

SUMMARY

Politeness and “White Men” in New Guinea Pidgin

Toru Okamura

[Faculty of Liberal Arts, Tezukayama Gakuin University]

The aim of this paper is to examine politeness in Pidgin, one of the national languages of Papua New Guinea. Few attempts have been made thus far to study politeness in Pidgin. The most polite expressions (MPE) in Pidgin tend to be used when speaking to outsiders, those who are not members of the speaker's social group or village, and to non-wantok (i.e. non-pidgin speakers), particularly Australian tourists (about 60,000 tourists from Australia visit Papua New Guinea every year). The hierarchical distribution of MPE is discussed in the section dealing with school teachers, Bikman, and Prime Minister Michael Somare. The difference between male and female speech in showing politeness in Pidgin was not found to be significant, and it is therefore not possible to establish a relationship between gender and language use in this respect.

The data on which this study is based comes from interviews with twenty-one Pidgin speakers in Fima village, near Goroka town. Politeness is examined in Section Four, where it is proposed that wantok status is significant for our understanding of politeness in Pidgin.