



Sidney J. Baker, Esq.,
Author of "The Australian Language"
Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, N.S.W.

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Dear Mr. Baker,

In your article PIDGIN: BIRTH OF A NEW LANGUAGE (Herald, 18th July 1953) you criticised the recent action of two members of the U.N. Trusteeship Council, who toured the Australian administered Trust Territory of Papua New Guinea and condemned the use of pidgin English by governmental and other bodies in the territory.

I agree with you that a language, once it is in use, cannot be rooted out. But it is possible to prevent a new Babel of Pidgin languages, which is already taking shape in the territory. If government officials would insist that all papers printed by governmental or mission bodies shall adhere to a uniform mode of spelling, word order, etc. then in time a similar uniformity could be brought about as in the civilized countries, where there is one language for papers and books, although many dialects are spoken in the country, be it France, or Great Britain or others. However, as far as I know, no such action has been carried out, and you do not mention any such attempt made in New Guinea by the educational authorities.

You have given one interesting example from the New Guinea mission magazine "Frend Belong Mi" which I shall reproduce herewith. It refers to a mathematical puzzle.

HUSET SAVE KAUNTIM GUD ?

8			= 15	Nainfelo liklik panis i stop hir. Yu mast putim long en
		9	= 15	namber 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, wanfelo wanfelo. Yu mast putim
6	7		= 15	olsem baimbai trifelo long olgeder lain i olsem inaf long 15.
				Mi putim finish 6,7,8,9, nau yu mast putim 1,2,3,4,5.
				Traim, i no heve.

=15 =15 =15

These lines contain the international symbols 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 which are indeed independent of any language, whether pidgin, or aborigine, or any other one. Similarly, the pictorial symbol of the arrow means a CURVE in all languages of the world. And similarly, the pictorial symbols of Semantography can bridge all languages, whether pidgin, or aborigine or any other one. And this brings me to a matter which should be of grave concern to every Australian.

Not a year passes without a commission from the U.N.Trusteeship Council touring New Guinea and criticising the administration. Not a year passes without a hostile power accusing Australia of not educating the natives. One day, a majority vote supported by the small nations of Central and South America, of the Middle East, etc. may take away from Australia the moral right to administer the territory. The Australian delegates point to the immense difficulties. More than one hundred different languages are spoken in the territory, and there is no medium available to bridge them all. But now we have Semantography.

With this view in mind I lectured to the Australian School for Pacific Administration, to officials of the Department for External Territories in Canberra, to students of Sydney University, etc.etc., demonstrating the practicability of my symbols. However, official action is usually slow. What is needed are some far-sighted men, who recognize that the method of symbols could be used as a medium of interlinguistic communication, and who recognize that such an experiment could show to the world that Australia is making great endeavours and novel experiments in order to fulfil her promise under the trusteeship charter. You, as the author of "The Australian Language" are a prominent linguist in Australia, and I am turning to you again. Three years ago, I did so, but in vain. Should the old curse be repeated and a pioneer of a new idea be turned down in his own country? I ask you to arrange for a demonstration before you and some of your friends, in order to convince you that Semantography can do the job in New Guinea.

Yours faithfully
C.K.Bliss
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