote villages, such as Mayo (where Yessan-Mayo is spoken). Villagers have increasing difficulties getting money for school fees to send their children to high school and even to primary school (Leo Luma, p.c.). In most parts of the world, Western-style schooling has contributed to language loss by being 'instrumental in producing marginal individuals' (Lastra 2000: 159-60). A breakdown in village based schooling may be a positive factor against language shift. At present, villagers live on subsistence farming rather than trusting to luck in towns and government posts; they are 'forced' to carry on traditional ways of life. In the situation of a destabilised economy, the emblematicity of vernaculars may — at least temporarily — win out over the putative economic privileges that go with acquisition of Tok Pisin or English.

In the case of Manambu, some new developments can be considered beneficial for slowing down the process of language shift. At least some of the retiring urban elite going back to the village may bring another influx of interest and culture revival into the village. The activity of an overseas linguist and an overseas anthropologist each working with highly respected Manambu speakers boosts the prestige of the language as a means of day-to-day communication; this has already initiated a community-based project of Manambu language and culture documentation and teaching (see Hornberger and King 2000: 185, on the importance of such activities in the context of Quechua language maintenance). The importance of a community-based orthography approved by a consensus of well-respected Manambu cannot be underestimated: if people start writing their language, this may ultimately diminish the expansion of Tok Pisin into functional domains reserved for Manambu. This is a task for the near future.

**Abbreviations used**: 1 - first person; 2 - second person; 3 - third person; ALL - allative; BAS - basic cross-referencing set; COM - comitative; DAT - dative; DEM - demonstrative; DES - desiderative; DS - different subject; du, DU - dual; EMPH - emphatic; EXIST - existential; fem - feminine; FUT - future; HAB - habitual; IMPV - imperative; LG - ligature; LOC - locative; masc - masculine; NEG - negative; p - person; pl, PL - plural; PNG - Papua New Guinea; POSS - possessive; PRES - present; PROH - prohibitive; RED - reduplication; SEQ - sequential; sg - singular; SS - same subject; SUB - subordinate; TR - transitive cross-referencing set; TRANS - transitiviser.

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