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Restituting Language: Ethics, Ideology and the Making of a Dictionary

by

Christine JOURDAN*

ABSTRACT

I propose to consider the ethical dimension of the return of data to the research field site, here the Solomon Islands by focusing on the writing the Pijin Dictionary published in 2002. I start by discussing the disconnect between the linguistic data we gather and the transformation these data undergo before linguists and anthropologists typically return them. I then focus on the making of the dictionary showing how the techniques of dictionary making and linguistic ideology of research participants and collaborators interact with my own to create a product far removed from the original data. I am questionning the ethics of such a transformation. Finally, I explain that though the dictionary is now 20 years, it is not used by Solomon Islanders who are not taught to read and write in Pijin but in English (the official language of the country). Rather, young Solomon Islanders using social media, are developing their own spelling for the language, neither that of Pijin nor that of English.

Keywords: ethics, linguistic ideology, dictionary making, pidgin, Solomon Islands

RÉSUMÉ

Je m'intéresse à la dimension éthique du retour des données dans les pays où elles ont été collectées, ici les Iles Salomon. Après avoir discuté la distance qui existe entre les données collectées et les données telles qu'elles sont typiquement restituées par les linguistes et les anthropologues, je prends pour exemple le dictionnaire de pijin et montre comment les techniques de compilation de dictionnaire et les idéologies linguistiques de mes informateurs conjuguées aux miennes le façonnent et en font un produit loin des données originales. J'interroge la dimension éthique d'une telle transformation. Finalement, j'explique que ce dictionnaire déjà vieux de 20 ans n'est utilisé par personne aux îles Salomon, du fait que les Salomonais apprennent à lire et à écrire en anglais (langue officielle du pays) et non en pijin. Par contre, les jeunes Salomonais présents sur les réseaux sociaux sont en train de développer leur propre orthographe de cette langue, ni pijin ni anglais.

Mots-clés : éthique, idéologie linguistique, compilation de dictionnaire, pidgin, îles Salomon

Anthropologists have codes of ethics that are akin to sacred commandments: your informants you will not deceive; their interest you will protect; their intellectual property you will not steal; your data you will not cook; your research you should render accessible to the scientific community and local population; your data you will protect, etc. They serve as guidelines for best practices and that is well. In my view, one commandment is missing though it is implicit: your data you will return. That it is missing can be taken not as an oversight, but as an indication that such return is not easy to arrange. At times the data are sensitive and are best not shared in public: they were made accessible to the anthropologist under confidence. At times the community from where the data come is divided on what ought or ought not be returned, on the form in which data are to be returned, and whether they ought to be returned at all. Yet again, some communities are not equipped to arrange for the safekeeping of the bulk of the data we would be prepared to return. And finally some anthropologists feel that their data are simply not readily accessible, or not "good enough" to bother with, or too personal (see Jaarsma, 2002; Mosel, 2004; Thieberger and Musgrave, 2007, among others).

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With the goal of returning data to the community where they work, or simply to put some order in the lexical notes that populate their field data, a number of anthropologists and linguists working in societies where the local language has yet to be written choose to do what I swore I would never do: compile a dictionary. Their motivations for doing so vary from scholar to scholar: they include the desire to respond to local pressures for a dictionary; the need to preserve information that is part of the human cultural heritage; the wish to be able to return raw materials they collected transformed into a product that may benefit the collectivity (and not solely the individuals anthropologists work with); and sometimes, the desire to accumulate data so that they become available for further linguistic analysis by others[1].

In this paper, I analyse the philosophical and ideological steps involved in the making of the Pijin cultural trilingual dictionaries that I compiled over 10 years with the help of Ellen Maebiru, without any previous experience in lexicography (Jourdan and Maebiru, 2002)[2]. In doing so, I would like to propose that the complexity of making a dictionary goes beyond the usual lexical quagmires that lexicographers face when they embark on such a project. What will become obvious are the language ideologies and the politics (those of the lexicographers and those of the informants) that interplay with ethics and linguistics to guide the making of a dictionary. Though the issue of language ideologies permeates language documentation when applied to efforts to revitalize "dying" languages (see Hill, 2006; Kroskrity, 2015; Mosel, 2004), this paper will show that they also affect the documentation of languages that are not in danger of disappearing. This is nothing new of course, as the sociology of language and lexicographers working on non-endangered languages attest to (Hartmann, 1987; Chen, 2017). Hartmann goes as far as referring to a dictionary as "an ideological weapon" (Hartmann, 1987: 124). But here, the case is a bit different, as the language in question is neither in danger of disappearing, nor does it have the status of a national language. In that sense, it is not sustained by national cultural productions, institutions or legislations. It is simply the lingua franca of a small archipelago called the Solomon Islands where it coexists with 74 ancestral languages and with English, its main lexifier and the official language of the country.

The article will start with a discussion of the interplay of ideologies and ethics in dictionary making. This will be followed by a brief presentation of Solomon Islands Pijin. Finally, I will present and analyze the aspects of dictionary building where ideology and ethics played an important role, and will discuss their role in the return of the data. The paper will conclude with a reflection on the use and ironies of this dictionary in a society that does not write in Pijin.

Ideologies and knowledge

As with many other linguistic anthropologists, the bulk of the data I gather consists in different forms of oral language: narratives, interviews, life histories, stories, conversations, linguistic elicitations etc. But the evanescent nature of oral language makes it a frustrating medium to gather. Once said, words and sentences disappear, even when they are part of a well-established body of oral literature. The fleeting nature of speech renders the return of data even more problematic: how does one return something that is not present any longer. Generations of my predecessors and numbers of my colleagues have sought to capture speech by writing it down and by recording it on tapes, and now on digital recorders. Corpora of different speech genres are thus established that live (and often times sleep) in the researchers' archives[3] or in well-established public archives, whose goal it is to render linguistic data accessible to researchers and the public at large[4]. Scholars make use of linguistic examples in the papers or books they publish, or in the hand-outs they distribute at conferences. Or they compile dictionaries or write grammars that will "freeze" the language in time, and transform it into an object (see Mühlhäusler, 1990). But what happens to the bulk of the data after it is so recorded varies according to the objectives of researchers, that of the communities they work with, the nature of the data they gather, and often times with the conditions

1. In today's world, the dictionary compiler must also think of the support on which this dictionary will be published: to maximize its accessibility to local populations, one might want to revisit the tradition of publishing in print only. Gone are the days when paper was the only possible support for such a document. As Thieberger (2015) remarks, paper versions impede the usefulness of the dictionary in places like the Pacific where potential users live far away from the places where they are kept, and where the price of such document is prohibitive for local budget. But it might be argued that publishing in electronic media only has the same results for populations that have no access to computers or intelligent phones. Access to information is always a problem in the remote rural areas of the Pacific islands.

2. When I started compiling words in 1991, each new word was entered on index cards together with their gloss and an example taken from the corpus of interviews in Honiara that year. When I made the decision to formalize all these cards and transform them into a dictionary, I made use of the SIL program SHOEBOX. Before printing, the dictionary was formatted with the SIL Multi-Dictionary Formatter (MDF).

3. In a recent paper, Françoise Grenand writes à propos the Wayapi dictionary she compiled: "Les textes wayapi sont donc restés à dormir dans mes cartons, même s'ils furent la source inépuisée des exemples, tant pour la grammaire que pour le dictionnaire qui suivit" (Grenand, 2020: 88) (*The Wayapi texts remained asleep in my boxes, even though they were the inextinguishable source of examples, for the grammar as well as for the dictionary that followed*) (Translation mine).

4. An excellent example is PARADISEC (the Pacific Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures), a regional archive that houses field recordings from the Asia and Pacific regions.

imposed by research grants and research permits secured by researchers.

The word "data" dehumanizes what these records consist in: words spoken by people in a cultural context are now recontextualized into research materials. The word "data" also hides the fact that they may include information that is often private in nature or culturally sensitive. Therefore, returning these raw data (in the form of recordings) to a community or to an official institution requires that they be "prepared" in ways that meet the requirements of the researcher's ethics protocol (and in the absence of formal protocol, their own sense of ethics), those of the speakers who provided the data, and those of the community to which they are being returned. Particularly important are the anonymity and privacy of the speakers and the nature of the information they provide (secret, private, potentially harmful to them or to others). As Thieberger and Musgrave (2007: 34) remind us, sentences that seem innocuous when they are collected can turn out to be embarrassing or problematic when they are reintroduced in the society years later and out of context. To overcome these difficulties, many anthropologists and linguists also make it a habit to return recordings (and transcriptions of these recordings) directly to the people they obtained them from. I am one of them. The advantages of doing so are clear: one does not need to worry about privacy, confidentiality, secrecy and so forth, yet one is able to contribute to the accumulation of local knowledge in a form that is not mediated by the linguistic or social analysis.

The return of raw data as discussed above can be contrasted with the return of transformed data in the form of articles, monographs and dictionaries. For scholars whose work focuses on language documentation of endangered languages, a dictionary is often a must, particularly when language revitalization is taking place. In other cases, such as in mine, the dictionary is "a part or a by-product of their research projects" (Mosel, 2004: 39). Often, these dictionaries are compiled in societies where the language studied by the fieldworker is not yet written. People may be literate in other languages, but not in that one. In some places, people are not literate at all. If the return of "oral" language in "oral" form is complex enough in practical terms (not everyone in the community may have access to the technology that allows them to listen to the recordings[5]), the return of oral language in the form of written texts adds another set of complexities linked to choices of orthography, codification, and standardization. The lexicography literature attests to these difficulties (see for instance Frawley, Hill & Munro, 2002 or Grenand, 2020 for discussions on orthography choices for indigenous languages in the Americas). But these are difficulties for the linguists to worry about, usually in cooperation with the speakers of the language they work with.

In my view, the biggest challenges are linked to the local cultural expectations of what language is, and of what a text is and does, and for some texts, who has ownership of them. They are also linked to the linguistic ideologies[6] that provide the context to the language we record. What does it mean to decontextualize oral narratives into texts that are recontextualized according to the authors' cultural world? What does it mean to freeze a language in a book and to list it by words according to an alphabetic order? What does it mean to give linguistic and cultural legitimacy to a language that did not have (and still) may not have any? As will be shown, these practices and ideologies came to bear on lexicographic decisions I made when I compiled a dictionary of Solomon Islands Pijin 20 years ago, and which forced me to reflect on their effect every step of the way.

Finally, an important question remains: to what extent is writing a dictionary the best way to return language data to a community? Or, as Terrill (2002) asks "Why make books for people who don't read?" After all, a dictionary is an artifact of literate societies that stores knowledge outside of people's memory, while formalizing this knowledge for further access: classifications, imposing grammatical categories, ordering, analyses, and so on. Another point is worthy of consideration: a dictionary of a yet unwritten language, as with any other efforts of codifying it, is typical of the colonial linguistics that have accompanied European colonial expansion: it seeks to control the language and to put some order in it as if to shape it to Westerners' expectations of what a language is or ought to be.

Most dictionaries give in to the pressure of ordering knowledge for easy further access in a style that is conventional in Western intellectual tradition. This is what the genre is all about. This ordering can be seen in the presentation of the linguistic data: in the alphabetic order in which the words are listed; in the parts of speech that follow the words; in the semantic domains to which this word belongs and so on. But it can also be seen in the systematicity in which the information is registered. Except for a few notable dictionaries (Jeff Heath's 2006 dictionary of Tamashek is a good example), the order in which the information appears is predictable from one dictionary to the next. The best surprise, so to speak, is that there is no surprise. Or rather, the best surprise is that there should be no surprise. Yet, as anthropologists such as Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) have shown in their work in Kwara'ae society (Solomon Islands), it is likely that the epistemologies of knowledge of the societies we record the language

5. Advances in cell phone technology are changing all this (see Hobbis, 2020).

6. The concept of linguistic ideology is defined differently by different authors. Foley's definition works fine for my purpose: "a cluster of beliefs that a particular speech community holds about the form and function of language" (Foley, 2005: 157). It is to be noted that language ideologies may change through time, and that concurrent linguistic ideologies may exist in the same community of linguistic practice.

of may not be based on the same principles. Indeed, in non-literate societies, or in societies in which the language is not used for writing, the fate and usefulness of this dictionary will vary with circumstances. At best, it could be useless in the immediate future but could become useful later on. At worst, it does not correspond to the local understanding of what a language is and does and remains useless.

Finally, from a structural point of view, a dictionary can be seen as a rather neutral exercise. After all, it is only comprised of words taken from the public sphere: what can be wrong with listing them? A dictionary takes speech out of context and packages it as an artifact whose roots are in the Western intellectual tradition and which creates a linguistic standard. As Frawley, Hill and Munro reminds us, "standardization is a not a prerequisite to literacy" (2002: 10). Yet, this is what a dictionary does. From an ideological point of view, a dictionary is not neutral at all. Words taken out of their original sociocultural context are organized in an alphabetical list. The cultural knowledge embedded in the words is chopped up in units, some of them giving access to grammar. These words are presented as if they are all equal, as if they have all the same cultural weight. In this list, their meaning is produced for all to see, as if it existed totally irrespective of the speaker's use of them, and of the hearer's interpretation of them. It is as if when organized in this way, words can do no harm. Seen under this light, the compilation of a dictionary may then exempt the compilers from worrying about ethics, yet allow them to fulfill their sense of obligation to the people they worked with. But do words do no harm even out of context? Not so. Only when one reads the small print, so to speak, can one see that not all words have the same power: grammatical power, cultural power, social power, etc. And if one has any doubts about the power of words, one simply needs to look at the literature on word tabooing (Keesing and Fifi'i, 1969 on word tabooing in Kwaio), on the performativity of the "F" word in English (Fleming, 2018) and language slurs (Croon, 2010) to be convinced of the contrary.

Linguists and linguistic anthropologists working in a language endangered community have to be mindful of the tensions present in the society around language preservation. Kroskrity (2015) explains that further tensions develop within the community between the stated goals of language preservation and the anxiety and emotions felt in the face of it. In the case of the Pijin dictionary, no such tensions existed within the community of speakers I worked with. People did not feel attached to Pijin culturally and never manifested any emotions about the dictionary. It is as if Pijin existed as a useful entity for everyday usage, but not as an object of identification and affiliation that would generate emotional responses. I seem to have been the one most involved in the project emotionally.

A brief note about Pijin

The Solomon Islands is a nation occupying a small archipelago of the South Pacific with a population of about 680,000 people (SINSO, 2020). Twenty per cent of the population live in urban centers as wage earners while the rest live in rural areas by subsistence horticulture and fishing, supplemented at times by the growing of cash crops such as coconuts, cocoa and rice. Tryon and Hackman (1983) recorded 74 languages. The website Ethnologue lists 75 languages, 4 of them extinct (Summer Institute of Linguistics, 2020). Pijin is the lingua franca of the country. One of the Melanesian pidgins, it was introduced in the country at the end of the 19th century by indentured laborers returning from their two year contract on the sugarcane plantations of Queensland (north-east Australia). Pijin spread quickly and is now known in all parts of the country, and used widely everywhere for intergroup communication, particularly in urban centres. Pijin has been so successful socially that it is nowadays one of the "killer languages" of the Solomon Islands, to use Price's expression (1984). As I have shown (Jourdan, 2008), societal language shift away from vernaculars to Pijin for some social and age groups in some settings is well established. Pijin is heard on the radio, in popular culture, and is the main language of the towns. Its pervasive presence is being felt everywhere in the country, most notably through loan words in local languages. Indeed Akin (private communication 2008) and Lichtenberk (2003) note the increasing number of Pijin loan words in Kwaio and Toqabaqita (two languages of Malaita), for words that already exist in those languages[7]. But if Pijin is widely spoken, it is not widely written. Despite the efforts of the Literacy Association of the Solomon Islands (LASI) and the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) through the works of the Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group (SITAG) the language is not a popular medium of written communication. There are many reasons for this situation: first, schooling takes place in English; second, Pijin lacks institutional support from government agencies; third, though it is the main language of the country, and the mother tongue of two generations of Solomon Islanders (mainly in urban centers), Pijin still lacks linguistic and cultural legitimacy. Its own speakers at times denigrate it as a broken form of English (Jourdan and Angeli, 2014).

Pijin is not an endangered language at all: the total number of speakers of Pijin increases all the time as does the number of people for whom it is the first language they learned and their main language, though it is hard to know the numbers since

7. Lamont Lindstrom (2007) writes about similar processes in Vanuatu where the local pidgin called Bislama enters Kwamera on the island of Tanna. Code-mixing takes place at such a pace that Kwamera changes fast.

we have to wait for the outcome of the 2019 census that included a question on Pijin. In addition, Pijin changes quickly and starts exhibiting variation in function and status, thus making the compilation of this dictionary a never ending proposition. Yet, despite this vitality, Pijin suffers from coexistence with English, its main lexifier and the official language of the Solomon Islands, and also the prestigious language for social advancement.

The making of the dictionary

Whether they "chose" to write a dictionary, whether they gave in to the "beast" that materialized from file cards or computer files, or whether they accepted the challenge of the people among whom they do research, researchers know that the dictionary they are writing encapsulates much of the knowledge they have accumulated over the years. Knowledge about words, of course, but also knowledge about culture. Though it is possible for a young researcher to embark on the making of a dictionary, it is only after a few years of comfortable use of a language in many of its cultural contexts that one can pretend to know this language well enough to carry out such a project competently. A dictionary is often a way for the compilers to assess their knowledge and understanding of the cultural world they are hoping to grasp.

There exist many techniques that the researcher can use to find words, to elicit them, to get their different meanings, and fieldwork manuals and journals specializing in language documentation, such as *Language Documentation and Description* or *Language Documentation and Conservation*, are full of them[8]. So is the collection edited by Gippert, Himmelmann and Mosel (2006). But it remains that nuances of meaning are often accessible only to those who know well, though not necessarily natively, the cultural world this language is part of. And if it were not enough of a problem, it remains that even the most experienced fieldworker is often a novice in dictionary making. Unavoidable questions arise, such as: What to list?; Do I include sociolinguistic notations?; Are all senses of the word essential? But the more important question remains: What is achieved by the compilation of a dictionary? I am hoping to give some elements of an answer below.

What to list?

Throughout my years of research in the Solomon Islands, I could witness the fast pace with which Pijin was changing. And though it was clearly not an endangered language, the changes that affected all aspects of the language in a very short time were leading to the development of social and generational variations sufficient for people to notice them and comment on them (Jourdan and Angeli 2014). While some words disappeared from common usage and were never learned by the new generation, many new ones appeared. Some tests on word lists I made in schools in 1983, 1993 and 2007 attest to that. Many morphological changes took place as well, and there was a lot of code-switching with English or ancestral languages.

When the idea of a dictionary finally took form (all the computer cards that lived in a shoebox demanded attention) I wanted it to be a repository of the cultural worlds conveyed in Pijin. Long before I was thinking of "restituting" Pijin in that form, it became obvious that everything had to be recorded for safe-keeping. Many dictionary compilers do not take this position. In his dictionary of paicî, a language of New Caledonia, Jean-Claude Rivierre explains that he did not want to burden the readers with words they did not know or would have no need for. His audience was the young generations of paicî speakers. He explains:

> "Je me suis donc efforcé de repérer les termes rares et de limiter ce dictionnaire au paicî pratiqué actuellement par les locuteurs adultes, établis sur la côte est comme sur la côte ouest"[9] (1983: 18)

By contrast, I was clearly the victim of a romantic approach to language that made me consider, very uncritically, that words were things to be collected before they vanished. I felt that when they vanished, the knowledge they carried, and the social system that gave them meaning, would disappear as well. I was thinking like a specialist in language preservation about a language that was not at all in need of preservation. For instance, when Pijin speakers today use the word *prison* where people three generations ago would have used *kalabus* (from Portuguese *calaboso*), the historical dimension of that word, though it may have escaped speakers who used it, was nevertheless there to bear witness to language contact and to the history of Pijin. It was important to capture that word in the dictionary as a witness.

Though exhaustivity is not necessary for all types of dictionaries, it is typically the goal of dictionary compilers who work with heretofore undescribed languages. But how can one be exhaustive when one's audience is not keen on having all the possible words listed? As Mosel (2004) points out, many words do not make it into a dictionary because the audience might not want to see them listed: taboo words; secret words; insults, etc. Our informants know that not all words are equal, and having them listed out

8. I will not enter here into a debate that distinguishes language documentation from language description and which puts dictionary making into the latter category (see Himmelmann, 1998; 2006; Austin and Grenoble, 2007). But as many contemporary dictionaries of poorly documented languages include more texts, images, examples, sounds and videos, the boundaries between the two are increasingly becoming blurred (see also Ogilvie, 2011).

9. "Therefore I carefully noted rare terms but purposefully limited this dictionary to the Paicî currently spoken by adults living on the east coast and on the west coast" (translation mine).

of context does not alter their power. Here, the language ideologies of our audience take precedence over our own (Keesing and Fifi'i, 1969). Or rather, our sense of professional ethics and its Hippocratic first law "First do no harm" (American Anthropology Association code of ethics) – itself a form of ideology – comes into conflict with our professional duties ("list everything because this is science"), and takes precedence over our own linguistic ideology.

Entering everything in a dictionary gives it a false impression of neutrality and transforms it into a tool of reference, an arbiter of spelling, meaning, function, etc. When the word enters a dictionary, however long it may have been used in the community before entering the dictionary, it acquires legitimacy; it now exists officially as part of that language. People in literate societies have been taught to use the dictionary as a tool of reference even when they play games. If the word is in the dictionary, it exists officially. We will come back to that topic later.

The question of the audience

One rule of thumb in compiling a dictionary is deciding who the audience is. Traditionally, compilers have a few audiences in mind: the local population; the colleagues; and more generally the World: Here is a language that the world can now know about, if not know. My main intended audience was the Solomon Islanders: most adults knew Pijin better than I did, but most of them did not know the sum of it all. That is the case for speakers of any language: the words we typically know are those pertaining to our cultural worlds, activities, interests, etc. Enamoured as I was with the language, I wanted Solomon Islanders to see what a rich language Pijin was, contrary to what many of them thought: compiling a dictionary rendered these words more concrete and countable.

I was also interested in producing a tool that people could use to check words and their meaning, and to learn how to spell and write Pijin, if ever they wanted to do so. Though Pijin is the lingua franca of the archipelago, it is never written except in some rare cases (the occasional instructions in public offices; the rare cartoons in newspapers; the Bible). It seemed important to build a tool that could allow people to use Pijin so that they could write in it. The naïve lexicographer that I was kept hoping that eventually Pijin could become a written medium of written communication in the country and that the dictionary could play a role.

But I was also a novice lexicographer, and therefore I added two audiences: the foreigners who would want to learn Pijin, and the Solomon Islanders who would want to learn English and French. Some friends in Honiara had said that they would like to know some French and very often asked me to teach them. As a result, the dictionary is trilingual: Pijin, English and French (more about that later). The third audience was the linguists who would want to use the dictionary as a basis for comparative data and analysis.

But there was more to it. Years of fieldwork in Solomon Islands indicated two important cultural phenomena. On the one hand, there was an increasing number of urban young people for whom Pijin was the mother tongue and the only language they knew until they entered primary school where they were introduced to English. Often, they had become distanced from the customary ways of their parents and did not know much about them. In parallel, Pijin was becoming the medium of a vibrant urban culture driven by the youth. If this dictionary was going to be useful, it had to encapsulate all this: the ancestral cultural world and the emerging one. Here again, my own sensitivity to the importance of cultural worlds and my own desire to "capture culture" pushed me towards ethnographic descriptions as often as I could. Quickly, the dictionary became ethnographic. In writing these words, I am remembering Pawley's observation that ethnographic dictionaries are fraught with dangers because they

> "are generally written by one or few scholars who are not native speakers of the target language, assisted by native-speaking consultants who have no prior knowledge of lexicography. Sometimes, the compilers themselves have no previous experience of making a dictionary." (Pawley, 2011: 264)

He could have been writing about me. But more importantly, the dictionary became ethnographic because of my conception of the centrality of culture in language. Here, the theories of language and culture (eminently ideological) that I was working with coalesced with something just as ideological, the desire to give symbolic visibility to urban culture and its language, and to make customary practices accessible to the young urban crowd. Though this dictionary was not compiled from the perspective of language documentation as it is understood today (i.e. in relation to endangered languages), its ethnographic dimension speaks to the preoccupation I had to document ways of life that are sustained by, or that sustain, language. This approach is increasingly an important feature of ethnography of language, sociolinguistics or conservation linguistics (Hill, 2006; Kroskrity, 2015). I have to say that the ethnographic descriptions (including the illustrations) are one of the features of the dictionary that the Solomon Islanders enjoy the most.

The making of the dictionary and its structure[10]

Sources for words

For the reasons I explained above, I conceived of this dictionary as a repository of Pijin words and usage, as well as of the cultural worlds that are sustained by Pijin. This implies that I included all the words I could find, old and new, rural or urban, gen-

10. This section makes use of parts of the introduction of the Pijin dictionary.

der-marked or age-marked, without making any selection. Whatever I found, I entered into the dictionary. As a result, the dictionary contains old words and new ones, even though many people may not know them, or may not use them today. To find all the words and their meanings, I used many sources: 1) 200 tape-recorded interviews in Pijin that I had made over the previous 15 years with people originating from all over the Solomon Islands, young and old, women and men, girls and boys, educated or not; 2) systematic elicitation of words with Solomon Islanders by semantic fields (body parts; kinship; natural elements; flora; fauna, etc.); 3) recordings of radio programs; 4) lyrics of popular songs and poetry; 5) natural conversations between friends; 6) stories and myths I recorded; 7) and words supplied by friends and colleagues over the years. All these spoken words were supplemented by written words as they were found in word lists and short dictionaries and works published in Pijin written before mine (Simons and Young, 1978; SICA, 1982; The Big Death, 1988; Guyer Miller, 1989; Beimers, 1995; The Niu Testamen, 1992)[11].

Words and examples

Second, it seemed essential to me that the dictionary not be limited to lists of words illustrated by some examples. Language, as we know, is not a simple collection of words. These words are linked by grammar. Thus, as is customary, the part of speech that reveals grammar and provides a window on the grammatical life of the word was added to the gloss. Other types of information were also added when called for: the scientific name of every word relating to fauna or flora. This is not an innocuous choice: it allowed me build up the all-encompassing nature of the work and to give the dictionary an encyclopedic dimension that would, in my view, enrich it.

But it seemed also important to not limit myself to a simple translation of a Pijin word into English or into French, and to provide examples of how it was used in natural speech. Therefore, whenever possible, each word had to be exemplified with sentences so as to show how it was being used. Whenever possible, the examples used in the dictionary are taken from the corpus of 200 taped interviews or conversation recorded in the Solomon Islands. When no sentence could be found for a particular word in recorded speech, I asked Solomon Islands friends to give me a sentence that would include that word[12]. Some examples work better than others in that they not only illustrate how a word can be used in a sentence, but they also give some ethnographic information.

Ethnography

Words are part of sentences, but they are part culture and are evolving within culture and not outside of it. As I wanted this dictionary to be ethnographic, it was essential to record and talk about cultural practices that are sustained by Pijin, or that can be talked about in Pijin. Whenever possible, I added substantial information on lifestyles, behaviour, customs, fauna, flora, geography and history, thus transforming the dictionary into a kind of mini encyclopedia. In order to compile all this information, I made use of a significant body of sources; all of them are listed in the bibliography section of the dictionary, and cited throughout the dictionary in relevant entries.

Etymology

Languages have a history: this history also reveals the history of its speakers over time. Thus it was essential in my mind to indicate the link between the Pijin word and its lexifier. Pijin has two lexifiers: English from which 80% of the vocabulary has been borrowed, and Melanesian languages, mainly Eastern Oceanic, from which 20% of the vocabulary has been borrowed. Not surprisingly, the Melanesian languages provide terms related to particularly important cultural elements and for some items of the local fauna and flora. But some words have a more convoluted history: they find their way into the language via languages that borrowed them earlier. That is the case for the word *kepok* that was introduced in the Solomon Islands by the British administrators along with the tree itself and which is of Malay origin (kapuk). It was important to record this history. This was even more important given that young Pijin speakers, learning Pijin on the fly as they are and not being taught its history and its grammar, are now proposing for some words folk etymologies that are clearly wrong. For instance, young urbanites explained to me back in 2016 and again in 2019 that the word *varanda,* which entered English from Hindi (varanda), found its origin in Toqabaqita, one of the languages of Malaita. Providing the etymology was therefore essential.

Pijin or English?

Drawing the line between English and Pijin proved to be the biggest problem in many cases. I had described this difficulty in the introduction to the dictionary. The problem I faced is similar to that encountered by Lichtenberk (2008) when he compiled his dictionary of Toqabaqita. Pijin and Toqabaqita are under-

11. Linda Simons' and Hugh Young's (1978) dictionary *Pijin blong Iumi*; the small *Peace Corps dictionary* compiled by Laura Guyer-Miller (1989); the *Buk blong wei fo raetem olketa word long Pijin* produced by the Sica Pijin Literacy Project (1982); the *Pijin word list* compiled by Gerry Beimers and produced by SICA (1995); the book *The big death*; the cartoons published on the back cover of the magazine *Link*.

12. Helen Maebiru, my long time collaborator, proved to be a great source of examples over the years when we could not find a good example in the taped interviews.

going very rapid lexical changes and coexist with lingua francas: Toqabaqita coexists with Pijin and English, and Pijin coexists with English, its main lexifier. English occupies a different sociolinguistic niche but bears heavily on the usage of Toqabaqita and Pijin. Borrowings of Pijin words into Toqabaqita and of English words into Pijin are frequent. Lexicographers face important questions: Is a Pijin word commonly used in Toqabaqita discourse a Toqabaqita word, and is it to be listed in a Toqabaqita dictionary? Is an English word commonly used in Pijin a Pijin word and is it to be listed in a Pijin dictionary? Faced with having to make a decision, Lichtenberk opted for the following criterion: "words that do fit the phonological and phonotactic pattern of Toqabaqita are listed and words that do not fit them are not" (Lichtenberk, 2003: 395-396). Of course, as Lichtenberk explained further in his article, things were a bit more complex: this criterion could not accommodate the inclusion of loan words from Pijin that were current in Toqabaqita, but had retained the phonotactic patterns of Pijin and it meant that some loanwords were not included. In the case of the Pijin dictionary, deciding what to list or not was rendered more difficult by the lexical proximity of Pijin and English (recall that 80% of Pijin vocabulary comes from English), by the increasing dialectical variations found in urban Pijin and particularly by the acrolectal variety of Pijin increasingly prevalent among the young educated urbanites, and finally by the frequent code switching between Pijin and English in urban settings (Jourdan, 2008). From a structural point of view, it is often difficult to know where Pijin stops and English begins (Jourdan and Angeli, 2014). And though code-switching can hardly be understood adequately from a structural point of view, it remains true that a dictionary is essentially a structural exercise about the lexicon, and that one has to decide what words to list. In my view, and in the view of the Solomon Islanders who participated in the project in different ways, it was essential to make room for new lexical items that reflect changing mores, knowledge and ideologies while keeping true to the language itself. What is meant by the latter is difficult to explain and goes against all the things I believe languages are: continua of linguistic forms that morph into others and become salient to collective consciousness and change again. Nonetheless, one has to have some principles for including word in a dictionary. What allowed me to decide whether some words were truly part of Pijin (needing to be listed), rather than English words pronounced with an Oceanic phonology (and not needing to be listed), was how widespread the usage was in the population. After having done all the cross-checking possible on the usage of a particular word about which I had doubts, I used the following rule of thumb: if ten different people from different walks of life in different places were to give me the same answer to the question: Is this word a Pijin word?, I would consider a word to be a Pijin word and would include it in the dictionary. It may not be a very scientific method of investigation, but in the end, if I erred, it was on the side of conservatism. I think.

Variants

Languages are living "things", that is, they are cultural things. Pijin is no exception. People I worked with came from different parts of the Solomon Islands and spoke Pijin using the phonology of their own mother tongue. These "accents" allow Solomon Islanders to identify the cultural origin of the Pijin speakers, something they enjoy very much (Jourdan and Angeli, 2014). To be faithful to the regional variants of Pijin, and to the ways my various informants spoke Pijin, but also hoping to be as thorough as possible in my representation of the language, I intended to represent the regional and social variations existing in Pijin as much as possible. I did this by recording the regional *pronunciations* for the same words: for example, in the Kwaio language of Malaita, initial *p* is often replaced by *f*: *Fisin* for *Pijin*. In the Tolo language of Guadalcanal it is the reverse**:** *pinis* for *finis*, etc. As a result, many words are entered more than once in the dictionary, under different spellings, but all refer the reader to the main entry using a standardized spelling. How to deal with variants is a pervasive problem for dictionary compilers, as Grenand (2020) explains. The word standardized here is problematic: Pijin was never standardized and is at best a collection of varieties. By standardized I refer not to a norm imposed from above, but rather to ways of speaking emerging from different communities of linguistic practices. Yet over the years the urban varieties of Pijin have been more socially salient and come closest to a norm (Jourdan and Angeli, forthcoming). On the other hand it would have been impossible to do justice to the whole range of variation that is found in Pijin. I took into account the most pervasive phonetic rules: apocope (loss of final vowel); deletion of epenthetic (central) vowel; alternation of *p* and *f*, and entered the variant forms that seemed to be the most widespread. It is under the main entry that one finds the relevant information on a given word. In recognition of the efforts of regularisation of Pijin and the literacy pathbreaking work made by the members of SICA and SITAG over the years, I am following, in most cases, the spelling choices they proposed in their various publications, and most specifically in the 1995 word list produced by Gerry Beimers. Again ethics and pragmatism combined here to guide me. Example 1 illustrates how I dealt with variants.

Example 1

« **mone** *Variant:* **moning**. *n. From:* Eng. morning. 1) morning; *matin, matinée*. **Moning kam, iumi bae go long hom.** Tomorrow morning, we'll go home. *Demain matin, nous irons au village*. *Syn:* **moningtaem**. — *int.* 2) good morning!; *bonjour ! Syn:* **gudmone.** » (Jourdan and Maebiru, 2002: 127)

Description *vs* prescription

I had originally thought that the dictionary was going to be descriptive, not prescriptive; in other words, I had planned to record meanings and give translations and examples, and to abstain from noting sociolinguistic registers for fear of being normative. I had, somehow, imagined that by refraining from indicating any sociolinguistic usage, I would mitigate the normative effect created by writing down the language in a dictionary format. All words would be equal, so to speak. This proved to be unrealistic, if only because it seemed essential to recognize that Pijin was becoming socially marked, and that linguistic *faux pas* loomed at the horizon of any language speaker/learner who was not warned of the various social registers in which some words are used. Following the model set by Terry Crowley (1995) in his dictionary of Bislama, the pidgin of Vanuatu, I resorted to indicating usage whenever relevant, and only for the purpose of supplying additional information, rather than for the purpose of being more normative. By their nature, dictionaries reinforce linguistic norms and usage, if only by spelling out the appropriate context of usage of words. I have made use of such labels, but sparingly: *arch.* (archaic, for the old words); *sl.* (for slang); *urb. Pij.* (urban Pijin), *off.* (offensive), etc. Examples 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the choices I made.

Example 2

« **misket** *n. Usage:* arch. *Usage: arch*. *See main entry:* **bisket**. » (Jourdan and Maebiru, 2002: 126)

Example 3

« **napkin** *n.* napkin; *serviette de table*. *Usage:* Urb. Pij. *Usage: Pij. urb*. *From:* Eng. Napkin. » (Jourdan and Maebiru, 2002: 130)

Example 4

« **sarap** *act. vi.* to shut up; *la fermer*. **Iu sarap! Mi les fo herem tokspoelem blong iu!** Shut up! I've had enough of hearing your teasing! *La ferme ! J'en ai assez d'entendre tes moqueries ! Usage:* Off. *Usage: Off.* Note: S&Y report that "this expression is even more offensive to some people for whom the mouth is taboo than it is to Europeans". *Note: S&Y affirment que "cette expression est encore plus insultante pour certaines personnes pour lesquelles la bouche est plus taboue qu'elle ne l'est pour les Européens". From:* Eng. shut up. » (Jourdan and Maebiru, 2002: 175)

Language contact

People live in contact with people from other groups, and so do their languages. But all languages are not equal. Some have more prestige than others. In the language situation prevalent in the Solomon Islands, Pijin is likely to be put at the bottom of the linguistic hierarchy by most speakers (Jourdan and Angeli, 2014) and English at the top. Within the larger sphere of the Pacific Islands, Pijin has to contend with the presence of other colonial and post-colonial languages, French and English, supported by large educational and administrative infrastructures and a large number of speakers. Some Solomon Islanders know about French as it is spoken in the neighbouring Melanesian islands of Vanuatu and New Caledonia. One of the main features of the Pijin dictionary is that it is trilingual: Pijin, English and French. Readers in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere may wonder about the usefulness of having a French translation for every word in Pijin. Why not limit myself to writing a bilingual Pijin-English dictionary, as Crowley did in his Bislama dictionary? This inclusion of French stems from a few considerations. First, the request made by some Solomon Islanders to have access to French, one of the other languages used in the Pacific: these well travelled members of the intellectual and political elite explained that they felt bad not being able to speak French in Vanuatu or in New Caledonia when they went for advanced studies or for meetings. Second, the request made by people from New Caledonia, French Polynesia and other French-speaking countries to have access to Pijin, without having to go through English. Therefore, including French in the dictionary along with Pijin and English responded to the request of my interlocutors and their desire to access the wider world through French. But I was also driven by ideology. Though spoken widely in the archipelago for more than 100 years Pijin is not able to shake free of the negative stereotypes attached to it by the former British colonial administration and repeated widely among its own current speakers. The most common qualifiers "broken English", "a jargon", "a language with no grammar" and "not a real language" are still heard today, even in the mouths of speakers for whom it is the mother tongue. In my mind, it was important to put Pijin on the linguistic map, at par, visually and symbolically, with the two other prestigious lingua francas of the Pacific: French and English. Example 5 illustrates the trilingual nature of the dictionary and the many of other features described above.

Example 5

« **kepok** *n.* kapok pod; *gousse de kapok*. *Ceiba pentandra*. **Mifala save iusim kepok fo wakem kusun.** We use kapok to make cushions. *Nous utilisons le kapok pour faire des coussins.* Note: When mature, the pods of the kapok tree are filled with lustrous fibres. The seeds and fibres are removed by hand from the pod, put in a basket, and separated by hand or by stirring them with a spindle. The seeds fall to the bottom of the container, thus freeing them from the fibres. People use the fibres to make pillows, cushions and mattresses, which can be changed every year at no cost. *Note: Quand elles sont mûres, les gousses du kapokier sont remplies de fibres blanches et brillantes. Les graines et les fibres sont enlevées de la gousse à la main, mises dans un panier et séparées à la main ou en les remuant avec une quenouille. Les graines tombent au fond du panier, libérant ainsi les fibres. On utilise les fibres pour faire des oreillers, des coussins et*

des matelas, qui peuvent être changés chaque année à moindre frais. From: Malay Kapuk via Eng. kapok. »

Conclusion

I started this article by expressing ethical concerns about the return of data to our research communities, explaining that this return was problematic on different counts: What to return?; What is the best medium to return the data in?; And what happens to the data once they are returned? I showed that this ethical concern was particularly important because it was often magnified by the linguistic ideologies of both the researchers and that of the people with whom they worked while the data were constituted, but particularly when the data were being returned.

I opted to illustrate the tensions between ethics and these ideologies with a discussion centred on the making of the Pijin trilingual dictionary. At every step of the dictionary-making process, from the selection of the words to be listed to the inclusion of illustrations and the trilingual nature of the work, my own linguistic ideologies, and at times that of my Solomon Islands interlocutors, coalesced to shape the end product and its afterlife.

In this case, there is no afterlife. The irony of this dictionary is that no Solomon Islander ever uses it. There are a few reasons for this state of affairs: availability and relevance. Back in 2002, the publishing house did a small print run, as they normally do, because their typical captive audience is libraries. The result was that the price for each dictionary was high by Australian standards and even more so by Solomon Islands standards. In addition, the dictionary was never distributed in the Solomon Islands for the reason explained above. All my efforts to get grants to be able to do so at a reasonable price were unsuccessful. At best, only a few Solomon Islanders were aware of the existence of the dictionary. I bought copies and distributed them locally as much as I could. Now that the dictionary exists online as part of the ANU open access initiative, it is readily accessible. As one of the reviewers for this paper suggested, one could go one step further and make it accessible for download as an app for mobile phones. I will certainly look into that, but in my view, accessibility is better served by relevance and usefulness. And relevant and useful, this dictionary is not.

As I have explained throughout this paper, Pijin is a language used only verbally: Solomon Islanders who are literate write either in English (the language of formal schooling) or in their ancestral language (which they were taught to write by Christian missionaries). Most adults, if they wish to exchange on social media, will use English or their ancestral language, and a small minority of them will use Pijin, following the SICA (and the dictionary) spelling system. Recently, things have changed somewhat: young Solomon Islanders, like youth everywhere, have embraced social networks and participate avidly in many of them through texting with the help of images and emojis. As with other social media users elsewhere, they use their language of primary communication for the purpose of texting and put their own imprint on it. Surprisingly, or not surprisingly rather, depending on what your knowledge of the local society is, among young people this language happens to be Pijin and not English. The latter is considered too formal and academic for use among friends (Jourdan and Angeli, 2014), even on social media or texting among friends, where many of the exchanges I collected among young people are typically light in nature (jokes, bantering, teasing, etc). Pijin, on the contrary, is the natural medium of oral communication among urban people. It should not come as a surprise that Pijin is the linguistic resource of choice for texting. After all, as David Crystal (2008) has shown, texting belongs to the world of orality, though the support medium is that of literacy. As with oral languages, people tend to reach for affect in order to express their thoughts. When they are texting, they make use of visual devices such as capitalization, excessive punctuation, shortenings, and now emojis. Young Solomon Islanders do the same: they write Pijin in any way they want with the goal, as they explained to me, of ensuring speed, efficiency, and affectivity. And because referring to a dictionary is not a cultural reflex, and because they have no model for writing Pijin any other way, they are inventing a new spelling system of sorts. The result is that the young people are appropriating Pijin, shaping its spelling system, putting their own twist on it, and in turn, are giving visibility and legitimacy to a written form of the language that is now spreading as a quasi norm[13]. How they write Pijin words in this context is very different from the way these words appear in the Pijin dictionary I compiled, or on the spelling list prepared by SICA (1985). Ironically, this new spelling renders the Pijin dictionary even more useless (practically speaking) than it was before.

If my goal in writing the dictionary was to return the linguistic data I gathered in a form that could be useful for the population I worked with, it is clear that I failed. Given the linguistic situation prevalent in the country, no Solomon Islander has a need for the Pijin dictionary at this time. Yet, I am comforted by the fact that ethically, and despite all its ideological shortcomings, the book represents an effort on my part to share with local people and to return to them the data I gathered. Developments in technology will allow me to go one step further and to archive the primary dictionary files and render them accessible for further use.

Pijin keeps changing, and fast. It is in the nature of a dictionary to lag behind the changes and the innovations that are associated with the transformations of languages in the course of their history. The

13. Leslie Vandeputte-Tavo wrote about similar issues when she described the use of Bislama in text-messages in Vanuatu (2013).

Pijin dictionary is no exception to the rule. Almost 20 years old, it is dated if one considers the speed with which Pijin has been changing syntactically and lexically in the intervening years. However, in compiling this dictionary, and thinking about what I and my interlocutors wanted it to be and to do, its exhaustiveness in the recording of words, meanings, spellings, expressions, etc. make it a tool of reference for assessing the changes undergone by Pijin since then. Here, I am remembering Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre's wish that her dictionary of iaai-français (Ouvéa) be used as the basis for further versions. She wrote:

> « Je souhaite que celui-ci, en suscitant l'intérêt et les critiques des gens d'Ouvéa, puisse leur servir comme point de départ pour d'autres versions enrichies et améliorées. » (1984: 9)

Now that the Pijin dictionary exists online, and is easy to access (Openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au), I too am hoping that Solomon Islanders can take it up and bring it up to date (the issue of what to list will become even more crucial). Only then will my wish of returning the data have been fulfilled.

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