

BeLing Kolloquium, 17/11/2015

# **The bastard language of Babel**

## **Authenticating Tok Pisin**

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English Department

University of Bern

“We cannot allow ourselves to be – what did the Bible say? – the **country of Babel** or whatever they call it, where everyone speaks his own version of Tok Pisin.”

(BM, novelist, interview 2014)

“We continue to **bastardise both English and Tok Pisin in our search for more words** to fit into our modern Tok Pisin.”

(MD, poet, blog comment 2013)

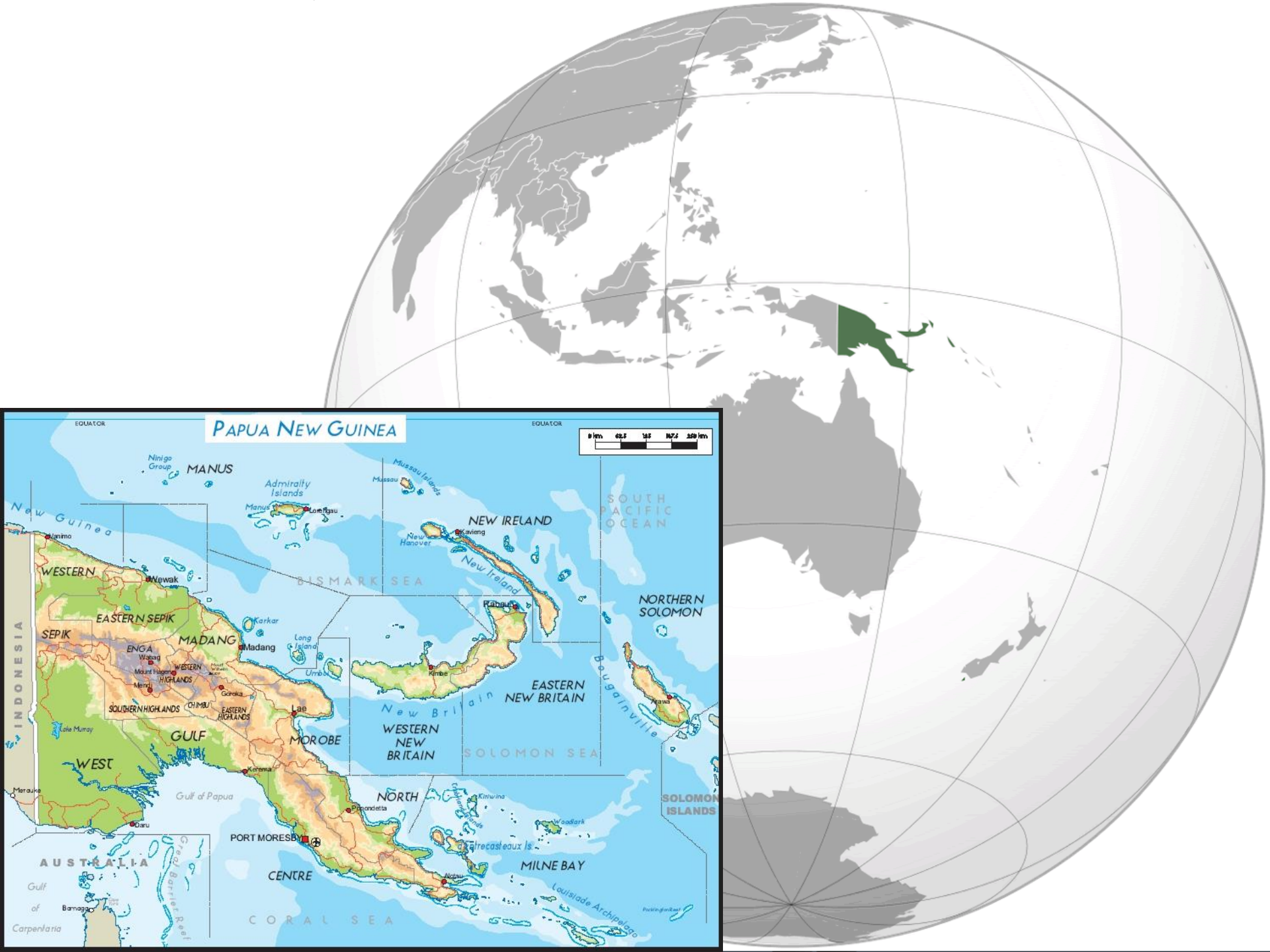
“Every text incorporates, reformulates, reinterprets or re-reads previous texts, every act of communication is grounded in semantic and pragmatic histories which are not simple and linear, but complex, multilayered and fragmented.”

(Blommaert 1999)

# Overview

- Tok Pisin: the lingua franca of PNG
- Terminology and theoretical approach
- Data
- Metalinguistic debates on Tok Pisin: examples
- Discussion





## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

0 km 62.5 125 187.5 250 km



# Tok Pisin and Papua New Guinea

- About 800 local languages/ 7 million inhabitants
- Approximately 10 percent speak English
- Around 50 percent speak Tok Pisin (English-based pidgin)
- Tok Pisin is increasingly spoken as a first language in urban areas (creolised)
- It is regarded as an expression of national identity
- Tok Pisin, English and Hiri Motu are sometimes considered official languages (*Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea, Wikipedia, CIA*)

# The role of Tok Pisin?

- Awkward position between local language and language of colonisers
- Pushed in the 1970s (by linguists)
- Often described as successful pidgin (by linguists)
- But: stagnation since 1970s
- Today: almost no place in literature or education system

The status of Tok Pisin...?

The **status** of Tok Pisin is related to the variety's perceived **authenticity**.

Authenticity and status are constructed in **language ideological debates**, which are constantly re-shaped by social, cultural and political context.

One constant **theme** that links metalinguistic debates to their context is the notion of **simplicity**.

# Terminology

“**Discourse**” is used in a “generic sense to denote a type of discourse, a collection of discourses, or a class of discourse genres, for instance, when we speak of ‘medical discourse,’ ‘political discourse’ or (...) of ‘racist discourse.’”

(van Dijk 2002)

- Discourse as “social practice” in a broader sense, but not as a specific social or in fact discursive event
- Discourse as “abstract form of knowledge”

(Fairclough 2003, Wodak and Meyer 2008)

# Theoretical approach

Authenticity

# Woolard (2008)

“Within the logic of authenticity, a speech variety must be perceived as **deeply rooted in social and geographic territory** in order to have value.”



# Coupland (2001)

Level of authentication	Feature
Authentic language 1	Attested and attestable language
Authentic language 2	Naturally occurring language
Authentic language 3	Language encoding fact and truth
Authentic language 4	Fully owned, unmediated language
Authentic language 5	Language indexing personal authenticity
Authentic language 6	Language indexing authentic cultural membership

# Theoretical approach

Language Ideologies

# Language ideologies

Geeraerts (2003): language ideologies are essentially **cultural models** that have been conventionalised to the point that people are not aware anymore that they are only dealing with models.

# Language ideologies

Language ideologies are seen as “sets of beliefs” (e.g. Watts 2000, Woolard and Schieffelin 1994) or sets of “language myths” (Watts 2000).

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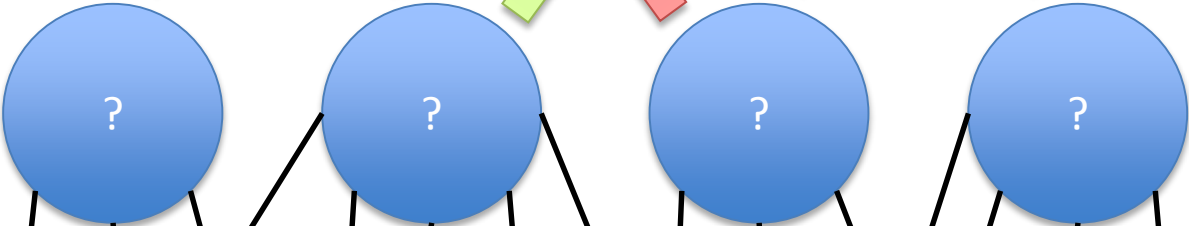
→ Identifying the elements of language ideologies is crucial.

→ Themes

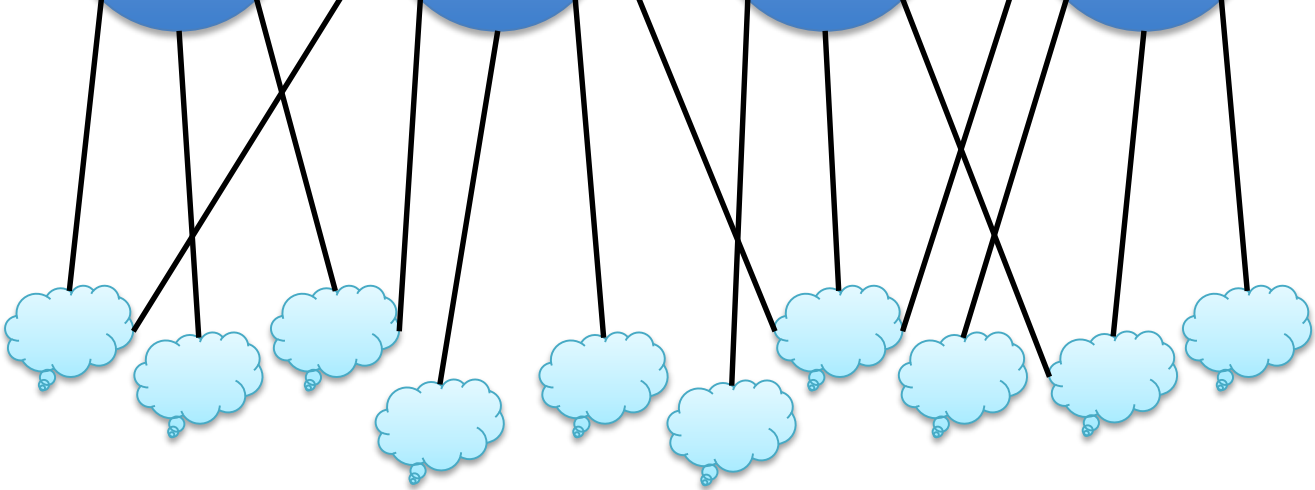
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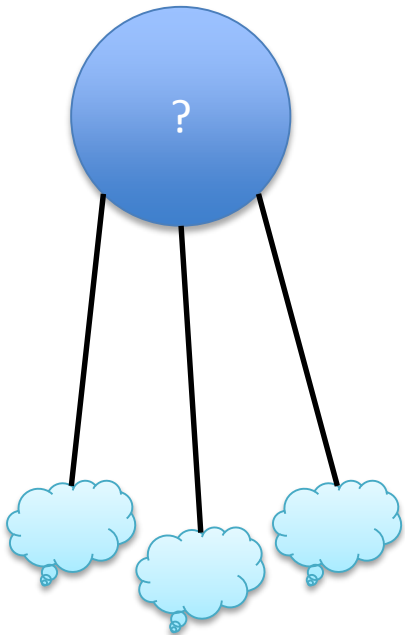
effects/ processes



language ideologies



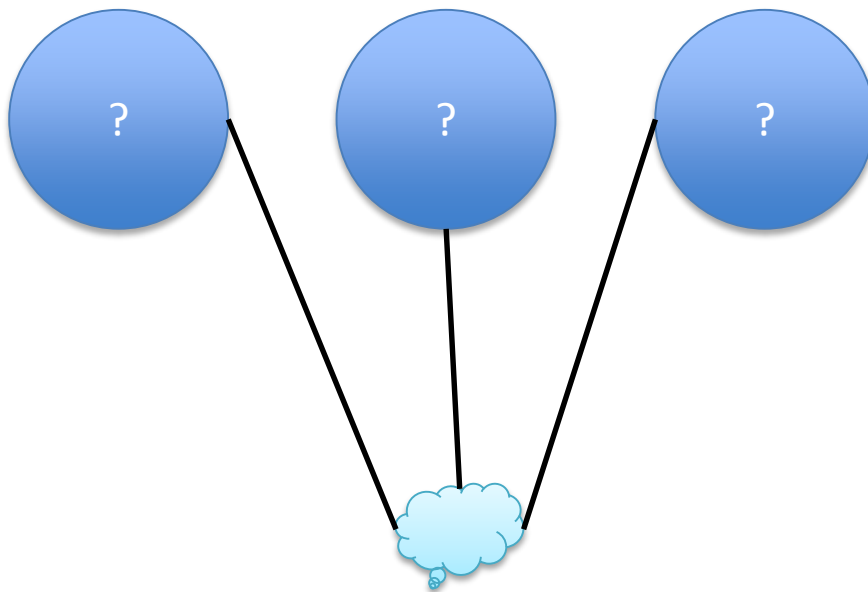
**themes:** beliefs/ myths, cultural models, topoi, conceptual metaphors



language ideologies

themes: beliefs/ myths





language ideologies

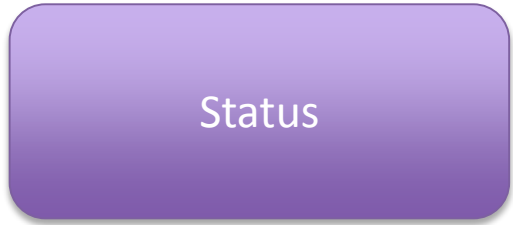
themes: beliefs/ myths

Authenticity



effects/ processes

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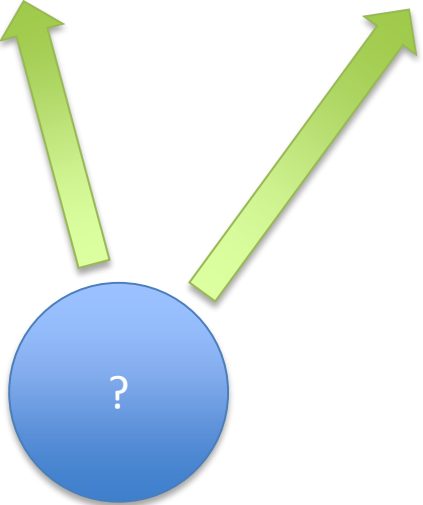
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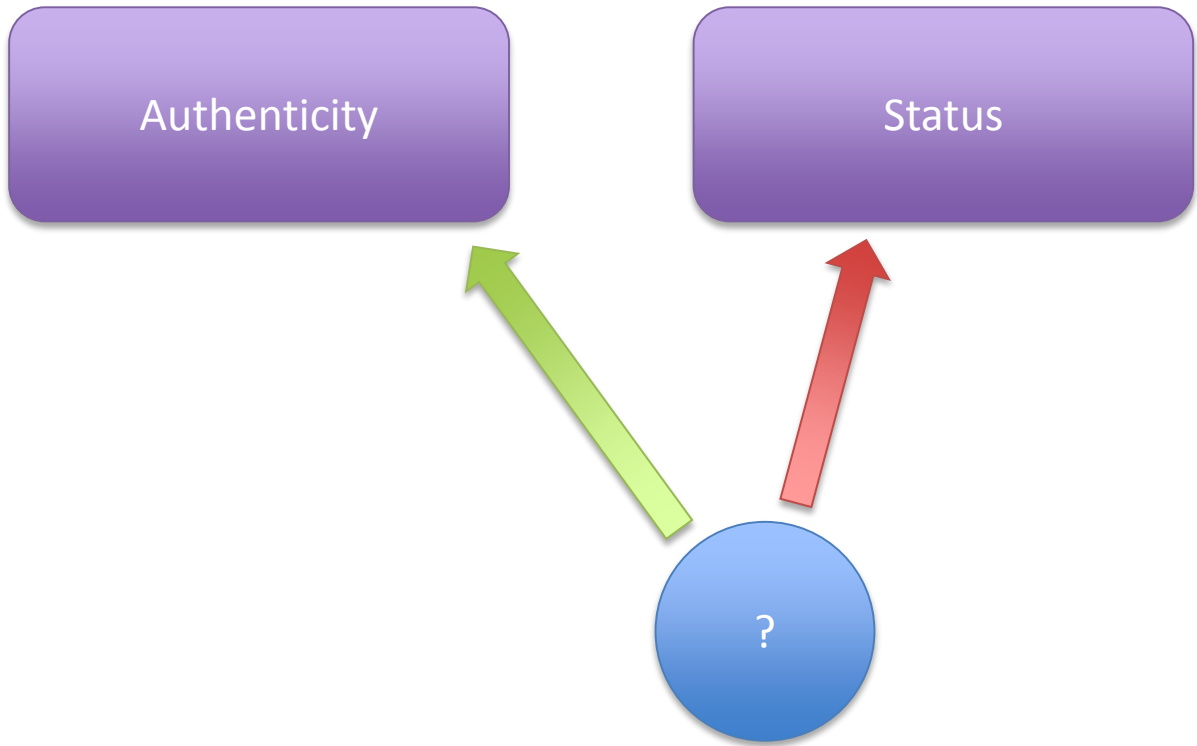
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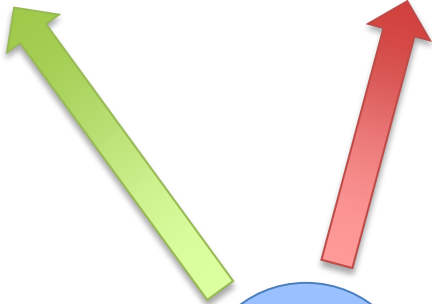
language ideologies

**And sometimes this happens**

Authenticity

Status

effects/ processes



?

language ideologies

**And sometimes this happens**



# Simplicity

seems to promote authenticity of Tok Pisin

# Data

## What?

Newspaper articles, editorials, letters to the editor, official written documents, blog articles and comments

Interviews

## When?

Second World War – now

includes the pre-independence phase of PNG

1960s and 70s are crucial in the acceptance of many non-standard varieties



# TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
**Post-Courier**  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1972  
PROGRESS IN PRINT SUPPLEMENT

**SIMPLY EVERYONE READS THE POST-COURIER**

Papua New Guinea  
Post-Courier, 1972

Some examples

**1950s**

**Towards the end of  
colonialism**

# Some examples

- UN Visiting Mission, 1953, urged to “eradicate” Tok Pisin
- Tok Pisin seen to have “characteristics (...) which reflect now outmoded concepts of the relationship between indigenous inhabitants and immigrant groups” (*Report on New Guinea, 1953*)

# Some examples

“So **rudimentary a means of expression** causes a hobbling, a **crippling** of the most developed aspects of the **indigenous mentality.**”

French member of the UN Visiting Mission, 1953, quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *South Pacific Post*

# Some examples

“It is Government policy to introduce standard English as soon as possible, but **Pidgin has been used for generations as the only common talk between peoples divided by scores of different languages.**”

Paul Hasluck (Australian Minister for Territories), reaction to the UN criticism, *SPP* 1953

# Some examples

## A different view:

Pidgin as “**a language in its own right**”

One major “reason for survival” of Tok Pisin was the “**crude simplicity of pidgin**”, which made it easy to learn.

Sidney J. Baker, philologist, July 1953, *Sydney Morning Herald*

# Some examples

“Pidgin can be regarded as a full, mature language only if we expect the natives to settle down to their present level of culture.”

“[T]he natives themselves realise their **limitations by being restricted to pidgin** and crave instruction in English.”

# Some examples

“To most people (...) it would be hard to envisage any future for the **incongruous violations of the principles of even simple English that pass in New Guinea as a language**. At the very limits of toleration it could be conceded that Pidgin has **a place as a make-shift** (...).”

“Hundreds of natives in Papua speak **pure English** extremely well (...). The result is that Papuans have a **tremendous advantage** over their fellow-countrymen in New Guinea.”



# Two contrasting ideologies

[Tok Pisin is simple; this reflects Melanesian culture;  
Tok Pisin is 'violated' English; English is the language of  
liberation]

[Tok Pisin is simple; but it is a language on its own; it  
serves well as a lingua franca across the country]

**anti-colonialist vs. functionalist ideology?**

Some examples

**1970s**

**Nationhood and unity**

# 1970s

- Around independence in 1975, Tok Pisin, together with English and Hiri Motu, had been established as a major lingua franca.
- Used in parliament, radio and one newspaper

# Some examples

“If the language is properly to fulfil its *rôle* in the new functions into which it has recently been elevated (...), it is imperative that it be standardised without much delay. Its **vocabulary especially needs to be expanded and enriched** in accordance with the nature and character of the language.”

Stephen A. Wurm, *Hemisphere* 1974

# Some examples

**“I am beginning to detest the word ‘unity’.** Not because I don’t believe in unity. I do. But **most of those who use the word in Papua New Guinea equate it with ‘uniformity’.** I believe in unity. I will fight with my last breath against uniformity.”

Percy Chatterton, missionary, politician and columnist, *Pacific Islands Monthly* 1973

# Some examples

Chatterton appreciated “the possibilities of Pidgin as a medium for **creative writing**”, but thought it pointless to make the language “an adequate vehicle for transacting the business of a nation caught up willy-nilly **in the complexities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century world.**”

Link between **standardised language** and  
efficient **performance in highly complex world**

Link between **non-standard or standardless  
language** and **poetry**

Same ideologies we find in Western  
metalinguistic discourse (Geeraerts 2003)?



# Let's all speak the same language

Please allow me to comment on some points made in letters on the choice of a national language.

When trying to select our national language, some New Guineans say Pidgin and some Papuans say Motu, and note their obvious reasons.

I'd say that's fair enough, but on the other hand, there will be some disadvantages existing in future within or outside the country.

Some of the disadvantages could be:

- Future youngsters of PNG will have no knowledge of modern English.

- Wastage of Government time and money in printing and translating English versions into Pidgin or Motu.

- PNG will be regarded as difficult to communicate with or understand, by developed countries.

- There'll be a language discrimination

if one of these two languages (Pidgin or Motu) is used as a national language in the country.

- No white teachers or lecturers would be allowed to train in the colleges, schools and universities. If they were, they would have to learn Pidgin or Motu thoroughly for say three or four years, to make their explanations clear to Pidgin or Motu speaking students.

How would you feel about that, teachers? I don't think you'd like the idea. And the students? They wouldn't like it, either, because some explanations mightn't be clear enough to understand.

Of course there are many more disadvantages but those above are likely to be confronted if one of the two languages is to be used.

If the English language is to be abolished, then how about introducing the Japanese language? This question may be thought funny, but that would be one way to settle the language argument between Pidgin and Motu.

Why I mentioned Japanese is that some of our students are already going over to Japan to learn the language and teach it when they return to PNG.

Let's stop chasing our own tails and acting stupid. English is the only language which has brought us into close contact with different countries of the world with religion, trade, sport and many other activities.

Remember that we Papua New Guineans

are struggling to go forward, not backwards, like other undeveloped or developing countries. If the Pidgin or Motu language is selected as our national language, we shall have been dumped, in the eyes of the world today.

Don't anyone be surprised when I answer you in my own tongue when you speak Pidgin or Motu as your national language. Then you and I will realise that there is a communication breakdown.

Bai yu long long ia.  
Be oi basio dara dara danu?

**SIKONI MAIATSINI**  
Kavient

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working in universities second language learn- businessmen, etc?

# We must choose Pidgin or English

I would like to make a comment on the article (Post-Courier, May 17) about Mr Sali and Miss Abaijah opposing Professor Dutton's suggestion.

As a national of this country I am really hurt when the term 'visiting foreigners' is used in describing one of the essential people of this country.

May I remind my countrymen and women, that when we are making any comment on our brothers and sisters who are here to help us, we must select our words properly.

When Miss Abaijah used the term 'visiting foreigner' she might have seen it from another view point, but I am taking it as it is written down, as what it means.

A large percentage of this country's popula-

tion are illiterate so to take one of the 700 languages to be the national language will cost the country a lot.

Also, it will be very difficult to teach to a person of another dialect. People learn the language they are born into between the ages of 2 and 8, so it will be very hard to teach those who are older at present.

If we take one of the 700 languages, then we are putting down the other 699 language groups. To prevent this, let's use Pidgin, since it is not one of the 700 languages.

It will be a great financial loss to teach

the three-fifths of the population who are Pidgin-speakers to speak Motu, but only a small loss to the one-fifth Motu speakers to speak Pidgin; the other fifth already know Pidgin, so have no worries. I am using a wise estimation only.

I say PNG should take a language which won't make another language group unhappy. Unity under one language is better. So we must take English or Pidgin.

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Professor Dutton's inaugural lecture "Language and National Development: Wanem Rot?" has certainly provoked considerable reaction, both from the general public and from Members of Parliament. I wonder, though, how many of them understood either what Prof Dutton advocated or in fact how important the language issue is.

Prof Dutton's lecture, in very brief terms, stated that the present policy of universal education in English was wasteful both financially and socially — financially, in that a large number of expatriate specialist English teachers needed to be employed; and socially, in that education in English both cut the educated Papua New Guinean off from his traditional socio-cultural heritage, by implicitly denying the importance of his language and thus his culture and also by creating artificial class-systems in which fluency in English — and not necessarily job efficiency — ensured rapid promotion to high levels.

Instead of the present system, which does little or nothing for the average rural or urban Papua New Guinean, Prof Dutton proposed (1) that all Papua New Guinean children in primary school be educated in their own native language wherever and whenever possible; (2) that a single language be adopted as the national language of the country; and (3) that English be taught to those who need it in their chosen profession.

The first point should, I think, be starkly obvious. Anyone learns anything better in his own first or mother language than in any other language in which he is taught; and if the primary purpose of education is to impart information, skills, attitudes and values, then this is best done in the student's first language, or, failing that for practical reasons, some other language with which the student is familiar.

bring this message painfully home.

Thirdly, some international language will be necessary for our diplomats, engineers, lawyers, and perhaps some others for the furtherance of their professional education.

In this case, English is certainly the most likely; and although some might say that this will also lead to a class-division, at least one can say that language will probably not be the cause of it, since the people involved will be necessarily few, and will achieve "upper-class status" through other means.

We come then to Prof Dutton's statement that Tok Pisin — alias Pidgin — should be the national language of PNG. Actually, his point was that if one language should be chosen as a national language, then Tok Pisin was the best candidate; this has been misinterpreted by his critics, but we can let that pass.

# ONLY TOK PISIN CAN DO THE JOB

By Dr JOHN LYNCH

Senior Lecturer, Department of Language, UPNG

ly, tolerant of change so that speakers can express things in Tok Pisin that they could not before.

Granted, some of this change has to be curbed — and I return to this below — but nevertheless, Tok Pisin is the dominant language of PNG.

For example, surveys done at UPNG show that, while very few New Guineans learn Hiri Motu while at UPNG, a substantial proportion of Papuans acquire a working knowledge of the language there.

What disadvantages are there? The major one is that two major social dialects of Tok Pisin are arising — one, a more "traditional" variety, is spoken by large numbers of

The question of a national language for Papua New Guinea is once again the subject of public debate, thanks to the vote for Pidgin cast recently by the new head of the University's Language Department, Professor Tom Dutton.

that the days of the old colonialists were over. In the "old days", one could always hear objections to Tok Pisin from colonialists, who suggested that "it is not a real language", "it's only bastardised English", "it's incapable of expressing anything except basic concepts", and so on.

## It's 'not dignified'

But now we find some latter-day "old-timers" like Miss Abaljah, who says that Tok Pisin is not nearly as dignified" as Hiri Motu, which is a much more "colorful" language, and is only the language of the New Guineans anyway; and Mr Sali, who stated that only languages spoken by Papua New

the Morobe and Eastern Highlands Provinces as a second language. And the other languages also are characterised by their importance as mission languages.

Mr Sali's suggestion is open to two criticisms — these languages are not the languages of a great number of Papua New Guineans' grandfathers; and more importantly, each of these languages is restricted to a small area of PNG, and, if one of them was chosen as the national language, this would give such an unfair advantage to people from that region, and would necessitate such a tremendous expenditure on teaching people from all other areas of PNG, that it would be politically and economically disastrous.

language which was spoken over much of the Pacific during the last century, and which was learned by Papua New Guineans in plantations in Queensland, Samoa, Fiji, and PNG itself.

It was spread very rapidly from Papua New Guinean to Papua New Guinean: one need only look at the historical record to find that the Germans, the Australians, and even the United Nations as late as 1953 tried to stamp out Tok Pisin (because they thought it "inferior"), and with what result — it is now spoken by nearly 40% of PNG's population as a language for communication between national and national!

True, much of Tok Pisin's vocabulary is "borrowed" from English — perhaps 75%. But then 60% of English's vocabulary is "borrowed" from other languages, yet no-one questions English's position in today's world.

Hiri Motu, on the other hand, is the language developed by the Motu and Gulf people for use as a trading language during the Hiri expedition.

## Hiri Motu's a 'pidgin' language

It is a "pidgin" (or restricted) language, and thus no more or less "dignified" than Tok Pisin — or English

managed to get rid of Tik Pisin from Papua.

To do this, he required his policemen to use the Pidgin Motu used in the Hiri trade in their dealings with each other and with other Papuans.

It can thus be cogently argued that Tok Pisin is a language whose origins are external to PNG but whose development over the past century has been solely in the hands of Papua New Guineans, despite the discouragement of colonial administrations and the UN; while Hiri Motu — alias Police Motu — is a language whose origins are indigenous but whose development over the past century has been largely due to pressures exerted by colonialist administrations. Which of the two is the 'colonialist' language?

Finally, let me return to the point about the desirability for a national language. In all newly-independent nations, it has been found both desirable (from a point of view of national pride) and necessary (from a point of view of expediency) to have one language which is spoken and understood by all, or nearly all, the citizens of the nation.

Citizen must speak to public servant, public servant must speak to



# English gives PNG the chance to talk with the world

I have read the various articles and letters in the Post-Courier on the use of Pidgin as a national language, and have been provoked into defending English as the most suitable language to be used in education, and as the language of communication within this country.

I suggest that both Professor Dutton and Dr Lynch have been too selective in what they have chosen to say and write about Pidgin. They have mentioned the advantages of Pidgin as a language but have ignored its disadvantages.

Dr Lynch (Post-Courier, June 1) maintains that Pidgin is "an adaptable and vital language, able to be used in any situation, able to express almost anything the writer wants it to, and most importantly, tolerant of change so that speakers can express things in Tok Pisin that they could not before".

I will accept that statement although I doubt it.

Recently someone remarked that even the Government's Eight Point Plan looks

like it is going to dictate to the people what is to be acceptable or unacceptable in THEIR language. Whose language is it?

As a language of education, Dr Lynch states "anyone learns anything better in his own first or mother language than in any other language in which he is taught."

Elsewhere Dr Lynch quotes the figures of 10,000 to 20,000 people who speak Pidgin as a mother tongue.

It is hard to estimate from these figures how many of these would be children of school age. Even if there were 10,000 such children, then they are only a very small percentage of school age children in Papua New Guinea.

Therefore Dr Lynch defeats his own argument for supporting education in Pidgin, because the vast majority of children here do not speak Pidgin as

their first language. It is so much more difficult. I have met many Asians who have learnt English this way, and taught by their own countrymen and their English is often very difficult to follow.

The statement I found most difficult to swallow was Professor Dutton's suggestion that teachers and students could write the texts for Pidgin that would be needed in schools. Who are these teachers and students who have so much time to spare? Obviously they would need to be fluent in both English and Pidgin, so that would eliminate many expatriates and Papuans.

Also they would do such translations without payment, otherwise such a plan would be costing money, not saving it.

How many of these people would be available for such a task, and would they do this translation during classes or during their

free time? To quote Professor Dutton again, "an education project should be looked at like any other big project, eg, the Purari Hydro-electricity scheme".

I quite agree. Therefore, perhaps Professor Dutton could provide us with a cost-benefit analysis of his Tok Pisin Scheme.

I would also like Professor Dutton and Dr Lynch to make it clear to us just who are "the elite" who would be allowed to speak English.

Obviously it includes technologists and technicians. Does it also include those who will follow a trade?

Are rural workers to be allowed to read trade literature on farming techniques, fertilisers and pesticides?

Who is going to make this decision? Is it going to be the Government or the schools?

Or is trade literature going to be also translated into Pidgin? If so, who will do that? The teachers and students?

In the Post-Courier, June 4, there is an article about Mr Osin-

g's attitude to language, and that Professor Dutton and Dr Lynch with their talk of "the elite" and "the masses", are the colonialists.

They want the democratic process, whereby everybody learns English and is given equal opportunity, to be negated.

It was found that this attitude existed in Polynesian societies in Wellington, New Zealand.

A lecturer from the English Language Institute at Victoria University started evening classes in English for Polynesians living in the suburbs and was surprised to find after a while that only the elders of the people were attending classes.

The others had been discouraged from attending, because the leaders wanted to maintain their control of the people through their control of the English language. This put everyone else in a subordinate position, and they had to go to the leaders for help and advice.

Dr Lynch referred to the bloody riots over language in India 10

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# Pidgin's a national language already

Please allow me a bit of space in your paper to make a few brief comments on Professor Dutton's ideas for making Pidgin Top National Language, (Post-Courier, May 14).

Firstly, what is there to nationalise? It has been, is and will be, the major language used in this whole country by the different groups of people who through this language make and unite PNG.

I can see nothing to nationalise. It

"The few," now beneficial to everybody, who learned Pidgin were forced to physically, so that they could communicate with their masters.

Mind you, there were no texts whatsoever for those early learners of Pidgin English, now National Pidgin. Now do I need that?

Thirdly, what a waste of money it will be to write out texts for a

gin fluently, but cannot read?

It would certainly serve well as a pillow, or could hit the world record overseas as a tour attraction: "Learn Wild Pidgin While in Niugini".

And lastly, now that everything is taking its turn to be "Nationalised", what's next? "National Niugini"?

I reckon I'd better stick to English also,

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# English is our international language

"As long as Papua is politically dominated by New Guinea, passengers on the gravy train and those skilled in the art of short-term political expediency will continue to trot out academic arguments to support pidgin English at the expense of international English in Papua" (Page 5, Post-Courier, June 2).

Pidgin English started as a bad social habit thrust upon New Guineans solely as an instrument of colonialism and it is now being spread in Papua solely as an instru-

ment of neo-colonialism.

You can chew the end of your ball-point pen as hard as you like or go blue in your pink face trying to make platitudes in pidgin English but it will still be nothing but a comic opera language.

In every English-speaking country that I have visited, as well as such countries as the Philippines and Malaya, pidgin English can be guaranteed to produce a good laugh in almost any company.

Pidgin English and mudmen are leading topics of interest to uninvolved laymen and academics alike, so I wonder why the academics here are so serious about the matter.

Pidgin English is absolutely no use in Papua, where it is a social disease of colonialism which prevents the less privileged people from becoming fluent in our international language, which is English.

In Papua, pidgin English is in competition with international English and not with Motu, as foreigners here mistakenly believe.

Simple English leads to better English but pidgin English only leads to better Pidgin and worse English.

I dislike Pidgin as a spoiler of international English, as an instrument of colonialism and as a creator of a privileged elite and Pidgin peasants.

English is our inter-

national language and, as such, it belongs to us as much as it belongs to the colonials who are telling us to use something else.

After all, who wants to speak pidgin to our Papuan people, other

than the colonials and their servants? I look forward to the day when it will be official policy to stamp out pidgin English in Papua.

J.M. Abaijah, MP  
National Capital

## These statements were untrue

In your issue of June 15 on Page 10, in an article entitled "New Irelanders owe K500,000", you report the Chairman of the Papua New Guinea Federation of Savings and Loan Societies, Mr Anwo Ketawo, as making various statements about the debts of New Irelanders and the operations of the Development Bank in that Province.

I accept that you have reported Mr Ketawo correctly. However, as it happens the statements are untrue and the public might have been better served if your reporter had checked with the Development Bank or with me.

The true figure for the debts of New Irelanders currently outstanding to the Bank is K87,000, not K500,000. The total of loans made by the Bank in New Ireland to date is K344,000, so that it had already got back 75 per cent of total funds lent and will get much

more, because many loans included in the K87,000 are recent ones which have just begun repayments.

In addition, it is not true that the Development Bank has closed its Kavieng office or considered doing so.

In fact it has recently opened a new office at Namatanai and increased its staff at Kavieng.

JULIUS CHAN,  
Minister for Finance

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## Govt

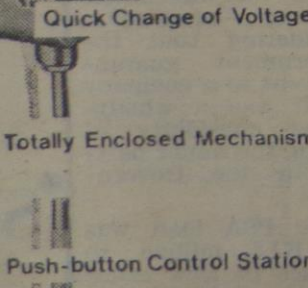
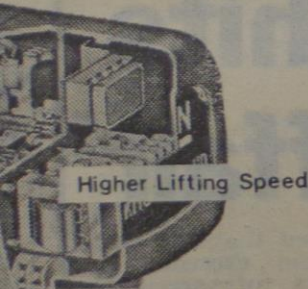
The Japanese company in the Biella oil project has been led to consider withdrawing.

Speaking in Parliament yesterday, when debate resumed on a motion by Mr Harry Humphreys (Talasea), the Prime Minister, Mr Anwo Ketawo said the Government had written to the company seeking its withdrawal.

"We believe it may be possible to produce an arrangement which is acceptable to the company and reasonable in the Government's view", he said. Mr Humphreys' motion expressed outrage and deplored the attitude of the company and the Japanese Government.

Mr Humphreys says the Japanese company and the Government are irresponsibly developing the oil palm scheme on the motion urges the Government to...

## ELECTRIC CHAIN HOIST



Higher Lifting Speed

Quick Change of Voltage

Totally Enclosed Mechanism

Push-button Control Station

## Unbung wantaim

Of course the move to join the East Sepik and the West Sepik Provinces should be opposed.

This dangerous centralising tendency must be reversed.

There is an urgent need for decentralising.

It is to be hoped that all provincial constitutions will include a provision for sub-provincial government and so on until every man is a Premier of something.

John Adoe,  
Boroko.

ERED BASSET Half an hour ago the vicar And he's still trying to work



# For Dante, Italian — for PNG, Pidgin

It is richly ironic that you should choose to quote from Dante to attack Pidgin. When Dante was writing, Latin was the only language fit for an educated man.

It was the only language capable of conveying the subtleties that marked true civilisation. It was elegant and refined, and so on.

Italian, on the other hand, was regarded as barbarous gibberish, a vile parody of Latin, fit only for peasants, quite unsuited for poetry or any civilised discourse, and so on.

Does this sound familiar? Of course it does; they said everything about Latin

that they now say about English, everything about Italian that they now say about Pidgin.

Dante wrote his masterpieces in Italian, and single handedly gained recognition for the language.

The Solomons, PNG and the New Hebrides might not be so lucky, but it does not matter. English had no-one like Dante when it needed him, and some linguists say English, too, was once a Pidgin language.

was transported to and fro on an old plantation tractor.

The Health Department erected a monument which they called the "Bali Witu Rural Health Centre". The people's money and their handwork were used and now it has been standing unstaffed and the pigs are taking the two wards

## Maybe Mr

After reading P. (Post-Courier, May 18) cent statement concerning plantations in an under such as Papua New Gu to agree with Mr Gordon

Mr Leahy writes at some length in order to disprove that a plantation crop such as coffee distorts the economy of Papua New Guinea. However, he fails to see the weakness of his argument,



ANGUS LAUPUN,  
Native of Bali  
Island.

# Pidgin will overcome

It is sad that some people still deride the most important island language of the South-west Pacific as a mutilated form of a foreign language or of the English language.

Pidgin, or Bislama, is the Melanesian Esperanto. It has had as much success as its East African equivalent, Swahili, for similar reasons.

Swahili is now the official language of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, their own international language, although a second language for most of its

noticed that each one of you who seem to be disgusted with Les Mills' work, as Na-

Like Pidgin, its thought sequence is familiar to its users, even if it uses some Arabic words, as Pidgin uses European ones.

Even though very different words are used in different regions, Pidgin is a lingua franca that allows the people of the New Hebrides, Solomon Islands and much of New Guinea and the New Guinea islands to communicate with each other with many outsiders like myself, who appreciate the need to learn it.

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Colleen have been  
ing for PNG.

Having known  
Mills and his dedica  
wife, for quite a per  
of time, I can ass  
you that their mor  
doesn't drop as ea  
as you may think  
judgment of your  
standards.





EDIP 1439

# English language is the greatest in the whole world

It is a normal rule that one should never dissect the literary standard of any letter to a newspaper, since the content is all important in these cases.

However, one really must draw the line at the drivel published over the signature of Provoked National Officers (Post - Courier July 13).

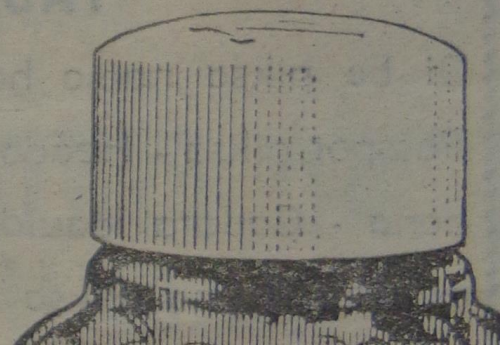
The reason for their complaint that there are several levels of payment for the teachers of this country is only too obvious.

Heaven help any child learning to speak and write English if he or she gets into the

No! Provoked national officers the reason your Government pays the huge salaries needed to attract overseas teachers is simple to find.

You yourselves are in need of a great deal more education than you have presently received, and only experts in the subject should be allowed to influence the minds of the next generation of Papua New Guineans.

# If you a head pain, "flu, v need





## Bais is wrong

## Pidgin is easier for everyone

These students are the true generation who will have a better understanding of our country and things that surround us which are often scarce in their country.

What will happen if a group of students from PNG wants to go on an expedition to study in other countries, who have made great effort in collection for the trip and other expenses, when someone like you starts charging for your so called "assist-

I would like to make a few comments on Mr Percy Chatterton's letter (Post-Courier, July 15).

Firstly, he said Switzerland has three national languages. In fact, it has four. They are French, German, Romansch and Italian.

Secondly, he commented on the lecture given by Professor Dutton. He disagreed with the professor and said that Pidgin is a non-Melanesian language, which is absolutely rubbish.

How can people who don't speak English

## Women's success

Greetings from our women's fellowship. The first of our annual women's shows is over and as your paper expressed it, "it was a rip-roaring success"

This was certainly

part of the industry...  
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idly by while officer...  
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Chairman and Mem...  
for Southern Highla...  
(Mr Ron Neville) sh...  
think very carefully...  
fore using a body s...

## B'VILLE TALKS FINISH

This week's talks between Government and Bougainville leaders today.

The two groups have been discussing administrative arrangements and the constitution of the Bougainville Provincial Government.

The talks began in Port Moresby on



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...resources.

Some expatriates may live on caviare and champagne. An other and very special index would be needed to measure their rate of inflation.

# ght at the pictures

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to throw their fists around, too.

All this was accompanied by a man who kept yelling profanities and who sounded like a sewer smells with the language he was using.

Finally the fight ended and the crowd dispersed. With all the police present, nothing was done. They even watched while one man was beaten several times.

I asked why they hadn't arrested Mr Loudmouth (I was told he was an MP) and those who were fighting. I received a shrug of indifference.

...SALIS OBIAN, CBE, MP,  
Minister for Finance.

# Pidgin is so easy

Please allow me a few comments in reply to a letter from "Papuan and Proud of It" (Post-Courier, June 10) on a national language for Papua New Guinea.

Surely it is ridiculous that Motu be spoken as our national language. Motu is pure to only a few like the proud Papuans who live in Hohola 1, 3 and 4 villages.

You fellows should try your best to go out of Hohola to places like Vanimo and Bougainville Island. These two places are many miles away from other places, but when the people come there they can easily learn to speak Pidgin in one or

...val of  
...mittee on Public Works.  
In a joint statement to yesterday, the Finance Minister, and the Primary Industry Minister said they had been forced to pro situation required an immediate early September.

Delivering the statement, Mr Sali said any further delays would have set back the development program by 12 months.

He said such a delay would have caused political repercussions.

The statement follows a series of questions on Friday by Mr Harry Humphries (Talasea), who is a member of the Standing Committee on Public Works.

Mr Sali said the Government had decided to act when the committee deferred approval pending further technical details which were to be given at a later meeting.

The meeting was never held.

The committee

had not proved the other had that such a doubtful.

He told that the Asi ment Bank ed and a project in A

Mr Humph Government to proceed scheme was contempt to committee a liament.

Later, out government, he sa mittee would to decide tion.

The schen about K165,0

→ Competition between English and Tok Pisin

→ Competition between Pidgin and local languages



hospital in the first three months of this year with cerebral malaria 11 had died.

rency earnings, and the internal cash flow until the world price recovered to a realistic level, he said.

visitors was imported snack foods.

Instead, people were eating salad rolls, drinking pine-

# Sali 'no' to Pidgin

The Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Sali, has supported a call by the Member for Central Regional, Miss Josephine Abaijah, not to have Pidgin as the national language.

Mr Sali said this was because Pidgin was not spoken by the great grandfathers of the PNG people.

Miss Abaijah, believes Motu should be the national language — in Papua at least.

She described Pidgin as a "mutilated foreign language".

Her comments were prompted by a lecture given by the new professor of Language at the University of Papua New Guinea, professor Tom Dutton, who said he believed Pidgin should replace English as the national language.

Miss Abaijah described Prof. Dutton as a "visiting foreigner".

Mr Sali suggested that instead of Pidgin one of the main dialects of the country's 700 dialects should be adopted.

Miss Abaijah said that if New Guineans did not want to learn Motu they should select a local language for themselves instead of spreading the influence of Pidgin, the language of their colonialism.

The National Weather Service forecast for today and tonight: Showers and isolated thunderstorms with rain areas mostly in the northern coast and western plains. Most areas will be fine with a few late afternoon and evening showers and morning coastal rain. Scattered morning fog areas in the Highlands. Light to moderate south-east winds with local

afternoon sea breezes on coastal areas. Weather details (24 hours to 3pm): Port Moresby 30 (maximum), 29 (minimum), 0 (millimetres rainfall); Lae 30, 29, 28; Rabaul 31, 30, 7.0; Momote 31, 30, 0.4; Kavieng 31, 30, 8.0; Kieta 29, 29, 42.0; Madang 30, 30, 15.0; Wewak 32, 27, 37.0; Milne Bay 29, 27, 41.0.



# Proud Papuans sometimes speak in Pidgin

Referring to Post-Courier, June 10, 1976, an unknown proud Papuan writer stated that Pidgin is ridiculous in Papua.

I, myself, am also a proud Papuan but I am ashamed to say that a proud Papuan does not practise Motu as a national language.

I come from Lake Kutubu in the Southern Highlands Province, and my people are well known Motu speakers.

And quite often we do speak Motu to some of the Papuans who are working here.

However it makes me doubt that Motu ever existed, because ridiculously they reply in Pidgin.

There are people from Central, Milne Bay, Gulf and Western Provinces working in the Southern Highlands who do not iden-

tify themselves as Motu speakers.

Here we are trying to use a language that is thought to be a proud national language of Papuan people, but some Papuans do not give a scrap whether Motu ever existed or not.

You think of how many Motu speakers there are in the Western, Gulf, Milne Bay and even in the Central Provinces.

As far as I know, there aren't too many, and what's more, the young generation of these Papuan provinces has forgotten Motu.

More often I hear a Papuan couple chattering away in Pidgin and all their children are taught Pidgin and not Motu.

And so Pidgin is always the common language spoken even by Papuan children. Therefore who can deny that Pidgin will never be spoken by the Papuan people?

I have been in the Central Province for quite some time and I have realised that most of the young people of the Central, Milne Bay, Northern, Western, and Gulf

Provinces do not understand Motu.

So who is going to teach Motu even to the Papuans if Motu is to become the National language of Papua New Guinea?

So there is no way in the world that Motu will become the National language in Papua New Guinea.

Besides Motu hasn't got all the required words in it, and it is inconvenient deriving words from English.

But as for Pidgin, most words come from English.

So it will be quite possible that Pidgin will eventually become the national language of this country.

However, I am not really concerned which language becomes our national language.

But I have clearly shown you which side I am on.

**BARIGI GESE,**  
Social Development,  
Mendi.

## No waiting for reserve teachers

I would like to comment on the letter "Reserve teachers" by Aiado and Raphael Soajoro (Post-Courier, June 10).

Both gentlemen must have misheard or did not fully understand what was said on the radio.

The main idea of this reserve position for teachers college graduates is to prevent delays in giving appointments to all graduates.

Also it's an assurance to all graduates that after graduating, they are sure to get a teaching appointment, whereas in previous years many graduates were faced with no teaching appointments and were staying in their villages awaiting offers of appointment.

- master;
- Schools that have three or more teachers;
- Non-urban areas which are not too remote.

Being put on the reserve position does not stop you from applying for a level one vacant position and I quote what was said over the air.

"Those teachers who are in their first year of teaching this year (graduates of 1975) are reminded that the position you are now holding is a reserve position; you have no right of tenure to that position.

## Who worries about Manus?

It is pleasing to see that the Manus islanders are interested in the welfare of their province and people.

It is even more pleasing to see that the islanders are putting their heads together to find possible approaches to develop their province, including the establishment of provincial government.

What is not pleasing to see is that the heads that are put together are few and belong to prominent bodies such as senior public servants and

high-ranking academics.

Understandably, not everyone can be involved in preliminary discussions as this would only result in congestion of ideas; thus nothing positive would result.

On the other hand, a fair representation of all sectors of the Manus community would not be out of place.

The question of national standing is totally irrelevant. What is relevant and more important is that a fair representation is made, to enable information on the progress

## Settlers in PNG

MOTEL



# Many people speak Pidgin

May I make a few comments on the "National Language"?

I'd like to refer to Mr Boyamo Sali, Minister for Primary Industry, and Miss Josephine Abaijah, Member for Central Regional who made a statement saying that Pidgin is not to be a national language, (Post-Courier May 17).

Miss Abaijah has described Pidgin as a "multilated foreign language".

For my opinion, it is a multilated foreign language, but Pidgin has nearly covered the country.

Pidgin is a very simple language and it is spoken by many, many old men and women: and even a two to 10

## — even Papuans

we can't make Motu a national language, because we New Guineans don't know how to speak Motu.

Pidgin is very simple and much easier to learn than Motu. Think back to the old people in the village, who don't know how to read and write and

can't speak English, which I think will take them years to learn.

Pidgin is easily spoken and it's very easy to understand. We must make Pidgin our national language and I support Professor Tom Dutton.

**REUBEN WARAKORI,**  
Citizen of Wewak

## Pidgin in Papua?

### Ridiculous!

For a couple of weeks now there has been talking in this country about having Pidgin as our national language.

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→ Local languages endangered because of Tok Pisin

→ But Tok Pisin is endangered, too



# Pidgin is losing its meaning



• Mr REA

## Feedback committee

The Minister for Labor, Commerce and Industry, Mr Rea, is planning to establish a consultative committee provide feedback to the Government from the private sector in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Rea announced this when the National Investment and Development Authority met the Port Moresby Cham-

Government pronouncements in Papua New Guinea could be meaningless to a large proportion of the country's population because of the **disintegration of the pidgin language**, a linguistics expert has claimed in Canberra.

He said the disintegration process had already reached fairly serious proportions.

It was being caused by the borrowing of English words to cover, in Pidgin, new concepts and situations.

It was causing serious communications problems.

The expert is the head of the Department of Linguistics at the Australian National University's Research School of Pacific Studies. Professor Stephen Wurm.

His claims are made in the latest issue of the university's newspaper, "ANU Reporter", in a front page article head-

from the structural differences between pidgin and English.

Straight borrowing from English could lead to the disintegration of the pidgin structure and pidgin lexical system.

"This disintegration process has already assumed fairly serious proportions in a variety of pidgin spoken in the big urban centres, especially Port Moresby," the professor says.

"Serious misunderstandings can arise between urban dwellers and rural dwellers because, generally speaking, pidgin speakers in urban areas use Anglicised pidgin, and pidgin speakers in rural areas or villages use a

Anglicised terms used in the Papua New Guinea Parliament, many of the decisions in the House and pronouncements by the Government can be meaningless to a large proportion of the country's population.

"At best, such Government statements are open to misinterpretation."

Giving examples, he said a Government publication could quote a "board of management," which would be written in the Anglicised version of pidgin as "bot ov menesmen."

To villages this would at best, mean a "boat" and a "man" with the words "bot" (boat in non-Anglicised pidgin)



• Mr

## CURRIE DEAD

The Finance Minister, Mr CURRIE, has decided to attend the for convert Australian dollars cents.

The new deadline March 31.

The previous line was but original deadline was



## Kupiano ...

We do not sell sweets that can ruin the health of children — things like lolly water, lollies, sweet biscuits, cheese-pops and chewing gum.

Our main concern in Kupiano High School is to sell the food that can satisfy the health of children.

**GEU OPU,**  
Students in charge of  
canteen,  
Kupiano High School.

# a simple solution

## LETTERS

## Keep Pidgin pure

The Pidgin language must not be allowed to disintegrate (Post-Courier, March 1). It is *too* useful to too many people.

The Pidgin language used in towns has changed in many ways from the language used in villages. The Anglicised urban form is meaningless to rural people.

At present, Pidgin is spoken widely and is helpful in many ways. If it ceases to exist, many and many prob-

# seve

# - m

# split

The National Party  
even resignations from  
actually ended its existence

Five get sore



WE NEED AN ACADEMY TO STANDARDISE PIDGIN — PROFESSOR

Papua New Guinea needs to establish a language academy as a step towards standardising Pidgin, a leading authority on the language has said.

Dr Stephen Wurm, Professor of Linguistic Studies at the Australian National University, said the academy should examine the present use of Pidgin, look at its problems and make suggestions as to how the problems could be overcome.

He said the old standard structure of the language was starting to collapse.

In urban areas it was starting to become half English, half Pidgin — with the result that it was no language at all and could not be understood even by people in rural areas.

# 'Make it a language we all understand'

"What is required is some basic central organisation which does the job of establishing what is in the language and how new words could be incorporated into it," Prof Wurm said.

However, any additions to the language should take account of Pidgin's grammatical structure.

Prof Wurm was speaking at the second of two public lectures on Papua New Guinea language at the University of Papua New Guinea.

He suggested that a language academy could be set up by the Government or university.

He was not in favor of the new urban Pidgin becoming a national language, he said, as it was too often changing.

Pidgin spoken in areas such as Madang and Wewak was more constant and more readily understandable throughout the country.

Prof Wurm said there was no reason for languages to be "fighting" one another.

While people should be free to speak their own particular languages, it was essential that there be a language which all people could understand.

"Language policy should not be looked at in terms of compulsion, but in terms of mutual advantage," he said.

Prof Wurm said it was not sufficient for an organisation such as an academy to compile a new, standardised Pidgin dictionary.

"If a decision is taken that a language should be used, it is important that the Government and other authorities use it, and do not just tell others to use it.

"The Government could give preference for positions to people who have a good command of the language," he said.

While it was difficult, anywhere, to standardise the

speaking of a language, the important thing here was to teach people how to read a standardised, usable Pidgin, Prof Wurm said.

"Some people in the villages might not understand the language on the radio but if they were familiar with the written form, they would ultimately understand.

"It is essential to standardise the language, for this reason.

"If the people can see it written, they will have a better idea of the language," Prof Wurm said.

He said the study of Pidgin had been looked upon for some time as being unimportant.

But now the world recognised it as an important subject and there was wide interest in what was happening with the language here.

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Some examples

**Today**

**Tok Pisin in a globalised  
world**

# Some examples

“We cannot allow ourselves to be – what did the Bible say? – the **country of Babel** or whatever they call it, where everyone speaks his own version of Tok Pisin.”

“There are more Tok Pisin speakers in this country (...) than any other language, even English. (...) Let’s write books, stories for that readership. **Otherwise we are failing our people.**”

“Hopefully we get some **standardisation** in place, so that way we monitor, if you wish, the **development of our language.**”

BM, interview 2014

# Some examples

“We continue to **bastardise both English and Tok Pisin** in our **search for more words** to fit into our modern Tok Pisin.”

MD, blog comment 2013, *PNG Attitude*

“Tok Pisin works well in shared contexts, but can be **difficult when expressing concepts because it is difficult to be precise** and concise. But this kind of **ambiguity** is a useful trait in **poetry** (...) The most important point about using Tok Pisin is that it is **uniquely Melanesian**. (...)”

MD, blog article 2013, *PNG Attitude*

“It feels better to people to be able to speak Tok Pisin. There’s a **better sense of ownership** of that language, because we’re creating it as we go along.”

MD, interview 2014

# We still find...

- language-culture equation from ‘anti-colonialist ideology’ (though, is it, really?)
  - idea that Tok Pisin needs to be standardised
  - fear that standardless Tok Pisin is not functional
- The idea that Tok Pisin is a simple language is hardly ever questioned – because it has been deployed as an argument for and against the use of Tok Pisin.



# PNG nationalism

simplicity + expression of Melanesian culture +  
functional in national communication

→ authentic, high-status variety  
(focus on cultural and oral production)

simplicity + expression of culture + disfunctional  
for international positioning

→ authentic, low-status variety  
(focus on educational and written production)

# Conclusion

Continuing authentication of Tok Pisin through a growing sense of ownership, languagehood and geographical rootedness.

But status?

Similar to the Milroys' (1999) distinction between covert and overt prestige of a language, i.e. solidarity and status. BUT not the same.

→ Tok Pisin has a very high status, but only in certain domains.



# Discussion

If we want to investigate the effects that language ideologies have on the status or authenticity of a variety, there are three issues we need to address. We need to establish 1) how we identify language ideologies, i.e. what elements they consist of and how we find these elements in discourse/ texts, 2) how we categorise and define language ideologies (in order to make the analysis reproducible), and 3) how we determine the actual impact of the individual elements and the sum of these elements on abstract concepts such as status and authenticity.

Thank you very much for your attention

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# Appendix

Dialect Project  
(Laura Tresch)

Creole Project  
(Christoph Neuenschwander)

**New Zealand English**

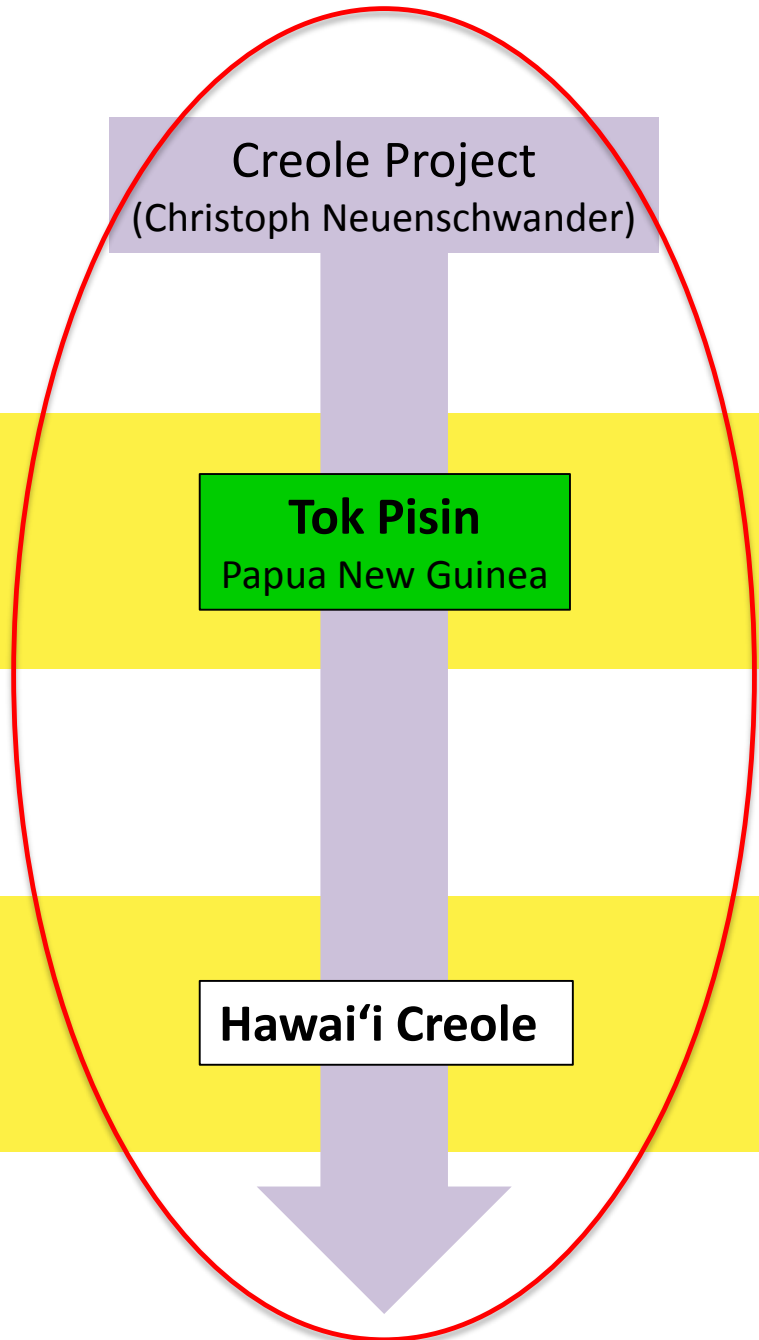
**Tok Pisin**  
Papua New Guinea

- More legitimised
- Local standard variety
- Overt prestige

**Estuary English**  
Southeast England

**Hawai'i Creole**

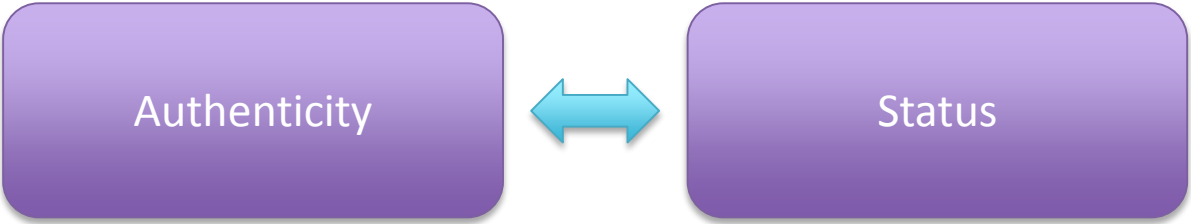
- Less legitimised
- Non-standard variety
- Covert prestige



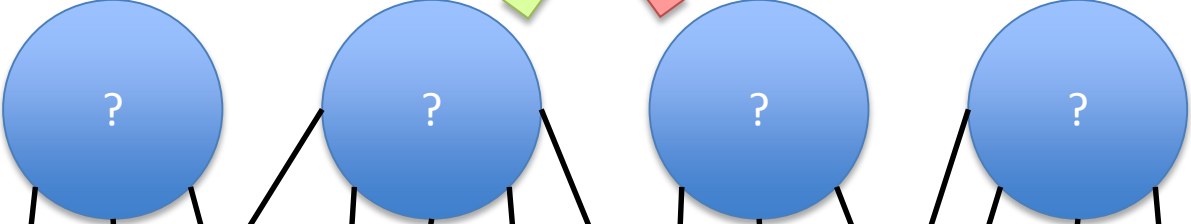
# Qualitative study

## Implications:

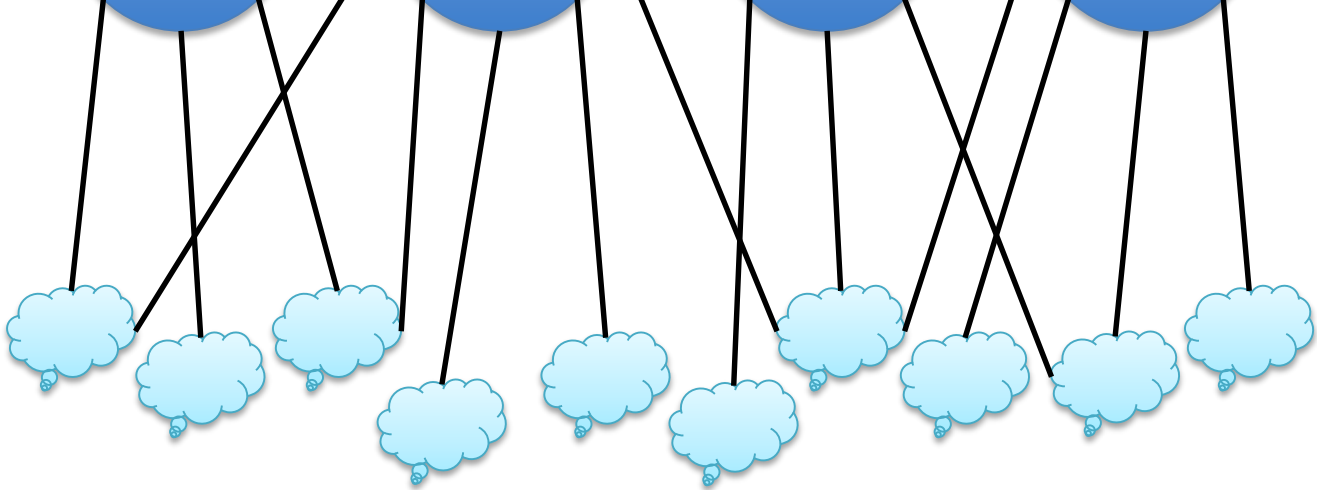
- Media discourse is not representative of people's beliefs
- Data sampling is not representative – but typical
- Aim of the project is not to describe the dominance or prevalence of certain ideologies in public discourse, but the description of the ideologies themselves



effects/ processes



language ideologies



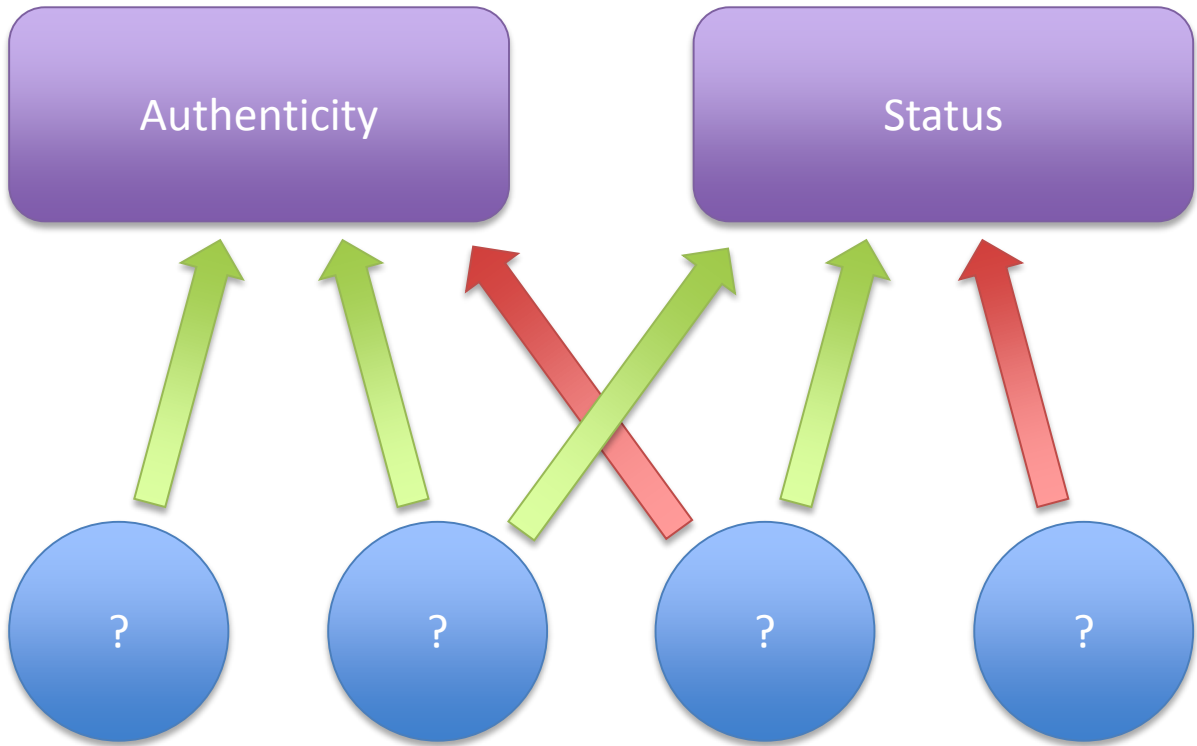
themes: beliefs/ myths

Authenticity

Status

Effects of language  
ideological debates in  
public metalinguistic  
discourse/ processes





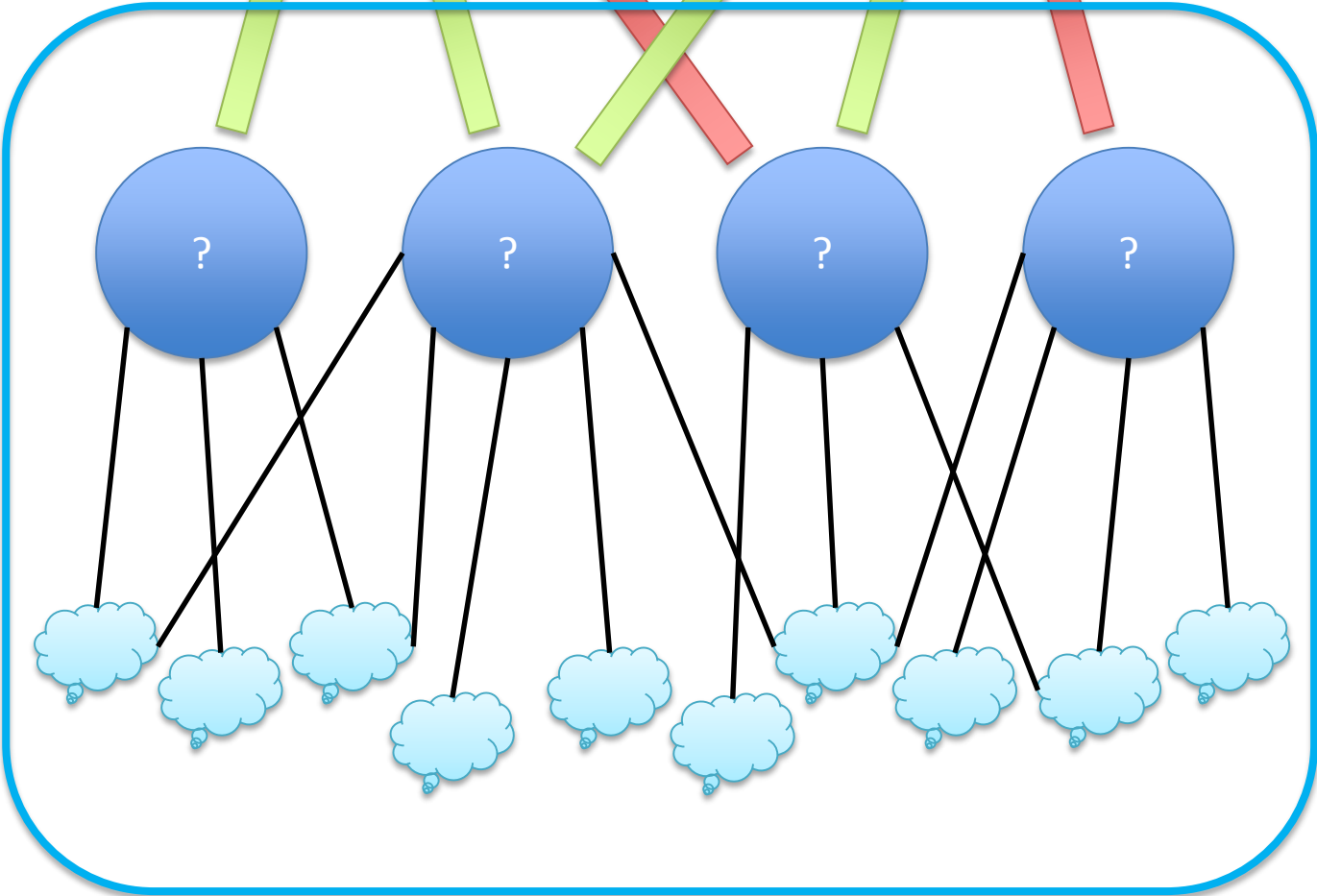
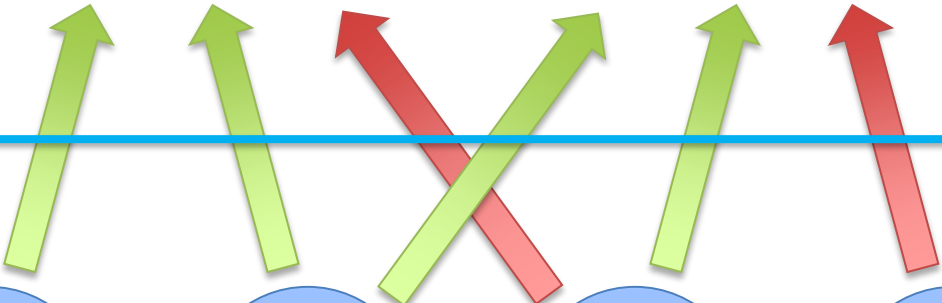
effects/ processes

language ideologies  
(large analytical entity,  
formed by smaller entities,  
which I call themes)

Authenticity

Status

effects/ processes



language ideologies

*metapragmatic  
commentary/ ideological  
production (Philips 2000)*

themes: beliefs/ myths,  
cultural models, topoi,  
conceptual metaphors