

Language Community Attitudes and their Implications for the Maintenance and Promotion of the Tongan Language¹

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Introduction

Five thousand years ago, my Pacific ancestors left their familiar home in south-east Asia and sailed off into 'an ocean...where the waves fall on innumerable reefs, and a great wind blows from the south-east with the revolving world' (Beaglehole, 1974), drawn ever on by the mystery of the beckoning horizon and the majesty of the far from tranquil Pacific Ocean, their only guides the winds, the waves and the stars, and sustained only by the strength of their visions and their faith in their skills. They brought with them the traditions, values, beliefs, religions, crafts, arts, plants, animals and languages of their homeland and in the thousand and one islands of the Pacific forged them into unique cultural and linguistic legacies.

The children of Maui thrived and multiplied. And then the white men came. The impact has often been fatal. Tonga's Epeli Hau'ofa puts it this way:

Only yesterday
the sands of Sopu brightened the shores of Nuku'alofa,
horse-drawn carts crawled half-awake down the green roads,
and we sent men and money for missions abroad.
Our fathers bent the winds and strode the waves
to bring the Kula and Mothers of Kings from Upolu,
fine mats from Manu'a and the royal studs of Lakemba

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for the Forbidden Daughters.

And did not Maui Kisikisi pierce the Horizon with his javelin?
Or the Suppressor-of-Waves speed the slabs from Uvea
for the terraced tombs of the God-Kings?

But the sands of Sopu are gone,
broken beer bottles strew the Sacred Shore,
the tennis court from Salt Lake City marks the grave
of Salote's lawn,
and the one-time nation of givers,
dreaded jaws of the ocean,
begs for crumbs from the Eagle and the Lion.
Yesterday Tangaloa made men,
but the God of Love breeds children.

Today, in many parts of the Pacific, as indeed in many other parts of the world, small vulnerable language communities and their cultures are in the process of being eroded, and emasculated by other more powerful and dominant cultures and languages. Most, if not all, are engaged not only in desperate struggles to preserve, maintain, and promote their linguistic and cultural heritages, but grappling too with the corollary problems of how to nurture among members of such affected communities, pride in themselves, their communities and their shared identities.

As a member of such a small, vulnerable and beleaguered language and cultural community, I wish to share with you the intervention measures that Tonga has adopted in response to the threat of language and cultural demise.

Tonga's strategies are based on the proposition that language planning, by focusing close attention on the language attitudes of the target population, can be provided thereby with most of the ingredients with which to formulate language aims and policies, to design and select appropriate strategies and evaluate instruments that are most conducive to the successful planning and implementation of language programmes at the national level.

Language planning is in theory and practice a sociolinguistic activity since it takes place within exact and defined socio-cultural parameters and its aims and methods of operation involve the manipulation of contextually-based social and linguistic variables. Language attitudes by virtue of this definition assume the most important place among sociolinguistic factors since by their nature they would be the most difficult to manipulate and the least amenable to social engineering. Attitudes are formed at the subconscious level over a long period of time and through the complex interactions of many sociolinguistic and psychological factors which are difficult to identify and control.

Language planning is aimed at individuals and its successful implementation is almost entirely dependent on the personal decisions of individuals. It is the contention of this paper that successful language learning of whatever type or degree is ultimately dependent on personal choices of individuals which no legislation or brilliant planning and strategical approaches could direct or change, without the willing and able assistance and participation of those individuals.

It is argued that personal decisions regarding language learning and adoption are best understood through conscious and deliberate attempts at comprehending the language attitudes of the individuals comprising a particular community. The abilities that members of any language community develop in any particular language, be it first or second, and the purposes to which they put them are very individualistic concerns, but individuals are also members of a group or a community whose membership entails communication in and socialisation through a particular language. The language choices of individuals and the purpose to which they put them can therefore be influenced by the prevailing social and cultural mores of those closest to them in their community. The language attitudes of the whole society as well as sub-groups and the individuals comprising it need, therefore, to be understood for language planning purposes.

Attitudes: Definitions

Theoretical views of attitudes fall into two major categories: the **mentalist** and the **behaviourist** views. According to the mentalist's conception, 'an attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Allport, 1954:24).' The mentalist regards attitude as a state of readiness, that is, it is a mediating factor between any stimulus affecting any individual and that individual's response. The mentalist's definition of attitude possesses three components: a cognitive component, which is basically the belief structure of an individual; an affective component, which is the individual's emotional reactions; and a conative component, which is the individual's predisposition to act or behave toward the attitude, object or situation.

There are several empirical difficulties with the mentalist view of attitude, chief among which relates to the question of measurement. If attitude is an internal state of readiness, how is this state to be isolated, identified and distinguished from other 'internal' states which might have some bearing on behaviour, and further, how is it to be measured? One commonly used strategy is a direct questioning of the subject as to his or her attitude toward a given object or situation. The other is an indirect method which is based on inferences from behaviour patterns exhibited by the subject. Neither approach is completely satisfactory. Assessments of attitudes based on self-reports by the subjects often suffer from questionable validity. A test is only valid if it assesses what it purports to measure, and there is always, therefore, in attitude tests, based on self-reports, an element of uncertainty, that is, whether subjects actually possess the attitudes toward objects or situations they purport to express in tests. Sometimes the tests themselves compound the problem. For example, a response to the question 'Is Tongan important to your child?' demonstrates a belief. To test the subject's attitude would require a further statement from the subject regarding his/her feeling about the expressed belief. Belief is only a sub-set of attitude, and yet many attitude studies have only measured belief (Edwards, 1983:140). Inferences from observed behaviour, on the other hand, are at best only intervening variables or a combination of them, which may or may not relate to attitude. This has been one of the major

criticisms about attitude studies. They cannot prove conclusively that attitudes influence specific behaviour or vice-versa.

The mentalists argue, however, that attitudes can be accurately gauged from inferences based on the individual's reactions to evaluatively-worded belief statements (Gardner, 1985:9) and most of the major attitude assessment techniques such as those developed by Likert (1932), Thurstone (1928), Guttam (1944) and Osgood et al (1957) have been based on this premise. Gardner (1985:9) points out that from an operational point of view 'an individual's attitude is an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent.'

The behaviourist view is that attitudes are overt behaviour and consist of people's responses to social situations and can be observed, tabulated and analysed. However, in this theory, attitudes cannot be used to predict behaviour (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970:138), which obviously reduces its usefulness as a means of explaining human behaviour. The field work which I conducted on the language attitudes of the Tongan language community was based on the mentalist view of attitude.

Language Attitude and Language Behaviour

It is difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between attitude and behaviour. However, there have been sufficient studies, such as those of Gardner and his colleagues in Canada, which have demonstrated convincingly again and again that attitudes are related to language behaviour, though not necessarily directly. In any study of the relationship between attitudes and language behaviour, there is a need to distinguish between specific attitudes relating to language behaviour and other behaviour.

If the mentalist view of attitude is accepted, it means that attitudes can be used to predict language behaviour, that is, if an individual's attitudes towards a particular aspect of language or language behaviour is known, it is quite possible to predict that individual's responses related to those

attitudes. There have been numerous studies in the literature which have claimed to demonstrate such relationships. A variety of field investigations have been conducted relating to attitudes and language behaviour and, despite the views to the contrary, it is clear that attitudes are still rated very highly by researchers as providing important and crucial insights into language behaviour and particularly in relation to language maintenance, second language acquisition and achievement.

The Field Work

Accepting not only the importance of language attitudes, but a causal relationship between language attitudes and language behaviour and performance, I undertook a major survey of the language attitudes of the Tongan language community in order to clarify and identify language goals and strategies through which they could be achieved, directed and monitored. Language maintenance can only be achieved through a collective decision by a particular language community to continue to use a particular language for particular purposes.

The survey was expected to provide answers to a number of very important questions. For example, it was very important to establish in some objective manner, whether the linguistic situation in Tonga is diglossic or bilingual, and one of the means of doing this is through the study of the attitudes of the language community towards various aspects of language and language behaviour which have been shown by previous research to be indicative or characteristic of diglossic or bilingual situations, such as their attitudes to the aesthetic and pragmatic qualities of the two languages; to the effectiveness and suitability of the two languages for their designated roles; to the concept of language maintenance and development; and to the question of whether Tongan is considered a necessary marker for national and individual identity and to the question of which means provide the best opportunities for acquiring a second language.

To obtain an accurate, valid measure of the attitudes of the language community means a fairly large sample to represent not only the true composition of the larger society but of the various sections within the

community whose attitudes are particularly germane to influencing the directions of language shifts and policies within the community. The differences between the sexes and the different age groups would be particularly important for confirmation of either diglossia or bilingualism. In conjunction with the attitude survey, would also be an investigation into language choice, to determine what language is used with whom for what topic under what contexts and why. For both investigations, it was decided to use the direct methods of measuring attitudes and of determining language use.

If the linguistic situation in Tonga is diagnosed as diglossic, it augurs well for the maintenance of the Tongan language, since research indicates that diglossic situations promote language stability.

Aim and Purpose

The main purpose of the field work was to determine what the language attitudes of the Tongan language community were, and various important sections of it toward specific aspects of the Tongan and English languages and to certain aspects of language behaviour. The specific groups which were of particular interest to the study were: the policy-makers and the administrators, who determine and formulate national language policies; the parents, whose children were the subjects of such policies; the teachers, who had to implement them and could exert influence on their effectiveness; and the students, who were the subjects and recipients of language educational policies and strategies.

Attitudinal Categories

The attitudes that were probed by the study were the subjects' attitudes to:

- the aesthetic and pragmatic qualities of Tongan and English, (Tongan/English Aesthetic);
- the two languages' designated functions and use, (Tongan/English Functions);

- the two languages' respective language communities, (Tongan/English Community);
- Tongan as a marker for group identity, (Tongan Identity);
- the continuing maintenance and development of the Tongan language, (Tongan Maintenance);
- bilingualism per se., (Bilingualism).

Method

The first part of the field work consisted of a pilot study which consisted of self-administered questionnaires of open-ended questions, which in turn were supplemented by random interviews. The questions attempted to elicit attitudes to the six language areas identified previously. The results were then used to formulate evaluatively-worded belief statements that were employed in the final questionnaire. A Likert-type seven-point scale system was used in the final questionnaire. However, when the distributions for each category were examined, there were too few scores on the extreme left of the scale so the seven points were reduced to four.

The Final Questionnaire

The final questionnaire contained ten items under each sub-category, making a total of 110 items. Every effort was made to ensure that the items were balanced in the sense that some expressed positive statements, while some expressed negative opinions.

The questionnaire was administered to a large sample of just over 1000 subjects to ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

The Field Work was conducted between October of 1986 and June of 1987.

The Results

The responses were initially summed up for all attitudinal categories. It was

found that among the Tongan attitudinal categories, the Tongan Community ranked highest; Tongan Learning, second; Tongan Identity, third; Tongan Aesthetic, fourth; Tongan Maintenance, Fifth; and Tongan Function was ranked lowest. In the English categories, English Learning ranked highest and came second overall to Tongan Community in positiveness. Bilingualism ranked fifth overall on the positive scale.

1. Age

The sample was divided into three age groups: 10-19, 20-39, 40+, each roughly corresponding to a generation. It was found that on the whole the trends in the Tongan attitudinal categories across all the age groups were positive in the sense there were more who agreed with the attitudinal statements than those who disagreed with them or who expressed neutrality. However, it was found that there was a decline in positiveness in the attitudes toward Tongan which is directly related to the different generations. The language attitudes of the 40+ age group were the most positive. Even in the category of Tongan Learning, the youngest age group still registered the least positive responses. In the English attitudinal categories, which included Bilingualism, it was found that language attitudes are directly related to age, but in reverse order to Tongan. The youngest age group favoured English most while the oldest age group was the least favourable.

2. Sex

Although the survey revealed on the whole no significant relationship between sex and language attitudes, there was one interesting and important exception. In Tongan Maintenance, it was found that females were more positively inclined towards the development and maintenance of the Tongan language than males.

3. Educational Level

The sample was divided into three groups. Group 1 had only primary education or some secondary education; Group 2 were those who had completed secondary education to Form 5 level; and Group 3 were those

who had obtained University Entrance or a higher qualification. This category related more significantly to English than Tongan. However, it was found that the higher the level of education, the more likely was it that attitudes to both Tongan and English would be positive, but the generalisation seems more applicable to English than to Tongan.

4. Tongan Language Competence

This category was based on the self-assessment of the respondents. The sample was divided into three groups in accordance with their reported level of competence: Fair, Good and Excellent. The cross-tabulations demonstrate that competence in Tongan is indeed related to language attitudes except English Functions and English Community. In the Tongan attitudinal categories respondents claiming excellent competence in the Tongan language were shown to be significantly more favourable and positive in their attitudes, while those who reported only fair competence were definitely less favourable. In the English and Bilingual categories, it was again found that those who rated highest on Tongan competence were the most favourable in their attitudes.

It is quite possible of course that those with high self-esteem would tend to rate their language skills highly as well as register positive attitudes toward the two languages. In this instance, it does not seem likely since only 29.2 per cent of the group claiming excellent competence in Tongan gave themselves this rating in English, whereas 63 per cent of those claiming this level of competence in English gave themselves this rating in Tongan. The two groups would therefore overlay to some extent, but they appear to be drawn from two distinct groups. The conclusion then that favourable attitudes toward Tongan are influenced by language competence would appear valid.

5. English Language Competence

Similar results to the Tongan Competence were recorded. They demonstrated in all cases that those claiming the highest competence in the English language were more favourable in their attitudes toward English, Bilingualism and the Tongan Community than those admitting to lesser

competence. Competence in English, then appears to be an important factor in differentiating attitudes toward English.

6. Type of Bilingual

The sample was divided into three groups in accordance with their degree of mastery of both languages: Tongan-dominant bilinguals; Equal Bilinguals and English-dominant bilinguals. It was manifest from the results that Tongan-dominant bilinguals were more favourable in their attitudes toward Tongan, as were the English-dominant bilinguals toward English. These results confirm the importance of the association of language competence with language attitudes. However, while increased competence in the Tongan language is associated with general positive attitudes toward both languages and their communities, high level competence in English is more specifically directed toward English only and its associated contexts.

7. Parents

Initially, it was found that without exception those with children in school were much more positive in their attitudes toward Tongan than those without. In English it was the reverse, with those without children in school showing more favourable attitudes toward English, but since this group included the youngest age group the differences may be entirely due to the age factor than any real differences. This age group was removed, then, subject to further analysis. It was found that the important factors that appear to differentiate or influence attitudes were educational level and language competence. For the parental group, attitudes are generally more positive with higher educational qualifications and improved competence in Tongan and English.

8. Occupation

The sample was divided into five occupational categories: Students, Teachers, Clericals, Decision-makers and Others.

In the students' group, it was found that the older the age group, the more competent in Tongan and the Tongan-dominant bilingual type tended to

exhibit more positive attitudes toward Tongan, while the more competent in English, the better educated and the English-dominant bilingual were more favourable toward English.

It was found in the teachers' group that age was relatively unimportant in differentiating attitudes, but the difference in attitudes appears to be related to educational level and proficiency in the two languages. A significant departure from the other results in the study which has shown a direct relationship between positivity and educational attainment is the finding that the less qualified teachers favoured Tongan more than the better educated. It was speculated that the difference was due to the level at which a teacher was teaching and the educational policies and practices operating at each level which were likely to influence language attitudes.

In the decision-makers' group, it was found that this group on the whole demonstrates a relatively homogeneous positive attitudinal profile toward Tongan. The results can probably be explained by the fact that all the sub-population variables which have been found to correlate highly with positive attitudes, such as the higher age factor, higher educational attainment, higher language competence, enjoy predominance in this group. It would appear that when all these factors are present, the result is uniformly favourable attitudes toward Tongan.

The results so far can be summarised as follows:

1 That language attitudes are related to age.

Attitudes toward Tongan on the whole are positive, but there is a significant rise in positiveness with age. Attitudes toward English on the other hand have an inverse relationship to the age groups.
Positiveness of attitudes declines as the age factor rises.

2 That language attitudes are related to Educational Level.

Attitudes toward certain aspects of Tongan appear related to educational attainment with those who only have primary education being the least positive. Attitudes toward English are also directly

related to level of attainment, with those in the least achievement category exhibiting the least favourable attitudes.

3 That language attitudes are related to Language Competence.

Again it would seem that positiveness in attitude toward either language is directly related to the level of competence in the language. The higher the level of competence, the more favourable appears to be the attitude toward the language. Thus high competence in Tongan is significantly related to very positive attitudes toward Tongan and a similar phenomenon is observed with attitudes toward English and competence in that language.

The individual with the most positive attitude toward Tongan appears to be over 40 years of age; has children attending an educational institution; is professionally either a primary school teacher or decision-maker; has attained either secondary or tertiary education; possesses either good or excellent competence in Tongan and is either a Tongan-dominant bilingual or an Equal-Bilingual.

Although these are useful statements in relation to the language attitudes of the Tongan community toward Tongan and English, they are not particularly informative on how these population variables interact with each other. To determine whether these three factors would still affect attitudes when one of them was controlled, the entire sample was formed into sub-groups where one of the factors was controlled. The decision to employ the t-test as a means of validating the results of the previous analyses and of testing the directions of the differences in the means of the sub-groups and the interaction between the population variables was felt to be justified. The null hypothesis for these tests assumed there would be no differences between the various sub-groups.

9. Summary

Both the pilot study and the major survey have provided conclusions about these language attitudes. These conclusions can be put in the form of general statements under the following sub-headings:

General Statements

- 1 That attitudes toward the Tongan language and its community are strongly positive.
- 2 That attitudes toward the English language and its community are generally positive, although less so than Tongan.
- 3 That in the attitudinal categories which attempted to measure similar attitudes towards the two languages, the means of the Tongan attitudinal categories were significantly higher than the comparable English categories, except in English Learning which obtained a higher mean.
- 4 That there is universal agreement on equally high and balanced competence in both Tongan and English as the ideal bilingual goal.

Tongan

- 5 That the Tongan language is valued mainly for its function as a group language.
- 6 That while Tongan is assessed as performing satisfactorily its role as a social and cultural language and as an instrument of general communication, there are doubts about its continuing efficiency and suitability as an official language and a medium of higher education. [This would strongly suggest a preference for a diglossic situation with distinct differentiated functions for the two languages.]
- 7 That while Tongan is considered an important marker for group identity, its role in individual identity is increasingly questioned.
- 8 That there is almost universal confidence in the ability of the Tongan language to evolve and develop but there is also strong agreement that there is a need for official support for its continuing development and maintenance.
- 9 That there is intense pride in the Tongan language community and

being members of it.

- 10 That attitudes toward the learning of Tongan are strongly positive.

English

- 11 That English is mainly valued for instrumental reasons, particularly its role as an instrument of higher education, and a vehicle for modern development and international communication.
- 12 That there is evident ambiguity about the roles English should be performing in the group.
- 13 That the English language community is valued mainly for its associations with the English language and as a source of English experience.
- 14 That there is a very strong universal desire to acquire English.

Bilingualism

- 15 That there are obvious doubts about the potential detrimental effects of a bilingual policy in education, but this is counter-balanced by an equally strong desire to achieve high level competence in both languages.

Population Factors

- 16 That there are strong associations between language attitudes and the population characteristics of Age, Language Competence and Educational Attainment.
- 17 That positive attitudes toward Tongan and its community are directly related to the age factor, and that its positiveness rises as age increases.
- 18 That positive attitudes toward English are inversely related to age in that its positiveness decreases as age rises.

- 19 That there are significant differences in the attitudes of the different age groups with the older age groups favouring Tongan while the younger age group favours English.
- 20 That Tongan Competence is strongly related to positive attitudes toward Tongan, while English Competence is equally related to positive attitudes toward English.
- 21 That language attitudes are related to the level of education with the better educated generally favouring both languages, while the least educated were generally least positive to both.
- 22 That while Language Competence and Educational Attainment were important in differentiating attitudes within age groups, they appear to have little effect on levelling attitudes between age groups.

One of the disadvantages of relational studies is the fact that while significant relations are found, it is not possible from the findings to predict the direction of the relations. The study has established that Language Competence, Educational Attainment and Age have significant associations with language attitudes toward Tongan and English, but it cannot tell us whether the positive attitudes were the direct result of each of these factors or vice versa. In other words, it cannot predict cause and effects. All that could be said is that there are significant associations between language attitudes and these factors.

However, what the survey has provided are guidelines for the development of a strategical language plan for Tonga.

Tonga's Strategies for the Promotion of Language Maintenance and Bilingualism

It was argued at the beginning of this paper that language planners, by concentrating on the language attitudes of the community, can be provided thereby with most of the ingredients needed for the formulation of successful language plans from the aims to the implementational strategies

to the evaluative procedures.

The field study has confirmed the following:

- 1 The Tongan language is valued as the group language. As such it assumes precedence over any other language. Knowing and speaking Tongan is therefore considered more important than knowing and speaking any other language.
- 2 Learning Tongan is considered worthwhile and important and members profess eagerness to learn it.
- 3 The current status of the Tongan language in the school curriculum is felt to be unsatisfactory and should be improved within education at all levels.
- 4 Tongan speakers are proud to speak the language and claim membership in the Tongan language community.
- 5 The Tongan cultural heritage and language, which are shared by members, are both considered important features of their group identity.
- 6 It is considered very important that Tongans should know more about their society in all its manifestations.
- 7 Tongan is voted the best medium for the primary school level and for all cultural subjects at all levels.
- 8 Apart from education and some specialised areas such as science and technology, business and commerce, Tongan is still considered the best medium in all other domains and for all other communicative acts with all Tongan-speaking members of the community, and is, in fact still being used for those purposes.
- 9 Tongan, it is agreed, should continue to be used for government functions.

- 10 Tongan should be maintained and developed and a Government body should be assigned or created to assume this responsibility.

English

- 11 English is considered very important chiefly as an instrument for higher education, modern development and internal communication.
- 12 The English language community is valued mainly for its contribution to modern progress and as a source of 'native' English.
- 13 English is felt to be the best medium for secondary and higher education, modern development and international communication and for teaching English at all levels.
- 14 Learning English is a very important part of education.
- 15 English should also be used for government functions and internal official communication.

Bilingualism

- 16 Tongan and English should both be used for government functions, and for official, internal communication.
- 17 Equal and high level competence in both languages is considered to be the most desirable form of bilingualism for both individuals and the community.
- 18 Tongan should be acquired before English.

1. Language Aims

The main purposes of the language programmes in Tonga that emerge from the survey are:

- 1 Equal and high competence in both languages in all the four skills of listening, speaking, writing and reading for all members of the society.
- 2 Successive or consecutive bilingualism, with Tongan being acquired first.
- 3 Improvement in the status of Tongan in education.
- 4 Inclusion of Tongan studies in the curriculum.
- 5 Maintenance and development of the Tongan language.
- 6 Some form of diglossia in usage in government functions and in higher levels of education.
- 7 Covertly, the enhancement of the speech communities' language attitudes to Tongan, particularly students and teachers.

To address these language aims, Tonga is adopting a series of integrated and complementary measures, as follows:

- 1 The first priority is teacher education, which is aimed at raising teachers' educational attainment level; their competence in both Tongan and English; their professional competence; and at providing teachers with the necessary support service that would assist teachers to perform optimally, raise their self-esteem and self-confidence. These measures are based on the assumption that teachers can influence the language attitudes, behaviour and performance of students and further that such measures could enhance teachers' attitudes toward the Tongan language.
- * Establish an all-trained teaching force. In 1992 for the first time, Tonga succeeded in employing all trained teachers at the primary level. At the secondary level, it will begin implementing a one-year intensive course from 1993 for untrained teachers at the secondary level, which is expected to train all such teachers within three years.

- * Improve the service conditions of teachers. For example, in 1989 in the Salaries Revision teachers' salaries were raised considerably in order to raise teachers' status and to retain and attract quality teachers. The Ministry is also attempting to maintain the present teacher/pupil ratio of 1:21 at the primary level and 1:16 at the secondary level.
- * Improve the general level of education of teachers. It is planned to raise the entry qualification for teacher trainees from post-Form 6 to post-Form 7 by 1994.
- * Improve the teacher training programme. A major review of the teacher training programme will be undertaken toward the end of 1992 with assistance from New Zealand, Australia and the University of the South Pacific, which is aimed at ensuring that the College train teachers to be equally competent in both languages; to be self-confident and to be professionally effective and multi-functional.
- * Improve the professional status and self-esteem of teachers. The Ministry is in the process of restructuring to provide greater autonomy to schools, allowing teachers greater participation in the processes of curriculum development and student evaluation and to provide them with a greater sense of ownership. The College is also in the process of developing specialist one year programmes in areas such as management, counselling, language teaching methodologies, etc. to enable practising teachers to meet students' evolving needs.
- * Improve and update teachers' knowledge and skills. The Ministry is at present implementing an in-service training programme at the primary level with the assistance of the Peace Corp Volunteer Organisation to assist in the improvement of primary teachers' competence in the two languages. The Ministry is also continuing the LINK programme which was originally created to train teachers and develop materials to assist with the teaching of slow learners and children with learning difficulties. The programme is now assisting with the training of specialist language teachers for the primary level. In addition, the Ministry still continues with assistance to schools and teachers, through the field officers' support service, which is increasingly conducting

school-based in-service training programmes.

- 2 Provide schools with quality materials in both languages.
 - * Tonga is currently trialling in the schools a new language programme with assistance from AIDAB, in which a bilingual approach is adopted for the teaching of the two languages. It means that Tongan and English are taught by the same teacher in the same lesson using the same materials. At the lower level beginning from Class 1 the time sharing between the two languages is about 90% for Tongan and 10% for English. The time for English will be gradually increased as the pupils progress through the primary level so that by Class 6, the time for English will have increased to 50%. This approach is based on the assumption that Tongan is the language in which teachers are more competent and the language in which teachers and students could communicate effectively and in which students readily learn and think. The skills which they develop in the Tongan language will then assist them to acquire English more effectively.
 - * Tonga is currently implementing a major literacy programme in which it is developing and beginning to publish hundreds of reading books in the Tongan language for the primary level. Through assistance from various donors such as Australia and New Zealand, it is at the same time providing English reading books to the primary schools. Parents and the school communities are assisting in the programme by establishing school libraries and parents, particularly mothers, are actively encouraged to assist with the implementation of the literacy programmes within the schools themselves.
 - * At the secondary level, the Curriculum Development Unit is publishing materials for the Tongan Studies programme, which is compulsory to Form 5 level. This programme is language-based, but the language skills are taught through cultural contexts. At the same time 40 per cent of the Form 5 assessment is internal, with some external monitoring and validation, and students are required to undertake a project which could be on literature, the performing and creative arts or on some craft work.

- * Tonga also plans in the long term to localise the Form 6 and 7 examinations to allow Tongan Studies to be included in their programmes.
- * Tongan Studies is already compulsory at the Teachers' College where in the third year programme trainees are expected to undertake a piece of original research. Already the College has published the results of the best works and are using these as resource materials for both primary and secondary levels. Tonga also practises a deliberate policy of having the Teachers' College represent Tonga in the South Pacific Festival of Arts in order to train teachers effectively in all the performing and creative arts. Increasingly the teachers themselves compose, choreograph, create and perform the presentations from dance to music to carvings, etc.

3 Provide Adequate Quality Support Services

To assist with the provision of quality materials, the Ministry has established at the CDU a production unit whose main responsibility is the printing of the materials written by the Unit including Tongan reading materials.

4 Policies

Tonga has also established necessary language policies to support the school efforts, chief among which is the official recognition of Tongan as the national language and Tongan and English as the official languages. Tongan is also a compulsory requirement for entry into the Civil Service; it is compulsory to Form 5 level; and is a compulsory subject at the Teachers' College.

- 5 Indirectly, Tonga is also implementing a number of other measures which are expected to have beneficial effects on language behaviour.
- * Provide quality education for all at both primary and secondary level. Already Tonga has enjoyed universal primary education and to some degree universal secondary education. However, Tonga hopes to

improve the retention rate at Form 5 level to 100% by 1995 and at Form 6 by the year 2000.

- * Improve equity of access to all levels of education. Since there is a government primary school on every inhabited island and within two miles walking distance of the major settlements, Government's main efforts in recent years have been concentrated on improving access to quality secondary education. It has established a high school on every group in Tonga and is constructing major high schools with assistance from Japan, a process which is expected to be completed with the construction of Ha'apai High School in 1994/95.
- * The Government is also encouraging the employment of trained teachers in non-government schools by providing scholarships for degree studies and by increasing its subsidy to such schools to assist with teachers' salaries.
- * Tonga is also undertaking major new programmes at the post-secondary level, which are expected to meet all the country's basic and middle-level training needs. All these programmes, which include priority areas such as technical programmes, tourist and hospitality programmes, health studies programmes, developmental studies programmes such as accounting and management studies, are planned to be offered through the distance education mode to allow maximal access by the people of the rural areas and outer islands.
- * Encourage parents through radio programmes, public meetings, parents/teachers' associations, etc. to maintain the Tongan language as the home language.

2. Language Development

In addition to these programmes, Tonga is also endeavouring to develop the language to enable it to perform its designated functions more effectively. One of its major strategies is the development of a monolingual dictionary and a doctoral student, Melenaite Taumoefolau, is currently undertaking this project at the University of Auckland.

The same corpus is expected to be used to develop a new grammar of the Tongan language. A research database has also been established at the Distance Education Centre which is conducting research and collecting materials on Tongan history, culture and language.

These are only a few of the programmes that are being implemented in Tonga which are aimed at promoting and enhancing the Tongan language. It is believed that in Tonga's context, they will assist in achieving both the stated and hidden objectives of language plans. Their achievement will ensure that Tonga will continue to make effective and efficient progress with its development goals and at the same time, ensure that its unique cultural and linguistic heritage will continue to thrive.

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