

The Evolution of Written Bislama

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Abstract

This thesis explores the potential decreolisation of Bislama, the creole of Vanuatu. It focuses on the evolution of the written language and consists in the study of a corpus of documents in Bislama in various genres and over a period of 40 years.

The first three chapters of this thesis focus on the background, setting first the historical, geographical and sociological context of the study. In the second chapter, I present the theoretical frame on pidgins and creoles which shows that my study fills in a gap in the literature. My work is diachronic in essence but also looks into the place of Bislama in the formal education system of Vanuatu.

The methodology was therefore two-fold. The main part of the thesis is an empirical quantitative study of a data base of written material that I constructed as well as other documents not included in the data base. The part on education relies on interviews made in Vanuatu during my fieldtrips.

The hypothesis of decreolisation is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 and the present research shows that the anglicisation of written Bislama varies considerably between the genres. For some genres and in some of their sub-categories, there is evidence of decreolisation taking place. However, no generalisation can be made as in other genres the phenomenon is just not occurring in an obvious way or not at all.

In Chapter 6, my study also highlights the obvious link between the lack of standardisation of written Bislama, its potential decreolisation and the fact that it is neither taught nor used as a medium of instruction in Ni-Vanuatu schools.

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Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CMC	Computer-mediated communication
ELP	Education Language Policy
INTV	Institut National de Technologie du Vanuatu
LAV	Literacy Association of Vanuatu
L1	First language
MOE	Ministry of Education (Vanuatu)
MP	Melanesian Pidgin
NGO	Non-government organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PVC	Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
UNC	University of New Caledonia
UOA	University of Auckland
USP	University of the South Pacific
VCC	Vanuatu Cultural Centre
VKS	Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta
VL	Vernacular language(s)
VLPC	Vanuatu Language Planning Conference
VNCC	Vanuatu National Cultural Council
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
WV	World Vision (Vanuatu)

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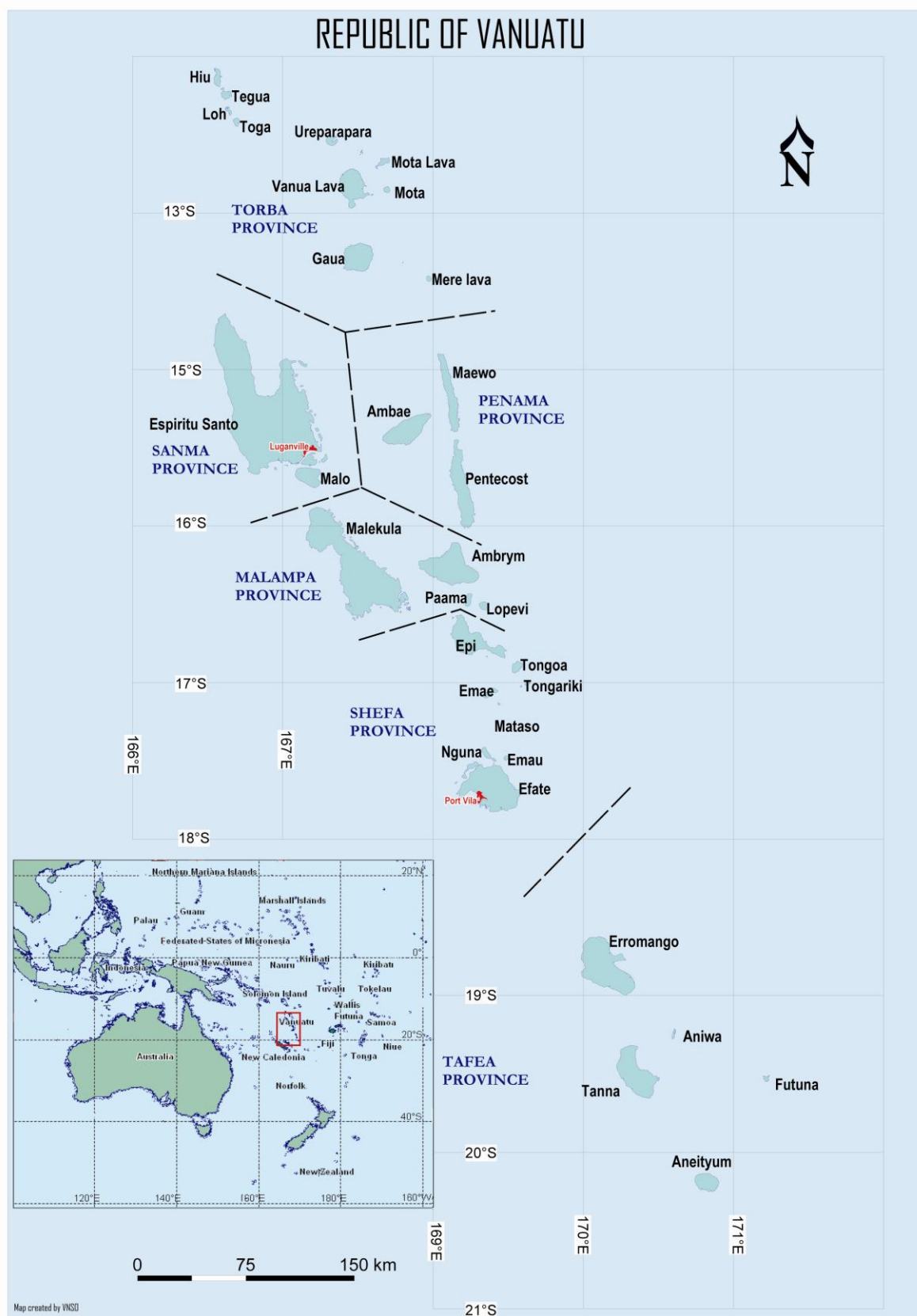
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Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2010

CHAPTER 1: THE BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Republic of Vanuatu, formerly known as the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, became independent in 1980. The country is composed of more than 80 islands which stretch in a Y-shaped form for around 900 kilometres in the South West Pacific region, between the thirteenth and the twenty-first parallels. Along with this geographic diversity come a unique colonial past and heritage, as well as a very rich linguistic situation. Indeed, it can be said that about 100 vernacular languages are still spoken today by the Ni-Vanuatu¹ population of about 243,000 (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, August 2009). It is also one of the very few nations in the world where a pidgin/creole, Bislama (also sometimes referred to as Bichelamar), has been given the status of National Language, as well as that of official language along with French and English.

In 1979, before Independence, Tryon was already stating that Bichelamar “is spoken by almost all male adults among New Hebrideans and by a very high proportion of female adults. Most children of school age speak Bichelamar... Bichelamar is the first language of a rather small number of children born of marriages between parents of different languages, especially in the main urban centers of Santo (Luganville) and Port Vila” (Tryon 1979: 19). He adds that no one seems to mind the unstandardised orthography but that the one used in Camden’s translation of the Four Gospels is “gaining in currency”. On the eve of independence, Tryon considers that “perhaps this [creating a feeling of nationalism] is where Bichelamar will play its most important and vital role, for it is seen as the sole unifying means of communication among these islands unfortunate enough to inherit the weighty legacy of an Anglo-French condominium (Tryon 1979: 29).

Vanuatu is entering its fourth decade of independence, and Tryon’s prediction has come true: not only has Bislama ‘gained in currency’, but it is today **the** language of Vanuatu.

¹ ‘The Ni-Vanuatu’ refers to the people of Vanuatu. I will also use it as an adjective.

1.1 Brief historical background

According to archaeological findings, the first inhabitants of today's Vanuatu, the Lapita people (from the name of their pottery), can be traced back to at least 3,500 years ago (Siméoni 2009). Not much is known yet about migration from other parts of the Pacific, as there is no archaeological evidence of what happened. It was not until 1606 that the first European, Pedro Fernández de Quirós, set foot on the island of Santo. In 1774, James Cook gave the whole archipelago the name of 'New Hebrides' (a name which was kept until the independence in 1980). Then came the traders in the 1830s, looking for sandalwood, sea-slug ('bêche de mer' or *bislama*), and later on for labour to work on the Queensland plantations (blackbirding), between 1863 and 1904.

The actual colonisation of the archipelago started in the late 1860s with settlers (mostly French) acquiring plantations and the missionaries (mostly English-speaking Anglican and Presbyterian). It is on these plantations that Bislama was first used as the language of communication by labourers that had come back from Queensland and used the pidgin there to communicate with workers from other islands. Catholic missions were also established in the second half of the nineteenth century, which would later develop close links to the French colonial administration, whereas the Anglican and Presbyterian missions supported the British administration. This was to have deep repercussions on the division between Francophones and Anglophones in the Ni-Vanuatu population, in terms of education and political positions towards the question of the independence of the country. Because of the frequent quarrels, mainly over land ownership, the French and the British had to find a solution: they established a unique type of 'joint', though separate, government, the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, between 1906 and 1980, hence today's complex post-colonial heritage.

It is to be noted that until the 1960s, it was the missions that were in charge of education, and for a long time, local languages were used for teaching in church schools. For instance, "The Melanesian Mission chose Mota, a language of the Banks Islands, as language of education" (Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 403). In fact, "Religion, literacy and education for much of Vanuatu's pre-colonial and colonial history were very closely intertwined. All the writing systems that are used for most of the local languages in the country have been developed by Christian missionaries of a variety of denominations over the past century and a half" (Crowley 2000: 61). Crowley also points out that "Christian missionary activity during the 19th and early 20th centuries was generally conducted almost exclusively through the medium of local languages, and people completely avoided the use of Bislama as a language of religion" (Crowley 2000: 64). Bonnemaïson also notes that:

The great expansion of the Anglican Church that took place at the end of the nineteenth century ran concurrently with Presbyterian expansion in the southern and central parts of the archipelago. Sharing the islands between them, these two churches were then at the height of their missionary drive. (Bonnemaison 1994: 65)

But from the 1970s, Bislama was used as a religious language much more frequently, the vernacular languages (VL) were abandoned in the 1960s in favour of the metropolitan languages for education, and the language used as the medium of instruction depended on people's religious affiliation, as stated by Bonnemaison (1994: 79), who stresses the fact that along with the foreign language used at school, the Melanesians also acquired certain political loyalties, and a specific European culture.

On the whole, education was not much of a concern for the Condominium authorities until "At the start of the 1960s, [...] the British Residency took charge of education programs, teacher training and pedagogical development" (Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 403). In 1960, about 12% of the population was Catholic (so taught in French) and 80% were linked to Anglophone missions (Van Trease 1995: 18). Bonnemaison (1994) also states that it took the French authorities some time before they realised they were in a minority situation, and that their policy was not very successful in trying to build 'a sizable' elite. This imbalance prompted the French to build (free) schools to try and tip the balance: "On the eve of independence, the numbers involved in the French and British education systems were approximately equal. However, the statistics included students only just recently enrolled in the recently constructed French schools" (Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 404). In fact, it appears that the French presented 'optimistic' figures and that the balance was never quite reached, and the figures for 1998 in the Ombudsman's report show that only 25 to 30% of the students went to a French-medium school (Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 445).

This French/English dichotomy also shaped antagonistic political attitudes, and confrontations were frequent between 1975 and 1980 (Siméoni 2009: 240). Tryon & Charpentier are very critical of the role played by the two governments of the condominium:

If there is any area in which the Condominium could be described as an abject failure, it is the failure to put in place a policy of bilingual education, which would have allowed the future State to function, and above all else so that its citizens, whatever their educational background, could understand one another (Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 406).

However, the road to independence led the political parties and churches to work together and

write a constitution in 1978, and the seventy-four-year old Condominium of the New Hebrides gave way to the new Republic of Vanuatu in 1980, which inherited a dual education system still in place today.

Crucial in the approach to independence was the use of Bislama by the political parties; indeed, in order to reach a wider audience to get their political message across, Bislama was by far the best means available. So attitudes changed, and Bislama, once the language of plantations, was seen as ‘neutral’ as opposed to French or English: “Bislama began to change from being the language of those who some thought to be enslaved, to the language of those who sought to be free” (Crowley 1996: 127). All the political campaigns were conducted in Bislama, and the political parties’ platform programmes were presented to the public in Bislama. At the same time, Radio Vila also played a role in the transmission of political ideas and debates, and was seen as an important instrument to keep people informed in Bislama, particularly in the rural areas where not many people were educated in either of the metropolitan languages.

By that time, too, better means of transportation facilitated a growing urbanisation, and many people moved to the two major urban centres, Port Vila and Luganville (see map p. 2), whose population grew respectively from 1,300 inhabitants to 10,000 for Port Vila and from 1,500 to 5,000 for Luganville between 1955 and 1979 (MacClancy 2002: 163). This urban growth also favoured the spread of Bislama as the language of communication between people from different islands who did not have the same mother tongue.

1.2 My study

This pidgin/creole, the *lingua franca* of the country for many decades, but also the emblematic language (coat of arms, coinage and national anthem) and a symbol of identity, is the object of my study. My research will address and explore questions about the language by looking at it from the following two different perspectives: the written language itself and its place in the Vanuatu educational system. Even though the main focus of this research is on the language itself, it is impossible for me not to include a part on its lack of status in the schools of Vanuatu, because as I will show, the two are closely linked. The main question that will be addressed in this study could be very briefly summarised as follows:

What can be said about the evolution of written Bislama in the past forty years or so, that is to say from the period when it started being used in its written form up to now? In other words,

is anything happening to its linguistic features that could show the anglicisation² of the language? Linguistically speaking, this could be addressed as ‘Is Bislama decreolising?’, which occurs when the mixed language comes closer to its lexifier. As we will see in this study, things are not as simple as that for Bislama, as some would not even accept that the language is a creole, let alone that it is decreolising.

This research topic was suggested to me by my friend Michel Aufray, who was a Professor at the French INALCO (familiarily known as “Langues O”) and was a specialist in oral cultures, Austronesian comparative linguistics and languages of the Pacific. Before I met Michel in New Caledonia, I had been to Vanuatu a few times and had already decided to learn Bislama, a promise I had made to myself when I first went to the New Hebrides in 1970. In the meantime, I lived for eighteen years in Reunion Island, in the Indian Ocean, where I was fascinated by the creole language that I learned to use, but orally only. It was while I lived there that the first Reunionese Creole / French dictionary was published, and I remember reading and hearing heated arguments about the spelling conventions that some found ridiculous. So my interest in mixed languages is by no means recent, and I took great pleasure in learning Bislama. Some thirty odd years after his first stay in Vanuatu, Michel and I went on a trip to Port Vila, and we talked about the language a lot. As I was just starting to learn Bislama, I bombarded him with questions while reading the written language I could find in the press, which, as an English teacher, I mistakenly thought was so easy to understand, and this is why he suggested I do a PhD about ‘modern’ Bislama under his supervision, as he had noticed a few changes in both the spoken and written language. The challenge was daunting, but I finally said yes, and in June 2007, we met Ross Clark at the COOL7³ conference in Noumea. Ross accepted to be my supervisor in Auckland for a *co-tutelle* INALCO/University of Auckland. Unfortunately, this was never to happen quite the way we had planned, since Michel Aufray died in a car accident in August 2007.

1.3 Rationale

Vanuatu has such a great linguistic variety, with over a hundred vernacular languages (VL) still in use, many of which are still at the oral stage – so with no orthography or grammar studied by linguists – that most of the research is in fact dedicated to these indigenous languages, as some of them are threatened with extinction, being spoken by fewer speakers

² I have not tried to find evidence of gallicisation (influence of French) but I did not notice any feature worth studying while working on the corpus.

³ 7th International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics, 2-7 July, 2007.

and therefore endangered. Bislama, on the other hand, is thriving. It has been well described and analysed in its uses at several stages of its development. Nevertheless, there is to my knowledge no study of the written language over a period of forty years or so, looking at the changes as written Bislama is becoming more common. When I started this research, I struggled to find material in Bislama, apart from what was to be found at the National Library of Vanuatu. Today, there are so many documents written in Bislama in different fields that I feel it makes this research relevant. Furthermore, no study of the language has ever been made about the way it is used with the new technological means, such as text messages, emails and chats, which makes my investigation unique in that respect.

There is no denying that Bislama is overwhelmingly present in the everyday life of the Ni-Vanuatu population. And yet, it has never been given any place in the formal educational system. The last part of this study will look at possible changes in the years to come, as Vanuatu is entering its fourth decade of independence and is in the process of setting up a new Education Language Policy (ELP) which will be crucial for the future of its youth. What place can Bislama find for itself in a rapidly evolving society?

1.4 A changing world

An important factor to be taken into consideration is the changes in the population of Vanuatu and the consequences they have for language use. The phenomenon of urbanisation is increasing: if we look at the figures of the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO), we can observe that in a period of about forty years (between 1967 and 2009), the population of Port Vila has been multiplied by nine, and by five for Luganville (VNSO website, *Census and Surveys*). The growing popularity of *nakamals* (kava bars), particularly in urban centres, also created a need for a new linguistic repertoire that neither of the two metropolitan languages, nor the local languages, could provide, as well as some feeling of belonging to a wider Oceanic community. Let us have a look at what official figures tell us about these changes.

The first post-independence census was conducted in 1989, so roughly ten years after Independence. Crowley notes that “Of all of the published censuses to date, only in the census of 1989 has there been a question relating to proficiency in local languages” but that the reliability of the results could be questioned. In the 1999 census, he adds, the questions about language use were modified to take into account the language of the household as well as the proficiency of each member of the household (Crowley 2000: 58). What Crowley argues is that the 1989 census does not provide much information about the linguistic demography of the country at the time, because the question relating to language was formulated in such a

way that it ignored some of the realities of the situation (Crowley 1994). For instance, some of the indigenous languages have no names, the figures cannot discriminate between the speakers of different local languages (one general heading for all), some languages are viewed by people as being similar when they are not, and movements of population make it very hard to identify the residents of one particular place in a clear way. Crowley also states that the figures may well not reflect reality, as for instance in the case of the number of people who claim to speak Bislama but no vernacular. He clearly demonstrates that the 0.4% of the population estimate found in the census for this category cannot be accurate as a survey conducted about ten years before showed the figure to be around 7.5% already, so that his own estimation of speakers of Bislama as their first language is around 10%, at least in towns (Crowley 1994). Crowley's estimation was probably not so far from reality, as the 1999 census shows that Bislama is the first language of about 12% of the population, mostly children living in urban zones and who do not speak any indigenous language. Let us examine the results of the 1999 census regarding the use of language at home and at school (medium of instruction), as shown in tables 1.1 and 1.2.

Table 1.1: Languages used at home 1999

Main language in the household	National	Urban	Rural
Indigenous language	73%	29%	85%
Bislama	23%	56%	13.3%
English	1.8%	5%	0.6%
French	1.4%	4%	0.4%

Compiled from *The 1999 national population and housing census: Main report*. Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Port Vila, 2000.

Table 1.2: Language of instruction 1999

Language of instruction	Total	Percentage
English	89,589	≈ 72%
French	36,448	≈ 28%

Compiled from *The 1999 national population and housing census: Main report*. Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Port Vila, 2000.

What these figures reveal is that in spite of the fact that the majority of students are educated in English (almost three quarters of the total number), and the rest in French, the household languages are neither of the two metropolitan languages, by far. In fact, the most commonly used languages at home are the Melanesian languages, whether an indigenous language, or Bislama. What can also be noticed is the discrepancy between rural and urban areas, with Bislama unsurprisingly more used in towns than in the countryside.

A report made by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC) also in 1999 shows interesting points as regards the use of languages by the younger generation: although young people are attached to their mother tongue, they mostly use Bislama for communication, particularly in towns. The language is now used in new social patterns and therefore has had to expand dramatically lexically and stylistically to respond to new needs of expression. In December 2008, the second *Youth Report* was published by the VCC, about ten years after the first one (see Chapter 2). Part 4 of the report is devoted to language use and importance in the life of urban youth, and the changes are obvious. In some places, one third of young people say they use Bislama almost all the time, and 93.3% use Bislama to communicate with their friends (as opposed to 70% in 1999). The conclusion about this part is that:⁴

Bislama is one of the main languages we use a lot today, especially in urban areas, or rural areas close to towns. There is also a great number of young people that say that Bislama is their first language, and that they use it all the time. Bislama is an important language for Ni-Vanuatu youth. (Vanuatu Yang Pipol's Projek tu, 2008)⁵

The report also points out that in spite of being educated in one of the metropolitan languages, they do not use them outside school in their every day life, which shows that there has been no change in ten years regarding the divide between language of instruction / language of usage. Another interesting finding of this report shows that “A lot of women today like using Bislama” (*Tebol 4.2* shows that 35% do speak Bislama all the time).⁶

According to the figures published in the *Household Listing Counts* in October 2009, about 60,000 people now live in towns, with 45,000 of them in Port Vila which has the highest annual growth rate of 4.7%, as opposed to 2.8% a year for Vanuatu as a whole. This is not without consequences on the growing importance of Bislama.

⁴ All translations from French or Bislama are mine. I take full responsibility for them.

⁵ *Bislama hemi wan long olgeta men lanwis we yumi stap usum plante tedei espeseli long ol urban mo rural eria klosap long taon. Yumi gat iet wan bigfala namba blong ol yangfala wea oli stap talem Bislama hemi fes lanwis we oli stap usum oltaem. . Bislama i wan impotan lanwis blong ol yut long Vanuatu.*

⁶ *Plante long ol woman naoia oli stap laekem blong usum Bislama.*

Let us have a close look at the 2009 census results (finalised in a report published in April 2011) and find out what they reveal in terms of population change, as well as about language use. First, 24.4% of the total population live in towns, with 56% living in Port Vila and 29% in Luganville (*National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report Vol.2*, VNSO 2011: vii). These results show that Vanuatu is still overwhelmingly a rural country with about three quarters of the population living in rural areas, in spite of spectacular urban growth. If we detail these figures for age groups, we notice that the same proportion of people between 0-34 live in rural or urban areas (73%), whereas only 27% of the age group 35-70 live in rural or urban areas.⁷ The balance between the two groups in terms of urban/rural dichotomy is quite remarkable, but what these figures actually show is that Vanuatu is a ‘young’ country, with three quarters of its population under 34.⁸ This obviously implies that the choices made in terms of language policy in education have been, are and will be crucial. In the global figures, we find that the literacy rate for the population aged over 15 is 85% for Vanuatu: there is a big discrepancy between urban and rural areas, with 97.7% for urban zones and 80.5% for the rural ones.⁹ As for the age group 15-24, the rates are 92% for Vanuatu, 99% for urban zones and 89% for rural zones (*Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report: v*).

Table 1.3: Literacy rates

	Literacy rate (over 15) *	Literacy rate (15-24) *
National	84.5	92.1
Urban	97.7	99.2
Rural	80.5	89

* as defined in the questionnaire (see footnote 8)

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, page v

⁷ All the percentages either in the text or in tables have been calculated by me from the figures given on the quoted pages of the *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*: VNSO 2011.

⁸ This arbitrary separation at the age of 35 enables me to have what can be regarded as a ‘pre-independence-educated’ group and a ‘post-independence-educated’ group as Vanuatu became independent in 1980.

⁹ It has to be noted that this does not correspond to the OECD definition of reading literacy (“ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society”) : *Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris, 2002, *Glossary*: 47. VNSO has chosen the definition of ‘basic’ literacy in its narrowest sense that is to say “can read and write a simple sentence”.

So what this reveals is that since the previous census ten years ago, with today's age group 15-24 representing at that time an age group 5-14, the literacy rate has improved quite noticeably when compared to the global figures for the country, both in urban and rural zones.

The conclusions in the report indicate that “Almost everyone (98%) older than 5 years of age living in the urban areas was literate. This compares to only 80% of the population 5 years and older in rural areas” adding that “Literacy rates were over 90% for the population aged 10-34, then it gradually declines after that, and is less than 70% of the population at age 65 years and older” (*National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report Vol.2, VNSO 2011: xii*).

If we examine the results given table 6.14 of the report (p. 104) about illiteracy in Vanuatu, that is to say seen from a different perspective, we can draw the following conclusions: the percentage of illiterates among the total population of Vanuatu is 15.2%, with 0.6% of them living in urban zones and 14.6% in rural zones. This means that the highest proportion of people who cannot read or write (about 96% of them) come from rural areas. So even if these figures seem to contradict the ones about literacy given above, in fact it is just another way of looking at the statistics, and of course we find the same conclusion which indicates a huge discrepancy between urban and rural zones in terms of illiteracy. The results vary a lot depending on the age range of the population so I have decided to sum them up in the next table in which we find the proportion among illiterates (and not of the total population of Vanuatu) of the various age categories.

Table 1.4: Illiteracy rate urban and rural plus age range

	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-69	+70
Vanuatu	33.8%	20%	22.8%	15.5%	7.9%
urban	55%	18.1%	12.3%	10.2%	4%
rural	32.9%	20.5%	23.1%	15.6%	8%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 104

The percentages about illiteracy (in any language) presented in table 1.4 reveal that the statistics vary greatly according to the age group considered: for the age group 5-9, 55% of urban children and 33% of rural children are illiterate, figures that go down dramatically to

around 19% for the age group 10-24, whether urban or rural. The gap between urban and rural illiteracy then widens for the generations from 25 to 70. As for people over 70, the rate in rural areas is double that of towns with respectively 8% and 4%. At first sight, it looks surprising that the illiteracy rate for the younger children should be higher in towns than in the country, as it is the only age range with such a situation. This could be due to the fact that a lot of the children living in the cities speak Bislama much more than in the rural areas, where they use the local languages more often. As Bislama has no place at school, it seems reasonable to infer that literacy comes later for the city children who are then taught in English or French. In the rural areas, on the contrary, the parents using the local languages that do have a written system can start teaching their children at a very early stage. So the very high proportion of urban children that cannot read or write before the age of 9, almost 50% in fact, shows that Ni-Vanuatu children become literate in any language a few years after they have started primary school, which of course is important in terms of the choice of language as the medium of instruction in the very first years, as well as the number of years children are taught in the language chosen.

If we look at the literacy rate in Bislama, though, the gap between rural and urban areas appears even wider, as shown in table 1.5: indeed, a huge 90% of the urban population claim to be literate in Bislama as opposed to only 68% in rural areas., which confirms the link between urbanisation and the spreading of Bislama use in the population. This does not contradict the explanation I gave about the 5-9 age range ability in Bislama, it merely shows that the language ability in written Bislama comes later.

Table 1.5: Literacy in Bislama 2009

	Vanuatu	urban	rural
Percentage of population (over 5) literate in Bislama	73.5%	90%	68%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 100

Let us now observe literacy in terms of language ability for the population aged over 5: the answers to question P19 “Can this person read and write a simple sentence in one or the following languages (English, French, Bislama, other language?” (*Household Interview*

Schedule, Population and Housing Census, 16 November 2009) show that among the total population aged 5 – 70+ considered, i.e. 195,800 persons, the first language in which people say they can read and write is Bislama, followed by English, then Other (so languages that obviously include autochthonous languages), and French coming last, as mentioned in the report: “Literacy in Bislama was, with 74% of the population, the highest followed by English (64%), and French (37%). Half of the population is literate in a language other than Bislama, English or French. Literacy was measured by a respondent’s ability to read and write a simple sentence in any language” (*National Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report Vol.2*, VNSO 2011: xii). What I chose to do is form three age groups, one from 5 to 9 (early school), the second from 10 to 34 (‘young active’ population), and finally between 35 and 70+ (‘mature active’ and retired), as shown in table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Language ability (in any language)

Language Age	English	French	Bislama	Other
5 – 9	46%	30%	35%	29.3%
10 – 34	71.5%	42%	82.2%	52.8%
35 – 70+	60%	30.8%	77%	55.6%
Total 5 – 70+	64%	37%	73.5%	50%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 95

What is interesting here is that for the group aged 5-9, the first language is English, and then Bislama, whereas French and other languages are on an equal footing, and not too far from Bislama. This is obviously linked to the fact that for the time being, the medium of instruction in primary school is mainly English, so that it does not come as a surprise that English should be the first language of literacy. The picture then changes almost radically for the group aged 10-34, in so far as the proportion of people who can read and write Bislama goes from about 30% for the first group aged 5-9 to over 80%. This figure then goes slightly down for the third group with 77% being able to read or write a simple sentence in Bislama. How can this dramatic difference be accounted for? Again, caution has to be exercised here because we know that some of these figures cannot be accepted at face value (as noted by Crowley, mentioned earlier), simply because we cannot distinguish between the people who can speak

and write only their language and/or Bislama and no other language from those who can speak Bislama and English or French, or the three of them, plus a local language too, for instance. It is therefore impossible to actually know what the percentage of population who only have language ability in local language and/or Bislama is. However, what those figures seem to indicate is that later on in teenage and early adulthood, more people can ‘use’ Bislama than any of the two languages of instruction, English and/or French. This group includes today’s students, and the students of a period of about 25 years, that is to say a generation. So in fact what we see here is that the younger generations definitely consider Bislama as a language they can use in its written form, that is to say for writing and reading. Of course, there are limitations to this interpretation, and I certainly will refrain from drawing conclusions saying they would rather use Bislama than English or French.

As far as the question concerning the language used in the household is concerned (question H23), the results show that an overwhelming majority of people use Melanesian languages at home, whether vernacular or Bislama. Again the variations between situations can be enormous between urban and rural areas: not surprisingly, local languages are used mostly in rural areas as the language of the household, which shows the importance people attach to their culture and identity as a sign of belonging to a local community first. On the other hand, Bislama is the language primarily spoken by 70% of urban households, as shown in table 1.7.

Table 1.7: Main language of household (1999 & 2009)

Main language in household	national		urban		rural	
	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999
Local language	63%	72%	20%	29%	77%	85%
Bislama	34%	23%	70%	56%	21%	13.3%
English	2%	1.8%	6%	6%	0.9%	0.66%
French	0.6%	1.3%	2%	4.5%	0.2%	0.4%
Other	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%	0.1%	0.17%	0.13%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 167, and table 1.1

If we compare these figures to the ones given in table 1.1 (which I have included in table 1.7 to facilitate the comparison), we can remark that there seems to be a decline in the use of

European languages at home, French in particular. The use of local languages at home has decreased by 10% whereas the use of Bislama has increased by the same proportion. It is tempting to reach the conclusion that it is primarily speakers of indigenous languages that have given up using their local language at home and adopted Bislama as the household language. Nevertheless, even though this is quite plausible considering the urbanisation of the population already mentioned, which is undeniably the most striking element of the changes in the Ni-Vanuatu population, this assumption would certainly require confirmation from more detailed figures. In fact, if we look at the urban/rural figures, we can notice that the phenomenon of the decrease in the use of local languages and increase in that of Bislama is almost the same whether it takes place in urban or rural areas, although the tendency is a bit more marked in towns with a 14% increase. So the assumption that there might be a shift from indigenous language to Bislama in households all over the country seems validated by the figures: Bislama appears to be not only the language in towns, but is also growing in the countryside.

Lastly, I will look at the results about the language at school. The figures are to be found in Volume 2 of the report and do not give us much information in so far as: “Unfortunately about 20% (11,750) of all students did not state or know the main language spoken at their school” (2009 Census Report, vol.2 p.90). What we actually know is that 51% go to English-speaking schools, 23% to French-speaking schools, 1.6% attend schools where both French and English are the languages of instruction and 3.2% use a local language at school (the last two percentages are calculated from the figures given in Figure 81 p. 90 of the report). Among the school population, 75% go to primary school, 12% to secondary school, 10% in pre-schools and only 0.7% go to a vocational school. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from ‘incomplete’ results, but if we compare those figures to those for 1999, we can notice that the proportion of students attending French-speaking schools has gone down a little from 28% to 23%, but that does not mean to say that the ‘non-indicated’ answers representing 20% of the students are necessarily attending English-speaking schools. Nevertheless, the percentage for the latter in 1999 was 72%, and in 1999 no mention was made of vocational or pre-school attendance which amounts to about 11% of the school population. It seems reasonable to think that some of these students, particularly in pre-school, are the ones educated in local languages. The ambiguity might lie in what people perceived as being a ‘local’ language and ‘other’ in relation to Bislama and which category they decided to put it in. The answers might also be skewed by the fact that ‘the language spoken at school’ (as stated in the results) is not necessarily ‘the language of instruction’ for some who might have been confused by the terms. So here we find the same kind of ambiguity in the results as the

one mentioned by Crowley for the 1989 census, though under a different form. In conclusion to the 2009 results, it is however obvious that the majority of students attend English-speaking schools, which is of course very important in terms of the contact between Bislama and its lexifier for the majority of school-goers. This conclusion itself must nevertheless be put in perspective in turn as a lot of children leave school at a very early age and are therefore not exposed to English for a very long time, particularly when they live in rural areas.

The other factor of change is globalisation and its impact on all nations. Access to new technologies, the Internet, mobile phones, satellite television and travelling have completely modified the way we communicate. The people of Vanuatu, just like other Pacific Islanders, now live in the local world and in the global world, and they quite naturally and justifiably want the best side of both worlds for their children. This has deep implications on education, with the double onus of protecting local culture and languages while at the same time providing the children with competence to interact on the global scale, which implies the knowledge of an international language such as English. In the few years I have been doing this study and visiting Vanuatu on several occasions, I was always surprised each time to see the changes in the use of mobile phones and the almost ‘aggressive’ ads made by the two telecom companies in all three languages, but mostly in Bislama on the huge billboards. Bislama is now also commonly used for emails, text messages and chat forums, called computer-mediated communication (CMC). One interesting point in the study will be to find out how Bislama is used and whether the ‘rules’ that govern this kind of written material in English also apply to Bislama such as the language of text messages, for instance.

The figures concerning new technologies to be found in the 2009 census are summed up in the two following tables:

Table 1.8: Mobile phone and Internet in households 2009

Percentage of households	National	Urban	Rural
Mobile phones	75%	90%	70%
Internet connections	3%	9%	1.5%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p.195

As is only to be expected, these figures cannot be compared to those of 1999 simply because the question then was irrelevant. Mobile phone networks and Internet connections are a recent phenomenon in Vanuatu so it is the first time figures about their use have been published.

What we can see here is that if cell phones are very much part and parcel of people's everyday lives, access to Internet is still very limited for most of the population and is considered a 'privilege'. As shown in table 1.9, less than 1% of the population has an Internet connection, however, the report reveals that about 7% of the population use the Internet. Still, this is not much compared to other countries such as New Caledonia where according to the statistics available for the 2009 census, 37% of households have an Internet connection. In terms of cell phone use, there is not much difference between the two countries, as in New Caledonia, 87% of households have a mobile phone (<http://xt.isee.nc/xtc/xtc.php>, retrieved on April 2, 2012).¹⁰

Table 1.9: Mobile phone and Internet users 2009

Percentage of users (on total population)	National	Urban	Rural
Total mobile phones	35%	13%	21%
Total Internet connections	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%

Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 195

It is interesting to note that even if the number of households with a cell phone is 90% in towns, in fact the actual proportion of users is higher in rural areas than in towns. There is still a lot to be done for phone companies in terms of the coverage of areas in the whole country, and competition between the two companies could entail that conditions of access will improve in the years to come.

So as a conclusion to this part, what I can say is that the figures revealed by the 2009 census confirm the growing role of Bislama in Vanuatu, in more and more domains. I have noticed an enormous increase of official 'publications' in Bislama such as posters, leaflets, awareness documents as well as notes or ads written for everyday purposes and which can be seen on doors, in the street, aboard buses etc. What I think is happening is that in spite of the written language being given no official place in education, the Ni-Vanuatu population is now making use of the language they mostly speak in **both** its oral and written forms. It is virtually impossible to know what will happen in terms of when the new Education Linguistic Policy (ELP) will be adopted by Parliament, under which form, not to mention how it will be implemented. The political world is also changing in Vanuatu, as a new Prime Minister, and

¹⁰ Percentages calculated from the statistics on 'housing equipment'.

Minister of Education, were in place in December 2010, after the results of the provincial consultation were presented for information in Parliament. As of April 2011, no final decision has been made, nor will one be made very quickly, as a lot of other problems, such as the New Curriculum Statement, are also being tackled. The policy has yet to be discussed again, the final choices to be made before they are sent to the Ministers and then to Parliament (M.Lesines, p.c., April 2011). It is possible to imagine that the Government is trying to prioritise what is important first, as it is also dealing with the qualification and training of teachers: in February 2011, more than 120 Ni-Vanuatu students enrolled at the University of New Caledonia in order to get BAs in various topics (all taught in French), with scholarships from the Vanuatu Government (as opposed to about 40 students previously). It may well be that by the end of the present research I will not be able to know whether the policy will be implemented as such, and if not, what the changes will be. At this point, it seems however that in spite of the political instability and the frequent reshuffles of the ministers, there will be no changes as far as bilingualism English/French as the major aim of the policy is concerned. It remains to be seen whether the new policy will actually benefit the children and lead them to better academic achievement and better lives.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis:

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the research question and its relevance in today's context. I will then place this study in its theoretical frame with the literature review in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for the research, and the decisions I had to make about the choices I was faced with. In Chapter 4, I will focus on the written language, and examine my corpus in order to address the issue of the expansion of written Bislama as well as its potential anglicisation (decreolisation?). Chapter 5 will present the results of the research based on the part of the corpus which was turned into a data base form, and discuss the findings and conclusions of my investigation. Finally, Chapter 6 concentrates on the place of the written language in Vanuatu's educational system, and the potential consequences of the new language policy on Ni-Vanuatu youth. I will finish this thesis by presenting my conclusions on this research and outline future study.

Conclusion

A few years before independence, Camden noted in the preface of his dictionary:

I have been very much aware of the controversy which has developed concerning the nature of the language and its adequacy as a lingua franca. Much of the argument has been coloured by the fact that any change in status for the language is intimately bound up with a change in status for those whose participation in the political, economic and social life of the country is dependent upon it, and there has been strong opposition to that change.” (Camden 1977: vi)

More than thirty years later, there is little question that Bislama is adequate as a lingua franca and is used in a great range of domains. It is the language used in Parliament for debates, it is used for conferences and forums at the University of the South Pacific for instance, it is used in all the official offices, even if the staff also master at least one of the European languages (English mostly). It is used at the police station, where it can be difficult to find someone to write a report in English or French, it is used at church, at home, on the radio and television, it is used in the press, it is used in politics, it is used for public awareness campaigns, it is used in sports, it is used for celebrations, its use is recommended by the National Council of Chiefs (*Malvatumauri*) when local languages cannot be used. Bislama is the language of the Ni-Vanuatu. The only fields where Bislama has no or very little place in its written form are education and what we call ‘literature’, and one cannot but think that the two are linked, in so far as there probably is no literary production written and published in Bislama precisely because the language is not acknowledged in the educational system. From a purely linguistic point of view, Bislama is as good a language as any to be a means of literary expression. However, its (official) non recognition as a written means of expression is probably a hindrance to the development of literature in the language. Today, there is still strong opposition to change towards the introduction of Bislama in the formal educational system in spite of its increasing place as a written medium in people’s lives.

So it remains to be seen whether this relatively new language, used only orally for a long time, yet increasingly present in its written form, will be able to play a role in the emergence of a truly creative Ni-Vanuatu literature. By making it the national language, the Constitution acknowledges its importance as a factor of national identity. However Bislama will acquire its *lettres de noblesse* and legitimacy only when it becomes the vector of Ni-Vanuatu culture.

CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL FRAME

2.1 Pidgins and creoles

Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927), a German linguist, was undoubtedly the first to attract attention to the field of pidgin and creole studies when he published articles as early as the end of the nineteenth century: he is therefore considered as the father of what was later called *creolistics*. Only sporadic studies, however, were carried out until it became again the object of attention for linguists in the 1960s. One landmark in the interest shown in these languages, until then probably regarded as not worthy of detailed study on a wide scale, was the first International Conference on Creole Language Studies held in Jamaica in 1959, where scholars raised questions that would lead to further interest and hotly debated theories.

In 1966, Hall wrote that “pidginized and creolized languages represent one of the most interesting frontiers of linguistic science, and offer points of special challenge in all respects” (Hall 1966: 147). In spite of the fact that in the meantime “this fascinating but hitherto neglected field” (p. 148) has been, and still is, the object of numerous studies, three questions remain the source of controversy among linguists today: the definition of these languages, their origins and the problem of the existence of continua and/or *post-creole continuum* for some. But let me start with the definitions of these terms, which also have been a source of debate, but on which linguists seem to have reached a widely accepted compromise.

2.1.1 Etymology

The question of the etymology of the terms themselves appears to have been settled : ‘pidgin’ derives from the Chinese Pidgin English pronunciation of the English word ‘business’, even though other proposals for the origin of the word have also been made. There seems to have been much less controversy about the etymology of ‘creole’, which comes from the Spanish *criollo*, first used to name the Spanish children born in the West Indies, and much later to qualify the languages in those regions (Chaudenson 1995: 3). Todd proposes another explanation, saying “it seems that the English form of the word comes from French ‘créole’,

which is, in turn, derived from the Portuguese ‘crioulo’ rather than the Spanish ‘criollo’, though both Iberian forms are ultimately related to ‘criar’, which includes the meanings of ‘to nurse, to breed, to nourish, to bring up’” (1990: 22).

2.1.2 Definitions

It is also quite a challenge to find out what these two words describe, as pointed out by many linguists in the literature. Charpentier, for example, underlines the fact that “This linguist [Hall], as many of his Anglo-Saxon colleagues, gives the term ‘pidgin’ a wider semantic field than the one this term has in French”¹¹ (Charpentier 1979: 49), and prefers to use ‘*sabir*’ or ‘*lingua franca*’ to refer to the first contact language that appears. On the other hand, some consider that “there is no strict delimitation between a jargon and a pidgin; both are part of a continuum” (Bakker 1995: 29). McWhorter also refers to a ‘pre-pidgin continuum’ (1997: 145). Mühlhäusler’s definition is the following “Pidgins are examples of partially targeted or non-targeted second-language learning, developing from simpler to more complex systems as communicative requirements become more demanding. Pidgin languages by definition have no native speakers, they are social rather than individual solutions, and hence are characterized by norms of acceptability” (Mühlhäusler 1986: 5). He believes that they are different stages in the development of the pidgin, from what he calls ‘pre-pidgin’ to ‘pidgin’ and finally to ‘extended pidgin’. The most frequently found definition of the word would nevertheless be that a pidgin “is a marginal language which arises to fulfil restricted communication needs among people who have no common language” (Todd 1990:1). The language is lexically derived from a language, although it is not intelligible to the speakers of the language from which the lexicon derives, and is structurally simplified. The lexicon of the new language emerges from what is called the *lexifier* (often the European language referred to as the *superstrate*), and the pidgin also has features from the other language(s), called the *substrate(s)*. It is also common knowledge that jargons or pidgins are unstable languages, with limited vocabulary and “limited grammatical and stylistic resources in syntax and discourse. In addition, for reasons that are probably connected mainly to ease of learning, pidgins tend to lack elaborate morphological structures” (Thomason 2001:159). There could be two explanations for the ‘simplicity’ found in pidgins: on the one hand, some would argue that this is due to the fact that the speakers of the lexifier language modify their language in a contact situation, what has been called the ‘baby talk’ or the ‘altered model’ theory. On the

¹¹ “Ce linguiste, comme beaucoup de ses collègues anglo-saxons, donne au terme « pidgin » un champ sémantique plus large que celui que possède ce terme en français. ”

other hand, it is also possible that the explanation lies in the fact that the simple features merely reflect an early stage of language development, with learners acquiring lexical items but not grammatical items, which can be referred to as the imperfect learning theory (Siegel 2006).

The words “pidgin” and “creole” are often associated, though often in a contrastive way: the main difference between the two is that pidgins, as mentioned earlier, have no native speakers whereas creoles do. In fact, some pidgins develop into native languages and the creole will then be called a *nativised pidgin*, used by children as their first language. It is therefore not surprising that definitions such as the following should be found : “The term ‘creole’ is now mainly used in English to refer to languages which derive from pidgins and which, in many instances, share most of their vocabulary with a European language, usually English, French, Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish” (Todd 1990: 23). Some also argue that “A creole language can be defined as a language that has come into existence at a point in time that can be established fairly precisely” (Muysken and Smith 1994: 3). Others say that the line between expanded pidgins and creoles is indeed hard to draw and question the fact that nativisation is the trait that can define pidgins from creoles. McWhorter goes as far as saying that “no distinct point is proposed between pidgin and creole”(1997:151).

2.1.3 The genesis of pidgins and creoles

The genesis of pidgins and creoles has attracted a lot of attention in the last fifty years or so, and has been a matter of dispute. The only thing all linguists agree on is that creoles are mixed languages, what Thomason refers to as “contact language [...] identifiable by the fact that its lexicon and grammatical structures cannot all be traced back primarily to the same source language” (Thomason 2001: 158). What they do **not** agree on is the chronology of the formation of these new languages, with sometimes radically divergent opinions, which we will now examine.

There are still many things we do not know about the genesis of pidgins and creoles, mostly because some appeared long ago – as early as the eleventh century for what was probably an Arabic-based pidgin (Thomason 2000: 163) – and it is virtually impossible to find enough data to account for their creation. Thomason argues that “if specialists agree that there are several ways in which creoles (and pidgins) arise, then it may turn out that several theories are viable, but for different languages”, which indeed seems a reasonable proposition, since this would take into account the fact that not all pidgins and creoles have the same history of

creation, a highly likely possibility also stressed by DeCamp: “Their [pidgins and creoles] degree of divergent development and consequent variability is therefore potentially very great” (DeCamp 1971: 27).

The very first theory about pidgin and creole genesis is that they are all descendants of a Portuguese-lexifier pidgin which existed in the fifteenth century – which may have been a relic from the *Lingua Franca* of the Mediterranean – which was spoken in West Africa and that “in the course of their imperial expansion, the Portuguese spread pidginized versions of their language far and wide” (Hall 1966: 5). They were spread by traders, colonisers and slavers who replaced the Portuguese lexicon with their own, in a process known as ‘relexification’. The Portuguese also went to India and the Far East, for example Pedro Fernandes de Quirós, who made voyages of discovery in the Pacific Ocean, reached the New Hebrides in 1606 and gave its name to the island of Espiritu Santo. It is true that some items of vocabulary deriving from Portuguese can be found in pidgin and creole Englishes. However, this monogenesis theory cannot account for the diversity found in creoles around the world, although some linguists still believe today that English-lexifier Caribbean creoles descend from a pidgin coming from West Africa. But as stressed by Hall himself, “there grew up another kind of pidginized English on both sides of the central Atlantic... this speech, which we might term Central Atlantic Pidgin English, has left creole survivors all around the Caribbean” (Hall 1966: 9). Baudet (1981), for example, compared constructions in Caribbean creole texts with those from West African languages spoken by slaves. The results indicated that a West-African substratum can indeed be found in Caribbean creoles (e.g., in determiners and nominalisers, serial verbs, genitives), as well as some features present in universal creole grammar (e.g., reduplication, lack of true subordinators). Also, as stated by Todd, “other pidgins and creole exist in the world which are not based on European languages and which yet share some of the characteristics of all the pidgins and creoles so far discussed” (Todd 1990: 36).

Hall differs from the monogenesis theory in that he believes that, in spite of their similarities, many of the pidgins and creoles arose independently and developed in parallel ways. His ‘life-cycle’ theory on the genesis of creoles is that there originally appeared a pidgin, created because of the necessity for communities with different languages to be able to communicate in various contact situations and for specific reasons. This pidgin, originally a simplified version of the European-lexifier language, then may disappear altogether if not needed anymore, or become an *expanded pidgin*, then a creole when it becomes the native language of a group of speakers (Hall 1966). McWhorter (2000) also thinks that creoles “emerged as radically reduced pidgins”

(as cited in Siegel 2008: 46), which explains their morphological simplicity – Hawai'i Creole is a good example of this conventional life cycle. At the same period, Stewart (1964) proposed the terms *acrolect* and *basilect* for the boundaries of the continuum, the *acrolect* being the closest to the standard lexifier (the 'least creolized') and the *basilect* being the 'most creolized'. These terms were popularized by Bickerton in the 1970s, along with *mesolect* to describe the intermediary stages within the continuum.

Because none of the above-mentioned theories seemed to be completely satisfactory, some linguists have tried to find other explanations for the similarities found in all the pidgins or creoles, looking for features that seem to be common to all languages. For instance, Bickerton's Language Bioprogram Hypothesis proposes another completely different scenario for the origin of creoles, referred to as the *universalist approach* (Bickerton 1984). For him, the creole does not come from an expanded pidgin, but is the result of 'abrupt' creation by the children of adults that only communicate in a very unstable, limited pidgin. Those children use their innate language capacity to transform the pidgin into a language with a structured grammar. According to this theory, the features to be found in the grammar of first generation creole speakers are similar to those of any child acquiring their first language and making 'mistakes'. Nevertheless, he allows for the possibility that specific historical and demographic factors account for the differences among the creole grammars, and that the degree of variation is linked to the dominant-language input. The importance of the dominant language varies greatly in any creole community, and he argues that the smaller the foreign input is, the closer the grammar of the creole is to bioprogram features, that is to say to universal grammar. He concludes by saying that "neither substratum influence nor diffusion is adequate to account for the creation of Creole Languages" (1984: 184). The fact that this innate capacity is universal could account nicely for the similarities found in creoles, but not for the diversity found in plantation creoles, since there were very few children on plantations, and, if there were any, why would adults use a different language from their own native tongue to communicate with them, particularly if the pidgin they were speaking was highly unstable? Finally, where do non-plantation creoles, such as Tok Pisin for instance, fit in?

Thomason prefers another version for the abrupt creation of pidgins and creoles, with the new pidgin used for limited domains, and the creole for all domains. The creole would then not necessarily go through an early pidgin state. She argues that "the people in the new contact situation learn to communicate with each other by deploying a new vocabulary with grammatical structures they hope will be understood by their interlocutors" (Thomason 2001: 180), ending up with a "crosslanguage compromise among the languages of the pidgin/creole

creators”. This involves a process of ‘negotiation’, which would explain the diversity found in creoles, as well as their similarities.

However, not all creoles are the result of ‘abrupt’ creation: we know that some of them have actually developed from a pidgin that was first stabilised and then underwent lexical and grammatical expansion because the language of communication had to be used in a new social environment. These gradualist creolisation theories concern mostly the plantation creoles in the Caribbean, as well as Tok Pisin for instance, and probably Bislama as well. Romaine stresses the fact that “It is apparent that the structural differences between an expanded pidgin and an incipient creole will be minimal. The same applies to functional differences, which emphasize the problem in using the criterion of native speakers as the defining feature of creoles to distinguish them from pidgins” (Romaine 1988: 155). But in this field of current research, we again are confronted with different interpretations of the phrase ‘gradual creolisation’. One of the most prominent supporters of this gradualist theory is Chaudenson, who applies his vision of the genesis of French-lexifier creoles in the Indian Ocean to all creoles. In his opinion, the first slaves learned imperfectly the dialects of French of the colonizers, and then the next waves of slaves learned increasingly different varieties of French until the general language of the slaves became a creole. Therefore, for him, creole genesis is simply extreme contact-induced change (Chaudenson, 2000 as cited in Siegel 2008: 51). He offers the following definition:

Creoles are languages that originated during the European colonisation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in societies – most of which insular – where the massive arrival of slaves, a necessity because of the agro-industrial development, modified the mode of transmission of the European language.¹² (Chaudenson 1995: 93)

This position is radically opposed to the life-cycle theory, in that it is based on the assumption that it is what Mufwene calls *basilectalization*, namely going from the acrolect to the basilect. This issue will be considered later when we deal with decreolisation, with which it is related for some definitions of the term itself.

As this first part attempts to show, there is probably still a long way to go before linguists agree on the origins of pidgins and creoles. The popularity of this field of research in the past decades, as well as access to possibly new data, might lead to new theories in the years to

¹² “ Les créoles sont des langues, nées de la colonisation européenne des XVIIème et XVIIIème siècles, dans des sociétés, pour la plupart insulaires, où l’arrivée massive d’esclaves, rendue indispensable par le développement agro-industriel, a modifié le mode de transmission de la langue européenne”.

come, but it seems reasonable to admit that there is probably room for several theories, because of the different historical and sociological situations at the time of the emergence of these mixed languages. I would therefore agree with Thomason when she says: “At present, at least, we can be certain that diverse genesis processes have produced pidgins and creoles, but these processes usually cannot be distinguished retrospectively, either in principle or in fact” (Thomason 2000: 188). The conclusion that I reach after examining the different theories is that it seems reasonable to believe that there is probably room for all of them: some Europeans probably simplified their language when talking to ‘natives’, some ‘natives’ were probably not interested in trying to learn a European (target) language, any of us probably uses their innate capacities to learn any language, and sometimes, for lack of evidence, we are probably in a position where we venture explanations from the data we have in our possession, instead of actually being able to prove them. All scenarios seem to be in what I would refer to as ‘a continuum of likelihood’ at one stage or another, so I will here adopt the position that there is room for more than just one explanation. Nevertheless, there does not seem to be much debate over the origin of Bislama, the object of this study: in this case, Hall’s life-cycle theory from jargon to pidgin, and probably to creole, seems to be the most coherent (see chapter 4).

2.1.4 Decreolisation

Having considered the process of creolisation, let us now turn to what is called decreolisation. As can be easily understood, the fact that there are divergent visions of creolisation in the first place implies that there are also divergent hypotheses for decreolisation. When dealing with the latter, creolists have different opinions on whether there are several discrete grammars in creole languages, or only one grammar with switching rules. The other issue at stake is also trying to find out if there is an invariant rule-ordering for the decreolisation of Anglo-Creoles.

As often in linguistics, there is not one definition of the term ‘decreolisation’: some consider it is language attrition (the language is becoming “less creole”) whereas others use the term to speak about language death (has ceased to be a creole). It seems that the most current acceptance of the phenomenon described as decreolisation today is that it occurs when a creole is in contact with its lexifier, also called superstrate or dominant language, and loses some of its ‘creole’ (substrate) lexical, phonological and grammatical features, so that it becomes closer to the standard dominant language. For some, this process also involves sociohistorical conditions, such as the partial breakdown of social stratification, as well as an educational system in the dominant language.

The phenomenon of decreolisation was originally described by Schuchardt as early as 1883 (cited in Siegel 2008: 235), so that there was an earlier recognition of the phenomenon, but it was not clearly defined until much later when the concept was picked up by DeCamp (1971) and his *post-creole continuum* to describe the course of Jamaican Creole. When DeCamp coined the phrase ‘post-creole continuum’ (DeCamp 1971: 29), he observed that very little was known of what happened at the end of the conventional life cycle, where he saw three possibilities: either there is not much change in the creole and it remains stable (Haitian), or it becomes extinct (which is what is happening to Gullah), or the creole gradually merges with its lexifier, as for example in Jamaica (all references DeCamp 1971: 349). This last possibility is what he calls the emergence of a post-creole continuum, with a broad spectrum of speech varieties (hence the name of *variationist approach*). He adds two conditions for a speech community to reach post-creole status: “First, the dominant official language must be the same as the creole vocabulary base...Second, the social system, though perhaps still stratified, must provide for sufficient social mobility and sufficient corrective pressures from above in order for the standard language to exert real influence on creole speakers” (DeCamp 1971a: 29). What is considered as decreolisation is the process that leads to this post-creole continuum. Some linguists reject the term “post-creole”: for example, Mufwene says: “Decreolization is synonymous with a situation that was misnamed *postcreole continuum* by DeCamp (1971), rather than simply *creole continuum* – a situation that need not correspond to language attrition” (Mufwene 1994: 64). He also rejects Bickerton’s theory for the same reason, namely that he does not believe there could have been a homogeneous, monolithic variety as the original creole.

Bickerton (1975) at first agrees with this position for the post-creoles in the Caribbean region, arguing that the speakers gradually change their basilectal grammar so that their output is closer to the acrolectal grammar. This of course implies the existence of a whole continuum with a number of mesolects, the intermediate stages. This vision is challenged by Alleyne (1971) and Valdman (1991), because it does not take into account the fact that there was internal variation right from the start. In fact, even Bickerton (1980) later disagrees with DeCamp’s (and his own former) theory, rejecting the simplistic view that there were at first two distinct ‘dialects’, the creole and the superstrate, and that the creole continuum would be, as seen by Labov (1971), a mixture between superstrate and creole with varying proportions of features from both languages. The problem with this theory, Bickerton argues, is that in fact the creole and the superstrate differ so much that simple feature-substitution is impossible.

The other formal problem not taken into consideration by DeCamp's theory is that it considers creoles as 'monolithic', whereas a creole, as any language, undergoes natural changes, that Bickerton qualifies as spontaneous, language-internal changes (e.g. when an already existing form acquires a new meaning). Changes due to decreolization are considered non-spontaneous, targeted towards the model language, and they happen when an already existing structure or meaning acquires a new form or a new structure. Bickerton insists on the fact that distinguishing between the two processes is important to preserve the hypothesis that a creole continuum is non-linear, i.e. with a series of sequent changes whose aim is to link basilect to acrolect. He reaches the conclusion that "a creole continuum is first and foremost a linguistic and not a social phenomenon" (Bickerton 1980:124), and that the social values assigned to new forms and structures are irrespective of the reasons for change. In his opinion, it is therefore wrong to assume that there is "pressure to avoid basilect" and "pressure to acquire acrolect": even though these pressures do exist, they **do not** cause the changes, they merely exploit them.

Day offers the theory that the continuum undergoes decreolisation through a process of sequent overlapping systems which he considers to be the mesolects (Day 1974: 39). This is a tempting theory, because it also accounts for the possibility of earlier stages of decreolisation, with the continuum not having yet reached the acrolect, but also for the possibility that both basilect and acrolect can change in the direction of the other, a possibility rarely evoked as most of what is considered decreolisation describes only the situation when the basilect moves towards the acrolect.

Alleyne (1971) goes against the theory that the Caribbean creoles originated from a relexified Afro-Portuguese pidgin for two reasons: first, the slaves came from different linguistic backgrounds, and second, there was no need for a jargon in the contact situation between Europeans and the slave trading centres. Alleyne believes there was an early continuum, so variation was present from the initial stages of creolisation, followed by a first process of decreolisation with the arrival of the settlers. This led to a homogeneous creole used on the plantations, which underwent another decreolisation after the emancipation. In his opinion, there have always been some varieties more distant from those of the lexifiers than others, and decreolisation is not restricted to the influence of the superstrate on the basilect, but also the influence of already existing intermediate varieties. Therefore, decreolisation is merely contact-induced change, with borrowing transfer from 'higher' mesolects and attrition of basilectal features, or language shift from creole to higher lects for succeeding generations, with the higher varieties becoming prominent. However, Winford strongly criticizes the

theory that “Decreolization consists in the creole abandoning, one after another, those features which distinguish it from the superstrate, and immediately replacing each abandoned feature by its superstrate equivalent”, adding “this tinkertoy concept of decreolization is a radical misconstruction of the processes involved” (Winford 1980: 110-111). Yet later on, Winford agrees with Alleyne’s position: “The position I adopt here is that the explanations offered by Alleyne and LePage come closest to an understanding of the whole picture” (Winford 1997: 235). Bickerton, as well as Winford, also reversed his position on decreolisation, and this shows that the field explored here is indeed a complex one that can lead to very different interpretations of language changes.

As mentioned earlier, another theory – which is radically different – is proposed by Chaudenson and Mufwene, who reject the vision of decreolisation via structural attrition, mainly because of historical evidence. They maintain the position that creoles are nothing but versions of their lexifiers that followed the ordinary process of language evolution: “the changes undergone by Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles do not seem to be different from those observed in noncreole languages, with some old items and phrases used by the older generation passing away with their users” (Mufwene 1994: 65). He mentions that Bickerton reversed his position on decreolisation in 1988, now arguing that the varieties close to the acrolect started first. What may differ from the changes in any language and those in creoles is the speed at which they occur in the latter, as underlined by DeGraff (2003: 399), who asserts that language change in creoles is due to language contact, a position not too far from that of Mufwene when he says “the basilectalization process was more a by-product of imperfect acquisition of the target by second-language learners” (Mufwene 2001: 60, as cited in Siegel 2008: 53). This theory is strongly rejected by Winford: “It is based on an equally erroneous assumption that a single, unidimensional and unidirectional path of change gave rise to the creole continuum” (Winford 1997: 237).

Siegel, for his part, concludes that even though the two theories of predecessor pidgin versus restructuring of the lexifier are opposed, they nevertheless both “view the morphological simplicity that exists in creoles ultimately as a consequence of processes of second language acquisition and exposure to second language versions of the lexifier”. (Siegel 2008: 53). In fact, the whole concept of a creole continuum is still a very controversial question. Some linguists, among them Siegel himself, go as far as rejecting it altogether, taking the position that there is in fact no continuum, but rather “a model with two discrete systems, the creole and the lexifier” (Siegel 2008: 237) or, “a model with an intermediate system as well (Winford 1997) and code-switching between the systems” (Siegel 2008: 235).

2.2 *Bislama i stap wea?* (What about Bislama?)

The first problem I am faced with in this study of the evolution of written Bislama is to actually ‘classify’ the language. Is it a pidgin, a creole, a pidgin creolising, or a creole decreolising? To what extent would it fit into a post-continuum theory? As I have mentioned earlier, some linguists actually think we should abandon trying to label those contact languages altogether, arguing that the distinction between expanded pidgins and creoles is vacuous, such as Keesing (1988), for instance. The problem of selecting criteria to distinguish between pidgins and creoles has never quite been solved, and their relevance to Bislama has yet to be proven. Charpentier offers the same argument:

In the Pacific, the distinction between pidgins and creoles is largely ineffective: substrate and superstrate are always present in proportions ranging from the odd feature inherited from last century to omnipresence imposed by the current sociolinguistic situation. Even the traditional extralinguistic criteria usually put forward to distinguish between the two codes prove ineffective.¹³ (Charpentier 2004: 381)

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Bislama has changed, is changing and will continue to change. The difference between these changes and the ones taking place say, in French or English, is that the language changes very quickly as compared to ‘older’ languages, and also that, precisely because Bislama is a relatively young language, we have more evidence of the changes because the data is more accessible than for some of the older creoles.

There is in fact no real question about the origin of Bislama. Along with Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea and Pijin in the Solomon Islands, it is one of the three varieties of Melanesian Pidgin spoken today, which are overall mutually intelligible. The first studies about Melanesian Pidgin focused more on the dialect spoken in Papua New Guinea than in the New Hebrides.

2.2.1 Melanesian Pidgin

The first account of Melanesian Pidgin I could find was written by William Churchill in 1911. Churchill was the consul general at the United States Embassy in Samoa, where he became interested in the linguistic diversity of the region. His book is composed of four chapters which give an account of the parentage of the jargon, its grammar and the sources and use of

¹³ “ Dans le Pacifique la distinction pidgins/créoles est largement inopérante : substrat et superstrat sont toujours présents dans des proportions allant du simple trait hérité du siècle dernier à une omniprésence imposée par la situation sociolinguistique actuelle. Même les traditionnels critères extralinguistiques généralement mis en avant pour distinguer ces codes s’avèrent inopérants. ”

the vocabulary, followed by twenty pages of Beach-la-Mar vocabulary. Churchill attributes the name Beach-la-mar to “a common sailor mispronunciation of *bêche-de-mer*, a name applied to the edible trepang...” (Churchill 1911: 4). In his account of the origin of the jargon, he stresses the role played by blackbirding: “It was the labor trade which made Beach-la-mar a jargon and extended its currency. It gathered material from every source, it fused them all and created a language which yet remains the only means of intercommunication in the Western Pacific” (Churchill 1911: 9). He notes the fact that sailors were uneducated men who used ‘broken English’ themselves, remarks on the lack of inflection of the jargon (except for verbal inflection with “ ‘*m*, *um* or *em*, from substrate origin”) (Churchill 1911: 27). He also comments on the lack of conjunctives or disjunctives such as ‘and’ or ‘but’, with clauses or sentences simply put one after the other, and mentions the phonological problems, particularly with labials. The list of vocabulary is made from texts Churchill studied from fifteen writers between 1844 and 1911, and it is all written with English spellings, even for the few words like ‘*savvy*’ which are not of English origin. The words are followed by their translation into English, their nature, and they are often illustrated by examples.

While trying to find material written in Bislama, I came across a ‘funny little book’ entitled *Pidgin English as used in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea* which attracted my attention. There is no date of publication, but the author makes it clear that it was written for the soldiers fighting in New Guinea: “the book is presented in the hope that it will be the means of saving many valuables lives and lightening the burden of the soldier, in his valiant efforts to regain our country for us” (Helton: 3). The purpose is mentioned again in the foreword, stressing the importance for the ‘invaders’ to speak the language of the country. The book is organised in two parts, the first part (from page 6 to 22) giving a very amusing list of ‘Don’ts’, and phrases or expressions organised thematically (e.g. ‘Type of conversation that would be used on encountering a native in the bush’, or ‘Phrases in connection with nurses’). The second part (pages 23 to 64) is an English/New Guinea Pidgin English dictionary (pages 23 to 47) followed by a Pidgin English/English dictionary (pages 48 to 64). In the foreword, the author mentions (in bold characters) that “**Having regard to difference of pronunciation of some members of the Forces, the strict phonetic spelling of the Pidgin has not been adhered to, as it is considered more simple to understand in the form presented**” (Helton: 6). I am not quite sure what ‘strict phonetic spelling’ means, but what I notice is highly anglicised spelling, which makes sense if the writer wants to make the English-speaking reader’s task easier. Here is one example to illustrate this choice: ‘a week ago’ is translated as ‘*one pella week e loose pinish*’: the aim of the book being to facilitate speaking the language to be able to communicate quickly with the natives, as opposed to

writing it, then it follows that the closest to English the ‘transcription’ is, the easier for the learner to pronounce the words or phrases well enough to make himself understood. I quite like the simplicity of this book and must admit that a ‘Don’t’ such as “[Don’t] Lean Up Against a Coconut Palm. Look up first. A dry nut might be ready to fall and would seriously injure you if it should hit you” adds a touch of humour to an otherwise plain little book.

In 1943, Hall, an early promoter of the linguistics of Creole languages, published a book about Melanesian Pidgin English after a study carried out in 1942, under the auspices of the United States Armed Services Institute. Although he states that “the material and analysis furnished here must not be considered as more than a preliminary sketch” (Hall 1943: 7), he nevertheless gives an analysis of the grammatical structure, a listing of the basic elements of the vocabulary as well as an English-to-Pidgin glossary. He takes great care of stressing the fact that his informants were all English speakers and calls for further study that would be carried out with the participation of Melanesian speakers as well. In his introduction, he clearly says that although this communication and trade pidgin is based on English, “its grammatical structures and vocabulary differ sufficiently from those of English to render it a separate language, not merely a form of English” (Hall 1943: 7). This definition of the new language is remarkably neutral in that at no point does Hall refer to ‘bastardised English’ as others had done in the past. As opposed to Churchill, he chooses not to use the term *Beach-la-Mar*, he says, because “it is somewhat loosely used and extended to include other South Pacific pidgins such as Australian and Filipino”, and so “it is best to avoid it, for the sake of clarity” (Hall 1943: 7). He also notices that the community of speakers is discontinuous and non-homogenous, with two categories of speakers, the Melanesians themselves and European speakers. At this stage, he does not believe that the pidgin has first language speakers, except maybe some Melanesian children who do not have a vernacular language in common. What strikes him in the pidgin is that a great deal of variation is to be found in the language. This should not come as a surprise since all speakers are influenced in their use of the new language by their own native languages, and that this has repercussions on the phonology, grammar and vocabulary they use. He then goes on by giving the features of Melanesian English, mostly by comparing it with English. In spite of the fact that he notes that the grammar of the pidgin “is essentially similar to that of English, though with a few basic and many superficial differences” (Hall 1943: 8), he nevertheless remarks that new phrase-types have been developed, but that style is much simpler than that of any European language. He evaluates the vocabulary to be about 1,000 words, of which 60% have a similar use and function as in English, 15% come from English but are used with a different meaning or function, 10% are new compounds, and around 12% are non-English. The problem with this

inventory is that, as mentioned earlier, the informants Hall relied on for his description were all native speakers of English, and therefore we may consider that some of the vocabulary included here could have been used by English speakers, but not necessarily be understood or used by Melanesian speakers.

This point is important, because it is still today one of the problems any linguist considering the vocabulary of a pidgin or creole is confronted with. Clark, for instance, also points out that “There are naturally cautions to be observed in using such material.” (Clark 2007: 358). He notes that, since the documents were written by English speakers, there could be unconscious translations or code-switching that could produce a high level of apparent anglicisms. Hall published another book relating to Melanesian Pidgin in 1955, which he refers to himself as “a tract” (Hall 1955: 9), after pidgin had become the object of controversy following the position of The United Nations Trusteeship Council on New Guinea in 1953. Indeed, “the Trusteeship Council of the United nations condemned the use of Pidgin in the Territory of New Guinea, and demanded that Pidgin be immediately ‘abolished’” (Hall 1955: 13). In this book, appropriately entitled *Hands Off Pidgin English!* Hall does not mince his words to state his opinion about the case of the use of Melanesian Pidgin. He already notices that “it has become creolized to a slight extent in a few urban centres such as Rabaul, but only in individual families” (Hall 1955: 21), and at that stage counts “about 1,500 words in Pidgin, which, however, can be combined into phrases so as to say anything that can be said in English” (Hall 1955: 23). He also mentions the problem of the attitude some have towards the pidgin, and the role it can play in the rise of a feeling of nationalism and education. Considering this was published in 1955, Hall has a remarkable approach, both from the linguistic point of view and from the social one. The questions raised in this “tract” still resonate today, and his work, which one could qualify as a plea for the recognition of creoles, sheds light on problems or attitudes still to be found in what you can hear about Bislama and its place in society in contemporary Vanuatu.

In 1979, *Bislama*, or rather *Beach-la-Mar*, was the object of a study by Clark which focuses on the historical relations among Pacific pidgins and creoles. In spite of its title, ‘In Search of Beach-La-Mar’, this work fits in the part about Melanesian Pidgin since Clark makes a comparative study of nine modern Pacific pidgins and creoles from a historical point of view: after eliminating what they share with standard English, the donor language, he looks for the languages’ shared remaining features which will be taken as evidence of a common origin. He reaches the conclusion that Tok Pisin, Pijin and Bislama are three dialects of a single Melanesian language. He also remarks that some features found worldwide in pidgins and

creoles may have been introduced in the Pacific by speakers of non-Pacific tradition, meaning that “Pacific pidgins are not a spontaneous local creation” (Clark 1977: 21). According to him, the New Hebrides “seem to have been the area of the earliest pidgin development in Melanesia.” (Clark 1977: 24)

Clark’s theory is the following: there was a jargon, a contact language, before 1860, which already had pidgin traditions from other places in the world. Not surprisingly, this jargon was highly variable and included local vocabulary as well as innovations. During the years 1865 to 1880, this jargon was systematised, then spread, which would account for the fact that there are no major differences between the six Southwestern traditions the study covers. His hypothesis for the origin of Beach-la-Mar differs from the traditional vision that it was the earliest form of Pacific Pidgin, which developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of whaling and trading. He clearly distinguishes jargon and pidgin, with a pidgin having more vocabulary, more grammatical resources and greater stability; so at the origin there was an early jargon, because of its great variability and its use in transient situations. By the 1830s, what Clark calls the South Pacific Jargon was spoken by the English-speaking islanders that could be found in most parts of the South Pacific: this jargon appeared when Pacific islanders were crewmen on board European ships, and they “appear to have played a major role in forming and spreading the earliest South Pacific pidgin”(Clark 1983: 12). However, this jargon never acquired a long-lived community and so it did not develop (Clark 1983: 15). The Early Melanesian Pidgin appeared later, with the sandalwood period of the 1840s in the New Hebrides and New Caledonia, where stations created by Europeans employed labour from other islands. In the ‘sandalwood English’ recorded by missionaries as early as 1859, some features of the early jargon were already present. The same contact situation was in place in the early nineteenth century, with the trade of holothurians (sea slugs) to China: shores stations to dry them were created, which used local labour, so a contact language then emerged between European and Melanesian people, and also between Melanesian people themselves, as most of the time they did not share a common language.

Just as the South Pacific Jargon died for lack of use, one might have expected ‘sandalwood English’ to disappear when the trade stopped and labourers went back to their own islands. But this was not to be the case, because of a new economic situation, namely the development of sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji. When the labourers then went to Queensland to work on plantations, they took the jargon with them, which was subsequently used for longer periods of time and among a more diverse labour force, and “thus, by the late 1870s a pidgin

was in use in Queensland and southern Melanesia that was recognizable as an early form of Melanesian Pidgin” (Clark 1983: 22). It then spread to what is now Papua New Guinea in the late 1870s, but not for very long, which explains why Tok Pisin and Bislama developed later in different ways. So Clark comes to the conclusion that the term Beach-la-Mar was not used in the early nineteenth century to denote the language in English, whereas it was used in New Caledonia as early as 1872 so that “*biche-la-mar* represents a borrowing by French of English *Beach-la-Mar* in the sense of ‘pidgin’ ” (Clark 1977: 76). Keesing does not quite agree with Clark insofar as he considers that the *lingua franca* of the mid-nineteenth century showed “greater grammatical richness and stability” (1988: 13) as well as a grammar more influenced by the substrates than estimated by Clark. Keesing argues that “a crucial phase in the formation of a Pacific jargon from which pidgin emerged took place in the 1840s as whaling and trading ships began to frequent the islands of the central Pacific” (Keesing 1988: 15). This contradicts the assumption that the pidgin developed later on the plantations in Queensland. To justify his point of view, Keesing shows that all the ingredients were already present at an early stage for a precursor of a Pacific pidgin to develop, since there were enough islanders working on the ships to make enough innovation and transmission. He underlines Bickerton’s suggestion (not proven as yet) that there may have been an early creolisation, followed by a process of repidginisation on plantations, because there was a substantial number of Islanders that learned the pidgin as fluent native speakers, though not as their first language, even though no clear evidence of nativisation could be found in the early texts. Probably not, Keesing says, as the number of people would not have been sufficient to make a strong impact on the language. His conclusion is that by the late 1880s, “a remarkably stabilized and expanded pidgin” (Keesing 1988: 91) had emerged in the Pacific, which had many features of Oceanic substrate languages, and that this pidgin could emerge because it was used by speakers of Oceanic languages to communicate between the groups they belonged to, as opposed to with Europeans. This accounts for the fact that what Kaufmann calls “negotiation” (referred to as “conspiracies between different forces” by Mühlhäusler), lead to “simplify down to common denominators deriving from a common ancestral language” (Keesing 1988: 91).

As far as some grammatical features are concerned, there was a “convergence of speakers for both sets of languages on a path that is a ‘natural’ unmarked pattern” (Keesing 1988: 108). Keesing observes that what Mühlhäusler presents as new developments for *Tok Pisin* must have already existed in the 1880s, as they are also present in *Bislama* and *Solomons Pijin*. The interesting thing about this position is that Keesing does not exclude the other linguistic theories about the genesis of a pidgin, leaving room for “foreigner-talk”, universal grammar

features, influence of both substrate and superstrate languages, and sociolinguistic or historical evidence: “The creation of Pacific pidgin was a dialectic of co-creation to which speakers of English and Oceanic languages contributed in different and complementary ways, commensurate with the radical contrast in their socio-linguistic and political-economic position” (Keesing 1988: 100).

Crowley (1989) does not either quite agree with Clark’s reconstruction of the Early Melanesian Pidgin, stating that Clark did not mention some words of Fijian and Samoan origin that entered the language at an early stage. There were also words of French and Melanesian origin that are not included in Clark’s lexicon. Crowley argues that terms referring to the spiritual world, for instance, were not shared by the different communities on the plantations, but rather used by their own groups, which accounts for the fact that they did not appear to have been common to the three varieties. The same line of reasoning applies to the vocabulary for flora and fauna, with also the difference that some of the seemingly English-derived compound words used were created rather than borrowed from English or Melanesian languages. But Clark’s list of reconstructed vocabulary does include a number of terms used on the plantations for recreational purposes, such as music or cards. Crowley therefore comes to the conclusion that Bislama was “quite possibly lexically richer during much of the nineteenth century than we have assumed, but it also expressed a Melanesian identity much more than we have assumed” (Crowley 1989: 101).

To conclude on this part about Melanesian Pidgin, what is remarkable is that as we will see in the next part, the language was described at a very early stage as opposed to Bislama. This probably accounts for the fact that Tok Pisin became used as a written, standardised language, long before Bislama, as stated by Siegel: “A standard orthography was first proposed in 1955 (Hall 1955a)”¹⁴ (Siegel 1983: 81). Even though there is a Bislama/English dictionary, we cannot say that Bislama is standardised and discussions are still going on in Vanuatu as we will see later on in this research.

2.2.2 Bislama

Despite the fact that Bislama is a ‘young’ language, and that the interest in contact languages is relatively recent, quite a few works have been written on the subject, be they books, articles and dictionaries. To try and make things simpler to apprehend, I have decided to separate the

¹⁴ Hall 1955a refers to *A standard orthography and list of suggested spellings for Neo-Melanesian*. Port Moresby: Department of Education.

literature part into several categories in a way that makes sense for my own study. Also for the sake of clarity, I have decided to have a chronological approach to the material published.

2.2.2.1 Dictionaries, grammars and other descriptive works

If we go back to the nineteenth century, we can find occasional, brief references to the language in various books. Some are quoted by Clark (1979) who gives Sandalwood English or Beach-La-Mar examples in Melanesia to 1865 (Clark 1979: 35-37). He insists on the fact that “During this period the jargon became recognized by Europeans as something distinctive, to the extent of acquiring two names of its own: ‘Sandalwood English’ (or simply ‘Sandalwood’), and ‘Bêche-de-mer English’ or simply ‘Beach-la-Mar’” (Clark 1979: 37). As mentioned by Crowley, “most of the published nineteenth century sources of written Bislama of which I am aware were written by Anglophone Europeans, with often satire or ridicule, and standard English orthography.” (Crowley 1996: 120). Examples of the language at a very early stage can be found in Schuchardt (1979), Jacomb (1914) and Fletcher (1923).

The very first systematic attempt to give Bislama a written form can probably be attributed to Father Pionnier in 1913. Pionnier was the first to write Bislama not using the English spelling conventions, so that his writings were not too far from modern spelling. Crowley describes Pionnier’s work as “one reasonably substantial published description of BLM [Beach-la-Mar] spoken in the 1890s that is worthy of serious attention” (Crowley 1993: 208). Pionnier gives a grammatical sketch of late nineteenth-century Bislama, with short vocabulary grouped in semantic fields, and a few sentences, as well as a few paragraphs related to religion (baptism mainly) at the end of the sketch. Even though the work was completed by another Marist priest, Father Antoine Colomb, who probably made a few mistakes when reading Pionnier’s notes, it is nevertheless quite interesting. The merit of this work is that it is a good basis from which Crowley was able to make observations about the changes in Bislama, namely that “a portion of the vocabulary that was in use a century ago in BLM has been replaced by forms that for the most part more closely resemble the English words from which they are derived” (Crowley 1993: 215). This is an interesting point in terms of what might be regarded as very early ‘decreolisation’ of Bislama, although no one would consider the language as a creole at the time, since it was definitely a pidgin. The word ‘anglicisation’ is therefore more appropriate to qualify the changes towards English found in the language.

An insight into the use of Bislama, rather than on the language itself, is given by Tailleux (1954), who was a French ‘délégué’ (district agent) for the Condominium for the Northern Islands. He remarks that *bichlamar*, in spite of its imperfections, plays the role of lingua

franca in the New Hebrides and has spread quickly in the archipelago. It is appropriate to classify this strange language with the numerous varieties of ‘*Pidgin English*’ to be found everywhere in the world, in China or on the coasts of Africa. He gives a few definitions and circumlocutions supposedly used for ‘piano’ and ‘saw’ (considered to be very funny by foreigners because they are very long), but also adds that this “sabir” deserves some kind of consideration because “There is no denying that it is very useful as it is the *lingua franca* not only between the indigenous peoples of a big part of South Pacific Islands, but also between people from different origins in the New Hebrides (French, English, Chinese and Tonkinese), in spite of its bad reputation as a ‘bastard’ language among educators” (Tailleur 1954: 296)¹⁵.

Other Francophones also used more gallicised spellings which were better than the English ones because they were closer phonemically to the actual pronunciation, and also offered a different attitude to the language itself (namely considering it as a language and not some kind of pidgin English in the wider sense of the term). For instance, Schmidt made a six-hundred French/English/Bislama word list in 1957, calling the language “a special jargon that is nothing but corrupt English, due firstly to deficient pronunciation by the indigenous people. This jargon, known in English as Pidgin-English – pidgin being probably a Chinese corruption of ‘business’ – is called ‘Bichelamar’ in Melanesia” (Schmidt 1957: 119).¹⁶

I have found what seem to be two publications of *Apprenons le bichlamar: petit lexique francais-bichlamar de conversation courante*: one is referred to under ‘Anonymous, not dated [1970s]’ (Crowley and Lynch 2001: 148), which appears to be the one I found under the same title written by P. Laveau and with the collaboration of H. Tanga. This tiny book is the compilation of notes left by missionaries or French civil servants, which gives little information on the grammatical features of the language, a list of about 500 words and a few sentences. What is very surprising is the origin of the word ‘Bichlamar’ proposed by Laveau, who argues that there is absolutely no reason why this word should come from ‘biche de mer’ as a French expression, an etymology that he calls “simplistic”. His proposition is that it comes from “speech labour” which derived into “speech labar” or “peech laba” (Laveau 1980: 6). Laveau says he chose to write the words as they sound as opposed to English spelling. He emphasises the fact that there are many repetitions and long periphrastic phrases in the

¹⁵ “ Il a certes mauvaise réputation chez les éducateurs... Il faut bien admettre cependant qu’il rend de multiples services. Il sert de *lingua franca* non seulement entre les indigènes d’une grande part des îles du Pacifique Sud, mais également aux Hébrides entre colons et commerçants français, anglais, tonkinois et chinois. ”

¹⁶ “ ...parlent un jargon spécial qui n’est autre que de l’anglais corrompu, dû surtout à une prononciation défectueuse des indigènes. Ce jargon, connu en anglais sous le nom de Pidgin-English – pidgin étant probablement une corruption chinoise de ‘business’ – est appelé en Mélanésie ‘Bichelamar’. ”

language, and says that Bichelamar is only used by the population when they are talking to someone outside their clan or tribe, otherwise they use their vernacular languages (Laveau 1980: 60).

In 1974, Guy, another French linguist working on various languages in Northern Vanuatu, published his *Handbook of Bichelamar-Manuel de Bichelamar*, severely criticised for its lack of consistency and accuracy (Lynch 1975). The book is composed of five parts: an introduction with spelling, pronunciation and grammar written in English, followed by exactly the same thing in French. From page 114 to 168, there is a Bislama-English-French dictionary, then a part entitled English-Bichelamar (pages 171 to 210), and finally French-Bichelamar (pages 213 to 255). The first thing that I noticed in Guy's work is the difference there is between what he writes in English, and then in French, about Bislama. To illustrate my point, this is for instance what can be seen on the paper cover of the book (Guy 1974):

HANDBOOK OF BICHELAMAR presents the principal features of the morphology and syntax of Bichelamar, the Melanesian Pidgin spoken in the New Hebrides group. This language has become the lingua franca of the area and is used in daily radio broadcasts and newspapers.

Ce **MANUEL DE BICHELAMAR** présente une introduction à la grammaire de cette langue, développée au cours du siècle dernier à partir de formes abâtardies de l'anglais, qui est devenue langue de fait des Nouvelles Hébrides.¹⁷

Just a bit further down, Guy calls Bichelamar “this often under-rated language” in English, whereas the French version reads “ce véhicule de la communication”. So what I can say is that right from the very cover of the book, the language under study is both described as ‘under-rated’ and presented as ‘bastard English’ too. The same phenomenon of almost schizophrenia appears in the introductions: the English version mentions “...emerged during the last century from diverse forms of pidginized English” (p. 3) and in the French part, we find “développé au cours du siècle dernier à partir de formes abâtardies de l'anglais” (p. 57) (c.f. cover quote already translated). More surprising, “the *lingua franca* of the New Hebrides” (p. 3) becomes “le sabir des Nouvelles Hébrides”, and “the pidginized forms of

¹⁷ The literal translation of this would be: ‘**HANDBOOK OF BICHELAMAR** presents an introduction to the grammar of this language which developed in the last century from bastardised forms of English, and which has become the lingua franca of the New Hebrides’.

English” (p. 3) becomes “l’anglais petit nègre” (p. 57). It seems to me Guy did not quite know how to qualify Bichelamar and his lack of consistency is also criticised by Charpentier who says “therefore a big proportion of the lexicon cannot be considered as ‘universal’, that is to say trans-regional’ (Charpentier 1979: 253).¹⁸

No more satisfactory is the account of *le Bichelamar* by two Japanese linguists also working on VL, Kuki and Yoshioka (1977). Admittedly, it is only an introduction which the authors intend to “elaborate upon and expand further incorporating several other texts and many other notes in the not-too-distant future” (Kuki and Yoshioka 1977: 47). Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any further study that might have proved a little more detailed. The definition of *Bichelamar* given by the authors does not seem to be accurate, as they use the term to define all three varieties of Melanesian Pidgin, whereas, as was known at the time, Papua New Guinea’s variety is called *Tok Pisin*, and the variety in the Solomon Islands *Pijin*, so that in fact there is no such thing as what they call ‘the New Hebridian Bichelamar’. In addition to this, they do not believe that the three dialects are basically the same language, on the basis that they have “certain, although not easily confirmable, proofs [sic] that this might not be the case.” (Kuki and Yoshioka 1977: 49), proof that the reader is not allowed to share at this stage. Furthermore, their work and analysis of the language, mainly concerned with grammatical features, is based on the transcription, then translation, of the recording of a traditional story by a native speaker. At no time do they specify whether the speaker is Anglophone or Francophone, a distinction which, as we know, is perfectly relevant for the population of the New Hebrides. They might have taken this into account because they do actually mention, quite justifiably, that there are two kinds of *Bichelamar*, the urban and the rural versions of the language. In footnote 3 (Kuki and Yoshioka 1977: 52), it is stated that “The junctures here are nothing but a reading device and have no final linguistic value. The text here is a highly sophisticated version of the urban type [of Bichelamar].” Later, they mention that Bichelamar has many words of Melanesian origin, which is not true at all, and that the text presented in the study contains “many” English words, supposedly because it is the urban variety. In fact, there are only nine words in English (some used twice), and some of them might have been perceived to be English but still be used in Bislama (“ready”, for instance). This is not to say that the study is not reliable, but some of the conclusions probably have to be taken with some reasonable degree of uncertainty. It does seem slightly questionable to draw conclusions from the study of just one text, although any study has the

¹⁸ ...c’est une large proportion du lexique qui ne peut pas être considérée comme “ universelle ”, c’est-à-dire trans-régionale.

merit of widening the knowledge about the topic and can be confirmed or disconfirmed by further study.

Pastor Bill Camden was the first to produce a major dictionary called *A Descriptive Dictionary: Bislama to English* in 1977, which for a long time remained the only standard reference work for Bislama.¹⁹ Camden not only provided much-needed information in Bislama lexicography with about 3,000 words, though there is no section English to Bislama to be found in his dictionary, but his work served as a starting point for Crowley's 1990 first dictionary. Camden was also interested in the origin and evolution of Bislama, and was a partisan of the substrate theory, drawing parallels in the structure of the lexicon and the syntax of Bislama and the vernacular language of Tangoa (Camden 1979).

No syntactical or lexical innovation could come through borrowing from the source language. We think that Bislama, the pidgin of the New-Hebrides, found itself 'frozen' at the stage it was in when it was reintroduced by the natives coming back [from Queensland]. Cut off from the source language, it was the substrate languages that played the main role in the evolution until the relative of the language on the plantations (Charpentier 1979: 71).²⁰

Charpentier criticises Camden's dictionary, arguing that it is "the works of a Presbyterian Anglophone" which has numerous examples of "abusive anglicisation" with neologisms and also the introduction of English syntactical morphemes into Bislama²¹. Charpentier also stresses the importance of the factors that led to the change of attitude towards Bislama. First, the translations of the first religious texts by the Bible Society in 1971, and at the same time, its use in the political fight towards independence, both, he argues, closely linked in the Pacific region more than anywhere else. The other factor that has influenced the spreading of Bislama is urbanisation, which, according to Charpentier, was leading to the creolisation of the language (in the early 1970s), since many of the children coming from different islands started speaking Bislama before they learned their parents' mother tongues, giving Bislama a

¹⁹ Reverend Bill Camden (1930-1994), of the Presbyterian Church, spent eleven years in the New Hebrides, mostly in Santo. As a linguist, he was involved in the Bible translation into Bislama for more than thirty years.

²⁰ Toute innovation d'ordre lexical ou syntactique ne pouvait se faire par emprunt à la langue-source. Nous pensons plutôt que le Bislama(n), pidgin des Nouvelles-Hébrides, s'est trouvé figé au stade qui était le sien lorsqu'il fut réintroduit par les autochtones rapatriés. Coupé de sa langue-source, ce sont les langues composant le substrat qui ont joué un rôle prépondérant dans l'évolution jusqu'à la stabilisation relative du pidgin des plantations.

²¹ "l'œuvre d'un anglophone presbytérien" (p. 248) ; "de tels exemples d'anglicisation abusive, très nombreux dans ce dictionnaire" (p. 249)

new function. But, because of economic recession and political dissensions, it remained a pidgin used episodically in Port Vila, its surroundings and on the islands, he argues. Nevertheless it was considered by the young urban generation as ‘their language’, a Melanesian language. Political life was also to play a paramount role in the spreading of Bislama, regarded as the language of unification against the two colonial powers.

Tryon (1983) also showed interest in the national language of Vanuatu. In an article published three years after independence, he highlights the fact that almost all Ni-Vanuatu now speak Bislama, though it is not necessarily widely used in their everyday lives, at least in rural areas. He gives two interesting figures regarding the use of both oral and written Bislama for the periods pre-1970 and post-1980 (1983: 5-6). The most striking element in these figures is the changes that occurred during that decade concerning the use of written Bislama. Indeed, apart from occasional use in newspapers for the pre-1970 period, Bislama was not used at all in its written form for other purposes. The picture is quite different for the post-1980 period, with frequent use of Bislama in newspapers, slogans and advertising, and for religious purposes (hymns and the Bible). The language was also occasionally used by the government and the administration, and in letters. He says that in those days, “No textbooks are available or sanctioned in either Bislama or any of the vernacular languages” (p. 14). According to him, the main differences to be found in Bislama are the ones between the rural and urban varieties of the language:

The Bislama of urban speakers is often characterised by the extensive use of neologisms and borrowings from English and French, and by the use of syntactic markers, some of which are borrowed from English and some of which are taken from other English-based Pacific pidgins (Tryon 1983: 15).

This dichotomy between urban and rural speakers is also linked to education and age, and he stresses the fact that the need for new terms to express new concepts, particularly in politics, has led to heavy borrowing and therefore created what he calls urban Bislama, which is mainly incomprehensible for rural speakers. The interesting point about his conclusions is that this is also, to some extent, what still can be heard today in Vanuatu.

Tryon also had the merit of being virtually the only writer to have published a guide for the foreigners willing to learn the language (Tryon 1987). To my knowledge, no other extensive language-learning method has been published up to now. Having been published more than twenty years ago, Tryon’s book may be suffering now from being a bit outdated, as was pointed out to me by younger speakers when I was using it myself to learn Bislama. It

nevertheless remains the only instrument available to foreigners and was an excellent starting point for my reflection on the language and its changes. Today, the Peace Corps also have a self-taught language-learning course designed for the volunteers who are working in Vanuatu, and which can be downloaded from the Peace Corps website. The aim of the handbook is to assist volunteers to learn Bislama. It starts with notes on spelling and pronunciation, then each unit typically has dialogues, vocabulary lists and exercises for practise, such as texts in Bislama for comprehension with questions in English about the text. It is rather basic, but quite effective.

Undoubtedly, the most prolific writer about Bislama is Terry Crowley who published numerous articles and books about the language.²² It would probably be very tiresome for the reader to go through all of his publications in this part, so I have chosen to report only about the major pieces, although all of them are of great interest and will be referred to in this study at some stage or other. His first major work is another thorough piece which provides both synchronic and diachronic descriptions of the language, starting from the early stages when Beach-la-Mar was used as the *lingua franca* up to 1990, when it had gained the status of national language in Vanuatu ten years before (Crowley 1990). The book concentrates on Bislama as a language, its origins and evolution in both lexical and grammatical fields at various stages of its development. According to Crowley, “The Bislama spoken by the end of the First World War was probably not very different to varieties of Bislama spoken widely today” (Crowley 1990: 87). He also looks into the place of Bislama in Vanuatu and its functional expansion, and what he calls ‘the more recent developments’, which mostly focus on grammatical features such as the expansion of the prepositional system or subordination, for instance. The conclusion of that study is interesting, in that it raises attitudinal issues still prevailing today:

Some speakers of Bislama still believe that Bislama either is still, or at least has only recently ceased to be ‘broken English’. Few people appreciate the fact that for the greatest part of its period of development, Bislama has been a language used by Melanesians for communicating with other Melanesians about Melanesian interests, rather than a language for simply taking orders from the *masta* (Crowley 1990: 403).

Crowley published two other dictionaries of Bislama/English, English/Bislama, one in 1995, entitled *A New Bislama Dictionary*, with a second, updated edition in 2003. In an article

²² Crowley (1953-2005) was a linguist specialising in Oceanic languages and Bislama. He taught at the University of Papua New Guinea (1979-1983) and at University of the South Pacific (USP) in Vanuatu (1983-1990).

published in 1994, Crowley discusses the issues he was confronted with when he started working on his dictionary. First, the changes since Camden's work, which means that Crowley had to rely on his own observations to update the previous works. Delimiting the lexicon was another problem Crowley gave a lot of thinking over: "Every lexicographer faces the problem of deciding when a word of foreign origin ceases to be a foreign word and becomes a genuine word in the language" (Crowley 1994: 32). His solution to that was to retain the words that people of primary level education used systematically in town, even though the dictionary might be said to be representative of a more "urban" language. He applied the same principle to slang, making entries for the expressions actually entering the general lexicon. The second part of the dictionary, that is to say the English-to-Bislama part, could not include every English word, so Crowley decided to select the ones that could be found in written materials used by Ni-Vanuatu of upper secondary levels of education (so about 6,250 words). He also deplores the fact that having a French/English/Bislama dictionary was impossible for practical reasons. It is to be mentioned here that the Alliance Française is at the moment finishing the work on a French/Bislama dictionary, based on Crowley's 2003 second version of his dictionary (G.Cumbo, personal communication, March 2010). The preface to the second edition stresses the great expansion of the language, and comprises 9,500 separate pieces of information about meanings under nearly 7,000 headwords while the 1995 edition had about 5,000 entries.

This is the latest Bislama dictionary to which there will be no other edition by Crowley. Since 2003, there is no doubt that Bislama has continued expanding. Let us hope that Ni-Vanuatu scholars will continue the work in the future to give an account of the numerous changes in such a dynamic language.

In 1999 (second edition, revised) *Pidgin Phrasebook* by Lonely Planet (the languages of Oceania) deals with the three dialects, Bislama, Solomon Pijin and Tok Pisin, as well as the creoles of the region (Yumpla Tok and Kriol). Its aim is " [to] give you a comprehensive mix of practical and social words and phrases [to] chat with the locals and discover their culture – a guaranteed way to enrich your travel experience" (back cover). The guide gives a brief historical background, indications about pronunciation, grammar and spelling, in examples selected for their usefulness for tourists. Although it is inevitably sketchy, its purpose is fulfilled in that it gives the basic information to 'get around' without making too many regrettable mistakes. The only surprising thing I have found in this book is the actual transcription 'blo' for 'blong': the writer explains that 'blo' is the shortened pronunciation of 'blong', but also actually gives 'Mi blo Ostrelia' as the translation for 'I come from

Australia’(1999: 27). Even though it is quite accurate that the pronunciation is more often than not ‘*blo*’, it is indeed a rare occurrence in written Bislama. The explanation is probably that this is meant to facilitate not the pronunciation of the phrase itself, but probably the comprehension of ‘*blo*’ in sentences uttered by the natives themselves, as this could prove tricky should the foreign addressee not be familiar with that pronunciation.

Not many books are dedicated to the grammar of Bislama, even though some of the features are described in the dictionaries. In 1985, a Master’s thesis by Zhuang focused on the grammar of the verb in Bislama. In this study, Zhuang gives a brief picture of the different grammatical categories before concentrating on the verbs. For him, there are eight types of verbs in Bislama (copula, locative, existential, directional, adjectival, intransitive, transitive and auxiliary). I must admit that I have some difficulty in agreeing with Zhuang on some of his examples and their translation. For instance, for him “a directional verb usually occurs after a verb which indicates a displacement or the manner of a motion verb” (Zhuang 1985: 54), so that words like *antap*, *daon*, *aot*, *ova* are verbs after *kam* or *go* in *go antap*. In chapter 5, which deals with serial verbs, it seems to me that a lot of the examples, along with their translations, are misinterpreted: he draws a parallel between the sentences (1) *Mi mi wetem (long) man ya* and (2) *Mi mi kam wetem man ya*, saying that (2) is a serial verb construction, but that he will adopt the classification of *wetem* in (2) as a preposition “for convenience” (Zhuang 1985: 122), whereas *wetem* (1) is obviously the verb ‘wait for’ and *wetem* in (2) is the preposition ‘with’, so that classifying (2) as a serial verb construction does not make sense. The translation for *Hem i karem kenu i go long menlan* is ‘He took a canoe to (go to) the mainland’ [sic]. There is no possibility for ‘to go to’ to be an interpretation of this sentence, as it would be *blong go long menlan* if it expressed purpose. The same mistake appears in *Hem i sik tumas i af ded finis* translated as ‘He is too sick to be half dead’, which sounds rather strange to say the least. There are other confusions to be found in the part concerning the causatives constructions, as in *Hemi sanem sam man oli kam* ‘He sent some men to come’ (Zhuang 1985: 155), and the part on *blong* and *long* is sometimes a bit confusing. As a conclusion on this study, I would say that because of the shortcomings above mentioned, I would take some of Zhuang’s conclusions with a pinch of salt.

More has been published on the same subject by Crowley in a book which focuses on a very specific feature of Melanesian languages, namely verb serialisation. In fact, a first article about serial verbs and prepositions in Bislama was presented at the first conference on Pidgins and Creoles in Melanesia held in Papua New Guinea in 1987. What Crowley does here is “describe a number of syntactic constructions in Bislama which appear to be cognate with

serial verb constructions” (Crowley 1987: 59). He reaches the conclusion that substratum influence cannot be positively eliminated as a factor in the development of the construction, as verb serialisation is a feature of many vernacular languages of Vanuatu.

Meyerhoff (2000) focused her study on the constraints on null subjects in Bislama taking both linguistic and social factors into account. In chapter 1, she defines variables, which can be ‘inherent’ and cannot be socially or stylistically stratified or ‘derived’ and are socially stratified and “a priori never obligatory because their social significance and utility depend on their optionality” (Meyerhoff 2000: 5). Chapter 2 focuses on Bislama on Malo Island, which she says is considerably more than a pidgin, since it is a marker of identity as well as a unifying social code in situations of intergroup diversity. She notes that the greatest variations in Bislama are phonological, but can also be lexical and to a lesser extent syntactic, and wonders if those variations are systematic regional variations. The following chapter analyses language use, looking at the different factors that can determine the choice of Bislama over a local language. The next chapters analyse subject pronouns and verb inflection as well as serial verbs, and the conclusion of the study is that 44% of finite clauses have null subjects, and Bislama has a split pro-drop system, that is to say that first and second person subjects tend to be realised with pronouns, whereas third person subjects are usually null. She also notices a difference in the younger speakers of Bislama and concludes that “the role of younger speakers in the continued grammaticisation of Bislama deserves further examination” (Meyerhoff 2000: 185).

In 2004, Crowley published the only extensive grammar of Bislama. In the introduction, he specifies that in 1987, he wrote a grammatical account of the grammar of the language, entitled *Gramma blong Bislama* which, as the title indicates, was actually written **in** Bislama and for which a completely new terminology had to be created. Unfortunately, this grammar did not receive much support from USP or publishers to be made accessible to the general public, which prompted Crowley to write another grammar in English. There were several reasons for producing this grammar, as indicated by Crowley in the preface (Crowley 2004: xii). First, it is a tool for foreigners to help them learn more about the language once they have some basic knowledge of it. Second, a tool for Ni-Vanuatu themselves, in so far as it clearly shows the complexity of the grammar of Bislama, and therefore may provoke a different attitude to the language. It would also prove extremely useful for the people involved in the creation of written materials in the language, even though it is not taught in schools for the time being. I have used this grammar a lot in the past few years, and it has proved immensely useful and enriching. It is conceived in such a way that it is very simple to use and to refer to

for precise information. The explanations are simple and clear even though quite detailed. Indeed, its purpose will be entirely achieved when it is used by students or teachers to have a better understanding and knowledge of their own language.

2.2.2.2 Bislama as a written language

So how was Bislama written in the works previously mentioned? This part will examine the orthographies in greater detail and the variations in the documents. What can be said at this point is that up until Camden's work in the 1970s, every attempt at a description of Bislama could be considered as a *de facto* new proposal of spelling, even if informally, and that Camden was at the origin of the beginnings of a standard spelling.

Let us now have a closer look at the very first utterances of the language as recorded in the documents, starting with the very early ones mentioned in the precedent part.

Crowley (1988) made a compendium of Bislama utterances covering the period from the 'sandalwood era' (1850s) till 1939, followed by a historical lexicon of Bislama which "is an exhaustive listing of every word used in a Bislama context from the 1840's to the outbreak of the Second World War" (Crowley 1988: 47). This work is composed of three parts, one which is a compilation of Bislama utterances, divided into three periods (the sandalwood era, the plantation era and the twentieth century until 1939). The second part is Fletcher's Skit (p.36-46), set in 1916, and the last part is the lexicon with a total of 905 words. In Crowley's compilation we find quotes from Pionnier (1913), Jacomb (1914), Tailleur (1954) and Schmidt (1957), whose work will be studied later on in this part.

In Schuchardt (1979), we find the following excerpt:

Okotopa, 17, 1880

*Misi Kamesi Arelu Jou no kamu ruki mi Mi no ruki iou Jou
ruku Mai Poti i ko Mae tete Vakaromala mi raiki i tiripi Ausi
parogi iou i rukauti Mai Potiu mi nomoa kaikai* (Schuchardt
1979: 10).²³

What we find here is what seems to be at first sight almost unrecognisable Bislama, as this was written by a Polynesian teacher stationed in the New Hebrides, and "the phonetic peculiarities of Melanesian and Polynesian have been given full rein" (Schuchardt 1979: 10).

²³ For which he offers the following transcription: « October 17, 1880. Mr. Commins, (How) are you? You no come look me; me no look you; you look my boat he go Mae today. Vakaromala me like he sleep house belong you, he look out my boat, me no more kaikai ».

What can be noted here is the presence of epenthetic vowels (as in *Okotopa*), and ‘r’ for ‘l’, as well as no punctuation at all.

Other brief sentences are given by Schuchardt, this time collected by Layard (the British Consul in New Caledonia), who calls the language ‘Beche-le-mar English’, most of which are quite easy to understand for English speakers, as for instance in “*What for you put diss belong-a-master in fiyer? Him cost plenty money and that fellow kai-kai him*” which roughly means ‘Why did you put the master’s dish [silverware?] into the oven? It’s very expensive and the oven will ruin it’, (Schuchardt 1979: 20), or “*You savey where man him stop?*” (*Yu save wea man i stap?* ‘Do you know where the man is?’). Having been collected by an English speaker, it is not surprising that we find English spelling here, but the structure of the sentences is pretty similar to those we would find today. Clark (1979) quotes occurrences recorded by Garnier in New Caledonia: “Boat belong you?” or “Allsame man ouiouei belong boat mate mate kaikai” (Clark 1979: 37).

Pionnier (1913) was the first to have a systematic approach to the language, and as a French native-speaker, I find Pionnier’s transcription of the language remarkably similar to today’s pronunciation and it is, on the whole, pretty consistent. It goes without saying that the spelling has got nothing to do with an English spelling, with a few exceptions, even though it may appear to be English at first sight (for instance “you” p. 109). If I take a passage such as: “*Harème! You no fraid! I stap onetap Big fala Masta. I mèkèm ol tigne: Claoude, Sane, Moun, Solouara, graoun...ol tigne. Big fala Masta ia, Masta bilong ol man ol oumane*” (Pionnier 1913: 193-94 as cited in Crowley 1988: 20)²⁴, my understanding of it is immediate and does not require much effort, which considering that it was recorded in 1913 appears quite surprising to me. The other interesting feature in Pionnier’s account is the glosses: they are not translations into French, but rather calques from Bislama, with each Bislama word remaining at the same place in its French form. Needless to say that it is **not** French at all! What I noticed though here is that the Bislama “i” is either presented in French as the relative pronoun “qui” (p. 109) or as a personal pronoun (subject or object) “lui” or “elle” (p. 111). This shows that the status of “i” was not quite clear to Pionnier (or Colomb).

If I compare Pionnier’s occurrences with Jacomb’s, the point I have just made is even clearer, as I would probably have to venture interpretations for some of the latter’s examples of

²⁴ In today’s Bislama : ‘*Harem! Yu no fraet! I stap antap Bigfala Masta. I mekem ol samting: klaod, san, mun, solwata, graon...ol samting. Bigfala Masta ia, Masta blong ol man mo ol woman*’. (Listen! Don’t be afraid! There is a great Master (up there). He made everything: the clouds, the sun, the moon, the sea, the earth...everything. This great Master is the Master of men and women).

Bislama, such as “*What name boy ‘e make?*” or “*Take ‘im ‘e come*” (Jacomb 1914:93/94 as cited in Crowley 1988: 26)²⁵. So my conclusion is that the transcriptions made by French speakers were in fact closer phonologically to the actual pronunciation, simply because they did not necessarily speak English so might have not been influenced by the English spelling of what they heard, and also because the sounds of Bislama are closer to French than to English.

Quite an interesting piece of writing in Bislama is *Fletcher’s Skit* (1923), presented in the Appendix of *Isles of Illusion*, which is supposedly inspired from an actual event that took place in 1916 and which the author wrote in Bislama. Apart from the educational plays by *Wan Smolbag*, this is in fact the only ‘literary’ creation in Bislama that I could find, even though it was not written by a native speaker. Unsurprisingly, the language used is mostly anglicised, with a few words and spellings in French (“*Goudé, Master*” ‘Good day, Master’). What is already present here is the predicate marker *i* that appears as ‘*e*, often after ‘*im* as in “‘*im ‘e go yissterdi no more*” which would be ‘*hem i go yestedei nomo*’ ‘he left yesterday’ in today’s Bislama.

W. M. (angrily). Which way you no bin tell ‘im out? Me, me bin go longa store. Me sing out, me sing out. No. (ABOH laughs merrily. W.M. enraged forgets his biche-la-mar.) You... you.

A (frightened .Me no sabby.

W. M. (anxious for information, recollects himself). Two feller ‘e go Vila finish long time?

A. No. ‘im ‘e go yissterdi no more.

W. M. Two feller ‘e go longa what?

A. Me no sabby.

W. M. Two feller ‘e go longa lannitch? No, two feller ‘e go longa boat long all boy? Which way?

(Fletcher 1923: 326)²⁶

Apart from a few sentences to be found in Crowley’s compilation for the twentieth century, there is nothing much on Bislama until Tailleur (1954). My main comment on Tailleur’s work (1954) is that some of the words presented in the list seem to have disappeared from the

²⁵ In today’s Bislama: ‘Wanem boe i mekem?’ and ‘Tekem i kam’.

²⁶ “Why didn’t you tell me? I went to the store, and called and called. In vain. You, you!” / “I don’t know.”. “Did the two of them leave for Vila a long time ago?”/ “No, only yesterday”/ “How did they go?”/ “I don’t know.”/ “Did they go with the small boat or with the boys on the big boat?”

modern language, for instance the adjective ‘green’ is given as ‘aule saime life’ (modern Bislama spelling *olsem lif*), ‘to write’ is ‘maike pépa’ (*mekem pepa*) which is *raetem* today, and ‘buy’ given as ‘baï’ (*bae* in modern spelling) which is *pem*, *bae* expressing the future. This also applies to expressions such as ‘*seun i stop were?*’ referring to the position of the sun to give the time. In spite of its shortcomings, this was at the time a starting point as the list is given in the three languages, English, French and Bichelamar.

As we have seen in part 2.2.2.1, Guy’s work is not very consistent. In an article also published in 1974, Guy discusses the phonology of Bichelamar and proposes a spelling system which he claims to be “compatible with, apparently, most phonological varieties of Bichelamar” (Guy 1974: 23). What is striking here is that, as stated by Guy himself in his introduction, he relies on **one** informant and **one** recording, as well as on his observations from conversations with New Hebrideans, to try and establish rules for the phonology of Bichelamar. This approach cannot be considered as reliable, all the more so as we know that the phonology of Bislama is obviously influenced by the native languages people speak, and that there are about 100 vernacular languages still in use in Vanuatu today. As for the written part, used for the spelling proposals, he only analyses issues of *Le Bulletin d’information de la Résidence de France* and the publications of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He stresses the fact that the *Bulletin*’s spelling is consistent, and that “the ‘Bulletin’ turns out to be written in excellent Bichelamar, unspoilt by French or English” (Guy 1974: 36). However, when referring to the spelling used in the *Bulletin*, he stresses the fact that unfortunately, English words are very often misspelt and etymologies mistaken, so how could that be “excellent Bichelamar”? He concludes that “given some knowledge of both English and Bichelamar, and having struggled one’s way through one or two issues only, one is no longer seriously hindered by its distinctive orthography” (Guy 1974: 36). He then criticizes the spelling system established by Camden, by saying that “it requires some knowledge of both English and French in order to be applied with any consistency” (Guy 1974: 37-38). So again, the data taken into account may well be considered as too sketchy to pass judgments and work out yet another spelling system.

It was Camden who played an important role in the establishment of the spelling system in the 1970s and contributed greatly to the translation of the Bible into Bislama. It is however to be noted that Camden had his own vision of the phonological system of Bislama, and that there were changes between 1974 and 1976 with the committee working on the spelling system adopted for the translation of the Bible.

As far as the issue of a standard language is concerned, Crowley mentions the fact that he did not try to define a “standard” Bislama, as he felt that it was up to the Ni-Vanuatu themselves to do that, and that “ the task of standardisation belongs in a monolingual dictionary of Bislama” (Crowley1994: 39). Crowley acknowledges that for the 1990 dictionary, he made little attempt to standardise spelling beyond the already accepted conventions. Things changed for the 1995 dictionary, as in the meantime a working committee on Bislama was set up by the Literacy Association of Vanuatu, and that “ [the organisations involved] have agreed to promote the adoption of a single standard spelling system for the language, which this dictionary aims to facilitate” (Crowley 2003: v). He included as much information as possible on all the varieties of the language, even though he could not include every possible phonemic variant of every word, for obvious reasons. Crowley’s dictionary is used by many as a reference for standard orthography.

2.2.2.3 Educational material in Bislama

Even though Bislama is not officially used for educational purposes, there are nevertheless a few books that have been published in Bislama, but some of them are hard to get hold of because they were not accessible to the public.

First, the Ministry of Education, with the help of foreign funding, has published a few booklets for educational purposes, mostly designed for the needs of the communities or for vocational education. These publications will be used both to examine the language they are written in, since most of them are fairly recent, and also for their content, one of them being a language course about Bislama, which is of particular interest as regards the information given to Ni-Vanuatu concerning their own language. It is to be noted that this particular publication was created for the Vanuatu Distance Education School (2002).

Brunton, Lynch and Tryon (1978) published a series of articles on various aspects of the life in the New Hebrides, including the language itself, and which are the results of academic research. In the introduction, the editors explain the purpose of this book: they have asked researchers who had been working on the New Hebrides in various fields to write out the result of their research in Bislama, so that they would be accessible to Ni-Vanuatu. The book is therefore a series of fifteen articles written all in Bislama, dealing with various subjects such as history, languages, anthropology and custom. Four of these articles are devoted to linguistics, namely to the very rich linguistic situation in Vanuatu. What is interesting about this book is what we find printed on the inside cover: “To show that there is not only ONE way of writing Bislama, we have mostly followed Camden’s spelling, but tried a different

spelling for G.K.Ward's second article".²⁷ These two articles will be used later on for the study of the language itself.

The most important piece of literature in the field of education is probably Crowley's *LL123 Introdaksen long Stadi blong Bislama (Kos Buk Wan, Kos Buk Tu, Buk blong Ridim)* (1985), a language course for tertiary students. *Buk Wan* deals with the origin and evolution of Bislama, and its place in Vanuatu. *Buk Tu* describes the phonology and rules of the language. The aim of the course is two-fold: first, it is a course to learn Bislama ("i gat wan kaen kos we oli lanem Bislama long ol man we oli no save Bislama yet" Crowley 1985: 7), also referred to as "Yumi save TOKTOK Bislama". Second, it is a course about Bislama ("Yumi save TOKBAOT Bislama") (Crowley 1985: 12). As can be expected of course books, there are exercises (the answers are provided at the end of the book). Unfortunately, this course was only used once for summer school, and was later abandoned, although we can probably say that, had it been used to train many more students, it undoubtedly would have been of great use to both learners of Bislama and speakers of Bislama in tertiary education. *Buk blong Ridim* is a compilation of 23 articles written by several linguists, some of which were translated from English (in which they were originally published) and others written in Bislama and never published in any other language. The focus is naturally Bislama, but also the wider context of languages in Melanesia, and Tok Pisin. The diversity of the topics and the insight it provides the reader with on those particular fields are of great interest to any reader, be they linguists or not.

More recently, material is written in Bislama for early childhood education with a view to translating them into VL or using them as such for Bislama L1 speakers. Re-reading and editing is done by senior teachers, and great care is taken not to use anglicised Bislama (Jenny James, Ministry of Education (MOE), p.c. 2010).

Some NGOs produce material in Bislama for literacy purposes, such as World Vision, for instance. Today, more and more official or semi-official reports are written in Bislama, as well as leaflets for community awareness purposes.

It has to be remarked here that I have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of material written in Bislama in the past three or four years. Today, a lot of what could be called 'public awareness' information (e.g. tsunami alert, HIV and domestic violence campaigns) is printed in Bislama, so that it seems that the written language is becoming the new way of reaching a part of the population that does not have sufficient mastery of either written English or

²⁷ "blong soemaot we i no gat wan gudfala fasin nomo blong raetem bislama, mifala i bin folem spelling blong Camden plante taem ; be long namba tu raet blong G.K.Ward mifala i bin traem wan narakaen bakegen. "

French. There is therefore a more pragmatic approach from some of the ministries or organisations that understand the need to use Bislama to be able to reach the population.

2.2.2.4 Sociolinguistic approaches

In part 2.2.2.1, I have already mentioned Charpentier 1979 as a major work in terms of the description of the language itself. The other part of his work is a sociolinguist study of the use of Bislama in the public domain in the pre-independence period, in which he looks at the place of the language in the missions, the educational system, the media and the administration. What is interesting about this latter part is that it deals with questions raised by Charpentier at the time (just before independence), some of which are yet to be answered, almost thirty years later. Indeed, he devotes a part of his work to the place of Bislama in the educational system, emphasising the importance of the role played by the missions which for a long time were in charge of most of the education, as French and British schools were only to be found in the two cities, Port Vila and Luganville (Charpentier 1979: 89). Charpentier denounces the confusion it created in people's minds between school and church, as well as the rivalry it spurred between 'anglophones' and 'francophones'. In his opinion, Bislama started spreading through the children who had to go to boarding-schools to continue their studies: "We will not hesitate to assert that the boarding-school system was an essential element in the propagation of Bislama" (Charpentier 1979: 98)²⁸. Nevertheless, in this part about education, the conclusion is that "Bislama has always been excluded from education" (Charpentier 1979: 111)²⁹. He shows that the decisions made at the time were crucial for the future of the country: "The official bilingualism seems therefore the choice of all parties, including the Vanuaaku Pati, and the pidgin remains officially ignored, as it has always been" (Charpentier 1979: 154)³⁰. Part of the work is dedicated to written Bislama and the problems it was faced with at the time, which naturally will be referred to in greater detail later on in this work, mainly to make parallels or contrasts with today's situation. Charpentier also makes interesting suggestions for education on which I will rely to discuss the current situation in Vanuatu.

Numerous articles have been published about the situation in Vanuatu and the place of

²⁸ " Nous n'hésiterons pas à affirmer que ce système d'internat a été un élément essentiel de la propagation du Bislama(n). "

²⁹ " Le Bislama(n) a toujours été exclu de l'enseignement. "

³⁰ " Le bilinguisme officiel semble donc retenu par tous les partis, Vanuaaku Pati inclus, le pidgin reste comme par le passé officiellement ignoré. "

Bislama in society, some of which in relation with Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. I have only selected a few for this review, as some of them overlap in parts of their content : the information given to the reader will be used and referred to in a more precise way throughout the rest of this study. Crowley's 'The position of Melanesian Pidgin in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea' offers interesting insights on the status of the two languages in their use in their respective countries. In spite of the fact that Tok Pisin was written much earlier than Bislama, in the 1950s with the newspaper *Wan Tok*, and that the first dictionary offering a standardised spelling was published by Mihalic in 1957, Crowley argues that "Bislama has higher status in the eyes of its speakers in Vanuatu than is the case with Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea" (Crowley 1990b: 3). Bislama has more national respectability as it unites the whole population of Vanuatu. Crowley also mentions the problems of the standardisation of written Bislama, the guidelines drawn up by the *Komiti blong Bislama* never being truly enforced. He devotes a part of this long article to the place of Bislama in education: the grammar and course books he has written entirely in Bislama, facing problems with the terminology which had to be created from scratch, some of the courses at the Teacher's College Institute taught by Ni-Vanuatu staff in Bislama. He also mentions that UNICEF could fund translation courses so that "It is hoped to have the full set of course materials available for pre-school teachers to enrol in the Bislama-medium programme sometime in 1988. From this time on then, pre-school training in Vanuatu should be available entirely through the medium of Bislama, rather than through English only at the present" (Crowley 1990b: 14).

In 1996, Crowley focuses on twentieth-century Bislama and its evolution, which started in the late 1960s because of urbanisation and the role of politics and the media. He stresses the fact that urban youth was very creative, and that a lot of new slang expressions appeared, in which he found no influence of the substratum. He also remarks that the language used in new domains, such as parliament or democracy, is mostly incorporated from English, whereas the revival of kava drinking as a symbol of Melanesian identity cannot rely on English as a source of borrowing and therefore entails creativity in the development of the language. Part of this article is devoted to the press, and the efforts to standardise written Bislama, as well as the place of the language in education. Some of the questions raised here are still without answers today, as will be established later in this research.

Another mine of information concerning the place of Bislama in Vanuatu is yet another 85-page long article by Crowley in 2000, in which he highlights the place of the language in religion, the media and education. He mentions that Bislama is used throughout the country, "with few people over the age of ten being unable to speak it" (Crowley 2000: 54), and that

“In terms of written church materials, newly established religious organisations in Vanuatu such as the Mormons, the Baha’i and the Seventh Day Adventists appear to be putting all of their efforts into providing written material exclusively in Bislama” (Crowley 2000: 66). As far as the problem of literacy is concerned, about 75% of the material is religious in content, 25% of which are written in Bislama. In fact, he stresses, there has never been a national survey concerning literacy in the country, even though people do write, mostly in English (for secondary school leavers) or in Bislama, very rarely in their vernacular languages. Crowley gives a detailed account of the Anglo-French educational system in Vanuatu, which led to a very paradoxical situation where children are taught in metropolitan languages they do not use outside the classroom environment. He also examines the role of the media, with newspapers mostly found in towns and the radio having 80% of its programmes in Bislama, be it national or private. As far as television is concerned, *TV blong Vanuatu* was created in 1992, with national news broadcast in Bislama, and satellite TV only in metropolitan languages for the wealthier part of the population. Crowley underlines the complexity of language policy in the country, with numerous calls for changes, but very little done: “Official attitudes towards the language in the twenty years of Vanuatu’s independence have therefore largely involved some talk, but little action” (Crowley 2000: 100). There is still a high degree of variability and laxity in the written language, in spite of efforts made to try and change the situation, making it hard to define the position of written Bislama. Crowley also evokes the status of vernacular languages, whose future could look grim, due to the shift towards Bislama for young urban speakers particularly, and even in rural areas: “There are some rural areas where Bislama has become the dominant medium of exchange” (Crowley 2000: 121). Nevertheless, this does not necessarily entail the disappearance of vernacular languages, but could lead to a diglossic situation. The possibility of a shift to French-Bislama or English-Bislama bilingualism is also considered, even though speaking a local language or Bislama is the norm among Ni-Vanuatu, while the use of metropolitan languages is sometimes reserved for jokes or to show off.

An interesting piece of reading was written in 1998 by Miles, in which a whole chapter, entitled ‘Language, Education and National Identity’ is dedicated to the place of Bislama in society and tackles some of the still highly controversial issues, such as language choice and so-called ‘bilingualism’. According to him, there is a misconception of what ‘bilingualism’ is, as very few people as individuals are bilingual, and also as it is irrespective of the role played by Bislama in society as well as the importance of vernacular languages. He reaches the conclusion that “School amalgamation was intended to help create an English-French bilingual school environment. In practice, however, it tends to diminish the role of each of

these international languages in favor of a monolingual usage of Bislama” (Miles 1998: 135). And yet, pupils are forbidden to use Bislama at school!

This is also the topic of Lynch’s article ‘Vanuatu’s banned National Language’, to be found in *Pacific Languages in Education* (1996). This book offers a series of articles relating to the use of Pacific languages (Melanesian Pidgin or vernacular languages) in education, as well as the issues about metropolitan language education, be it in the Solomon Islands (chapter 13), Papua New Guinea (chapter 10), Niue (chapter 7), New Zealand (chapter 14) or Fiji (chapter 18). Since this book was primarily intended for tertiary students at USP, we also find Crowley’s article about the need for the development of the teaching not **of** Bislama as a language, but **about** Bislama as a language, hence the title ‘*Yumi Tokbaot Bislama*’. The range of articles here, different even though related, is very useful to get a wider picture of the situation in the Pacific region and draw parallels or contrasts between the choices made by different countries in term of their language policies.

Another useful insight into what is happening in the region is Wade’s 1998 ‘*Attitudes Towards Pidgin*’, based on “a survey on the attitudes of “Wantok” students studying at the University of the South Pacific towards the pidgin that they speak’ (Wade 1998: 4). Wade observes that the results of the survey were ‘more positive than expected’, with speakers proud of speaking a Melanesian language, even though its use in education is still extremely limited, and comes to the (optimistic) conclusion that “it may not be long before Pidgin is given its chance” (Wade 1998: 4).

Early (1999) gives a very critical review of the Ombudsman’s 1996 and 1997 annual reports to Parliament on ‘the observance of multilingualism’ in Vanuatu. The language clearly expresses strong disagreement with the conclusions of these reports: ‘absurd’, ‘faulty interpretation’, ‘biased’, ‘fallacies’, ‘ludicrous’, ‘fanciful’ and ‘lamentable’, to quote only a few. Early stresses the bias towards the importance of French given by the reports, as opposed to linguistic reality in Vanuatu. He also underlines the very little place given to Bislama and the vernacular languages, as well as the negative attitudes and prejudiced misconceptions towards them. What is interesting about this article is that it raises questions that are still unresolved today, ten years later, and that will be dealt with in this study, including trying to say more about what Early calls: “Admittedly, the script for the later scenes in the unfolding drama of the role of Bislama has yet to be written” (Early 1999: 20). The other question this research aims to clarify is to be found in the same paragraph:

But what will happen to Bislama in the future? Should French continue to decline, a new language contest may develop between Bislama and its primary lexifier language, English. Acrolectal varieties of Bislama are widespread among the new urban elite, and so one wonders what a decreolised Bislama might look like in coming decades” (Early 1999: 20).

In 1999, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC) published a report about the youth of Port Vila, written in Bislama. The report investigates the reason for their living in town (*namba 4 Pat*), their attitude to language and *kastom* (*namba 5 Pat*), education (*namba 6 Pat*) and work (*namba 7 Pat*). It gives a very interesting insight of what is happening to urban youth in modern Vanuatu. For instance, 25% say they never went back to their island of origin because they grew up in town, where 15% came for school, and a lot of them cannot afford to go back to their island very often. As far as language use is concerned, “this survey shows that a lot of young people can speak their language well”³¹: table 11 shows that 88.8% of young people still speak their vernacular language (VCC 1999: 26). However, when asked which language they use most, about 70% use Bislama as opposed to 25% who use their mother tongue. The reason for this is obvious: “In the different town areas, young people speak Bislama most of the time because they live together with a lot of groups from different islands”³². In the 13 to 18 age bracket, 86% know their VL well, 70% use Bislama in Port Vila as their first language (L1), 32% use Bislama as their second language (L2) while 61% use VL as L2. These figures show that “custom is very important in the life of Port Vila youth today” (VCC 1999: 28).³³

The attitude towards the two languages of instruction, French and English, is quite clear: very few young people speak one or the other language outside school, and they think it divides people to have two different languages of instruction. Some go as far as rejecting them altogether but also point out that: “It would be expensive if Bislama was introduced in schools” (VCC 1999: 28).³⁴

When questioned about education, it is obvious that the general feeling is that the system does not answer their needs: “With today’s educational system, a lot of young people have no

³¹ *sevei ia hem i faenemaot se fulap yangfala oli save gud lanwis blong olgeta.*

³² *Insaed long ol setelmen, ol yangfala oli stap toktok Bislama fulap taem from se oli stap liv tugeta wetem plante nara grup long aelan.*

³³ *kastom hem i minim wan bigfala samting insaed long laef blong olgeta yangfala long Vila tedei.*

³⁴ *sapos oli introdusum Bislama insaed long skul hem i tru se bae hem i sas tu.*

chance of reaching their goal” (VCC 1999: 29)³⁵. In fact, the survey shows that in spite of improvement, 67% of the children have no chance of continuing school after Class 6 (as there are not enough schools and the big issue of school fees that parents cannot afford), so how can they join the workforce and find a good job ? For those who drop out of school early, education was of no help or even worse: “education got me into trouble” (VCC 1999: 34).³⁶ Naturally, this has consequences on finding a job: while 37% rank having a job as their first dream for the future, their lack of skills makes it virtually impossible for them to integrate the work force, and when they do, they are extremely underpaid and lose hope (VCC 1999: 73).

This report clearly points out the very difficult situation that urban youth finds itself in, with very little achievement in their education and therefore very little chance of feeling part of society, which is a big concern for the future of Ni-Vanuatu youth and has to be dealt with very quickly.

A second report was published in 2008, also in Bislama. Unsurprisingly, the conclusions of the report show that Bislama is playing an even more important role in today’s life for the Ni-Vanuatu youth, and that the problems they are faced with mostly come from an education policy which does not meet their needs. The link between language, education and their place in today’s society is made quite clear. This leads me to the last part of this literature review, which deals with language policy.

2.3 Language policy in the South Pacific

There is a lot of literature about language planning and language policy, so I have decided to consider those which focus on the situation in the Pacific region. In 1990, studies about language planning and use in Australia and Melanesia, Polynesia and Southeast Asia started to appear (Baldauf & Luke, 1990). They all stress two conflicting issues: “the need for local identity through local language, *versus* the need for access to the wider world through the use of languages of wider communication (Baldauf & Luke 1990: 7). In most of these countries, “very little in the way of formal language planning is done. Instead, the educated élites, whether they be of the exogenous or indigenous variety, opt for a modern Western educational system, like the one in which they were educated” (Baldauf & Luke 1990: 17). The writers of the different articles that compose this book agree that part of the problem in

³⁵ *Wetem sistem blong edukesen we i stap tedei fulap yangfala oli nogat janis blong kasem gol blong olgeta.*

³⁶ *edukesen i mekem mi trabol*

the region (and elsewhere) is that language planning is in the hands of those who have the power to undertake those policies and it is therefore designed to serve their interest. This is indeed a very strong position, but it seems to correspond to the situation in Vanuatu, where after independence the two colonial systems of education were kept side by side for a long time, and where even today the language policy proposed by the government still keeps the bilingualism wanted for the population in terms of French/English, not for example French/Bislama or English/Bislama. It still boils down to the yet unclear answers to the questions ‘Who do we teach?’, ‘What do we teach?’, ‘For what goal do we teach?’ and ‘How do we teach?’.

One of the chapters examines the situation in Vanuatu (Thomas 1990). Thomas gives an account of the 1981 Vanuatu Language Planning Conference, where the role of local languages and of Bislama had to be defined for the future. At the end of the conference, “The final resolution which the Language Planning Conference adopted showed strong support for the use of Bislama. It recommended that Bislama should be taught at least as a subject in the first four years of primary school and used as a medium of instruction for classes five and six’ (Thomas 1990: 245). In his account of the same conference, Topping (1982) emphasises the fact that Bislama was used as the primary language for the conference, thus proving – if need be – that it is an adequate language for complex, even abstract discussions on law, politics and education. The resolutions adopted by the delegates concerning education recommended education in VL at the early stage, then the introduction of Bislama, then Bislama as the medium of instruction, and French and/or English as medium of education at the secondary level (Topping 1982: 3). Almost thirty years later, nothing much has been done in terms of what this conference advocated, apart from the introduction of VL in early childhood education. The debate over the place that Bislama should (or not) be given in the Vanuatu educational system is still raging, and the answer is unclear.

More recently, other voices were also heard about education and language policy in the Pacific. Four books, whose titles all begin with ‘*Re-Thinking...*’ have been published in the past few years, and they shed a different light on the problem, approaching it from new perspectives. They have all been written by Pacific Islanders who think it is time for them to try and define their own criteria and find their own policies that meet the needs of the population, as opposed to adopting Westernised models that have proved a failure in all the post-colonial nations of the regions.

Re-Thinking Vanuatu Education Together (2004) is a compilation of some of the papers presented at the 2002 conference about education in Vanuatu. The different aspects of

education are looked into, be it language, policy, funding, curriculum, or planning. The book ends with recommendations and future directions, urging the government to clarify and define goals for Vanuatu education and adopt a coherent, sustainable approach. The importance of indigenous knowledge is emphasised in terms of language and culture, the need for new curricula crucial, the training of teachers an important matter to consider as well as the funding of education and scholarships. But what is above all important is that “Ni-Vanuatu educators cannot expect outsiders to administer changes arising from the recommendations. Together, Ni-Vanuatu must ensure that they develop appropriate policies, strategies, and actions to implement these recommendations” (Sanga 2004: 322). In other words, Ni-Vanuatu educators, like their colleagues in other parts of the region, are ready to make the very important step of taking their education into their own hands, and rightly so.

The same position is adopted in the other books of the same series, where re-thinking aid and evaluating the impact of foreign aid on education is the main topic. John Niroa gives an account of the aid to Vanuatu education for the period between 1990 and 2003 (Niroa 2005). He gives figures about the financial aid given by France, Australia and New Zealand, but without taking into account the volunteer programmes or staffing provided by these countries. On the whole, he concludes, there is a “fragmented approach of donors” and a lack of “coordinated approach to managing aid projects” from the Vanuatu Government departments (Niroa 2005: 283). The general conclusion is rather gloomy: “Histories of what have been or are working well have therefore been ignored. Consequently, resources are not adequately used and are even wasted” (Niroa 2005: 288).

What is the situation in the other islands of the South Pacific region? Siegel (1996) considers on the one hand Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), and on the other, the rest of the region (nine islands).

In 1991, the first survey of literacy and language took place in the Solomon Islands: the results showed that 83% of the population speak Pijin, and that there is a wide range of language preference for language use at school and at church. Pijin is used as the medium of instruction in most schools and few people can speak English. Therefore, the recommendation was that “Pijin should be adopted as the national language of the Solomon Islands’ (Solomon Islands National Literacy Committee 1991: 3) and, in order to give access to educational opportunities to most, “Education should be conducted in the National Language. Other languages, particularly English, should be taught as subjects. This policy has been shown to increase cognitive development and would quickly lead to greater educational achievements for most students, both children and adults.” (Solomon Islands National Literacy

Committee 1991: 4). The problem of the standardisation of Pijin is mentioned, a solution to which could be the publication of a spelling list, and the production of more material in Pijin has to be encouraged. The very low adult literacy rate is emphasized (particularly for women) and measures should be taken to offer literacy classes for adults.

A few years later, Siegel writes: “the report’s figures about adult literacy had some immediate impact. A national literacy awareness program was implemented for the 1991-92 period, mainly through radio broadcasting and newspapers.” (Siegel 1996: 89) Efforts were made, mostly by NGOs, to promote vernacular education in the SI, and Siegel concludes that “The time is right to promote vernacular literacy in the Solomon Islands in both formal and non-formal education” (Siegel 1996: 97). The same conclusion is reached by Lee “In conclusion, I would like to emphasize again that the Solomon Islands Pijin may be used in many appropriate ways in the curricula of schools. [...] the use of Pijin has been beneficial to the students both in what is intended to be taught and in helping them to understand better and use English” (Lee 1996: 208).

Siegel examines the use of VL in education in Melanesia and other Pacific countries and notes that there are many differences in policy and practise in the region, as well as in resources and teacher training. In Melanesia, only the former colonial languages are used in the formal education system, whereas all the other countries use their vernaculars in education. Siegel stresses the benefits of vernacular education: “the most important [reasons] are the educational, psychological, social and cultural benefits for students, their families and their communities” (Siegel 1996: 10). It is now a well-established fact that children learn better in their own language, can communicate with their families and communities who are more involved in school activities, and learn about their own culture. In the chapter dedicated to Vanuatu, Siegel gives an account of the various literacy programmes in the country at the time, most of which are conducted by NGOs. The recommendations are to set up pilot projects, one using a VL and the other Bislama as the language of instruction in early primary school (formal system) and to continue funding for the NGOs involved in VL education programs.

In PNG, the introduction of VL or Tok Pisin at the pre-school level started in the 1980s with a few projects. In 1991, a major reform of the system was endorsed to do the same thing on a national scale, in spite of not so favourable reactions from the non-government sectors in PNG (Siegel 1996). A few years later, the Governor of Madang province, which has 164 languages, “has thrown out vernacular education” in elementary schools, “after experiencing difficulties in implementing the policy”. Shortage of money and resources, poor English skills

for students, inappropriate policy for urban zones and no bridging part between VL and English at level 3 are the reasons evoked for justifying this change (www.islandsbusiness.com, February 2010 issue).

In Samoa, the teaching is done in Samoan from Year 1 to Year 8, with English becoming the medium of instruction from Year 9 onwards (Siegel 1996). The aim of the general policy is to have Samoan/English bilingual individuals. In 2010, a report by Early notes that the proposed system goes further, with “the aim to achieve a high level of Samoan and English language competency for students through a bilingual education system” (Early 2010: 1). The policy recognises the need for good English standards (necessary in the global environment) but at the same time the importance of the Samoan language and culture is strongly emphasised (preserving the culture heritage). Early notes that “These documents [defining the new policy] give Samoan a place in the education system that exceeds what is thought to be possible in other Pacific countries” (Early 2010: 4) and the approach is referred to as a ‘parallel media approach’ or ‘additive bilingualism’, with Samoan and English used as media of instruction in various proportions at the different stages of education. This is a very innovative approach in the Pacific and requires looking into curriculum, expectancy of attainable levels in the two languages, linkage with the communities, and literacy methodologies as well as teacher’s training. In spite of the difficulties of implementing such a policy, Early salutes the fact that “These broad policy objectives are to be greatly applauded, as they represent a genuine attempt by the Samoan policy makers to ensure that the treasured heritage of their cultural and linguistic tradition remains strong in the face of powerful pressures exerted by globalisation” (Early 2010: 1).

Many voices from the Pacific region concur to say that it is crucial for Pacific children “to first become literate in their own language before acquiring literacy in a global language such as French or English” (Herrmann 2007: 32) and also that ‘We need to devise ways to build bridges in order to help Pacific students ease into the world of academia without alienating them from their culture’ (Taufaga 2007: 29). It seems that in a lot of these Pacific countries, the tendency is to adopt a bilingual policy, with both the local and the European languages adopted as media of instruction, with preference given for the local language at the early stage of education, or sometimes both languages throughout the whole educational system. Vanuatu is for the time being one of the very few, if not the only one, to have a vision of bilingualism in two European languages, French and English, and very little room for VL or the lingua franca of the country. Admittedly, it was the only country with a joint Anglo-French government for almost three quarters of the last century, therefore with two metropolitan

languages as independently-used media of instruction, but does this justify not taking today's world into account to the point of ignoring completely people's most used language?

Conclusion

My literature review has been selective, by necessity, because it involved making choices. First, I have tried to make a selection among the vast literature on pidgins and creoles, and on both creolisation and decreolisation. This literature has provided me with the necessary background to try and put Bislama into the picture of pidgins/creoles. Second, finding everything I could about Bislama or in Bislama was the next obvious step. I have tried to be as thorough as possible in that part of the research. Finally, I have made the choice to look at Bislama from a slightly different perspective too, with considering its place and role in education, simply because it is my strong personal belief that the status and use of a language is inevitably linked to how it is considered in the educational system of any country.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The first points I will start this part with are very practical ones: in order to make this piece of writing (hopefully) reader-friendly, I have chosen to insert my quotations in the text in English, with the original quotation in French or Bislama as footnotes, at least for the longer ones. Words or phrases are given in Bislama with their English translation immediately after. Unless otherwise stated, the translations from Bislama quotes into English are mine, and so are the translations from French into English. I take full responsibility for them. I have sometimes also chosen to give phrases or sentences originally written in ‘old’ Bislama in ‘modern’ Bislama, mostly to point out the differences in a contrastive way, or sometimes to show the similarities. Of course, I also take full responsibility for those (it was at times quite a challenge to do this!). To make the identification of the languages easier, all words in Bislama are written in *italics*, (except for the word Bislama itself when it refers to the language of Vanuatu) and English glosses or translations are given in ‘single quotes’.

I mentioned in the introduction that the idea of a PhD on Bislama was primarily to focus on the changes in the language, with the hypothesis of its decreolisation, or anglicisation in mind. What triggered my attention on Bislama and its evolution were first Aufray’s remarks, but also something I have often heard from Ni-Vanuatu themselves, namely that the language of today is different from the Bislama of ‘before’, particularly in urban areas. People often ventured the opinion that today’s Bislama is ‘more anglicised’ than the one used, say, a few decades ago.

So my first goal is to try and find out whether Bislama, which is, to a certain extent, in contact with English, its lexifier, could be said to be ‘decreolising’, as some of the creoles in the Caribbean islands. In order to do that, I had to make choices: it would probably have been more challenging to observe spoken Bislama, and make a comparative study between age groups in Port Vila, for example. But this is a huge task, and would have required that I live (or had lived) there for quite a long time, which is not the case. But it then occurred to me that, if the spoken language had changed so much, I would probably find trace of this evolution in the written language as well, so I started examining written material to show the evolution of written Bislama in the past forty years.

This study is therefore mainly based on corpus analysis for the part on Bislama. Nevertheless, in order to place the written language in a wider context, namely that of education, I also had to meet people and therefore resort to open or semi-structured interviews for that part of the study. This chapter will outline the two different approaches I used, as well as the difficulties I was faced with for my research.

3.1 The language: corpus analysis

The problem of the representativeness of the corpus is always a crucial one (Biber 1993), and I was no exception to the rule of having to ponder over the choices I was making and the reasons why I was making them.

3.1.1 The choice of corpus/corpora

Corpus linguistics normally “involves the analysis of (usually) very large collections of electronically stored texts, aided by computer software” (Baker 2010: 93). There are different sorts of corpora, some are general corpora (such as the British National Corpus) whereas specialised corpora will restrict themselves to a specific genre, or a period of time, or some language variety. For obvious reasons, specialised corpora are smaller in size, easier to collect and are used to answer specific research question (Baker 2010: 99). My corpus necessarily belongs to the second category, with the difference that it does exist in electronic form for only a very limited part, since the only documents in Bislama I could have access to in this form are some press articles and material published on websites such as *Kam2geta*.

Since I am studying the evolution of the written language over a period of forty years or so, therefore making a diachronic study, my first difficulty was to decide whether I would have one corpus, a continuum so to speak, or several corpora at different stages (say every ten years, for instance) over the period. Some of the changes in the language have been the object of study (mostly by Crowley), but to my knowledge, nothing has been written about this phenomenon in the last ten years or so.

Inevitably, the question of the kind of texts I would select for this research had to be addressed. This was not the hardest part, in fact, because I tried to have access to **all** the texts in Bislama that I could find, particularly for the ‘earlier’ period. Bislama as a written language was not used until the late 1960s and the 1970s, and in the earlier stages, its use was limited to only a few publications. Baker mentions the fact that “written corpora are generally easier to build (and large archives of texts that were originally published on paper can be found on the internet, meaning that such texts are already electronically coded)” (Baker 2010: 99). Unfortunately, this is not the case for texts in Bislama, and as a result of this I spent a lot of

time at the National Library and at the USP library going through collections (sometimes incomplete) of newsletters, newspapers, and any kind of publication in Bislama. As no chronology or catalogues of newspapers or publications have ever been done, and also because of the fact that some publications were only in French and English, this was not an easy task but it was made much easier with the very kind assistance of all the librarians who were most helpful with my search for Bislama documents and also helped me with scanning and photocopying. For the more recent period, things were sometimes easier with the digital versions of some of the material (a subscription to a newspaper and official material which were given to me by various organisations or official departments for instance). The material would then have to be sorted according to its repertoire so that a comparative study could be made in the various genres.

Another factor that can be of importance is to try and identify by whom some of these documents in Bislama were written. In fact, it is virtually impossible to answer this question for many of the ones published in the earlier days, as I have been unable to find this kind of information in spite of my efforts. Accordingly, the question of knowing if the publications by the French and British Residencies were written by expatriates speaking Bislama or by Ni-Vanuatu employees of the Residencies may well stay unresolved. I would have to rely on people's memories of the time, but sometimes the information I was given informally also showed some degree of variation: I therefore decided to include only the data I could cross-check, or show my uncertainty (about precise dates mostly) by adding question marks. On the other hand, my corpus also contains some texts which **are** translations (mostly from documents originally written in English) and will therefore be examined as such, as the act of translating a text into a language is not the same as writing a text in a language. This does not imply that I will be using what Baker calls 'parallel corpus', which is "a more carefully designed type of multilingual corpus, where the texts are exact equivalents (i.e. translations) of each other" (Baker 2010: 100). Nevertheless, these translations cannot be ignored as they may well be almost the entire corpus for a specific genre, religion for instance where *Baebol Long Bislama* cannot but be a translation of the Bible. I have also noticed that the language of translations is somewhat different from the one used in 'written' documents (e.g. letters to the editor).

Once the question of the nature of the material was (relatively quickly) solved, and the different genres listed, came the problem of the size of my corpus: what can be considered as sufficient to be regarded as representative of the language in each genre? What would be my method of sampling? Written Bislama is spreading fast, and the quantity of written material is

increasing dramatically, giving me a lot more of ‘modern’ Bislama than ‘older’ Bislama. Would I be able to get sufficient material in all the genres to attempt to draw conclusions that would be reliable enough to be presented as evidence from the results of the study? If not, could I draw conclusions only from the documents in my possession (the more recent ones) without being able to compare them with ‘older’ ones simply because there were none published in the earlier period (advertisements for instance)?

There seemed to be more questions than answers at first, but I was, however, slightly reassured by the fact that “sample size is not the most important consideration in selecting a representative sample” (Biber 1993: 243). I chose to use the ‘stratified sampling’ method, in which “subgroups are identified within the target population (in this case, the genres), and then each of those ‘strata’ are sampled using random techniques” (Biber 1993: 244). Hopefully, the careful identification of groups would allow me to reach conclusions on between-group variance that are representative enough of the whole range of uses of the written language, as well as possible within-group variance that would provide an answer to my research question of the potential decreolisation of Bislama.

3.1.2 The genres

As mentioned earlier, I have decided to take into account virtually all the documents I could find written in Bislama, thus trying to include the full range of linguistic variation in the language. The bulk of texts are obviously to be found in the press: even though newspapers in Vanuatu come and go, change names and do not necessarily include articles in Bislama, they nevertheless provide the researcher with a range of numerous registers such as sports, news, letters to the editor and so on. Each of these specific genres will be the object of study.

As far as ‘literature’ is concerned, there is unfortunately not much to look at, as only two books have been published in Bislama and neither of them is fiction, one being the account of a trial and the other mostly memories from World War II, in fact recordings put into the written form.

On the other hand, much more educational material has been published for various target audiences, ranging from early childhood to university students. Religion is part and parcel of people’s lives in Vanuatu, and part of the study will be devoted to religious material. During the past few years, a lot of ‘unpublished’ material has been made available: advertisements, official forms or leaflets, technical reports by NGOs, governmental statistical data for Vanuatu and posters, to name a few. Bislama is also used in politics, and in a few specific

local scientific publications. The written form of the language is now used for computer-mediated communication (CMC) with text messages, emails and chat websites.

3.1.3 Difficulties

Compiling my corpus was sometimes not easy, and was indeed a time-consuming task, for the reasons mentioned above. A lot of the ‘earlier’ publications cannot be found any more, most are quickly out of print, even the more recent ones (it is impossible to find any of Crowley’s dictionaries in Vanuatu), so that I sometimes became frustrated because I was not able to find things that I had heard of but could not trace.

The other question that I also had to think about was ‘Who wrote this?’. This could sound as a silly question but in the context of Vanuatu, it may well not be. Let me elaborate a bit on this point. There is a lot of variation in Bislama, often linked to the origin of people and their local languages (mostly phonological variants), to their level of education (wider lexicon), to their being francophones or anglophones (different lexicon) and to the fact that they live in urban or rural areas (also different lexicon). So my problem can be expressed in the following terms: are these factors important enough to greatly influence the way people write in Bislama, and if so, how can I take this into account for the ‘older’ part of the corpus, written such a long time ago that it is virtually impossible to know who was writing at the time, particularly in the press? I have already stressed the fact that finding the origin of most documents was not possible except in a few cases.

The newer forms of written ‘documents’ that have appeared with new technologies have also been hard to come by, but for completely different reasons. First, because nothing of the kind has been done before, so I cannot rely on any previous ‘corpus’ or examples to analyse. Second, text messages, chats or emails are of a much more personal kind and therefore involve people directly in their daily, almost intimate lives. It is also a time-consuming task for people to transcribe their text messages. As far as websites are concerned, I myself became a member of *Kam2geta*, which to my knowledge is the only website created in Vanuatu that offers forum discussions, chat space and email services. The administrator of the site showed their support by posting a general message to ask people for their permission to allow me to make use of public discussions on the site, and all the members involved in forum discussions not only agreed to do so, but also expressed their interest in and support for my research. This is a yet completely unexplored topic as it is very recent and has not been the subject of any study, so I am grateful to the members of the site, as well as to my friends who were willing to share some of their personal messages, for giving me the chance to explore a

new field of research. I used this particular data to make statistics about the use of languages for new ways of communication, and it has been very rewarding to be able to do this part of the study.

3.1.4 Data analysis

The major problems I was faced with as regards data analysis are two-fold. First, Bislama was for a long time, and still is to some extent, a highly variable language: so what part can be attributed to nonce occurrences, typos or mere phonological variations? Second, I have struggled to find reliable software to use to convert scanned documents into Word documents. Obviously, Bislama does not appear among the languages that software can recognise, and it was almost impossible to have an acceptable result without spending hours editing the scanned version. Interestingly enough, though, the first software I used would ‘automatically’ make changes to the words towards English – for instance *oli* became ‘oil’ – even when I ticked another language on the list. This should not have come as a surprise, as most of the Bislama lexicon is borrowed from English, so that the software recognised enough of the words, even with their Bislama orthography, to assimilate it to English.

After trying to get better results for a long time, the library of the University of Auckland suggested I use FineReader, which is the software they use for old and sometimes hard-to-decipher texts. There is no doubt I got better results with this software, however, it also involved the time-consuming tasks of scanning and converting, and unfortunately, when I dealt with more ‘complicated’ documents in terms of layout, such as newspapers, the result was hardly satisfactory and could not be used as such for analysis purposes. This entails that most of the ‘tracking’ I did on the documents in my possession was done manually, which represented many hours of work. The other downside to this state of affairs is that it has been sometimes impossible for me to have a precise idea of the size of some of the corpus, as no word count was available to me.

I include here an example of the kind of document I got when I scanned the newspapers I had found, for instance: as is obvious, there is absolutely no way this can be used for study.

1. FASFALA TOKTOK

Vufala ol mama weyufala i iavem a! pikinini! Vu mas save gud se long lukiuk blong god, bes wei blong wosipim Hem (God) i blong eduketein olpikinini ow trenem olgeta ong at gudfalafasin we ol man i save gut. I no gal wan narafalu wok we i hoe olsem 'ok ia..'
"Wherefore, Oye loving mothers, know ye that in God's sight, the best of all ways to worship Him is to educate the chiltirel? and train them in cii the perfccions of human 'dnd; and no nobler deed than this eun be imagined, s:
Pour cult,, O mères affeetuenses, sache qu 'ouxyeux de Dien, Ia meilleurefaçon tie 'adorer est d'éduquer (as enfimis et de las former A avoir toutes las perfections wmaines; et l'on nu pent imaginer d'action plus uobie....

OL KWESTIN

Ho Ia 'Abdu'l43aho?

Toktok ia i go Long hu?

1. Wanem has wei blong wosipim God?

Givim samfala eksampol blong a! gziafalafasin we of man i save gar.

From wanem tokiok ia go long of mama?

Wanern bes wok we wan mama i save mekem7

2. SPRTUL EDUKESEN I STAT LONG FAMLE

Evri wan long ol Manifestesen blong God I tokbaot hae malt blong mared mo hae mak blong famle. Baha'u'llah i talem se rison from wanem wan man mo wan woman i mared i blong tufala i reisemap ol pikinini we oh save long God mo oil wosipim Hem. Stamba wok blong famle i biong tijim ol pikinini blong oh save long God mo oh wosipim Hem. Hernia yumi kolem "spiritud edukesen." Yumi mas tijim 01 pikinini abaot God, mo yumi mastijim olgeta blong folem ol ba bbong God. Yiimi mas tijim olgeta se oh mas leftemap oh spiritul fasin blong olgeta. Oh mae lanem wanem kaen fasin i stret mo wanem kaen fasin i no stret. 01 samling Ia nan oh ol impotan samting we wan pikinini i save lanern.

Example of scanned document, using AbbyReader software, converted from *Stamba Trening Program, Baha'i Trening Institut blong Vanuatu, 2001: 2-3.*

Here is another example of what I could get with OCR:

NA13 113 HARIKEN APTA TTJ NIH NO HO,

Last **hariken** we i bin **han** fastaeoi, **aol bin harafa** soien ci p1cc nao long **Saot Se i no long taem**, aSia iv wik **no no, narafala hariken 'cakegen** we **cli kolem cc** HTendy **eni ken spolem** sanfala sanrbing **hakegen long ol pies long Not, taem** we **cmi pas long niedel blong** Bankis **aeland** no Espiritu Santo long naoiba 2 **mc 3** mc **4 Sebware.**

Samba tu **hariken** la, **cmi strong** wan tu, no cmi makem plante trabol, be **mo olsen fastwan we ± barafa spolem ci pies long Saot. Sem taem** we **olgeta long Santo oil sendem tok-tok I ken, oil talem** so, win mc **soiworka biong harken ia I ba rafa soolem pies blong S is long** Lalekuia long Santo. **Solijora I bin go tekem aot ci 1-iaos** we **cli stap kolosap long solworka no no.**

Scanned document from *British Newsletter*, February 8, 1972: 4

Original text:

NAMBA TU HARIKEN AFTA TU WIK NO MO

Fast hariken we i bin kam fastaeoi, emi bin barafa spolem ol ples nao long Saot. Be i no long taem, afta tu wik no mo, narafala hariken bakegen we oli kolem "Wendy" emi kam spolem samfala samting bakegen long ol ples long Not, taem we emi pas long medel blong Bankis aeland mo Espiritu Santo long namba 2 mo 3 mo 4 Febware.

Namba tu hariken ia, emi strong wan tu, mo emi mekem plante trabol, be ino olsem fastwan we i barafa spolem ol ples long Saot. Sem taem we olgeta long Santo oli sendem tok-tok i kam, oli talem se, win mo solwora blong hariken ia i barafa spolem ples blong fis long Palekula long Santo. Solwora i bin go tekem aot ol haos we oli stap kolosap long solwora no mo.

As can be observed in the first example of scanned text, the software does not recognise some of the English or the French text either (first paragraph). The more recent documents are better ‘recognised’ by the software so that with effort and practise, I managed to get the meaning of most texts. This was however not often the case for the very ‘old’ documents when a typewriter was used (as opposed to a computer) and the layout of the newspaper page was too complicated for the software to make sense of. So in order to still be able to work on the material, I had to pay for the services of a secretary who accepted to type out some of my material. I had to make choices again, as it was impossible to have everything typed, of course, so again the relevance of what I would select was part of my work. I cannot but insist on the invaluable help this represented for me, because I had realised at a very early stage that it was impossible for me to deal with all this transcribing. I ended up with a total of about 36 000 words: of course, I would have liked to have more but was restricted by financial reasons.

These two examples clearly illustrate the two major problems I was faced with, namely the word count for my corpus, and the non-recognition of the language by software. The only good side about this state of things is that it probably gave me a very sharp eye to look at the texts, as I was obliged to pay close attention to what I was reading to make sense of the texts while I was correcting them.

The last point I can also stress to point out to the difficulties is quite in keeping with this work, namely because one of the hassles of dealing with written Bislama is having your computer systematically changing the predicate marker “i” into “I”, even when you try and change the language by default. Apart from the fact that it is annoying because it requires tedious checking, it is in fact quite interesting to find out that the computer ‘recognises’ Bislama as close enough to English to actually change the default language back to English and make automatic changes. To finish on that point, I have to say that in some of the documents that are printed today in Bislama, you do indeed find the *I* quite often replacing *i*, a point I believe writers should be careful about because it may lead to confusion and make understanding more difficult for some because of its inaccuracy, even though I realise that checking texts for “*I*” is a very time-consuming activity.

3.1.5 Data base

After spending so many hours looking at my corpus and highlighting what fit with the criteria I have chosen to try and show the potential decreolisation of Bislama, I found myself extremely frustrated at reaching conclusions that I could not prove ‘scientifically’. I did not think it was good enough to just say ‘this is what is happening for that genre’ without evidence to back it up. I had already asked other students or colleagues for help, without much success, and was on the verge of giving up when good friends of mine suggested I use Microsoft Access and constitute a data base.³⁷ What this software enables you to do is build your own data base, for which you select the elements you want to be part of your corpus, and the criteria you want to use for data analysis. As I was entering the data, I decided that I would add an estimation of the size of my corpus elements in order to be able to compare things that could be compared in terms of size. This seems important to me in so far as comparing the number of occurrences of plural *s* in texts of respectively 3 pages and half a page is completely useless, or even does in fact distort the statistics. My own criterion for the number of pages was to use a ‘normal’ A4 typed page as reference for measuring the size of the text. What this means is that an ad can be referenced as 0.2 in terms of size, if it is very short or printed in very big letters. I realise that this is not perfect but it comes as close to the best estimation I could make without being able to actually have a precise word count. Let me now explain how I proceeded: first, I selected eleven genres – press, religion, ads, *storian*, politics, official documents, book, translations, periodicals, other and CMC. Then I subdivided the genres into more categories such as for press, letters to the editor, sports, news articles, speech/interview, *kastom stori* or culture. So in the end, I find myself with eleven genres and twenty-six subcategories which are used to qualify the part of the corpus I am referring to. In the corpus table of the data base, I have a corpus ID number for each document, its genre and sub-category, the publication name, date and size (so six elements). In the criteria table, I have thirteen elements which appear under this form: corpus ID, page, compound word (such as *telekad* ‘telecard’), compound word 2 (such as *mobael namba* ‘mobile number’), verbs E (*introdusum* ‘introduce’), E word (word written in English), voc not in 2003 (vocabulary not in Crowley’s 2003 dictionary), grammar *evri* (use of *evri* + predicate marker *i* or *oli*), *evri* time (when *evri* is followed by a word referring to time such as *evri dei*), passive (or forms in -ed), epenthetic vowel (such as in *kolosap* ‘klosap’), and spelling (when words or phrases are spelt ‘differently’, such as *ikat* for *i kat*).

³⁷ All my gratitude goes to Emma and Stuart.

Once the frame of the data base is set up, all you have to do is feed it with the relevant information from the corpus. At the end of my work, I find myself with a data base of 246 corpus items (that is to say the number of documents I worked on, with most of them composed of several pages) and 4790 elements altogether (which represent the number of elements fitting the criteria I selected), all this representing an estimated total of 466 pages³⁸. The next step is to write out the queries, that is to say the questions you want the software to give you answers to. Again, this step required serious thinking, because I had to be careful to find meaningful and relevant questions so as to get evidence to back up my conclusions, some of which I already had an idea about while looking closely at the documents. The very gratifying part of the (time-consuming) building up of the data base is getting all these results which you can then try and analyse. To facilitate the reading of the results, I have decided to justify my choices about the corpus and the criteria at the beginning of Chapter 5 which will consist of the ‘results and analyses’ part.

The second part of this research on Bislama required a completely different approach as the information I was looking for was not to be found by studying a corpus, but by meeting people and getting information from them.

3.2 Bislama in education

3.2.1 The documents from the Ministry of Education (MOE)

I consider myself extremely lucky to have been given access to a lot of official documentation by the MOE staff and to have been invited as an observer to a formal meeting for the National Curriculum in March 2010. As the new Language Policy is in the making, it has enabled me to follow the whole process of its development. The documents were given to me either in French or in English, or both, but it has to be mentioned at this point that all the discussions, debates or consultations I was invited to were carried out in Bislama, as is now the norm in Vanuatu. It is indeed a rare thing to be in the thick of things, so to speak, and as a result to be able to discuss the issues with people. The obvious danger, of course, is to think you have the answer or the solution and try to impose it on others. I inevitably found myself faced with the old paradox of the neutral researcher/observer as opposed to a person with convictions who sometimes had to check that she was not crossing the line. I will elaborate more about this point in the following part.

³⁸ A page is a standard A4 sheet with a word count of 400 to 450 words per page.

3.2.2 Interviews

I was also extremely lucky to be able to meet with a lot of people willing to share their knowledge and opinions about Bislama itself, its status in today's society and its place in education. Vanuatu is a small country, Port Vila a small town, and most of the people I spoke with are prominent personalities on the Ni-Vanuatu scene who can easily be identified. Nevertheless, they were all quite willing to sign the Ethics Consent Form and most of them accepted to be quoted. There are quite different ways of carrying out interviews, from extremely structured to casual conversations, and from recorded to non-recorded. I chose not to record the interviews, and to take down notes instead. I decided to ask the same core questions, but of course allowed for flexibility too, because I wanted the participants to be able to say things in their own words and without much prompting from me. My questions revolved about the topics I am interested in, namely the changes in the language in its written form, its place in education and its status in general.

Some of the interviews took place at the participants' workplace, usually after agreeing on an appointment date so as not to disrupt their work. This was the case for the people working at the MOE, at the Prime Minister's Languages Services, at the New Zealand and Australian High Commissions and at USP. Typically, I would explain the object of my study, give them the Ethics Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form first (sometimes explaining some of the points), and often ask one or two questions as 'starters', then let them talk for as long as they wished to, while I was taking notes. Naturally, the questions varied a little depending on whom I was meeting, so they were sometimes more directed to language, and sometimes more to education, but all the participants were willing to share their opinion on both topics.

I made it very clear to the participants that I would respect their privacy and would therefore **not** use anything they told me "off the record". This sometimes happened with the other kind of interviews that were more informal, and could therefore be described as casual conversations rather than interviews. Sometimes, there would be a 'formal' interview, with note-taking and permission to quote, then followed by a conversation with no notes at all, and based on mutual trust. I found that a lot of people were interested in my PhD and my reasons for doing it, even though some were surprised sometimes that Bislama should be the object of a PhD. The response was extremely open and generous and all the people encouraged me to continue my research, and were often very talkative about its topic.

What was surprising, though, was that at times I would get almost diverging opinions from the same person, depending on whether it was formal or informal, as if the function of the person did not allow them to express themselves as freely as individuals. This did not happen very frequently, but on enough occasions to make me realise how sensitive the issue of the place of Bislama still is, and that the attitude of official organisations may not reflect people's personal views. When in doubt, I have always made sure that the person agreed about what I might quote by checking with them that I could do so, so that there would be no breach of trust on my part.

Because this is Vanuatu, what happened too was that some people would just open their door to me without any reservation and without prior arrangements to meet. I sometimes just happened to walk past a door with a sign on it and walk in. In most cases, people would agree to spare some of their time to talk to me, even if their work was not necessarily particularly linked to education or Bislama. On the other hand, I have sometimes left my phone number (not just once) to meet people I felt I had to, but who never called me back for an appointment. They were all people with big responsibilities, so it could have been just lack of time, or lack of interest in my topic.

I have tried to be as thorough as possible in both my corpus design and data collection, but I must admit that it has been at times frustrating not to find some documents that I know exist, but was unable to find no matter how hard I tried, which was the case for 'older' documents that have been out of print for a long time and cannot be found either at the National Library or the USP library. Fortunately, it concerns only a very limited number of documents, so that I do not think they would have changed the results of this research in a noticeable way.

CHAPTER 4: BISLAMA

4.1 History of Bislama

I will start this part on the language itself by briefly summarising its history developed in the literature review. Along with *Tok Pisin* in PNG and *Pijin* in the Solomon Islands, Bislama is one of the three dialects of Melanesian Pidgin which first started as a trade jargon, then expanded into a pidgin on the plantations of Queensland and Fiji in the later part of the nineteenth century. It was then brought back to their country of origin by the labourers who continued to use it on the plantations in the New Hebrides. The recruitment of Ni-Vanuatu labourers from all parts of the country contributed to the expansion of the language, in so far as they did not speak the same languages. For a long time, Bislama was therefore mainly spoken by men, and had a low status, as it “came to be regarded as the language of social deviants and troublemakers, both by missionaries and the members of the local communities” (Crowley 2000: 64). However, the way the language was considered changed, as shown by Camden (1977) in the introduction to his dictionary: “Between all sections of this community, [the Melanesian community, forming ninety percent of the population] Bislama functions as an invaluable means of communication in social contact, in business life, in church life and most conspicuously at present, in the rapidly expanding political life of the country” (1977: iii). Two years later, Camden (1979) notes that “in the areas that have retained most of their traditional culture virtually all adult males understand Bislama, and a substantial majority speak it. However, in these areas a minority of the women and few of the children understand or speak it to any great extent” (1979: 52). He also adds that mobility and marriage across language barriers became much more common in the 1960s and ‘70s, so that “in most cases, in both urban and rural situations, the children of these marriages speak Bislama as a first language” (1979: 52). I have also mentioned that what characterises the language is its considerable variation, found in both the oral and written forms, mostly because of regional pronunciations and the lack of a standardised form.

³⁹ As quoted by J. Lynch in *The Independent*, March 25, 2005.

4.2 From oral to written (1960s/1970s)

Vanuatu is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with most people speaking several languages. It is a well-known fact that multilingual societies use languages for different functions, which entails that some of the languages may not be suitable for all the domains of communication. Coulmas notes that:

With the advent of decolonization, the former colonies, most of which multilingual states, have therefore come under much pressure to assign to one of their languages the status of 'national language', which should then be adapted in such a way that it could satisfy all of the communicative needs of its respective society (Coulmas 1989: 3).

This is precisely what happened to Bislama, which was given the status of national (as well as official) language of the new republic in 1980: "The national language of the republic is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. The principal languages of education are English and French" (the Constitution of Vanuatu, Article 3:1). Until the 1960s, Bislama was not used in its written form, and even later, it was given a much more important place in the oral medium of the radio than in the written press. Coulmas talks about the concept of what he calls "language adaptation", which looks at how languages adjust when they have to meet new or changed functional requirements. According to him, language change is a gradual process often unnoticed by the speech community (Coulmas 1989: 21) even though it is the community's desire to employ the language for new purposes which is the most important factor in language adaptation. The language then has to fulfil new functions, and "It is using a language for purposes of modern communication that generates the necessary registers and thus leads to functional expansion" (Coulmas 1989: 3). In order to adjust, the language has to be enriched and normalised, which implies that there is a conscious intervention in the 'natural' course of language development (as for German, for instance). Coulmas stresses the importance of writing: "a mode of verbal communication in its own right", without which modern societies cannot function (Coulmas 1989: 12). The passage from oral to written is of primary importance for the development of the language in terms of its lexicon and grammar, as well as the appearance of new genres. He also emphasises the role of translators who, by being bilingual, are more aware of the shortcomings of a language when they compare it to a 'more advanced' language. This point is actually of interest for my research, as some of the documents of my corpus, not to say many of them, are in fact translations of English documents, so that it will definitely be taken into account in the present study.

Goody (1977) examines writing with an interesting perspective, namely its importance in changing communication from 'instant', face-to-face contact to the 'timeless' storage of information, and more possibilities of scrutiny. Therefore, he argues, the written language is more abstract, more depersonalised, and can be the object of more critical observation, thus having an impact on rationality, scepticism and logic.

In Goody (1987), we find the differences between the oral and the written languages (English) which make the written language more formal, more carefully constructed, and with a hierarchical differentiation of speech into proper and colloquial forms (Goody 1987: 265). Admittedly, this study is not about trying to compare written and oral Bislama, nevertheless, some of the points made by Goody are probably relevant to written Bislama too. He notices greater use of abstract terms, greater choice of words, usage of greater explicitness, greater syntactical elaboration and greater formality, and greater use of words derived from Latin. When the usefulness of the language grows and it acquires new functions, the lexicon has to expand. Todd says that "The pidgin's expansion is normally closely associated with the 'dominant' language, by which I mean the language of government and education, and this, in turn, is almost always the language from which the pidgin's vocabulary is derived" (Todd 1990: 55). The language can continue to expand with its own resources, but what happens is that it often borrows from the lexifier, and "the influence of English, especially on the vocabularies of English-based pidgins and creoles, is all-pervasive and a source of almost limitless enrichment" (Todd 1990: 57).

Maas (2009) makes interesting points about orality versus literacy when he states that "The critical literate threshold is crossed when linguistic structures are produced in writing that do not exist in spoken language, i.e. when writing is not the transcription of a spoken text". In his opinion, there are two aspects to this threshold: the formal structures used and the languages that make those structures available.

He adds: "Writing is usually not learned to convey a message but to reproduce (written) cultural patterns (often in a religious context)" (Maas 2009: 166). It is interesting here to note that religion contributed greatly to the expansion of Bislama in the 1970s.

Besnier (1988) focuses on the spoken-written relationships in Nukulaelae Tuvaluan and shows that it is not quite relevant to speak only of 'written' and 'spoken' Tuvaluan so that there is "a need for a multi-dimensional model of variation across text types" (Besnier 1988: 708). There are two written registers (personal letters and religious sermons) and at least five types of spoken registers. His conclusions state that "the characteristics traditionally attributed to written language clearly do not apply uniformly to Nukulaelae written registers...A number

of characteristics that have been associated with spoken language are reflected most strikingly in one of the two Nukulaelae registers...Significantly, the written register with the most affinities to the Western concept of written discourse is the sermons.” (p. 729). As a conclusion, Besnier stresses the fact that there is no universal boundary between written and spoken, but rather that “the cultural ‘value’ of a communicative context on Nukulaelae is the determiner of the form of language produced in that context” (p. 731). We can probably draw a parallel here with Bislama as we know that the written language used for religious texts is sometimes different from everyday Bislama used for notices, for instance.

Crowley and Lynch (1986) also devote a chapter of their book to the development of terminology in Melanesia, when new words are needed to express new concepts or functions. What they emphasise is the fact that language change is slower than the changes in society, so that if changes in the language are made too quickly, and particularly when this is done through borrowing, they can provoke a breakdown in communication and the creation of ‘two’ languages, for instance urban and rural varieties (which we know is what often happens in Vanuatu). The principle they advocate for expanding the lexicon is, whenever possible, not to resort to borrowing when possible, but rather to rely on the resources of the language itself (such as compounding and extension). It is a better choice, they say, because it is more easily understandable by all, and also because it expresses cultural identity. Nevertheless, borrowing is a good thing when you need very precise words used mostly in technical fields and on an international level, such as *akioloji* in Bislama for ‘archaeology’ in English and ‘archéologie’ in French, which can be recognised by all once a definition has been given for the Bislama word.

Just before Independence, Charpentier already wrote that “Bislama(n) used to be the language of illiterates. Today’s written versions are, in fact, solely for Europeanised people. The oldest natives, those who live in rural areas, have only attended the mission’s primary school, [so] most of this new vocabulary cannot but escape them. All those neologisms found in written Bislama(n) refer to the European world, its technology, its institutions” (Charpentier 1979: 171).⁴⁰ Tryon also notices that “Since the principal language of administration and government is Bislama” (with English and French playing distinctly minor roles), there has

⁴⁰ Autrefois, le Bislama(n) était un parler de populations illétrées. Les versions écrites actuelles s’adressent, en fait, uniquement à des gens européenisés. Les autochtones les plus âgés, ceux qui vivent dans les zones rurales, n’ont fréquenté que l’école primaire de la mission, l’essentiel de ce vocabulaire nouveau ne peut que leur échapper. Tous ces néologismes du Bislama(n) écrit font référence au monde européen, à ses techniques, à ses institutions.

been “a flood of neologisms in Bislama reflecting the changed administrative arrangements” and gives a list of some of the coinings that “have become an integral part of Bislama in recent years” (Tryon 1986: 307). However, he adds, “This situation causes confusion and consternation among non-urban Ni-Vanuatu, who constitute nearly 85% of the population” (Tryon 1986: 308).

So what happened to Bislama when it started being used in its written form? This is what I propose to study in the rest of the chapter. Let me here first quickly summarise the information to be found in the different dictionaries of Bislama because they give us a good insight on the expansion of the lexicon. In 1957, Schmidt’s wordlist contained roughly 600 words. Twenty years later, Camden’s dictionary had about 3,000 words. Roughly another twenty years later, Crowley’s 1995 dictionary had about 6,250 words, and his latest version in 2003 has 9,500 definitions under 7,000 headwords. A rapid estimation shows that within a period of forty years or so, the number of entries in dictionaries of Bislama has been multiplied by more than fifteen times (from 600 to 9,500). This estimation is in fact not even accurate as we have mentioned earlier that Crowley has “tried to include as much information on all varieties of the language as possible, except for the more formal and anglicised registers of the best educated anglophone Ni-Vanuatu” (Crowley 2003: 14). For instance, verbs such as *apruvum* ‘approve’ or *ogenaesem* ‘organise’ do not appear in the dictionary (therefore have not been counted) while they are very commonly used in Bislama. Also, the ‘word count’ stops in 2003, and we can be certain that new words have been introduced into the Bislama lexicon in the meantime, too. So in fact it can safely be inferred that the multiplying factor is much more than 15 within a period of four decades. What is important to remember is that as people’s everyday lives and realities change, and new technologies appear, the language will continue innovating constantly to adapt to new fields and cover new domains.

The written documents that compose my corpus have been put together according to their genre and/or function. As indicated in Chapter 3, there are 11 genres split into 23 subcategories. In this chapter, I will give a detailed account of what is to be found in the corpus and give precise examples to illustrate my points. However, the study of precise criteria as regards the hypothesis of potential decreolisation of Bislama will be discussed in the following chapter, with statistical results and analysis. I have to emphasise the fact that, given the highly variable way in which Bislama is written, some of the elements in my corpus were not fit to be integrated in the database, for they would have skewed the results. Therefore, I have chosen to include these documents in this chapter, because they are nevertheless part of the corpus and interesting to analyse in their own right.

I will start this study with a quotation which, in my opinion, illustrates perfectly the starting point of this whole research on the potential decreolisation of written Bislama (this letter was published at the dawn of independence):

FULAP NIU TOK LONG BISLAMA

Dear Edita,

Mi laikim tumas blong ridim atikol we ibin kamaot long pej 21-22 long Nasiko nambatu. be mi sore tumas we mino andestan samfala toktok we istap long atikol ya. mo had be from man we i raetem igo long bislama imekem ihad blong andestan. Fulap long longfala toktok 'responsebol citizens,' 'difinitiv' 'rikonaesem' 'exploitasem' we mino save se ol man aelan i ridim oli save olsem wanem. Plis me hop se nekis taem yu raetem stret bislama yu no raetem ol toktok we oli no gat mining. Mi hop se yu raetem stret bislama nekis taem. Tankyu - Simon - United Kingdom (leta igo long edita, Nasiko, 20/3/80: 9).⁴¹

As is stressed by the writer, the problem of introducing new lexicon by borrowing from English is definitely not a new one and already provoked reactions thirty years ago.

4.2.1 The press

Articles and letters to the editor are probably the biggest part of my corpus, because I was able to go back to the very beginning of their publication. It has nevertheless not been easy to find them, and I have therefore organised my study around a table to be found in the Appendices section (Appendix A). It took me quite some time to try and complete it with cross-checked information, as the collections are sometimes not complete themselves, and the dates given by journalists do not always match the ones I could find in other sources. I have chosen to list the periodicals in chronological order, and it has to be noted that the list is not exhaustive, as I have kept out some of the free supplements directed at tourists (and therefore containing no Bislama). I have done my best with what I could find in the collections of both the National Library and USP Library, but that does not mean that the collections are complete. For instance, it was particularly difficult at times to find the chronology for political publications, which were sometimes published for a short period of time, or changed names or

⁴¹ A Lot of New Words in Bislama/ Dear Editor, / I really enjoyed reading the article published pages 21-22 in *Nasiko* No2, but I'm sorry to have to say that there are words in this article that I cannot understand, because the journalist who wrote the article makes it hard to understand. I do not know if people from the islands can read or understand a lot of those words, such as 'responsible citizens', 'definitive', 'recognise' or 'exploit' ['exploitation' if there is a typo between final 'm' and 'n', as the verb would have been 'exploitem']. So please I hope that next time you will use 'good' Bislama, and not words that do not mean anything. I hope you use 'good' Bislama next time.

issue numbers every so often. Whenever I could, I asked the journalists I met to check some of the information. I hope that this work may be useful to others in the future and save them time to find what they are looking for.⁴²

4.2.1.1 Newsletters

The French Residency was the first under the Condominium to start a newsletter, called *Bulletin d'Information de la Résidence de France* 'French Residency Information Bulletin', which started in 1961 and was published monthly, then bimonthly. Camden notes that "Items drawn from the weekly "Bulletin d'Information de la Résidence Française" were translated into Bislama and published bimonthly, and although the grammar and orthography used were often criticised, the publication was widely read" (Camden 1977: iv). The British followed suit in 1971 with their fortnightly *British Newsletter*. Let us look at these two publications, almost the first documents written in Bislama for the New-Hebridean population, even though it would probably be fair to say that not many people at the time could read and write Bislama. The *Bulletin d'Information de la Résidence de France* had an edition all in Bislama, varying from ten to twenty pages, with photos beginning to appear in July 1969. Let me start with a passage from 1970:

*M. John Lynch, one student long university bilong Hawai em i stap nawia long Tanna blong spenem 5 manish. Bambai em i lanem lanwich bilong Tanna bilong loock stamba bilong ol lanwich ia bicosse bambai em i passem one examen. M.Lynch i bin came before long New-Hebrides in 1968. Taem ia em i lane mol [sic] lanwich bilong Malekula (Issue No 2, February 1970: 11).*⁴³

As is obvious in this passage, the language used in the *Bulletin* is a mixture of English, French and Bislama, with consistent orthographies throughout the newsletters, odd as some might look, and probably not intelligible to speakers of English only or of French only. What I mean by this is that it is definitely Bislama, variable as it may appear, so that in spite of the fact that it contains words either in English or French, or some strange mixtures of the two, the grammar is definitely neither, and is pretty similar to the one used in today's Bislama. But in fact, one would have to be almost trilingual French/English/Bislama to be able to understand the newsletter.

⁴² I am grateful to Ross Clark for giving me information from his personal collection.

⁴³ Mr. John Lynch, a student from the University of Hawai'i, is now in Tanna to spend five months there. He will be learning one of the languages of Tanna to find the origin of these languages for an examination (he will be sitting). Mr. Lynch already came to the New Hebrides in 1968 when he learned the languages of Malekula.

When examining these texts, it is important to bear in mind that at the time, there was practically no model of written Bislama, apart from Pionnier's 1913 description and Schmidt's 1957 six-hundred French/English/Bislama wordlist. So the people who wrote the *Bulletin* in those days were almost pioneers in the use of Bislama as a written language. What we find in these texts, representing a total of 98 pages of typed material, can be described as follows:

1) Spelling:

There are a great number of 'oddities', mostly words from English with a French spelling, or a pseudo English spelling:⁴⁴

- *h* is often found after *t* : sometimes, influence from written English : *ol getha (olgeta)* 'the', *wethem (wetem)* 'with'; but sometimes, no justification because no *h* in English, as in *rithim (ridim)* 'read', *lelbeth (lelelbet)* 'rather', *foreth (fored)* 'forehead, front'.
 - *c* for *k* : at the beginning of words: *cam (kam)* 'come', *castom (kastom)* 'custom'.
 - *ck* for *k* : at the end of words, even when not in English: *loock (luk)* 'look', '*loockout (lukaot)* 'look out', *tock toc(toktok)* 'speak, talk'.
 - *ou* for *ao* : kept English spelling and pronunciation: *out (aot)*, *about (abaot)*,
 - *aw* for *ao* : *naw (nao)* 'now', *hawa (haoa)* 'hour', but '*low*' for English 'law' '*loa*' (change for French speakers).
 - *oo* for *u* : *too mass (tumas)* 'very', *loosum (lusum)* 'lose'
 - *ai* or *aï* for *ae* : *bambai (bambae)* 'will'
 - '*say*' (*se*) : conjunction
 - *ll* for *l* : *tallem (talem)* 'tell', *follem (folem)* 'follow', *hollem (holem)* 'hold' (no double consonants in Bislama).
- Combination of several features: *camouth (kamaot)* 'come out'; *sall wotha (solwota)* 'sea'; *sem marque (semak)* 'same,as'; *maney (mane)* 'money'; *same ting (samting)* 'something'; they may make some of the words incomprehensible to French speakers, and possibly to English speakers as well.

⁴⁴ For practical purposes, the original word will be followed by its spelling in 'standard' Bislama between brackets and by the English or French origin (not translation) between inverted commas or square brackets when necessary for comprehension.

- Spelling variations due to phonological variants: usual ones (influenced by the phonology of VL):

- *sh* (sometimes *ch*) for *s* at the end of words such as *Franish* (*Franis*) ‘French’, *manish* (*manis*) ‘month’, *lash* (*las*) ‘last’, *lanwich* (*lanwis*) ‘language’, (mostly disappeared, merged as /s/).
- *c* for *g* : *capman* (*gavman*) ‘government’
- *d* for *t* : *raindem* (*rentem*) ‘rent’, *wendem* (*wantem*) ‘want’
- *s* for *j* : *senisim* (*jenisim*) ‘change’
- *p* for *b* : *perrem* (*berem*) ‘bury’, *plokem* (*blokem*) ‘block’
- Ø for *h* (dropped ‘h’) : *em/hem* (still current today)
- Epenthetic vowels:⁴⁵ *bilong* (*blong*); *kulusap* (*klosap*) ‘near’

2) Vocabulary: a mixture of French words kept as such, and English words kept as such.

- Hours in French: 10h (10 am), 22h (10 pm)
- *Bicose* (*from*) ‘because’⁴⁶
- *i strong tu bi long mekem* (*i had tu blong mekem*) ‘it is hard to do’
- Consistent, but which have changed: *bat* (*be*) for ‘but’

3) Grammar:

- Plural -s at the end of English words, even when not in English (e.g. ‘*childrens*’)
- *Fala* is used as a separate word, not a suffix, mostly after numerals in English (*three fala*, *two fala*); also found for pronouns (*you fala*, *nother fala*)
- Construction with *bilong* for compound nouns : *long garden bilong pikinini* (kindi) ‘kindergarten’; *ol chief bilong custom* (*kastom jif*) ‘traditional chief’⁴⁷
- Serial verb constructions (SVC):⁴⁸ no changes: *i sendem news i cam say...* ‘news has come that...’; *i mekem N i V* ‘it makes N V’; *i tekem i cam long Santo* ‘take it to Santo’; *i no save livim Na Griamal i mekem trouble olsem* ‘Na Griamal cannot be left

⁴⁵ An epenthetic vowel is an added sound or letter to break a consonant cluster.

⁴⁶ In Guy’s dictionary, there are two translations for ‘because’: *from we*, and *bikos* (Guy 1974: 241).

⁴⁷ These constructions do not make sense in Bislama, where one finds *kindi* and *kastom jif* respectively.

⁴⁸ SVC: a chain of two (or more) verbs with a simultaneous (but semantically transparent) event interpretation, lacking overt co-ordinators (Meyerhoff 2000: 160).

to make this kind of trouble'; *mekem ol company bilong place ia i came more big fala* 'make the companies of that place become bigger'; *Père Jahan i mekem oli visit school* 'Père Jahan made them visit the school'; *letem ol company out side i wok* 'let foreign companies work'.

- *Every* : used with both predicate markers 'i' and 'oli'

The British Residency started its own *British Newsletter* much later, in 1971. The first article more or less in Bislama was published on December 14, 1971 and was already about the spelling of Bislama, and the use of pidgin. This is what the subject of discussion was at the time:

WHICH WAY YOU-ME WRITEM PIDGIN?

One falla something we bambae oli talk about long Advisory Council meeting long this month emi Pidgin or Bislama.

Wanem now you me think long languis ia? Olsem wanem bambae you-me writem? Wanem talk-talk long Pidgin now you-me wantem keepim more which one you-me no wantem?
(*British Newsletter*, December 14, 1971: 9)⁴⁹

It then offers the same passage written in three different ways, with a view to making people react and say which spelling system they favour for Bislama, and why. The extracts were prepared by linguist Jacques Guy who "has been working at Port Olry in north Espiritu Santo for some 18 months. Although Pidgin is not one of the languages he is studying, he has taken a keen interest in it and, knowing that the *British Newsletter* was about to start publishing a section in Pidgin/Bichelamar/Bislama/Pislamar, he has kindly prepared texts using the three possible spellings (so far) of the language: the Rev. Bill Camden's, the "ordinary traditional" and his own" (*British Newsletter*, 14th December, 1971: 9). Here is part of the three propositions.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ How do we write Pidgin? At this month's Advisory Council meeting, one of the topics discussed was Pidgin or Bislama. What is our opinion on this language? How are we going to write it? Which words of Pidgin do we want to keep and which do we not want?

⁵⁰ Because these examples are all about variation in orthography, I will not use [*sic*] for any of the spellings, even if some of them are probably more typos than choices.

- 1) *Sam netiv man oli talem long mifala se: “Sipos yufala i raitem nyus-pepa ia long Bislama, i gud”. Be mifala i thing-ting se: bamabe mifala i mas raitem olsem wanem? Wanem fasin i gud blong raitem? [...]*
- 2) *Some man long New Hebrides oli tallem long me fella se “Suppose you fella i writem newspaper ia long pidgin emi good”. But me falla i think se olsem wanem now bambae me falla i writem? [...]*
- 3) *Sam netiv man ol i talem long mifala se, Supos yu raitem nyus-pepa ya long Pislamar, i kut. Me mifala i tingting se, bamabe mifala i mas raitem olsem wanem? Wanem fasin i kut plong raitem? Nao ya, mifala i raitem hemya plong traem nomo [...]*

Sample texts in *British Newsletter*, December 14, 1971: 9⁵¹

These three short texts are in fact the perfect illustration of the variations to be found in written Bislama at the time, when it was starting to be used for religion (hence Camden’s spelling in example 1). What is referred to as ‘ordinary traditional’ – I am not quite sure what the writer means by these two terms, but it does correspond to the way the rest of the article is written – is in fact a mixture of English words and spelling with a few changes to ‘bislamise’ the language such as the *-em* suffix for transitive verbs as in *writem*. Finally, example 3 (Guy’s own orthography) is vastly influenced by local pronunciation, which is in keeping with what can be noticed in Guy’s dictionary. Guy actually references words starting with *b* under *p* (Guy 1974: 119), there are no words starting with *d*, no words starting with *g* (under *k* but not mentioned), *f* is under *p* (Guy 1974: 120) but the suffix *-fala* is found as *-vala*, no word starting with *h* (they are referenced under the vowel that follows the *h*) and no words under *j*.

In the introduction to his dictionary, Camden underlines the fact that “The nearest thing to such a pattern [conform to a prestige dialect] is the pressure recognisable in many parts of the country, to conform the phonology of Bislama to that of standard English, to a marked extent. This is particularly noticeable in the form of the roots most recently developed.” (Camden

⁵¹ Some locals say to us that it would be a good thing to write the newspaper in Bislama. But how should it be written? What is the right spelling?

1977: vii) If we look at examples 1 and 3, this is illustrated by Camden's 'gud' as opposed to Guy's 'kut'. But Camden adds that "in the writing of the language, there has been a widespread tendency for everyone to do 'that which is right in his own eyes' " (1977: vii). What Crowley explains in his grammar is that the contrasts between voiced and voiceless are lost in word finals – only the voiceless stays – so that 'dog' and 'dock' are homophones, but the spelling is close to English, so there are two different words in Bislama, *dog* and *dok* (Crowley 2004: 11).

So what I can conclude from the observation of these two newsletters, one presumably written by Francophones and the other by Anglophones is that in both cases, we find a lot of English words or of anglicised spelling for Bislama. At the same time, the language found in the francophone newsletter almost looks more anglicised than the Anglophone one, which could be considered as an indication that there was awareness of the importance of English as the lexifier and that there might have been sometimes 'hypercorrection' on the part of the Bulletin writers.

4.2.1.2 Newspapers

It is not easy to have a clear picture of the press over a period of about forty years in Vanuatu, as many of the newspapers were only published for a short time, or sometimes came back under a different name. The sources of information available sometimes give different dates for newspapers, or even different names, which does not make the task of referencing them a simple one. I have tried to be as thorough as possible in getting a fair picture of the various publications which I have decided to present in the same order as the table to be found in Appendix A.

In the mid-seventies, the newsletters became periodicals, *Nabanga* in French and Bislama and *New Hebrides News* in English at first, then with a little Bislama from 1972 onwards. In *Nabanga* No 1, 1975, the quality of the Bislama used is no better than the one in *Le Bulletin*, and we find the same features with heavy (and sometimes unfortunate) anglicisation of the language, as can be seen in the following passage:

Ol pipol we i kat radio, bambai ol i harem ol world News i no plenty bat local news yes. Long NABANGA bambai i kat one ples bilong you sapos you raet long mi fala bilong tallem same ting we you ting baot long NABANGA o tallem aot ting ting bilong you about ol tefren kwistin.

Nabanga No 1, 1975: 2.⁵²

⁵² People who have a radio hear a lot of local news, but not much of international news. In *Nabanga*, there will be room for you to write to us about your ideas and express your opinions on different topics.

I will not study this example in detail as we find the same features already identified for the Bulletin (see 4. 2.1.1 Newsletters). However, when we examine what is published under *Légende de l'archipel: Long taem blong bifo...Wan storian blong bifo blong Makura* 'An old traditional tale of Makura'⁵³ (Nabanga No 17: 20), we notice that in this case, there are no anglicisms at all: no English words, no plural -s, no verbs recently borrowed from English. So we can remark that, because this is a *kastom stori* 'traditional story', it is not surprising that we do not find any evidence of anglicisation. Ni-Vanuatu people are very proud of their *kastom stori* and want to protect them as well as pass them on to the next generations, thereby transmitting their culture where recent, more fashionable loan words do not find their place because they are not needed.

At the dawn of independence, the two newspapers disappeared to become *Tam Tam*: "the French Newspaper and British Newspaper staff came together to form the first ever Government-owned *Tam Tam* Newspaper which was printed every two weeks. Eventually it became the *Vanuatu Weekly Newspaper* until it closed in 2000 (Len Garae, retrieved 31/8/2009 from *How media grew in Vanuatu* > *Daily Post* > Article Archives Page 2 of 2 <http://www.dailypost.vu/ArticleArchives/tabid/56/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/4>). The publication was in the three official languages and for a long time, it was the only newspaper in Vanuatu. He adds: "About 1978/79, a brave Australian woman journalist called Christine Coombe set up the first independent newspaper called "The Voice of the New Hebrides". It was not a thick newspaper but it was an instant hit. It carried mostly briefs and many pictures of sports. As journalist, editor and publisher, she knew what she was doing. I was free lancing for her. Eventually her weekly newspaper was selling like hot cakes" (Garae 2009). I was unable to find any copy of the periodical in Vanuatu and was told that Ms Coombe had been deported because the government did not like the independence of her tone in what she published about Walter Lini. She was Vanuatu correspondent for ABC and also for Radio Australia, and the director of News Media Ltd which owned the *Voice of Vanuatu* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 mars 1983, p. 6, retrieved April 2, 2012 from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19830314&id=Zv5jAAAAIBAJ&sjid=K-cDAAAIBAJ&pg=4552,4883553>). I have found in a reference from the National Library of Australia that 35 issues of the newspaper were published, mostly in English and with some Bislama. So unfortunately, the little Bislama to be found in this publication is not included in my corpus.

⁵³ *Makura* is one of the Shepherd Islands, north of *Efate*.

Apart from *Vanuatu Weekly/Hebdomadaire*, there was another periodical, *The Trading Post*, which started in 1992 and is still published today, though it has changed names in the meantime to become the *Vanuatu Daily Post*. This is what Len Garae says about it: “Initially the *Trading Post* was an advertising brochure for business houses. It was a neat little business. When Marc-Neil Jones took it over, he cleverly moulded it into a newspaper. In 1993, it became a full-fledged weekly print medium. Slowly but surely he developed it with a skeleton staff of three to expand and develop it to where it is today with a success story employing over 40 on the staff and coming out in colour daily except on Sunday” (Garae 2009). The *Daily Post* is written in English with the occasional sports article in Bislama. However, the newspaper has a free supplement, all-Bislama *Vanuatu Wikli Post*. It was expected to be launched by the *Daily Post* in August 2008, with over 3,000 copies to be distributed in the islands. There had already been a trial monthly one in 1993, but it never got off the ground even though it was a huge popular success. The editor of the *Daily Post* declares that “*Wikli Post* carries news and features, advice and information to rural areas and will include much needed health and educational information and news to improve the lives of people in a language they fully understand. Currently there is absolutely nothing printed for the bulk of the rural population”. Marc Neil Jones adds that “The newspaper has utilised the TVET Bislama language spell check to ensure that the Bislama used in the paper is standardised” (www.dailypost.vu, posted on August 16, 2008).⁵⁴ In fact, the supplement was actually “launched in August 2008 and lasted for about a year, then stopped for about a year too and resumed in December 2010 to stop again in February 2011” (Ricky Binihi, 14/4/2011, p.c). Even though the newspaper was hugely successful in the islands, there were not enough financial resources to keep it going. An attempt was made to have it sold in Port Vila to subsidise the free publication for the islands, but this was not viable. According to Ricky Bihini, people valued the *Wikli* for two reasons: first, because they could understand Bislama better than English or French, and second, because the paper provided them with analysis of situations – particularly political or social issues – as it did not deal with the ‘urgency’ of daily news.

⁵⁴ TVET: Technical, Vocational Education and Training. Spell check retrieved June 2009 from <http://www.swtech.com.au/bislama/index.html>

This was not the first attempt at having a periodical all in Bislama, as *Tam Tam* (*nias pepa blong yumi*) was probably the only paper all in Bislama in 2001, until August 2002. “It was published by the *Port Vila Press* group but was too costly so disappeared, but the Bislama part was then included until 2003. So there was one paper in the three languages, then in May 2003 it became *The Independent*, which kept the same formula with the three languages (Gratien Molsoul, March 2010, p.c).

The most recent daily is the *Vanuatu Times*, which started in September 2009 and is privately owned. In 2010, the team is composed of twelve journalists, two of them on training, four of them for sports both in English and Bislama, one for the French section, three for the local and island news in English and Bislama, all of them Ni-Vanuatu. The newspaper calls itself “*Vanuatu’s Indigenous Owned Newspaper*” and claims to be written “in the three national languages”, which is highly inaccurate, as there is only **one** national language in Vanuatu, namely Bislama. The confusion between national and official languages is not worthy of a newspaper as it can be misleading for the readers because it goes against what is stated in the country’s constitution.

As opposed to other newspapers where the ‘sections’ written either in English, French or Bislama are separated, the articles in any of the three languages are mixed on most of the pages. In fact, a very limited part of the paper is written in French, and there is roughly the same amount of English and Bislama articles, with what appears to be a bit more Bislama, but this is variable from one issue to another. The quality of written Bislama found in this paper would be considered by some as very poor, as it is a mixture of English and Bislama, with what appears to be a ‘don’t care’ attitude. Let me quote an extract of an article to illustrate this seemingly rather harsh judgement:

*Ol niufala intek blong trainee tija we oli stap tede, bambae oli fes cohort blong ol Tija we oli stap ko tru naoia long implementesen blong fes-eva **HARMONISED** program blong Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education-VITE. [...] Long taem I kam, olsem se I kat 2 seperet institusen anda long wan roof. Long English saed yumi kat difren entri kraeteria, difren course content mo difren asesmen. Long French saed, sem samting I happen afta 47 yia long ol dispariti ia, VITE I fotunet bikwan inaf anda VESS festaem mo I kam VESAP program blong luksave se I nid blong harmonaesem ol program blong VITE. (Vanuatu Times, No. 26, 12 March 2010: 2).⁵⁵*

⁵⁵ *Today’s new intake of trainee teachers will be the first cohort of teachers to go through the implementation of the first-ever harmonised programme at the Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education (VITE). [...] For a long time, there have been two separate institutions under the same roof. The English and French parts had different*

Even though it is quite common for Bislama to borrow heavily from English for registers that do not exist in the language, such as education or official services, what is striking in this extract is that even the words that have been part of the Bislama vocabulary for a long time, and thus have a standard Bislama orthography, are kept here with their English spelling: *English* for *Inglis* and *French* for *Franis* are two such words. Others are also kept in English, *course content*, *roof*, *trainee* or **HARMONISED** [sic]. The use of capitalisation for the predicate marker ‘i’ becoming ‘I’ can also be seen as unfortunate and possibly confusing for not so educated readers faced with a text written in a mixture of English and Bislama. Grammatical calques such as *fes-eva program* ‘first-ever program’ may also hinder the comprehension of the content for a non-anglophone speaker.

So today, we can say that there are three main newspapers in Vanuatu, *The Independent* (weekend, three languages), the *Daily Post* (English) and the *Vanuatu Times* (three languages). The Bislama used in these publications is very different and depends mostly, in my opinion, on the attitude of the journalist towards the language. Some make a point of not wanting to anglicise their Bislama and being consistent in their spelling, using mostly Crowley’s dictionary as a reference. In other articles, it seems obvious that the choice of the writer is different, with massive borrowing from English, even sometimes code-mixing with English, and a highly variable kind of Bislama as far as the spelling is concerned.

Vila Flash is a free weekly magazine of around thirty pages which started March 1, 2010 and whose motto is ‘*Tingting Positif!*’. It is published in three languages, but with only one or two columns in Bislama, which range from *Kalja* ‘Culture’ to stories or various articles about today’s Ni-Vanuatu society. The cultural page usually presents local artists, members of the *Nawita Asosiesen*, and their work. The page entitled ‘*Tingting Positif!*’ can be considered as the editorial of the magazine, and broaches on topics such as *Abaot Mane* ‘Money’ or *Abaot Woman Vila* ‘The Women of Vila’ (written by Sero Kuautonga, a famous Ni-Vanuatu painter and president of Nawita Association). The stories are *kastom storian*, probably collected by Paul Gardissat (referred to as P.G.).

I will conclude this part on the press by giving the results of my first ‘pilot study’ on the genre ‘Press’, when I was still trying to determine how I would proceed to find evidence of potential decreolisation in the different genres. I decided to look in detail at various issues of the *Daily Post (DP)* of September and November 2009 as well as of *The Independent* with issues of

entry criteria, different course contents and different assessments. After 47 years of disparity, VITE has the opportunity to fill the need of harmonising VITE programmes, first under the VESS, and later the VESAP programmes.

March 2009 and January and February 2010, all of which I chose randomly. One of the features I focused on first is the plural *-s* to see if it is happening often enough to be a salient feature and therefore be considered as a sign of decreolisation, or if it was just the odd occurrence. The results of this pilot study are summed up in table 4.1. The results gave evidence that the ending was found in anglicised texts, along with many words either in English or borrowed straight from English while not many Bislama words were actually put into the *-s* plural form. I also noted that it was mostly the Bislama nouns ending with *-a* ‘-er’ that take the plural mark, as well as words in official notices too.

Table 4.1: Pilot plural *-s*

	19/11/09	18/11/09	16/09/09	10/09/09	17/09/09
Daily Post (letters to the editor)	<i>ol promotions,</i> <i>ol pikjas</i>	<i>Pasifik Sisonal</i> <i>Wokas,</i> <i>ol growers,</i> <i>ol farmers,</i> <i>ol activities</i>	<i>Plante kwestins,</i> <i>ol senia</i> <i>posisens,</i> <i>risoses,</i> <i>fes 10 years</i>	<i>artikels,</i> <i>tu ministries,</i> <i>ol portfolios,</i>	<i>ol gaps,</i> <i>ol issues,</i> <i>ol developments,</i> <i>tufala consultants</i>
	28/3/09	16/1/10	5/2/10		
The Independent (articles and ads)	<i>5 crews,</i> <i>kasem fishes,</i> <i>ol stools,</i> <i>qualifiers,</i> <i>2 teams,</i> <i>3 games</i>	<i>Ol skuls,</i> <i>evri sels,</i> <i>ol aid donors,</i> <i>fri equipments,</i> <i>ol organisers,</i> <i>“ups mo daon”,</i> <i>ol “ekstras”</i>	<i>Besfrens,</i> <i>minits, drinks,</i> <i>(ol human raet)</i> <i>abuses,</i> <i>lidas,</i> <i>raets,</i> <i>waeves</i>		

It is difficult to make any conclusion on the written Bislama used in the press, as there are probably as many styles as there are journalists: as I have already said, the writers make personal choices for the language they use, and so do the readers who are aware of this fact, as some mention ‘*stret Bislama*’ or ‘*rabis Bislama*’ when you ask for their opinion about such and such article. There is also official awareness of this variation in what has to be called the ‘quality’ of the written language, as Gratien Molsoul was, for instance, awarded “la Médaille du Meilleur Rédacteur en Bislama” ‘the Medal for Best Journalist Writing in Bislama’ by Deputy Prime Minister Walter Lini in 1997 (Molsoul, p.c., March 2010). Today’s journalists have never been taught Bislama at school, so variation prevails: it remains to be seen whether the standardisation of written Bislama everyone seems to be in favour of, but which is not happening in reality, will one day have an impact on the normalisation of the language in the press.

4.2.2 Politics: the road to independence

Just as was the case for periodicals, it was not easy to try and find what was published by political parties, mostly because the publications were pre-independence and lasted only a few months for some of them. Table 4.1 attempts to clarify my findings, and the documents mentioned there are the ones I have studied. The genre ‘Politics’ in my data base is subdivided into six categories, with a total of just under 30 pages, that is to say 6.5% of the entire corpus. However, some of the publications, such as *Le Mélanésien*, for instance, have been included in the ‘Press’ genre as opposed to ‘Politics’ because they were more like newspapers than political tracts or manifestos.

As previously stated, Bislama played a preponderant role in the political life of the country, in so far as it can be said to have been used as one of the most important features of the run-up to independence. Charpentier mentions that “The first electoral campaign in the history of the New Hebrides took place in 1975. Each political party was all entitled to express themselves on the radio, in English, French and Bislama, it was added. The pidgin was thus acknowledged again as playing an official role.” (Charpentier 1979: 143)⁵⁶ Camden (1977) emphasises the fact that the changes in attitude towards the language are due to its role in the political debate, and adds that the population’s political awareness, resentment and frustration have found expression in Bislama (1977: vi).

The two main political parties endorsed the use of Bislama and used it for their platforms while also making the choice of resorting to Bislama for their written information publications, which demonstrated the adequacy of the language to deliver speeches and produce political literature. The first political party in the Condominium was the ‘New Hebrides Cultural Association’ (afterwards called the ‘New Hebrides National Party’), mostly Anglophone, which was then followed by the creation of ‘Union des Partis Modérés’ (UMP), a competing movement to attract Francophone support, (Crowley 2000:92). They both produced newsletters such as *New Hebridean Viewpoints*, a monthly newsletter published by the Information Department of the *Niu Hebridis Nasonal Pati*, whose editor was Hilda Lini (the first Prime-Minister-to-be Walter Lini’s sister). It welcomed articles, poems, etc, in the three languages. *Viewpoints* started in 1971 and it is the oldest newspaper in the New Hebrides.

⁵⁶ En novembre 1975, avait lieu la première campagne électorale de l’histoire néo-hébridaise. Chaque parti politique était autorisé à s’exprimer sur les ondes, il était précisé en anglais, en français et en Bislama(n). A nouveau, le pidgin se voyait reconnaître un rôle officiel.

The newsletter promoted the message of independence to the rural people. In fact it contributed to the education of the grassroots on what it meant to remove the colonial yoke to be a free people to choose their own destiny. This was the first print medium to be put together and stapled by an all New Hebridean staff of one and sometimes two” (Garae 2009: 2).

It changed names in April 1977 to become *Vanua-aku Viewpoints* after the new name of the party in February 1977. Between 1971 and March 1979, the Vanua-aku Party published three different journals: *Vanua-aku Viewpoints*, *Nasonal Pati Nius* and *Bislama*. From November 1981, *Vanua-aku Viewpoints* integrated the different *Nasonal Pati*’s journals which became a single periodical. To make things clearer, table 4.2 includes all the political publications I could find.

Table 4.2: Political publications

Publication	Frequency	Languages	Dates
<i>New Hebridean Viewpoints</i> (oldest newspaper) ↓	monthly	E/F/B	1971-1977
<i>Vanuaaku Viewpoints</i> ↓	monthly	E/F/B	1977-1979
<i>Vanuaaku Pati</i> ↓	monthly	B/E	1992-1995
<i>Viewpoint</i> ↓	monthly	B/E	1996
<i>Nakamal</i> ↓	???	B/E	July 1971- Dec 1972
<i>New Hebrides Nakamal</i>	???	B/E	1973-1974
<i>Tan Union</i>	monthly	E/F but mostly B	April 1977-Nov 1977
<i>Tru Toktok- Journal du Parti Fédéral des Nouvelles-Hébrides</i>	monthly	B/F	No 2 March 1979
<i>Nasiko/Kingfisher/Le Martin Pêcheur</i>	weekly	E/F/B	1980
<i>Jeune Mélanésie</i> ↓	fortnightly	F/B	April 1980-Sept 1980
<i>Le Mélanésien</i>	every 10 days	F/B	Oct 1980- June 1981
<i>Golden Express</i>	???	B/E???	1992-1996
<i>Etoile UMP’S News Bulletin</i>	???	B	1995
<i>Independent Front Niusleta</i>	???	B	1995
<i>Ifira Flash (aka Politikol Flash)</i>	???	B	1996

* The arrow ↓ indicates that the publication became the one immediately below it.

Just like in the part about ‘Religion’, some of these publications are not part of my database because they had been studied at an early stage and can therefore be considered as pilot studies. Those included in the database will be the object of study in Chapter 5.

As I did for the ‘Press’ genre, I started by making a pilot study of political documents to see which features, if any, could be considered as tokens of decreolisation. The following paragraph will present the results of this earlier study.

The oldest political newspaper was *Viewpoints*, so I will start with comments on written material first from January and June 1972, and then from December 1976 and January and March 1977. We will first consider two 1972 documents which look like ‘Letters to the Editor’, as they are signed and express personal opinions. It may be useful here to remember that Bislama was just starting to be used more commonly as a written language, and its orthography was highly variable at the time. This is exactly what we can notice in these two letters which are characterised by very different ways of writing. This is an example of what we can read in the first letter:

Ol geta fren bilong mi tu de imi lukim blade samting i cam cam long New Hebrides. Sam bala samting ia i good be sam bala nomo. An if imi no lukaut kut alsamting ia oli save seperetem imi ol man bilong New Hebrides
(*NH Viewpoints* No 4, January 1972: 15)

In today’s Bislama, the text would be like this:

Olgeta fren blong me tede yumi lukim plante samting i kam long Niu Hebridis. Sam samting ia i gud be sam i nogud. Mo sapos yumi ino lukaot gud ol samting ia oli save seperetem yumi ol man Niu Hebridis.⁵⁷

As we can see here, the construction and the meaning of the sentences are easily understandable in spite of the differences in spelling, because the variations are due to spoken variations already identified. The grammar shows no difference with today’s, and the very few words coming from English like *an if* for ‘and if’ are transparent. In the second letter, which strongly criticises discrimination against the people from the New Hebrides in terms of jobs in towns, we do not find as many variations: there is presence of epenthetic vowels in *sikul* (*skul*) ‘school’ and *turu* (*tru*) ‘true’, but this was a common feature in the language of that period. Otherwise the written Bislama in this text is surprisingly similar to what we would have today, as illustrated by this short example: “*Tete yumi long Niu*

⁵⁷ My friends, today we see a lot of things arriving in the New Hebrides, some good, some bad. If we do not pay real attention to them, they will divide us, the people of the New Hebrides.

Hebridis yumi tingting wetem tokabaot se olsem wanem bambae yumi nomo man Niu Hebridis bambae yumi lukaot Niu Hebridis” ‘Today we people of the New Hebrides think and talk about the way we locals, and us only, will look after the New Hebrides’ (*NH Viewpoints*, June 6, 1972: p. 13). The articles are mostly in Bislama (with a few in English), and there is nothing really striking as far as anglicisation is concerned. There are a few borrowings from English, obviously, mainly for official names like *Joen Kot Registreson blong kraon* ‘Joint Court Land Registration’ but we still find the *blong* construction while we would probably have something like *Joen Kot Lan(s) Registresen* today. The words spelt today with -g are mostly spelt with -k as *olketa* ‘the’, *bikfala* ‘big’, and the predicate marker *i* is sometimes (but not consistently) cliticised in *ikat* or *ikohet* (all examples *Viewpoints* January 1977, p. 11). What is remarkable in these articles is that I have not found words with the plural ending -s even though we have numerous nouns in the plural like *ol jif* ‘chiefs’, *ol pasta* ‘pastors’, *ol sekreteri* ‘secretaries’, *ol lida* ‘leaders’, etc (*Viewpoints* Vol. 7, No 3, March 1977, p. 11). The only exception to this is to be found in the noun phrase *evri sivil mo kriminal keses*, which is all the more interesting as the plural is found with the quantifier *evri* obviously meaning ‘all’ here.

The only document I have from *Nakamal* is a letter to the editor and was published pre-independence in 1974. The letters we find in this newspaper are written either in English (the majority) or in Bislama. In this letter, there are a few words in English (*last issue*, *salary*, *town*), some with the plural -s like *slums* or *workers*. Some Bislama words are spelt in English like *suppose* (*sapos*) ‘if’, and sometimes in the plural as in *boes* [*long Vila harbour*] ‘buoys’. We also find verbs derived from English and currently used a lot like *critisaesem*, *provaedem*, and the phrase *talem se* ‘say that’ is written as one word *talemse*. It is impossible to draw any conclusions from just one example, but the language in this document definitely shows anglicisation in more than one way.

Tan Union started in April 1977 and was the newspaper of francophone ‘Union des Communautés des Nouvelles-Hébrides’ (U.C.N.H), and was written in the three languages. The editorials are written in the three languages French, Bislama and English (so I have included two in the ‘Translation’ part). The publication gave readers an opportunity to voice their opinion and most of the Letters to the Editor are written in Bislama and deal with all the issues that were the object of controversy while the country was on its way to independence. The Bislama is therefore often idiosyncratic, but we find the same features already mentioned in terms of spelling. The vocabulary also depends on the writer but is never highly anglicised, maybe because it was Francophones writing (as illustrated by the French word ‘*paye*’ for

‘pay, salary’. However, we do find English words or borrowed expressions in the Bislama version of the editorial, as in *ol melanesians* ‘Melanesians’, *policy*, *wisaot reli tinktink blong...* ‘without really thinking of...’, and *watch*. So on the whole, we find that there is more variation in the spelling than traces of anglicisation.

Tru Toktok was the ‘Journal du parti fédéral des Nouvelles-Hébrides’ (Union des Partis Modérés Libéraux) written mostly in Bislama, with some French as well. New words are being introduced in the Bislama lexicon, such as “Constitusen” [sic], so it is indicated in quote marks and its meaning is then explained in simple terms for less educated readers to understand its meaning. Apart from such words, there are very few English words or anglicised expression, even though we find two or three occurrences such as *long 2 wiks taem* ‘in two weeks time’, *2 experts* and *Political Kommissars* ‘political commissars’. It is here noticeable that these words take the English plural ending -s as well, which never appears in any of the rest of the texts. The spelling shows the usual variations with *wendem* (*wantem*) ‘want’, *ko* (*go*) ‘go’ and *kat* (*gat*) ‘have’ and *c* for *k* as in *cofe* ‘coffee’ or *copra* ‘coprah’. More unusual is *iumi* ‘we, us’ (in fact, normally only found as *yumi*) and *ou ia* (*hu ia*) ‘who’ which, in my opinion, comes from the French spelling of the sound /u/ associated with the dropping of the /h/.

There is also the colon systematically found after *se* preceding the clause it introduces, as in *long wan Referendum i minim se: bambae ol pipol oli vot forom* ‘by Referendum, which means that everybody will vote’, or in *rul i kam afta, i talem se: Iumi lusum game* ‘the rules come later so they can say that we have lost the game’, and *blong mekem se: i klia* ‘to make it clear’ (literal ‘to make that it is clear’). This simply indicates that *se* was perceived as a word meaning ‘that’ and introducing another clause. The other oddity found in *Tru Toktok* is *en* for ‘and’, normally found as *mo*, as *en* usually means ‘end’. Apart from these features, I have not found anything worthy of attention in the language used in this pre-independence publication.

I also looked in detail at the first three issues of *Nasiko/ Le Martin Pêcheur/ Kingfisher* (No 1, 2 & 3, 1980). It was a French / Bislama / English weekly, with three pages in Bislama, one page for politics, one for health or law and one for kastom. I have made a table (4.3) of what I could find in the documents which were studied with some of the criteria I used for the database.

Table 4.3: Pilot criteria press

	English words	plural -s	spelling	predicate marker -i
Nasiko No 1 18/10/1980	quality	<i>tri pejes</i>	<i>yu fala, mi fala tink, kat, kut, fanem, rais , blande</i>	
Nasiko No 2 18/10/1980	quietly, fully, one place [<i>long</i>] ⁵⁸ community council [<i>haos</i>], specially, reconciliation, before end, church people [<i>belong hem</i>], case, free, guilty, statement, property		<i>look save, withaot, man place, sur ('sure')</i>	
Nasiko No 3 28/10/1980	aim, constitution, especially, social,life, confidence, way, message, Love [<i>mo</i>] Brotherhood, effort, loyalty, property, appeal,individual right, rumour, commission of enquiry, policy, fair, steal, death,hatred, wife, feeling, fine, basic human right, other free [<i>kantre</i>]		<i>kat, bikfalla, samfalla, samthing, kantre, sore bikwan,</i>	<i>ikamaot, istap, isave, imas, ibin,iko,iluk, inomo olsem ..., imekem, wan samthing we iakensem [basic human right], ipas finis, ino bin kat, iminim, ipem [fine]</i>

From what I have observed, I can make the following remarks: the number of English words in the articles varies from almost none to a lot, which appears to be one of the characteristics of the times as well as of today, and for which my explanation is the journalist's idiosyncracies. What is surprising, however, is that even when we do find a lot of English words in the text, there are no words in the English plural form with the -s ending and with very rare exceptions, the same is true of all publications of this period. I have no explanation for this state of things, apart from venturing that people might have used less of these plurals in the spoken language at the time, so that it did not appear in the written language until much later with growing anglicisation. In one of the issues, the predicate marker *i* is systematically

⁵⁸ The words between square brackets appear as such in the original text and give the context of the use of the word. The Bislama words are written in italics as in the rest of my work and not in the text.

written as one word with the following verb as in *imas* (*i mas*) ‘must’ or *iminim* (*i minim*) ‘means’. This phenomenon is one of the criteria in my database and will be studied Chapter 5.

The other political publications of my corpus belong to what I have called ‘period 2’, that is to say the past two decades. A lot of these were published for a short period, mainly preceding a general election.⁵⁹ As they are more recent, I expect to find more English or anglicised Bislama in these publications.

Golden Express was produced by the *Infomesen Unit* of the National United Party (NUP) and was written all in Bislama. It seems it existed only between July 1992 and September 1993 and had a Readers Forum in which people expressed themselves mostly in Bislama, and also in English. In the articles I studied, I have found quite a few English words or expressions like *case*, *easy*, *agree*, *story*, and *limit television introduction*, to quote a few. There are also words with the plural -s, some of them English like *islands* but some in Bislama like *lidars* ‘leaders’, normally spelt *lida* and often found as *lidas* too. The spelling rules of Bislama are not clear to the writers, or not respected as in the case of the *c* not spelt *k* in *clearem* ‘clear’, *close* ‘closed’. Verbs are also borrowed from English like *arrangem* ‘arrange’, *obligem* ‘oblige’ and *benefitem* ‘benefit’, for instance. So on the whole, the language is a mixture of English and Bislama, with idiosyncratic spelling as in *alsem* (*olsem*) ‘as’ and *al* (*ol*) ‘the’. In the ‘Letters to the Editor’ section, as could be expected, the style varies according to the writer. One of the three letters I have studied contains very little English except for the words ‘*analyse*’ and ‘*useless*’, and two expressions translated from English: “*Yu No krae from milk We Yu kapsaedem long floa*” ‘No use crying over spilt milk’ and *oli still mekem sens long hem* ‘it still makes sense’. However, we find a lot of English words or borrowings in the other two letters, as well as plural *yias* ‘years’ or *pigmits* ‘pork’ (English *‘pigmeats’), (all quotations from *Golden Express*, August 29, 1992).

The Independent Front Newsletter was composed of a few typed pages (usually around 8) with some photos and handwritten passages too. It was the newsletter of the eponymous party composed of some members of UPM who had not received official endorsement as UPM candidates for the November general election. I have not been able to find precise details on the newsletter apart from the fact that the 18/11/1995 issue was the eleventh (“*WELKAM LONG NAMABA 11 EDISEN BLONG INDEPENDENT FRONT NIUS LETA*”, ‘Welcome to the 11th edition of the independent Front newsletter’, p. 2) so it may have been a monthly

⁵⁹ The latest general election in Vanuatu was held in 2008, and one will be held in 2012. The documents I have mainly concern the 1995 general election.

publication which started at the beginning of 1995, the year of the general election. I have found traces of anglicisation in the vocabulary mostly, with words like *letes* ‘latest’, *kofi ba* ‘coffee bar’, *jenerol aotluk* ‘general outlook’, and sometimes English words like ‘honesty’ or ‘aim’ (18/11/1995: front page). Differences in spelling include *iumi* for *yumi*, *ko* ‘go’ and *kat* ‘got’, *aut* ‘out’ and *aut gowing* ‘outgoing’ (glossed in the editorial as French ‘sortant’), and *long sait* (*long saed*) ‘about, concerning’. There are no English words and no plural -s endings in this page-long editorial.

Ifira Flash, aka *Politikol Flas*, was written a weekly written by the Ifira Vanua-aku Party sub-committee and had eleven issues altogether, composed of 4 pages, and was only published between January and March 1996. I have found nothing special about the Bislama in this publication apart from the fact that it is not anglicised even though it is a 1996 publication, so more recent than others we have seen.

Etoile was the *UMP Nius Bulletin* and lasted only for the 1995 general election. Even though the Union des Partis Modérés was considered as francophone, there is anglicisation in the articles. The verbs are borrowed straight from English, some already integrated into the lexicon of Bislama like *congratulatem* ‘congratulate’ or *enkarajem* ‘encourage’, others may be less common like *injoym* ‘enjoy’, *fulfilim* ‘fulfil’ and *aprojem* ‘approach’. There are a few English words like ‘certain’, ‘city’, ‘road’ or ‘island province’. Compounds are built following the English construction, as can be seen in *human resos developmen* ‘human resource development’, *disentralaisesen polisi* ‘decentralisation policy’ and *hydro pawa project* ‘hydropower project’. As far as spelling is concerned, we find the same *iumi* (*yumi*) found in other publications of the time, -ai for -ae as in *kain* (*kaen*) ‘kind’. For some of the orthographies, it seems reasonable to think that some are due to typos because they are not consistent throughout the texts. Just like in the other documents mentioned previously, there is only a single word with plural -s in 4 full pages, in an expression mostly used in the plural in English: *naturol risoses* ‘natural resources’.

The temporary conclusion to be drawn from this small pilot study shows that there are indeed traces of anglicisation in the genre ‘Politics’, a fact that needs confirming with statistics in the next chapter of the thesis.

4.2.3 Religion

Along with politics, the church also played a very important role in changing the attitude towards Bislama. At first, the missionaries used the vernacular languages, but things changed radically in the late 1960s, and Bislama, which was also used for political debate, acquired a new status and became much more widespread. Charpentier notes that spoken Bislama (pidgin) was used a lot (+++ in his table) in the domains of religion, political speeches, radio news, hymns, and *stringband* songs whereas written Bislama was common in the domains of religion, newspapers and politics (Charpentier 1979: 166).

I have chosen to look at the various religious documents I have found in a chronological way, to try and find out if there have been many changes over a period of more than thirty years. Unfortunately, some of these documents are not dated, so I have had to rely on my observations or sometimes the information ventured by people I asked about them to estimate the period in which they could have been written. Table 4.4 indicates the publications I have been studying.

Table 4.4: Religious publications

Title	Date	Publisher
<i>Gud Nyus Bilong Jisas Krai</i>	1971	Bible Society in New Zealand
<i>Good News long helpem you</i>	1972	R. Killingbeck (Assemblies of God, Santo, New Hebrides)
<i>Ol Wok blong Ol Aposol</i>	1974	Bible Society in New Zealand
<i>Kition na Jona</i>	1976	Bible Society in the South Pacific
<i>Ol Ansa We God I Givim,</i>	n.d.	SGM Scripture Gift Mission
<i>Lait bilong Rod bilong Yumi</i> (A Selection of introductory Bible Readings)	n.d.	from material produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Ltd.
<i>Rut</i>	1976	Bible Society in the South Pacific
<i>Nyutesteman Long Bislama</i>	1980	Baebol Sosaete Blong Saot Pacific
<i>Ol Sing Blong Nyu Laef Buk Tri</i>	1983	Kristin Kaonsel blong Vanuatu
<i>Ol Sam long Bislama</i>	1983	Bible Society of the South Pacific
<i>Sam Prea blong Baha'i</i>	1985	Baha'i Publishing Trust, Suva

<i>Baebol long Bislama</i>	1998	Baebol Sosaeti Blong Saot Pasifik
<i>!Gud Nius! Jisas Kraes I kam long wol</i>	n.d	Skripja Yunyon Vanuatu
<i>Ol Sing Blong Nyu Laef Buk Fo</i>	2001	Kristin Kaonsel blong Vanuatu
<i>Stamba Trening Program (Pat 1)</i>	2001	Baha'i Trening Institut blong Vanuatu
<i>Baha'i Fand (Toktok blong Yuseum long Baha'i Stadi Klas)</i>	2001	National Spiritual Asembli blong Olgeta Baha'i blong Vanuatu
<i>Presen blong ol Lanwis ya</i>	2000	Ron Graham (website)
<i>Yumi tijimgud ol pikinini (Buk 1, Buk 2 & Buk 3)</i>	1999 & 2005	J.& L. Paschke, , Scripture Union Pacific Region
<i>Yumi tijimgud ol pikinini:Wokbuk blong pikinini Klas5 mo 6 Juina Yut, Buk 2& Buk3</i>	2006	J.& L. Paschke, Skripja Yunyon Vanuatu
<i>Laef Blong Ol Ju Evride Long Taem Blong Baebol</i>	2005	Wycliffe Bible Translators
<i>Bigfala kwestin blong Laef</i>	n.d	Presbitirin Riform Joj
<i>Wokbuk blong Pikinini (Buk 1, Klas 5 mo 6 Junia Yut)</i>	2008	J.& L. Paschke, Skripja Yunyon Vanuatu
<i>Baha'i Fet</i>	2008	Given by C.Pierce
<i>Samfala raeting blong Fet we oli Enkarajem Yumi blong Givim Servis</i>	n.d	Given by C.Pierce
<i>Stewardship 1</i>	2009	Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
<i>Mobile Phone</i>	n.d	Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
<i>Stadi blong Vilij Laef</i>	n.d	Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
<i>Yumi ridim Tok blong God long Famle Wosip</i>	2009	Baebol Sosaeti blong Saot Pasifik
<i>Gud Nius Blong Jisas Kraes We Jon I Raetem</i>	2009	Bible Society of the South Pacific
<i>Prapa Independen</i>	2009?	E.Natapei, P.M, Bible Society of the South Pacific
<i>Tok Blong God Hemi Laet blong Rod blong Yumi</i>	2010	Pastor D.Regenvanu, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
<i>?Olsem wanem nao bae yu save gru olsem wan man blong Jisas Kraes?</i>	2010	Scripture Union Vanuatu

4.2.3.1 Translations of the Gospels and the Bible

Even though this part deals with translations of religious material, I have decided to leave it in this chapter under ‘Religion’ as opposed to ‘Translations’ because the religious texts could almost be taken as a ‘reference’, some kind of a norm for written Bislama, as we will see further down.

In 1967, the New Hebrides Christian Council endorsed a project to begin the translation of the Gospel of Mark into Bislama. “The initial material was well received and a decision was taken in 1969 to proceed with the translation of the full New Testament” (Camden 1977: iv). The turning point was the publication of *Gud Nyus Bilong Jisas Krai* ‘The Four Gospels’ (literally ‘The Good News of Jesus Christ’) in 1971 and *Ol Wok blong ol Aposol* ‘The Acts of the Apostles’ in 1974. The entire *Nyutesteman* ‘New Testament’ was published in 1980. After revision of the first translations, the full translation of the Bible was finalised in 1996 (*Baebol long Bislama*), and *Nyu Laef* ‘New Life’ hymn books became widely used for religious practice, so that “Within a period of thirty years, Bislama has changed from a language that was almost completely avoided in religious contexts to the language in which the largest number of people now read religious materials” (Crowley 2000: 65).

Nyutesteman Long Bislama, published in 1980, is the revised version of the 1971 and 1974 texts put together as indicated in the introduction: “The two already published books were reread, corrected and put together into a single book” (1980: 3).⁶⁰ The spelling conventions in this version are the ones adopted by the committee who revised this version: double punctuation marks for interrogative and exclamative sentences (at the beginning and at the end), the need for a language with meaning, so it does not follow exactly the translation from Greek, but an effort was made to use understandable Bislama: “*long stret Bislama*” ‘in good Bislama’ (p. 3). Explanations are given about the use of some words or expressions such as ‘Kingdom of God’, *Masta*, ‘Lord’, *Hae God*. The footnote system is carefully described, either for help “*blong givhan long man we i ridim buk ya*” ‘to help the people who read this book’ (p. 4), or to give alternative translations or references for other passages of the Bible. There is also a system of a star following some of the words, with a dictionary for those words at the end of the Bible. The dictionary is twelve pages long (p. 514-526), with both proper and common nouns mostly, but also sometimes phrases whose meaning is defined or

⁶⁰ *oli lukluk ol tok blong tufala buk ya we oli mekem finis, oli stretem bakegen, nao oli joenem olgeta tok ya wanples blong mekem buk ya.*

illustrated with comparisons or examples in today's life. For instance, the word *lafet* (p. 519-520) is first defined, and then the origin of each celebration is explained in detail.

In the introduction of the *Baebol Long Bislama* 'The Bible in Bislama' (1996), we find a brief history of the various steps that led to the full translation of the Bible. A paragraph is dedicated to the spelling of Bislama, stressing the fact that the spelling adopted there is the one endorsed by the 1995 spelling committee, even though "a few words do not follow the rules of the committee, because the team thought some were confusing"⁶¹, so that in the 1996 Bible, "*bambae yu save luk niufala fasin blong raetem tok blong tede*" 'you will find today's new way of writing'. The explanations for the choices of vocabulary are the same as the ones of the 1980 version. The translators justify the changes made to the original text by saying they did their best to give meaning to the translation in Bislama, so that Ni-Vanuatu readers would actually comprehend the texts. The same principle of facilitating the comprehension is adopted for the verses numbers, and explanations are given about the use of *Hae God*, *God* and *Masta/masta*, for the same purpose. The aim of footnotes is also carefully explained: to avoid confusions, to propose a different translation, or to facilitate comprehension when the language is too different from Bislama. There is also a system of a star following some of the words, with a dictionary for those at the end of the Bible. The dictionary is forty pages long (as opposed to twelve for *Nyutesteman*), and adopts the same principles as in *Nyutesteman*. For instance, under the word *manis* (p. 601-602), the different calendar and each of its months are explained along with the correspondence to our Gregorian calendar. All the animals and trees or plants that a Ni-Vanuatu reader is not familiar with, such as *oktri* 'oak', *ostrij* 'ostrich' and *pelikan*, 'pelican', are described as well as their use in the life of those days.⁶² Some purely religious expressions are also made clear to the readers, the most commonly used in the Bible, like *Pikinini blong God* 'God's children' (p. 606) or *wasem leg* 'wash the feet' (p. 616). Surprisingly at first sight, the word *vatu* is included in the dictionary, with the explanation that "In this translation, to convert the currencies of the times into *vatu*, the translators followed the rule that one thousand *vatu* was one day's wages."⁶³ This choice shows the real effort put in by the team to 'give meaning' to the translation, as stated in the introduction. The 'official' translations of the Gospels first and then of the Bible serve as a

⁶¹ *fju tok nomo we oli no folem fasin blong raetem we komiti ya i talem, from we tim i luk se sipos oli folem fasin we olgeta ya oli telem, sam tok bambae oli paspas.*

⁶² *Oktri* has the meaning of 'casuarina, ironwood' in Bislama (Crowley 2003: 195).

⁶³ *Olbaot ol translesen ya, taem ol transleta oli tanem ol tok blong mane blong olgeta bifo I kam long watu, oli folem rul se wan taosen watu i pei blong wan man long wan dei.*

model for a lot of subsequent religious material, and were also used as spelling references by some for a long time.

4.2.3.2 Other religious publications

There are a lot of religious publications in Bislama in Vanuatu today. In order to reach the highest number of people, many of the churches, whether settled in Vanuatu for a long time or more recently, chose to have their publications in Bislama rather than in the indigenous languages (even though SIL mostly publish in local languages rather than in Bislama).⁶⁴

The publications that I will examine are the ones that I have not included in my database because I had studied most of them at the beginning of my research, so they can be considered as detailed pilot studies on written Bislama in the ‘Religion’ genre. I will follow the chronological order of Table 4.3 to give the results of what I have found in these documents, bearing in mind that for some, I have had to make guesses about the period they were published. We will first look at *Ol Wok blong Ol Aposol*, published in 1974, composed of 150 pages with a few illustrations. There is nothing striking in this book about the spelling (even though we find words like *speret* ‘spirit’ and *store* ‘story’ – usually respectively spelt *spirit* and *stori* – as well as mostly the digraph *-ai* for *-ae* in *baptais* ‘baptise’ or *said* ‘side’ (but *skae*). We find the traditional repetition of pronouns, and the sentences in direct speech are always introduced by *i se* as illustrated by the following example: *Jisas i ansa long olgeta, i se “...”* (p. 2, my emphasis).

Both published in 1976, so around the same period, *Kition na Jona* ‘Gideon and Jonah’ and *Rut* ‘Ruth’ have the same characteristics: reduplication, question marks at the beginning and at the end of the question, direct speech systematically introduced by *i se* as in *Nao Rut i ansa, i se “...”* (p. 27) even though we find one occurrence of *tufala i talem long hem se “No gat...”* (p. 11). We also find some vocabulary borrowed from English and rarely found in written Bislama as *dota* ‘daughter’ but apart from this word, there is no anglicisation at all in these booklets, written in simple language and also illustrated.

Ol Ansa We God I Givim is composed of questions/answers from the Bible (with quotes from verses) so to some extent they are also translations. I have looked in detail at some of the verses to see if there were any differences with the official translation of the Bible, with the following results illustrated by these examples. For instance, “*Bifo we bifo olgeta, God i mekem skae mo graon wetem olgeta samting we i stap long tufala*” (*Baebol* p. 2) becomes

⁶⁴ Information given by Ross Webb, March 2011 (personal communication)

“*Fastaem, bifo olgeta, God i mekem heven mo wol*” (Jenesis 1:1) and “*God hem i olsem delaet, i no gat tudak nating i stap long hem*” (Baebol) becomes “*God i olsem delait, i no gat tudak nating i stap long em*” (Fas Jon 1:5). So what we observe here is that in the first example, the version in the booklet is much more concise than the Baebol one, as the phrase “*skae mo graon wetem olgeta samting we i stap long tufala*” (literally in English ‘the sky and the earth with all the things that are in these two’) is replaced by “*heven mo wol*” ‘heaven and the world’. In the second verse, the only difference lies in the spelling of *hem* which becomes *em* and *delaet* (‘standard’ spelling) spelt *delait* ‘daylight’.

The other differences in spelling I have found are *ya* in the Baebol given as *ia*, and words which spell with *-ae* are written with *-ai* instead as in *lait* ‘light’, *wais* ‘wise’ or *orait* ‘alright’. The punctuation also varies slightly from the traditional one in that there is only one question mark at the end of the sentence, contrary to one at the beginning and one at the end in the *Baebol*. Similarities show the reduplication of the pronouns (*mi mi*) and the use of *olgeta* with the meaning of ‘all, everything’ as in *bifo olgeta* for before ‘in the beginning’ and *olgeta samting* ‘everything’.

Also not dated but which I estimate to have been published around the same period, that is to say in the late seventies, *Lait bilong Rod bilong Yumi* is a 33-page booklet subtitled “*Selection of introductory Bible Readings*”. It presents extracts from the Bible, so translations, but they differ hugely from what we find in *Baebol long Bislama*. The spelling is highly variable, but shows some old-fashioned traits such as the presence of the epenthetic vowel in *bilong* (*blong*), reduplication of the pronouns in *yu yu*, *mi mi* and strange transitive suffixes in *ridem* (*ridim*) ‘read’ and *finisem* (*finisim*) ‘finish’ – where *-em* should be *-im* to obey the rule of the agreement with the root vowel *-i* in *rid*. According to this rule, for most verbs the suffix varies between *-em*, *-m*, *-im* or *-um* depending on the vowel in the root verb, so the intransitive *rid* becomes *ridim* when it is derived to become transitive.

There are several editions of *Ol Sing Blong Nyu Laef*, which consists of adaptations or translations of English hymns (the sources are given in English at the top of each hymn). The book is divided into several parts according to the circumstance in which the hymns are sung. Many of these hymns were translated by Pastor Bill Camden (the author of a dictionary in 1977) and Mrs Dorothy Dewar, who was a member of the *Kokonas Tim*. The first edition was published in 1970, the second in 1973, both by The Presbyterian Church. I have only looked at *Buk Tri* and *Buk Fo*, published respectively in 1983 and 2001 by the *Kristin Kaonsel blong Vanuatu* ‘Christian Council of Vanuatu’ (*Buk Fo* 2001: [introduction] *Stori blong Buk Ya*).

The main difference between the two books is the introduction of new hymns in *Buk Fo*, with for instance the section *Yumi sing long spesel taem* ‘Songs for a special occasion’ which includes three new hymns. As can be seen in Table 4.5, the differences in spelling are limited and very few words have been changed. So on the whole we can conclude that there has been very little evolution towards English in the ‘traditional’, most commonly used religious publications

Table 4.5: Main changes between *Buk Tri*/ *Buk Fo*

<i>Buk Tri</i> (1983)	<i>Buk Fo</i> (2001)
<i>nyus, tangkyu, gyaman</i>	<i>nus, tangkiu, giaman</i>
<i>laekem</i>	<i>lavem</i>
<i>sing</i>	<i>kores</i>
<i>mbae</i>	<i>bae</i>
<i>soregud</i>	<i>sori gud</i>
<i>Masta</i> (p.59)	<i>Hae God</i> (p.103)
<i>speret</i>	<i>spirit</i>

We make the same observation when we look at the two versions of *Gud Nyus Blong Jisas Kraes, Jon I Raetem* ‘The Gospel according to John’ published in 1980 and the one I have found in a separate booklet published in 2009 by the Bible Society of the South Pacific. In the latter, we find the exact translation of the same text in *Baebol long Bislama* (even the stars are copied even though there are no references at the end).

What has been added to the original text is a summary of John’s Writings at the beginning of the booklet followed by the translation, with an occasional explanation or more information (often under the form *tok ya* “...” *I min se* “...”) sometimes found between brackets or as footnotes to explain or to give an alternative translation. The changes are therefore the ones made between the first version of the *Nyutestamen Long Bislama* in 1980 and the revised version in *Baebol long Bislama* in 1998. Table 4.6 shows some of the changes.

Table 4.6: Changes in the versions of the Gospel of John

<i>Gud Nyus Blong Jisas Kraes, Jon I Raetem (1980)</i>	<i>Gud Nius Blong Jisas Kraes We Jon I Raetem (2009)</i>
<i>Fastaem, bifo olgeta</i>	<i>Bifo we bifo olgeta</i>
<i>I gat wan i stap</i>	<i>I gat wan man i stap</i>
<i>Waes Tok blong God</i>	<i>Tok blong God</i>
<i>Olgeta samting blong wol</i>	<i>Olgeta samting</i>
<i>Waes Tok ya i wok blong hem</i>	<i>Hem i yusum Tok ya blong mekem</i>
<i>Krais</i>	<i>Kraes</i>

The last document not included in the database is entitled *Laef Blong Ol Ju Evride Long Taem Blong Baebol* and was published very recently in 2005. It is a translation from *Daily Life in Bible Times* (1988) by Pastor Willie Mowa and was edited by Dorothy Dewar, and Janet and Jim Stahl. It is a book whose aim is to improve general knowledge about the life of the Jews in the times of the Bible. ‘*Buk ia bambae i givhan long yu blong yu save kalja blong olgeta*’ ‘This book will help you know about these people’s culture’ (p. 1). It is composed of six parts and gives information about history, geography, people’s way of life, customs, religion and the Roman rule.

It also contains maps and illustrations for the various parts, as well as biblical references if the reader wants to read the original texts in the Bible relating to each topic, and an index at the end. There is nothing particularly remarkable in terms of vocabulary, spelling or grammar in this publication: even though it is very recent, there is no obvious anglicisation of the vocabulary, we still find reduplication of syllables in some words like *brekbrekem* (p.23) for instance, and *ya* has definitely become *ia*, following the spelling currently used.

The Baha’i faith was introduced in Vanuatu in 1953 by Mrs Bertha Dobbins who started “The Nur School” (with four pupils) the following year. The Baha’i Faith quickly expanded to other islands in the 1970s and by 2003, the Faith was established in 199 different localities in Vanuatu. An adult literacy programme started in Tanna as early as 1978, offering basic literacy classes in Bislama to everyone. The project was abandoned in the 1980s but revived in the 1990s and is still running today. In the 1990s, “Greater emphasis was placed on socio-economic developments projects in the fields of primary school education, moral education, adult literacy, water supply, health care and environmental conservation” (*Bahai’i Fet blong Vanuatu* 2003 : 22).

The Baha'i Faith translate their written material from French and English into Bislama. They also create their own original pamphlets or write reports on Baha'i topics in Bislama, which are sometimes translated into English, rarely into French (the Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly, for example). The Baha'i Faith is also involved in small-scale literacy programs (on Tanna and Santo since 1976), for which they produce basic literacy material in Bislama or sometimes in VL. They also produce training courses for teachers and workbooks for students, mostly based on Baha'i prayers, some are 'readers' in Bislama, such as story booklets with illustrations (readers). The translator uses Crowley's dictionary as basis for translation and spellcheck (Charlie Pierce, p. c., March 2010).

Skriptja Yunyon 'Scripture Union Vanuatu' publishes a few resources in Bislama, mostly to assist Christian Churches in schools, so principally for children, like the series *Yumi tijimgud ol Pikinini* 'Let's teach our children well', composed of three books and a student workbook. There is also a booklet of 24 pages entitled *?Olsem Wanem Nao?* 'What do we do now? '.

The Presbyterian Church is the most important church in Vanuatu with 28% of the population's religious affiliation (2009 *National Population and Housing Census*, NSO p.25, http://www.vnso.gov.vu/images/stories/2009_Census_Summary_release_final.pdf, retrieved January 2012). It is involved in the publication of booklets written in Bislama for educational purposes as well as publications about religion itself. All these documents are part of my data base and are therefore analysed in Chapter 5.

In January 2008, The Australian Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu had a workshop " to introduce students to writing standard Bislama, with particular emphasis on avoiding English structures which do not communicate for people who have not had much education" <http://www.scriptureunionvanuatu.com/> Copyright © 2007-2008 Scripture Union (Vanuatu), retrieved May 7, 2010. So this proves that there is awareness that anglicised Bislama is not the best way to reach the majority of readers.

There is one religious publication that I decided not to include in my database, for fear it might skew the results. Indeed, *Good News long helpem you*, 'Good News to Help You' written in 1972 by Ronald Killingbeck (Assemblies of God, Santo, New Hebrides) does not come close to being written in Bislama, at least in my opinion. It is a booklet of 30 pages, a mixture of Bible verses and explanations about their meaning, or perhaps texts for preaching. They are all written in "phonetical" Pidgin with English spelling or English words. The Killingbecks were the first Assemblies of God missionaries to work with the Ni-Vanuatu people, first in New Caledonia, then in the New Hebrides. In Noumea, in the late sixties "the

people of Vanuatu spoke many languages but were united by one language called Bislama, a type of pidgin English. The Killingbecks quickly began using the Bislama language in their services and building relationships within the Ni-Vanuatu community” (retrieved May 2011 from <http://visionforvanuatu.wordpress.com/about/>).

In order to justify why I did not include this book in my database, here is an extract of the text, bearing in mind that it might have been one of the very first attempts at translating religious material into Bislama:

“Jesus I Dead From Youme

Jesus Pikinini Belong God

Bible i tellem say, “God i likem too much algetta man belong world, now him i givem me, me straight Pikinini belong him, me one no more were him i got, belong algetta man were mam i believe long me bambae all i no savay lus, all i got life were i no save finis.” John 3:16

God i been likem man too much, more i been lookem finis were heart belong man i fulup long sin. More him i bin sendem Jesus pikinini belong Him belong i come long helpem man (Killingbeck 1972: 1).⁶⁵

In fact there is almost no problem to understand what Killingbeck wrote in ‘Bislama’ and transcribe it into ‘*stret Bislama*’ as the syntax is definitely the same as the one we find today in the language. It is only the spelling that is very different, but once you have realised that he writes the words pronounced in Bislama with an English spelling or an approximation thereof, it does not take much effort to make sense of the writings. One may nevertheless wonder about the purpose this booklet was in fact supposed to have, and the public targeted. What I mean by this is that this publication was written forty years ago and in those days, it is unlikely that a lot of people, apart from those who were educated through the English medium, knew enough to be able to associate the pronunciation of Bislama with English spelling. Moreover, I am even more sceptical about the Francophones with little or no

⁶⁵ ‘Jesus died because of us/ Jesus is God’s child/ The Bible says: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’.

God loved men too much, and as He had seen that men’s hearts were full of sin, He sent His Son Jesus to help men.

In today’s Bislama: *Jisas I Ded from Yumi/ Jisas Pikinini Blong God/ Baebol i talem se, “God i laekem tumas olgeta man blong wol, nao hemi givim mi, mi stret Pikinini blong hem, miwan nomo we hemi gat, blong olgeta man we man i biliv long mi bambae oli no save lus, oli gat laef we i no save finis” John 3:16*

God i bin laekem man tumas, mo i bin lukim finis wea hat blong man i fulap long sin. Mo hemi bin sendem Jisas pikinini blong Hem blong i kam [b]long helpem man.

knowledge of English, as they would have been incapable of making sense of the text as it is. As a French speaker myself, I can say that words such as *algetta* ‘*olgeta*’ and *takem* ‘*tekem*’, for instance, would probably be a puzzle for French speakers as they would not associate (English) sound and spelling. Because there are too many words in English and too many spelling variations, I have not included this religious document in my database. I have not been able to find the booklet that Ronald and Joy Killinbeck’s daughter Lori wrote in March 2011 for the first ‘Women Ministries National Conference of the Assemblies of God’ in Port Vila in May 2011. This 48- page small book entitled *Wan Waef we i stap biae long stret fasin blong God* is inspired by Elizabeth George’s book *A Wife After God’s Heart*, extracts of which she translated into Bislama and which deals with women’s issues in Vanuatu.

All the other religious publications have been included in my database, so they are studied in Chapter 5. The first conclusion I can draw from looking at the documents studied in this part of Chapter 4 is that there is much less anglicisation in the written Bislama used in religious documents than in other genres, but this needs confirmation with the analysis of the database results.

4.2.4 Other publications: science and agriculture

4.2.4.1 Nitutu

Nitutu, *Nyus blong Agrikalja Vanuatu*, was first published in April 1981. It was a small newssheet of the size of a booklet composed of a dozen pages reporting short news about the world of agriculture. This periodical was a publication of the information services of the *Ministri blong Agrikalja, Forestri wetem Fiseri* ‘Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries’: “*emi blong traem blong mitim olgeta nid ia long fasin we bamabae emi givim regula infomesin blong agrikalja*” with the aim ‘to try and meet the needs by giving regular information about agriculture’ (*Nitutu* No1, April 1981: 1). What is interesting about the contributions from the readers is the following recommendation: “*Sipos yu gat kontribusen yu raetem long Bislama mo yu spelem long wei long Bislama Dictionary blong Pastor Bill Camden*” ‘If you have a contribution, write it in Bislama with the orthography found in Pastor Bill Camden’s dictionary’ (*Nitutu* No 1, April 1981: 11). At that time, Camden’s dictionary was the only one available apart from much older work by Guy, but what surprises me is the fact that the writer should be given some instructions about the way he writes in Bislama, possibly to maintain some kind of standard for the written language because it was an ‘official’ publication. In the second issue of the newssheet, the editorial asks again “*Nomo mi askem yu mas raetem long Bislama. Em ia I bigfala wok tumas long tanem ol tok I go long*

Bislama” ‘I ask that you write in Bislama only, it is too much work to translate articles into Bislama’ (Nitutu No2, Mei 1981: 1). Then, in the following paragraph, the editor thanks two people, one “*long help long tanem tok long Bislama*” ‘for helping translate into Bislama’, and the other “*long halpem long tanem tok mo jekem Bislama blong mi*” ‘for helping translate and checking my Bislama’. The last part reminds the writer to write in Bislama and conform to Camden’s spelling. What is in fact slightly ironical in this is the fact that when we look at the contents of the newssheet, we can notice at once that some of the vocabulary used cannot be found in Camden’s 1977 dictionary. For instance, there are no *transfea* ‘transfer’, *komplet* ‘completed’ or *enkarajem* ‘encourage’ in Camden. On the other hand, we sometimes find the predicate marker *i* cliticised in *ikat*, *igo*, *ikasem* or *ifilim*, but this is variable as we also see *i go* or *i gat*. Also subject to variation is the use of the consonants already mentioned as depending on the speaker’s pronunciation – and therefore orthography – such as *gapman* ‘government’. We also notice the use of *bat* ‘but’ more commonly *be* today, and the recurrent feature of the suffix *-em* as marker of transitivity for virtually all verbs. If we take the verbs *givim* ‘give’ or *yusum* ‘use’, we notice that the suffix varies respecting the rule – already mentioned – whereby it becomes *-im* or *-um* depending on the vowel in the root verb, respectively *-i* in *giv* and *-u* in *yus*. This rule is sometimes not applied in *Nitutu*, so that we find oddities like *givem* ‘give’, *usim* ‘use’, *putem* ‘put’ (all in *Nitutu* No 2, p. 2). At some stage, the format changed and so did the type of publication, as *Isiu No 20* in *Februari 1991* reads “*Niuspepa blong ol staf we I wok long Dipatmen blong Agrikalja, Laefstok mo Hotikalja wetem Dipatmen blong Forestri*” ‘The newspaper of the staff of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Horticulture and the Department of Forestry’. *Nitutu* kept its name and format but because of administrative changes was published every two months by *Ministri blong Lan mo Najerol Risos* ‘the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources’, of which ‘Agriculture, Lifestock and Forestry’ became a Department along with the department of Fisheries, and of Land, Survey and Geology (as seen in *Namba 19, Disemba 1982- Januari 1983*). *Namba 19* is therefore much longer, composed of 68 pages, because it has to cover information for all the newly-created departments: “*So ‘Nitutu’ blong yumi nao i olsem mesej lif ya. Buk ya i talemaot sam mesij long saed blong ol defren wok we i gohed naoia long Vanuatu*” ‘So our *Nitutu* is like the message leaf. This booklet gives information about all the different things happening in Vanuatu’.⁶⁶ It also includes cartoons to explain the role of the *Lans Ofisa* ‘Lands Officer’, of which I am giving an example here.

⁶⁶ ‘*Nitutu*’ hem I wan tok blong S.W.Bay Malekula we hemi minim se mesij lif we I talemaot sam toktok (*Nitutu Namba 19*, p.2) ‘*Nitutu* is the name of a leaf used for messages in S.W.Bay, Malekula’.



Nitutu, Namba 19, Disemba 1982- Januari 1983: 21⁶⁷

Quite a big part of the issue is devoted to *Wota Saplae* 'Water supply', and there is also a lot of information about various crops such as *kofi* 'coffee' (p.46), *kakao* 'cocoa' (p. 53). In other sections, we find tips about food and on how to make cheap, easy-to-work objects from poor countries overseas: "*Long plante kantri ovasi, i gat man we i nogat tumas mane, be ol man ya i wantem wokem wan samting*" 'In many overseas countries, there are people without too much money but these people want to make things' (p. 56). These tips are often illustrated by cartoons to make understanding easier. Part of this document is included in my database, but the first study shows that if there are a few English words here and there, most of the Bislama is not anglicised at all, with no words taking the plural *-s* ending, and a few compounds based on English, but spelt in Bislama. It seems that the writers, either consciously or because it is actually the way they speak themselves, make the choice of using Bislama understandable by all.

4.2.4.2 VRDTCA Niusleta

Things are probably slightly different for *Vanuatu Rural Development and Training Centres Association Niusleta*: (VRDTCA) is a *kwotali* 'quarterly' practically all in Bislama by VRDTCA, an umbrella organisation dealing with vocational training principally for rural youths who left the school system very early, but also for adults. It is not very easy to know exactly the full history of VRDTCA because the various sources do not always give the same information. In the October 31, 1999 newsletter (corpus 113), we can read "*fes AGM I disaedem nem mo logo long 1989 I mekem namba 11 AGM*" 'The name and the logo were adopted at the first AGM in 1989, and this is the eleventh AGM'. So we may infer that the

⁶⁷ Look at the pictures in the middle of the booklet! / So that's all about the laws and the way the Department of Lands works.

association was created in 1989. In the video on *YouTube* (retrieved May 31, 2012 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gmdd3TBndk), however, we are told that it was part of an FSP⁶⁸ Project between 1992 and 1995 when it became an independent NGO. The association gets financial help from aid donors such as NZAID or Oxfam NZ (since 2003) with a mission to provide those youths with training and vocational skills (http://vrdtca.org.vu/wp/?page_id=2). Some of their newsletters are part of my database but here I will give examples of what I found in the other documents. The publications can contain as many as 29 full printed pages including photos and even sometimes cartoons and poems. The December 2001 publication, for instance, is 8 pages long and gives mainly information about the training courses, workshops and meetings organised in Rural Training Centres, but there is also a poem on page 6 entitled *Mi Mo Smol Vilej Blong Mi* ‘Me and my small village’, composed of 9 stanzas of 3 lines each (except the last one with 4 lines), with an attempt at rhyming endings but not always successful. It has no punctuation, was written by CCA and promotes the training he got at RDC. On page 7, there is a letter addressed to the readers called RTC Watch written nicely with the shape of a pine tree for Christmas by the same writer.

I will give here a summary of what I have found in one of the VRDTCA newsletters (the June 1999 issue) as an example, but the remarks made about this document can be applied to all the others I have looked at, which are included in the database in Chapter 5.

- 1) Vocabulary: a lot of the vocabulary is borrowed straight from English and cannot be found in Crowley’s 2003 dictionary. This includes nouns such as *ata* ‘other’ (p. 3), *faenol (ripot)* ‘final report’ (p. 3) or *impruvmen* ‘improvement’ (p. 8).⁶⁹ We can also find many compounds, like *pat taem konsaltant* ‘part time consultant’ (p. 2), *Komuniti Based trening woksop* ‘community-based training workshop’ (p. 3) or *two-dei woksop* ‘two-day workshop’ (p. 4), and verbs like *provaedem* ‘provide’ (p. 3), *inkrisim (save)* ‘increase knowledge’ (p. 8) and *introdusim mi* ‘introduce myself’ (p. 14). Finally, we find the preposition *thru* ‘through’ (in Bislama) and the adjective *mein* ‘main’ used consistently throughout this issue of the newsletter.
- 2) Grammar: there are quite a few examples of nouns ending with plural *-s*: *founding membas* ‘founding members’ (p. 1), *niufala nids* ‘new needs’ (p. 2) and *tufala mein objektivs* ‘two main objectives’ (p. 3), to give a few. We also find another feature

⁶⁸ FSP stands for Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific.

⁶⁹ Faenol is given as a noun ‘final’ or a verb ‘play in final’, not as the adjective.

borrowed from English, namely the use of *bae* not meaning *bambae* as in the future, but ‘by’ preposition introducing a nominal phrase to describe the agent: for instance, in “*Hemia hemi nambatu visit bae ripresentativ long World Bank iko long Ofis blong VRDTCA*” ‘This is the second visit to the VRDTCA office by a World Bank representative’ (p. 2), or in “*I bin kat wan visit las yia long manis Oktoba bae Peter Semington...*” ‘There was a visit by Peter Semington in October of last year’ (p. 2). The other grammatical feature borrowed directly from English is the use of the *-ed* form in *We I based long Suva* ‘which is based in Suva’ (p. 8), a form which does not exist in Bislama.

Here is another passage illustrating what we typically find in the *Niusleta*, this time an interview in which we can see evidence of the points mentioned in the previous examples:

“Long opening blong AGM sekerteri [sic] blong Malampa Provinsel Kavman L. Maltock we hemi kes [sic] spika hemi enfesaesem se hemi impress blong luk mo witnesem wan efektiv asosiesen wetem bigfala namba blong RTC representatives we oli kam long rural komunitis. Hemi glad tu blong luk se tis AGM i mekem aweness long komuniti mo semtaem tu long kavman olsem we i representem. Hemi koment se CRP i no kwaet adresem skul drop out outstream we hemi wan bigfala concern isu long kaontri tudei mo hemi gled blong witnesem wan NGO olsem VRDTCA i stap givhan long bridgim gap ia (VRDTCA Niusleta, October 31, 1999: 1).⁷⁰

In this passage, we also have English words (*representatives*), nouns in the plural (*komunitis*), verbs like *enfesaesem* and compounds like *concern isu* ‘concern issue’, all denoting anglicisation of the language.

The conclusion I can draw from looking at these documents is that the language used is definitely anglicised. The other newsletters have therefore been included in Chapter 5 for database analysis to see if this is confirmed in the rest of my corpus documents of the same genre.

⁷⁰ When he opened the AGM, first speaker L. Maltock, the Secretary of the Malampa Provincial Government, emphasised that he was impressed to see an effective association with a high number of RTC representatives coming from rural communities. He was also pleased to see that that AGM made the community and also the government aware of what it represented. He added that the CRP [Comprehensive Reform Program] does not quite address the school drop out outstream which is a big concern in the country today and he is glad to see that an NGO like VRDTCA helps bridging the gap.

4.2.4.3 *Naika*

Naika, also called *Nyuspepa blong Natural Saens Sosaiti blong Vanuatu* ‘The Journal of the Vanuatu Natural Science Society’ was published between 1981 and 1993, with 42 issues in the three languages. The articles were about the same themes in the three languages, but in fact one gets only summaries in French and Bislama, not the exact translations of English. From number 1 to 15 (September 1984), there was no Bislama at all. The summaries in Bislama started in No 16, December 1984 with the article *Ol pijin long Vanuatu* ‘Birds of Vanuatu’ (p. 8). Then the proportion of articles in Bislama varied from one issue to another: for instance, there is no article in Bislama in No 20, December 1985, but in No 21, we find this time the exact translation of articles into Bislama, not mere summaries as formerly. Later on, there was again no Bislama in issues 27 and 28. From No 28, the publication was still called *Naika* but with only a subtitle in English only ‘*Vanuatu Natural Science Society*’, as opposed to having one in Bislama previously. *Naika* disappeared in 1993 with No 42. As can be expected, the semantic fields are mostly around animals, birds and plants, as illustrated by a short passage:

*Long wan ples long Vanuatu I gat ol difren kaen blong pijin. Ol wanwan kaen pijin ia oli gat difren nid blong saed blong samting olsem kakae mo ples blong mekem haos blong olgeta. Toktok ia hemi tokabaot olsem wanem I happen taem wan niufala kaen pijin hemi kam long wan aelan blong yumi.*⁷¹ (*Ol pijin blong Vanuatu*, [translation/adaptation from a much longer article in English], No 16, December 1984: 8)

What is interesting in *Naika* is that it is one of the few publications where we have translations from English into Bislama. These are studied in the part devoted to translations, and the articles are incorporated into the database as either ‘Translations’ or ‘Periodicals’. On the whole, what can be noticed in *Naika* is that there are no nouns ending with plural -s, very few English words and not many compound words, which leads me to the conclusion that *Naika* was very little anglicised. Admittedly, the publication happened mostly before Independence, and so belongs to the first period of the corpus. The other reason for not finding much English, perhaps, is that because most of the articles in Bislama were translations, or summaries of translations, so they were written as such, with an effort not to anglicise the language too much, as we find in many other translations.

⁷¹ There are many different species of birds which live in various parts of Vanuatu. They all have different needs for food or places to build their nests. This article is about what happens when a new species of bird comes to one of our islands.

So to sum up the findings in this part, we can say that just as in the other genres, the level of anglicisation of these scientific publications varies greatly from one to another. The older ones seem to be written in more traditional Bislama whereas the one published more recently such as the VRDTCA Niusleta, targeting a much younger public, are more creative in their designs and more anglicised in their Bislama, as they do not hesitate to borrow heavily from English, not only the lexicon but also grammatical features that do not normally appear in Bislama.

4.3 Literature: Ligo, WWII, Molisa

I will start this part by first explaining what I mean by ‘literature’ here. If ‘literature’ refers to creative literary work or production such as novels, plays or poetry, then we can say there is no literature in Bislama, apart from a very few poems and songs by stringbands.⁷² On the other hand, if we refer to pieces of writing published as a book, written originally in Bislama, then we can include the two books I have been able to find (along with the others mentioned in the ‘education’ part). Both books are non-fiction, and very different in presentation. *Murder Long Paradise* is in fact the account of a trial in Vanuatu in 1995-1996, while the other is a compilation of stories about the Second World War in Vanuatu, entitled *Big Wok: Storian blong Wol Wo Tu long Vanuatu*. There are, however, a number of booklets written in Bislama but they mostly deal with factual information and are not literary pieces. Molisa’s *Pasifik Paradaes* is one of these and has been included in the database.

As mentioned by Romaine (1994) on the use of Hawai’i Creole English (HCE) as a literary language, the problem of the use of creoles and pidgins in literature is linked to standardisation and attitude towards the language. She argues that standardisation is important in giving the creole autonomy, and that the fact that the language is not seen as fit for literary expression is one of the reasons why it is so little used. Like Bislama, HCE is not used in schools, but as opposed to Bislama, it also has no place in church, and so there is no impetus to provide a standardised orthography. However, Romaine shows that, in spite of these problems, there is literary material published in HCE like drama and poetry, which is not really the case for Bislama.

4.3.1 Poetry

The only poetry I could find are the poems written by Grace Molisa in different publications, and a few other poems in *Some Modern Poetry from Vanuatu*, under the direction of Albert

⁷² *Stringband* is the name given to local bands in Vanuatu. Their songs are mostly unwritten.

Wendt and published in 1975, that is to say a few years before Independence.⁷³ The poems in this book are mostly written in English with a few exceptions: three poets write in Bislama, Mildred Sope (two poems), Albert Leomala and Kali Vatoko (two poems together) and Albert Leomala (four poems), with an English translation of their poems. What is striking in these poems is that they are all written in very simple Bislama, and contain a lot of repetitions. Most of the poems are composed of four or five stanzas and they all deal with colonialism and the poet's own vision and feelings. They are all polemical and express anger or fear of the future, with the loss of tradition in a colonised country. Some advocate quite openly the time when 'the white man' will be chased and 'go home'. All are very nationalistic and quite surprisingly, one is anti-religion (*Kros* by Leomala). What we find in these poems as far as the spelling of Bislama is concerned is *-ai* for *-ae* as in *fainem* 'find', *laikem* 'like', the words 'swit' and 'swet' in today's Bislama spelt *suit* and *suet*, *gat* spelt *kat*, and the words in *-fala* written as two words *tu fala* (as opposed to *tufala*). A few words from indigenous languages are integrated, such as '*tubui*' or '*kolo*'. So there is nothing remarkable about the written language except that it is not anglicised at all, but this should not be a surprise if we consider the state of mind of the writers who probably did not want to voice their anti-colonialism views in a colonial language when they could use their own language. We will examine some of the poems in the 'Translation' part because a few were published both in English and Bislama.

I have already mentioned that to my knowledge, Molisa wrote only a few poems in Bislama. It is sometimes difficult to identify her poems as they are often found in booklets published for other purposes, not as in the 'poetry' genre, like *Blackstone*, which obviously belongs to the latter category. One is to be found in the *Human Raets Toksave* booklet. In fact, this text is composed of two parts and it is not easy to classify, as the first part looks like poetry and the second half is more prose, so it is a mixture of two styles, a feature we often find in Molisa's writings.

Vanuatu

*Vanuatu hemi kraon, we hemi land,
we hemi hom blong yumi
yestedei, tedei mo foreva.*

Kraon ia yumi kamaot long hem

⁷³ Samoan writer Wendt was a Senior Lecturer at USP in Suva in 1975 and the editor of *Mana Publications* in Suva between 1974 and 1980.

mo bambae yumi gobak long hem.

Laef blong yumi i stap long kraon

mo i dipen long kraon.

Human Raets Toksave 1999: 28 (part 1)⁷⁴

As can be seen in the first part of the text, we find the characteristics usually associated with poetry: there are three stanzas, clearly separated, the last two stanzas rhyme. We also find repetitions – the word *kraon* ‘ground’ is used 4 times – and there are parallels in the structure of the last two stanzas with one verse followed by another one introduced by *mo*. The spelling is what could be qualified as the least anglicised with *kraon* (*graon*) and *kobak* (*gobak*) and there is not a single word of English.

It is also the case for the poem in *CEDAW* (2001: 12-13). The recommendations on how to use CEDAW are written in the form of a poem in Bislama for Women’s Day in May 2001. The poem is dedicated to the women of Vanuatu, and gives them advice on how to defend their rights: *Hao blong Usum CEDAW long Laef blong Yu* ‘How to Use CEDAW in your Life’. We notice here that there are very few English words, no plural *-s* as in *Universal Charter blong Human Raet* (p. 13) whereas we find *Human Raets* in the same leaflet (p. 4).

The difference we can observe between Molisa’s more anglicised translations of formal articles and rules and her poems probably lies in the fact that there is much more emotion in the poems and fewer of the ‘academic’ constraints that one finds in the official translation of texts. The poem was written from a personal point of view and it is dedicated to women – one of the causes that Molisa spent her life defending – so it is more a message to fellow women to celebrate Women’s Day than a literary piece of work. It has to be noted here that Molisa wrote her very famous poems “Blackstone” in English, not in Bislama, and that most of her other publications were also in English, the language she was educated in.

The other poems are in *Pasifik Paradaes*, a 30-page booklet containing information about Vanuatu, and “The Book is written in Anglicised Bislama, especially for English readers, as an introduction to Bislama and Vanuatu” (Molisa 1995: 5). The advice given to the reader is “Bislama is a creole based on English. If you have trouble understanding a word, read it out loud phonetically”, and in the acknowledgements, Molisa thanks the Australian High Commission in Port Vila for anglicising the Bislama in this book. So what we have here is a

⁷⁴ Vanuatu is our land, our home, yesterday, today and forever. / We come from this land and will return to this land. / Our life is in the land and depends on the land.

product for English-speaking tourists, and the language in which it was originally written by a native speaker has been modified to cater for the needs of foreigners to facilitate their understanding of the language. It might sound like a good idea at first sight, but to me it seems that this is a perfect example of not giving Bislama its place as a language that “*hemi save stanap hemwan*” ‘which can stand by itself’ as one of my Bislama teachers taught me. Indeed, we all know that the lexifier is English, but that does not mean to say that you have to modify the vocabulary and use words like or mix Bislama with English as in “*Vanuatu hemi rich gud/ Wetem gudfala weather mo volkanik soil. / Forest, riva mo solwora/ I fulap gud long ol food. / Manples ino save what is hungry*” (p. 24). This booklet is also a mixture in terms of the nature of what we find, some parts are prose like pages 8, 13 and 16, but on pages 10, 11 and 17, the texts definitely have the structure of poems, and it is interesting to note that the poems contain fewer English words and less anglicised vocabulary too, so they are undoubtedly closer to what Molisa probably wrote in Bislama, as it is harder to change poetry than factual texts for the sake of understanding. It seems however strange that some of the words should have been written in English while they could have been understood if read ‘phonetically’ as advised in the introduction: an example of what I mean here is the word *cook* in *Mi Mama* (p. 17) – which might have been written *kuk* without hindering the reader’s comprehension – or the same phenomenon happening for *feelim* (*filim*) ‘*feel*’ and *water* (*wota* or *wora*).

I find these pieces of writing of particular interest from the linguistic point of view as well as from a more social perspective. It seems to me they show the kind of duality most Ni-Vanuatu people are faced with: on the one hand, Bislama is their language, they use it all the time and it is widely acknowledged as a Melanesian language defining their identity. On the other hand, however, the language of instruction is either English or French, and it is the European language which is still mostly used for literary creation. Molisa was one of the pioneer female campaigners and advocates for women’s equality, as well as the first woman politician. Her work *Blackstone* includes poems which denounce colonialism and male predominance in the social life of the country, so I find it very symbolical that her creations were mostly in English while most of the documents in which she wrote about women and human rights were written in Bislama, not to mention all the translation work she did which will be studied in the ‘Translation’ part.

Much more recently, I found a poem posted on the website *Kam2geta* by TYKES with the following introduction “Hey y’all! Geez, nobody’s posted anything in a while. Here’s a lil narrative/satirical verse for y’all. It’s free-writing so don’t go hatin if it’s not textbook poetry.

Bless!” (retrieved June 1, 2010-06-01, kam2geta.ning.com). The poem is written half in English and half in Bislama, with repetition of the same stanza of four verses in English three times, plus another stanza in English at the end and two in Bislama. It is obvious that an effort has been made to have rhymes, both in English and in Bislama. If we look at the parts in Bislama, we can notice that there are very few words (6 out of 150) with their English spelling (*rice, mobile fone, end, fly, fee*).

Village Boy

*I'm a village boy, dreaming of the big city.
One day I'm gonna get there when the boat come and get me
I'll be working so hard, I struggle on my own
But, I'ma make some money for my Famz back home.*

Mi plantem vanilla, kokonas, wetem some kava,
Taro, aelan kabis mo smol karen blo maruana.
Mi stap salem iko lo olketa famli lo taon ia
Be oli no stap pem mi, oli kiaman wetem ol kaon ia.
Naoia oli nogat mani blo sendem me wan bag rice,
tinfis, bel suga wetem wan hariken laet.
Oli raetem mi wan leta se, “Brata yu no wari,
Bae mi sendem yu wan niu mobile fone lo end blo manis!”

*I'm a village boy, dreaming of the big city.
One day I'm gonna get there when the boat come and get me
I'll be working so hard, I struggle on my own
But I'ma make some money for my Famz back home.*

Solwora blo yumi I fulap wetem kaenkaen fis nao,
Isaed lo reva yu save faenem ol bigfala naura.
Lo maonten mi luk ol pijin oli stap fly hae
I stap lo yu wan nomo blo planem ol gudfala kakae
Mi nogat wari, Yu nogat wari taem yu stap lo aelan.
Hemia nomo, mi needim smol mani, so mi mas ko faenem
Blo pem skool fee wetem sam meresin,
klos blong ol pikinini wetem smol kerosin.

*I'm a village boy, dreaming of the big city.
One day I'm gonna get there when the boat come and get me
I'll be working so hard, I struggle on my own
But I'ma make some money for my Famz back home.*

It's more than a mission statement, it's an ambition in my mind and
 Like a defaulted music player, I'll be the same when I'm re-winded.
 What will it take for you?
 Surrender your pride or give me a piece of your life
 Cos' that's the cost of living in shackles,
 That's the price you pay to survive.
 Who will ya blame when failures not an option but your only friend?
 I say switch your allegiance, get sum options and start again.
 Village boy. City life. That's a savage combination
 Put yourself in my situation, then, anticipate it.

The fact that the poem is written both in Bislama and in English – which can be assumed to be the language of instruction – could be an indication that things are changing and that Bislama will start being used in literary creations too and not just limited to the songs by *stringban*. It also shows that as code-switching and code-mixing are more frequent these days because of the use of new technologies which creates new communication, they may appear in more literary writings too or new creations like slam, for instance.

Let us now consider the two books I mentioned, the account of the trial by Ligo and the stories about World War II.

4.3.2 *Murder long Paradise*

Joe Ligo was one of the first Ni-Vanuatu to become a magistrate after independence, a position he resigned from in 1996 over disagreement with the Chief Justice. He wrote his book *Murder Long Paradise* in the same year, and gives an account of a particular law case, namely the trial of Mrs Luciana Picchi, accused of murdering her husband with the help of three other people in 1995. She was found guilty and sentenced to life. The case went to appeal in 1996, the judgement was overturned and Mrs Picchi was set free in 1996.

Explanations of the workings of the judicial system are to be found in the first twenty pages of the book, followed by the account of Mrs Picchi's trial.

As Joe Ligo was educated in the Anglophone system and then studied law in Australia, we could expect the book to be highly 'anglicised', all the more so as most of the vocabulary concerning the case belongs to the register of justice. The title itself could make the readers anticipate such a thing, as the two nouns are spelt in English. Nevertheless, most of the book is in fact the testimonies of the four defendants, as reported by Ligo, and which are different

versions of the course of events that led to the murder. These have probably been made in Bislama by three of the defendants who are Ni-Vanuatu, and may be also by Mrs Picchi, an Italian woman who is said to have been able to speak Bislama (“*Misis emi stap toktok lanwis blong Italy wetem Bislama*” (Ligo 1996: 51).

It is therefore not really surprising to find that all the accounts of events do not seem to be anglicised at all. The second reason why English has been avoided is given by Ligo himself: “I have tried my best not to include too much technical law vocabulary to make it easy for people to follow the court case in everyday Bislama” (p. 3).⁷⁵

What I did find in Joe Ligo’s book that comes from English is the use of plural -s at the end of words, often with English words as: *ol facts*, *ol figures* (p. 3), *eggs* (p. 12), *ol rules* (p. 15), *two weeks* (p. 25). More interesting is the use of plural -s with Bislama words, e.g. *ol deits* (p. 3), *ol medieval taems*, *olgeta feimes monumens*, *ol Romans* (p. 4), *sam telefon kolls* (p. 74), *ridim buks* (p. 68), *ol kasets* (p. 97), and a systematic use of ‘s’ after *yia* ‘year’ as in *4 yia’s* (p. 5), *7 yia’s* (p. 7), *long olgeta fes yia’s* (p. 7), *20 yia’s experiens* (p. 36).

When Ligo uses vocabulary (whether English or Bislama) that might pose a problem for the readers to understand, he provides them with either synonyms or explanations (mostly in Bislama), as shown in table 4.7. The other obvious evidence of the influence of English is the use of many verbs directly borrowed: I noted down all the verbs borrowed from English and checked them against Crowley’s 2003 dictionary first (knowing he chose not to include the loan words that are not in common use by people with primary education level) and then against the TVET spell check. I made the choice of ignoring the spelling variations influenced by English such as ‘*quotem*’ for *kwotem*, ‘*wearem*’ for *werem* or ‘*feilem*’ for *fel*, as well as the few words spelled in English as *involve* or *fail*. Out of a total of 83 verbs, 25 verbs are not in the dictionary, that is to say just over 20%, which is not much considering the register. After checking the more recent spell check, I found that only 5 verbs that are not present in Crowley are in the TVET list: *expectem* ‘expect’ (found as *ekspektem* in the spell check), *solvem* ‘solve’, *repitim* (*ripitim*) ‘repeat’, *lendem* ‘lend’ and *rimaendem* (*rimaenem* in the spell check) ‘remind’. Among the remaining verbs, which therefore represent 24% of the total number of verbs, two have a new meaning: *kosem* ‘cause’⁷⁶ and *bangem* ‘bang’ (door)⁷⁷. Two verbs are

⁷⁵ *Mi traem bes blong kipim aot teknikol toktok blong loa mo mekem emi isi blong folem storian long court long evridei bislama.*

⁷⁶ The translation for *kosem* in Crowley is ‘overcharge’ (price). (Crowley 2003: 140)

⁷⁷ *bangem* is translated as ‘collide with, hit’(car). (Crowley 2003: 44)

used in a different way: *tanem off* ‘turn off’ (only *tanem* is to be found) and *applaem* [sic] as a transitive verb but which only comes as *aplae* intransitive ‘apply’(for a job) (p. 39). Two already existing verbs are given a prefix from English: *mislidim* and *dispruvum*. The influence of English is obvious with the use of *jejem* ‘change’ as opposed to the existing *jenis* or *jenisim*, and if we look at the remaining verbs, we notice that most of those that cannot be found either in Crowley nor in the spell check refer to the semantic field of justice. That is the case of *mederem* ‘murder’, *koroboreitem* ‘corroborate’, *affem* ‘affirm’, *beisem* ‘base’, *re-instetem* ‘re-instate’, *enfosem* ‘enforce’, *upholem* ‘uphold’, *konfem* ‘confirm’, *konviktim* ‘convict’, *admitim* ‘admit’ and *daotem* ‘doubt’. The few remaining verbs have a more general use, and some of them are now quite commonly found in the press or leaflets (just as a reminder, Ligo’s book was written over fifteen years ago, so today some of these verbs would probably appear in a recent dictionary). They are verbs such as *refusim* ‘refuse’, *distroem* ‘destroy’, *damagem* ‘damage’, *tritim* ‘treat’, *involve* ‘involve’, *quotem* ‘quote’ and *kool daon* ‘cool down’. I have found most of these verbs used quite commonly today, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Let us now examine the other expressions or words used by the writer that are not referenced in the dictionary. As shown in table 4.7, there are few expressions, but many nouns or compound nouns and adjectives. Again, what can be emphasised here is that some of these, like (*dip-)**friza* ‘deepfreezer’, *gambling* ‘gambling’, *hat atak* ‘heart attack’, *pisful* ‘peaceful’ or *paoaful* ‘powerful’, are words that one can find in the press, in shops or in booklets easily accessible to people (in towns at least). Some of them are written in English (those not in italics in the table). Three of the adjectives borrowed from English keep the suffix *-ful* at the end of the word, which I have found as happening more and more often in the press too. What could be very confusing for a reader is that all English *-ing* words in Bislama are nouns, so that some readers might struggle to identify the form *willing* as not being a noun here but used as the verbal phrase ‘be willing to’. However, it is possible that the meaning becomes clear in the context of the whole sentence: “*Be still, mi no mas foget se ino kat man i fosem yu be yu bin **willing** blong tekpat long ol rabis samting we ibin happen long naet ia*” (p. 115).⁷⁸

As mentioned previously, Ligo gives his own explanations or synonyms when he thinks the reader might have a problem understanding (see table 4.8). Here again, we might say that were the book written today, some of these words would probably not require any explanation because their meaning would be clear to most readers.

⁷⁸ However, I must not forget that no one forced you, but that you were **willing** to take part in the nasty business that took place that night.

Table 4.7: Anglicised expressions, nouns and adjectives in Ligo

expressions	nouns	adjectives
<i>plei wan active rol</i>	land use planning	<i>feimes</i>
<i>bae mistek</i>	<i>inta-cropping</i>	<i>prosperus</i>
<i>[yu no bin wantem] tekem eni jans</i>	<i>akius</i>	<i>respektful</i>
	<i>filing</i>	<i>pisful</i>
	<i>kampling = gambling</i>	<i>risonabol</i>
	<i>dip-friza</i>	<i>blank (jek)</i>
	<i>ansaring masin</i>	<i>fetful</i>
	<i>hat atak</i>	willing
	<i>katoon video</i>	<i>paoaful</i>
	<i>telefon opereta</i>	

For example, a word like *bukstoa* ‘bookstore’ would seem easy by analogy, even though there are no bookstores as such in Port Vila. ‘Duty’ is now often found as *diuti* and I am not sure that the word *beden* ‘burden’ used in the book as a synonym is in fact easier to understand than ‘duty’ itself. The synonyms are sometimes written in English or with an English spelling (‘workboy’ for *leibara*), but the explanations are all in Bislama. We sometimes find the loanword from English and the Bislama word on different pages, as with *jen blong nek mo jen blong hand* ‘necklace and bracelet’ (p. 33) and *jein, breislet* (p. 96). We sometimes find the loanword from English and the Bislama word on different pages, as with *jen blong nek mo jen blong hand* ‘necklace and bracelet’ (p. 33) and *jein, breislet* (p. 96).

A lot of expressions refer to sex, which is systematically written *sex* with the English spelling (*havem sex wetem* ‘to have sex with’, *plei sex tugeta* ‘have sex’, *wokem sex* ‘have sex’, *mekem sex* ‘have sex’, *sex i tek ples evri dei* ‘sex took place every day’) and used in the calque expression *sexual intakos* ‘sexual intercourse’ (p. 34). The words *sex* or *seks* and *sexual* or *seksol*, not found in Crowley’s dictionary, have definitely entered the lexicon of Bislama and can be seen in many leaflets or booklets for health awareness campaigns.

Table 4.8: Synonyms and definitions by Ligo

word	synonym	definition
<i>Ol pruv</i> Duty <i>Resal</i> <i>Joen long kiling</i> <i>Leibara</i> <i>Kleva</i> <i>Kiaman hair</i> <i>Tiuma</i>	<i>Evidens</i> <i>Beden</i> <i>Frut</i> <i>Kos blong ded</i> <i>Workboy</i> <i>Magic man</i> <i>Wigs</i> <i>kansa</i>	
<i>Affem</i> <i>Akamplis</i> Ø [autopsy] “batad waef syndrom” <i>Bekari</i> <i>Bukstoa</i> Cross-examination <i>Dets</i> <i>Diu</i> <i>Handklav</i> Oath <i>Raeding</i> <i>Riding</i>		<i>Wan promes be wetaot Baebol</i> <i>Emi bin joen tu blong mekem trabol</i> <i>Raet blong katem bodi</i> <i>Emi problem we woman we man blong em i kilim</i> <i>oltaem i save kat</i> <i>Ples blong mekem bred</i> <i>Wan stoa we oli salem ol buk</i> <i>Raet long narasaed pati blong kwestenem witness</i> <i>ia long toktok we i kivim</i> <i>Dei wetem namba</i> <i>Kolkol i kam wota</i> <i>We oli stap yusim blong wasem ol samting mo kala</i> <i>blong olgeta i waet</i> <i>Promes blong talem truth, we emi tekem promes ia</i> <i>long Baebol</i> <i>Ron long hos</i> <i>Ridim buk</i>

The words *mani* or *mane* ‘money’ are typically followed by *vatu* between brackets, which might seem rather superfluous as one can probably assume that the persons who are likely to read this book do know the meaning of *mane* or *mani*, but it is in keeping with Ligo’s will to write in ‘*evri dei bislama*’.

From a grammatical point of view, as far as the use of *evri* is concerned, it seems that it is used to mean ‘all’ in the three occurrences found in the book: *emi no save kivim evri mane* ‘he

could not give all the money' (p. 44), *evri mistek* = all the mistakes (p. 138) and *long evri evidens* (all the evidence). The only *evriwan* is used as the adverb 'completely' in *karaj emi wetwet evriwan* (p. 95) 'the garage was completely wet'.

As a conclusion to what can be observed in this book, I can say is that indeed, in spite of the fact that Ligo is writing a book about a very specific semantic field, namely justice, he takes good care of keeping his vocabulary as simple as possible and globally not too anglicised. Admittedly, the most anglicised part is the introduction, which is not surprising, because it deals with the case itself and the workings of the judicial system. The testimonies of the witnesses – Ni-Vanuatu persons – are, in fact, spoken language in writing and therefore contain very little English.

4.3.3 *Big Wok*

The other book entirely in Bislama is *Big Wok: Storian blong Wol Wo Tu long Vanuatu* which consists in a compilation of about 450 texts of varying lengths, stories recorded by the editors between 1987 and 1989, and by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. So what we have here is in fact oral testimonies put down in writing, with spelling advice from Crowley, and some photos of the time.⁷⁹ The book is divided into chapters under thematic heads covering all the different aspects of the war and its impact of people's lives, such as *Olgeta Man Japan Oli Kalabus* 'The Japanese go to prison' or *Niuhebridis Defens Fos* 'New Hebrides Defense Force'. The story tellers (originally 125, but only about half of the stories were kept) come from all parts of Vanuatu (some are very well-known, such as Jimmy Stevens), and the stories have been divided by topic as the same names are found throughout the book.

A little historical background here might be useful to understand the context, as this was a very important part of the life of the New Hebrides, with a lot of impact on the population and the country itself: "That war changed a lot of places in Vanuatu as well as the life of a lot of men and women living on the islands. World War II is very important in the lives of a lot of Ni-Vanuatu men and women." (Lindstrom & Gwero 1998: 1)⁸⁰ The first American warship entered Port Vila harbour in May 1942 and the last American soldiers left the New Hebrides in 1946, so that the presence of the American troops in the country lasted for about 4 years, long enough to stay in memories and have lasting consequences. As could have been

⁷⁹ *Mo, laswan, mitufala i talem tangkiu long Terry Crowley from hem i advaesem hao nao blong spelem samfala wod long barava Bislama* (Lindstrom & Gwero 1998: ix)

⁸⁰ *Wo ya i jenisim plante ples olbaot long Vanuatu mo i jenisim laef blong plante man mo woman long olgeta aelan long kantri. Wol Wo Tu hem i wan impotent samting insaed long laef blong plante man mo woman blong Vanuatu*

expected, I have found in these texts some features from oral that are normally not so common in writing:

- reduplication of personal pronouns (*mi mi*)
- direct speech: *Pusum olgeta, go go !* ‘Push!’ (p. 17)
- variation : *olgeta Japanis, ol Japani, olgeta man Japan, ol Japan* ‘the Japanese’, *tufala Jap ya* ‘those two Japs’ (p. 163), *woman blong Japan* ‘Japanese woman’ (p. 164), *sabmarin blong Japan* ‘Japanese submarine’ (p. 164), *wan faeta plen blong Japanis* ‘Japanese bomber’ (p. 164)

We also find what is clearly normally associated with oral style:

- short sentences: *Ol bot antap. Lanis antap. Go bak.* ‘Boats up there. Boats out there. Go back home’ (p. 23)
- verb repetitions: *Oli kakae, kakae, kakae gogo oli fulap* ‘They ate and ate and ate until they were full’ (p. 23), *Mifala i stap stap stap, i no long taem olgeta hae man i kam* ‘We waited and waited, and then the officials came’ (p. 23).
- Interjections: *ale, oraet, e* (direct speech), *saye* (p. 165).

Obviously, the semantic field here is that of war, army, soldiers and equipment. A lot of these had never been seen in the New Hebrides, like planes or warships: “We looked and we were surprised, a plane was flying. We had heard about a ship that could fly and whose name was “plane”. That day was the first time we had seen one.” (Lindstrom & Gwero 1998: 12)⁸¹ This implies that the lexicon for those new things was mostly borrowed from English as this was in fact the longest and only period when the population of the New Hebrides was in contact with an English-speaking population on an everyday basis, apart from the British people who were in the country in small numbers to represent the British part of the Condominium and with whom the local population had very little to do at the time. In the chapter entitled ‘World War Two brought some changes’ (p. 292), people tell about the impact this period had on their lives, not only in terms of practical things such as airfields and roads, but also in terms of relationships between black and white people.⁸² Some go as far as saying that, because they started getting wages for their work, it made them realise they had been exploited: “Now

⁸¹ *Plen i flae mifala i lukluk we mifala i sapraes. Se yumi harem stori se i gat wan sip i flae, nem blong hem “plen”. Hemia tede yumi luk faswan blong hem.*

⁸² *Sam Jenis I Kamaot long Wol Wo Tu.*

when (our) young people worked, they got a lot of money, wages. Before, it was bad, as if we worked like slaves” (p. 292).⁸³ It also brought about changes in mentalities in a colonial environment where Melanesian people were considered as ‘boys’ (servants) and white people as ‘masters’: “....We were boys, workmen. But when the Americans came, there was no master, everyone was the same. At that time, it made no difference whether you were a “big” man, you still had to work with the others to make quick progress with your work” (p. 292).⁸⁴ The barriers of racial discrimination were broken too, as never before had Melanesian people been able to sit down and share meals or jokes with white people. The word ‘boy’ used with its colonial meaning was forbidden “*Yes, i tabu blong talem ‘boe’*” (p. 295). Political awareness followed, and new ideas of equality and democracy were introduced: “As in Europe, if you want independence, you must be familiar with politics. When the war was over, those who went to school started reading books about countries where politics played an important role and they thought it might be better for us if we tried to do the same.” (p. 293).⁸⁵

Very little is mentioned about the influence on the language apart from this comment: “When the Americans came, we started using English. Before they came, we did not use ‘okay’, but after their arrival we used it all the time, whereas before we used ‘i oraet’ ”. But it is when they came that we started using ‘okay’ ” (p. 297-8).⁸⁶ But we find compound nouns borrowed from English such as *kagosip* ‘cargo ship’, *gasmass* ‘gasmask’, *masin gan* ‘machine gun’, but also creations using the same principle of mere description as in *raonhaos* for ‘quonset’, *jiptrak wetem sikis wil* for ‘tank’ (not to confuse with *tang* meaning ‘[water] tank’ which some would pronounce with a final /k/) and a creation with *gadman* ‘guard’ (literally *guardman). All in all, apart from these few specialised words introduced in the vocabulary because of the contexts, what we find here is very little anglicised, because people are telling about their own reactions and emotions such as surprise, fear, awe, so that they use everyday language where there is no need for new words. This can also be explained by the fact that

⁸³ *Naoia ol yangfala blong yumi oli wok, oli kasem big mane, wejes. Bifo, I nogud. Yumi luk olsem yumi wok olsem slave.*

⁸⁴ *Yumi yumi boe, yumi wokman. Be taem ol Amerika I kam, I nogat wan masta. Evriwan I sem mak. Long taem ya, nevemaen yu wan bigman olsem wanem, be bae yu mas wok tu wetem ol narafala ya blong mekem wok I go kwiktaem.*

⁸⁵ *Olsem long Yurop, taem we olgeta i wanem samfala we oli independent, oli mas yusum politik. Taem we wo i finis, ating samfala we oli skul, oli stap ridim ol buk blong ol kantri we oli yusum politik, oli faenem se ating i mo gud yumi traem praktis long hem ya.*

⁸⁶ *Olsem Amerika i kam nao mifala i stat yusum Inglis. Olsem taem Amerika i no kam, yu no yusum “okei”. Tok ya, Amerika i kam nao ol man i yusum olwe. Be bifo, “I oraet”. Be naoia yu luk Amerika i kam, nao i talem se “okei”.*

words for ideas and personal feelings are part of the lexicon from the very beginning so that they are perceived as Bislama even though they came from English in the first place.

4.4. Educational material:

4.4.1 *Man, Langwis mo Kastom long Niu Hebridis*

In the introduction to *Man, Langwis mo Kastom long Niu Hebridis*, published in 1978, the editors explain the purpose of this book: they have asked researchers who had been working in the New Hebrides in various fields to write out the results of their research in Bislama, so that they would be accessible to Ni-Vanuatu. The book is therefore a series of fifteen articles written all in Bislama, dealing with various subjects such as history, languages, anthropology and custom. Four of these articles are devoted to linguistics, namely to the very rich linguistic situation in Vanuatu. What is interesting about this book is what we find printed on the other side of the cover: “To show that there is not only ONE way of writing Bislama, we have mostly followed Camden’s spelling, but tried a different spelling for G.K.Ward’s second article” (Brunton, Lynch and Tryon, eds, 1978: inside cover).⁸⁷ If we have a closer look at the two articles written by G.K.Ward, which both deal with archaeology, what differences can we find in the spelling? The article is entitled *Wok blong Tikim Kraon i Save Soem Fasin mo Kastom blong Bifo long Bankis i Olsem Wanem?* ‘Can archeological diggings in the Banks reveal old ways?’, with the first version from page 81 to 86, and the second from page 87 to 96. What we can see is mainly differences in spelling, as in *digdigim graon* (p. 81) written as *tikim kraon* (p. 87), *olbaot* becomes *olpaot*, *bitim* is spelt as *pitim*, *difren* becomes *tevren*, to quote a few.⁸⁸

4.4.2 USP

The Pacific Languages Unit at USP was established in Vanuatu in 1983, with a mission to raise awareness about VL and other languages spoken in the country, provide skills for the survival and development of their languages, teach tertiary courses in and about Pacific languages, and conduct research into Pacific languages (Crowley 2000: 110).

⁸⁷ *blong soemaot we i no gat wan gudfala fasin nomo blong raetem bislama, mifala i bin folem spelling blong Camden plante taem ; be long namba tu raet blong G.K.Ward mifala i bin traem wan narakaen bakegen.*

⁸⁸ The first words are to be found in the first version, the second words in the second article.

4.4.2.1 Bislama Coursebooks

The Pacific Languages Unit staff have produced descriptions of some Vanuatu languages, including Bislama. Crowley (1985) created a tertiary course **about** and **in** Bislama entitled *Introdaksen long Stadi blong Bislama*, for which new linguistic terminology had to be developed from scratch (Crowley 2000). The basic principle adopted by the author was to borrow from English as little as possible, thus privileging other strategies such as the semantic extension of existing Bislama words, the use of compounds based on pre-existing Bislama forms, and when borrowing was inevitable, giving preference to the words that could be identified both in French and English or choosing the most plausible word from either of the two metropolitan languages (i.e. most phonologically or orthographically compatible with Bislama). *Buk Wan* and *Buk Tu* are course books, and *Buk blong Ridim* is a compilation of articles either previously written in English and translated into Bislama, or written directly in Bislama, some of them published for the first time or written expressly for this book. Those articles provide the students with a mine of information on Bislama, its history, the problems linked with its orthography and variation, as well as guidelines for the spelling of new words introduced in the vocabulary of Bislama.

4.4.2.2 Crowley's dictionaries

Of course, it is impossible not to mention Crowley's dictionaries in this section. Two dictionaries of English/Bislama, Bislama/English were published in 1990 and 1995, as well as a second, revised edition of the latter in 2003.

This version is, up to now, the latest dictionary of Bislama that has been published. What I was interested in was to find out what Crowley included in the last revised edition which was not present in 1995. Even though Crowley's primary aim is not to impose uniformity of the language, he clearly says that "this dictionary aims to promulgate a set of standard spellings" (2003: 3), and it is indeed used as spelling reference by many. He also indicates that the revised edition contains about a fifth as many entries as in the 1995 edition, and this is what I have been looking at in more detail, being aware that what I would **not** find was "the more formal and anglicised registers of the best-educated Anglophone Ni-Vanuatu" (2003: 14) which Crowley chose not to include as a variety of the language, even though he is not denying that words from English are flooding into Bislama and enriching it, with some having a fairly widespread use.

How did I proceed to observe the newly-included words or expressions? I first made a list of all of them, with their grammatical nature, and made lists of nouns, verbs, expressions, etc. I

then looked at each category trying to determine whether the words were borrowed straight from English, were a creation from English or part English, or a creation from French. I also looked at the words which acquired a new, different meaning and those with an extension of meaning. I looked at the verb phrases and noun phrases, and tried to find out whether some semantic fields have been particularly developed. The results of this work are interesting and are analysed in detail in the following part.

We will first look at the nouns which I divided into sub-categories: objects, people, body, sex, animals and plants, and religion, and then for each semantic field, I sub-divided them into simple nouns and compound nouns (by which I mean NN, N + N, N *blong* N, or any compound form from elements other than nouns, plus compounds that contain more than two words). What is very striking in the results of the study of this particular point is that the great majority of the new entries in the dictionary are compound nouns, as shown in table 4.9. Indeed, the average percentage of compounds reaches 66% whereas simple nouns represent only 34% of the total number of new nouns. In some categories, the percentage of compounds is extremely high, with for instance 88% of the nouns referring to the category ‘body’ being compounds.

Table 4.9: New nouns and compounds in the 2003 edition

	noun	compound noun
body	12%	88%
animal, plant	34%	66%
object	23%	77%
people	16%	84%
other	50%	50%
religion	0%	100%
Total	34%	66%

I then looked at the composition of compound nouns to classify them into three types: the first category called NN and ADJN contains joined words composed with two nouns like *kagobot* ‘cargo boat’ or an adjective and a noun like *taedleg* ‘someone who cannot dance or practise

sport' (English *tiredleg). In the second category, we find compounds with two separate juxtaposed nouns like *Jaena sop* 'block laundry soap' (English *China soap) or adjective and noun as in *blujin*. Finally, the third category concerns the compound formed with the preposition *blong* between two nouns as in *lanwis blong aelan* 'local language' (English 'language of the island'). Then I looked at which category fitted the semantic classification made previously for all the nouns and compounds (see Table 4.6). As shown in Table 4.10, there are major discrepancies in the nature of the compound nouns according to the semantic field they illustrate.

If we look at the body parts or functions, it is in fact not really a surprise that the majority of the nouns should be found under the form *N blong N*, such as *besin blong bodi* (pelvis) or *wota blong nus* (snout). Most of the time, the first noun describes the 'nature' (*wota*, *besin*) whereas the second word that follows *blong* indicates the 'location' (*bodi*, *nus*) so that the speaker gets a double reference to allow him to understand fully what is meant, as the word '*pelvis*' directly borrowed from English would probably evoke nothing to a lot of speakers.

Table 4.10: New compound nouns by nature

	NN, ADJN	N + N, ADJ + N	N <i>blong</i> N
body	21%	7%	71%
animal, plant	68%	16%	16%
people	54.5%	9%	36.5%
religion	25%	25%	50%
object	54.5%	27%	16%
other	65%	13%	21%

However, some words are becoming more common because of health awareness campaigns about global problems such as smoking, alcoholism and Aids, for instance. So words such as '*lang*' or even '*liva*' are found in leaflets with drawings and will probably integrate the language for all parts of the population as information in Bislama is made more available in the whole country. However, it is to be noted that the construction in *N blong N* is believed to

also protect people's shyness regarding all matters of the body: Crowley mentions the use of circumlocutions when there are lexical gaps: "I am not referring here to obscure items of introduced technology such as daisy-wheels on typewriters, paper clips or the shutter of a camera, but to a number of very basic body parts and functions which are expressed by well known words in English as well as in Vanuatu vernaculars" (Crowley 1989: 88). He adds that these parts are in fact shown on the body and most of the words have too broad a meaning to be precise, so people use semantically accurate circumlocutions. These are often found to be impractical for everyday use because they are often too long. From what people have been telling me as well as from personal observation of my corpus, it seems that things are gradually changing, with more and more words borrowed straight from English, such as *elbo*, *snis* etc...Indeed, if we look at some of the information sheets published by the Ministry of Health concerning vaccination, for instance, we find words such as *siknes*, *difteria*, *misel* which are straight borrowings from English, even the word *vaksin* is used alongside the more traditional *stik meresin*. In the more recent documents, we notice a strong tendency towards the borrowing of English nouns to describe most of the parts of the human body today.

Just as the lexicon referring to body parts or functions has expanded a lot, so have words or expressions belonging to the semantic field of sex (not included in the table). Out of the twenty-one that I listed, eleven are nouns (eight of them compound nouns), four are adjectives and six are verbs. Among those, only one expression is borrowed directly from English but with a different grammatical nature: *anda ej* is a compound noun referring to 'an underage sexual partner'. All the other words are euphemisms to talk about things that are still considered as *tabu* for a lot of people, so we find expressions like *planem manioc* for 'have sex'. It has to be noted that most of these words belong to the register of slang, or even are sometimes classified as 'offensive'.

If we now look at the category of animals and plants, the majority of compound nouns found are constructed as one single entity, which makes sense in so far as most of them are in fact built on ADJN rather than NN. We know that in Bislama compound nouns whose initial word is an adjective are usually written as one word (*blakbus* 'primary forest', *grinbun* 'vegetable' or *switskin* 'variety of coconut'). A lot of these adjectives describe colour and are associated with the noun to get a whole new meaning, they can sometimes even make a word of themselves such as *blakanwaet* 'sea snake' (also called *snek blong solwota*). Unsurprisingly, it is in this semantic field that we find the most numerous nouns coming from vernacular languages (*navas* for 'wild yam' or *nalumlum* for 'moss' or 'grass').

The compound nouns describing people are mostly NN, but also a fair amount can be found as *N blong N*. If we examine them more closely, we come to the conclusion that these words inevitably get a new meaning coming from either a physical characteristic, a personality trait or are based on a simile: for example *dabolhed* for ‘someone who does too many things’ and *sekretpolis* for ‘an officer in civilian clothes’. It is easy to see that these words could be very tricky for foreigners who might confuse them with their English equivalents such as ‘secret police’ for instance. Similes are like in any other language: their meaning has to be deduced from the main characteristic, as *tel blong pig* for ‘someone who is always on the move’ (literally ‘pig tail’).

As far as new objects are concerned, more than half of them are NN, then 27% are N + N and only 16% *N blong N*. Most of the NN words are borrowed from English as such and therefore keep the English spelling: *andewea* for ‘underwear’ or *blujin* for ‘blue jeans’. The compound nouns N/ADJ + N seem to be more creations using English words to make a word in a different order or with a new meaning, with examples such as *trak doti* for ‘garbage truck’, *Jaenis sop* ‘bar of soap’, *bag pilo* (also *pilokes*) for ‘pillow case’ and *enjin string* for ‘string mower’.

For the compound nouns belonging to the ‘other’ category, a big majority of them is NN and *N blong N* found in more than 20% of the cases. Here again, we find straight borrowings from English (*maketples* ‘market place’, *siping nius* ‘shipping news’, *priskul* ‘preschool’), a few words acquiring new meanings: *selbag* for ‘empty sack cut open to make a single sheet’, *snekhil* for ‘windy hilly road’, *wanwei* for ‘one-way street’. The *N blong N* words, *mak blong saon* ‘stress’(on word), *sta blong faea* ‘spark’, *rod blong etkwek* ‘seismic fault’ or *sid blong pantri* ‘capsules’(medicine) show a good dose of creativity in the way they try to express things without resorting to mere borrowing of the English word.

Let us now look at the verbs: I have kept about fifty of them, as I did not include those that are also to be found in ‘new expressions’, so I limited myself to just ‘simple’ verbs or what I would call ‘compound verbs’. Here are the results of my study in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: New verbs in the 2003 edition

SBE*	SBF*	Creation	New meaning or extension	Grammatical category	False friend
39%	6%	10%	35%	6%	4%

*SBE = straight borrowing from English (e.g. *disaed* ‘decide’), SBF = straight borrowing from French (e.g. *futi* ‘foutu = absolutely bugged’)

What these results seem to confirm is that the largest number of new verbs are borrowed straight from English. We have to keep in mind here that Crowley mentioned that he avoided including the ‘too-anglicised’ Bislama in his dictionary, so in fact there are probably many more loan verbs from English that are used particularly in urban zones and by the English-educated elite. This is confirmed by the small proportion coming from French, as the percentages reflect those of the medium used in education too. What is striking here is the big proportion of already existing verbs which acquire new meanings or extensions, as almost as many verbs are extended (35%) as newly introduced into the lexicon (39%).

Among the new additions a few are grammatical novelties or changes, not new words as such but with a different function. For instance, this is what we have with *mekem se* used as a conjunction ‘in order that’ or ‘thus’. *Hamas*, normally used as interrogative for quantity (‘how much’, ‘how many’) can also be used as an adverb with the meaning of ‘however’ or ‘no matter how’ when it follows an adjective, as in: “*Traoses blong mi i doti hamas, bae mi werem nomo laswan tede*” (Crowley 2003: 102) where it has the same use as *olsem wanem* + ADJ.⁸⁹ Also mentioned as used in a new grammatical category are *wik*, *manis* and *yia* used as adverbs to express respectively ‘for weeks’, ‘for months’ and ‘for years’, as illustrated by “*Wok blong mekem diksonari olsem ia yia ia*” (Crowley 2003: 300).⁹⁰

As a French speaker, I could not miss out on the new introductions coming from French, all the more so as they are not very frequent because the next lexicon often comes from English. Some of the words are paired with their synonym in English too, so we may infer that their usage will depend on whether the speaker is francophone or anglophone (the word ‘tray’, for instance, is both *plato* ‘plateau’ (French) and *tre* ‘tray’ (English)).

I find interesting the fact that there has been a change concerning the way the words *besdemea* ‘bêche-de-mer’ and *bislama* are introduced in the dictionary: in the 1995 edition, Crowley has the word **besdemea** followed by ‘See **bislama**’ (p. 44), and the entry **bislama** is translated by ‘sea slug’, ‘sea cucumber’, ‘bêche de mer’, ‘trepang’, ‘holothurian’ and even illustrated with a small drawing below (p. 47). In the 2003 revised edition, what we have is **besdemea** as the main entry, with the same translations (p. 48), whereas the word **bislama** (p. 51) itself is only followed by “See **besdemea**”. In the introduction to his work, Crowley explains that “...all synonymous forms are presented. Where it is relevant, however, forms that are more widely used than others are indicated by means of a note within the entry for the

⁸⁹ However dirty my shorts are, I will wear them for the last time today.

⁹⁰ The task of making a dictionary like this takes years.

less frequently occurring form, along with a cross-reference to the more frequently encountered synonym” (2003: 3). This implies that in the years between the two editions, there could have occurred a shift from *bislama* as the more common word for ‘sea slug’ to *besdemea* more frequently used these days. The term ‘bêche de mer’ being used both in French and English, it is impossible to say which language it comes from.

There are quite a few new expressions in the revised edition, which should not come as a surprise: as the language is used in more domains and by more people, but also much more as a first language, it goes without saying that there is considerable expansion of the registers to meet the needs of describing new attitudes, behaviours or actions. Most of these new expressions are therefore more verbal than nominal and most of them are ‘creations’, that is to say not imported from English or French, but rather invented to make a particular situation clear, as exemplified by expressions such as *go bak long kinda* ‘go back to the beginning, to basics’ (literally ‘go back to kindergarten’). A good proportion are figurative and cannot be translated literally, like *mekem plen* for ‘accelerate’ (literally ‘to make the plane’). Some of these can only be understood in the Ni-Vanuatu context as their meaning describes something which is impossible to guess by just looking at the words, as in *mekem wota* for ‘to go freshwater prawning’ or the very funny *wansaed savat* for ‘best friend’ (literally ‘a jandal for one side’, so one half of a pair). Others are more easily ‘understandable’ at first sight, like *pas biae* meaning ‘to cheat on spouse, to be deceitful’ (literally ‘pass behind’). Very few of these expressions use words of French origin: I could only find 2 out of 68 expressions, one easy to understand because straight forward for a French speaker, *mekem bordel* for ‘engage in drunken revelry’ (literally ‘create havoc’) and the other one *pulum lastik* for ‘dawdle’ being very figurative as it literally means ‘to pull on the elastic’.

To these expressions we must add new interjections, where French words are a bit more common and which of course all have different meanings from what they normally have, one or two abbreviations such as *SPR* = *sperem pablik rod* for ‘be unemployed’ (itself probably derived from *sperem rod* ‘wander around idly’) and one or two surprising words that come from brands such as *eski* = *kontena* ‘container’ (from Esky ‘chilly bin’).

Finally, a few adjectives have also entered the new dictionary, with a few borrowed from English such as *ekspae* ‘expired’ or *disebol* ‘disabled’, *testi* replacing *tosta* for ‘thirsty’ (phonology closer to English), but also words from VL origin such as *nambut* for ‘deafmute’ with the extension ‘speechless’, or extended meaning for *handikap* ‘in total disrepair’.

What I can conclude to this part on the most recent dictionary to be found is that it is now eight years old and we know things change extremely quickly for a language that is getting much more commonly used for everyday written material. When I read ‘new’ documents published very recently, I find a lot more words coming from English than mentioned in Crowley’s dictionary.

Of course, this is due to the fact that the author himself made the choice of not including these words if they were not used by speakers with primary school education level. Secondly, this does not mean to say that the majority of the people do use these words on an everyday basis, and they are probably limited to an urban population that can have access to these documents much more easily and are more likely to read them than people living in isolated rural areas. Does this imply that the “incomprehensible Vila Bislish” mentioned by Miles (1998: 144) is here to stay and that the risk of a diglossic population, as also mentioned by Tryon and Charpentier (2004), is real? What we see with Crowley’s dictionary is that Bislama seems to have its own resources as a language to be creative and develop in its own way without necessarily having to borrow massively from one of the two metropolitan languages. It is true that as an ardent defender of Bislama and indigenous languages Crowley may appear biased in his choices for his dictionary, but it seems to me that taking the level of education of the majority of the Ni-Vanuatu population as well as usage as a point of reference sounds an intellectually honest stand no one can really reproach him for.

4.4.3 Early education

Eli Jaelhud Edukesen ‘Early Childhood Education’ is one of the fields where there are a lot of publications in Bislama: books, readers, posters and leaflets. The aim is very pragmatic: first, to reach as many people, children and parents alike, in a language they know. Second, to create pedagogical material that everybody can use as a basis for translation into VL, so that all the children are given documents with the same content even though they are written in different languages, with a view to improving the knowledge of traditional stories for all the islands of the country. The policy here is to use simple vocabulary that can be grasped by the majority of people, therefore keeping it as little anglicised as possible. Nevertheless, borrowing from English is what the writers resort to when the circumlocution would be too long for expressing a simple word or concept, and also sometimes to attract people’s attention and make it look more appealing, more ‘modern’ and pleasurable (Jenny James, MOE, p.c. March 2009).

In the leaflets designed for parents (awareness campaigns mostly), entitled *RID* ‘reading’, *RAET* ‘writing’ and *MATHS* ‘maths’, it is true that there is no English apart from nouns or noun phrases like *fun* ‘fun’, *skil* ‘skill’ or *kwaliti taem pleiplei* ‘quality time to play’, obviously borrowed straight from English. Some of the verbs may be a problem for non urbanised speakers of English, like *aprisietem* ‘appreciate’, *preseem* ‘praise’ or *majem* ‘match’ (for a matching exercise).

But most of the information is transmitted in everyday words, and a words like ‘neurologists’, for instance, is expressed by ‘*ol man blong stadi bren*’ whose meaning is immediately understood by all readers. However, if we look at the small books published to be used by teachers in the classrooms, we can see that there is no English at all. The choice of using stories written in Bislama and then translated into VL probably inposes constraints on the language used because if it was too anglicised, it might be difficult to turn into VL. Secondly, *kastom* stories or children’s stories are rarely anglicised at all because they use an environment that is familiar to the readers, so the lexicon needed is also quite familiar.

Buk blong Kindi: Lanwij Program published by the National Komiunity Development Trast, Port Vila is a 12-page booklet giving teachers some advice and instructions on how to teach their mother tongue (called here local language) to very young children. The emphasis is put on the importance of the success of the teaching:

Sapos oli laekem lanwij blong olgeta bae oli laekem kastom blong olgeta, sapos...oli laekem pipol blong olgeta, sapos...taem oli finisim skul bai oli wantem kambak long vilej blong helpem pipol blong olgeta mo developem ples blong olgeta. Sapos ol pikinini oli statem yusum lanwij blong narafala man olsem Inglis o Franis bai i had blong oli lanem samting kwik taem mo bai oli no klad blong lanem samting mo bai oli no save pasem gud skul blong olgeta. Kindi lanwij program hemi bin develop taem ol tija blong kindi we oli bin go tru long local lanwij program (LLP) blong ol pikinini oli no bin save yusum gud ol lesen blong LLP (p. 0)⁹¹

⁹¹ If they like their language, they will like their custom, their people and when they finish school they will feel like going back to their village to help their people and develop their place. If the children start using a foreign language like English or French, it is going to be hard for them to learn, they will not enjoy school nor have good results. The Kindy Language Program developed when the kindy teachers who had gone through the children’s Local Language Program (LLP) did not know how to use the LLP lessons well.

In this booklet, we find some of the pedagogical jargon borrowed from English but on the whole it is pretty simple Bislama with no anglicisation.

4.4.4 Ministry of Education

In spite of the fact that Bislama has no official place in the education system of Vanuatu, the MOE publishes text books in Bislama to cater for the needs of students who have dropped out of school, or adults who wish to go back to studying. These documents are mostly used by students whose aim is to get some kind of qualification or diploma.

Such is the case for *Vanuatu Komuniti Setifiket* ‘Vanuatu Community Certificate’ produced by the Institut National de Technologie du Vanuatu (INTV). The pedagogical material is for *Setifiket 1* and 2, and includes courses such as *Besik Bislama* ‘Basic Bislama’, *Komuniti Stadi* ‘Community Study’ and *Pesonal Developmen* ‘Personal Development’ for Level 1, and *Rid, Raet mo Andastanem Bislama* ‘Reading, Writing and Understanding Bislama’, *Hom Kea* ‘Home Care’ and *Kea Blong Ol Animal* ‘Looking after animals’, for instance, for Level 2. Some of the courses are in English only, like *Generol Wokples Sefti* ‘General Workplace Safety’ and *Besik Enjin Mentenens* ‘Basic Engine Maintenance’, probably because the lexicon is highly technical and does not exist in Bislama. This material followed what was originally the Melanesian Literacy program which started in 1989 with the Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union and was followed by a literacy program by World Vision. In 2006, a project was funded by the Australian Government through TVET to produce educational material. When we look at the kind of written Bislama used in these booklets, what we can say is that all the vocabulary dealing with pedagogy is borrowed straight from English like *asesmen* ‘assessment’, *kraeteria* ‘criteria’, *wok buk aktiviti* ‘workbook activity’, or *no-fomal grup insaed long komuniti* ‘non-formal group in the community’ (*Setifiket 2 Grup*: 47), and verbs like *difaenem* ‘define’, *eksplenem* ‘explain’, *defrensietem* ‘differentiate’, or words as *emploimen* ‘employment’ and *sastenebol* ‘sustainable’ (*Setifiket 2 Kakae*: 13). In the *Han Buk blong ol Tija* ‘Teacher’s Handbook’, the aim of the course is clearly stated: “It is made to help people improve their lives. For instance, they can plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their activities” (*Setifiket 1 Besik*: 7).⁹²

Another interesting MOE publication is the *Kos Book Blong Lanwis* for Vanuatu Distance Education School (a project set up in 2002 but which does not seem to have been followed up, as I was unable to find any trace of its implementation). It was part of the ‘Basic Life Skills

⁹² *Hemi helpem pipol blong impruvum laef blong olgeta. Oli save mekem plante samting, fo eksampol, oli save plan, implimentem, monitarem mo evaluetem ol aktiviti blong olgeta.*

Trial Project' designed in 2000/2001 to help young school leavers at end of Year 6 with no skills at all. So it is dedicated to students who stay in their villages, and learn with the help of local teacher support. The book, entitled *Lanwis* 'Language' and composed of two main parts, each being subdivided into main 'topic' parts, only deals with Bislama and is written in Bislama, apart from page 5 which gives precisions about the aim of the trial project in English.

In the introduction, it is nevertheless mentioned that 'In the course of the study, you will find that this book wants you to write or tell things also in your mother tongue, so that it helps you to not forget it and learn new things too' (MOE 2002: 4).⁹³

Part 1 deals with the origin and development of Bislama (p. 7-76) whereas Part 2 focuses on the place of Bislama in Vanuatu, as well as that of the other indigenous languages in the region (p. 77-148). Each 'topic' part is divided into several lessons, where the student is given information which he has to read before he can answer the questions or do the tasks about the topic. The course book is on the whole very well documented, but one could however wonder if it is actually appropriate for young school leavers learning by themselves, as some of the information about languages in the Pacific region, interesting as it may be, could prove quite a challenge for the interest of a ten-year-old school drop-out or maybe even for grown-ups whose interests lay in practical things. Indeed, some of the information is almost 'specialised' in the field of linguistics and even though an effort has definitely been made to make it accessible to readers, I still think that some of the questions would be rather hard to answer for some. It does however in the end provide the successful student with accurate and interesting information and knowledge of his own language, and better understanding of its mechanisms as well. It mentions the differences in spelling according to whether the speaker is francophone or anglophone, as well as the anglicised form of Bislama that can be found in the press, and asks the student to express his opinion about the two forms by trying to be aware of why one form (presumably the less anglicised) is easier to read than the other (p. 141).

Part 2 also raises the problem of attitude towards Bislama and does not shirk its responsibilities when it gives conclusions such as "Now you have finished this lesson, you know that Bislama is not used as it should be as a real national language in its own right"

⁹³ *Taem yu stap folem stadi blong yu i ko, bae yu faenem se bukya, bae i askem yu blong mekem, raetem o talem samfala samting tu long Lanwis ples blong yu. Hemia i blong helpem yu blong no fogetem Lanwis ples mo blong save olgeta samting we yu no bin save bifo.*

(MOE 2002: 125).⁹⁴ It comes to the conclusion that although Bislama is the national language when it is used **orally**, it is not given its place as a **written** language (MOE 2002: 130). In the same line, the subject of the standardisation of Bislama and its place in education is clearly discussed with the conclusion that “If Bislama was introduced in schools, it would lead to a better standard of the language” (MOE 2002: 130).⁹⁵ This position is quite surprising coming from the MOE as today there is no question of introducing Bislama into schools, whether as a taught language or as a medium of instruction.

4.5 NGOs

4.5.1 Vanuatu Women’s Centre

The Vanuatu Women’s Centre was set up in September 1992 as the Committee Against Violence Against Women. In 1993 it became the Vanuatu Women’s Centre. It is managed by a Collective Committee and a Board Management which was set up in 1997. There is a total of 6 staff – 3 counsellors and 3 administrative staff (retrieved June 22, 2010 from <http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/development-partners/50-mca-road-updates/60-mca-road-update-27.html>, Government of The Republic of Vanuatu, 2010). It is mainly focused on the issue of domestic violence, and provides support and counselling for victims of violence as well as community awareness programmes. The VWC produces a *niusleta* ‘Newsletter’ almost entirely in Bislama, with sometimes the odd article in English (the recommendations for children’s safety are always published in English, for instance). It also publishes a lot of booklets or brochures in Bislama to help women know their rights and the procedure to follow in case of divorce, abuse etc. It also tries to involve men in the campaign and change mentalities as far as abuse of women and children is concerned.

Most of the articles report events happening in Vanuatu, like meetings, training, opening new centres and so on, so they are written directly in Bislama. A few of the articles are probably translations from English when they are texts of laws, rules or results of international surveys. I have not found many differences between the two kinds of articles.⁹⁶ What characterises

⁹⁴ *Taem yu finisim lesen ya, yu save nao se Bislama oli no yusum olsem wan barava nasonal lanwis blong raet long hem.*

⁹⁵ *Sipos Bislama i kam insaed long ol skul, bae hemia i save mekem se standed blong Bislama i save kam antap.*

⁹⁶ I have chosen not to put precise references for pages or dates, as these are common features to all the documents from the VWC, be they newsletters or leaflets. Some are part of my database and are analysed in Chapter 5.

most the Bislama used in these publications is definitely the systematic, highly consistent spelling of the predicate marker ‘i’ and the following verb as one word, as in *isave*, *istap*, *idisaed*, *ikat*, *iting*. This can also be found even when the word following the marker is not a verb, as illustrated by *ijes* ‘i jes’, *iklad* ‘i glad’ or *itabu* ‘i tabu’. The other systematic feature of the written language is the spelling of some words with *k* for *g* and *t* for *d* in words such as *prokram* ‘program’, *ensaet* ‘inside’, *hat* ‘hard’, and *gohet* ‘go ahead’. On the other hand, we do find vocabulary borrowed straight from English, particularly adjectives as *temporeri* ‘temporary’, *faenol* ‘final’, *likol* ‘legal’, or verbs like *aplaem* ‘apply’, *gazetem*, *jensem* / *jenjem* (for *jenisim* ‘change’), *sherem* / *shearem* for *serem* ‘share’ and *asoltem* ‘assault’ or *abiusum* ‘abuse’.

The VWC also publishes booklets and brochures to provide women with information about legal procedures such as marriage, divorce or domestic violence, all in Bislama. What we find in these is similar to what has been described in the VWC’s newsletters: words borrowed straight from English and sometimes with the English spelling and words with the plural -s. What is interesting in those documents is that they often give definitions or explanations of the words borrowed from English, thus introducing the Bislama new word with a semantic content, as for instance in “*Guardian / Gadian: Eni man o woman we ino stret papa o mama blong pikinini be hemi mekem wok blong papa o mama blong lukaotem pikinini*” ‘Any man or woman who is not the child’s parent but who looks after the child like a father or mother’. Because most of the procedures described in these leaflets are legal action related to a court of justice, so rather specialised vocabulary that most women would not be familiar with, the terms are carefully accompanied by explanations in ‘simple’ Bislama so that the message can be transmitted effectively to the readers. However, when reading those brochures, I cannot help thinking that, in spite of the efforts made for them to be easily understandable, they nevertheless could be quite a challenge for people with little education and not used to reading in Bislama a lot (which would probably be the case of most women, as documents in Bislama are very recent and did not exist a few years ago). Most are more than 3,000 words long, which represents quite a lot of reading to do. Of course, the more material is published, the more familiar it will be to the population, including the younger generation, who will have much more access to written material on all these subjects than their parents or grandparents. The comprehension of these leaflets is also facilitated by meetings with the staff of the VWC who provide women with advice and information that complete the written documents which are then discussed face to face.

Human Raets Toksave by Grace Mera Molisa (1998) is a booklet of about thirty pages, dealing with human rights, for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. She wrote it after being a member of the Port Vila Municipal Council between 1993 and 1996 and having meetings with women, to whom the booklet is dedicated. I have already mentioned that it contained one of the poems by Molisa in Bislama. The first part of the booklet is a translation of the thirty articles of the United Nations declaration into Bislama. The second part (called *Japta 2* ‘chapter 2’) consists in explaining the rights and duties of the people of Vanuatu as guaranteed by the Constitution of Vanuatu (p. 19-22). The last part deals more specifically with women’s rights, reproductive rights and civil and political rights in Vanuatu. The semantic fields found here are those of humanity, civil rights and duties. It has to be noted here that the translation of the Declaration can be found following a link on the United Nations website, in the section ‘languages’ under bichelamar, identified under Amnesty International, UK, retrieved 11 December 1998 from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=bcy>. This part will be seen in ‘Translation’.

Another booklet (16 pages) written by Molisa in 2001, her last publication before she died in January 2002, is also about women and human rights. It is entitled *CEDAW: Konvensen blong Stopem Evri Kaen Diskriminesen Agensem Ol Woman* ‘Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women’, with information about CEDAW, its nature and function, its rules in the world and in Vanuatu, so this part is mostly translation from English. It is followed by recommendations on how to use CEDAW in the form of a poem in Bislama written by Molisa for Women’s Day in May 2001 (see p. 128). The last few pages of the booklet are in fact all the different publications by Molisa, both on her own or with her participations to other books. What we have here is words or expressions in Bislama with their English translation between brackets, like *mekem woman i safa o harem nogud* (disadvantaged or discriminated against). The first pages being official rules translated from English, we do find English words with their English spelling ‘inferiority’ or ‘victims’ (p. 7), English words with Bislama spelling *ikwaliti* ‘equality’, *diskriminatori* ‘discriminatory’ (p. 7). The plural -s is often kept, even in Bislama: *ol 16 Atikols* ‘the 16 articles’ (p. 8), *buks* ‘books’ (p. 14). Adjectives are borrowed: *avelebol* (p. 8) or *avaeliabol* (p. 10) ‘available’, and verbs such as *fulfilim* ‘fulfill’, *ajivim* ‘achieve’, *diliverem* ‘deliver’ (p. 8-9). *Evri* ‘every’ is used mostly with its plural meaning of ‘all’: “*evri step* (all the measures)” (p. 8), *evri raet blong yu* ‘all your rights’ (p. 13). So what we have is anglicised Bislama, with in fact focus on the content more than on the form, except for the poem on which I have already made comments. The rest of the booklet will be studied in the ‘Translations’ part at the end of this chapter.

4.5.2 Transparency International Vanuatu

Transparency international Vanuatu (TIV) is part of Transparency International created in 1993 and which focuses on corruption and government accountability. TIV publishes in French and English, but also sometimes in Bislama (mostly booklets about civic rights). I have in my possession three documents published by TIV, of very different nature: one is a booklet composed of 52 pages providing the readers with information about democracy, the workings of Parliament, human rights and the duties of citizens (Bryard et al 2005)⁹⁷. The second is a sticker advertising the office of TIV and ALAC (Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre), and the third is a leaflet which is in fact a form to join TIV. What is immediately obvious without going into too much detail is that the Bislama in these documents is highly variable, and often a mixture of Bislama and English. For example, the word ‘corruption’ appear as *korapsen* whereas it is written with its English orthography in *Help blong stopem corruption* ‘Help stop corruption’ on the first page of the leaflet, but as *korapsen* later on inside the same leaflet. Variation in spelling is also what characterises these documents, with words as *contactem* for *kontaktem* ‘contact’ or *oganaeseses* found also as *oganiseses* ‘organisation’. There is less variation in the booklet, but it is a translation, and it is difficult to know whether the book was first written in English or in French, or both, and then translated into Bislama as mentioned page 1: “*Olgeta i tanem ol toktok i go long Bislama*” ‘Those who translated into Bislama’ with the names of the four translators. For each part of the booklet, the section *ol toktok blong save* ‘useful vocabulary’ gives definitions in Bislama from words in English and in French, as for example in “*Condominium: Fasin blong i gat tu (2) kaontri we i stap lukaotem wan nambatri (3) kaontri we i no kasem independens yet*” ‘Condominium: when two countries rule over a third country not yet independent’ (p. 4). The semantic fields found in this booklet are those of politics, justice and human rights, and therefore we find a lot of words borrowed directly from English that were integrated into the lexicon of Bislama in the 1970s and just before and after Independence, as the organisation of the new Republic was based on European models. These include words such as *sitisen*, *demokrasi* and *Ripablik*. All the vocabulary of Parliament is also straight from English with *Memba blong Palemen* ‘Member of Parliament’, *Spika* ‘Speaker’, *sesen* ‘session’, *Oral Kwesten* ‘Oral Questions’, *Bil blong Praevet Memba* ‘Private Member Bill’, *pasem wan bil* ‘pass a bill’, or *saspendem sesen* ‘suspend a session’. On the other hand, some expressions such as ‘freedom of speech’ or ‘freedom of religion’, that could easily have been calqued too, are in fact respectively expressed as *yumi fri blong gat sam tingting we yumi save talem* and

⁹⁷ Corpus document 61.

yumi fri blong jusum jyoj we yumi wantem. The vocabulary referring to local or provincial institutions is calqued, as well as that for all public services, elections, powers and corruption: *pablik seven* ‘public servant’, *politikol apoenti* ‘political appointee’, *kwalifae administresen* ‘qualified administration’, *gavenens* ‘governance’, *exesem paoa* ‘exercise power’, *eksektiv* ‘executive’, *judisol bodi* ‘judicial body’, *transparen elektorol system* ‘transparent electoral system’, *taon klak* ‘town clerk’ or *Lidasip Kod* ‘Leadership Code’. As far as human rights are concerned, we find borrowed words too (often explained or defined) such as *resism* ‘racism’ and *seksism* ‘sexism’, *akaontebiliti* ‘accountability’, *givim braeb long* ‘to bribe’ or *ikwel tritmen* ‘equal treatment’. Other words such as *enkwaeri* ‘enquiry’, *kleim* ‘claim’ or *rikwes* ‘request’ also come directly from English. So what we can conclude from the study of this document is that some of these words will obviously be familiar to all like *Ripablik*, for instance, because they were integrated into the lexicon of Bislama a long time ago and are commonly used. Others will be less familiar but heard in periods of parliamentary session or elections so they already are or will easily be recognised in the context when they are often used. Other words or phrases, probably the most ‘specialised’ ones referring to less common institutions or workings of the political system, such as *lejislativ* ‘legislative’ or *Standing Oda* ‘Standing Order’, which require precise knowledge of the system, will remain obscure to most and not be understood should they be used by politicians or journalists without being defined or explained. However, it seems almost impossible for associations like TIV to publish information material without using those words borrowed from English unless they use long circumlocutions that might be a hindrance to understanding and clarity. The other alternative often used by organisations is to introduce new vocabulary from English and give definitions to get their meaning across, thus enabling the new words to enter the lexicon and expand it in a gradual process of integration.

4.5.3 Wan Smolbag

Wan Smolbag Theatre is an NGO that started more than twenty years ago with a small group of actors, and has turned into one of the major non formal education agents on the Vanuatu scene. The organisation produces a lot of educational resources, such as plays, films, radio programmes, TV series and teaching resources dealing with all the issues of the modern world, but focusing particularly on awareness at the Vanuatu level. In 2010, the resources catalogue lists 26 DVDs, 9 CDs or tapes, 27 books and various posters. The languages used are mostly English and Bislama, and less often French. Most of the written material is play scripts, textbooks and comics, the latter two all available for free distribution at the *Yut Senta* ‘Youth Centre’ or at workshops, and all produced in Bislama. One person, Jo Dorras, is in

charge of the writing part which is then reviewed and edited for the Bislama part. The spelling is checked using Crowley's 2003 dictionary, but 'newer' expressions not to be found in the dictionary because they appeared in the language after its publication are commonly used since the target public is young people. The Bislama used in the books is remarkably non anglicised when possible, even though words borrowed from English are used to talk about problems such as AIDS or when specific language such as *domestic proteksen oda* 'domestic protection order' is used officially. The meaning of those unfamiliar expressions is always explained in very simple words, thus enabling the less educated part of the population to become familiar with terms they otherwise would not understand. All the activities proposed in the textbooks accompanying the films or plays are also designed to facilitate understanding and always based on interactive methods. WSB sends material all over the world, and is extremely famous and popular in the whole Pacific region, which explains why more than half of the DVDs are in English rather than in Bislama. They sometimes produce material or radio programmes on request from other organisations such as JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) or the Ministry of Health, for instance. The material is also used for in-service training of teachers. The funding comes from Oxfam, AusAID and NZAID (WSB, p. c. March 25, 2010). I have included some of WSB documents in my database so they will be analysed in Chapter 5.

4.5.4 Miscellanea

In this part, I will mention the other documents that I have included in my corpus but which cannot be easily classified, such as cartoons, flyers etc. Among the other official documents in my possession are various leaflets from the Vanuatu Family Health Association, with a leaflet about AIDS and a booklet about contraception and family planning. Both are written in everyday Bislama but still contain the odd word in English and the translation of the headlines in both English and French. Most of the terms referring to body parts are the traditional Bislama ones like *bag blong pikinini* 'uterus', but sometimes also the English word is used and illustrated by drawings. All in all, those documents are very easy to understand and should not be found hard to deal with by readers.

In the same vein, the Ministry of Health also produces today much more material in Bislama, such as leaflets, posters and illustrated information documents to be distributed to the population for awareness and information purposes. Some are written in the three official languages, such as *Flu AH1N1, 11 Rule blong Prevensen* 'AH1N1 Flu, 11 rules for

prevention’ (I was given this little concertina flyer in the street in Port Vila on Francophonie, March 2010).

2007 was declared *Kastom Ekonomi Yia* in Vanuatu which involved all the associations, organisations and of course the communities themselves. For the occasion, the Vanuatu National Cultural Council (VNCC) published a few leaflets designed for awareness and information campaigns for the population of all the islands. They all stress the importance of keeping traditional ways: *No Lusum Kastom Ekonomi* ‘Don’t Lose Traditional Economy’, and *Kastom Ekonomi, Lukluk blong Hem* ‘The Aim of Traditional Economy’ are two of these leaflets, all in Bislama.

In both documents, the loan words from English that might pose a problem of comprehension are indicated between inverted commas, thus signalled as being English, some with the English spelling as in “*inequality*”, “*social security*” or “*equity*”, others spelt in Bislama like “*gavenans*” ‘governance’ or “*valiu*” ‘value’. As far as the lexicon is concerned, we find *Vatu Ekonomi* and *Ekonomi blong vatu*, just like *Kastom Ekonomi* and *Ekonomi blong Kastom*, though the compound without *blong* is more common. The vocabulary contains recently-introduced words such as *ajivim* ‘achieve’, *gavenans* ‘governance’ and *sosel* “*harmoni*” ‘social harmony’. But on the whole, the sentences are written in everyday, easy-to-understand Bislama. Both leaflets stress the importance of protecting traditional ways as opposed to the more modern, cash-focused economy which can have negative impact on the country and its people.

In a completely different domain, a friend of mine gave me her *Kuk Buk*, put together by the Women’s Ministry Council of “We Care Ministry”, Assembly Of God Church.⁹⁸ This booklet is a 28-page compilation of various recipes from members of the A.O.G Church that have been put together. Even though it is not dated, it was written in the last decade so is very recent. Here is a small extract from the booklet to illustrate my points about what it contains:

⁹⁸ Thank you, Lloyd!

CHOPSUEY

Ol thing we yu nidim:

1kg Dwarf beans
5 big carrots
3 to 4 garlic (crushed)
1 big onion
1kg meat (steak)

Cooking oil
3 tblspn sugar
Soya sauce
Tomato paste (smol tin)
V-Tsin (if yu wantem)

Ways blong wokem:

Katem everi vegetables long thin slices (long sizes) . Also katem meat igo long thin sizes an combine meat, soya sauce sugar, garlic, tomato paste and V-Tsin inside long wan dish mo mixem gud olgeta . Putum pot long fire mo pore cooking oil igo, (smol blong cover potom blong pot) taem i boil, yu pore mixture blong meat igo mo letem i kuk . Taem i dan, yu katem onion long slices mo addem igo wetem meat mo tekem aot pot long fire. Yu fryim carrots i haf dan mo pore igo wetem meat inside long pot, nao yu doim sem wetem beans . Yu mixem gud everi wan tugeta long pot mo putum bak long fire smol taem afta bai i redy blong sevem wetem rice.

By: Ms. Rose - Mary J

Kuk Buk, AOG Church, p. 8

What we can see is that most of the names of the recipes are in English, as in ‘Baked Taro with Cheese’ or ‘Steak and Pineapple’ (p. 10). We sometimes find some Bislama too, like *Banana Melek Drink* ‘Banana Milky Drink’ (p. 26), but it is often a mixture of Bislama and English: *Aelan Taro Lif Soup* ‘Island Taro Leaf Soup’ (p. 15) or *Baked Taro Wetem Coconut Cream* ‘Baked Taro with Coconut Cream’ (p. 1). I think the reason for these variations can probably be found in the fact that these recipes come from different persons and so what we have reproduces the way they were originally given. What does not vary much is that the ingredients are mostly in English, except when they are local products. So we have 1kg carrots, cooking-oil, curry powder, etc, but also 4 *kakai blong wota taro* ‘4 water taro tubers’, 1 *pundle lif laplap mo fire-woods* ‘a bundle of laplap leaves and firewood’ (p. 1) and 1 *Cup wotakres o eni nara kapis* ‘1 cup watercress or any other cabbage’ (p. 5).⁹⁹ We also notice the use of plural-s at the end of some words, mostly written in English: *plates*, *legs*, *parts* and *eggs*, to name a few. However, some Bislama words also take the plural marker, as in *lifs* ‘leaves’, *stons* ‘stones’, *sids* ‘seeds’ and *saks* ‘sacks’. All the abbreviations – mainly used for measures – are in English: *tblspn* ‘tablespoon’, *250 mg or 8oz*, *½ cup* etc. Grammatically speaking, it is interesting to see that *everi* is followed by the plural noun *vegetables*, thus confirming that it is used to mean ‘all’.

⁹⁹ *Lif laplap*: large leaf used to wrap pudding for cooking on stones; heliconia plant from which these leaves are taken (Crowley 2003: 152).

Using Bislama in cartoons is not recent, in fact I have found some very old ones, such as the one shown below, as well as a Bislama game of ‘snakes and ladders’ which were published as early as 1980. As we have seen in part 4.1, the newsletters and then newspapers were published in the three languages, and the part in Bislama contained various sub-categories, with the occasional cartoon.



Tam Tam, 21/3/1980: 6¹⁰⁰

In the press, the most famous cartoon is *Kranki Kona* ‘Crazy, stupid Corner’, satirical drawings by Douglas Peterson published in the *Daily Post* since 2001, mainly to criticise the government and politicians. Most of these are written in English, but a few are in Bislama, with the English translation in a small vignette (which I have put as footnotes here). They are so popular that I could not but give an example of what they are, but we must bear in mind that the majority of them are in English (in the 2004 book, there are 8 cartoons in Bislama out of a total of 124, so 6.5 % in Bislama). What can be observed in the Bislama used in *Kranki Kona* is that it looks very anglicised because there are words like *Ministry*, *statutory board* *membasip* and *fishing licence* which are written in English, even though they might have been spelt *Ministri*, *statutori bod membasip* and *fisin laesen*. We find the same mark of English in the grammar with *eleksens* ‘elections’ in the plural. So in fact what we have is a mixture of English and Bislama in the lexicon, particularly when the words refer to official titles or procedures.

¹⁰⁰ ‘When you drown inside, you can’t come out’



The Best of Kranki Kona (2004: 50)

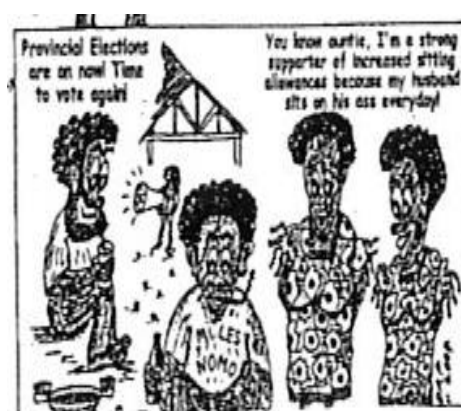


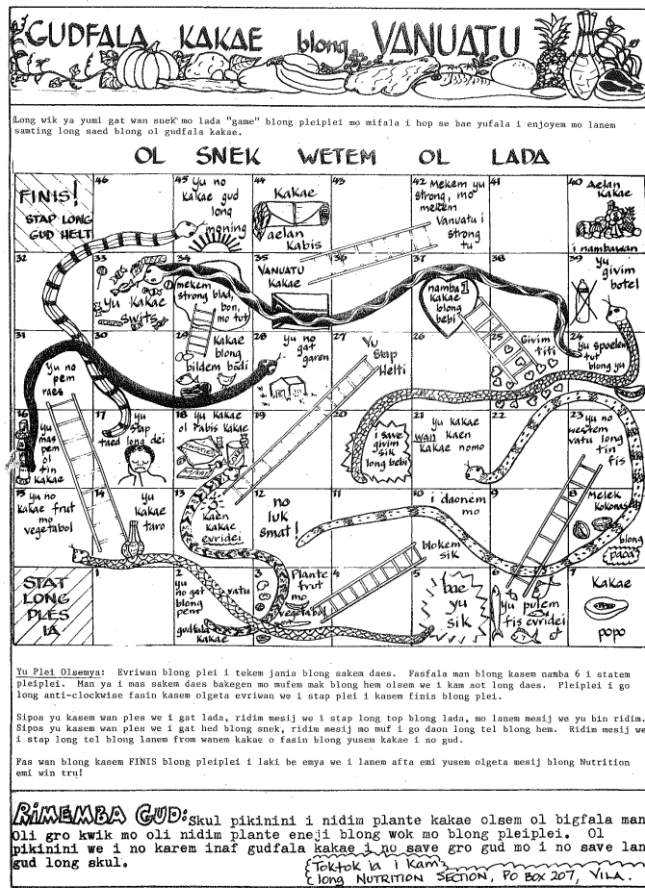
The Best of Kranki Kona (2004: 59)¹⁰¹

We must bear in mind that the *Daily Post* is written in English, even though it publishes letters to the editor in Bislama, and a few articles dealing with sports or local events. This entails that its readers may not be aware of nor pay particular attention to the presence of English in the cartoons because the paper is mostly in English. It could also account for the fact that the cartoons are in English thus following the paper's editorial choices. When they are written in Bislama, there are always accompanied by small vignettes in English, shown here in footnote 101.



101





As can be seen in the part of the game reproduced here, *Ol Snek wetem ol Lada* was adapted from the traditional English game 'Snakes and Ladders' with a pedagogical aim, namely to describe *Kakae blong Vanuatu*. It provides the players with advice on what is good for their health or not and promotes local food, as in *Aelan kakae i nambawan* 'Local food is the best' (40) or *kakae popo* 'eat pawpaw' (7). It also shows that some of the food becoming fashionable is not too good like soda and snackfood called *rabis kakae* 'junk food' (18). The vocabulary is simple, no English, easy to understand by all, including children.

Lastly, I will include in this part a word on the posters in Bislama that can be found today. First, the seven posters made by UNESCO for the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme at the VCC in December 2008. Their aim is to stimulate discussions and interest within classrooms among teachers and students and they are available in several languages, English, French, Spanish and Bislama. One example of these is given in Appendix D. What can be noticed here is that the language used is not anglicised at all, with not a single word with an English spelling, not a word in the plural form with the -s ending, so they are written in remarkably 'stret Bislama', as some would say. In fact, these posters all deal with traditional knowledge and kastom and so it makes perfect sense to me that they should not be anglicised at all.

The point is clearly made: you can express yourself, say meaningful things without necessarily resorting to ‘sophisticated’ English vocabulary, as illustrated by the following example of a paragraph from another of these LINKS posters (http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.phpURL_ID=7438&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, retrieved May 2011).¹⁰²

Save blong ol man mo woman: tufala saed blong kastom save

Ol woman mo ol man oli gat plante save mo oli save mekem fulap difren samting. Be, ol woman oli gat sam samting we olgeta nomo oli gat save blong mekem mo oli gat fasin blong pasem save blong mekem ol samting ia i go long ol pikinini gel blong olgeta. Save blong olgeta ia hemi impoten blong mekem se komuniti hemi laef long wan gudfala fasin.

The strength of the message expressed in very simple words in all the posters is what, in my opinion, makes them so powerful and efficient, and stresses again the fact that Bislama is indeed sufficient to say anything, contrary to what its detractors may say.

When you walk around Port Vila and go to the offices of ministries, organisations and associations, it is now rare not to find a poster, or several, in Bislama. When I started this research, they were few and far between, but today, it seems that this mode of communication to the general public is spreading fast. Of course, there are also commercial ads, some of them very visible, in the town streets, but these have been studied under the ‘Ads’ sub-category, so here I am only talking about ‘official’ posters by, for instance, the Ministry of Health or Justice. Because I could not take all of them, I decided I would take photos and then study some in more detail. The results of my findings are summarised here, as I have decided not to include them in my database. There are two examples of this kind of posters further down. Generally speaking, these posters in Bislama use simple vocabulary, but the anglicisation of the language is highly variable, as we can see in the examples here. In the poster about domestic violence, some of the vocabulary is borrowed from English, like *Famili*

¹⁰² **Knowledge of men and women: two sides of traditional knowledge:**

Men and women know a lot and can do different things, but there are things that only women have the knowledge of and that they pass on to their daughters. Their knowledge is important for the community to have a good way of life.

Proteksen Loa ‘Family Protection Law’, the meaning of which is clear in spite of the English structure of the compound, all the more so as people are used to official terms being loan words from English. They know what this means, and what it refers to as the bill was highly controversial and was much discussed in the media. But the language can also be closer to English as in the VITE poster, with English words like *NOW* and anglicised spelling in words like *theori* and *practis* which might have been respectively spelt *teori* and *praktis* – although I am not sure that the word *teori* would be used commonly, it is probably more part of the vocabulary of the educated elite, which is the public actually targeted by the poster.¹⁰³



Apart from official posters, there are also public and private notices in Bislama, and just like the posters, they are becoming more and more numerous. They show a lot of variation in the kind of written Bislama, as illustrated by the two examples given here, one taken at Port Vila Bauerfield International airport, the other at the library.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ I could find the word *teori* neither in Crowley’s dictionary, nor in the TVET spell check, and I have not seen it anywhere else.

¹⁰⁴ Sorry, we will close at 9 am for a staff meeting. Thank you very much. The librarians.

NO ENTRY. Access restricted to pass holders only. Trespassers will be fined 100,000 vatu or sentenced to one month imprisonment.

SORRY BAE MIFALA
 I KLOS LO 9:00 AM
 FROM STAFF MITING.
 THANKYU TUMAS!!
 SIGN: LAEBRIANS.



One of the other documents that does not fit any other category is the Master's Degree Thesis by Jane Kanas entitled *Tu Kaen Bislama?* 'Two kinds of Bislama?'. Its aim is to show that "When we look at the National Language of Vanuatu, we can see that there are two kinds of Bislama spoken in Port Vila" (Kanas 2002).¹⁰⁵ The distinction made by Kanas concerns the differences between the Bislama spoken by Francophones and the one spoken by Anglophones. She is the first (and to my knowledge, the only) Ni-Vanuatu USP student to have written her dissertation in Bislama. There is nothing remarkable to note about her Bislama: it is not too anglicised, even though we find compounds borrowed from English (*famli bakgraon* 'family background'), a few adjectives like *hem i interesting* 'it is interesting' (p. 23) or *fomol Bislama* 'formal Bislama' (p. 65). The spelling follows Crowley's dictionary, with common reduplication of the pronoun *mi* in *mi mi*. A new word has been added by Kanas to the already existing list of linguistic terms, relevant to my own research: in her summary, she uses the word *dikriolaisesen* 'decreolisation' "This study also shows that in [the Bislama] used by Francophones, we can observe that there are English words or phrases, which shows that decreolisation is taking place. It shows that Bislama is getting closer to English, its lexifier"¹⁰⁶. This point is also mentioned in the part about the future of Bislama: "*Long ples ya, yumi save talem se ating fasin blong dikriolaisesen i stap tekem ples*" 'What we can say here is that there may be decreolisation' (p. 69). The glossary of linguistic terms Kanas gives at the end shows that out of 30 words, 9 are borrowed straight from English, like *akrolek*

¹⁰⁵ *Wan Luluk long Nasonal langwis blong Vanuatu blong Soem Se i Gat tu Kaen Bislama we ol i toktok long hem long Vila taon.*

¹⁰⁶ *Studi ya i soem tu se long hemia we ol Frankofon ol i stap yusum, yumi save luk se ol wod mo toktok long Inglis ol i stap go insaed long hem, mo hemia i stap soem se dikriolaisesen i stap tekem ples. Hemia i soem se Bislama i stap muv go klosap long mama langwis blong hem we i Inglis.'*

‘acrolect’, *pos-kriolaisesen kontinuum* ‘post-creolisation continuum’ (p. 87) while all the others are the ones coined by Crowley like *mama langwis* ‘lexifier’.

This work is quite remarkable because of its nature, as it shows that Bislama can be used successfully for ‘serious’ pieces of writing, as far as university education level. It is the first step towards the recognition of the written language as a valuable tool for any kind of writing.

4.6 Official reports

Just like Bislama can be used at the tertiary level, it is also the language chosen by more and more associations and official organisations who publish their reports in Bislama, sometimes from English (or French), but not always. I have selected a few of them, and others have been included in my data base.

4.6.1 Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS) / Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC)

The Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC) is one of the biggest producers of material written in Bislama. Apart from *storian* ‘traditional stories’, VCC publishes many reports on various topics. The VCC’s principal role is to preserve local languages, culture and traditions, but also to inform people about cultural subjects. For instance, they produced a booklet of eight pages about archaeology, with pictures and drawings, and whose aim is to inform the population of Vanuatu about what is happening in terms of archeologic research and findings in their country. Apart from the obvious words borrowed from English such as *akioloji* ‘archaeology’, *akiolojis* ‘archaeologist’, “Archaeological excavation” (defined in Bislama), and *atifak* ‘artifact’, it is remarkable that no other word from English is found in this brochure. In fact, it should not come as a surprise because as defenders of VL and Bislama, how better to do that than by setting the example in showing that the language of the country can be used with as few loan words from English as possible?

The longest publication is the report on Port Vila Youth, (1999). *Harem Voes Blong Yangfala Long Vila Taon...: Ripot Blong Vanuatu Yang Pipol’s Projek* is the report of a study made to give young people the opportunity of voicing their concerns, hopes and opinions about their lives. So it is composed of two distinct kinds of documents: on the one hand, we have interviews from the young, so oral speech written down, and on the other we have the interpretation of the results of the survey, so official language and statistics. It is interesting to note that the Bislama used for the official report is not anglicised at all, and is everyday language, very close to the oral one used by the young who are interviewed. Here are two

quotes to illustrate my point: in the part *Lanwis* ‘language’, we find, for instance, “*sevei ia hem i faenemaot se fulap yangfala oli save gud lanwis blong olgeta*” (p. 26) ‘this survey shows that a lot of young people know their mother tongue well’, where only the word *sevei* is more recent. This is confirmed in a sentence like “*Hem i impoten blong luk ol poen olsem fulap yangfala i yusum moa Bislama bitim lanwis blong aelan blong olgeta*” ‘It is important to note that a lot of young people use Bislama more than their mother tongue’ (p. 27), where there is no anglicisation of the written language at all. This is in keeping with the VCC’s policy, but another possible explanation too is that this report had to be accessible to these young people themselves, so it had to be in everyday language as most of the interviewees are school dropouts.

Storian blong olgeta we oli bin go katem sugaken long Ostrelia ‘Australian South Sea Islanders’ is the catalogue – written in English and then translated into Bislama and French – of an exhibition at the National Museum of Vanuatu in September 1996 (but initially shown at the Australian National Maritime Museum). I have not included this piece in my ‘Translation’ part because I do not have the original version in English so I cannot compare the two texts. However, I can say that the Bislama version does not show any sign of anglicisation at all, with no English words, no grammatical features of English and no recent loanwords. We find exactly the same absence of English in another catalogue *Spirit blong Bubu I kam Bak* ‘Arts of Vanuatu’ in June 1996, entirely written in Bislama, with no translation in French or English.¹⁰⁷ This choice of using as little English as possible is definitely not the one made by other official services writing out reports. For example, let us have a look at some reports by the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO).

4.6.2 VNSO

The Vanuatu National Statistics Office is another publisher of official reports in Bislama. One of them is *Vanuatu Analisis blong 2006 Haoshol Inkam mo Expendija Sevei: Samari, Ripot blong ol Estimesen blong Besik Nid Poveti Laen, mo Insidens mo ol Karakteristiks blong Poveti blong Vanuatu* (VNSO 2008). In the title itself, we have an example of what characterises the VNSO written language: heavy anglicisation of the lexicon, with a lot of compounds like *Haoshol Inkam mo Expendija Sevei* ‘Household Income and Expenditure Survey’, or plural -s for *Insidens* ‘incidents’ and *Karakteristiks* ‘characteristics’. The vocabulary is so specific that there is a *Glosari blong Ki Tem* ‘Glossary of key terms’ at the

¹⁰⁷ Two other books of the exhibition were published in French and English and were a collaboration between a number of people (*Spirit blong Bubu I kam Bak*: 6)

end of the booklet (p. 11-12), with definitions and acronyms of terms like *pejesing powa pariti exjens ret* (PPP) ‘purchasing power parity exchange rate’ or *dependensi resio* ‘dependency ratio’, which obviously would not be understood by the majority of the population. On the other hand, the VNSO also writes the census questionnaire in Bislama as well as in the other two official languages, French and English. The document I have is *Appendix B, Institusen Fom, Sensis blong Haosing mo Populesen* (VNSO, Novemba 1999, p. 217-219). When we look at this document, we can notice that contrary to the reports, there is virtually no English in the questions asked to the population of the country, as illustrated by questions like “*Yu kat hamas yia?*” ‘How old are you?’ or “*Hamas yia long ol kaen skul ia?*” ‘How long did you go to ... [that kind of school]?’ This makes perfect sense as they have to be phrased in everyday language so that people can understand and answer them. We must not forget that around 85% of the population in Vanuatu lives in rural areas and that the urban population is a minority, and not everybody living in towns is educated enough to understand heavily anglicised Bislama. So here again, these two examples show that people are conscious of the public they are writing for, and almost adapt their written language to the targeted audience.

4.6.3 AusAID

AusAID (the Australian Agency for International Development) is one of the biggest aid donors in Vanuatu, and is involved in work with the Vanuatu MOE to help them as one of the Education Partners (C.Thieffry, p.c 2010). *Intenasonal divelopmen assistance blong Ostrelia we i kam long Vanuatu 2008-09* is a 24-page long booklet published by the Commonwealth of Australia 2008, written all in Bislama and which gives information about all the sectors in which AusAid helps the government of Vanuatu. As can be seen in other official documents, the vocabulary is sometimes calqued on English, with many compounds like *intanasonal divelopmen assistance program* ‘international development assistance program’ or specialised administrative lexicon: *ekspendija* ‘expenditure’, *govenans* ‘governance’, for example. When the words seem they could pose a problem of comprehension for some, they are explained through a gloss in easy terms, as illustrated by examples like *prosesem* glossed as *mekem i wok* and *monopoly* by *fasin blong gat wan kampani nomo*. However, in spite of these examples, most of the text is expressed in simple, everyday Bislama understandable by all. I think that because this kind of documents is becoming much more common, their lexicon will become more familiar to more people, and the words recently introduced into Bislama will probably have completely integrated the language used by most of the population in a few years, as opposed to by only a small elite.

4.7 New forms of the written language: text messages, emails, chat

Most of the research on new forms of communication relates to English-based computer-mediated communication (CMC). Nevertheless, there are also recent studies that look at non-native speakers of English (Danet & Herring 2007), and the use they make of English for CMC in a multilingual environment. What the studies mostly reveal is that English is predominantly the language of the Internet: in 2009, according to the statistics given on the *Internet World Stats* website, 495.8 million Internet users use English when they are on the net. No study has ever been made on Vanuatu, but it may be possible to compare its situation to that of other countries where people are similarly in a situation of diglossia: English or French are the languages of instruction, and VL or mostly Bislama are the spoken languages. In Vanuatu, about 8% of the population are Internet users with a growth of 466% between 2000 and 2008 (*internetworldstats.com* 2008). As for the use of cellular phones, the figures given by *EconomyWatch.com* reveal that in 2007, there were 26,000 cell phones in the country, and 36,000 in 2008 (the population considered by both websites for Vanuatu is estimated at around 218,000 inhabitants). There are two competing telecommunications companies whose advertisements cannot be missed anywhere in towns and their almost aggressive advertising campaigns, often in Bislama, show the importance of a juicy market in a rapidly changing country. So as anywhere else, the Ni-Vanuatu are making more and more use of the new ways of communication.

There are many questions in terms of language use with these new technologies. Do the Ni-Vanuatu use Bislama, their language of affect and identity, to communicate on the Internet and on their mobile phones in the form of written text messages? Does the language, mostly used in its oral form, penetrate a new space for its written use? Do people code-mix, or code-switch, and if so, do the Francophones use French and the Anglophones English? Are there any purely local creations, such as abbreviations, to reflect Bislama at all?

As I have mentioned in the methodology part (Chapter 3), it is difficult to constitute a corpus of emails and SMS messages because of their personal nature. Forum discussions are easier to obtain because they are more public as you can find them on websites provided you become a member of the site yourself.¹⁰⁸ It follows that my sample is small and random, so no formal conclusion can be drawn from my documents. A more reliable study would require a much bigger corpus as well as the methodological decoding of the results. Nevertheless, in spite of all the limitations, this part of my research may be taken as just an exploratory investigation

¹⁰⁸ I would like to express my gratitude to all the persons who gave me permission to use their writings.

which simply gives an indication of what the trend might be for the language patterns of new technologies users in Vanuatu. To my knowledge, this is unexplored territory as no previous study has been made on the subject, and it goes without saying too that the sample does not reflect the population of Vanuatu, as many do not have access to the Internet, particularly in rural areas.

4.7.1 SMS or text messages

Mobile phones and text messaging are now part and parcel of our everyday lives, and Vanuatu is no exception to the rule. Because the length of a text message is limited to a certain number of characters by the telecommunications company (if you go over the limit, you pay for two messages), users have developed strategies for a new kind of writing so as to reduce the number of characters in the message they want to get across. The basic principle used in English, as well as in French and probably other languages, is the suppression of the vowels that are not absolutely essential to the understanding of the word, so the word ‘message’ becomes ‘msg’ (either in English or French) without hindering the comprehension. Abbreviations and acronyms are extremely frequent and seem to be used worldwide, even in non-English-speaking countries. For example, English abbreviations have entered the French SMS vocabulary: ‘asap’ is used to translate the French ‘aussi vite que possible’ or ‘dès que possible’, ‘4me, 4u’ means ‘pour moi, pour toi’ and ‘2L8’ actually means ‘trop tard’! (FTPlanet, *Dictionnaire du langage SMS*, <http://www.ftplanet.net/dico-sms.php>, retrieved June 12, 2010). Some are based on reading the characters phonetically, such as CU for ‘see you’ or B4 for ‘before’. Acronyms can use either the first letters of the words composing a phrase, for instance PCM for ‘please call me’, or a combination of phonetic reading and first letters, as in F2T ‘free to talk’. Some have become fixed in the language (called SMS English) and require a bit of practise for their meaning to be clear. More difficult to acquire are the symbols without any relation to the words, that is to say signs that are used as a completely new code altogether and can be considered as the equivalent of emoticons on the Internet: for instance, :-) means ‘smiling’ and :-(*) ‘you make me sick’ (website English Grammar on Line, <http://www.ego4u.com/en/chill-out/curiosities/sms-english>, retrieved June 10, 2010). The new language is called ‘textese’ by some, and is often a combination of different features. Crystal (2008) makes an interesting point when he says that texters who are bilingual routinely switch between the features of their different languages, with reading some in L1 and others in L2, a point we will examine for Bislama speakers.

When we have a look at Vanuatu, the statistics mentioned above reveal an increase in the number of mobile phone users from 11.9% in 2007 to 16.5% in 2008, a trend which has

probably grown in the last two years, considering the number of stalls or stores where you see people buying top-ups for their phones. In its ‘Information Technology’ page in 2012, VNSO says “Although internet use and computers are not widespread, almost every household has at least one mobile phone” (retrieved July 16, 2012 from http://www.vnsso.gov.vu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=21).

It has already been made clear in this study that Vanuatu is in a kind of diglossia, as most people use one language at school or in the formal sphere and another at home or in the spoken sphere. It is therefore interesting to find out which of the languages they use for texting, which is a very personal activity. So what kind of Bislama do people use for their text messages? I will give here a few examples so we can observe what happens:

- 1) *g'day lyne, mi hope se u no kakai 2mas chicken naoia. Mi kakai simboro nomo. Study hard n God bless.*
- 2) *Gdnait sis, ating u slip finis, just 1 2 say av a swit drim n may da Lord always be with u. God bless.*
- 3) *Gd day! Hw r u? Skul ok? Ana i crawl fnis n i save copy 1m we man i mkm. Spos u clap, cry, sing m 2 i mkm. N e way, I just drop in 2 say tke care n God bls.*
- 4) *Gudnite lo u mo bon wiken.*
- 5) *Alo my gel, dady n mummy 1tem rimaind u blo mas trustem God from ol study blo u. Mi2fla 1tem talm 2 se we lav u. Ok take care, biz.*
- 6) *Hey bai mi wait lo u lo town, lo side blo megastore, be spos u go fastaem be u wait ok! Ok taltoul.*
- 7) *Hey mi just wantem wishim u gud luck 4 the exams. Hope se bai u no kiaman lo ol answers blo u.*
- 8) *Mi kasem gud mesej blo yu. Bae I olraet lo yu sapos yu save kam pikimap mi lo university lo magenta lo 13h. Bae mi weit daon lo parking lo saed blo solwota.*
- 9) *Halo [...], gud blo harem se u kam bak safely. Hemi no wan problem, yumi save mit eni taem, mi less blo stap mekem nating finis. Talem nui [niu] ples blo yu afta bae mi kam luk yu. Lukim yu.*
- 10) *Ok I stret bae mi pass lo haos blo U. lukim yu!*

What can be said at first sight is that these do not look much different from what we have in English or in French text messages, in so far as they include all the features we can expect.

There is obviously here a lot of code-mixing, with Bislama and English mostly, and just three French words (*taltoul* ‘see you later’ (à tout à l’heure in French slang), *biz* (French for ‘kiss’), and *bon* ‘good’, which is ironical because these messages were all written by Francophones. If we observe them in more detail, we find the features shown in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Features in SMS messages

Logographs	Omitted letters	Non-standard spelling	‘Look-and-say’ phonic creations
<i>2 = tu</i> <i>U = yu</i> <i>4 = for</i>	<i>fla = fala</i> <i>m = hem</i> <i>n = and</i> <i>blo = blong</i> <i>lo = long</i> <i>mkm = mekem</i> <i>spos = sapos</i> <i>bls = bless</i> <i>talm = talem</i>	<i>av = have</i> <i>N e way = anyway</i> <i>da = the</i> <i>biz = bises</i> <i>taltoul = à tout à l’heure</i>	<i>Item = wantem</i> <i>2mas = tumas</i> <i>1 2 = want to</i> <i>1m= wanem</i>

To those found in the examples, I will add a list which was given to me by Ni-Vanuatu texters (Hari Simon, p.c, 2012). As we can see in table 4.13, some are quite predictable like *olsm = olsem*, *Umi2 = yumitu*, for instance. Others reflect the influence of English, as in the spelling *luv* for normally *lav* ‘love’, in which the change of vowel adds nothing to the word itself. What I have called ‘look-and-say’ words are also based on English for the pronunciation, like *Item* in two syllables ‘one’ + ‘tem’ corresponding to *want* + *em* in Bislama, phonetically corresponding to [wHntem]. Other abbreviations come from a mixture between phonetic English and the pronunciation of Bislama itself, like *Vnis* for *finis*, as the distinction between /v/ and /f/ is not always clear.

Table 4.13: Other abbreviations in text messages

	Logographs	Omitted letters	Non-standard spelling	‘look-and-say’ phonic creations
Given by texters	<i>D = dei, 2D = tudei</i> <i>2moro = tumoro</i> <i>2naet= tunaet</i> <i>C U = lukim yu</i> <i>Z = stret</i> <i>4umi2 = blong yumitu</i>	<i>olsm = olsem</i>	<i>luv u = lav u</i>	<i>Vanua2 = Vanuatu</i> <i>Umi2 = yumitu</i> <i>gd na8 = gud naet</i> <i>Vnis = finis</i>

What is also strange is using *D* for *dei* ‘day’, because it is closer to the French pronunciation of the letter -d which pronounces [de] as opposed to [di:] in English, so close to *tede* in Bislama when the final vowel is not diphthongued. Sometimes, the English is kept entirely, with its pronunciation in full so the phonetic value of the letter has outranked its graphic value, like in *C U* ‘see you’ in English, for *lukim yu* in Bislama! The complete mystery comes from the coinage of *Z* for *stret*, because there is no link between the word and its pronunciation neither in English nor in French ([zed] in both languages) and that of the letter which is used in Bislama text messages. This could be what Crystal (2008) calls a code, which goes with identification with a group or the creation of an identity by deviating from the ‘norm’ and adopting idiosyncracies.

4.7.2 Emails

Juste like text messages, emails are mostly of a personal nature so it is not always easy to ask people to save them for research. I have used the ones I received myself, and others communicated to me by people I know. I have a total of 1421 words for emails, with the following distribution of languages:

Table 4.14: Languages in emails

	Bislama	French	English
Percentage of email corpus	87.9%	2.2%	9.92%

Here are some of them, all written by native speakers: most of the emails were written by Francophones who can also speak English.¹⁰⁹

1) *Emi oraet nomo.*

2) *Halo [...] mi jes faenem imel adres blong yu. Sori mi nobin lukim text blong yu bifo yu ko bak. Eniwe hemia hemi imel adress blong mi. Sapos eni samting kontaktem mi long adress ia nao.*

3) *hey hi, olsem wanem? u oraet?? Mi trafiké some picture blo u ia, m ia mi sendem i kam ia wetem mail ia, u traem openem after look...Mi faenem ol pics ia lo internet ahahaha no mi joke, mi bin katem some photo ia lo dossier blo [...] nao be mi look picture blo u ia. Sorry mi*

¹⁰⁹ The names have been left out and replaced by [...].

no bin askem permission blo u blo usum ol photos ia...no kross...well m ia nao ol photo ia bai u just look after mekem some comment lo m. Ale à +

4) Hey, mi trae blo downloadem ol Christian song lo link ya we u sendem i kam ia be every time mi traem, I stap fail nomo. Be u bin downloadem some? Anyway bai mi traem again. Thanks blo sendem link ia i kam, bye n see u around.

As is immediately observable, the language for emails is very different from text messages, because the constraints are not the same. Mostly, there is not much code-mixing in emails, they are written in Bislama with just a few words or phrases in French (most written by Francophones to a French person) and just a few words in English. The variation found in these messages comes from the spelling, for instance ‘*email*’ is either kept in English or spelt in Bislama *imel* – it is slightly ironical to see that the French words ‘mail’ or ‘mel’ are not used at all – while French is used for more personal communication (like *Ale à +* in email 3, familiar French for ‘see you later’) or slang words like ‘*trafiké*’ ‘fiddled’. What we do find, though, is shortenings, like *blo* and *lo* for *blong* and *long*, *n* means ‘and’ (normally *mo* in Bislama). What is also surprising is that even though these emails were written by Francophones, the percentage of French they actually contain (2.2%) is extremely low. The part of English is not very high either with just less than 10%. So what this shows is that in my few examples, the vast majority of Ni-Vanuatu people write their emails in Bislama, not in English or French, but with the occasional word in French or in English and idiosyncratic spelling. Considering the limitations of the study already mentioned, I insist on the fact that it is of course impossible to draw conclusions from such a small corpus, so further investigation into ‘email Bislama’ is definitely needed.

4.7.3 Kam2geta

We will now look at another form of CMC: to my knowledge, *Kam2geta* ‘Come2gether’ is the only website existing that is specifically designed for “anyone linked to the Republic of Vanuatu in one way or another”, and calls itself “a cyber nakamal” where people “come together to discuss, *storian*, joke and make new friends” (<http://kam2geta.ning.com>, opening page, June 2010).¹¹⁰ This website was created by Matua-Admin and it offers a wide range of uses: you can become a member with a profile (with or without photo), invite friends, there is a forum place, K2G chat, and blog, entertainment and games. Members have a mail box for messages, can add messages and start or join discussions. There are two possibilities for

¹¹⁰ A *nakamal* is the traditional meeting place for men from a village to drink kava and *toktok*.

synchronous communication, namely chat facilities, one on each page and one called *Storian Smol*, on which you can post photos and video/audio documents as well, and where you can create a private space to chat privately with a friend. You can also write to somebody on a comment wall (asynchronous messages), making the message visible for all. There are also direct links to the newspaper *Vanuatu Daily Post*, Tourism Information, Parliament House, the Vanuatu Statistics Office, the Meteorological Services, The University of the South Pacific and *Wok i kik*, an employment website. So not only does the site give you the opportunity of making friends and discussing issues, but it also provides any visitor with useful information about Vanuatu.

According to the website, there were 1,186 members in June 2010 (<http://kam2geta.ning.com/profiles/members/>, retrieved on June 4, 2010). What is immediately visible is that the main language used is English, as all the website pages themselves are in English, and there seems to be no French at all, which confirms the hegemony of English as the language of the Internet, but is slightly surprising in multilingual Vanuatu where part of the population is educated in French.

The interesting point about observing this new way of communication is to find out whether new patterns have been established for online conversation. As there is officially no standard Bislama, do users write in Bislama, do they integrate some English, and to what extent? Is there a lot of code-switching, or is it rather code-mixing?¹¹¹ We will try and find out whether Ni-Vanuatu show creativity and come up with specific shortenings, or if they have strategies to combine elements or if they invent new terminology as opposed to borrowing massively from English. The most interesting part of the website, in my opinion, is the possibility to post ‘questions’ that become the starting point of the discussions where any member can express their point of view. It is hard to say whether this is instant, interactive communication, or reflection and continuation of the discussion, which must be often the case considering the sophistication of the replies. I will give here one example of what happens.

One of the questions posted on the website which provoked a lot of reactions was “WHY ARE THERE LESS NI-VANS THAN OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDERS ON SCHOLARSHIP STUDYING IN INSTITUTIONS OVERSEAS?” (Posted on March 19, 2009, in *Current Affairs*). The rest of the question was “From observations, the number of Ni-Vanuatu on scholarship studying in any higher tertiary institution in the region is less than those of our other neighbouring countries in particular Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea who are

¹¹¹ The terminology used here is the traditional one, so code-mixing takes place at the intra-sentential level.

also on the same scholarship. Why are there not many Ni-Vans studying in Universities overseas? ”. As might have been expected, there were a lot of different comments on this point. I cannot here give all the replies, but I have decided to keep one example which I find particularly indicative of what can be found on the website, as will be shown by the results in Table 4.14. First, what we have in this corpus of about 4,600 words is two more or less equal parts with 45.4% of English, and 54.6% of mixture. Within the non-English comments, the distribution is as shown in table 4.15:

Table 4.15: Nature of forum discussion without English

	Bislama	Code-mixing	Code-switching
Percentage of discussion without English	8.7%	72.2%	19.1%

What this reveals is that in a substantial majority of the forum discussions not taking place in English (72.2%), people code-mix between Bislama and English, and almost 20% of them code-switch. A small minority write in Bislama only, as if we look at the proportion of Bislama within the whole corpus of forum discussion I have selected, it amounts to only 4.7% altogether. This entails that people write ten times as often in English as they do in Bislama on the forum discussion. The other obvious point is the big difference between code-mixing (around 70%) and code-switching (around 20%). It is difficult to tell exactly why this is happening, but it seems to me that code-mixing is a phenomenon that Ni-Vanuatu are familiar with, because it happens so frequently that some may not even be conscious they are doing it. Because of the fact that for some, borrowing from English is the obvious thing to do at all times, particularly for the educated few, they are used to inserting English words into their sentences in Bislama, that is to say to code-mix between the two languages. It then follows that this happens in the written language as well, as using the Internet is mostly restricted to a younger urban population like students for instance. One might say that this is mere speculation on my part, but chat forums are often used more frequently by younger people (a fact you can find out when you look at members’ profiles). Here is an example of what was posted as comments:

*That's a good idea. private sponsorship i gud long olgeta we oli wok nomo. Kavman i mas lukaotem ol nara option blong kivim long ol **unfortunate parents** we oli no save affordem Uni and **that is the only** best solution.wan nara samting too, MP Ralph is **currently sponsoring 12** students at Emalus Campus in semester 1/2009. spos evri 52 MP ia oli sponsarem 4 students each long ol constituency blong olgeta, alala, we are definately moving forward.....(March 19, 2009).*

As we can observe here, the writer uses English words in the middle of a sentence in Bislama, like *kivim long **unfortunate parents** we oli no save affordem* where the noun phrase only (in bold characters) is English. There is also code-switching with whole sentences in English like “*that’s a good idea*”. Here again, there is a lot of variation depending on the writers themselves: some make a massive use of English, with only a few words in Bislama while others write mostly in Bislama with a few words in English. Just like emails and text messages, this new way of communication is worth looking into in more detail in the future.

4.7.4 Instant chat

Instant communication (synchronous CMC) takes place on websites like MSN or ICQ and enables people to ‘talk’ in writing, so that it obeys constraints of speed and synchronicity, which is not the case for emails, and not always for forum chats where you can also post your answer at any time. I do not have many examples of chat because of the personal side I have already mentioned. What has been observed elsewhere (Lee 2007) is that there is a lower degree of linguistic complexity in chat than in asynchronous CMC. If we look at the chat in Bislama between ‘a’ and ‘b’ (two francophone Ni-Vanuatu), we notice that the Bislama sentences are interspersed with English words which represent 27.7% of the whole text, which seems to be a lot for Francophones.

- a- *hey gud nite, mi look u online nao, mi just wantem kam wishim you gud nite and gud week;*
- b- *hey gnite after u how???mi nomo look u online long taem nao*
- a- *yes u tru ia, save wok blo busy nomo!! mifala lo USP ia I stap go lo exams week nao.*
- b- *Eh mifala too, be u tekem amas course everyone?*
- a- *Mi bin tekem 2 ia, be mi dropem one, afat naoia mi tekem accountings nomo, be u?*
- b- *Mifala olsem nomo, exam next week, so this week mi revision week. Be mum olgeta oli oraet?*
- a- *Yes, mi ringim olgeta yesterday, oli oraet nomo, be oli wantem mi go long Santo for holidays. Mi no sure yet spos mi go or no. No ating bai mi go...wait no bai i depend too lo ol results.*
- b- *OK stret one time. Mi ia end blo year onetime, nos kas mi joke.No afta exams blo mi, wait last exams blo mi lo one Wednesday ia, yes, after lo Friday blo m bai mi kam lo Vila.Be ino gud from bai mi stap one week nomo.*
- a- *Oh ok, No be I gud, at least u kam look ol families small, after kakai aelan kakai bakegen.*
- b- *Yes u tru ia, mania mi misim ol families blo mi we.mi wantem look*

olgeta nao.hehe, be save nomo, solwota I blok
a- Hey sista blo mi, yumitu stap chat be mi mas stap out nao, time i stap
go, tudak i stap kam, road too i long we, ale mi stap go fastaem. Mi bin
look u online nao, mi just wantem chat i kam ia, be ale, nice chatting with
u. Hope blo catch up next time, ale bye and God bles.
b- Ok ale, thank u bakegen blo chat wetem mi. Gud nite, passem gud nite
lo olgeta lo house too, ale bye, God bless.

There are different features we can identify in this conversation: words borrowed straight from English as in *online*, *God bless*, *chat*, *bye*, with some in the plural form like *families*, *results*, *exams*. However, we can also note that there is no Bislama word with the -s plural ending. Some words written in English could have been easily spelled in Bislama, like *look* (*luk*), *time* (*taem*) or *out* (*aot*). We also find shortenings like *blo* for *blong*, *gnite* for *gud naet*, and *nite* for *naet* (English abbreviation).

Conclusion

Because of the very small size of my corpus in this particular domain, I will refrain from making assertions and will simply summarise the trends I have found in these new forms of written communication. On the whole, there is evidence that a lot of code-mixing is happening in the three various forms of CMC, even though we can point out that even for Francophones, there is massive use of English over French in the abbreviations and codes. An attempt has been made here to try and show patterns, however, as I have indicated, CMC is definitely an area in need of further research.

4.8 Translations

As mentioned previously, the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu states that there are three official languages in the country, English, French and Bislama. It follows that all official documents should be published in the three official languages, and the work is the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Language Services Department, formerly Department of Translation and Interpretation before independence. The aim of this department was to help the government to implement its new policy of tri-lingualism, as explained in the following article:

EKUAL RAET INSAET LONG PABLIK SEVIS
Oli talem se eni sitisen igat raet blong go insaet long pablik sevis weta oli
skul franis o oli skul inglis. Insaed long komiti blong pablik sevis imas gat
sem namba blong ol memba we oli skul franis o inglis.

KRIETEM WAN SEVIS BLONG TRANSLESEN
Ripot ya tu i talem se konstitusen emi luksave Bislama, Franis mo Inglis
langwis. Gafman imas rispektem konstitiusen ya mo stanemap wan tru ofis
blong translesen we bambae i gat sam tru spesal man blong loa oli wok
long hem blong luk se igat stret toktok istap kamaot ino ol man nomo we oli
save mekem translesen be oli no save loa blong hem (Interview NHW
27/3/80 p22).¹¹²

Considering the workload, the Department was largely under-equipped and under-staffed and needed expanding because it could not keep up with demand. A project was set up with help from UNESCO in the early 1980s to train more staff, both translators and interpreters. Even though the situation has improved in the meantime, today there are still delays in translations from and into Bislama, as well as from and into the two other languages because the quantity of material to be translated has also greatly increased. What is translated from Bislama into French and English are mostly court material for the tribunal, written in Bislama and that has to be translated into English. In the past, records of the debates in Parliament, which take place in Bislama, were translated by the PM's Language Services, but since 2004, Hansard Division has been in charge of the production and translation of the minutes. A team of four minute-takers, with two junior reporters, one editor for French and one editor for English take notes of the debates in Bislama (these notes are not available to the public), then translate them into both French and English. In case of doubt, the notes can be checked against recordings (not available to the public either) and are finally approved before they are sent to all the Parliament libraries in the world (Hari Simon, p.c., June 2011).

Documents originally in French or English that require translation into Bislama are mostly all the reports coming from the various ministries, all the official documents from the government, the Ombudsman's reports, annual activity reports from the ministers to the government. The PM's Translation services are also in charge of translating all the brochures and posters, etc, published by the various ministers, mostly Health and Agriculture. The main

¹¹² EQUAL RIGHTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE / Any citizen has the right to be a civil servant whether he is francophone or anglophone. There must be the same number of Francophones and Anglophones in the public service.

CREATION OF A TRANSLATION SERVICE / The report also says that the constitution recognizes three languages, Bislama, English and French. The government must respect the constitution and set up a translation service with a lawyer to check the translations, [as] not all translators have some knowledge of law.

problem is lack of staff for so much material to be translated, along with the lack of standardisation which does not make the work easy. What the translators use is the spell check they have on their computer and Crowley's dictionary (Delphine Sumu, p.c., March 2008).

Translations probably represent a substantial part of the corpus, even though it is impossible to verify, as most of them are not identified as such. What I mean by that is that it is reasonable to make the assumption that some of the articles published not only in the Vanuatu press, but also in the English and French periodicals with Bislama pages in them were translated from either French or English. This would concern the articles about international news, of course, not the ones about the New Hebrides / Vanuatu, or all the local events.

It is also difficult to identify whether some official documents were translated from one of the metropolitan languages, mostly English, or actually written in Bislama. While there is absolutely no doubt that documents such as the *Human Raets Tok Save* 'Declaration of Human Rights' or *Baebol long Bislama* 'The Bible' have been translated from English, in other cases, it is hard to know exactly what the original text is. However, some texts are clearly identified as translations with sometimes the text in the two (or three) languages, for instance in English with its Bislama translation, or vice versa. There are not many of these to be found, but they will be the object of attention here.

Of course, there are the official translations made by the Prime Minister's Languages Services, whose first work was to translate the constitution of the new Republic of Vanuatu, which is the first translation we will look at.

4.8.1 *Konstitusen blong Ripablik blong Vanuatu*

The edition I have studied is the 1988 revised edition in Bislama, and the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu in English found on the Parliament of Vanuatu's website (<http://www.parliament.gov.vu/constitution.html>). I will just illustrate my comments with extracts of both texts in parallel in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Konstitusen/Constitution

Bislama	English
KONSTITUSEN BLONG REPABLIK BLONG VANUATU	CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
<p><i>YUMI olgeta man Vanuatu,</i></p> <p><i>Yumi PRAOD from yumi bin faet strong blong kam olsem fri man,</i></p> <p><i>MO YUMI TINGTING STRONG YET blong lukaotem gud olgeta samting we yumi winim long faet ia,</i></p> <p><i>MO YUMI STAP HOLEM TAIT FASIN IA we yumi gat ol narafala kala, ol narafala langwis mo ol narafala kastom,</i></p> <p><i>BE YUMI SAVE GUD se long fiuja bambae yumi evriwan i wokbaot long wan rod nomo,</i></p>	<p>WE the people of Vanuatu,</p> <p>PROUD of our struggle for freedom,</p> <p>DETERMINED to safeguard the achievements of this struggle,</p> <p>CHERISHING our ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity,</p> <p>MINDFUL at the same time of our common destiny,</p>

What is immediately obvious is that the text in Bislama is much longer than the one in English, a feature we will find in all the other documents and which is also true when they are translations for French. In this precise example, the English text has 35 words whereas the Bislama translation has 68 words (51.5%), that is to say almost double the number of words. What is interesting is to try and find out why this is happening and see if patterns can be made out and applied to the other translations as well. Let us first take just two groups of sentences from this extract and see if we can make observations:

- 1) PROUD of our struggle for freedom,
- 2) *Yumi PRAOD from yumi bin faet strong blong kam olsem fri man,*
- 3) DETERMINED to safeguard the achievements of this struggle,
- 4) *MO YUMI TINGTING STRONG YET blong lukaotem gud olgeta samting we yumi winim long faet ia,*

It seems that what is possible in English, that is to say elliptic adjective phrases like the single word ‘*proud*’ in example 1 has to be expressed with a pronoun in Bislama with *yumi praod* in 2, so the pronoun *yumi* used in the very first clause has to be repeated in Bislama. If we look at examples 3 and 4, the circumlocution to translate ‘*determined*’ is even longer as not only do we have the pronoun *yumi* repeated too, but it is used with a verb phrase composed of 3 words to express the same thing as one word in English. This is something that happens quite often in translations when people do not want to borrow the adjective straight from English, because there are not as many adjectives and past participles in Bislama as in English. In fact, the passive form corresponding to ‘be + past participle’ does not exist in Bislama, and something like ‘spoken language’ will be translated by *langwis we oli toktok* (literally ‘the language they speak’). The use of adjectives recently borrowed from English indicates anglicisation and can be taken, in my opinion, as a sign of potential decreolisation. The other way of expressing the full meaning without borrowing is by using a relative clause introduced by *we* which qualifies the noun, as we can observe in *olgeta samting we yumi winim long faet ia* for ‘achievements of this struggle’. Today, as we have seen in other more recent texts written in Bislama, some would use the loan word *ajivmen* because it is more and more present in the jargon of education and youth, so people are more familiar with it and many would understand what it means. We also have to remember that this translation is over thirty years old, so a lot of things have changed in the lexicon in the meantime. The other point that has to be taken into account as well is the register: the constitution is a very formal document and has to be understandable to all, so has to be written in the language of the people. However, the introduction of new lexicon borrowed from English was inevitable too, as the parliamentary model chosen for the new republic is based on most of the principles of the two European democracies that used to rule the condominium. This is why we find more compound nouns like *Deputi Spika* ‘Deputy Speaker’, *lidasip kod* ‘leadership code’, *fri-hol taetol* ‘freehold title’ and *sab-atikol* ‘sub-article’ than in other documents of the time. This is specialised jargon referring to institutions or concepts that cannot be easily expressed by circumlocutions which would hinder the comprehension more than facilitate it, and make the translations long and tiresome. So a balance has to be reached between what Clark (2004) calls ‘necessary’ borrowing and what can be expressed by the resources of the language itself, and this is exactly what this translation does. As far as the grammar goes, there are no plural endings *-s* in this translation, ‘everyone’ is translated by *eni man o woman* and ‘a person (who)’ by *olgeta (we)*. The future is always expressed by *bambae*, not by its shortened form *bae*.

4.8.2 Politics and other official documents

We will stay in the same semantic field with a few examples of political or official documents.

4.8.2.1 *Human Raets Toksave*

In paragraph 4.5.1, I have already mentioned Molisa's *Human Raets Toksave* (1998), in which part 1 is the translation of the thirty articles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (by the Vanuatu Language Services Department) and part 2 deals with the rights inscribed in the Constitution of Vanuatu.¹¹³ What is interesting in this booklet is the variation found in the use of English words and grammatical features, as well as a genuine attempt to make the booklet understandable by the target population, namely women, many of whom are not educated and need to be told about their rights in a simple, accessible way. I will start by giving an example of the official text in both languages in table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Declaration of Human Rights

English	Bislama
<p>Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.</p> <p>Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.</p> <p>Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.</p>	<p>Atikol 1. Evri man mo woman ibon fri mo ikwol long respek mo ol raet. Oli gat risen mo tingting mo oli mas tritim wanwan long olgeta olsem ol brata mo sista.</p> <p>Atikol 2. Evriwan i gat raet long evri raet mo fridom we i stap long Deklereisen ia, wetaot eni kaen difrens, olsem long reis, kala blong skin, seks, langwis, rilijen, politikol o narafala kaen tingting, we i kamaot long saed blong neisen o sosol, propeti, taem we man i bon long hem o emi narafala sosol saed olsem. Andap long hemia, bambae wan man o woman i no save mekem eni difrens long level blong politik, eria we wok hem i kavremap o intenasonol level blong kaontri o teritori blong narafala man o woman ia, nomata we hemi indipenden, tras, non-self-gavening o anda eni narafala arenjmen blong soverenti.</p> <p>Atikol 3. Evriwan i gat raet blong laef, fridom mo sekuriti blong man mo woman.</p>

¹¹³ The Bislama translation of the Declaration can be found on the United Nations website, in the section 'languages' under bichelamar, identified under Amnesty International, UK, 11/12/1998 (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=bcy>).

Contrary to what we found out about the constitution, the number of words here is greater in Bislama too, but not in the same proportion at all, as here the English text represents more than 80% of the Bislama translation (against over 50% for the constitution). If we look at the translation, it is easy to notice that *evri* is consistently used to translate ‘all’, *evriwan* means ‘everyone’ and *wanwan* means ‘each’. The English plural is translated by *ol*. What can also be noted is that both the nominal groups with *evri* and *evriwan* are followed by the singular predicate marker *i*, when one might have expected *evri man mo woman* ‘all human beings’ to be followed by *oli* as it clearly has a plural meaning in the mind of the translator. Another interesting feature to be found in this document is the translation for English passive forms: *bambae man o woman i no gilty from wan rong we hemi mekem* translates ‘No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense’ (*Atikol 11:13*), and *bambae man o woman ino save intefea wetem praevet laef, famili, hom o korespondens* means ‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence’ (*Atikol 12:13*). The passive is consistently translated by *(bambae) man o woman ino (save) V*, even when the subject of the passive is not ‘no one’ but ‘Nothing in this declaration’ translated by *Wan man mo woman i no save yusum wan pat blong Deklereisen ia*. (*Atikol 30:18*).

As far as the vocabulary goes, it is very little anglicised, and kept simple: here again, there seems to have been a deliberate effort on the part of the translators to use periphrases in Bislama over mere borrowing. For instance, ‘any media’ becomes *nuspepa, televisen o radio*, *fasin blong nogat wok* is ‘unemployment’, and most of the English adjectives such as ‘available’, ‘compulsory’, ‘accessible’ are also translated by periphrases whose meaning is perfectly clear to anyone not familiar with English, as in *Bambae evri pikinini i mas go long wan elementeri skul* ‘Elementary education shall be compulsory’ (*Atikol 26:17*). Sometimes a synonym is given as *ol raeting* for *litereja*. In this translation part, I found no word ending with the English plural marker *-s*, all the plural are under the form *ol raet blong man mo woman* ‘human rights’ (so *ol* + *N(sng)*).

The second part of the booklet (from page 19 to 30), as well as the introduction, presents a different picture. There is a lot more variation, and the writing is probably more spontaneous, because it is probably not always a translation from English (and from a very official text at that): some of it was written directly in Bislama, and so it is not surprising that we should find traces of variation as well as anglicisation (the writer, Grace Molisa, wrote a lot of texts in English). Some of the words are kept with their English spelling like ‘*human being*’, ‘*experiences*’, ‘*wrong*’, or, if written with a Bislama spelling, keep English grammatical features such as the plural *-s* (*Human Nids*, *Human Raets*, *parents*), *-ed* in *adopted pikinini*.

We also find the phonological variants g/k (*olketa/olgeta*, *gat/kat*), and *forom* for *from*, but the most surprising feature is the use of *lo* and *blo* for *long* and *blong*, which is extremely rare in written Bislama, and hardly ever found in texts with an ‘official’ purpose. This booklet was written later than the others we have looked at (1998) and so it could explain the presence of more modern abbreviations. *Evri* seems to be used for ‘all’, and ‘*olgeta*’ for the plural in *olgeta raet blong mekem pikinini* ‘reproductive rights’ (p. 24) and *wanwan* for ‘each’. Sometimes, an explanation is given for the words borrowed from English that may not be understood by the reader, such as *samting we hemi mas mekem* for ‘duty’ [sic] and *literasi* “*hemi minim se save rid mo raet*” (p. 30).

Molisa also compiled another book entitled *Woman Ikat Raet Long Human Raet o No?* written after the South Pacific seminar on CEDAW in 1991. This book of 89 pages is also composed of several parts: first, the CEDAW is given in the three languages (from page 11 to 54) and the second part (from page 55 to 89), entitled “The Convention and What It Means” (prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UN Office in Vienna) provides explanation about the convention itself and its implementation. This report is given in English and French, but not translated into Bislama. Finally, we find the report of the seminar and its recommendations, but only in English and Bislama, not in French, followed by a few pages only in Bislama about the future of CEDAW in the Pacific and Vanuatu. We may infer that these last two parts were written by Molisa, but it is hard to say who translated it, Molisa herself or the official Translation Service. The proportion here between Bislama and English is also 80 % for the English text, and the language and style are very similar to the other official translations already studied, as can be seen in table 4.18.

Table 4.18: CEDAW Convention

Bislama	English
A. Se evri Pasifik Aelan Steit oli mas joenem CEDAW Konvensen be sipos i gat samfala atikol we i stap long Konvensen we i no save wok wetel nasonal praktis we i stap long samfala kaontri mbae ol kaontri ia oli save joen be mbae oli talemaot wanem oli no save folem.	A. That all Pacific Island States accede to the CEDAW Convention, ideally without reservation, but where there is a concern that certain articles of the Convention may be incompatible with important existing national practise, accession be made with reservation on those points.

Another booklet by Molisa (2001) I have already mentioned is also entitled CEDAW, but it is a summary of the official version called “*Ol stampa toktok insaed CEDAW emi*” ‘Summary of CEDAW’ so it is not a translation. The Bislama in the two versions of the CEDAW Convention is quite different, as can be seen in this example:

Atikol 6: Bambae ol Steit Pati oli tekem ol stret aksen wetem ol loa blong katemaot ol kaen fasin olsem salem ol woman mo yusum ol woman blong salem bodi blong olgeta from doti mane (CEDAW 1991: 47).

ATIKOL 6. *Kavman bambae I daonem bisnis blong salem woman mo spolem ol prostitute we oli victims finis i stap* (CEDAW 2001: 7).¹¹⁴

As we have seen, the official 1991 translation presents the same characteristics as the translation of the Declaration of Human Rights, whereas the summary of the same article does not have to obey the same constraints and is therefore more “modern” and anglicised, with English and plural *-s* in *victims*. These features showing more anglicisation are repeatedly present in the 2001 booklet. It has to be added here that there is a ten-year difference between the two publications, and this may account also for the changes in the language, as well as the question of register. One is a very official translation while the other is an information booklet to be given to women to defend their rights, so the audience is not quite the same and the language in the small booklet can be less formal and probably more accessible to the women who want the information.

4.8.2.2 *Tan Union*

We will look at the translation of one of the editorials published in the three languages. What is striking in the three versions of the editorial is the difference in length: if the French and English parts are roughly the same length, the Bislama part is much longer. Indeed, the total for the French version is 69 words, the English version counts 73 words, but the same editorial written in Bislama is 115 words long, that is to say around 40% longer than the other two, a feature we have already observed in other translations. Here is one example of the two same passages, one in English and the other one in Bislama it goes without saying that I have kept the layout and the paragraphs as they were originally (*Tan Union*, No 1, Avril 1977, p. 2).

¹¹⁴ Article 6: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women (1991: 18)

Table 4.19: Tan Union editorial

Bislama	English
<i>Ol kaen pipol ia, ol i slak blong faet blong winim gud samting blong kantri. Samfala long olgeta ol i no kasem gud mo stret long olgeta ol i no kasem gud mo stret tingting blong luk save wanem aksen blong helpem ples. From we ol i slak mo ol i no gat wan tru tingting blong bildimap NIU-EBRIDIS, ol man ia oli jusum blong ronwei long kantri blong yumi. Wanem? ... Ol i no save luk tru?...</i>	Lack of courage or adsence [sic] of common sense leads these persons, for whom all pretexts are good enough for uming [sic] away. And yet...
<i>Yumi mas save se nao i no gat plenti kantri long wold we ol diferen populesen blong olgeta ol i hapi blong laef wan ples, from we ol i no gat trabol we i ekensem olgeta. Yumi mas save tu se aeland blong yumi nomo i gat wan reli djanch olsem. Ol kaen pipol long kantri blong yumi ol i save laef gud wetem olgeta wan ples.</i>	Rare are the countries gathering with such success, so many different ethnies [sic] within their population. Unique are the natural privileges of our islands.
<i>Yufala i bin laekem blong spendem laef blong yufala long Niu-Ebridis: from wanem nao yufala i wandem ronwei?</i>	You all have enjoyed living in the New Hebrides: Then why give up and go?

What can be said is that besides the length, the major difference between the two versions lies, in my opinion, in the style. The English text is very dense, almost poetic with inversions at the beginning of sentences (*'rare are the countries'*) whereas the Bislama is more down-to-earth, everyday language. There are many repetitions in the Bislama text, which may account for its length too, and we find the same circumlocutions and relative clauses as in the other translations.

4.8.2.3 Viewpoint

I came across what I thought a first sight was an article in Bislama in *Viewpoints* (20 December 1976, p. 9) but which in fact is the translation of a passage of *Africa Must Unite* by Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana. Even though it was originally written in English (not provided in the newspaper so I cannot compare the two versions), it is not very anglicised: one or two expressions are kept in English or borrowed straight such as *wan* 'well-organised' *strong body blong pipol*, *'politikol revoluson'* [sic] and the preposition *for* in *we i faet for independens*. All the rest is expressed in simple, understandable language. The spelling corresponds to the usual variations, with *hat* (*had*) 'hard', *wandem* (*wantem*) 'want', *olketa* (*olgeta*) 'the' and *kapman* (*gavman*) 'government' for instance. The verbs are the most anglicised vocabulary in *foloem* 'follow', *exsasaesem* 'exercise', *rulum* 'rule or *okanaesem* 'organise', which at the time were not as commonly used as today.

Evri is found with the plural marker in *evri pipol oli wandem* ‘everybody wants’ and *evri kain pipol we oli* ‘all the people who’ [every kind of people who]. So on the whole, it has the same characteristics as the other translations.

4.8.2.4 Various translations

One sometimes comes across various types of texts that are published in two or three languages, apart from the official translations I have already mentioned. It is often hard to know in which language the document was primarily written as most of the time, there is no clear indication of that. One example of such a text is *Torba Politics*, published in the *Vanuatu Trading Post*, April 30, 2002. The text is published as a ‘Paid Advertisement’ and given first in Bislama, then in English. Because the writer identifies himself as “*Mi olsem wan man Gaua*” ‘As a man from Gaua’¹¹⁵, it seems plausible to infer that the text – which looks more like a ‘Letter to the Editor’ than an ad – was first written in Bislama and then translated into English, but there is no certainty of this. In fact, when we look at the two texts, it is easy to see that the English version is in ‘perfect’ English while the Bislama used is highly anglicised, as illustrated by the following extract in both languages, first in Bislama then in English, as they appear in the newspaper (*Trading Post*, April 30, 2002: 13):

Table 4.20: *Trading Post*

Bislama	English
<i>Mi sapraes long campaign we tufala i mekem. Tufala ikam campaign blong talem policy or no? Tufala i kam campaign blong spolem nem blong ol man mo swea long ol man Gaua. Mifala ol man Gaua as a whole, ino nidim ol man olsem tufala blong kam campaign long Gaua & Torba as a whole from fasin we tufala i mekem.</i>	I was surprised by the way they ran their campaign. Was the purpose of the trip to campaign about the policy of the party? Because their campaign was aimed at spoiling other people’s name and swear at the people of Gaua.

As found in other translations, the Bislama text is about 30% longer than the English one, with some repetitions. It is quite obvious here that the lexicon is not only borrowed from

¹¹⁵ Gaua is an island in the northern Torba Province, it is the largest of the Banks Islands.

English, but often written with its English spelling, as we can see with ‘*campaign*’ or the phrase ‘*as a whole*’. So in this case, as in some others, I find it impossible to determine which of the two texts is the translation of the other. The other possibility is that the writer is perfectly bilingual and can actually write the text in two different languages without having to make a translation.

4.8.3 Biwako Millennium Framework

This is the translation from English into Bislama of an official document published by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in January 2003 called the *Biwako Millenium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, translated in 2006 by Robert Early. In the introduction, he stresses the difficulty of translating an official English document into Bislama, as some of the vocabulary and concepts are not too familiar to Bislama speakers. Early explains his choices, saying that he tried his best not to take the ‘easy’ way of borrowing from English: “*Mi traem blong no mekem olsemia tumas [jas stilim Inglis wod] ...Mi bin traem faenem wan stret rod blong talem evri Inglis toktok long Bislama*” ‘I have tried not to do this [merely borrow from English] and to find a way to word the English document in Bislama’ (2006: 6). He has also had to take into account the sensibility of people towards careful choice of vocabulary as regards people with handicaps, finding a periphrasis that is acceptable because it shows a respectful attitude towards these people, even though the word *handikap* would have been understood by speakers of Bislama. The phrasing was discussed with the local branch of the Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA) and the word *disabiliti* and phrase *man o woman we i gat disabiliti* were agreed on for ‘disability’ and ‘disabled person’.

In order to facilitate the reading of the Bislama translation, Early provides a small dictionary (p. 7), showing that borrowing from English is not as necessary as some would think and that finding equivalents in Bislama is possible providing you give it a bit of thought. This is a remarkable effort to prove that Bislama has the resources within itself to express virtually everything, proving the detractors of the language as being restricted totally wrong. Table 4.21 gives a passage of the translated text and of the original English version.

Table 4.21: Biwako Millenium Framework

Bislama	English
<p>25. Taem we ol pikinini mo ol yangfala we oli gat disabiliti oli no gat janis blong go long skul, bambae i mekem se oli no gat janis blong develop moa. Bambae oli no save go long trening kos, bambae oli no save faenem wok, bambae oli no save faenem eni rod blong winim smol mane long hem, mo bamabae oli no save olsem wanem blong traem stanemap wan smol bisnis blong winim mane long hem. Mo taem we oli no save kasem edyukesen mo trening olsemia, bambae i had blong oli kam independen o oli kam oli naf blong oli lukaotem olgeta bakegen. Mo taem we oli stap long wan sityuesen olsem finis, i had tumas blong oli kamaot long hem, mo sipos oli no kamaot long hem, bamabae ol narafala jeneresen we oli kam bambae oli save stap long sem ples ya bakegen.</p>	<p>25. The exclusion of children and youth with disabilities from education results in their exclusion from opportunities for further development, particularly diminishing their access to vocational training, employment, income generation and business development. Failure to access education and training prevents the achievement of economic and social independence and increases vulnerability to poverty in what can become a self-perpetuating, inter-generational cycle.</p>

In the example, the English text represents 41% of the Bislama translation. The main difference comes from the translation of nouns by longer noun phrases and the repetition of the verb phrase too: for instance, “employment” and “income generation”, used by themselves as complements of “access to...”, are respectively translated by the full clauses *bambae oli no save faenem wok* ‘they will not be able to find work’ and *bambae oli no save faenem eni rod blong winim smol mane long hem* ‘they will not be able to find a way to to make a little money’. Naturally, this choice is in keeping with the avowed wish to make the translation as little anglicised as possible (hence the glossary). As could therefore be expected considering Early’s explanations, there are no English words and no words with the plural ending *-s*. As far as spelling is concerned, the only point I can make is that Early sticks to the rule of using *-y* in *ya* (demonstrative) and in the middle of words like *edyukesen* or *komyuniti*, which are often also spelt *-i* in *ia* and *ediukesen*, *komiuniti* (or even *edukesen* and *komuniti*).

4.8.4 Naika

In part 4.2.4.3 I have already said that in Naika, the articles were written in English with summaries in French and Bislama. The example given in table 4.22 is not a summary of an article, I have chosen a translation of recommendations to the readers to be able to make comments. What is obvious here is that we find the same features as in other translations, namely the fact that the English text represents 60% of the Bislama one. The main difference comes from the translation of ‘your’ in ‘your letters’ by a relative clause *ol leta we bambae oli stap kam from yufala* ‘the letters which come from you’ (as opposed to *ol leta blong yufala*

‘your letters’). The other relative clauses, like *wan samting we hemi mekem yu gat interes tumas* (literally ‘something which makes you have a lot of interest’) is the translation of ‘something of interest’ and *ol animol, pijin, flao mo olgeta narafala samting we yumi save feanem long solwota mo bus blong Vanuatu* (literally ‘animals, birds, flowers and anything else we can find in the sea or in the bush in Vanuatu’) is the Bislama for ‘any aspect of natural science’ in the English text. It seems that here the preoccupation was sometimes to make sure that the readers would understand the meaning of terms that might have posed a problem like ‘natural science’. At other times, it is just what translating is all about, that is to say to express the same content in a natural way in the target language.

Table 4.22: *Naika*, Special First Issue, February 1981: 5

Bislama	English
<p><i>Plis, yu raet I kam long mifala!</i></p> <p><i>Leta: Long fyuja mifala I hop blong raetem daon ol leta we bambae oli stap kam from yufala long nyuspepa ya, “Naika”. Sipos yu lukem wan samting we hemi mekem yu gat interes tumas o sipos yu gat samfala kwestin long saed blong ol animol, pijin, flaoa, etc., long aelan blong yu, plis yu mas raet ikam long mifala.</i></p>	<p>Please write to us!</p> <p>Letters: In future issues we hope to publish your letters. If you see anything of interest or if you have questions on anything to do with wildlife or the natural environment, please drop us a line.</p>
<p><i>Toktok: “Naika” hemi askem long yufala blong givim eni kaen toktok, sot not mo ripot long saed blong ol animol, pijin, flao mo olgeta narafala samting we yumi save feanem long solwota mo bus blong Vanuatu, o long narafala kantri long Pasifik. Yu save raet I kam long Bilsma, Franis o Inglis, mo sipos yu no save taepem, yum as raetm I klea gud. Sanem I go long Edita long adres blong mifalai we I stap long pej 1.</i></p>	<p>Articles: “Naika” invites articles, short notes, reports on any aspect of natural science in Vanuatu of the Southwest Pacific region. Articles may be in Bislama, French or English and should be typed or written clearly and sent to the Editor, at our address given on page 1.</p>

4.8.5 Poetry

We have already seen some poetry in part 4.3.1, and I had mentioned that three of the poems had two versions, one in English and one in Bislama. Table 4.23 will provide an example of one of the poems.

Table 4.23: Poem

Bislama	English
<i>MI NO KIA</i>	ME NO CARE
<i>Yu talem se mi man Lolowai</i>	You said I was a person from Lolowai
<i>Mi no kia se mi man blong koprah</i>	I don't give a damn if I'm only a plantation worker
<i>Mi stap ia mi fainem sam fren</i>	I make friends with all the people from the islands
<i>Mi stap ia long 'Alberea Beronie'</i>	I spend my time on the 'Alberea Beronie'
<i>Mi stap suet ol taem nomo</i>	I sweat every day for my sake
<i>No kat man i kam luk mi</i>	-----
<i>No kat man i kia long mi</i>	Nobody cares for me in any way
<i>Mi stap tingting long tubui blong mi</i>	I never let my mind wander from my beloved
<i>Ako yu nomo yu suit long mi</i>	Who's so dear to me

Of course, translating poetry is not the same as translating a science or law, because it obeys other constraints of rhythm and rhyme, mostly, and also sometimes of register. So it is interesting here to observe what has been done for this poem. As there is no mention of who made the translation, nor of which way, I have assumed that the poems were written first in Bislama (because the first version is given in Bislama in the book) and translated into English by the poet himself (or herself), but I could be wrong on that point. Clearly, it is not a literal translation, and the first interesting point, I think, is the title of the poem: indeed, *MI NO KIA* might have been translated by 'I DON'T CARE' if we were to think 'standard' English. However, the form chosen by the writer/translator, ME NO CARE is definitely **not** standard *English*, it sounds like the creole phrase '*me no savvy*' or the much more modern *Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedars (2000) and the other poem '*Me no study, me no care, me go marry a millionaire. If he die, me no cry, me go marry another guy*'. (<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110505171126AAq36RQ>, retrieved May 2012). It is a well-known fact that in case of bilingualism, the choice of the language is an act of identity, and it seems to me that here, Mildred Sope made the deliberate choice of translating her creole by another English-based creole more familiar to a general public of speakers and readers of English. It could also have been for phonetic reasons because written that way, the English translation pronounces exactly like the Bislama phrase, even though spelt in English. The same choice probably applies to the other translation of *mi no kia* a little further down in the poem by '*I don't give a damn*' which sounds much more colloquial in English than it does in Bislama, but is the right way of expressing the anger we can feel in the verses. The word in VL *tubui* is not kept in VL but translated, whereas the interjection *Ako*

‘oh boy! Wow!’ is not used in the English version which sounds much more formal with ‘beloved’ and ‘dear to me’. It is also more impersonal because the direct address *yu* in Bislama becomes ‘who is’. The ending rhyme in *mi* found in the last four verses in Bislama is lost in English, and one verse is not translated at all. Finally, the word *kia* is today spelt *kea* ‘care’ so is closer phonetically to the English pronunciation.

4.8.6 Religion

It would be impossible to study all the religious documents that have been translated, but it is equally impossible not to mention some of them.

I will start this part by looking at translated material from the Baha’i Faith: 2003 was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Baha’i Faith in Vanuatu, and a commemorative booklet was published in English and in Bislama. Table 4.22 shows extracts of the two translations:

Table 4.24: Baha’i Faith

Bislama	English
<i>Long Baha’i Fet, i no gat ol pasta. Long saed blong fasin blong lukaotem wok blong Fet, paoa i stap long ol kaonsil we ol baha’i i elektem long wanwan vilij, ol wanwan kaontri, mo long ful wol. Oli kolem ol kaonsil ia ol Asembli. Evri Asembli i gat 9 memeba. Oli elektem olgeta memba blong ol Asembli long fasin blong vot we i sekret, mo i no gat kampein.</i>	As there is no clergy in the Baha’i Faith, authority lies in elected bodies, known as Assemblies, that operate at three levels – local, national and international. All such bodies have 9 members, who are elected by secret ballot, without canvassing or nomination.

The English version represents 60% of the Bislama text and the translation has the same characteristics as most: the vocabulary that could be difficult to understand for people with little education if it was borrowed straight from English is translated by a phrase understandable by all. This is the case for ‘authority’ which would be found as *otoriti* in some Bislama texts, but which here becomes the rather long circumlocution *Long saed blong fasin blong lukaotem wok blong Fet, paoa...* (literally ‘As far as the way to supervise the working of the Faith goes, power...’). There is minimum anglicisation of the translation, and the few words borrowed recently are indicated between inverted commas, as “konsultesen” (p. 10). I have not found a single word in the plural, and I have noticed that most of the time, *evri* is used for the translation of ‘all’, as in *evri memba* ‘all the members’ (p. 10), but not always:

evri man i translates the human race (p. 5), *evri kaontri* means ‘countries’ (p. 11) and *evri man* is also ‘every human being’ (p. 9), so that it is impossible to generalise any particular rule from these examples. The other translations I have are religious texts such as prayers or quotations which follow the same principles as in the report and of which I am giving a short example here: “*Yufala i ol frut blong wanfala wud nomo, mo yufala i ol lif long wanfala branis nomo*” for ‘Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch’ (p.5).

4.8.7 Advertisements

There are two kinds of advertisements, the commercial ones and the official ones published by national companies or any government service. There are also public notices published in newspapers for information about exhibitions and particular events, and most are written in the three languages. However, it is possible to find ads in only two or even one language that can be English or Bislama, hardly ever French when it is by itself. The first one we will look at in table 4.25 is an ad from the National Museum of Vanuatu, which always gives the information in the three official languages, in accordance with the constitution.

Table 4.25: Ad for conference at the National Museum of Vanuatu

Bislama	English
<p><i>Taem kastom seremoni long Vanuatu i kam long wan bisnes nomo</i></p> <p><i>Tuesdei 13 Epril 5.00 pm</i> <i>Nasonol Miusium blong Vanuatu</i> <i>Wan konfrens stret long bislama</i></p> <p><i>Konfrens ia hemi proposem tingting long wan problem we i konsenem fulap tredisenel seremoni long wol. Hao nao man-ples hemi save kipim kontrol long ol olfala seremoni blong bubu blong hem taem mani i kam insaed. Problem ia i kam bigwan long Vanuatu wetem masiv turism divelopmen. Blong traem tingting long ol orijin blong tis problem, Marc Tabani hemi usem tufala famos eksampol: Nagol long Pentekos aelan mo 15 Februari seremoni long Tanna aelan.</i></p> <p><i>I gat wan fri kava long en blong konfrens ia.</i></p> <p><i>Marc Tabani hemi dokta long antropoloji, memba blong wan bigfala risej senta long franis (CREDO long Marseille) we hemi karem plenti kolaborativ risej wetem VKS. Marc Tabani hemi bin mekem fulap filwok long saed long kastom blong Tanna sins klosap 20 yia.</i></p>	<p>Kastom Ceremonies and Tourism in Vanuatu</p> <p>Tuesday 13 April 5.00 pm National Museum of Vanuatu A Conference in Bislama</p> <p>This conference will discuss issues surrounding traditional ceremonies in Vanuatu. The need to balance the relationship between custodial control and tourism will be considered. Marc Tabani will present two case studies: the Nagol (or land diving) held on Pentecost and the John Frum ceremonies held annually on Tanna every 15 February.</p> <p>Free kava will be available to all conference attendees.</p> <p>Marc Tabani is a Doctor of Anthropology, Senior Research Fellow at the CNRS and a member of the CREDO Research Centre in Marseilles, France, who has worked collaboratively with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre for many years. As specialist of the cultures of Vanuatu, he has undertaken extensive fieldwork for close to 20 years, concentrating mainly on customs particular to Tanna.</p>

McDonald, Sunday, 11 April 2010, <http://www.presse.com.vu/general-notice/318-taem-kastom-seremoni-long-vanuatu-i-kam-olsem-wan-bisnes-nomo-tyuesdei-13-epril-500pm>, retrieved June 15, 2010

There is not much difference in size between the two versions of the ad, with the English representing over 90% of the Bislama. The layout is respected faithfully between the two versions and the translation is almost calqued, except when the English vocabulary is rather specialised as in ‘the need to balance the relationship between custodial control and tourism will be considered’. The sentence is therefore translated by a longer explanatory periphrasis *Hao nao man-ples hemi save kipim kontrol long ol olfala seremoni blong bubu blong hem taem mani i kam insaed. Problem ia i kam bigwan long Vanuatu wetem masiv turism developmen* (literally ‘How locals can keep control of the old ceremonies of their ancestors when money interferes. This problem has become a big one in Vanuatu with the massive development of tourism’). As for the compound noun ‘two case studies’, it is replaced by familiar synonyms two facilitate the comprehension *Tufala famos eksampol* (literally ‘two famous examples’). So there is lexicon borrowed from English, but it is limited to what is easy to understand by all. However, I did find evidence of anglicisation in another ad for the museum, with two nouns in the plural in *Lanem ol pleiplei wetem ol sids* ‘Learn how to play seeds’ and *faenem sam niu frems blong yu* ‘making new friends’ (*Vanuatu Infos* No 80, 19 mars 2010).¹¹⁶

Lets us now look at a public notice giving legal information to the public, and which was also published in the three languages.

Table 4.26: Notice TVL

Bislama	English
<i>TVL hemi wantem infomem ol gudfala kastoma blong hem se, olsem part blong network upgrade, bambae i kat network mentenens long ol sevis ia i stat long 15th march iko kasem 31st march 2011, stat long 8 am kasem 5 pm. Bambae i kat outage long taem ia long each line long 15 minutes.</i>	As part of a network upgrade, there will be a 15 minutes service outage per line in the above area. This outage is scheduled to take place between 8 am to 5 pm.

Vanuatu Daily Post, Monday, March 14, 2011: 14

In terms of length, we find the same proportion between English and Bislama as in most of the other translations (61%), mainly because the Bislama version repeats some information (dates) already mentioned in the title and which is not included in the English text, and also because there is a short sentence of introduction in Bislama which is not present in English

¹¹⁶ Here, ‘seeds’ refers to a traditional music instrument of Vanuatu.

and would be translated as ‘TVL informs its customers that...’. The compounds *network upgrade* and *network mentenens*, being technical, are respectively in English or borrowed straight from English, which is also kept for ‘*each line*’. So here we have a mixture of English and Bislama, with dates seemingly in English but without the capital for *march* which is normally spelt *Maj* in Bislama, and *15 minutes* kept as such too. So what we have here is anglicised Bislama, or even code-mixing with the majority of the translation in Bislama with English elements. If we count the words, we can say that there are 11 words in English out of a total of 54 words, so a proportion of English which amounts to just over 20% within the Bislama text.

I have then looked at other kinds of notices to see whether the same features appeared in the texts. The first document in table 4.27 is an official text (*Trading Post*, 8/6/2002: 16) and table 4.28 is an example of a commercial ad (*Trading Post*, 16/2/2002: 15).

Table 4.27: Official notice

Bislama	English
<p><i>Tenda Notis No. ...</i></p> <p><i>Pablik Woks Depatmen hemi stap invaetem ol kontraktas blong tenda from renovesen blong gavman haos No. 2 long aria blong Airport mo haos No. 145 long aria blong Meteo long Port Vila. Ol wok oli base long wan praes nomo. Ol interested kontraktas oli save tekem tenda documents long Pablik Woks Depatmen – Nasituan Building long Vila long Mande 10 Jun 2002 long wan non-refundable praes blong VT.500. 67</i></p>	<p>Tender Notice No. ...</p> <p>Public Works Department invites contractors to tender for the renovation to government house No. 2 at the Airport area and house No. 145 at the Meteorological services site in Port Vila. The works are based on a lump sum contract. Interested contractors may obtain the tender documents at Public works Department – Nasituan building in Port Vila on Monday 10th June 2002, for a non-refundable fee of VT.500. 67</p>

What differs in this translation is that there is hardly any difference in the number of words, in fact in this precise official notice, it is exactly the same. So I tried to find out if this was a characteristic of official translations that you find in the press in the three languages (I have left out the French parts) and what I found out is that most of the time, the same phenomenon happens. It also goes with heavy anglicisation of the translation as can be observed in this example. A lot of the official terms are borrowed straight from English, a feature I have already mentioned when we looked at official documents. We also find a lot of compound nouns, like *tenda documents* ‘tender documents’ or *Pablik Woks Depatmen* ‘Public Works Department’ which are all loans words from English too. The features of English are also found in the grammar with plural -s to *kontraktas* ‘contractors’, both when the word is kept in

English like *‘documents’* or written in Bislama like *woks* ‘works’, and the *-ed* form in *interested*. So on the whole, official translations are the most anglicised ones among all the translations I have studied.

Table 4.28: Commercial ad

Bislama	English
<p><i>STAT LONG 1 EPRIL 2002</i></p> <p><i>Mekem se nesen hemi kam mo klosap</i></p> <p><i>Raon long Vanuatu 20 Vt = 2 minit</i></p> <p><i>20 Vt = 4 minit (jip praes)</i></p> <p><i>Follem stat long GSM, TVL i mekem se bambae i gat wan praes nomo blong ol fixed laen long national kol, stat long 1 Epril 2002.</i></p> <p><i>Ol praes oli kat VAT long hem.</i></p> <p><i>Long wan 6 minit kol long Vanuatu:</i></p>	<p>FROM 1st APRIL 2002</p> <p>Bringing the nation closer together</p> <p>Throughout Vanuatu 20Vt = 2 minutes (peak)</p> <p>20 Vt = 4 minutes (off-peak)</p> <p>With the launch of the mobile telephony (GSM) soon, the geographic areas become meaningless. Thus, from 1st April 2002, TVL has decided to simplify its national phone rates on the fixed network, by applying only one national rate</p> <p>Note: all rates are inclusive of VAT.</p> <p>E.g. for a 6 minute call within Vanuatu:</p>

In the commercial advertisement, the first thing to be noticed is that the English version is longer – only by 7 words – than the Bislama one, a rare occurrence in translations. Contrary to what we have seen in the preceding table, the dates and times are written in Bislama, and there is no plural –s to minit (as is sometimes found in other ads). However, we do find *fixed laen* for ‘fixed line’, definitely an English grammatical form which does not exist in Bislama. The difference in length also lies in the fact that in the Bislama version, one or two English sentences have not been translated at all (e.g. ‘the geographic areas become meaningless’). So what we can say here is that if the Bislama ad is shorter than the English one, it is simply due to the fact that it does not contain as much information, a feature which does not happen frequently in translations.

Conclusion

After looking at various types of documents in several genres, it seems to me that there are, possibly, two kinds of translators: those who take great care not to anglicise their Bislama, and those who do not mind borrowing heavily from the language in which the original document, mainly English, was written and whose written Bislama will as a result be heavily

anglicised. Of course, it is not my role here to express a personal opinion over whether one choice is better than the other, as I am a mere observer trying to identify patterns and see if they can be classified or not in terms of the nature of the document translated, and its 'readability' for every day purposes. It can be predicted, however, that because the number of documents written in Bislama today has considerably increased, people will become more familiar with some of the borrowed words. Within a few years, they will be completely integrated in the new lexicon because they will be used more frequently and the vocabulary will keep expanding just the way it has before. Translators are people who are used to making careful choices so as to be faithful to the meaning of what they are translating, and their language skills make them more aware of the choices they make.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSES

This chapter is dedicated to the work done with the help of the data base which I constituted with most of my corpus. As a reminder, it consists of a Microsoft Access data base which contains 4790 items under 246 parts, that is to say the number of documents constituting the data base. The criteria I chose have been intentionally selected to try and back up evidence – or counterevidence – of the potential decreolisation of written Bislama. I will be using the tables of results that I obtained from the queries made to the data base software, and then calculate myself some percentages when they are necessary or simply quicker to read. Finally, I will analyse the nature of the phenomena occurring or not, as well as try to find some reasonable explanation to them.

5.1 The corpus

Before I start looking at the criteria in detail, let us have a closer look at the corpus itself, and its distribution, so as to compare or draw conclusions from reliable elements. I will start by giving the size of the corpus for my four ‘periods’, plus one called n.d for the ‘not dated’ elements. The four periods go from 1970 to 1980 (stated as 70), 1980 to 1990 (stated as 80), 1990 to 2000 (stated as 90) and 2000 to 2011(stated as 2000). Table 1 indicates the results of the size of the corpus for each of the periods, expressed in percentages.¹¹⁷

Table 5.1: Corpus size by period

	n.d	70	80	90	2000
Percentage corpus size	2.9%	10.5%	12.3%	8.2%	66.1%

¹¹⁷ All the percentages in this chapter have been calculated by me from the results of the queries.

As is immediately obvious, two thirds of my corpus are very recent and refer to the last decade. This is not a deliberate choice from my part, it is simply for evident reasons: not only are the documents written in Bislama much more common these days, they are also undoubtedly easier to find: for example, articles can be retrieved directly from the websites of newspapers. The other three periods are relatively balanced in size, but that does not indicate discrepancies depending on genre, as illustrated by ‘Politics’ with 58% of the corpus to be found in the 1970-1980 period. This can be easily explained as this was the decade preceding Independence in 1980 and during which all the political parties had their own publications in order to inform people and involve them in the political changes that would lead the country to Independence. This simply means that the results I get will have to be put into perspective and that I must bear in mind this essential factor when discussing them.

I have then analysed the corpus in terms of genres as they are defined in my data base, and these are the results I get for the main categories:

Table 5.2: Corpus size by genre

Genre	Press	Religion	Ads	Storian	Politics	Official documents	Translations	Periodicals	Other
Corpus size	28%	16.9%	1.2%	5.5%	6.3%	24.4%	3%	5%	9.8%

First, I have to say that within the main genres, the corpus is composed of sub-categories, some of them of very small size, so that they have no major impact on the results. However, they will be studied too as they are part of all the results in the analyses of the data base. I have made a table of those minor sub-categories with their respective size which is to be found further down (table 5.4). What table 5.2 reveals are the discrepancies in size I was mentioning earlier: for example, the biggest part of my corpus is a total ‘Press’ corpus of 28%, while the genre ‘Ads’ amounts to 1.2%. So a finer analysis of the sub-categories in each genre, the results of which appear in table 5.3, is needed as the results in table 5.2 are too vague to tell us much about the various categories.

Table 5.3: Corpus size of major sub-categories by genre

Genre	Sub-categories	Size of corpus
Press	Letters to the editor	4.6%
	Articles	16.8%
	Sports	2.6%
	Total minor categories	3.5%
Religion	publications	6.1%
	translations	3.3%
	educational material	6.6%
	brochures/leaflets	0.8%
Politics	Politics (news)	4.2%
	Total minor categories	2%
Official documents	reports	7%
	brochures/leaflets	10%
	Translations	2.8%
	Total minor categories	4.8%
Periodicals	Agriculture, science	5%
Other	Educational material	8.2%
	Total minor categories	2.4%
Storian	Educational material	2.6%
Storian	Total minor categories	2.8%
Translations	Educational material	1.3%
	Total minor categories	1.9%
Ads	Official	0.4%
	Commercial	0.8%

What we can observe here is that within each genre, there is also great variation in the size of the sub-categories. For example, ‘articles’ in the ‘Press’ genre represents 16.8% of this field while ‘Sports’ is only 2.6% of the same genre. In ‘Official documents’ which comes second in size with a total of 17% of the whole corpus, the sub-category ‘brochures or leaflets’ represents 10% of all the official documents. This should not come as a surprise as these have become much more numerous in the last decade and are definitely becoming part of the population’s everyday life. ‘Religion’ is the third largest part of the corpus with a total of 16.9%, 6.6% of this being ‘religious educational material’ and 6.1% ‘religious publications’, and these are recent publications as well.

What this points out is that written Bislama is mainly used not only in newspapers, as could be expected, but in many domains of everyday life such as awareness campaigns and official documents published by the various ministries of the government, as well as more and more educational material, whether by NGOs, the Ministry of Education, or religious organisations: indeed, all of these represent roughly 38% of the corpus. On the other end of the scale, we find a small corpus of publications referring to science or agriculture, which is not very surprising as they are more specialized topics. Commercial ads represent also a small fraction of the corpus even though they are becoming more and more common everywhere, but as I have chosen to evaluate the size of the corpus in terms of A4 pages of written material, it implies that the ads, even if sometimes they occupy half a page of the newspaper itself, see their size noted as 0.1 for instance when they have very few words. Some of the other figures might seem surprising at first sight but they will be explained when it is time for analysis and discussion.

There remained the problem of the minor sub-categories I mentioned at the beginning, that is to say the ones representing 18% of the corpus. I have then broken down the results to obtain table 5.4 which gives us each minor sub-category. Out of the 22 very small sub-categories, only 7 exceed 1% of the entire corpus, the remaining 15 representing a total of just over 7%. If I look at these results from a different angle, I can also say that, if I add up the minor sub-categories for the three main genres, I find the following totals: ‘Press’: 3.5%, ‘Official documents’: 5.1% and ‘Other’: 2.4%, that is to say a total of 11% of the corpus size¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁸ These figures were included in table 5.2.

Table 5.4: Corpus size of minor sub-categories by genre

Genre	Size in pages in corpus	Percentage of corpus
Press (translations)	2.5	0.55%
Press (politics)	4	0.86%
Press (speech)	1	0.21%
Press (agr/science)	3.5	0.75%
Press (prose)	1	0.21%
Press (kastom stori)	3.4	0.73%
Press (culture)	1	0.21%
Official (news)	8	1.72%
Official (translations)	6	1.3%
Official (educational material)	8.5	1.82%
Translations (agriculture)	5	1.07%
Translations (health)	4	0.86%
Storian (translations)	6	1.28%
Storian (kastom stori)	7.5	1.60%
Politics (Letters)	1.9	0.40%
Politics (translations)	2.2	0.47%
Politics (speech)	1	0.21%
Politics (prose)	4	0.86%
Politics (culture)	0.5	0.1%
Other (agr/science)	3.5	0.75%
Other (poetry)	7	1.50%
Other (prose)	0.2	0.04%

We will now examine the different genres in relation with their period of publication, as stated at the very beginning of this chapter, summed up in table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Corpus size by genre (major sub-categories) and period

Sub-categories	Size in corpus	n.d.	70	80	90	2000
Letters to the editor	4.6%			19%		81%
Articles	16.8%		27.3%	14%		58.7%
Sports	2.6%					100%
Religion (publications)	6.1%	22.8%				77.2%
Religion (translations)	3.3%					100%
Religion (educational material)	6.6%				21%	79%
Politics (news)	4.2%		58%	16.7%	25.3%	
Official documents (reports)	7%					100%
Official documents (brochures/leaflets)	10%				8.5%	91.5%
Translations	2.8%	51%	12.4%		36.6%	
Periodicals (agriculture, science)	5%			100%		
Other (educational material)	8.2%		11.7%			88.3%
Storian (educational material)	2.6%		100%			
Storian (translations)	1.28%					100%
Ads (commercial)	0.8%					100%

In table 5.5, we find the same results as in table 5.1, but in a much more detailed way: for instance, if we consider the sub-category ‘Letters to the editor’ (within the genre ‘Press’), we can see that it represents 4.6% of the entire corpus, with 19% of the letters in the 1980 period, and 81% to be found in the 2000 period.

We can now analyse the corpus in terms of genres and periods instantly. Of course, what appears at first glance is the confirmation that a big part of my corpus is to be found in the last twenty years, for reasons that I have already explained. These results enable me to study the various categories with their respective sizes within the whole corpus: for instance, the sub-category ‘religious translations’ represents 3.3% of the entire corpus, as is indicated in the

first column next to genres, and they were all published in the period 2000/2011. The various columns apart from the ‘size’ one represent the different periods of time during which my documents were published (as identified in table 5.1), so that the percentages we find in each box represent the proportion of each category for the given period.

To conclude this examination of the corpus, I have to say again that a few other elements of my corpus studied in Chapter 4 (such as the two books in Bislama) have not been included in the data base. They are therefore not taken into consideration in the results presented in this chapter, because I felt they would have skewed the results as some of the documents are completely ‘out of the ordinary’. Indeed, some are much too far from any more or less accepted variety of Bislama (Killingbeck’s publication, for instance), or simply too long to enter fully into the data base (as in the two books I have studied).

I will now consider the criteria I have chosen for my database, which are the following: pluralisation with *-s*, compound words (two types), *evri*, the expression of the passive (or *-ed* suffix), verbs, and new lexicon¹¹⁹. There is also a column in the data base devoted to spelling variation and one for the epenthetic vowels when found (such as in *forom*). The last column contains English words used as such in the corpus, that is to say with their English spelling, which I can use for cross-tables and matching with the other columns. These criteria allow me to look both at the syntactic changes and stylistic expansion of Bislama in the last forty years and to see whether they can be interpreted as a sign of the potential decreolisation of the written language.

In the next sections of this chapter, I will examine in detail the results I obtained from the queries made from my data base, and give a short discussion for each point before summing up all the results at the end of the chapter.

5.2 Plural *-s*

One of the signs of anglicisation is the presence of the plural *-s* at the end of nouns. Traditionally, in written Bislama, there is no morphological mark of the plural (no derivation), which is simply indicated by the determiners *ol* or *olgeta*: “If we want to express that meaning [houses] in Bislama, we do so by using the separate plural marker *olgeta* with the word for ‘house’ remaining unchanged, as in *olgeta haos* ‘houses’” (Crowley 2004: 38). A bit later, he adds “To make a noun plural, either *ol* or *olgeta* can be placed before the noun. Thus, *ol man* or *olgeta man* both mean simply ‘people’. Some speakers use the plural markers *ol* and *olgeta*

¹¹⁹ What I call ‘new lexicon’ are words not found in Crowley’s 2003 dictionary.

more or less freely with any noun. Other speakers favour *ol* with human nouns (or with nouns referring both to people and larger animals or living things) while they reserve *olgeta* for use with inanimate objects or smaller living things. Thus, some people may say *ol man* ‘people’ but *olgeta haos* ‘houses’ rather than *ol haos*.” (p. 51). Romaine (1992) looks into the introduction of suffixed plurals into *Tok Pisin* and concludes her study by saying that:

What we see here is the competition between two systems of pluralization. The earlier one, *ol*, may owe its origin and pattern of use to a developmental conspiracy between universal tendencies and substratum [...]. The other strategy has its origin in the superstrate and applies primarily to newly borrowed English items (Romaine 1992: 240).

Charpentier already mentions the introduction of grammatical morphemes from English into Bislama, among which *-s*: “More and more often, plurality, which in Bislama is expressed with *ol + Noun* is replaced by the English morpheme *-s*, plural marker at the end of nouns”¹²⁰ (Charpentier 1979: 179). The examples he gives are taken from the written press in the late 1970s, and to him, the *-s* ending is a sign of anglicisation. I have already presented the results of a small pilot on this feature in part 4.2.1.2 (table 4.1) to validate its choice as a salient feature for decreolisation.

Using the data base enabled me to find the total number of words with a final plural *-s*, then the number of Bislama words and English words with *-s*, and the distribution of plural marking according to period and genres (as well as sub-categories) in the corpus. The tables extracted from the queries are to be found in more detail in the “Appendices”, as I have chosen to give summaries or calculations of percentages in this chapter rather than long tables. Nevertheless, all the tables have been studied very carefully to try and find existing patterns and reliable conclusions. One of the interesting points is trying to find out whether Bislama words from non-English origin are less susceptible to pluralisation, and if there is a distinction between recent borrowings and well-established items, even though the distinction between Bislama and English words is sometimes not easy to make, particularly in the language used by the Anglophone educated elite. What I have not looked at in this part is if the suffixed items appear in a particular grammatical context, or if they bear the double plural marking of *ol + N-s*.

¹²⁰ De plus en plus, la pluralité exprimée en Bislama(n) par la suite *ol + Nom* est remplacée par le morphème anglais *-s*, marque du pluriel placé à la fin des noms.

5.2.1 The results for -s

In table 5.6, we can find the number of -s by genre and by period, and what percentage it represents in my corpus:

Table 5.6: Total number of nouns with plural -s

Genre	Totals	Percentage in corpus	70	80	90	2000
Press	178	29.8%	4%	11.2%	5.6%	79%
Religion	22	3.7%	–	–	–	100%
Ads	57	9.7%	–	–	–	100%
Storian	0	0%	–	–	–	–
Politics	110	18.7%	5.5%	13.6%	81%	–
Official documents	138	23.4%	–	–	5.8%	94.2%
Translations	1	0.17%	100%	–	–	–
Periodicals	2	0.34%	–	100%	–	–
Other	81	13.8%	1.2%	18.5%	56.8%	23.5%

What we first notice here is that the two categories that contain the most numerous occurrences of plural -s are ‘Press’ (about 30%) and ‘Official documents’ (23.4%), both with a massive percentage of respectively 79% and 94% of words with the plural -s in the 2000-2011 period. The domain of ‘Politics’ shows quite a significant percentage of plural -s as well (around 19%), but there is a difference with the two former fields in that the period with the highest percentage is 1990-2000, just as in ‘Other’, with a total of 14% of the corpus, 57% of which is in the 1990-2000 period, and 24% in the 2000-2011 one. Unsurprisingly, we find a remarkable 0% for ‘Storian’, less than 0.2% for translations and 0.34% for periodicals (during the 1980 period). The reasons for very few -s in the latter sub-categories lies in the fact that the writers of traditional stories or specialized texts, as well as translators, pay great attention to the way they write and make the conscious choice of not anglicising their Bislama.

If we consider two periods of time of twenty years, from 1970 to 1990 (period 1), and from 1990 to today (period 2), we have the following results in table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Plural -s by period

	Period 1 1970/1990	Period 2 1990/2010
Press	15.2%	84.6%
Official documents	—	100%
Politics	19%	81%
Other	20%	80%

Obviously, these results cannot be interpreted without being put into perspective with the size of the corpus by genres, as mentioned previously, which is what we have in table 5.8. What this table shows us is that there is no automatic correlation between the size of the genre in the corpus and the proportion of plural -s to be found in the texts. Indeed, if the figures correspond roughly for the ‘Press’ and ‘Official documents’ categories, the same comment does not apply at all to ‘Religion’, with a mere 3.8% of words ending with plural -s whereas it represents 16% of the corpus, and ‘Translations’ with virtually no plural -s.

Table 5.8: Plural -s and corpus size

Genre	Percentage of -s	Size of corpus
Press	29.8 %	28%
Religion	3.7%	16.9%
Ads	9.7%	1.2%
Storian	0%	5.5%
Politics	18.7%	6.3%
Official documents	23.4%	24.4%
Translations	0.17%	3%
Periodicals	0.34%	5%
Other	13.8%	9.8%

Discrepancies in the other direction are found in ‘Ads’ and ‘Other’, which represent a very small part of the corpus, but have a high percentage of plural -s with respectively almost 10% and 14%. I will now comment on some of the results for this part, paying close attention to the discrepancies because they require some interpretation.

5.2.1.1-s in Advertisements

I will start the detailed analysis of the results with the genre ‘ads’, which in my data base is sub-divided into ‘commercial’ and ‘official notices’. What I find in the results in terms of numbers is 45 nouns with -s in ‘official ads’ and 12 plural -s in ‘commercial ads’, out of a total number of 589 nouns with the plural -s for the whole corpus. In terms of corpus size, ‘official ads’ represent 1.6 pages and ‘commercial ads’ constitute 3.9 pages out of 466 pages in total (see Chapter 3 for the evaluation in pages). These results can be seen in table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Plural -s in ads

	Size of category in corpus		-s words in corpus	
	pages	percentage	number of -s	percentage
Official ads	1.6/466	0.34%	12/589	2.03%
Commercial ads	3.9/466	0.83%	45/589	7.64%

What this table clearly indicates is that in my corpus, there are more than twice as many commercial ads as official notices (2.5 times). This can be explained by the fact that official notices appear in newspapers for the great majority of them, and are written by ministries or public companies. Commercial ads, on the other hand, not only appear in newspapers, but today can also be found as leaflets or flyers almost anywhere. What is to be noted here is that the proportion of -s words in commercial ads is nearly four times that of official notices, so much higher. I think this can be easily interpreted: commercial ads are a new part of everyday life, and can be seen everywhere in towns. The most common ones are made by the telephone companies which fight a ruthless commercial war for customers and borrow heavily from English, the language of technology, modernity, progress and ‘being cool’. Most of the slogans are borrowed directly from English because the offers to the customers are similar to

those you find in any other country, hence expressions like *besfrens* ‘best friends’ or *fri minits* ‘free minutes’. This example of what you can find on leaflets will illustrate this point perfectly:

“*Rejista BESFRENS blong yu, pem 1 minit nomo, ol nara minits oli FRF*” (TVL ad, 2011)¹²¹

‘Register your best friends, pay for one minute only, the rest of the call is free’

We find practically the same language for the other phone company:

“*Introdusum Niufala Frens mo Famali rate lo VT 12! Yusum wan niufala seves blo Digicel. Rejistarem namba blo ol gudfala frens mo famali mo kolem olgeta long VT 12*”, ‘Introducing a new rate of 12 Vatu for friends and family. Use this new service by Digicel. Register the numbers of friends and family and call them for 12 vatu’ (Digicel, 2011)¹²².

The other sort of ads I looked at are identified as ‘Official notices’ (sub-category) in the data base. They are the ones found mostly in the press and are not for commercial purposes. They include all the ads from the ministries of Health, Justice, etc, as well as all the formal announcements by the electricity company, for instance. According to the law, these ads should be published in the three languages English, French and Bislama. In reality, practice varies and sometimes they are published only in English and French, and not in Bislama, but most of the time the rule is respected and you find the three versions. There are also ads in one of the metropolitan languages (English more often than not) and Bislama, but this is very rare. The written Bislama used for these can show great variation, probably depending on the translator/writer. It seems that the plural *-s* is mostly used with English words, as will be demonstrated further down. What also is clear is that the more anglicised the text (as shown by the matching of criteria), the more likely the *-s* endings: if we compare the two advertisements published in the *Ni Vanuatu*, (23-29 June, 2005: 11)¹²³, the “Press Release by Tanna MPs”, heavily anglicised, contains 14 words ending with *-s* whereas the notice of the Office of the President only has 3 *-s* (admittedly, the first document is about twice longer than the second, but still, the proportion is much higher). The fact that the use of words ending by *-s* is linked to the degree of anglicisation of the document is obvious: in the case just mentioned, 12 out of the 14 words in the Tanna MPs text are English words (families,

¹²¹ Corpus document 3

¹²² Corpus document 6

¹²³ Corpus document 150, a& b

measures, leaders, institutions, prosecution), and the remaining two are *jifs* ‘chiefs’ (very commonly found) and *membas* ‘members’ (Bislama noun ending with *-a*, also commonly found with *-s* plural ending by analogy with English). In the second document, 1 in 3 of the words is English (details) and the other two are *nems* ‘names’ and *ministas* ‘ministers’.

Considering these results, it seems reasonable to conclude that in the domain of advertisements, the use of the final plural *-s* ending borrowed from English is quite common, particularly in commercial ads. This new field of written Bislama takes its origin from a Westernised, or even globalised culture which makes heavy use of anglicisation everywhere in the world. Vanuatu is not exception to this new trend all the more so as its creole derives from English.

5.2.1.2 *-s* in Religion

Religion is another domain where there is a big discrepancy between the size in the corpus (16%) and the percentage of *-s* words (3.7%), which at first sight seems to mean that very few words are used in the English plural form. However, this conclusion needs a closer look. Because the documents are of completely different nature, I have divided the ‘Religion’ genre into three sub-categories: ‘religious texts or translations’ (for the Baha’i Faith, for example), ‘about religion’ (information published by various churches) and ‘educational material’ (mostly for children). So what I will do now is examine whether there are variations in the number of occurrences of *-s* words depending on which sub-category the document belongs to.¹²⁴

As could be expected, religious texts such as *Ol Sam* ‘Psalms’ or translations into Bislama show no *-s* words at all, conforming strictly to the ‘rules’ already existing (see Chapter 4).¹²⁵ Neither do brochures dealing with religious questions, such as *Bigfala kwestin blong Laef* (Presbitirin Rifom Joj, n.d.)¹²⁶ or *Tok blong God Hemi Laet blong Rod blong Yumi* (D.Regenvanu: 2010) contain any word in the plural form. As far as the two other sub-categories are concerned, I have noticed that there can be great differences between the documents, even sometimes when they are published by the same church. For instance, in the recent brochures published by the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, there are documents with

¹²⁴ As already noted, I have not filled the data of document 77 (Killingbeck’s 1972 *Good News long helpem you*) into the data base, as I felt it would skew the results.

¹²⁵ Thank you to Charlie Pierce for the Baha’i Faith texts.

¹²⁶ Corpus document 72

very few words ending with -s as in *Stadi blong Vilij Laef*¹²⁷, for instance (PCV, n.d.) whereas in another leaflet entitled *Mobile Phone Stewardship*¹²⁸ (PCV 2008?), we find both Bislama (*kols, drags*) and English words (*options, special features*) in the English plural form. Just like in ‘Press’ or ‘Letters to the editor’, the awareness of the use of this feature or lack thereof could simply be due to the writer’s idiosyncrasies. In the religious educational material, mostly consisting of books and exercise books for Sunday school practice, I have found no occurrence of -s words. This phenomenon can be justified by the fact that the writers of such books are clearly invested with a pedagogical mission and are therefore quite conscious of the choices they make for the written Bislama they use.

I also have to mention a recent book which is not included in the data base because it does not have many articles in Bislama as it is mainly written in English. However, *25 Tingting: Reflections on 25 Years of Independence in Vanuatu* (PCV 2010) is important because it makes the link between church and politics obvious: in the publisher’s note, things are clear from the very beginning: “...it must be remembered that, in the cultures of Vanuatu, the separation of the church and politics is an artificial one” (Prior 2010: v). In one of the contributions, this is what we find:

What helped to disseminate the information to the grassroots people was the publication of the ‘New Hebrides Viewpoints’, a periodical that was produced on a monthly basis. Father Walter Lini was mainly responsible for editing this and we asked him if he would be interested in publishing information about the New Hebrides Cultural Association in Viewpoints (Masikevanua 2010: 16-17).

Three of the contributions in this book were originally written in Bislama: “The articles in Bislama have been translated into English but the original version has also been included” (Prior 2010: vii). So let’s us examine the three Bislama contributions: when I look closely at Pastor Varasmaite’s piece of writing, published first in English (p. 111-13) and then in Bislama (p. 113-14), I do not find a single -s in the Bislama part, although I can definitely say that the vocabulary is heavily anglicised. Even if I find expressions such as *Jioj i mas birimaended* ‘the Church must be reminded’, *eksesaesem ol raet we oli gat* ‘exercise their rights’ or *saksesful* ‘successful’ – all of which are calqued on English phrases or words – the plurals are all expressed in ‘standard’ Bislama, even those often found elsewhere with the plural ending already mentioned: *olgeta lida* ‘the leaders’, *twanti-faev yia* ‘twenty-five years’,

¹²⁷ Corpus document 67

¹²⁸ Corpus document 68

grasrut ‘grassroots’, *ol jif* ‘chiefs’. We have made the same findings in Anfalo (p. 117-18) and in the third contribution by Tanarango (p. 97-100): *trifala fren blong mi* ‘my three friends’, *tri yia* ‘three years’ – so no plural marker – but anglicised Bislama such as *trafikseksen* ‘traffic section’, *mi no bin involv daerekli blong politik blong Niu Hebridis blong kasem Independens* ‘I was not directly involved in the political movement to the Independence of the New Hebrides’. In these articles, contrarily to what I have found for ‘Ads’, for example, there is obviously no link between the anglicisation of the vocabulary and the presence – or should I say the absence – of the English plural marker *-s*, although other English grammatical features that not exist in Bislama can be found, as is exemplified by *-ed* in the *bi rimaended* ‘be reminded’ mentioned above.

As a conclusion to this part, I can say that in the domain of religious texts, the only examples of words used in the plural form are to be found in the recent, modern brochures or leaflets published by churches and dealing with everyday issues more than religious questions as such. The church traditionally plays an important educational role in Vanuatu and because the documents give guidance about recent problems, the vocabulary is often borrowed from English, sometimes with grammatical features such as *-s* too. In spite of the massive anglicisation Charpentier accused the Presbyterian Church of a long time ago, I cannot conclude that it is rampant among the publications, even though most of the elders are members of the educated anglophone elite but again, there seems to be variation according to the writers themselves.

5.2.1.3 *-s* in Politics

The link between religion and politics is indeed a very strong one in Vanuatu, and all of the writers above mentioned in 25 *Tingting* are pastors, chiefs and elders with leadership responsibilities and involvement in the fight to Independence. I chose to keep the book in the ‘Religion’ category, but it might also have been in the ‘Politics’ genre.

I have three kinds of sub-categories in the genre ‘Politics’, because I have made a difference between what I take as different kinds of documents. First, those published by political parties, such as manifestos or party policy, which are included in my first sub-category. Newspapers that were at the time published by a political party (see Chapter 4) and which therefore have the traditional sub-categories such as ‘letters to the editor’, ‘news articles’ and even ‘sports’ or ‘poetry’ for some, constitute the second sub-category. The third one is what I called ‘translations’, as for instance in *Tan Union* where the article in French ‘Tournée sur Tanna’ appears in Bislama on the same page under ‘*Miting long Tanna*’, with other French

articles translated into Bislama on different pages (*Tan Union* No 1, 1 April 1977: 6)¹²⁹. The proportion of -s words in the genre ‘Politics’ in general is 18.7% of the total of plural words found in the corpus, for a corpus size of only 6.3%. This shows that in this field, the language is greatly influenced by English. Without even getting further, what I can say will sound obvious, and should not come as a surprise: the political life of the country is mostly in the hands of the educated elite, most of whom have attended English-speaking schools. Some francophone prominent figures of the political life of the country also went to neighbouring English-speaking countries such as Australia or New Zealand for university degrees. The language of politics was, at the time, and still is today, ‘imported’ from English along with the concepts of democracy, parliament, MPs and the country’s constitution. The model of a parliamentary democracy was adopted and “the political consciousness of the population increased and political activity was no longer restricted to the village but became a national phenomenon” (Sopé in Lini 1980: 177).

Here again, just like in the genre ‘Ads’, I have found the same phenomenon of extreme variation which is linked to the anglicisation of the document, as shown and explained in detail in the next part.

5.2.2 The link between -s and English

I will now examine the link between English words in the plural and the presence of -s in the documents for the whole corpus, as I have already mentioned on several occasions the correlation between the two that I have observed in this part of my research. The following part gives evidence of the fact that the two are closely linked.

5.2.2.1 English nouns in the plural

The first step to be taken to find whether or not there is a correlation is to identify the English words in the corpus. It has sometimes been a bit tricky for me to know whether I should put a few words into the English or Bislama categories, as the identification, so to speak, is not always quite clear-cut. If we take nouns ending with -ing, for instance, the primarily English ending is kept in Bislama, so that we can only differentiate between the two when the rest of the word is spelt in a different way, as in *fanresing* ‘fundraising’ for example. In the case of words that have exactly the same orthography such as *banana* ‘banana’, it is more difficult to know and I have just used commonsense and observation of the rest of the text to decide

¹²⁹ Corpus documents 33 and 34

whether I would consider the word as English or as Bislama. Table 5.10 gives us the number of English words in the entire corpus with the period they belong to.

Table 5.10: Total English words in corpus by genre and period

Genre	English words in corpus	Percentage	70	80	90	2000
Press	204	45%	0.5%	2%	0.4%	96.1%
Religion	22	5%				100%
Ads	39	8.8%				100%
Storian	5	1.1%	100%			0%
Politics	33	7.5%	12%	24%	64%	
Official documents	70	16%			0.6%	99.4%
Translations	2	0.45%		50%	50%	
Periodicals	12	2.3%		100%		
Other	54	12.2%			48%	52%
Total	441	≈ 100%	4%	13.5%	13.5%	69%

What this table shows is that almost half of the English words in the corpus belong to the ‘Press’ genre, and the next 4 genres where English words are also numerous are ‘Official documents’ with 16%, ‘Politics’ with 13.4% and ‘Other’ with 11.5%. At the other end of the scale are ‘translations’ and ‘Storian’ with very small proportions of English words. In order to be able to draw reliable conclusions on the potential correlation between the presence of English words and of the English plural marker *-s*, I made a table of English nouns only, excluding all the adjectives, verbs etc in English from the data base total of English words. I then put the results by period so as to be able to compare them with those of table 5.11.

If we look at the two tables, we can easily see that there are 441 English nouns out of the total 2616 English words, that is to say roughly 17%. The rest of the English words belong to other grammatical categories such as adverbs, adjectives, verbs etc.

Table 5.11: Total English nouns in corpus by genre and period

Genre	English words in corpus	Percentage	70	80	90	2000
Press	204	45%	0.5%	2%	0.4%	96.1%
Religion	22	5%				100%
Ads	39	8.8%				100%
Storian	5	1.1%	100%			0%
Politics	33	7.5%	12%	24%	64%	
Official documents	70	16%			0.6%	99.4%
Translations	2	0.45%		50%	50%	
Periodicals	12	2.3%		100%		
Other	54	12.2%			48%	52%
Total	441		4%	13.5%	13.5%	69%

Looking at table 5.11, we notice that the domain where borrowing ‘straight’ from English — that is to say actually keeping the English word in its original form — takes place very frequently is ‘Press’, with 45% of all the English words found in the corpus. As mentioned in Chapter 4, however, the anglicisation of the press is highly idiosyncratic and varies greatly according to the journalists. Just like in table 5.6 – the table indicating the proportion of nouns with plural *-s* – we also find ‘Official Documents’ in second place with 16% of English words. What must be noticed at this stage is the similarities regarding the period between the results for plural *-s* and for English words, with huge percentages in the 2000-2011 period. The surprising element, however, if we are to compare the two tables, is the domain ‘Periodicals’ — mostly composed of agriculture and science publications — which contains a much higher proportion of English words than words taking the *-s* plural. From the results discussed in the previous part, it could have been anticipated that the categories in which we find the most numerous *-s* words should fit the ones in which we find the highest proportion of English words as well: this is certainly not what is happening here for this category of publications.

But even more interesting is what the data base also enables us to do here, which consists in finding the matches between *-s* words and English words, the results of which are given in table 5.12. I have to add to these results that out of the 350 English words with the plural *-s*

ending, 113 are ‘doubles’, so found at least twice, and sometimes more, in the corpus. Some of these words are used systematically in English in some texts, like *politicians*, *voters* or *elections* in political texts, or *families*, *parents* and *communities* in others. The proportion of English nouns found with the plural marker -s is very high, as about 80% of them are in the plural.

Table 5.12: Match nouns with plural -s / English words by genre and period

Genre	Total match -s	Percentage	1970/80	1980/90	1990/00	2000/10
Press	102	29%	4.5%	11.5%	6.5%	77.5%
Religion	14	0.5%				100%
Ads	33	9.5%				100%
Storian	0	0%				0%
Politics	95	27%	2%	14%	84%	
Official documents	69	20%			3%	97%
Translations	0	0%				
Periodicals	1	0%		0%		
Other	36	10%		28%	47%	25%
Total	350	≈ 100%	1.7%	10.2%	30.2%	57.8%

What these results indicate is that the three same categories, ‘Press’, ‘Politics’ and ‘Official documents’, have the highest rate of matches and most commonly during the 1990/2010 period, that is to say in the past two decades. These fields are the ones where Bislama uses loan words most, because the expansion of the lexicon follows the changes in the way of life that are mainly due to globalisation which introduces new domains and therefore requires for new vocabulary. If we look at technology, particularly in the fields of computing science and mobile phones, for instance, Bislama will borrow from English for two reasons: first, English is the lexifier, so it is a kind of ‘natural’ borrowing and second, Vanuatu is not the only country that follows the trend of the anglicisation of the vocabulary with the introduction of new technologies, as so does French, for instance. In the press, I have already mentioned that international news is adapted or translated into Bislama, most probably from English. As for the field of politics, new vocabulary describing concepts or practises that belong to the

western world also comes from English, such as *gud govenans* ‘good governance’, *konstitusen* ‘constitution’, *judisol bodi* ‘judicial body’. Let me take a few examples in the corpus which are part of the data base. In the *NUP Campein Toktok*,¹³⁰ for instance, I have found 40 -s words, 18 of which are Bislama, which represents 45% of the total number, but half of them are found several times: *lidas* ‘leaders’, *sapotas* ‘supporters’, *membas* ‘members’, so that the actual percentage of Bislama words ending with -s drops down to 22%, all the other words in the plural are English words. In *Viewpoint*, I have looked in detail at documents 20, 21 and 22 of my corpus,¹³¹ and found that 27% of the words in the plural form were Bislama words, so just about the same proportion as the NUP party’s manifesto. Things are different, however, when I examine the translations found in *Tan Union*, 1/4/1977:¹³² the editorial is published in French, English and Bislama.¹³³ In the Bislama version there are no plural -s forms whatsoever. In the other translations, there is only a single form with an -s ending: “*Taem we olgeta jifs kastom mo olgeta politikol lida...*” ‘When the custom chiefs and political leaders...’ (*Tan Union*, 1/4/1977: 6). “*Jifs kastom*” is found four more times in the same article, and also under the form “*Kastom jifs*”. Two of these occurrences are between direct quotes “*Mifala ol jifs Kastom*”, “*ol Kastom jifs*” as they are reported oral speech made by the same speaker. The French version is ‘grands chefs coutumiers’ for *jifs kastom* and a bit further down by ‘les grands hommes de Tanna’. So what this shows again is the great tolerance for variation in people’s spoken and written Bislama.

Finally, many of the reports made by official bodies, like the National Statistics Office or organisations such as NZAID or AUSAid often use western terminology borrowed from English, but do not necessarily make frequent use of the English -s form. Some of these official publications have very few, if any, words taking the plural -s even when they do borrow a lot of English words. This is for instance the case of documents 7 and 8 in my corpus. Published by the Family Health Association, their role is to inform the population about health issues. In document 8, there are only two words ending with -s, *millions* and *vatus* (which were probably both written in English) but there are 23 English words in total, so that the proportion of plural nouns is only 0.8%. I could find no words ending with -sin the documents published by the Vanuatu Police Force (numbers 11, 12, 13 and 14), even though

¹³⁰ Corpus document 27, October ? 1991.

¹³¹ *Viewpoint* No 104, 15/10/96.

¹³² Corpus document 33.

¹³³ Corpus document 36.

they represent quite a few dense pages (4 full pages in the corpus, which amounts to approximately a minimum of 1600 words).

Here are two other examples which also illustrate my point:¹³⁴

“Ol rul insaed long Atikol ia bambae oli kavremap evri pablik seven, pablik otoriti mo ol dipatmen anda long ol ministri be i no Presiden blong Ripablik, Judisol Sevis Komisen, Suprim Kot mo ol narafala judisol bodi” (Vanuatu. Raet mo Diuti blong mi hemi Laef blongmi, n.d.: 21)¹³⁵

The documents published by the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta show remarkable consistency in the non-use of -s:

Fulap yangfala oli stap lukluk long kastom mo praktisim long fulap difren wei. Samfala long olgeta oli bin stat finis blong lanem bak ol wei blong kastom ia long fulap difren fasin. Samafala oli stap winim mane long hem, samfala oli stap luk save olgeta poen we hem i mentenem olgeta famle laen blong olgeta (Harem Voes Blong Yangfala Long Vila Taon: 24).¹³⁶

In both documents, we find no instance of nouns in the plural form although quite a few of them are in fact plural: *ol rul* ‘the rules’, *ol ministri* ‘the ministries’, *olgeta graon* ‘sections, all pieces of land’, *sam generesen* ‘some generations’, to quote a few. The explanation for such differences in the documents is often very straightforward: if we take the documents published by the VKS, it does make sense not to find English plurals, because of the very function of the VKS:

The Vanuatu Cultural Centre is a statutory body under the laws of Vanuatu whose primary function is "to support, encourage and make provision for the preservation, protection and development of various aspects of the cultural heritage of Vanuatu". In practice, the principle role of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre since its establishment in the 1960s, has been to document and record the culture and cultural history of Vanuatu. This has been done by the Cultural Centre staff and a network of approximately 60 volunteer fieldworkers throughout the islands of Vanuatu (retrieved 8/2/2012).

¹³⁴ I give here the original document to enable the reader to see the point quickly. The translations into English can be found in the footnotes.

¹³⁵ Corpus document 61: ‘The rules of this article apply to all public servants, public authorities and ministerial departments but not to the President of the Republic, the Judicial Service Commission, the Supreme Court and the other judicial bodies’.

¹³⁶ Corpus document 55: A lot of young people are looking into custom and follow it in a lot of different ways. Some have already started to learn again the various customary practices in a lot of different ways. Some make money out of it, others have come to understand the importance of transmitting the family’s heritage.

What we can conclude from these different examples is that there is a lot of variation concerning the use of plural *-s* in official documents, in the press and in many other domains, with the exception of translations, probably because the translator is not actually writing in Bislama, but translating another language into Bislama.

5.2.2.2 Bislama nouns with the plural *-s*

What we will do now is examine in more detail the Bislama words that are used with the plural *-s* and see if we can find patterns and draw conclusions. When I look at the list of nouns, what strikes me is that all the Bislama words in the list derive from English, that is to say that no word such as *pikinini* or *nabanga* is found with the marker *-s*. What is also obvious in the list is that a lot of these words would be used in their plural form in English, which confirms my hypothesis that they are simply transferred into Bislama with their English form. This is the case for a lot of examples, as previously illustrated by this ad for a telephone company which contains the words *besfrens* ‘best friends’ and *minits* ‘minutes’. Among the nouns that take the plural mark, it is quite frequent to find words with the ending *-a* ‘-er’ such as *lidas* ‘leaders’, *sapotas* ‘supporters’, *ministas* ‘ministers’, *membas* ‘members’, *bratas* ‘brothers’, *printas* ‘printers’ and *sentas* ‘centres’, to give a few. I have noticed that this is definitely a new feature that is integrating the written language and which probably comes from the pronunciation of the same words in English. If we consider the fields in which these words appear most, politics, administrative lexicon, official services, health, justice, education and sports seem to be the most frequent users of Bislama words with final plural *-s*. There is, of course, a logical explanation to that, as the vocabulary of these semantic fields derives from English. However, this does not entail that they should be used indiscriminately with the grammatical English plural marker. What seems to be happening here is what I have already mentioned, namely that there is great variation depending on the writer, just like there is great variation depending on the speaker. Some people obviously make a point of not anglicising their Bislama and therefore will write *ol wokso* ‘workshops’ as opposed to *woksops*. There are nevertheless a few words which are almost always found with *-s* because they are not used without the *-s* in English (or with a different meaning), for instance words like *Pablik Yutilitis* ‘Public Utilities’, *skils* ‘skills’. We also find in this category proper nouns like *Unaeted Stets* ‘United States’ or *Unaeted Nesens* ‘United Nations’, and words ending with *-ics* such as *statistiks* ‘statistics’ (bold characters: my emphasis). In the field of justice, we find words like *witneses* ‘witnesses’, *apointis* ‘appointees’, *kots* ‘courts’, *responsibilitis* ‘responsibilities’, *subkomitis* ‘subcommittees’, *atikols* ‘articles’, *kadians* ‘guardians’ and *adols* ‘adults’.

I have put these nouns into three categories: animates, inanimates and proper nouns, then in turn I have sub-divided animates and inanimates into respectively ‘individuals’ and ‘groups of people’ within the first category, and ‘objects/concrete’ and ‘abstract/notions’ within the second in order to have a more precise idea of what these nouns in the English plural form actually refer to, as can be seen in table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Bislama nouns with plural –s by category

PROPER NOUNS		<i>Unaeted Nesens, Unaeted Stets, Intenol Afeas, Pablik Yutilitis</i>	4
ANIMATES	Individuals	<i>besfrens, frens, ministas, lidas, apointis, sekreteries, jifs, komisars, sapotas, spikas, adols, kadians, perens, onas, wimeses, patisipens, manejas, ofisas, 0-3yias, wan perens, trenis, yangstas, medalis, kontraktas, provaedas, staffs, trenas, ofisols, fans, bratas, gels, tijas, atlets, investas, profesonals, smokas, winas, patnas, stekholdas, kastomas, trenis, pleas</i>	44
	Groups of people	<i>paties, klases, vilejes, subkomitis, komunitis, haoshols, komitis, tims</i>	8
INANIMATES	Objects, concrete	<i>resoses, bollets, ripots, islands, vots, lans, buks, drags, asesmens, kwestins, nems, apdeits, kols, atikols, shuting stas, atifaks, snaks, kols erias, spaeses, haoses, trofis, sus, coconats, swits, tuls, tris, komputas, printas, dokumens, ea karias, vehikols, guds</i>	35
	Notions, abstract	<i>minits, deis, taems, wiks, mitings, provisens, gems, grasruts, spots, Athletics, keses, kontribusens, poens, sentas, branjis, kastoms, kaons, statistiks, karakteristik, risalts, vots, kaontries, aktivitis, trenings, risons, raets, taosens, dipatmens, kots, programs, sevises, loas, rikots, nids, efeks, responsibilitis, rols, institusens, koments, nids, afeas, raets, aedias, developmens, standas, faendings, ruls, isius, skills, weis</i>	50

What table 5.13 reveals is that out of a total of 141 Bislama nouns ending with -s, 52 are animates (37%), only 4 are proper nouns (less than 3%) and the majority of them are inanimates (60%). If we refine the results in the ‘animates’ sub-categories – individuals and groups of people –, we can observe that around 15% of the animate nouns describe groups of people, as *komunitis* ‘communities’ for instance, whereas 85% represent individuals, as in *stekholdas* ‘stakeholders’ or *atlets* ‘athletes’. In the latter category, I have looked at the endings of the nouns so as to have the proportion of words ending with -as ‘-ers’, so nouns such as *pleas* ‘players’ or *spikas* ‘speakers’, because I have already given evidence in the

‘Press’ part of the same chapter that these words, calqued from English, often take the English plural marker as well. What can be said from the results presented in table 5.13 is that among the 44 nouns in the ‘individuals’ sub-category, 20 take the ending *-as*, that is to say 45% of the nouns of the category. What these results show is that the ending *-a* as the suffix ‘-er’ added to a verb is likely to ‘attract’ the plural marker *-s*. Moreover, what is also interesting here is that other nouns ending with *-a*, but with nothing to do with the suffix above mentioned, can also be found with the plural ending *-s*. This is what is happening here for *bratas* ‘brothers’ and *0-3 yias* ‘0-3 years’ where the English plural *-s* is kept in Bislama too. This is probably happening due to a phenomenon of overgeneralisation on the speaker’s part, or also simply because the pronunciation is similar whether the ending is a suffix or not. There are also two oddities in this table, one is *gels* ‘girls’, often found in the phrase ‘boes and gels’ borrowed from English as a set phrase – more often than not keeping the ‘and’ as opposed to the Bislama word *mo* – but which was found on its own here, which is very unusual. The second noun used in the plural form is *stafs* ‘staff’, and this occurrence is very rare indeed, in fact I have only found one in the whole corpus. It is almost impossible to say whether a nonce occurrence is a deliberate use of the form or if it is a typo. What is interesting here, if it is a choice on the speaker’s part to use *stafs* in the plural, is that the noun is almost exclusively used as a collective in English when it means ‘personnel’, therefore does not take the plural ending *-s*.

Within the category ‘Inanimates’, 35% of the nouns are objects or concrete things, and 65% are abstract nouns, that is to say two thirds. Among the 55 abstract nouns, two (*trenings* ‘trainings’ and *faendings* ‘findings’) have *-ings* endings, which is not frequent in Bislama and is due to the direct transfer of the English plural into Bislama already mentioned at the beginning of this part.

Conclusion on the use of plural -s

So to sum up this part which looks into the use of plural *-s* in written Bislama, we can conclude that there are domains in which *-s* is definitely much more present: the press, official documents, and politics. The other important feature is that this phenomenon has become increasingly present in the last decade, so it is recent, and could well mean that under the influence of the elite, who were mostly educated in English, Bislama is, to a certain extent, integrating this English grammatical feature into its written form. This could in fact be explained because of phonological reasons: we know that Bislama is written the way it is pronounced, so that the presence of the plural *-s* could simply come from the oral language, in which the mark of the plural is phonologically recognisable, and then merely transferred into

the written language as such. The fact that some speakers use a highly anglicised Bislama, with a lot of English words, must have some influence — of which they are probably not even aware — on the way they unconsciously apply the same grammatical English rules to their Bislama. It is indeed quite common to hear people speak that way, and it is sometimes hard to make the difference between Bislama and English. However, it is also obvious that this mostly applies to new domains where the influence of English is highest.

5.3 Compound words

As early as 1979, Charpentier notices the influence of English and the growing number of calqued expressions to be found in written Bislama. One thing he emphasises is that “The general tendency among Anglophones is to adopt the English word order for Bislama, which as a consequence provokes the suppression of the most-used tool-word in Bislama(n), namely *blong*” (Charpentier 1979: 178).¹³⁷

In the introduction to his 1990 dictionary, Crowley stresses the fact that the question of word boundaries is a problem in Bislama, which, according to him, is just as inconsistent as English. He adds:

I have, for the most part, attempted to recognise word boundaries in Bislama on the basis of phonological criteria. Thus, when a form is pronounced as a unit for the purpose of stress placement, then I have written this as a single word, and when stress placement applies to each constituent separately I have written these with an intervening word boundary (Crowley 1990: 34).

The rules he adopts are the following: Noun + Modifier are separate words, whereas Modifier + Noun can be either two separate units (often with two nouns), except when they appear rarely on their own and when the initial word is an adjective, the compound is often a single word. But in fact what Crowley emphasises is the high variability of these ‘rules’:

In many such cases, the unpredictability in Bislama mirrors similar unpredictability in English [...] When the time comes for a formally standardised orthography to be established for Bislama, I would predict that one of the major areas of argumentation and disagreement will involve the question of word boundaries” (Crowley 1990:37).

¹³⁷ La tendance générale chez les anglophones est de rétablir dans le Bislama(n) écrit, l’ordre de détermination anglais, ce qui a pour résultat de supprimer le mot-outil le plus utilisé en Bislama(n): *blong*.

In Chapter 4, part 4.4.2.2, I gave a table of the new compound words to be found in Crowley 2003. Table 4.10 showed that depending on the semantic field, the percentage of C1 (NN) or C2 (N+N) words varied greatly.¹³⁸ As a reminder, I will just add that the domains that contain the highest percentage of C1 words are ‘animals and plants’ with 68%, ‘other’ (65%), then ‘people’ and ‘objects’ with the same proportion (54.5%). The two lowest are ‘religion’ (25%) and ‘body’ (21%). So I have decided to take the same semantic fields for the data base, so as to be able to compare the results with the new entries in Crowley’s 2003 edition.

Bearing these remarks in mind, I have chosen to look at two types of compound words in Bislama: first, joined words, or C1, when two different words make one new word (NN), and second, C2 words composed of two or more words without preposition to link them (N + N). The second category is much bigger than the first in Bislama, and I have tried to find out whether these words followed the same pattern as in English or not, and in how many cases they were directly borrowed from English, with at least one of the words of N + N being an English word.

First, we will look at the number of compound words to be found in my corpus, both for the C1 and C2 categories.

5.3.1 C1 words

Before looking more precisely at the Bislama C1 words, it is necessary to identify first the total number of C1 words in the corpus, and second those in the list either mentioned several times or which are English words. Table 5.14 gives us the total number of C1 words by genre and by period.

Table 5.14: Total number C1 words by genre and period

	Total number in corpus	n.d	70	80	90	2000
Press	58		7	7	4	40
Storian	5		3			2
Politics	11		4	6	1	
Periodicals	5			5		

¹³⁸ What I call NN is a generic way of saying two words melted into one word, but not necessarily two nouns. The same remark applies to N+N, generic form for two separate words but not necessarily two nouns.

Religion	29	4			5	20
Ads	7					7
Official Docs	30					30
Translations	4			2	1	1
Other	16				10	6
TOTAL	165	4	14	20	21	106

As can be seen in table 5.15, where the same results are expressed in percentages, the first 4 main genres in terms of C1 words are ‘Press’, ‘Official documents’ ‘Religion’ and ‘Other’ with a total of about 82% between them. The genres with the smallest percentages are ‘Ads’, ‘Storian’, ‘Politics’ and ‘Translations’, which represent a total of just over 18% of the total number of C1 words. What is also to be noticed is that the proportion of C1 words to be found in the 2000 period is by far the highest with 65% of the compound words, the remaining 35% being equally divided between the other periods (not including not dated documents).

Table 5.15: Percentage of C1 words by genre

	Press	Official documents	Religion	Other	Politics	Ads	Storian	Periodicals	Translations
Percentage in corpus	35.1%	18.2%	18.1%	9.6%	6.6%	4.3%	3%	3%	2.4%

With these results, we can concentrate on finding out the C1 Bislama words only, identified in the following list and which I have decided to classify according to the way they are formed, i.e. from two nouns (NN), from a noun and an adjective (NADJ or ADJN), noun and a suffix (NSUFF) or any other combination (OTHER).

Table 5.16: C1 Bislama words by origin of formation

NN	<i>bakbensa, bisnisan, bladstrim, boefren, brasplet, bretfrut, cheaman, eafil, eaweibil, etkwek, faewud, fanresing, fildei, filtrip, fingganel, fisaman, flanelbod, fremwok, futbol, gaedlaen, gelfren, graonpot, hanbag, hanbuk, hedkwata, hedquek, heltkea, homkea, homwok, junggam, kaskrop, kloslaen, lanmak, landmark, landowna, manples, medelnaet, naetklab, ovaius, poketmane, priseman, Sandeskul, santrei, sifront, sitbed, skulfi, spaeklas, spialaen, spidbot, stekholda, stoakipa, stokyad, sugaken, telekad, toslaet, tutbras, tupes, viupoen, watamak, welfea, winmil, wokboe, wokfos, wokman, woksop, worksop, wosip</i>	67
NADJ	<i>carefri, drakfri, wotapruf</i>	3
ADJN	<i>baksaed, blakbod, blakpam, dedlaen, detwud, draeples, Franisman, freswin, frihol, gudhed, komonsens, hadwok, haelaet, haeman, haftok, hafwei, Inglisman, kaenhat, laefstok, lasde, laswik, lefsaed, longtaem, mobaelfon, puaman, raetsaed, rijman, sikman, smolholda, supamaket, trutok, waelken, waitman, welfea</i>	34
NSUFF	<i>jeamansip, laeflihud, lidaship, onaship, patnasip, rilesensip, sitisensip, stiwodsip</i>	8
OTHER	<i>andagraon, andawol, andawota, aotbreak, beregraon, blakbeda, brekup, daonfol, enitaem, fasbon, flaefokis, gavmansaed, gokros, godaon, hafwei, jekap, junggam, laeflihud, midfil, nampawan, niuwan, ovaius, self-kapman, spoksman, stilman, submarine, sutboe, toksore</i>	28

This list of C1 words was obtained from the results of my data base, but without all the English words and the words found several times in the corpus. The total of the remaining C1 Bislama words amounts to 141. If we summarise the results obtained in table 5.17 into percentages, this is what we find:

Table 5.17: Percentage of C1 words by formation

	NN	NADJ	ADJN	NSUFF	OTHER
percentage	46.9%	2.3%	24.4%	5.6%	20%

What can be noticed about these C1 words is that first, most of them are composed of two nouns: out of a total of 143, 67 are found under the form NN such as *fremwok* ‘framework’, *stekholda* ‘stakeholder’ or *tutbras* ‘toothbrush’. This category represents almost half of the total number of C1 words with 46.9%. We also have to bear in mind that in the traditional Melanesian word order, the head usually comes first and the modifier comes second. But in English, the normal word order is just the opposite, with the modifier coming first and the head second, as in ‘bed sheet’— spelt in two words. If we examine these C1 words more closely, we can see that in the list of the 67 C1 Bislama words we have, 65 (97%) follow the construction modifier + head while 3% are formed with head + modifier. However, there are three words among the ones formed as modifier + head that do not exist in English, but are formed by analogy: *prisenman* ‘prisoner’ (English **prisonman*), *sutboe* ‘paid marksman’ (English **shootboy*) and *wokboe* ‘worker’ (English **workboy*).¹³⁹

Three words in the ‘OTHER’ category do not exist in English either: one is formed with head + modifier *sitbed* ‘bed sheet’ (literally **sheetbed*, often found as *bedsit* **bedsheet* too), *medelnaet* ‘midnight’ (English **middlenight*) is slightly different from the English counterpart and the third one has no equivalent form in English: *manples* ‘local, Melanesian’ (English * ‘man [of the] place’). It follows from these figures that we can conclude that there seems to be a shift from the traditional Melanesian construction to the English word order modifier + head in the C1 Bislama compounds.

The second biggest category is words such as *kaenhat* ‘kind heart’ or *frihol* ‘free hold’, composed of ADJN. Among the 36 words, some have no equivalent in English, as will be shown later on in this part. In the ‘OTHER’ category, we find words formed from verbal elements as in *gokros* ‘go across’, *brekup* ‘break up’ and *flaefokis* ‘flying fox’, from pronouns in *niuwan* ‘new one’ and from prepositions as in *andawota* ‘underwater’ and *daonfol* ‘downfall’. The smallest category is the one with words composed of NADJ with only 3 elements. I have then taken the three predominant categories and found out in what semantic fields there were mostly present, with the same elements I have chosen for Crowley’s new words. The results are contained in table 5.18.

¹³⁹ The words *sutboe* and *wokboe* are now obsolete (Crowley 2003).

Table 5.18: Percentage of C1 words by field and formation

	body	animal, plant	people	religion	object	other
NN	1.5%	3%	20.5%	–	26.5%	48.5%
ADJN	–	8.1%	32.4%	–	5.4%	54%
OTHER	–	4.1%	12.6%	–	8.4%	75%

What is immediately striking in these results is that the field ‘religion’ does not have a single C1 word in my corpus, and that ‘body’ has a very small proportion of them, and only under the form NN. I have noticed that in terms of body parts, the construction *N blong N* seems to be predominant, as in *joen blong han* ‘elbow’. It remains to be seen in the study of C2 words whether this is confirmed or not. As for the field of religion, the absence of C1 words may come from the way they are formed: generally speaking, in English, the first word describes or modifies the second word which identifies the object or the person. Considering this, it seems reasonable to think that not much is needed in terms of lexicon for religion which is not a new domain of vocabulary.

The semantic fields that have the highest proportion of C1 words are ‘other’ with a big majority and then ‘people’ comes next, but the proportions for each formation vary greatly from one to the other. If we compare these figures with those of Crowley’s new words, we notice that we had also found that ‘other’ had the greatest proportion of C1 words (65%), then came ‘people’ and ‘objects’ with 54.5%, with the two lowest percentages also being ‘Religion’ and ‘Body’.

So what can be concluded from this comparison is that there is no discrepancy between what I have found in my corpus and what is recorded by Crowley in his dictionary, with one notable exception. In the ‘Animal, plant’ lexical field, we can observe a major gap between what is in my corpus, i.e. 3% for NN and around 8% for ADJN (so very small proportions) whereas in Crowley, 68% of the new words are found under the C1 category. The reasonable explanation for this is that this is probably simply due to the fact that when I crosscheck these figures with the size of my corpus, I can observe that the field categorised under ‘agriculture/science’ in the data base represents only 7.5% of the entire corpus, which is in

fact a small proportion.¹⁴⁰ When I examined Crowley’s newly introduced words in his dictionary, I noted every single C1 word in the list so it follows that at first sight, there seems to be a much greater proportion of them in this precise semantic field of flora and fauna. It is also well-known that in Bislama, the names of plants and animals are often created from an adjective (of colour, very often) and a noun, as in *yelotri* ‘Indian mulberry’ (literally *‘yellow tree’) or *redmaot* ‘emperor fish’ (literally *‘redmouth’). So the fact that we find a lot of C1 words in this field is not surprising, it probably means that Crowley included many more of these Bislama words in his 2003 edition.

Before we examine the words of the list in terms of loan words from English, I will just say a few words on the C1 English words that I took out of the list. There are only 12 of them – which represents 7.8% of the total number of C1 words – out of which more than half come from ‘Press’. Apart from that, none of the other genres show any significant use of English C1 words, with ‘Religion’ not even having one. This could be due to the fact that C1 compound words have been used in Bislama for a long time and are therefore part and parcel of the language with their own Bislama spelling, as will be made obvious soon. The twelve words are: chainsaw, Blackman, goodwill, blackbirding, spokesman, airfare, homework, workshop, lawnmower, headmistress and membership.

Table 5.19: C1 English words by genre and period

	Total number in corpus	1970	1980	1990	2000
Press	7		1	1	5
Ads	1				1
Storian (educational material)	1	1			
Official Docs	1				1
Other	2			1	1

The other salient feature revealed by table 5.19 is that 8 out of 12, so two thirds of the words are to be found in the most recent part of the corpus, which may indicate a tendency towards greater anglicisation. If we compare these results with the total list of C1 words, what we

¹⁴⁰ This is calculated from the total number of pages under ‘agriculture/science’ in the corpus, whether articles, translations or any other form.

observe is that Bislama does create a lot of compound words which it integrates into the language quite easily.

What I have also examined in detail for the C1 words is whether they are directly borrowed from English, as in *keafri* ‘carefree’ or if they are genuine creations of new Bislama words. At first sight, it seems that a lot of these words are borrowed from English because they are mostly composed of two English-based elements. If we look more closely, however, we notice that things are not as clear cut as they may appear to be. Indeed, even though most of these words do seem to be coming from English, there are in fact quite a few of them which are what I would call purely Bislama ‘original creations’, because they do not exist as such in English. These words fall into two categories: those which would be written in two separate words in English but have been joined in Bislama, and those which do not exist in English at all. I will illustrate my point with a few examples: if we take the word *waetman* ‘white man’ (lit. *‘whiteman’), this word obviously belongs to the first category, just like *fildei* ‘field day’ or *junggam* ‘chewing gum’. On the other hand, it seems obvious that words such as *toksore* or *gavmansaed* even though they are composed of two elements that originally come from English – respectively ‘talk + sorry’ and ‘government + side’ – do not have equivalent in English and have a different meaning as one new word: *toksore* means ‘to apologise’, can mean ‘condolences’ too, and *gavmansaed* translates by ‘about the government’. In table 5.20 we can find the proportion of both categories of words in the C1 list.

Table 5.20: C1 words not directly borrowed from English

	Bislama C1 words that would be 2 separate words in English	Bislama C1 words that do not exist in English
NN	<i>kaskrop, fildei, filtrip, brasplet,</i>	<i>wokboe, medelnaet, manples, graonpot,</i>
ADJN	<i>draeples, fasbon, hadwok, lasdei, laswik, longtaem, puaman, rijman, sikman, smolholda, waitman</i>	<i>freswin, gudhed, haeman, haftok, kaenhat, trutok</i>
OTHER	<i>gokros, godaon, niuwan, nampawan,</i>	<i>beregraon, flaefokis, gavmansaed, stilman, sutboe, toksore</i>

What can be observed in table 5.20 is that there are a total of 16 words that would not exist in English, that is to say a percentage of 11.2% of the total number of C1 Bislama words. The proportion of C1 words that would be C2 words in English amounts to 13.5%, and so the proportion of Bislama C1 words which do not derive directly from English reaches almost 25% of the C1 words. In the ‘ADJN’ category of words that do not exist in English under that form, we notice that two of them are formed with ‘ADJ + tok’ *haftok* and *trutok*, one with ‘ADJ + man’ *haeman* and two tothers with ‘ADJ + part of the body’ *kaenhathat* and *gudhead*. The meaning of most of them is clear because the word order is modifier + head so they do not pose a problem of comprehension for an English speaker, as *kaenhathat* for example means ‘a person with a kind heart’ (English *kindheart). On the other hand, the meaning of a word like *haftok* may be harder to grasp if one does not know *trutok* ‘truth’ which is easier to understand because of English ‘true’ even though there is no such thing as *truetalk. So by analogy with words like *haffples* ‘part of a larger area’ or *hafrod* ‘half way’, one might be able to infer that *haftok* means ‘part of the text’, but it is not obvious at first sight.¹⁴¹ In the ‘Other’ category, the same line of reasoning applies to *stilman* which is not English * a stealman but ‘thief’, but where we can recognise ‘steal’. What we can conclude from the study of these compounds is that even though a very big proportion of C1 words are borrowed straight from English with a Bislama spelling (75% of them), Bislama is creative enough to invent words by combining elements borrowed from English but at the same time giving them a completely new proper Bislama meaning which can be easily guessed at times, as in *beregraon* ‘graveyard’ (English *buryground, although there are a few occurrences of ‘burying-ground’ in English), but does not necessarily mean the sum of the two words that compose it, as in *freswin* ‘cool breeze’ (English *‘freshwind’).

5.3.2 C2 and C3 compound words

It must be first said again that C2 words are compounds made of two or more words juxtaposed without any preposition to link them, that is to say **without blong** which is normally used to make compound nouns in Bislama, as in *skin blong book* ‘book cover’ or *makas blong so* ‘sawdust’. As is instantly noticeable from the results shown in table 5.21, the number of compound words composed of two or more words (C2) is much higher than that of joined words (C1): indeed, out of the total number of compounds in the corpus, 91.6% are C2

¹⁴¹ When I asked native speakers about the meaning of this word, they told me they did not know it, so it is a nonce occurrence which must have been invented by the writer. In the context, it means a passage, a quote (from the Bible).

words and only 8.4% are C1 words. What we can observe here is that the three genres with the highest proportion of C2 compounds are ‘Press’ with a significant 40.2% of the total number, then ‘Official Documents’ with around 20% – that is to say half of ‘Press’ – and finally ‘Other’ with just less than 15%. The genres with the lowest percentages are ‘Storian’ and ‘Periodicals’, with about 1%, and ‘Translations’ with 2.1%.

Table 5.21: C2 words by genre and period

Genre	C2	Percentage	70	80	90	2000
Press	622	40.2%	8.1%	11.1%	4.1%	77%
Religion	104	6.7%	–	1%	5.8%	90.4%
Ads	95	6.1%	–	–	2%	98%
Storian	13	0.8%	63%	–	–	27%
Politics	101	6.5%	23%	39%	38%	–
Official documents	333	21.5%	–	–	2.6%	97.4%
Translations	33	2.1%	–	46%	23%	30%
Periodicals	17	1%	–	100%	–	–
Other	229	14.8%	–	–	38%	62%
Total	1547	≈100%	5.8%	11.8%	9.8%	72.5%

Before we make comparisons between C1 and C2 compounds, let us first examine the C2 corpus in more detail. Out of the total number of C2 words, 112 are compounds composed of 3 or more than 3 words written in Bislama only – that is to say with no English word at all – and which I will refer to as C3 from now on.

Another feature we will look at is the proportion of C2 words that ‘match’ according to the data base criteria, that is to say which contain at least **one** English word. This category also includes what I have called C3 words because I did not make a specific category for them in the data base, which explains why I am putting the results of the match words in table 5.22 here before looking at C3 words in more detail.

Table 5.22: C2 match by genre and period

Genre	C2 match	Percentage	Period 1	Period 2
Press	202	46%	24.3%	75.7%
Religion	22	5%		100%
Ads	39	8.9%		100%
Storian	5	1.1%	80%	20%
Politics	33	7.5%	36.3%	63.7
Official documents	70	16%		100%
Translations	2	0.4%	100%	
Periodicals	12	2.7%	100%	
Other	54	12.3%		100%
Total	439	100%	-	-

The data base results show that 439 words out of a total of 1547 ‘match’, which represents 28.4% of the total number of C2 words. In other words, almost three quarters of the C2 words are expressed or spelt entirely in Bislama. As could have been anticipated, the highest percentage of matches is in the ‘Press’ genre with nearly half of all the ‘match’ words, which corroborates the phenomenon of the anglicisation of the press already mentioned by Charpentier before Independence. The other significant numbers are found in ‘Official documents’ and ‘Other’, with a big proportion of them in the 1990-2010 period, which could be analysed as a sign of decreolisation for some of the genres. This point will be analysed later in correlation with the other criteria I have chosen. It is not easy to give an immediate interpretation of these results but it is hardly surprising, in the hypothesis of decreolisation, that the highest proportion of matches should be found, for most of the documents, in the more recent period from 1990 till today. However, these results have to be relativised as the very high percentages for period 1 for ‘Storian’, ‘Translations’ and ‘Periodicals’ can be explained by the fact that if we look at their size in the corpus (see table 5.5), we notice that there is an obvious correlation between these results and the period in which the documents were published. For instance, the 100% of match for ‘Periodicals’ for Period 1 is due to the fact that all my documents classified under that genre were in fact published in the 1980s,

that is to say Period 1. So there is nothing to particularly comment on in table 5.22 except that it contains no surprising results.

We will now examine the nouns composed of three or more words that I have called C3.

5.3.2.1 C3 Bislama words

We have found that C3 compounds represent 7.3% of all the C2 compounds, which is not many and means that the big majority of C2 words (92.7%) are formed N + N (generic name for compounds formed with two separate words). I have first looked at C3 words in terms of the period of time they appear in, as shown in table 5.23. I have then classified these C3 words not by genre, because after closer observation, I decided it would not have been relevant but rather by semantic field or the context in which they are used, with the following results shown in table 5.24.¹⁴²

Table 5.23: Percentage of C3 compounds by period

	1970	1980	1990	2000
C3 Bislama compounds	6.2%	6.2%	3.6%	84%
Total size of corpus (table 5.1)	10.5%	12.3%	8.2%	66.1%

As we can observed in table 5.23, the proportions between the percentage of C3 compounds and the size of the corpus for each period show no major discrepancy, even though the percentage of C3 compounds is higher than the size of the corpus for the 2000 period whereas it is the contrary for the remaining three periods. It is at this stage quite tempting to try and give an explanation by saying that what is happening here is not really surprising considering the hypothesis of decreolisation. Indeed, the traditional way of forming compounds in Bislama is by using the preposition *blong* between two words, as I have already said. However, some words were integrated into Bislama with their English formation right from the start, and the phrase *long garden bilong pikinini* (English *children's garden) found in *Le Bulletin* (see Chapter 4, part 4.2.1.1), for instance, makes no sense at all. Such C1 words have acquired a meaning of their own in English – in this case the word is itself borrowed from German – and are therefore integrated as such in Bislama, and for *kindagaten*, this is

¹⁴² I took all the C3 words into consideration, so 112 of them.

confirmed by the fact that in Crowley 1990, that is to say the very first edition of his dictionary, we already find *kinda*, *kindagaten* or *priskul* (p. 117) for ‘kindergarten’ or ‘preschool’. It is clear from all the results found by studying the data base that there is a tendency to borrow more and more set phrases or compounds from English with their original construction, so this phenomenon explains why the percentage is much higher for the more recent documents, as well as for the genres and the fields in which we find them. Table 5.24 gives us the number of C3 words categorised by domain.

Table 5.24: C3 Bislama compounds by domain

	Time (modifier)	Official	Title/name	Sports	Object	Other
C3 Bislama compounds (percentage)	12%	38%	19%	5.2%	3.4%	22.4%

Here are a few examples of these compounds to illustrate the various categories to which they belong:

- **Time (modifier):** *tu yia kalabus* ‘two-year imprisonment’; *2 wiks eksesaes* ‘2 weeks exercise’; *faev yia development plan* ‘five-year development plan’.
- **Other:** *nevus system aktiviti* ‘nervous system activity’; *mobael telefon kampani* ‘mobile telephone company’; *tobako smok polusen* ‘tobacco smoke pollution’.
- **Official:** *famili proteksen Akt* ‘Family Protection Act’; *Natural Disasta Manejmen Ofis* ‘Natural Disaster management Office’.
- **Name:** *acting taon klak* ‘acting town clerk’; *jif kowapratif ofisa* ‘chief cooperative officer’.
- **Sports:** *nok aut tunamen* , ‘knockout tournament’; *semi-faenal gem* ‘semi-final game’.

The three domains in which we frequently find these compounds are ‘Title/name’, ‘Official’ and ‘Other’, and if we put the words in the ‘period’ classification, we can see that 72 of them belong to the 2000 period, that is to say almost 80%. This percentage clearly indicates that the occurrences of these compounds are mostly to be found in recent documents. The other salient feature about these words is that the great majority of them are borrowed ‘straight’

from English, i.e. they are calqued from the English construction, which is obvious in examples such as *Provisenel Advaeseri Komiti* ‘Provisional Advisory Committee’, *tobako-fri laefstael* ‘tobacco-free lifestyle’, and *yut development program* ‘youth development programme’. In fact, all the C3 words whose modifiers express time are calqued directly on English, sometimes even with the punctuation (hyphen) as in *wan-wik-long nasenal konfrens* [sic] ‘one-week-long conference’, or with the plural *-s* as in *2 wiks eksesaes* ‘two weeks exercise’, whereas a more traditional way of saying this would be *wan nasenal konferens we bae oli ranem long wan wik*. When we look at the ‘Official’ category, which is the one with the biggest proportion of C3 words, we notice that among the 44 elements that belong to this field, like *tija trening woksop* ‘teacher training workshop’, *komuniti beis disasta manajmen okanaeseisen* ‘community-based disaster management organisation’ or *gapman agrikalja polisi* ‘government’s agricultural policy’, not a single C3 compound is **not** calqued on English, that is to say that all of the official lexicon keeps the English form even when it is spelt in Bislama. This also applies to the ‘Title/name’ category in which all the C3 words are calqued from English as in *Eli Woning Komiti* ‘Early Warning Committee’, *akting senia agronomis* ‘acting senior agronomist’, or *Pis Kop Voluntia* ‘Peace Corps Volunteer’. We can make the same observation for the domain of sports with compounds such as *semi-faenal gem* ‘semi-final game’ or *had woking tim* ‘hard-working team’ where the hyphen and the *-ing* verbal form indicate borrowing from English.¹⁴³ Let us now concentrate on the last two categories where we do find C3 words that do not follow the English construction. In ‘Object’, we have two occurrences of Bislama creations with *fes stael graonpot* ‘early ages pottery’ (English *first style groundpot) and *string fatom sel mane* ‘shell money’ (English *string fathom shell money)¹⁴⁴. In the ‘Other’ category, there are a few C3 compounds that need a closer look because as opposed to the remaining 21 which follow an English construction pattern like *pis loving pipol* ‘peace-loving people’, *han-ova seremoni* ‘hand-over ceremony’ or *ofisiol lonsing spij* ‘official launching speech’, these 5 C3 words do not exist in English, or if they do, they do not exist in English as they are formed in Bislama. In this category we find *middle bus komiuniti* ‘isolated community’ (English *middle-bush community), *laki mane namba* ‘winning number’ (English *lucky money number) and *foto kala cinema* ‘colour movie’ (English *photo colour cinema). As far as C3 *wol fri tobako dei*

¹⁴³ The ending *-ing* is usually only found for nouns in Bislama, not for verbal forms.

¹⁴⁴ *Fes stael graonpot* can probably be translated by ‘Lapita pottery’. Shell money is made of shell discs threaded on strings which are often valued by the fathom (about 1.8 meters). It is still used in the South Pacific for traditional payments.

‘world tobacco-free day’ (English *world free tobacco day), I found it in a little leaflet which was handed out to me on the ‘Journée de la Francophonie’ in Port Vila, which took place just before the World Tobacco-Free Day celebration. It seems to me that this strange word order in Bislama simply comes from a mistake about the word order in English for just this translation into Bislama, as in the rest of the document the normal English order is found in *tobako-fri* ‘tobacco-free’ for instance. The last C3 word that is different shows the traditional Melanesian word order for *tang wora* ‘water tank’ but at the same time the capacity of the tank is expressed as it would be in English with the modifier *15000 kalon* ‘15000-gallon’ preceding the head *tang wora*. So in this C3 compound *15000 kalon tang wora* ‘a 15000-gallon water tank’, there is a strange mixture of Bislama and English word structure.

To conclude this part on Bislama compounds of 3 or more than 3 words, we can say that a big majority of them are borrowed directly from English, thus keeping the same formation and meaning as their English counterparts. There are, however, a few compounds that are Bislama creations which are composed with words themselves coming from English but whose meaning as a compound is not equivalent to their origin. The other common feature is that a very high proportion of the C3 words are of recent use as they can be found in the latest decade of the corpus.

5.3.2.2 C2 Bislama compounds

Let us now look in detail at what constitutes the bulk of C2 words, that is to say those remaining once the English ones as well as those occurring several times in the corpus have been removed. From the original 1547 words found in the first data base list, and after eliminating C3 compounds, all English-only compounds and all the repetitions, I have a new list of Bislama C2 words which amount to 860 nouns in total. Just as I did for C1 words, I have classified C2 words into sub-categories according to their formation, as can be seen in table 5.25. Out of the 860, 170 are not composed of two nouns or if they are, they are not calqued on English, either because of a different word order or with a different meaning. The criteria I have chosen to classify them are the following ones: some are composed of a verbal *-ing* modifier + N, some of adjective + N or any other grammatical form. For clarity’s sake, I have decided to call the 170 C2 word list C2D (for ‘Different’ from English N + N calqued formation). So the proportion of C2D words is just under 20% while C2 compounds represent slightly more than 80% of the total number.

Table 5.25: Total Bislama C2 by formation

	Ving + N C2D	Other C2D	Head + modifier C2D	ADJ + N C2D	English N of N C2D	Bislama N + N (not in English) C2D	Bislama N + N C2
Bislama C2 compounds (number)	26	9	18	13	21	83	690
Percentage	3%	1%	2%	1.6%	2.5%	9.7%	80.2%

Let us now look at each of these C2D categories in more detail. First, there are 26 C2D words formed with a *Ving* modifier + noun, like *huping kof* ‘whooping kof’, *klosing det* ‘closing date’ or *hiling paoa* ‘healing power’. The first observation to be made is that all of them are calqued from English and not one is a Bislama creation, which is not surprising if we remember that the *-ing* ending is normally found exclusively for nouns in Bislama. What I notice in the list is that the modifier is *trening* for 7 of them as in *trening sentas* ‘training centres’ or *trening kos* ‘training course’, and that there are also several *outgoing* + *N* as in *outgoing jeaman* ‘outgoing chairman’, or *opening* / *klosing* + *N* as in *opening seremoni* ‘opening ceremony’. *Kaunseling* is also often found in leaflets related to health or domestic violence, as in *kaonseling senta* ‘counseling centre’, for instance.

Among the 13 C2D formed with ADJ + N, 8 are borrowed from English as in *fes et* ‘first aid’ or *Jenerol Eleksen* ‘General Election’ with the same meaning. Three are genuine Bislama creations using words of English origin but used in conjunction with nouns to form a compound which does not exist in English and which therefore acquires a meaning of its own in Bislama. This is what we have in *grand-pikinini* ‘grandchild’ (normally *bubu* or *smolbubu*), *sof mad* ‘mud’ (English ‘soft mud’) and *half lanwis* ‘pidgin’ (English *half language).¹⁴⁵ The ‘Other’ category represents only 1% of the total number of C2 compounds and contains words formed from different grammatical origins. In this category we find noun phrases such as *bae-eleksen* ‘by-election’, *handing ova* ‘handing over’ or *jata akaonten* ‘chartered accountant’. There are 9 C2D words in this category and all of them are calqued from English.

¹⁴⁵ In Bislama, *haf* is often used as a prenominal modifier in C1 compounds to express ‘partly’ or ‘half’ as in *hafkakae* ‘leftovers’ or *hafrod* ‘half way’.

Of more interest for the study are the remaining C2D categories, that is to say the N + N Bislama C2D words which do not follow the English pattern. These words can in turn be put into two groups: first, the compounds where the head comes first and is followed by the modifier, as in *lif banana* ‘banana leaf’, *artist woman* ‘female artist’¹⁴⁶ or *hoel palm* ‘palm oil’. Seventeen C2D words follow that pattern of formation, among which 4 are composed of *lif* + *N*, 3 of *memba* + *N*, and 3 of *man* + *N*. The remaining compounds have a modifier which can describe what the head is made of as in *haos tarpolen* ‘tarpaulin house’, or define a category like *krab kokonas* ‘coconut crab’. The most common of these C2D compounds is definitely *man ples* ‘local’ or ‘Ni-Vanuatu person’ depending on the context, found under many forms as *man place*, *man pleis*, also as a C1 compound *manples*, but the construction *man* + *modifier* applies to other modifiers as in *man-Ostrelia* for instance.

We also have the C2D compounds which are composed of N modifier + N head but which are not calqued from English and have their own meaning even though the two words that compose them are originally borrowed from English. In this category, we find all the words under the form *rabis* + *N* ‘rubbish + N’ (7 of them) like *rabis sistem* ‘useless system’ (English *rubbish system)¹⁴⁷ and *rabis sik* ‘venereal disease’ (English *rubbish sickness), where *rabis* as the modifier (in fact used as an adjective) will take different meanings according to the context but never too far semantically speaking from the English ‘rubbish’. Belonging to the same category are the 23 compounds with *kastom* as a modifier to mean ‘traditional’ as in *kastom danis* ‘traditional dance’ (English *custom dance), *kastom loa* ‘customary law’ or *kastom jif* (sometimes *jif kastom*) ‘chief’ (in the Ni-Vanuatu societal hierarchy). It has to be noted that compounds with *kastom* are quite common in Bislama for obvious reasons. Another common word used as a modifier in C2D compounds in Bislama is the word *stamba* (or *stampa* sometimes), also because of its semantism: originally, *stamba* means ‘trunk’ or ‘stump’ (of a tree), but also ‘base, start’. In many of the C2D compounds, the original meaning is kept even though the translation may appear far from the English origin, but in compounds such as *stamba valiu* ‘basic value’ (also found as *besik valiu* in some texts), *stampa poen* ‘important point, or *stamba tingting* ‘motivation, basic reason’ we can still find some of the original semantism when it is used as a modifier, which is the case here with the 13 C2D ‘*stamba* + *N*’ words.

¹⁴⁶ Also found as *woman artist* ‘female artist’.

¹⁴⁷ In English, ‘rubbish system’ would be understood as ‘a rubbish-collecting system’.

Bed kopra ‘hot air copra drier’ is given under the form *bed blong kopra* in Crowley 2003: 46, so this may well indicate that the construction using *blong* between two nouns is giving way to a more anglicised N + N construction.

Another category included in table 5.26 is the one that comprises C2D words in Bislama which would be found as N **of** N in English, as opposed to two juxtaposed nouns head + modifier in Bislama. There are 21 of these words in total (2.5% of the compounds): 5 have *pis* as head, like *pis wud* ‘a piece of wood’, *pis graon* ‘a piece of land’ and 11 are formed with the head noun *kaen* ‘kind of’, quite common in Bislama in noun phrases like *kaen pipol* ‘kind of people’, *eni kaen disata* ‘any kind of disaster’, for example.¹⁴⁸ Some of the other C2D of that category include *shed tri* ‘the shade of the tree’, measures like *one kilo raes* ‘a kilo of rice’ or *katon buks* ‘a box of books’, *branis kasis* ‘a branch of cassia’ and *art pis* ‘a piece of art’ which differs from the others because here *pis* is the second word (as opposed to *pis pepa* ‘a piece of paper’).

The remaining N + N words in the C2D category are compounds that have a completely different meaning from the two words that compose them and whose meaning cannot therefore be easily recognised. These compounds are Bislama creations with idiomatic use and meaning and could lead any unaware translator or foreign speaker astray. In this category are words like *stik meresin* ‘injection’, *frut sigaret* ‘one cigarette’, *kiaman toktok* ‘lie’ (English ‘liar’s words’).¹⁴⁹ The meaning of three of them can be more or less deduced because of their closeness to English: *haos gel* for ‘house girl’, *stik faea* for ‘firebrand’ and *tede naet* for ‘tonight’.

Table 5.26: C2D words with different meaning

N + N C2D words with different meaning	<i>stik meresin; flas man; frut sigaret; stil man; Vatu ekonomi; haos gel; kanobol snel; suga bud; stik faea; kiaman toktok; denja saed; tede naet; millionaire krismas;</i>
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¹⁴⁸ These C2 are not the same as *kaen hat* (also C1 *kaenhat*) in which *kaen* is the adjective meaning ‘kind’ (so *kaenhat* means ‘a generous person’).

¹⁴⁹ *Frut* is here used as a quantifier to mean ‘a single’ as opposed to ‘a packet’ (Crowley 1990: 84). I have not been able to find out the meaning of *kanobol snel* and *suga bud*, in spite of having asked many people.

I have found only one word ADJ + N, and it is borrowed from English: *Sekreteri Jenerol* ‘Secretary General’, and one formed N + V *tok haed* ‘metaphor’ (English *talk hide). Some of the C2D words would be a single compound in English as against two separate words in Bislama, as in *mun laet* ‘moonlight’ (found as *mun* in Crowley 2003: 172). *Ded laen*, borrowed from English, would be *dedlaen* ‘deadline’ in English, and there are three C2D compounds which are written in two separate words in my corpus with *medel* as the first component in *metel dei* ‘noon’ and *medel rod* ‘halfway’ but which are given as C1 words in the dictionary for two of them (Crowley 2003: 164). As for *medel pej*, it is more likely to mean ‘the middle of the page’ and thus belong to the N of N category.

So what can be concluded from the study of these C2D compounds is that just as for the use of plural -s, the way people write compounds is not clear cut and can vary from one person to another, so that we often find the same word under different forms. But we also have to remember that the rules are not so simple in English either, so may be what is happening in Bislama simply reflects what is taking place in the lexifier too. In Bislama, few of the compounds are written with hyphens, and some which are one word in English are written in separate words in Bislama and vice-versa. It is hard to know if what can account for these variations is possible variation in English (but this would only be to a limited extent), misspelling in Bislama, or also bad knowledge of English which can lead to ‘mistakes’. However, the proportion of such words is minimal in the corpus and I do not think it makes much difference in the global results of the study of compounds: it is just another example of the variations that are omnipresent in Bislama.

The remaining C2 words represent the big majority of compounds with over 80% of the total number. These are compounds formed with two nouns following the English word order, and we notice immediately that even though they are written with their Bislama spelling, most of these words or expressions are calqued from English. The following examples illustrate what can be found in the various genres or sub-categories.

- **Press:** *Pasifik Aelanda* ‘Pacific islander’; *pres rilis* ‘press release’; *helt program* ‘health programme’; *risej wok* ‘research work’;
- **Other:** *aktiviti ripot* ‘activity report’; *referens buk* ‘reference book’
- **Religion:** *fan resing* ‘fund raising’; *Baebol riding* ‘Bible reading’; *famli wosip* ‘family worship’; *prea haos* ‘prayer house’

- **Ads:** *aktivesen fi* ‘activation fee’; *tenda notis* ‘tender notice’; *diskaon praes* ‘discount price’; *silva jubili* ‘silver jubilee’.
- **Politics:** *Kondominium Asembli* ‘Condominium Assembly’; *vilij jif* ‘village chief’.
- **Official documents:** *bren injeri* ‘brain injury’; *Risev Bank* ‘Reserve bank’; *komuniti agrimen* ‘community agreement’.
- **Translations:** *kwarentin sevis* ‘quarantine service’; *helt seves* ‘health service’; *Tabu Toktok* ‘quotes from the Bible’.
- **Periodicals:** *korespondens kos* ‘correspondence course’; *aelan development* ‘island development’; *kofi protuksen* ‘coffee production’.
- **Sports:** *kap faenel* ‘cup final’; *sport kompetisen* ‘sports competition’; *jampionsip mats* ‘championship match’.

In fact, out of 690 words, only 68 of them (so just under 10%) are left that have an English word as **one** of their components as in *blad cells* ‘blood cells’, *national gems* ‘national games’ or *chicken fam* ‘chicken farm’. These words have been counted in the data base C2 match list as the query identifies the compounds as ‘match words’ as soon as **one** of the components is written in English, as shown in table 5.22. It follows then that there is a total of 622 C2 words composed of two juxtaposed nouns spelt in Bislama only. So let us now look at the remaining Bislama compounds and try and classify them to see what they describe and where they are found in the corpus.

Table 5.27: Bislama C2 by domain

	body	animal, plant	people	official, names	object	other	location
C2Bislama compounds	2.1%	3%	12.6%	19.2%	7.6%	49.4%	6%

As is immediately obvious, about half of the C2 words belong to the one category whereas the other six categories represent the other 50% of the words. The classification made here is a little different from the genre one we have just seen in so far as it categorises domains, so it is normal to find a big proportion of the words in ‘Other’. A lot of the compounds found in this category are borrowed straight from English to fill in a gap in the lexicon for words

describing practises, institutions and services recently introduced in the Ni-Vanuatu way of life. For instance, a lot of them deal with new technologies such as mobile phones, new services created by various ministers for the prevention of risks linked to natural catastrophes such as tidal waves or earthquakes, like *awernis miting* ‘awareness meeting’ or *aksen plan* ‘action plan’. There is also a lot of new vocabulary introduced in the field of justice, human rights and institutions, as well as electoral campaigns and voting rights, like *taetol namba* ‘title number (for land)’ and *litresi program* ‘literacy program’. It is therefore logical that the second category be ‘Official, names’ for exactly the same reason. Along with these new services come new official and public institutions for which the terms are also borrowed from English, as illustrated by *Kooperatif Federasen* ‘Cooperative Federation’. In this category I also included compounds such as *kastom dekleresen* ‘customs declaration’, *biznes laesens* ‘business license’ or *Milki Wei* ‘the Milky Way’. The third biggest category which I called ‘People’ includes words for jobs or qualifying people like *risos man* ‘resource person’, *katel fama* ‘cattle farmer’ and *senta staff* ‘centre staff’, for instance. Few C2 compound words refer to body or health, plants and animals and even objects, as they have been part of the lexicon for a much longer time and there is virtually no gap in the vocabulary to be filled, so we only find the recent ones linked mostly to technology for objects.

5.3.2.3 Comparative results

It seems to me that an interesting point is to compare C1 and C2 words in order to have a more precise idea of the similarities or discrepancies between the proportions of each category according to genre in the entire corpus. The results can be seen in table 5.28.

Table 5.28: C1 and C2 percentages by genre

	Press	Official documents	Religion	Other	Politics	Ads	Storian	Periodicals	Translations
Percentage in corpus C1	35.1%	18.2%	18.1%	9.6%	6.6%	4.3%	3%	3%	2.4%
Percentage in corpus C2	40.2%	21.5%	6.7%	14.8%	6.5%	6.1%	0.8%	1%	2.1%

What we can observe in table 5.28 is that there is not much difference between the repartition of C1 and C2 words according to genres except for ‘Religion’ and ‘Other’ with a much lower proportion of C2 words for the former and the contrary for the latter, so more C2 words than C1 compounds for ‘Other’.

The other categories with small percentages do not show much difference either with ‘Storian’ having a very small percentage of C2 words. It is not easy to give an immediate interpretation of these results, even though they are in keeping with the previous findings for other criteria such as plural -s, for instance.

Indeed, if we put these figures in parallel with those obtained for plural -s marking as well as C1 compounds, it is obvious that there are similarities in the proportion of both plural nouns and compound nouns in the main and least important genres, as shown in tables 5.29 and 5.30.

Table 5.29: Percentages of plural-s and C1/ C2 by genre

	Press	Religion	Official documents	Other	Translations	Storian	Periodicals
Plural -s	29.8%	3.7%	23.4%	13.8%	0.17%	0%	0.34%
C1 nouns	35.1%	18.1%	18.2%	9.6%	2.4%	3%	3%
C2 nouns	40.2%	6.7%	21.5%	14.8%	2.1%	0.8%	1%

Clearly, the genres already mentioned for having the highest proportion of plural -s words are also the ones that include the most numerous C1 and C2 nouns. However, there is a slight discrepancy for the genre ‘Religion’ with a small percentage of -s and C2 nouns and a bigger one of C1 nouns, a phenomenon I have already mentioned.

Table 5.30: C1/ C2 match and plural-s Bislama words by genre

Genre	Percentage C1 match	PercentageC2 match	Plural -s
Press	58.3%	46%	29.8%
Religion	-	5%	3.7%
Ads	8.3%	8.9%	9.7%
Storian	8.3%	1.1%	0%
Politics	-	7.5%	18.7%
Official documents	8.3%	16%	23.4%
Translations	-	0.4%	0.17%
Periodicals	-	2.7%	0.34%
Other	16.6%	12.3%	13.8%

What we see here is that there is undoubtedly a correspondence between the genres, the periods and the criteria for decreolisation that I have chosen. We find roughly similar proportions for most of the genres. There is a small proportion of the three features in the genres ‘Religion’, ‘Translations’ and ‘Periodicals’. The percentages are also balanced for ‘Other’ and ‘Ads’. However, there are variations for the three remaining genres ‘Press’, ‘Politics’ and ‘Official documents’.

5.4 The case of *evri* and *olgeta*

What drew my attention on one of the usages of *olgeta* in today’s Bislama comes from the reactions of several young native speakers who qualified the translation of the phrase *olgeta man* into ‘all men’ as old-fashioned and “old people’s Bislama”. Today, they told me, we use *evri man* or *evri woman* to say ‘all men’, ‘all women’, often followed by *long* as in *evri man long wol*. However, not everybody agrees with this, and when I asked people about their perception of the difference between *olgeta* and *evri*, I was given various interpretations, or none sometimes. We all know that we use our mother tongue ‘instinctively’, often without giving much thought to which form we use. For some speakers, it was obviously challenging to try and find an explanation: “it’s always been like that” was one, “it has changed, today it is different” was another.

This is what prompted me into looking a bit more closely at today's use of *olgeta* and *evri*, along with *evriwan* and *wanwan* at first, to try and find out what the differences in usage are, if any, and if they could be attributed to the anglicisation of modern Bislama or to another phenomenon.

5.4.1 Quantifiers in English

In order to do that, I first found out what two grammars of English - one published in 1990 and the other in 2008 - said about 'all', 'every', 'everyone' and 'each'. In Quirk and Greenbaum's 1990 grammar, we find them under the heading of 'indefinite pronouns' which "are heterogeneous in form and (they) embrace also a wide range both of meanings and of grammatical properties" (1990:121). They deal with expressing quantity, and several of them can function both as determiners and as pronouns. 'Everyone' and 'everything' are compound indefinites which can only function as pronouns, and whose interesting characteristic is that "despite their entailment of plural meaning they take singular verbs" (1990:121). 'Each' and 'every' are used both for personal and non personal with singular reference. The difference in usage between them is that "each is more targeted on the individual among the totality, every on the totality itself, in consequence of which 'every' is subject to quantitative modification as in 'almost every candidate is.' " (1990: 123). 'All' has a plural universal reference and can be used as pronoun or pre-determiner- in which case it can be used with a non count reference.

What we find in Cowan's 2008 grammar is more detailed about the positions these words can have in the sentences. The quantifiers 'each' and 'every' only appear with singular count nouns, whereas 'all' can appear with both plural count nouns and non count nouns. Cowan makes an interesting point with what he calls 'quantifier floating' for 'all' and 'each', which do not function in the same way (Cowan 2008:195). However, no matter what position 'all' occupies in the sentence, its referent is always plural.

As far their meaning is concerned, all quantifiers have a meaning of 'inclusiveness', namely they refer to an entire group. Nevertheless, there are differences in that 'all' refers to the totality of the members of the group, whereas 'every' and 'each' refer to single members of a group, and the difference is reflected in the subject-verb agreement, with 'all + Npl + Vpl' and 'each/every + Nsng + Vsng' (2008:197).

If we turn to French linguists and their grammars inspired by Antoine Culioli's *Théorie des Opérations Enonciatives*, we find a different approach altogether. Lapaire and Rotgé (1993) think that 'every', whose etymology comes from 'ever + each', includes 'each', but goes further by adding considerable weight to totality, because of 'ever'. This is the reason why, they say, 'every' is to be found much more frequently in expressions referring to time such as 'every day'. 'Every' can also be used with a modal (emphatic) function, as in 'I have every right to ...'.

As far as the meaning of 'all' is concerned, Lapaire and Rotgé note that even though 'all' has a "semantic logic" of "the whole", it has multiple interpretations. 'All' can mean 'everything' (expansive, universal or contextual), 'the only thing' (restrictive, as in 'all you have to do'), completeness, entirety ('all the boys'). It can also indicate the 'maximum' limit ('above all', 'at all speed'), a big quantity ('all too greedy'), exclusiveness with the meaning of 'nothing but' ('an all-girls' school), as well as indifferenciation ('beyond all doubt'). When they compare 'all + N pl' et 'every + N sng', the conclusion they reach is that 'all' is a synthetic tool, with a condensing and globalising approach, whereas 'every' is analytical, distributive and has a more dissociative approach.

To conclude on this short theoretical approach, we find in these grammars that 'all' has a plural reference (the totality of the members of a group), but can also be used with noncount nouns when it is a premodifier (e.g. 'all the time'). 'All' has different functions and can occupy various positions in the sentence. 'Every' and 'each' refer to a single member of a group and are therefore used with the singular. 'Every' is definitely more frequent in fixed expressions, particularly when referring to time. As for 'everyone' and 'everything', they can only function as pronouns and even though they have a plural meaning, they are used with verb agreement in the singular. We will now see how these theories relate with the use of quantifiers in Bislama

5.4.2 Quantifiers in Bislama

After looking at the quantifiers of English, I investigated the various grammars or descriptions of Bislama to see what had been written about quantifiers, concentrating on *olgeta*, *evri* and *evriwan*. To avoid a very long description of my readings, I summed them up in table 5.31.

Table 5.31: Existing literature on *olgeta/evri/evriwan*

	Olgeta (olketa)	evri	evriwan
Guy (1974)	-numeral: all, everybody -adverb: completely	-numeral: every	-numeral: everybody -adverb: without exception
Camden (1977)	-pronoun: they, them (used with <i>i</i> or <i>oli</i>) -pronoun after name or title: and the others -vocative: All of you!	-numeral: every (used with <i>i</i> or <i>oli</i>)	-numeral: <i>evriwan oli</i> : every (single) man -numeral: <i>evriwan i</i> : they all/ each
Tryon (1987)	-pronoun: they, them (used with <i>i</i> or <i>oli</i>) -quantifier: all -adverb: completely	-numeral: each, every (used with <i>i</i> or <i>oli</i>)	-numeral: all, absolutely all, every
Crowley (2004)	-plural marker -pronoun: they, them -quantifier: all -vocative: folks, everybody -postverb modifier: forever, completely, extraordinarily -interjection: boy! -reflexive: themselves	-prenominal modifier: every, each (used with <i>i</i> or <i>oli</i>)	-adverb: completely -noun: everyone, everybody -postpronoun modifier: everybody

However, I will add a few comments on this table as the points are not so clear cut and some need further explanations.

5.4.2.1 *Olgeta*

Guy (1974) only references the spelling *olketa*, translated by ‘all, everybody’, and (French) ‘tout le monde’. He gives a strange example which reads: *Yu ko talem long olketa tri* with the two translations ‘Go tell it to all the trees’ and ‘Va le dire à tous les arbres’ (Guy 1974: 137).

I have to say that I am very skeptical about the meaning given to the sentence by Guy because it does not seem to make much sense. Another possible explanation would be that *tri* is the numeral ‘three’ in which case it would mean ‘Go tell the three of them’ which sounds more likely and confirms the use of *olgeta* followed by a numeral found in other grammars.

As we can see in table 5.31, contrarily to Guy, Camden (1977), Tryon (1987) and Crowley (2004) all mention the use of *olgeta* as the pronoun ‘they’ and ‘them’ – either followed by *oli* or *i* as predicate marker depending on whether the subjects are respectively recognised as a plural (*oli*) or as a group (*i*). Camden distinguishes different usages, one of which is not mentioned in the other grammars. He also mentions a pronoun used specifically after “a subject named by name or title who is a recognised leader of the group” (Camden 1997: 78), with the different meaning of ‘and the others, and the rest’ as shown in *Pasta olgeta oli kam prea long mi tu taem finis* ‘The Pastor and the others [with him] came to pray over me twice’. Another interesting point made by Camden is the use of *olgeta* as a vocative, meaning ‘everyone, all of you’ that can be heard in address to either small or big groups of people, also mentioned by Crowley.

In his description of *olgeta*, Tryon (1987) says that *olgeta* as a pronoun “has a number of possibilities, depending on whether the referent is considered to be a single entity or group, or not, and whether the subject is known from context or not.” (p. 22), thus agreeing with Camden. He insists on the difference in meaning for *olgeta* depending on whether it is used alone (in which case it means ‘they’) or followed by a noun (in which case it is a quantifier meaning ‘all’). So, Tryon says, *ol jif* means ‘the chiefs’ whereas *olgeta jif* would be translated by ‘all the chiefs’ (p. 23). What differs between Camden, Tryon and Crowley is that neither of the former two considers that *olgeta* can be used as a plural marker, as opposed to Crowley. Indeed, this is the first usage indicated in Crowley’s *Bislama Reference Grammar* (2004): “*Olgeta* is used as plural marker, thus *olgeta haos* ‘houses’. The other plural marker is *ol*, with the following precision: “The choice between *ol* and *olgeta* varies according to the speaker: some use the plural markers freely with any nouns, others favour *ol* with human nouns and *olgeta* for inanimate objects” (Crowley 2004: 51). He adds:

Olgeta can be used either as a plural marker (as already indicated) or as a quantifier meaning ‘all’ (though the form *ol* can only be used to mark the plural). Thus, *olgeta man* can mean either ‘all the men’ or simply ‘men’. If the context does not make it clear which of these two meanings is involved, the meaning of ‘all’ can be unambiguously expressed by

combining *olgeta* before the noun with *evriwan* after the noun, i.e.,
olgeta man evriwan ‘all the people’ (Crowley 2004: 52)

5.4.2.2 *Evri /evriwan*

In Guy (1974), *evri* is considered as a numeral and translated by ‘every’ and ‘tous, toutes les’ in French, and *evriwan* is ‘everyone, everybody’ or ‘chacun, tout le monde’. In its adverbial usage, the meaning is ‘without exception’, thus *olketa evriwan* is translated as ‘everybody without exception’. Camden finds that for *evri*, “Two structures occur, with correlating meaning difference for many but not all speakers” (1977: 20). The difference becomes obvious when we look at the predicate marker used, either *oli* or *i*. When we have *evri + oli*, then the translation is ‘each individual/ every man has taken (it)’. When *evri* is used with *i*, as in *evri man i tekem*, Camden’s translation is ‘Every man has/the whole lot have taken (it)’. He adds a precision as to the latter use, by pointing out that “In areas where **Olgeta i** [collective use, as a group] does not occur or is rare, the second structure may carry the meaning: Each man has taken it” (Camden 1977: 20). For Tryon (1987), ‘each’ and ‘every’ are translated by *evri* with the two usages mentioned by Camden (*evri + oli* and *evri + i*). ‘Each’ is often translated by *wanwan*, which can occupy different positions and functions depending on the verb and its object (p. 180-181). ‘Each’ can also be expressed by *evri* and *evriwan*, as shown in *Evriwan long olgeta i dring fo sel kava* ‘They each drank four shells of kava’. For Tryon, *evriwan* means ‘all, absolutely all, every’ and is often used to modify the plural personal pronouns mentioned by Camden. He also agrees with Camden about the two usages of *evriwan + oli* (plural) ‘every (single) man’ and *evriwan+i* (single group or entity) ‘they all/each’. Crowley (2004) translates the quantifier *evri* by ‘each, every’, and the noun phrase *evriwan* by ‘everyone’ which he uses with the singular predicate marker *i* (p. 51-53). *Evriwan* can be used in combination with *olgeta* in *olgeta man evriwan* to lift the ambiguity on *olgeta* ‘plural, all’ and to mean ‘all the people’.

So what is surprising is that nowhere in Crowley’s grammar, more recent than the other two, do we find the distinction made by Camden and Tryon between the two usages of *evri(wan) + oli* and *evri(wan) + i* based on the perception of the speaker on whether he considers the group as an entity or the members of the group. It is therefore logical that we do not find a possible translation of ‘all’ by *evri*, but rather by *olgeta*. This is precisely the point under scrutiny in this study, because the perception of native speakers is that *evri* is now used to express ‘all’ much more often than *olgeta*.

5.4.3 The pilot study

I decide to look into more detail at a corpus composed only of articles found in some issues of *The Independent* published in 2009 (No 272 and 273) and 2010 (No 313, 315 and 316).¹⁵⁰ Naturally, the two variants of *olgeta* have been taken into consideration, as well as the number of the occurrences of *olgeta* following either *blong* (indicating possession) and *long*.

Table 5.32: *Olgeta/evri* pilot study

<i>The Independent</i>	No 315	No 313	No 273	No 316	No 272	Total	Percentage in corpus
Total words	7,662	6,693	6,606	5,996	9,220	≈39,200	
<i>olgeta/olketa</i>	48	33	64	81	95	321	0.8%
<i>blong olgeta/olketa</i>	18	8	30	36	31	124	0.32%
<i>long olgeta/olketa</i>	24	10	34	16	50	134	0.34%
<i>evri/everi</i>	27	32	20	16	22	117	0.3%
<i>evriwan</i>	8	4	6	1	8	27	0.06%

What is striking in these results is that a very big proportion of *olgeta* are used in noun phrases with *blong* and *long*. Indeed, 0.66% out of a total of 0.8% of *olgeta* in this corpus follow this pattern, so it represents more than 80% of them, which is not too surprising as *blong olgeta* expresses possession, and *long* is a preposition with multiple meanings. This also tends to show that *olgeta* is used by itself in only about 20% of the cases. It has to be noted here that it is only *olgeta* that can appear after *blong* and *long*, not *ol*, as one can say *haos blong olgeta* ‘their house’ but not * *haos blong ol*, whereas both *ol* and *olgeta* can appear before the noun. This rule could also explain the fact that there are so many *olgeta* in this position.

So what do the remaining 20% of *olgeta* express, or more precisely how are they used and what is their meaning? If *evri* + *N* is more frequent nowadays to express ‘all’, then the

¹⁵⁰ No 272 (21/3/2009); No 273 (28/3/2009); No 313 (16/1/2010); No 315 (5/2/2010) and No 316 (12/2/2010).

majority of the other *olgeta* found in the corpus should be clearly identified as mere plural markers.

In the pilot corpus, we find examples of all the usages of *olgeta* identified by the above-mentioned grammarians. For instance, we find *olketa* as the translation for ‘all’ in public notices, as in *Olketa bisnis man mo woman blong narafala countri* ‘All existing foreign investors’ [not my translation] (Pablik Notis N° 002/2010, *The Independent* No 315, p. 10). The reflexive use can be observed in *taem we ol smol gel oli wokabaot olketa nomo* ‘when small girls walk by themselves’ (p.35) or in *ol woman i mas pruvum olketa* ‘Women have to prove themselves’ (p. 39). It is also present in conjunction with a numeral, meaning ‘all’: *olgeta 52 MP* ‘all the 52 MPs’(C). In most cases, *olgeta* seems to be playing the role of a deictic, used to refer to a predetermined group which has been defined previously, as found in the following example: *Vanuatu i mekem problem long ol lida blong FLNKS, teritorial gavman blong Niu Kaledonia mo kansel blong jif blong Niu Kaledonia be ino olgeta i askem Vanuatu blong hemi talem sori* ‘Vanuatu caused a problem to the leaders of FLNKS, territorial government of New Caledonia and Council of Chiefs of New Caledonia¹⁵¹ but they did not ask Vanuatu to apologise’ (*The Independent*, No 273, p. 24).

As far as the occurrences of *evri/everi* in the same corpus of 39,200 words are concerned, we find that the proportion is around 0.3%. Table 5.33 discriminates between *evri* ‘all’ and *evri* ‘every’ when possible, also taking into account the noun phrases when a clear understanding of the usage is not possible, or when it is used in a different way. When the predicate marker was present in the sentence, it made things easier to see that the meaning was plural with *oli*. However, it was not always that simple to determine in which category to put *evri* and I relied on my perception of the meaning to try and see if it meant ‘all’ or ‘every’.

The pilot indicates clearly that the majority of the *evri* noun phrases found in this corpus mean ‘all’ and are followed by the plural predicate marker *oli* as in *i no evri pikinini blong Vanuatu bae oli go insaed long klasrum long namaba 15 februari*, literally ‘not all children will go inside their classrooms on February 15’ but which means ‘Not all children will be able to start school on February 15 [after a cyclone which damaged the school]’ (*The Independent* No 315: 25).

¹⁵¹ The French name for this body is ‘Sénat coutumier’.

5.33: *Evri* pilot

<i>evri /everi</i> = every, each	<i>evri /everi</i> = all	ambiguous / other usage
<i>evri manis, evri dei, evri wiken, evri wik, evri yia</i> (time) <i>evri taem, evritaem, evri dei taem, evri tu wik</i> (frequency) <i>evri ples</i> (location) <i>evri pei dei</i> (compound time)	<i>evri pikinini long Vanuatu (oli), evri woman Vanuatu, evri woman long Vanuatu (oli), evri man insaed long vilij, long evri kaontri long wol, long evri aelan blong Torres, evri smol aelan blong not, evri eria blong Vanuatu, kukum evri frut (from we i gat tumas), evri politikol pati (we oli), evri pipol we oli iusim, muvum evri pipol i go, evri bisnis aktiviti, evri income (we oli exist), bitim evri hotel long Luganville, evri kes (judge), evri risalt blong ol exam, evri parens, evri prodak we oli stap kam, evri prodak mo materiel</i>	<i>pass long evri stoa</i> (all) <i>behaf long evri jeneresen</i> (each) <i>evri ripot long histri blong Omdudsman</i> (all) <i>tekem evri step blong V</i> <i>i gat evri right /raet blong V</i> <i>mekem evri posibol wei blong hem</i> <i>i traem evri bes blong V</i> <i>[Tafea]hemi putum eviri long wei tumas blong V</i>

However, there remain a few examples of *evri* noun phrases which are not so easy to define, or have another function. For instance, in the sentence *Long evri skul blong gavman mo ol skul we ol jioj I ranem* (*The Independent*, No 313), we find two quantifiers followed by the same noun: *evri skul* ‘every school, all the schools’ and *ol skul* ‘the schools’.¹⁵² It is impossible to know why the speaker did not use the same quantifier, but as the sentence is found in a summary of an interview of someone working at the Ministry of Education, we may venture that there is a difference in meaning, with emphasis on ‘every single state school’, ‘all of them’ (whether anglophone or francophone, perhaps), which makes the message sound more like a promise made to the population. He can only speak for the government, not for the various churches and the confessional schools which are simply *ol skul we ol jioj* ‘(the) schools run by (the) churches’. In this case, *evri* fulfills the role of emphasis mentioned by Lapaire and Rogé. Another explanation was given to me by a native speaker, namely that it is because there is only one government and there are several churches, hence the plural marker *ol* in the second part of the sentence. I must say that I have found no evidence of this happening in many cases, and I rather favour the explanation of an emphatic form. It is also the case, I think, in other phrases, such as *i traem evri bes blong V* ‘He tried his **very** best’ found in the same sports page as *Oli traem bes blong olgeta blong V*

¹⁵² In all the examples given in this part, bold characters are my emphasis.

‘They tried their best’ (The Independent, No 273). The same emphatic function appears in the sports section with *[Tafea] hemi putum evri long wei tumas blong V* or *mekem evri posibol wei blong hem*, ‘[Tafea] went out of their way to V’ or ‘tried every possible way’, two rare occurrences which are not idiomatic at all in Bislama and the translation of which was not always agreed on by native speakers.¹⁵³ In *tekem evri step blong V*, there is a very similar fixed expression in English ‘to take all the steps to V’ and even sometimes ‘to take every step possible to V’ so here it is impossible to determine whether the speaker is using one form or the other. Also calqued from English is *I gat evri raet blong V*. As mentioned earlier, the English expression ‘I have **every** right to V’ is considered by Lapaire and Rotgé to express emphasis and it is kept as such in Bislama, probably with the same modal function. I also looked at the various Public Notices in the newspapers, because they are often written in the three languages and it was therefore easy to see how ‘all’ and ‘every’ were translated into Bislama and French. I am giving examples of what I have found in the same corpus in table 5.34.

Table 5.34: *Evri* in public notices

Bislama	English	French
<i>long evri manis,</i>	for each month	-
<i>long evri dei</i>	for each day	-
<i>evri peimen</i>	all payments	tous les paiements
<i>evri man o kampani</i>	all the persons or companies	toutes les personnes ou compagnies
<i>evri sels</i>	-	tous les achats
<i>evri Bisnis Laesens Holders</i>	-	tous les détenteurs
<i>evri private or public trak</i>	both private and public vehicles	-
<i>evri memba blong [...]</i>	all [...] members	tous les membres de la [...]
<i>evri Edukesen institusen</i>	-	tous les établissements
<i>evri man we istap yusum</i>	all users of	les Sociétés Commerciales qui
<i>evri man o woman we ikat kraon</i>	all State Leaseholders	-

¹⁵³ ‘Out of their way’ is my interpretation of the sentence in the context.

As is immediately observable in these examples, almost every occurrence of *evri* used in public notices is translated by a plural quantifier both in English ‘all’ and French ‘tous’. The conclusions I can draw from the pilot study are that:

- There are many more forms with plural meaning than singular, so that *evri* is more often the equivalent of ‘all’ than ‘every’.
- Some are ‘ambiguous’ but the context can give a reasonable interpretation on whether it is more ‘every’ than ‘all’.
- The noun phrase is often followed by *long* or *blong* (localisation, just like *olgeta*) or a relative clause (*evri N we oli V*).

I also looked at the Bislama translation of the Bible and compared a few verses from the Gospel of Saint John in the King James Bible version and in the 1997 *Gud Nius blong Jisas Kraes*, with the following results shown in table 5.35. As can be seen instantly, there is no *evri* in my extracts of *Baebol long Bislama*, even though we do find occurrences of *evriwan*, but not to translate ‘everyone’ which is expressed by *olgeta man*.

In all the other translations whether of ‘all’ or of ‘every’, we find mostly *olgeta*, sometimes *ol* and sometimes \emptyset . This is indeed a very striking feature of the translation of the Bible, and of other religious texts I looked at. As the language used in *Baebol long Bislama* is often considered as slightly old-fashioned and as different from every day language, it might reinforce the impression that the use of *evri* is more recent and part of young people’s Bislama as opposed to a more traditional way of writing. The other reason for this can also be that in the Bible, the people always belong to a contextually determined group – those around, the believers, the Romans etc – so that the use of *olgeta* as a deictic makes sense in a lot of cases. In more recent religious publications (about religion), the use of *evri* is much more common because they concern more general topics with universal value.

Table 5.35: All/every in the Bible

	English	Bislama
all	all things (1:3) all we (1:16) them all (2:15) all men (2:24; 3:26;5:23;11:48;12:32; 13:35 above all (3:31) (x2) all things(3:35,4:29;13:3;14:26(x2);15:15) all the people (8:2) not all; not all clean (13:10;13:11) all these things (15:21) all (5:28; 6:37; 6:39; 7:21)	<i>olgeta samting</i> <i>yumi evriwan</i> <i>olgeta man</i> <i>olgeta; olgeta man</i> (x5) <i>olgeta narafala man</i> (x2) <i>olgeta samting</i> (x6) <i>olgeta man</i> <i>no yufala evriwan</i> (x2) <i>ol samting</i> <i>ol dedmen; olgeta man; wan man</i> <i>long olgeta; yufala evriwan</i>
every	every man (1:9) every one (3:8; 3:20; 6:40) every man (6:45)	<i>olgeta man</i> <i>olgeta man; man; olgeta</i> <i>man</i>

Lets us now look at the results of the data base corpus. I have to say that I only entered *evri* into the data base, not *olgeta*, because it is more the ‘modern’ use of *evri* I am trying to investigate.

5.4.4 *Evri* in the data base

Table 5.36 gives us a general vision of the use of *evri* in my data base corpus, by genre and by period. The results show some clear features for the use of *evri*. First, half of the total number of occurrences can be found in only two genres, ‘Press’ (25%) and ‘Official documents’ (23.4%). The third genre with a high proportion is ‘Religion’ which stands in contradiction with the results of the pilot study, but we will see why we obtain these figures for the data base. The remaining 6 genres have a total of 32.7% so roughly one third of the total number, with the lowest percentages for ‘Ads’ and ‘Periodicals’.

Table 5.36: *Evri* by genre and period

Genre	<i>evri</i>	Percentage	70	80	90	2000
Press	123	24.8%	13.8%	17%	0%	69.1%
Religion	94	19%	0%	1%	6.4%	84%
Ads	13	2.6%				100%
Storian	28	5.6%	36%			64%
Politics	41	8.3%	48.8%	41.5%	9.7%	
Official documents	110	23.4%			13.8%	86.2%
Translations	29	7.7%		29%	34.2%	36.8%
Periodicals	11	0.8%		100%		
Other	40	7.8%			28.2%	71.8%
Total	489	100%	5.8%	11.8%	9.8%	72.5%

If I compare this to the size of the corpus, it becomes obvious that on the whole, there is remarkable correspondence between the size of each genre in the corpus and the percentage of *evri* as appears in table 5.37, with the exception of a smaller proportion of *evri* in ‘Periodicals’ with 0.8% whereas the corpus size is 5%. The explanation for this could be that the corpus falling into the ‘Periodicals’ genre is mostly material published in the 1980s so that the comparatively smaller proportion of *evri* might then be interpreted as a sign that it was not so frequent in the earlier period in agricultural and science publications.

Table 5.37: *Evri* and corpus size by genre

Genre	press	religion	ads	storian	politics	official documents	translations	periodicals	other
<i>evri</i>	24.8%	19%	2.6%	5.6%	8.3%	23.4%	7.6%	0.8%	7.8%
corpus size	28%	16.9%	1.2%	5.5%	6.3%	24.4%	3%	5%	9.8%

One feature I looked at in greater detail is the occurrences of *evri* followed by a noun expressing time (here called *evri* + time), as in *evri dei*, *evri 2 wik* or *evri manis*, because these ‘time’ (or frequency) phrases are borrowed from English and have been present in Bislama for a very long time. Table 5.38 provides the results for the percentages of *evri* and of *evri* + time by genre.

Table 5.38: *Evri* and *evri* + time by genre

Genre	press	religion	ads	storian	politics	official documents	translations	periodicals	other
<i>evri</i>	24.8%	19%	2.6%	5.6%	8.3%	23.4%	7.6%	0.8%	7.8%
<i>evri</i> + time	31.2%	15.6%	5.2%	7.3%	7.3%	19.8%	3.1%	2%	8.3%

What we can observe here is that again, there is no major discrepancy between the use of *evri* + N and *evri* + time, even though the proportion of the time phrases is higher in ‘Press’ while it is lower in ‘Religion’ and ‘Official documents’. What this shows is that in the latter two categories, the nominal phrases *evri* + N expressing quantity are more numerous in proportion than the total *evri* phrases, but it does not necessarily mean that all these quantity phrases reflect the new tendency of replacing *olgeta* by *evri* to express ‘all’. It could also be explained by the fact that while articles are anchored in time by nature, religious or official documents can be qualified as more ‘timeless’ as they refer to more general rules, advice, guidelines or simply information.

The next step is to concentrate on finding out where and when the time expressions appear most, which is what table 5.39 does. The ‘match’ time/*evri* indicates that 96 out of the total 496 nouns phrases with *evri* indicate time, which represents slightly less than 20% of the total number, so it follows that 80% of *evri* + N express quantity.

Again, these results have to be put in perspective with the size of each genre in the corpus just as in table 5.37 for all the *evri* noun phrases. What we see is that most of the occurrences are in the recent period with the notable exception of ‘Translations’ and ‘Periodicals’, but this is due to the fact that my corpus for ‘Periodicals’ is entirely in the 1980 period, as well as a big part of ‘Translations’ (the rest is not dated). There is therefore no discrepancy in the results.

Table 5.39: *Evri* match time by genre and period

Genre	<i>Evri</i> match	Percentage	70	80	90	2000
Press	30	31.2%	23.3%	6.6%	0%	63.3%
Religion	15	15.6%			6.6%	93.4%
Ads	5	5.2%				100%
Storian	7	7.3%				100%
Politics	7	7.3%	57%	28.5%	14.3%	
Official documents	19	19.8%				100%
Translations	3	3.2%		100%		
Periodicals	2	2%		100%		
Other	8	8.3%			12.5%	87.5%
Total	96	≈100%	5.8%	11.8%	9.8%	72.5%

As 80% of all occurrences of *evri* do not express time, and are therefore not directly calqued from English, I think it is useful to look at these 480 occurrences of *evri* both in terms of the grammatical and semantic construction of the phrases. Most of them are composed of *evri* + *N*, but not always as could be expected, and some can have more than one noun, a pronoun or a suffix as will be shown in table 5.40.

Table 5.40: *Evri* by grammatical and lexical use

	<i>evri</i> + time	<i>evri</i> + <i>man</i>	<i>evri</i> + plur	<i>evri</i> + <i>samting</i>	<i>evri</i> + place	<i>evri</i> + N (NE)	<i>evri</i> + other	<i>evri</i> + <i>wan</i>	total
<i>evri</i> (number)	112	144	6	42	47	4	110	16	481
<i>evri</i> (percentage)	23.3%	29.9%	1.25%	8.75%	9.8%	0.8%	22.9%	3.3%	100%

First, I will define the categories in table 5.40 and give examples to make things clearer. *Evri* + time, as we have already seen, is generic for time or frequency phrases such as *evri wik* ‘every week’, *evri taem* ‘every time’ (but also ‘all the time’), *evri Tusde* ‘every Tuesday’ or *evri 30 Julae* ‘every 30th July’. *Evri* + place is the generic term for *evri ples* ‘everywhere’ but

also for all locations as in *evri haos* ‘every house’, *evri aelan* (quite common) ‘every island’, *evri kaontri* ‘every country’. For the reason already mentioned at the beginning of this part dealing with *evri*, the *evri* phrases can mean either ‘every + N’ or ‘all the + N’ in English. I will use ‘every’ in the translations, but sometimes this is impossible and the translation by ‘all’ is compulsory or much more likely, as exemplified by *evri wo* ‘every world’. *Evri* + *man* is the generic term for *evri man/woman/pikinini/pipol* ‘every man/woman/child but also ‘all men/women/children/the people’, as well as nouns for persons such as *tija* ‘teacher’, *patna* ‘partner’, *parent* ‘parent’, *jif* ‘chief’, *ni-Vanuatu* ‘Ni-Vanuatu’ and *delegate* ‘delegate’, to name a few. The proportion of *evri* used with a noun describing a person is the highest of the corpus, followed by *evri* + other which are the nouns that do not belong to any of the other sub-categories. This includes concrete things like *evri kakae* ‘all the food’, *evri tablet* ‘every tablet’, *evri map* ‘every map’, or abstract nouns such as *evri program* ‘every programme’, *evri kaen rilijin* ‘every kind of religion’, or *evri trabol* ‘every trouble, all the trouble’.

The three categories *evri* + time, *evri* + other and *evri* + man total up to more than three quarters of the total number of all the *evri* phrases. The remaining categories include *evri* + *samting* ‘everything’ and *evri* + *wan*, generic for *evri wan*, *evriwan*, *evrione* that is to say all the different orthographies I have found for ‘everyone’. It has to be remarked that I have not found a single example of **evribodi* ‘everybody’ which would imply that the use of *evriwan* is strongly integrated in Bislama. The various examples of *evriwan* found in the corpus include the meaning ‘all of us’ as in *yumi evriwan*. In the category *evri* + plur, we find six noun phrases where the nouns following *evri* are obviously in the plural because they have the English plural ending *-s*. It is in fact the only time when we can be sure that *evri* is used to mean ‘all’ and not ‘every’, as with the remaining Bislama nouns, it is impossible to make the distinction between singular and plural if there is no predicate marker *i* (singular) or *oli* (plural) following the *evri* phrase. Interestingly, five of the six nouns refer to persons: *evri sapotas* ‘all the supporters’, *evri stekholdas* ‘all the stakeholders’, *evri investas* ‘all the investors’, *evri parents* ‘all the parents’, *evri komunities* ‘all the communities’ and the last one is *evri sivil mo criminal keses* ‘all the civil and criminal cases’. The other interesting feature these six words have in common is that they are either nouns ending with *-as* ‘-ers’, a phenomenon which I have already studied in the part on the plural ending *-s*, or their orthographies show some English spelling as in ‘criminal’, ‘parents’ (often found in the plural but under the Bislama form *perens*) and *-ies* for *komunities*. We can therefore conclude that in all these examples, the link between English and the meaning of ‘all’ for *evri* is obvious. If we look at the period they appear in, we can see that four are in the 2000 period, 1

in 1970 (*evri sivil mo criminal keses*) and one in 1980 (*evri komunities*). It is of course impossible to draw conclusions on the possible use of *evri* with a plural meaning of ‘all’ from 6 occurrences and the fact that 66% of my corpus was published during the 2000 period, which makes a greater percentage for this period a logical thing to find.

The last sub-category in table 5.40 is composed of only 4 elements, so an extremely low 0.8% of the total *evri* phrases. In fact, there are only two of them are both are found twice under the same form. They are what I have called ‘NE’ for ‘Not English’, which means that they are either not possible in English as *evri mane* (found twice) ‘all the money’ (English *every money) or they would have a different meaning like in *evri wol* whose most common translation is ‘all the world’.¹⁵⁴ What is also interesting is that they occur in the sub-category of ‘religious translations’ in my data base, in the period 2000. So it follows that the use of *evri* for ‘all the’, or ‘the whole’ would be a conscious choice from the translator’s part. However, in this particular case, there is a possibility that *evri wol* does mean ‘every world’ as the original entire sentence reads “*Mi prei long Yu blong Yu letem man ia i kasem ol samting we oli save sevem hem long evri wol long ol wol blong Yu.*” ‘I pray to You so that You can let this man have all the things that can save him in every world among Your worlds’ (*Sam prea blong Baha’i* 2008: 7) where *evri wol* is part of a longer noun phrase *evri wol long ol wol blong Yu*. As I was trying to find the translation of this particular prayer without success, I looked at others and found “Thou art the Lord of all worlds” (*All praise, O my God, Be to Thee, Bahá’u’lláh*, <http://www.bahaiprayers.org/praise1.htm>, retrieved August 2011). This could well correspond to what we find in the Bislama “*we Hemi Masta blong evri wol*” (p. 21). It is the only occurrence of *evri wol* I have found in my whole corpus and it is obvious that it requires the predetermined context of believing in the existence of several worlds to make sense as ‘every, each world’.

So if we want to conclude on this particular feature, we can say that there are three uses of *evri* that are most common, in nouns phrases expressing time (an old use calqued on English), with people (a much more recent use) and nouns designing objects or abstract words (‘other’). In the data base corpus itself, there are few nouns phrases with *evri* followed by a plural noun, but in the rest of the corpus, it is a phenomenon which I believe has become more common even though it remains idiosyncratic, just like other features of decreolisation. What remains observable is that the predicate marker following the noun phrase with *evri* can

¹⁵⁴ Corpus document 20 p.7 and p.21.

be either *i* and *oli*, with the latter being much more common, and that *olgeta* is more commonly used to refer to a predetermined group so not so often in initial position but more frequently after the prepositions *long* and *blong*.

5.5 Verbs

One of the categories of words I have chosen to look at in detail in my database corpus is verbs. The main reason for this is because “verbs constitute a major part of speech in Bislama” (Crowley 2003: 19). In Bislama, the transitivity of the verb is, most of the time, marked by a suffix that can be found under one of the forms *-im/ -em/ -um/ -m*, depending on the vowel of the root, a fact I have already noted in Chapter 4. The other reason for my interest in the verbs is that Crowley made the choice of not including “the highly anglicised speech of the well-educated” in his dictionary (p. 16), which implies that as a result, a lot of the verbs found in the written language are not in the dictionary. So I have tried to categorise the verbs and see in what context they are more likely to be found.

Before looking at my data base, I examined the new verbs in Crowley’s 2003 dictionary. I only kept the transitive and intransitive verbs, leaving out what he calls ‘verb phrases’ such as *drink solwora* ‘drown’ because they are new expressions built on ‘old’ verbs. I found 46 ‘new’ verbs in total. Among these, 21 are intransitive and 25 are transitive, so just about the same number. I then tried to find out if some of these verbs were already known but had acquired a new meaning, and this is the case for 10 of them (so slightly less than 25% of them). Such verbs include *flot* ‘be baggy’ (for pants), *kaontem* ‘take into account’ and *holem* ‘keep from being hungry’, to quote a few. The remaining verbs are completely ‘new’, like *disaed* ‘decide’, *jekin* ‘check in’ (flight) and *meksem* ‘embarrass’, for instance. However, I did not find in Crowley most of the verbs of my data base which we will examine now.

The query of my database indicates a total of 1870 verbs that I have entered. Naturally, this does not represent the total number of verbs in the corpus, but the ones which seemed to have entered the lexicon rather recently or which are very common. All are borrowed directly from English, or at least from English with spelling differences for some of them, but very few. Table 5.41 gives us the repartition of the verbs according to genre and period. What this table shows is that a big majority of these verbs belong to the ‘Press’ genre with over 40% of the total number. Then come ‘Official documents’ and ‘Other’ with respectively 18% and 11.5%.

So most of the verbs of the data base (70%) are to be found in only three genres, and the remaining 30% are distributed among the other six genres.

Table 5.41: Verbs by genre and period

	Total verbs	70	80	90	2000
Press	40.7%	2.1%	11.8%	1.7%	84.3%
Religion	7.9%	-	4.8%	2.7%	72.8%
Politics	8.7%	27.1%	32.7%	40.1%	-
Ads	6.5%	-	-	3.3%	96.7%
Official documents	18%	-	-	7.5%	92.5%
Translations	2.5%	-	19.1%	29.8%	51.1%
Storian	1.8%	36.4%	-	-	63.6%
Other	11.5%	-	-	17.2%	82.8%
Periodicals	2.5%	-	100%	-	-

However, we must bear in mind that these results have to be put in perspective with the corpus size (table 5.42). What appears very quickly from these figures is the contrast between the two percentages for ‘Press’ and ‘Religion’, which are the two genres in which we find the biggest discrepancies.

Table 5.42: Verb percentages and corpus size

	Verbs	Corpus size
Press	40.7%	28%
Religion	7.9%	16.9%
Politics	8.7%	5.5%
Ads	6.5%	1.2%
Official documents	18%	24.4%
Translations	2.5%	3%
Storian	1.8%	5.5%
Other	11.5%	9.8%
Periodicals	2.5%	5%

A very big proportion of the verbs are found in 'Press' for a size of corpus of 28% whereas it is just the opposite for 'Religion', which is rather big in the corpus (16.9%) but contains a relatively small percentage of the verbs of the data base (7.9%). The possible explanation for this is that, as we have seen with other criteria, the 'Press' genre is much more anglicised than 'Religion', so it makes sense that we should find more of these verbs recently borrowed from English in newspapers rather than in religious documents which are usually written in a much more traditional fashion. As we can see, there are no major big gaps in any of the other genres with figures that roughly correspond in terms of proportions. The second observation we can make from these results is that the verbs are overwhelmingly in the '2000' period, which is in keeping with the phenomenon of the anglicisation of Bislama in the past decade. Again, I have already made clear that in some genres, a big part of my corpus is recent so the results are logical (see table 5.1).

Looking at the verbs in my data base more closely, the first thing I observed is that most are transitive verbs (only 315 out of 1870 are intransitive, so about 17%). I decided to make a list of the transitive verbs only: I crossed out all the doubles (including various spellings for the same verb), intransitive verbs and the verbs written in English – some could be either in English or in Bislama so I looked at the corpus documents to try and see if the text was highly anglicised or not. I found 85 verbs in English, which represents only 4.5% of the total number. This implies that even when people anglicise their Bislama a lot, they still modify the verbs – at least the transitive ones where it is immediately observable – by adding the *-em* suffix to turn them into Bislama. It also means that this grammatical feature is definitely integrated into the language, even for the people whose language is highly anglicised. I was left with a list of 468 transitive verbs which I tried to categorise, but it was not easy to decide which criteria to use. I started with making a list of the most frequent verbs in my data base, ending up with 33 of them, so representing 7% of the total number. I then checked all the verbs, including the 33, against the latest version of Crowley's dictionary published in 2003. Out of the 468 verbs, only 134 are present in Crowley, which amounts to almost 30% of them. In other words, more than three quarters of the transitive verbs in my data base are

‘new’ verbs. Among the 33 most-commonly used verbs already mentioned, only 7 of them appear in Crowley, which represents a percentage of only 21% of these verbs.¹⁵⁵

It follows that about 80% of the most commonly-used verbs are ‘new ones’, or have not been listed by Crowley by choice. However, their high frequency of occurrence indicates that they have become very common in the past few years. I then looked closely at the verbs which are not in Crowley but which have a cognate already mentioned in the dictionary: these are listed in table 5.43. With a total of 51, they represent 11% of the total number of verbs and have been created from either nouns or other grammatical categories. One (*promes*) is in two columns as it is both a noun and an intransitive verb (which explains why the total percentage in table 5.43 is over 100%). When we look at the results, we can see that more of the new verbs were ‘created’ from nouns, 25% from intransitive verbs and most of the others from the derivation of existing verbs by adding a prefix as in *lidim* ‘lead’ becoming *mislidim* ‘mislead’ and *bildim* ‘build’ becoming *rebildim* ‘rebuild’, therefore following exactly the same pattern of derivation as in English.

Table 5.43: Verbs not found in Crowley 2003

Verbs not in 2003	Nouns	Intransitive verbs	V (+ prefix)	Adjectives
<i>asosiet</i>	<i>asosiesen</i>			
<i>bekem</i>	<i>beka</i>			
<i>bridjim(gap)</i>	<i>bridj</i>			
<i>dabolem</i>		<i>dabol</i>		
<i>daarektem</i>	<i>daarekta</i>			
<i>divelopem</i>	<i>developmen</i>			
<i>diskwalifaem</i>				<i>kwalifae</i>
<i>eduketem</i>	<i>edukesen</i>			
<i>eksasaesem</i>		<i>eksasaes</i>		
<i>endem</i>	<i>en</i>			
<i>faenelaesem</i>	<i>faenol</i>			
<i>fomem</i>		<i>fomap</i>		
<i>haosem</i>	<i>haos</i>			
<i>invaetem</i>	<i>invitesen</i>			
<i>kalarem</i>	<i>kala</i>			
<i>kaonselem</i>	<i>kaonsel</i>			
<i>kwalifaem</i>				<i>kwalifae</i>
<i>kwestenem</i>	<i>kwesten</i>			
<i>leftem</i>		<i>leftemap</i>		
<i>listim</i>	<i>lis</i>			
<i>manajem</i>	<i>manaja</i>			
<i>mislidim</i>			<i>lidim</i>	

¹⁵⁵ The 6 verbs are: *adreseem*, *dipen*, *enjoem*, *komplen*, *oganaesem*, *rejista* and *ripotem* (‘address’, ‘depend’, ‘enjoy’, ‘complain’, ‘organise’, ‘register’ and ‘report’).

<i>misiusum</i>			<i>iusum</i>	
<i>notisim</i>	<i>notis</i>			
<i>onem</i>	<i>ona</i>			
<i>ovalukim</i>			<i>lukim</i>	
<i>planem</i>		<i>plan</i>		
<i>plisim</i>		<i>plis</i>		
<i>praktesem</i>		<i>praktis</i>		
<i>promisem</i>	<i>promes</i>	<i>promes</i>		
<i>promotem</i>	<i>promosen</i>			
<i>rafem</i>				<i>raf</i>
<i>ribeldem</i>				
<i>refilim</i>			<i>bildim</i>	
<i>rekukum</i>			<i>filim</i>	
<i>rikrutem</i>	<i>rikrut</i>		<i>kukum</i>	
<i>saplaem</i>		<i>saplae</i>		
<i>selektem</i>	<i>seleksen</i>			
<i>skorem</i>	<i>sko</i>			
<i>speahedim</i>	<i>speahed</i>			
<i>spredim=spredem</i>		<i>spred</i>		
<i>stadim</i>		<i>stadi</i>		<i>strong</i>
<i>strongem</i>				
<i>tagetem</i>	<i>taget</i>			
<i>trakem</i>	<i>trak</i>			
<i>transpotem</i>	<i>transpot</i>			
<i>tuarem</i>		<i>tua</i>		
<i>voesem</i>	<i>voes</i>			
<i>votem</i>		<i>vot</i>		
<i>witnesem</i>	<i>witnes</i>			
<i>[Y]unaetem</i>	<i>yuniti, yunion</i>			

Table 5.44 expresses the same results in percentages, so they are easier to analyse quickly:

Table 5.44: Verb percentages by category

	Nouns	Intransitive Verbs	Verbs (+ prefix)	Adjectives
number of verbs	29	13	6	4
percentage	55.8%	25%	11.5%	7.8%

Among the verbs created from adjectives, two come from the same word *kwalifae* to form two different verbs with one being merely a derivation of the other (*diskwalifae*). There are also a few verbs in the data base that I did not include in table 5.32 because even though they may appear to have close words in Crowley, they do not have the same or a derived meaning, but a different one. This is the case for *adrese* ‘address’ which is found in Crowley under a

noun meaning ‘address’ (where you live). The transitive verb *plisim* ‘please’ has also a different significance from the intransitive verb *plis* ‘request’, and *faenelaesem* ‘finalise’ is not exactly similar to the noun *faenol* ‘final’ used in sport, according to Crowley.

Table 5.45 provides the list of the verbs in my data base which have a new meaning in the texts of my corpus, whereas the ‘old’ meaning is the one found in the 2003 dictionary.

Table 5.45: Verbs with a new meaning

Verbs	Old meaning	New meaning
<i>kosem</i>	overcharge	cause, provoke
<i>eksasaesem</i>	exercise (sport)	exercise (power)
<i>adoptem</i>	adopt a child	adopt a policy
<i>fiksime</i>	repair/arrange	fix a problem
	sexual partner (sl)	
<i>onem</i>	turn on	own
<i>fesem</i>	play against (sport)	face (a problem)
<i>plisim</i>	plis (v.i.):request	please
<i>ranem =ronem</i>	run, travel	run (a country)
<i>sevem</i>	save/shave	serve
<i>planem</i>	plant	plan (family)

So the process of expansion is not very frequent for verbs in Bislama as we can see that very few of them acquire a new meaning. Among the remaining verbs, many are written with an English-based spelling, that is to say that sometimes the writers do not always modify the original orthography to spell the word in Bislama only. Such verbs include examples such as *riestablishim* ‘reestablish’, *acreditim* ‘accredit’, *returnem* ‘return’, *riafemem* ‘reaffirm’ and *reviewem* ‘review’. Sometimes just the suffix is added to the English verb as in *authorisem* ‘authorise’ or *negociatem* ‘negociate’, and some even take a strange transitive suffix ending, like *suspectum* ‘suspect’ or *mekim* ‘make’. These are probably typos, but could also be due to an ignorance of spelling rules in Bislama with changes due to people’s own pronunciation of the words and the way they say them or perceive them, so it seems to me room must be allowed for these nonce occurrences without drawing any hasty conclusions.

The last point I want to make about the verbs is that there can also be great variation in the use of the predicate marker *i*, which will be studied in the ‘Spelling’ part of this chapter.

5.6 Spelling

As has been made clear on several occasions in the previous parts of this thesis, written Bislama is highly variable so it probably sounds slightly odd, not to say superfluous, to include a criterion such as ‘spelling’ in the data base. I wanted to look at the language to see whether I could find particular issues relevant to the problem of the standardisation of written Bislama, still a contentious issue at times, and perhaps patterns in variation, if there is any to be found. I started by filling in all the words that were not spelt ‘properly’, whatever that may mean when we deal with Bislama. What I noted was the orthographies where trace of English was evident in Bislama words – as there is a specific column for English words – in words like *whu* ‘who’, *ich wan* ‘each one’ and *samthing* ‘something’, for instance. I also noted the already identified variations around consonants, with alternatively *go* and *ko* for ‘go’, and vowels or diphthongs like *ai* for *ae* in *nait* ‘night’, *bambai* ‘will’, and *laikem* ‘like’, for example. While noting all the variations, I soon realised that once more, I was faced with some documents that contain a lot of spelling variations – but mostly consistent – whereas others have none. Anglicised language means anglicised spelling more often than not, but not always and variation in spelling is also linked to the writer – or the speaker when dealing with interviews – and their own way of pronouncing the consonants. I also noted words with reduplication of a syllable, and the cliticised form of the predicate marker *i*. It was at times difficult to decide whether a word may have been subject to misspelling, or if sometimes it is a typo, and I had to rely on common sense and the close observation of the rest of the document to include the word into the data base or not.

5.6.1 Various orthographies

Among the 1437 words I have in this ‘spelling’ part of the data base, there are 11 *blo* and *lo* for *blong* and *long* (a very small 0.8%). These two abbreviated forms, very common in oral speech, are hardly ever found in written material, but they are becoming slightly more common. We find them particularly in ads but mostly in chat or emails, as was mentioned in Chapter 4. There are 41 reduplications (about 3%), with a lot of repetitions of the same words like *pigpig* ‘pig’, *sloslo* ‘slow’, *smolsmol* ‘smol’ , *gogohed* ‘continue’, *samsamting* ‘something’, *kwikkwik* ‘quick’, as well as reduplication of the pronouns in *mi mi* ‘I’ and *yu yu* ‘you’. What is interesting with this particular feature is that most of my examples come from ‘older’ documents, that is to say from the 1970 and 1980 periods, and are hardly present in more recent documents. It seems reasonable to say, therefore, that reduplication, at least in the written material, is disappearing. What is also obvious is that it is highly idiosyncratic as

it is found in the same publications several times while it is nowhere to be seen in others. In the introduction to the 2003 edition of the dictionary, Crowley gives the various meanings expressed by reduplication (Crowley 2003: 26-27). For instance, he mentions that “numerals are the only words that are regularly fully reduplicated in Bislama [to indicate groups]” (p. 27). I have not found trace of this in the corpus of the data base and as I was saying, I have found very few of them in recent publications.

The other feature of Bislama which seems to be also disappearing is the spelling of the sounds *ngk* and *ngg* in words like *angka* ‘anchor’ and *fingga* ‘finger’, because the velar nasal is spelt *-ng* in Bislama. I have found a few of these words in the corpus, and their orthography corresponds to the one advocated by Crowley, for the phonologic reasons just mentioned. However, words like *angkul* ‘uncle’, *Engglis* ‘English’ and *Engglan* ‘England’, *krangke* ‘stupid’ *hanggri* ‘hungry’ found in the corpus are hardly ever found in written Bislama today.¹⁵⁶ One of the most commonly used words in Bislama belongs to this category and is spelled in many different ways, but the spelling adopted by Crowley is *tangkiu* ‘thank you’ (Crowley 2004: 19). However, because we can observe that the rule of *ngk* and *ngg* is disappearing, as words are more and more written *anka* and *kranki*, for instance, people apply this to other words as well and very often write *tankiu*, suppressing the *-g* before the *-k*. It could also be due simply to the fact that some are not aware of the *ngk* combination, as Bislama does not like consonant clusters very much and tries – or perhaps ‘tried’ is more accurate – to avoid them, so people do it unconsciously in writing too. If the language is to be standardised, there is no doubt that this particular tendency would have to be examined and a decision made about the spelling to adopt.

The word *tangkiu* takes us to another bone of contention for spelling, namely the difference between *-i* and *-y*. The rule is clearly defined in Crowley (2003 and 2004) but people are probably not aware that there is a rule and do not know how to apply it, so we find as many *tankyu* as *tankiu* – probably more by assimilation with *yu* ‘you’.

What I also found out in the list is words, often adjectives, with the English ending *-al* as in ‘national’, ‘local’ and ‘possible’. The confusion in spelling comes from writing them either with and *-ol* ending like *nasonol*, *lokol* and *posibol*, or with *-al* as in *nasonal* (Crowley’s choice (p. 185) but we also find *lokol* (p. 154) and there is no *posibol*). We also find sometimes *nasonel* and *posibel* for these words, so it can be confusing at times.

¹⁵⁶ The two words *Engglis* and *Engglan* do not exist at all in Bislama, the correct words are *Inglis* and *Inglan*.

Some common words like *famle* ‘family’, *agensem* ‘against’, *sapos* ‘if’ and *jyoy* ‘church’ have also a lot of different spellings which would be tedious to all note here, but it would not be difficult to choose one of them and spread it. But this is another question to which I have already alluded and which we will see in more detail in the next chapter.

5.6.2 Cliticisation of *i*

The last query in the ‘spelling’ part concerns the cliticisation of the predicate marker *i*. As far as the spelling of the predicate marker *i* is concerned, it may seem that there is variation in the way people write. However, a closer examination shows that this is not quite the case, and I would even go as far as saying that it is completely idiosyncratic from what I have observed in the pilot study I made. Indeed, the spelling is, in most cases, very consistent throughout one piece of writing. For instance, if we look at the *Wikli Post* free supplement No 48, published on Saturday, August 8, 2009, we find a perfect illustration of what I mean. In the article on page 2, the journalist consistently writes the predicate marker with the word that follows, mostly verbs but not necessarily, as can happen in Bislama. Examples of this are: *Pacer hemi fes akrimen we **ibin** kamaot* ‘Pacer is the first agreement that came out’ and *Rod blong tred **imoa** esi* ‘Trade is easier’. What we find in articles page 3 is completely different, as, except in the headline which reads “*Hu **i** onem Port Vila mo Luganville*” ‘Who owns Port Vila and Luganville’, all the predicate markers are under the form of *I*, with a capital letter, as exemplified in the following occurrences: *Hu nao **I** onem Port Vila mo Luganville* (same sentence), *Port Vila hem **I** stap long Shefa Provins* ‘Port Vila is located in the Shefa province’ and *From hem **I** no isi afta we **I** gat tumas tokotk **I** kamaot* ‘Because it was not easy since too many things had been said’.

It is difficult to venture an explanation for this phenomenon, but I will nevertheless try to give my own assumption. From my personal experience of having had to proofread my thesis several times, I can say that I have had to check my spelling every time I was making a quotation from Bislama, precisely to make sure that I was not misquoting the ‘*I*’ word. If we take the example of the latter article of the *Wikli*, what seems to be happening is that the journalist is perfectly aware that the ‘right’ spelling is *i*, which – ironically enough – can be found in the headline, and then just let the computer change small *i* into *I* without correcting it because it means spending a lot of time doing this and we all know that journalists always write in a hurry.

It is quite possible that others chose to not be faced with this problem by simply not having a space between *i* and the word that follows, using it as a simple word. In an article of the sports section in the same newspaper, we find the three spellings used at the same time: what is recognised as the ‘standard’ form *i* in *Ol fan blong hem i wantem luk hem i faet longfala taem moa* ‘His fans wanted to see him fight much longer’.

We also have the capital *I* in *Mifala I spendem ova long Vt1000 long transport* ‘I spent more than 10 Vt on transport’ and the cliticised form in *Naoia ol arenjmen **istap** blong nekis profesonal faet blong Jacobus* ‘All the arrangements for Jacobus’s next professional fight have been made’ (bold characters are my emphasis). So it is easy to see that sometimes not much attention is given to the spelling of the predicate marker *i*.

This is why I decided to enter the cliticised forms of the predicate marker *i* mentioned in Part 5.5 ‘Verbs’, including the forms with the negation *no* as in *inomas* and with the auxiliary *bin* as in *ibingo*. In Bislama, there are two ‘predicate markers’ *i* and *oli* whose “behavior is in fact rather complex, and can only be described with reference to elements of the sentence outside the verb phrase” (Crowley 2004: 92).¹⁵⁷ There is variation between the use of *i* and *oli* depending on the speakers, and on some grammatical constraints such as subject-verb agreement as shown by Meyerhoff (2000). She states that “Though the written convention is to represent *i* and *oli* as separate words, it is clear that they are clitics on the verb.” (Meyerhoff 2000: 86).

I did not look at the subjects when I entered my forms into the data base, I merely noted the variation in spelling and the cliticisation of the morpheme *i*. Funnily enough, there is no cliticisation of *oli*, but I have not tried to investigate this particular feature which could be the object of some other research.

A query was created to identify all the joined forms among all the ‘spelling’ items so that we can look at the verbal forms independently from the rest.¹⁵⁸ There is a total number of 392 forms which represent almost 30% of all the words I entered into the data base criterion. The results of my findings are shown in the four next tables. We will first see how the forms are distributed in the corpus in terms of genre and period.

¹⁵⁷ Not everybody agrees on the terminology of ‘predicate marker’, hence the punctuation.

¹⁵⁸ What I identify as ‘spelling’ in tables 5.47 to 5.50 refers to the cliticised verbal form (as in *igat*)

Table 5.46: ‘Spelling’ by genre and period

Genre	Spelling in data base	Percentage in data base	70	80	90	2000
Press	126	32.1%	8%	40.6%		50.9%
Ads	22	5.6%			9%	91%
Storian	0	0%	63%			27%
Politics	130	33.1%	15.4%	74.6%	10%	
Official documents	71	18.1%			1.4%	98.6%
Translations	6	1.5%			83.3%	16.7%
Periodicals	24	6.1%		100%		
Religion	1	0.2%				100%
Other	12	3%			83.3%	16.7%
Total	392		5.8%	11.8%	9.8%	72.5%

Just as for the other results, the percentages have to be observed against the corpus size in table 5.47 to look for potential discrepancies.

Table 5.47: ‘Spelling’ and corpus size

Genre	Corpus size	Percentage in data base
Press	28%	32.1%
Ads	1.2%	5.6%
Storian	5.5%	0%
Politics	6.3%	33.1%
Official documents	24.4%	18.1%
Translations	3%	1.5%
Periodicals	5%	6.1%
Religion	16.9%	0.2%
Other	9.8%	3%

Contrarily to the results for the other criteria, we can see that there can be great discrepancies between the size of the genre in the corpus and the proportion of ‘Spelling’. For instance, ‘Religion’ consists of 16.9% of the entire corpus, but only has 0.2% of ‘Spelling’, which means that in all the documents of the corpus dealing with religion, we do not find many cliticised *i* at all. In other words, the rule mentioned by Camden as early as 1977 which states that the predicate marker should be written separately from the verb is applied almost without failure in the religious texts. Likewise, this form does not occur in ‘Storian’ while it is overwhelmingly there in ‘Politics’, which implies that we must look at the forms in more detail.

Another interesting point to be noted when dealing with *i* is that I have found it present in 71 corpus documents out of a total of 246, so in 29% of them. However, the feature is far from being evenly distributed within the 71 elements, as in fact half of them contain only one or two occurrences of an attached predicate marker. Thus, it is clear when looking at the data base that some documents contain an extremely high proportion of the feature whereas it is totally absent in others. To see if I could find any explanation for this phenomenon, I looked more closely at the corpus elements where it was found. First, we can see clearly that this is not necessarily a new feature. But again, these results do not indicate much by themselves and have to be set against the composition of the corpus as seen in table 5.48.

Table 5.48: Main ‘spelling’ and corpus size by period

	70	80	90	2000
Percentage spelling	6.9%	49.6%	6.3%	37.2%
Percentage corpus	10.5%	12.3%	8.2%	66.1%

We can only account for the great discrepancies between the proportions by looking at the documents in even greater detail. What can be observed without a doubt is that as far as the predicate marker *i* is concerned, there seems to be a lot of variation in the spelling as *i* separated, *I* with a capital letter and or *i* cliticised, and I would even go as far as saying that its use is idiosyncratic. Indeed, just as is the case in the pilot study, the spelling is, in most cases, very consistent throughout one piece of writing, and this has nothing to do with the

period it was written in, which confirms what I had seen from the first observations in the rest of the corpus. There is no certainty, and I have noticed that in the publications by the Vanuatu Women’s Centre (VWC), for example, the morpheme *i* is systematically cliticised. So that the figures given by the query do not necessarily reflect what is happening in all the documents.

I then tried to find out which of the cliticised forms were the most commonly used as shown in table 5.49, that is to say on which verb or on any other word *i* was clitic.

Table 5.49: ‘Spelling’ most common forms

	<i>igat / ikat</i>	<i>istap</i>	<i>isave</i>	<i>imas</i>	<i>ikam</i>	<i>iko/igo</i>	<i>other</i>
	<i>inokat / inogat</i>					<i>ibingo</i>	
Percentage in database	19.3%	9.1%	6.5%	2.9%	4.9%	5.5%	51.8%

As we can see, about 50% of all the forms are distributed among 6 verbs, with the highest proportion for *igat*, which does not come as a surprise as *gat* is what Crowley calls ‘the existential verb’: when it asserts the existence of something, there is no subject and *gat* is invariably used with the predicate marker *i* (*i no* in the negative form) (Crowley 2004: 119), so it is more or less the equivalent of ‘there is / there are’. The same remark applies to *istap* because *stap* can have a variety of meanings. As for *isave*, it is also normal to find it among the common forms because *save* means ‘know’ and ‘can’, just like the forms *ikam* and *igo* which are also very common because of their meaning of ‘come’ and ‘go’. As for *imas*, the role of *mas* as the auxiliary ‘must’ or ‘should’ explains also its presence among the common forms.

In Bislama, the predicate is not necessarily a verb, but can be a noun, and adjective or even a prepositional phrase (Crowley 2004). This is why in the ‘other’ category of Table 5.39, we find words such as *ijas* and *ibin* (*i* + tense marker), *istret*, *iglad*, *itru* and *itabu* (*i* + adjective), *imoa esi* (*i* + comparative), *ino* and *inomo* (*i* + negative marker), *ishud* (*i* + auxiliary), *igiaman* (*i* + noun), *iblong* (*i* + preposition). However, most of them are verbs, and the people who are used to cliticising *i* do it very consistently, just as the writers who never use the cliticised form.

It is impossible to draw general conclusions when there is so much variability, of course, and this is not what I mean to do. This part simply aims at clarifying the use of some forms commonly found in Bislama, but which appear idiosyncratically.

5.7 Passive and Epenthetic Vowel

Before summing up the conclusions of the various parts of this chapter, I must add two remarks about my data base. When I decided on the criteria, I added two more to those already studied in this chapter: one called ‘Vowel’ for the epenthetic vowels, and the other called ‘Passive’ because I had found a few examples of Bislama words written with final *-ed* which were passive forms as opposed to the common structure *oli + V* normally used in a relative clause to express passive as in *Bislama we oli raet* ‘written Bislama’. However, the two criteria did not prove to be very meaningful and say much about the anglicisation of Bislama. I will nevertheless make a few comments on what I observed.

It is obvious that the forms with epenthetic vowels are disappearing and words like *forom* ‘because’ or *kolosap* ‘near, almost’ are rare today and are now spelt closer to English with *from* and *klosap* respectively. The problem of the standardisation of Bislama will be dealt with in Chapter 6, but what can be said at this stage is that the pressure from English Camden was mentioning in his dictionary is a fact and the multiconsonant spelling seems to be the – unwritten – rule today. The more traditional forms containing the vowels can be seen in ‘Letters to the Editor’ and interviews where they reflect people’s pronunciation. This is however not really a recent phenomenon: if we check **kolosap** in Crowley’s 2003 dictionary, we find “See **klosap**” (p.137), which indicates that the latter is more commonly used than the former. As for *forom*, it is nowhere to be found in the dictionary and only *from* is referenced.

As for the passive, there are two signs of anglicisation: the most common is the *-ed* ending which I found in more than 50 cases (not counting doubles), but most of them written in English. The other words in the passive or with the *-ed* form in English are used in phrases with English grammatical word order, but without the ending *-ed*, as illustrated by *stap involv* ‘is involved’, *i handicap* ‘handicapped’ and *kompas long* ‘compared to’, to quote a few. The other feature, less common, is calquing the English passive construction with ‘be’ into Bislama by using *bin* as the auxiliary, with examples like *oli bin involved* ‘They are involved’. However, this construction is ambiguous at times because *bin* is the auxiliary of the past in Bislama and never means ‘be’, so sometimes it is impossible to know whether the speaker is using a past form with *-ed* or a calque of ‘be + past participle’, as in *hemi bin*

destroyed which can be translated by both ‘it was destroyed’ or ‘it is destroyed’. In most cases, the context is sufficient to know whether it is one or the other, but not always. This *-ed* form with *bin* is getting more frequent but remains marginal for the time being, most of the passive forms are still expressed with the *oli V* construction, or simply by noun + verb like *hemi establish* ‘it is established’ or *oli beis* ‘they are based’.

Conclusion

This chapter only deals with the data base I constituted and the results obtained from the queries. Each of the various criteria I selected is studied in detail and is examined in terms of its relevance to the potential decreolisation of Bislama. We must, however, always bear in mind that the results presented here have to be put in perspective with the nature of the data base corpus, a fact I have tried to make clear throughout this chapter. The results are presented and summarised in the conclusion chapter. What can be said at this stage is that there is clear evidence of correlation in the presence of the various criteria in the documents.

“Language is like a door. It unlocks your opportunities to see what is actually behind the scene. When you go through a door to a house, you can find out what is inside— a table, chair, freezer, etc. For any particular country or island, language is the door to the customs and culture” (Chief Willie Bongmatur, National Council of Chiefs President 1998)¹⁵⁹

CHAPTER 6: BISLAMA IN EDUCATION

It has been impossible for me to conduct this research on written Bislama without taking into account the place it occupies in the formal education system in Vanuatu, because I strongly believe that the two are closely linked. This is what I will show in this chapter which focuses on education. In Chapter 2, I have already mentioned some of the literature I have used as background for my research, under part 2.3. Let me add here a few more articles worthy of interest for their approach on this particular problem, before I focus on the specificities of the question in Vanuatu.

I will start this chapter with two quotes from Charpentier which I believe will set the tone for the discussion on the language policy in Vanuatu. We must bear in mind here that these remarks were made in 1979, that is to say just a year before Independence: “The will to have bilingual people seems to correspond more to the philosophies and interests of the former colonial supervisory powers than to meet the actual educational needs of today’s New Hebridean world” (Charpentier 1979: 211).¹⁶⁰ Further into his study of the situation, he adds: “Generalising bilingual education to the whole archipelago amounts to applying a double foreign system on the Melanesian world thus choosing double unsuitability, not to say double

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Miles 1998: 146.

¹⁶⁰ Cette recherche d’un bilinguisme individuel généralisé nous semble plus correspondre aux philosophies et aux intérêts des anciennes puissances de tutelle qu’aux réels besoins en éducation du monde néo-hébridais contemporain.

uselessness” (Charpentier 1979: 215).¹⁶¹ So as we can see, the problem of language policy in Vanuatu is by no means a recent one and is still the object of debate.

To look at today’s world, let us first take into consideration the results of the 2009 census concerning the language of instruction (question P18b) along with the highest education level achieved by the population. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the figures of the 2009 census are incomplete so it is hard to draw conclusions from them. What they seem to indicate is that more than half the children go to English-medium schools, about 23% to French-medium schools. It is hard to say anything about the remaining 25% because we do not know if they did not state the language of instruction, or if they go to bilingual schools – but there are not many of those in the country – or if they go to kindergarten where VL are in use. As a reminder, I will mention the results of the previous census (1999) which indicated that about 28% of the students attended a French-speaking school (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1). The only other statistics we have are the ones given by Stahl after a survey in 1993 which only concerns the Lamel-speaking community, but in which we can find interesting conclusions on the reading and writing skills of this community in Bislama: 92% of the group can speak Bislama, even though most people use Lamel much more than any other language and only use Bislama as the language of wider communication. What the survey shows is that the levels of basic reading and writing skills are related to age, the language in question and the attained educational level. What it also reveals is that people are better at reading than they are at writing, in any of the three languages assessed (Lamel, Bislama and English) (Stahl 1994:27). In terms of school enrolment, 86% of the children aged 6-13 go to school, but the figures sharply decline after the age of 13 (age of the end of compulsory schooling). If we look at achievement, about 50% of the population over 15 had primary school level education, 25% reach secondary level and less than 4% go into higher education. It follows that 16% have only attended preschool, or not been to school at all. Finally, the statistics show that educational levels are higher in urban areas than in rural zones. If we consider language ability, the figures given in Chapter 1 of this work must be, in my opinion, linked with those stating the level of education completed for the population over 15: what is to be noticed here is the high percentage of people who have no schooling at all, combined with a high rate of secondary school drop-outs. As shown in Table 6.1, very few students reach the level of end of secondary school, and only a very small percentage go to university or get

¹⁶¹ Généraliser les classes bilingues à l’ensemble de l’archipel revient à plaquer un double système étranger sur le monde mélanésien et à opter pour une double inadaptation, pour ne pas dire une double inutilité.

tertiary education. The problem of underachievement for many is probably one of the biggest challenges for the Ni-Vanuatu government to tackle. However, it has to be noted that ‘education for all’ has indeed become a priority for the country in the past few years and that in 2010, school fees were abolished for school children with the aim of having free primary education for all in the formal system. Obviously, this is a major step forward in providing access to education to all the children whose parents could not afford to send them to school. One can nevertheless also venture that the medium of instruction is also part of the problem of having such a small number of students successfully reaching the end of secondary school, as it is today a well-known fact that learning in a foreign language is problematic for most children.

Table 6.1: Highest education achieved global 2009

	No school	Pre-school	Some primary	Year 10 certificate	Secondary certificate	University entrance	Vocational certificate	Other
H.E.C* (>15)	17.2%	1%	20.4%	11%	7%	2%	1.1%	0.5%

*Highest Education Completed for the population over 15. Compiled from *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. 87

The results are presented in a slightly different way later on in the report with the urban/rural dichotomy, as compiled in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Highest education achieved in urban and rural areas 2009

H.E.C * (>15)	national	urban	rural
no school	17.2%	5%	21.7%
primary	51.5%	38.8%	56.2%
secondary	26.4%	46.5%	18.9%
tertiary	3.8%	7.7%	2.3%
vocational	1.2%	2.0%	0.9%

* Highest Education Completed for the population over 15. Compiled from Key indicators, *Census of Population and Housing 2009 Basic Tables Report*, p. iv

What is notable is the big discrepancy between rural and urban areas in terms of the years of schooling, with the vast majority of rural students having no schooling or not going further than primary education.

What is immediately striking in Vanuatu is that the present system takes little notice of a phenomenon that has been the object of study for quite some time now in many multilingual countries, including the Pacific region, namely literacy in indigenous languages as well as pidgins or creoles. Crowley and Lynch (1986) already mentioned quite clearly the difficulties for the children who begin their education in a language they do not speak, which provokes lack of interest in both students and parents who more often than not cannot help their children in the metropolitan language they often do not master themselves. Siegel (2007) also discusses the same issue some twenty years later, and comes to the same conclusion. He says that when the children are taught in the metropolitan language, “they have to acquire both literacy and a second language (L2) in their first years of school” (Siegel 2007: 153). He adds that all studies show that learning literacy in a pidgin/creole has no negative effect on the later learning of another official language, and sometimes even gives better results. He also stresses the fact that it may be easier to distinguish between the lexifier and the pidgin/creole when there is no continuum, as neither can be seen as a dialect of the other. As there seems to be no post-creole continuum with Bislama (Siegel 2008), there should be no confusion between English and Bislama providing they are presented as two discrete languages. Crowley (2007) also raises the question of the importance of literacy in VL as opposed to literacy in a European language. He states that VL literacy can be promoted for different reasons, for religious purposes, to develop pride in VL, because they are considered as the best bridge to literacy in a language of wider communication, or simply to develop ‘basic skills’ for non-educated people. He challenges Charpentier’s (1997) assumption that literacy in a VL can damage oral cultures and is a westernised approach that can “entail a loss of diversity culminating in a shift towards the metropolitan language” (Crowley 2007: 167) and ‘disacculturation’. According to Crowley, today literacy is seen as “giving prestige to vernacular languages or giving people access to information in a decolonised world” (Crowley 2007: 169), and he adds that people value highly the writing of stories in VL, as it implies the full participation of local people, not merely that of ‘foreign intellectuals’. To be successful, he argues, literacy must be implanted in people’s cultures and become indigenised, and more efforts are made in adopting a much more positive attitude towards VL, be it by introducing them in the former stages of education, as well as the work done by the VCC, for instance.

In a report published by UNESCO, Bühmann and Trudell (2008) show that in Papua New Guinea, where a new bilingual policy was introduced in 1995 using VL for the first years of school, “The available studies indicate nevertheless that access to education has improved and drop-out rates decreased. Among some of the positive results due to the new educational system, better facility for literacy and the learning of English, higher percentage of school attendance, particularly for girls, and more students’ participation in class”.¹⁶² They underline that the participation of parents and communities was crucial, and that the fact that there are about four hundred VL was not necessarily an obstacle. However, the problem of teachers’ training and qualification is mentioned as well as some incoherence between local and national policies. The main point they make is that the number of years of schooling in VL is considered too short: “reaching the optimum level of cognitive development and academic achievement requires more than three years in the mother tongue” (Bühmann and Trudell 2008: 23), a point I will come back to later on.¹⁶³

A recent study of classroom code-switching between English and Bislama in Vanuatu (Willans 2011) shows very clearly that “although the language of instruction in Vanuatu’s classrooms is English, this is not the language in which the majority of genuine academic interaction takes place. The language policy is, therefore, not only ineffective, but may also be detrimental to students’ academic progress” (Willans 2011: 24). The results point out that, contrarily to what is often taken for granted, students do not use Bislama only because their English is poor, and that their code-switching fulfils other purposes. What is worrying, though, is that using English when the teacher is around, because the school policy is “No Bislama” can lead to misunderstanding or even that it “prevented real communication from taking place and an opportunity for learning was missed” (Willans 2011: 34). The author stresses the dilemma that parents and educational officials face, namely “how to provide the high levels of English that are needed without doing so at the expense of achievement and understanding in all areas of the curriculum” (Willans 2011: 36).

¹⁶² Les études disponibles indiquent cependant que l’accès à l’éducation s’est amélioré et que les taux d’abandon ont chuté. Certains des résultats positifs qui ont été portés au crédit du nouveau système éducatif sont notamment une plus grande facilité d’alphabétisation et d’apprentissage de l’anglais, un taux de scolarisation plus élevé, en particulier chez les filles et une plus grande participation des élèves en classe.

¹⁶³ Atteindre un niveau optimal de développement cognitif et de résultats scolaires exige plus que trois ans d’enseignement en langue maternelle.

As we will soon see, some of these studies and their recommendations have been taken into account by the MOE to establish the new language policy in Vanuatu, but only to a certain extent.

6.1 The paradox

As I have already stressed, Vanuatu finds itself in a very complex linguistic situation, mostly because of its unusual colonial past, namely the Anglo-French Condominium between 1906 and 1980. When it became independent, the country was one of the few in the world to make a pidgin the national language, as well as one of the three official languages along with the metropolitan French and English. The signs of the position of Bislama were strong: national anthem, status inscribed in the constitution of the new republic (giving it a higher status than the two former colonial languages), coinage and currency. The book *Vanuatu: Twenti wanningting long team blong independens*, published at the dawn of independence under the auspices of Father Walter Lini, Vanuatu's first Prime Minister, was published in the three languages. The importance of Bislama is stressed: "The people of Vanuatu [can] communicate in Bislama. Because a lot of people speak Bislama, this language also unites people and makes them work together" (Sope 1980: 52).¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, in the chapter dedicated to education, the then Minister of Education never mentions the place of Bislama in education, and declares that "All schools will follow one curriculum but the medium of instruction will be either English or French", adding "Our policy is to promote the English and French languages under one administration" (Kalpokas 1980: 241). So we can say that, right from the beginning, the position of the government was, to say the least, based on the paradox that, on the one hand, Bislama was recognised as the national language, bringing people together, but, on the other hand, it was given no place at all in the education system.

6.2 An old story

The question of the place of languages in education is not new, as we have seen with Charpentier. Even before independence, it had been a recurrent theme in political speeches and in newspapers. The earliest text I could find about the situation of languages in the New Hebrides is a letter to the editor of *nakamal/le néo-hébridais* No.8 in March 1972 by Reverend Bill Camden, who reacts to an article published in December 1971— which

¹⁶⁴ *Ol man Vanuatu oli save komiuniket long bislama. From we plante man oli toktok bislama, hemia tu i joenem ol pipol blong kam tugeta mo wok tugeta.*

unfortunately I was unable to find – entitled “A Rather Queer Idea” and which dealt with Bislama in education. As mentioned earlier in this work, Camden played an important role in the translation of religious texts and also in the standardisation of Bislama. On the same page, just before the letter, the editor takes sides on the position of Bislama: “In no way are we hostile to Bislama, the utility of which we acknowledge, but no one can deny it has obvious limitations” (*nakamal/le néo-hébridais* No.8, Mars 1972, p. 26).¹⁶⁵ According to the editor, Camden, who spent quite a few years studying Bislama, is trying to create his own language for his own sake (intellectual vanity, leaving his name to posterity!) What is unacceptable, they add, is his claim that the teaching of French or English aims mainly at keeping the Melanesian population under the domination of white men. They also argue that the translation of the four gospels into Bislama doesn’t prove the existence of a literature in Bislama. If Bislama was to be the language of instruction, the majority of the population would then be ruled by a small, foreign-language educated minority. Camden, they say, omits to mention that some children arrive at school without speaking Bislama at all. Their vision is that if the government keeps its efforts in promoting education in French and English, the new generation of Ni-Vanuatu will speak either one of the two languages and have some notions of the other one, which does not mean that Bislama will disappear, but it will be spoken just like any dialect in other countries – we know today that this has not happened at all. In his reply, Camden clarifies a few points by saying that “The language situation is exceedingly complex [...] and there is a small but rapidly increasing group who speak Bislama as their mother tongue [...]. But Bislama is by far the best known language, being spoken by more than eighty percent of the population over the age of ten.” (*nakamal/ le néo-hébridais* No.8, Mars 1972, p. 28). Camden emphasises the fact that it is “utterly unrealistic” to say that the population is bilingual English/French, in fact bilingualism has to be understood in terms of VL/Bislama for the biggest part of the population of the New Hebrides. He says that the article suggests that Bislama is inadequate, without syntax, grammar or orthography, which is not true, and adds that “If Bislama is recognised and the orthography standardised, most of the population will be fully literate in it within twelve months, and open to adult education in agriculture, cattle raising, homecraft, childcare or

¹⁶⁵ Nous ne sommes en aucun cas hostiles au bichelamar, dont nous connaissons l’utilité, mais dont nous savons aussi les limites, que nul ne saurait nier.

whatever” (p. 29). Camden’s conclusion, a few years before independence, is even more radical in terms of the political importance of the language for the future of the country:

Bislama is the only major unifying force at work. And recognition of it immediately implies full recognition of the third sector of the population. Till a Melanesian language of officially recognised and given status, the Melanesian people inevitably remain shut out in their own country, watching from the sidelines while strangers manipulate their affairs and dispose of their lands. Recognition of Bislama will both give status to the language, and more importantly, give status to those who speak it. (Camden: *nakamal/néo-hébridais*, Mars 1972, p. 29)

What can be said almost 40 years later is that Bislama has definitely been the language that led the country to its independence, but, as previously mentioned, it is impossible to say that it has been given status, at least not in formal education. It is interesting to note that Camden already mentions speakers of Bislama as their first language, so this is by no means a recent phenomenon.

The language problem is mentioned by this French teacher as being crucial: “Of course, there are numerous obstacles. The biggest of those is language, as the language of the street is mostly Bislama” (*Jeune Mélanésie*, 12 avril 1980, p.10).¹⁶⁶ The way this is said means that the person probably does not think much of Bichelamar as a language, but acknowledges that it is the language spoken by the people of the New Hebrides to communicate in their every day life.

We find more about education in letters to the editor: for instance, an angry reader comments on the attitude of the French ‘Directeur des Services de l’Enseignement’ and concludes “We New Hebrideans should decide what we want for future education system” (*Nasiko* 20/3/80:9). In 1981, the Vanuatu Language Planning Conference (VLPC) was held in Port Vila, attended by people from the Pacific region as well as Bislama Bible translators, officials from the MOE, Custom Chiefs and linguists. One of the recommendations was that “Priority should be given first to the teaching of local languages, then bislama, followed by English and French in schools in Vanuatu” (*Tam-Tam* 8/8/81:10-11). As might have been expected, this provoked numerous reactions, some of which were expressed in Reader’s Letters. One reader notes that “Discussion was dominated by overseas participants who

¹⁶⁶ Bien sûr, il y a de nombreux obstacles. Celui de la langue est le plus important : la langue de la rue est surtout le Bichelamar.

themselves had not been born speaking bislama or lived in a bislama oriented society [Professor D. Walsh and Pastor B. Camden]”. The reader also argues that doing this would deny the Ni-Vanuatu their right to learn an international language at an early stage, thus limiting their chances of communicating with the ‘outside the Pacific’ world. His conclusion is “Leave Bislama as it is and do not encourage it to grow because it has no international foundation.” (*Tam-Tam* 29/8/81:15). In his reply, Professor Walsh denied the fact that the Ni-Vanuatu participants were merely observers, and refuted the affirmation that he had recommended the teaching of Bislama in schools, arguing that only Ni-Vanuatu could make the decision (*Tam-Tam* 24/10/81: 14). Interestingly enough, the very same points will be made thirty years later about the same question! A different point of view is given in another letter, where the importance for children to use their language at an early stage – rather than a foreign language – is a good idea and would reduce the drop-out rate. The other interesting point made by this reader is that he thinks it is English that affects Bislama, and not the other way around (*Tam-Tam* 31/10/81:15). Pastor Camden himself wrote a letter in Bislama defending his point of view that:

They [from the United Nations] said that the best way to teach children to read and write well, and then speak another language well, is to teach them to read well in their mother tongue, the language they speak when they go to school.¹⁶⁷ (*TamTam* December 5, 1981)

He also stresses the important role played by Bislama in politics, and argues that if only the two colonial languages are kept in education, then “in this country, the power will not be in the hands of the people, but only in the hands of those who can speak those two languages [English and French]”.¹⁶⁸ Another point raised by Camden in this letter is that the country could be in danger of losing its culture, linked to language, should either local languages or Bislama not be recognised in the official educational system, an argument still used today by politicians such as Ralph Regenvanu, for instance. To finish with the reactions to the conference, a very long letter was published in Bislama over four weekly issues of *Tam-Tam* (from 9/1/82 to 30/1/82) deploring “the importance Bislama is taking over French and

¹⁶⁷ *Mo oli faenemaot finis we nanbawan rod blong mekem pikinini i ridgud mo i raetgud mo i toktokgud long narafala lanwis we i no bon long hem, hemia we fastaem, tija i mekem pikinini i ridgud long lanwis we i bon long hem, we i save toktok long hem taem i go long skul.*

¹⁶⁸ *Paoa long kantri ya bambae i no moa stap long han blong ol man ples, bambae i stap long han blong olgeta ya nomo we oli save tufala lanwis ya.*

English, the languages of instruction, and this is the reason for the bad results children get for their Class 6 exams, because they use Bislama a lot...” (*Tam-Tam* 9/1/82: 13).¹⁶⁹ The writer also stresses the fact that Bislama could kill the local languages “Don’t let Bislama damage your language and custom” (*Tam-Tam* 30/1/82: 13)¹⁷⁰ and that it is taking over in the households in the urban area of Port Vila (a phenomenon which will only intensify later on). In this letter, we find all the arguments against Bislama that have been used over and over again ever since discussions about the status of the language started and that seem to be, to a certain extent, stereotypes that are part of the collective unconscious, even though within a period of thirty years, a lot more is known about the language not being “[I have already said that Bislama is] a residue¹⁷¹ of English which spoils especially [good] English but French too...”¹⁷² The point that Bislama is of no use internationally is well taken, but it sounds a bit ironical (as well as familiar) to read that:

It is good to speak it [Bislama] but not to learn it at school...Bislama lessons would be good for those who want to learn the language, such as the expatriates who come to Vanuatu, as well as radio speakers or newsletter journalists who must use easy-to-understand Bislama, that is to say without too many English or French words, so that the people from the islands can understand what is said or written.” (*Tam-Tam* 16/1/82).¹⁷³

What this letter points out in fact is the already present dichotomy between “urban” Bislama which borrows a lot of foreign words so that the language in towns differs so much from “rural” Bislama that it appears incomprehensible to island people. This gap was also underlined by linguists such as Charpentier who says that because of heavy borrowing from English, “People who speak only French and the vast majority of the New Hebrides people living away from urban centres cannot understand such lexical creations. However, as this

¹⁶⁹ *Bislama hemi stap kaveremap tufala lanwis ia, franis mo inglish, we yumi stap lanem long skol. Hemia nao risen tu blong ol bad risalt long eksam long end blong klas 6 forom ol pkinini i yusim tumas bislama...*

¹⁷⁰ *No letem bislama i spolem lanwis mo kastom blong yu.*

¹⁷¹ ‘makas’ is the (worthless) residue of sugarcane, grated coconut or ground kava after the liquid part has been taken out («bagasse» in French)

¹⁷² *Bislama olsem we mi talem finis hemi wan lanwis we hemi « makas » nomo blong inglish mo hemi stap spolem tumas inglish espeshieli mo franis tu...*

¹⁷³ *Hemi gud blong toktok long hemi nomo bat i no blong lanem insaet long skol...Ol klas blong lamen bislama hemi gud blong olgeta ekspatriet we i kam insaet long Vanuatu mo ol i wandem lanem bislama, mo long olketa spika blong redio mo olgeta we i raetem niusletta blong oli mas yusim wan bislama we hemi isi blong andestan, we i no kat plante niufala inglish o franis wod insaet, blong mekem i isi long olgeta pipol long aelan blong folem wanem ol i talem o raetem.*

list shows, the journalists of the ‘francophone’ newspaper *Nabanga* also borrow from English” (Charpentier 1979: 169).¹⁷⁴

The other point, made by Mrs Makin who lives in Port Vila, is that “Should Bislama be introduced in schools, this would mean that francophone schools are doomed, because if Bislama is used for a few years and people have difficulties, they will turn to anglophone schools because Bislama and English are almost the same thing. So French would disappear [from schools]” (*Tam-Tam* 30/1/82).¹⁷⁵ In the perspective of my study, several points made in this very long letter are of particular interest. First, it is well worthwhile noticing that people’s perception that Bislama is anglicising is not a recent idea: as I can observe here, it was a feature of the language, whether spoken or written, that people already noticed more than thirty years ago. So can I venture the hypothesis that a potential decreolisation of the language, that is to say Bislama getting closer to its lexifier, namely English, was already taking place at the time and is not a new phenomenon at all, as stressed by Charpentier: “When pidgins (Bislama in particular) come up against English, for example, a boomerang effect occurs. Far from harming English, they become anglicised and depidginised to the point of being, for instance, only Bislamaised English in certain technical fields” (Charpentier 2006:133). Second, the status of Bislama as representing a danger to autochthonous languages is well taken, and fair: today, a lot of people express the same fear, as for instance can be found in Shipman’s work (2007). Here are her conclusions after interviewing or simply talking to people who articulate their fears about a pervading / pervasive use of Bislama:

When discussing issues of lanwis with community members, I received unanimous responses filled with concern for what many perceive as imminent indigenous language loss due to the rise of Bislama use among young children. A comment made during a group interview with members of Ronevie Village illustrates this point: “*From oli yusum tumas Bislama, mekem oli lusum lanwis blo yumi. So, naoia, yu go long evri praemeri skul, yu harem nomo se Bislama hemi fulap. Be oli no save*

¹⁷⁴ Les francophones exclusifs et l’immense majorité des autochtones vivant hors des centres urbains ne peuvent comprendre de telles nouveautés lexicales. Pourtant, comme cette liste l’indique, les journalistes du journal ‘francophone’ *Nabanga* pratiquent également de tels emprunts à l’anglais.

¹⁷⁵ *Sapos bislama i kam insaet long skul hemi min se bambae i kat wan denja blong ol franis lanwis skul long fiutja. Bambae bislama i kohed long skul long samfala yia mo bambae taem oli luk se i kat tumas difikulti nao bambae oli step i ko long inglish from bislama mo inglish kolosap i semak nomo be franis lanwis bambae oli sakemaot.*

There is also a feeling that Bislama is not as connected to people’s traditional way of life and *kastom* as the indigenous languages which possess extended lexicon to describe nature, for instance, which is not present in Bislama. It is therefore feared by some that the generalised use of Bislama will provoke not only the issue of endangering the languages, but also of losing the culture.

The question of the status of the language in schools was discussed in Parliament in April 1982, where all the different opinions were voiced. Some thought Bislama should be introduced in schools, as well as VL, because everyone spoke the language (Leymang, Roslyn and Worek for instance) whereas others did not see the need for teaching Bislama as everyone can speak it. One particularly interesting point of view comes from the Minister of Education, who stated that “Children are set back by having to learn a subject in a language foreign to them. Children struggle when they first go to school. They should have a system with a single language as the main language of education” (Crowley 1985: 62, point 18).

In the report of a workshop held in Vila in 1985, Crowley and Lynch (1986) give a detailed account of the linguistic situation in Melanesia with an interest in both VL and what they chose to call Pidgin (comprising Tok Pisin, Pijin and Bislama). The aim of the workshop was “to discuss the development and preservation of Melanesian languages, and to draw up a plan of activities to encourage the development of Pidgin in Melanesia” (Crowley & Lynch, 1986: p. 1). The place of Melanesian languages in education is discussed at length in Chapter 3 by the authors, who point out that “In Melanesian schools, students are generally suddenly confronted with a language that they have, in almost all cases, never spoken a word of in their lives before, whether be it English or French” (1986: 17-18). They also mention that students can be punished for speaking their own language at school, and question the efficiency of choosing European languages as mediums of instruction by wondering “If we are to sacrifice effective communication for learning a foreign language, are we operating with the best set of educational fundamentals in Melanesia?” (1986: 18). However, they stress the point that it is also a question of attitude towards the language, and that the problem is a complex issue because it is linked with a problem of public awareness: “Parents may well feel that such a

¹⁷⁶ Because they use too much Bislama, they are losing our language. So, now, when you go to all the primary schools, you really notice that Bislama is used a lot. But they can’t speak their [VL] language.

proposal [education in Melanesian languages in the early years] is a subtle plot to withdraw English or French from the curriculum altogether, and thus to make their children's chances of getting a 'proper' education and a decent job even more difficult than they are in the present situation" (1986: 21). They point out all the difficulties of integrating VL or Pidgin into formal education (lack of material, qualification of teachers, number of VL, lack of written systems for some VL or lack of standardisation for Bislama), but insist that it is now widely recognised that starting education in the child's language is best for learning, with later on a gradual shift to one of the metropolitan languages used as the medium of instruction. They also mention that Melanesian languages can be introduced into the educational system in two different ways, either as the medium of instruction, or as a taught language. Both ways would give the languages better status and recognition, in fact the legitimacy they lack for being seen as inadequate for 'serious' topics. They go as far as saying that literacy, which they define as "the ability to read anything that one can understand when it is spoken, and the ability to write anything that one can say, in any language that one can speak" (1986: 48), is essential for the functioning of society in so far as it enables people to participate in the decision-making process about issues in society. USP, as mentioned previously, was involved in courses in and about Bislama, but these were abandoned and taught only for one year, with the result that no real progress was made in terms of training Melanesian linguists on Bislama.

So as we can see in this part, the crucial issues surrounding the choices made for language policies, or languages in formal and non-formal education, are not new, but what I find very striking for the situation in Vanuatu is that it looks almost as if none of these conferences, workshops, or publications have contributed to real awareness and a change in mentality and attitude towards VL or Bislama. But as I will show in the following part, this is not quite true, because even if the same old clichés can still be heard, there also have been changes of attitude and some changes have already been, or will be, implemented in education in Vanuatu.

6.3 The justifications

After all the research about the phenomenon of diglossia and multilingual education, it is a well-known fact that a child learns better in his first language, and in the other language he can speak as opposed to a foreign language only used at school. However, there is still very

strong resistance against the introduction of Bislama into the Ni-Vanuatu education system. There are mainly two reasons that are evoked to justify such a point of view which we will study in this part: first, the lack of standardisation and second, the interference with English.

6.3.1 Lack of standardisation: myth or reality?

One of the reasons often mentioned for not using Bislama is its lack of standardisation. The variations found in the oral language can also be noticed in the written language, sometimes giving the reader the impression that ‘anything goes’. For a long time, Bislama was only an oral language which itself was extremely highly variable. All the descriptions of the language, whether made fifty years ago or today, mention this phenomenon. For instance, Crowley devotes a whole preliminary part of his *Bislama Reference Grammar* to the question of pronunciation and spelling (2004:11-23). He notes that “no comprehensive study has ever been carried out on the full range of variation to be found in Bislama.” (p. 7). This is not surprising, as this would prove to be a huge task, considering the tradition of variation in the recent language, as I have observed many times while doing this research. Indeed, the factors that are at the origin of these variations are numerous: the influence of regionalisms, with people speaking many different vernacular languages that cannot but influence their pronunciation or spelling of Bislama. The level of education also plays a very important role in the way people speak or write Bislama, and also it varies depending on whether the speakers are francophone or anglophone. The differences to be found between rural and urban populations have always been stressed. Age, of course, and gender are also important factors in the way people speak and write (Meyerhoff 2000). Not only do these features have an influence on pronunciation and spelling, but they also have a great impact on the vocabulary, likely to be much more anglicised in urban centres than in rural areas.

This great variability of the language has often been quoted – and still is today – as an ‘excuse’ for arguing that Bislama could NOT be used as a medium of education. How could teaching material, reference books, curricula, be written in Bislama when there are so many different ways of speaking or writing the language? This is the argument the detractors of the use of the language in formal education use a multitude of times. In fact, this proves to be a poor excuse. Indeed, there is variation, but one can present two arguments to counter this view. First, it is obvious, even today, that the Ni-Vanuatu have a remarkable ability to adapt to variation and to tolerate it. As a learner of Bislama, it struck me everywhere I went in Vanuatu that people had an extraordinary tolerance to my mistakes and ‘broken’ language, and I had the feeling that it was the effort I was putting into trying to speak the language that

was more important than the mistakes I was making. What a refreshing difference with the much more rigid attitude we Westerners have towards learners of languages! (*mea culpa* for having had the same attitude for years as a language teacher!). It could well be that this tolerance to variation (which some would call *laissez-faire*) has been around for so long in Vanuatu that people are in fact used to it and therefore seem to adapt to any kind of situation of communication, be it ‘unstandardised’ as it may. One could probably also argue that the situation of such a highly variable language prevails precisely because no effort has ever been made in earnest to change it. What I mean by this is that it is more a question of attitude towards the language than actual facts. It seems to me that it is not unreasonable to think that, if Bislama had been integrated as a medium of education earlier, then surely the differences we still find today would have become less and less frequent, as more and more writers and speakers of the language would have been taught the same forms, and a gradual standardisation would have spread almost by itself, almost naturally, so to speak. But because the use of Bislama at school has always been extremely marginal, informal, or even plainly prohibited, the written language was implicitly never given any status in formal education, contributing to the fact that no ‘levelling’ of the differences took place. Finally, English has many varieties too which enrich it and are not a hindrance to the teaching of English.

If we are to examine the evolution of written Bislama, then it seems obvious that the language we find today is much less variable than fifty years ago. This should not come as a surprise, though, as in the meantime, things HAVE been done, in spite of what can be heard. Indeed, the issue of the standardisation of Bislama is not a new one. The spelling system of the language has been developing for several decades now, just as the use of the written language has developed too.

6.3.2 The steps towards standardisation

As mentioned earlier, it was before independence that written Bislama gained a new status, mostly because of the translation of religious texts as well as the use of the language for political purposes (see Chapter 4). The first efforts to standardise the language were made with the first translations of religious material: the Four Gospels were published as early as 1971, and the Acts of the Apostles in 1974. In his 1977 dictionary, Pastor Bill Camden mentions the problem of written Bislama : “ A further complicating factor [after phonological variation] is the almost total absence of any pressure for a standard orthography... in the writing of the language, there has been a widespread tendency for everyone to do ‘that which is right in his own eyes’.”(p. vii). He then explains the spelling system he uses and how the

choices were made, including a part on the verb phrase in which he insists that “The predicate markers [such as ‘i’] are separate words and should always be written as such.” (p. xvi).

For some time, it was Camden’s dictionary that “came to be widely used for the remainder of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s as a source of Bislama usage and spelling.” (Crowley 2000: 102). Then in 1984, guidelines were published in *Fasin blong Raetem Bislama* ‘How to write Bislama’, which stated in its introduction: “*Plante man oli save ridim Bislama, be i gat problem long saed ya, from we i gat ol defdefren fasin blong raetem Bislama*” ‘A lot of people can read Bislama, but there is a problem because there are a lot of ways to write Bislama’ (1984:1). It also stresses the importance of reaching an agreement about the orthography of “an important language in Vanuatu” (1984: 2). The team exposes the reasons for so much variation in the written language because of the influence of people’s VL. Nevertheless, they say, phonological variation happens in any language, but this does not prevent them from having a standardised spelling. If we have a close look at the work achieved by *Tim blong Translesen*, it becomes obvious that the rules for a standard orthography were already set up very clearly, as shown below (Crowley 1985c):

- Bislama has five vowels and eighteen consonants.

- **Rule 1:** the spelling of a word will follow the way the majority of people pronounce it (p. 106).

- **Rule 2:** vowel, vowel, consonant, consonant [Bislama spells the way it sounds] (p. 106).

- **Rule 3:** if there is too much variation to find a majority, the spelling will be based on the language of origin of the word (p. 107).¹⁷⁷

These rules justify the spelling of ‘new’ as *nyu* as opposed to **niu*, (as Bislama does not have words with two adjacent vowels, the second of which is stressed, therefore what precedes *-i* is a consonant, spelt *-y*).¹⁷⁸ The same rule applies to *yusum* as opposed to **iusum* and to *tangkyu* ‘thank you’ (*-ng* is a consonant of Bislama). It might well be that these rules defined by

¹⁷⁷ 1 *I moa gud fasin blong spel blong ol tok bambae i folem maot blong big namba blong ol man ples/ 2 Vaoel, vaoel, konsonan, konsonan/ 3 Sipos i gat ol tok we ol saon blong wan grup olsem i stap long olgeta, mo i klia we i no gat big namba blong ol man vanuatu we oli stap yusum ol saon ya long sem fasin long ol tok ya, spel blong ol tok ya bambae i folem spel blong ol tok blong ol narafala lanwis, we ol tok ya oli kamaot long olgeta fastaem*

¹⁷⁸ I give the rules as they were at the time. Now ‘new’ spells *niu* in Bislama.

mostly linguists, valid as they may be, were not easily understood by the population, so that there could have been some kind of ‘public pressure’ to adopt easier rules to apply, as we will soon see.

Further conferences were held about the standardisation of the language, and *Komiti blong Bislama* ‘Bislama Committee’, composed of journalists, official Languages Services, representatives from numerous organisations and USP was set up, which were supposed to meet regularly between 1986 and 1988. For instance, *Komiti blong Bislama* decided in one of its meetings that the predicate marker *i* should be separated from *hem* (so **hemi*), and that /i/ **within** a word should be written *-i* but should be *-y* at the **beginning** of a word (thus *niuspepa* ‘newspaper’, *Niutestemen* ‘New Testament’, but *yusum* ‘use’, *yunivesiti* ‘university’) (Crowley 1985c:91). Unfortunately, the work of the committee did not lead to much, as the meetings were not regular and there was no way of implementing any decisions made by the committee. However, all the work that has already been done on trying to establish rules for the standardisation of Bislama can be used as a precious foundation for further rules to be developed and implemented.

Crowley published his two versions of the English-Bislama, Bislama-English dictionary in 1990 and 1995 (and an update in 2003), which are today used as reference for written Bislama by many. In the introduction to the 2003 edition, Crowley states that “Although Bislama has been widely used as a written language for about three decades now, words are written by different people with considerable variation” (2003:1), because of the influence of both English and French, and also because of phonological variations in vernacular languages. Crowley bases his spelling on the principles adopted by the Literary Association of Vanuatu in 1995 and says “The spellings in this dictionary therefore represent genuine compromises that have been accepted by a number of different groups who make use of written Bislama” (p. 2). He however insists on the fact that his dictionary does *not* (his emphasis) aim to impose a uniform Bislama on all people using the language, even though it aims to promulgate a set of standard spellings (p. 3). I have to add that, among the persons I have met who write in Bislama, a lot of them told me they used Crowley’s dictionary as reference for their spelling.

The translators of the official government services, the Prime Minister’s Languages Services, use a computer spell check for Bislama, which is also used by other official organisations,

such as SIL and AusAID for instance.¹⁷⁹ This spell check is an alphabetical list of 4,073 words, 349 of which are proper nouns and can be found at the beginning of each list, then followed by the rest of the words. If we look at the spell check in detail, some characteristics of the written language can be observed:

- days and months are spelled with a capital letter, as in English.
- *-ing* is kept for nouns, even for compound nouns (*selingbot* ‘sailing boat’, *wokingstik* ‘walking stick’, *boksing* ‘boxing’)
- *-g* at the end of words ending with *-ion* or *-an* from French origin (*sompiniong* ‘champignon’, *restorong* ‘restaurant’, *petong* ‘pétanque’, *gurmang* ‘gourmand’) – to indicate the velar nasal.
- *-g* preceding *-g* and *-k* (*singglet*, *konggres*, *tangkiu*, *hanggri*) – again to indicate the velar nasal.
- *-ia* has been chosen over **-ya* (not found in the list), and *i* is used in the middle of words such as *eskius* ‘excuse’, *tangkiu* ‘thank you’, whereas *-y* is used at the beginning of words as in *yunivesiti* ‘university’ and *yunion* ‘union’.
- some of the words can be found with two spellings, namely with and without a capital at the beginning of the word, like *bae*, *ating*, *bislama*, *yutufala*.
- neutralisation of the diphthong *-ei* in words like *edukesen* ‘education’, *aplikesen* ‘application’.
- some of the words appear with both their French and English origin *papiong* (French ‘papillon’) and *bataflae* (English ‘butterfly’), but it is obvious that the French words are becoming obsolete and the English words have replaced them, in writings at least.

What conclusions can be drawn from the observation of the spell check?

It seems evident that it was made quite a few years ago, and some things have changed in the meantime. It appears that in the written language today, preference is given to words derived from English much more than from French, as I have just mentioned. What I have also

¹⁷⁹ This concept (a word list based on the dictionary and *Bislama Baebol* that would work in MS Word as a spell check) was introduced by SIL Steven Beale in July 2000. Daryl Moon independently created a word list from another source, added words I gave him from the *Bislama Baebol* he didn’t have which resulted in a nice little installable program available here: <http://www.swtech.com.au/bislama/> (Ross Webb, p.c., March 2010)

noticed is that the consonant *-g* before another *-g* or *-k* (which Crowley describes as the consonant *-ng*) seems to have almost completely disappeared from the spelling in today's Bislama, for instance *tangkiu* has become *tankiu* more often than not, and I have never come across *Angglikan* in my readings, it is always *Anglikan* 'Anglican'. Among the proper nouns, most refer to the Bible or to geography, with a few for organisations or companies (*Amikal* French 'Amical',¹⁸⁰ *Eakal* for 'Aircal', New Caledonian airline), but it goes without saying that the list is greatly incomplete and probably only mentions the most used words at the time.

As written Bislama is becoming much more present in everyday life in Vanuatu, there is yet another attempt at finally dealing with its standardisation: the National Conference on Vanuatu Languages in October 2002 was the starting point for the formal establishment of a National Language Council (NLC), which has existed in an *ad hoc* form at various times since independence, and was officially set up as a statutory body by Parliament in 2005. It is composed of members of the MOE, Council of Chiefs, Languages Services Department, VCC, USP, Office of the Ombudsman, *Media Asosiesen blong Vanuatu*, SIL, World Vision and Translation and Literacy Programme (Vanuatu Christian Council). Its objectives are to safeguard linguistic diversity in Vanuatu, to raise awareness of language issues in Vanuatu and provide advice to the government concerning language policy. It also aims to assist the Ombudsman with its report on the use of languages, to promote awareness and an increased use of standardised Bislama, and finally to provide advice on national priorities for research on languages and encourage the publication of literature in VL and Bislama (VCC 2005-2007, retrieved June 2010 from

<http://www.vanuatuculture.org/documents/NasonalLanwisPolisi.doc>). From what I know, the NLC does not meet regularly and progress is slow.

The standardisation of a language is indeed a difficult task, but it appears that in Vanuatu, where people show a remarkable adaptability to variation in languages, an attitude of *laissez-faire* has prevailed, for many reasons: lack of political will, lack of financial means, attitude to language, particularly as regards the use of Bislama in education. 'How can the language be used in schools when it is not standardised?' is still one of the main arguments offered by

¹⁸⁰ The word 'amical' in French means 'friendly' and is also used as a noun 'amicale' for a group of people who do things together. There could also be a play on words with '-cal' being the traditional abbreviation for 'Calédonie' ([New] Caledonia), as in 'Aircal'.

the detractors of Bislama as a language of education. Nevertheless, I tend to agree with Crowley who links the problem of standardization with the non-status of the language in education:

Ideally, what would be needed for a standardised spelling system to take hold is the inclusion of Bislama literacy as an essential component of the education system of Vanuatu. Even if we were to continue to completely ignore calls for Bislama to be used as an official medium of instruction in schools in Vanuatu, there is no reason why it could not be incorporated as a subject of study, in which students would learn - among other things - how to systematically write the language (1996:142).

When I study the texts written in 'modern' Bislama, I notice two different aspects in the language. First, there seem indeed to be people who write a 'standardised' Bislama, that is to say where you find a fairly consistent spelling of the same sounds. This is mostly to be found in the press, even though I also remark that some journalists have their idiosyncracies. Nevertheless, I do seem to find a pattern in the way people write that corresponds, most of the time, with the spellings to be found in Crowley's dictionary. It is also to be noticed that this is where I find the most numerous anglicised words, but written in Bislama. In the articles, it is hard to know whether some are in fact translations from articles from the foreign press or articles written locally. One can probably assume that the articles dealing with local news are written 'from scratch', whereas international news may be translations or rewriting in Bislama. Things are definitely different when I read 'Letters to the Editor': indeed, and for obvious reasons, the Bislama used by their authors shows much greater variation, which should not come as a surprise. In the letters, it seems that 'anything goes': some are written consistently in Bislama, some make a very strange mixture of Bislama and English, with whole phrases or sentences in English. What surprises me here is that most writers do not seem to bother at all about the written language they use. It would be interesting to know why this variation happens so much, since one would think that, if you can write in both languages, as most of those who write to the editor can, then why not use just one language, either English or Bislama? There is anglicisation in the Bislama written by those who mix the two languages, so why not anglicise all of the Bislama instead of a few sentences here and there in the letters? It appears to me that code-switching is not 'necessary' as anything can be expressed in Bislama, given enough thought, therefore the choices made by the writers must have a different reason than the impossibility of expressing themselves in Bislama. However, it could just be because some things seem easier to say in one language because you learnt

them like that, or have been saying them that way for a long time, or have not found a satisfactory translation or equivalent.¹⁸¹ Another possible explanation would be that anglicised Bislama is a sign of social status and education, but probably mostly unconscious, so that it is not a question of choices, really, but simply of usage. The other kind of variation to be found in ‘Letters’ is the one that can be expected for the reasons mentioned earlier, mainly phonological, probably depending on the origin of the speaker. But in those letters, even though the writer has not adopted the ‘standard’ spelling, there is most of the time great consistency (for instance, *ko* for *go*) making the text no more difficult to understand than if it was written with another spelling.

I will conclude on this point with another quote from Charpentier: “With its numerous orthographic variations, a syntax more or less independent from English, written Bislama(n), deprived of the means of expression it has in its oral form, has been, until now, a poor means of expression...For the pidgin to acquire autonomy, to be less dependent on local languages and independent from the written language of instruction, it has to be standardised and taught. Only when that is done will authors write and think in Bislama(n). Then the pidgin will have been able to develop and enrich itself with its own means” (Charpentier 1979: 192).¹⁸²

Finally, in the same line, the subject of the standardisation of Bislama and its place in education is clearly discussed in the course book about Bislama with the conclusion that “If Bislama was introduced in schools, it would lead to a better standard of the language” (MOE 2002: 130).¹⁸³ This position is quite surprising coming from the MOE as today, just like in the past, there is no question of introducing Bislama into schools, whether as a taught language or as a medium of instruction.

¹⁸¹ As a native French speaker teaching English, I do this all the time when I am with French people who know English or with English speakers who know French!

¹⁸² Avec ses variantes orthographiques nombreuses, une syntaxe plus ou moins autonome face à l’anglais, le Bislama(n) écrit, privé des moyens expressifs existant dans son homologue parlé, n’est jusqu’à présent qu’un médiocre véhicule de pensée...Pour que le pidgin écrit soit entièrement autonome, pour qu’il dépende moins de la langue maternelle et soit indépendant de la langue écrite d’éducation, il faut qu’il soit normalisé et enseigné. Ce n’est qu’à cette condition que les auteurs écriront et penseront en Bislama(n). Le pidgin aura alors de fortes chances de se développer et de s’enrichir par lui-même.

¹⁸³ *Sipos Bislama i kam insaed long ol skul, bae hemia i save mekem se standed blong Bislama i save kam antap.*

6.3.2 Interference with English

This is the second justification used by many for not having Bislama at school, whether as medium of instruction or taught language. Indeed, many teachers and educators express their doubts about the introduction of Bislama into the educational system because they think that it would be a hindrance to the learning of English. They notice that there is a lot of interference between the two languages for learners of English, which may account for the (sometimes) poor quality of their English. There is, of course, no way of knowing exactly what the consequence of having Bislama either as a taught language, or the medium of instruction at any stage of the school system would be, because it has never been done. Nevertheless, as a teacher of a foreign language for many years, I will try and justify why I do not share this point of view.

There is no denying that Bislama is an English-lexified language, but as we have seen previously, it is the vocabulary that comes mostly from English whereas the grammar is quite different from the metropolitan language. It is my conviction that far from provoking confusion between the two languages, a **good** knowledge of Bislama by its speakers may actually turn out to be an advantage that teachers could rely on to teach English as a **foreign** language, as opposed to the current situation where children speak Bislama a lot of the time but are taught in English. It seems to me that the problem mentioned by teachers comes from the fact that the speakers of Bislama use the language, but that most of them have no idea of its origin, its grammatical rules and its writing system. Furthermore, the stereotyped notion that Bislama is ‘some form of English’ in the best of cases, and ‘bastardised English’ in the worst, must be part of the collective unconscious and the children have therefore no precise idea that Bislama **is** a language in itself. What I am convinced of is that, were children taught about Bislama at some stage, then they would probably be able to not only see the differences with English when it is introduced in the curriculum as a foreign language, but also to rely on their knowledge of the vocabulary in Bislama to facilitate their learning of English, once the ‘rules’ governing both spellings, for instance, have been clearly established. The transfer of their competence in their language, which at this stage would be both in the spoken and written fields, could then take place easily if it is taken into account in the method of teaching English. After all, this is what is done by any teacher of a foreign language: we rely on the knowledge the learners have of their first language to explain the similarities and differences between the two languages. The problem is only a bit more complex for Vanuatu, as most of the children do not have Bislama as their mother tongue, and may be taught first in their

vernacular language. The introduction of Bislama would therefore occur at some later stage, once the basics have been learned in the first language. But as the children are inevitably confronted with Bislama once they leave their community, it may well be an important step for them to know more about the language most will be using in their everyday lives, not to mention the importance it has for the children who do have Bislama as their first language.

Some will argue that this is mere speculation, and they would be right to do so, as no study of this phenomenon has ever been made in Vanuatu, for obvious reasons – indeed, the language has never been formally introduced in schools, or if it is, as in vocational education for instance, there has never, to my knowledge, been any study on the impact of Bislama on the students' English. Nevertheless, this particular point has been the object of research elsewhere, as for instance by Siegel in Papua New Guinea in 1997. His study “clearly refutes arguments that using a pidgin language in formal education will interfere with students' subsequent acquisition of the standard form of its lexifier” (Siegel 1997: 95). The results showed very positive outcomes of the use of *Tok Pisin* regarding academic achievement, participation and lower drop-out rate on the part of the students, as well as a positive reaction from the communities. My argument is that it is a well-known fact the current system does not provide the children with great competence – in fact very little – in any of the languages they use or are taught in. The richness of the linguistic diversity in Vanuatu has to be protected by making sensible decisions, and, along with Siegel, I believe that this could be one of the steps towards improving the multilingual heritage.

6.4 New developments

I started this part with saying that the attitude adopted by the MOE in Vanuatu was based on the paradox that Bislama had no official place in the formal education system, in spite of its status as the national language. In reality, this is not quite true: the MOE **does** use Bislama as a medium of instruction in particular fields. For instance, a big part of vocational training is carried out in Bislama, with classes to teach English and French as foreign languages, and educational material in Bislama is produced by the ministry (as seen Chapter 4). In fact, probably following all the reflection on the problem of languages at school, things have changed, but mostly in the direction of more harmonisation between the two systems of education working in parallel, namely the French and English ones. Little thought was given at that stage to the introduction of VL or Bislama: what happened is that from 1990 onwards, a few French pilot schools introduced English in Santo. Then English was taught in French schools by French teachers between 1995 and 2000, and Anglophone schools asked for

French teachers as well. In 2005, students requested bilingual teaching from the Vanuatu government, and the request for bilingual schools French/English was made by the community in 2006, which was endorsed by the National Summit. What happened then will be discussed in the part describing the new policy.

But at the same time, in the past few years, there has been a change of attitude concerning both VL and Bislama for early education. So today, for pre-school (early) education, most of the books are first written in Bislama, and then they are sent to the communities to be translated into the different vernacular languages. This is to ensure a sort of unity of pedagogical material throughout the country, with children being read the same stories, and because the teachers who are selected to write the stories come from all the different provinces, it gives a good coverage of *kastom stori* to the children. The stories are published by the MOE and are then redistributed for use in VL. This is the first step taken by the MOE to implement the new policy, and it makes sense to start at the very beginning of the school system.

6.4.1 The future of Bislama in education

At the National Education Conference in Port Vila in October 2002, MP Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, insisted on the need for Vanuatu to have a new vision of education. In his opinion, the formal education system is both the instrument of the erosion of tradition-based culture and the potential instrument of the maintenance of this culture if changes are made. He reproaches the current system with not addressing the reality of today's society and maintaining "the emphasis on training individuals for jobs in the bureaucracy that was the original rationale for the establishment of western education in the New Hebrides by the colonial powers – this colonial emphasis has not changed". The current system leads to social problems and perpetuates a sense of worthlessness among the Ni-Vanuatu population, he adds. Among his recommendations, instruction in VL (or Bislama) in the first years is mentioned, along with the incorporation of a high level of cultural content. He states that the VCC, an advocate of instruction in VL for a long time, has a huge amount of archives that could be used as a basis for educational material yet to be produced. (Regenvanu 2002: National Education Conference Paper, Port Vila, http://www.vanuatuculture.org/site-bm2/projects/20061215_new-vision-education.shtml), retrieved June 20, 2010.

This position was also made quite clear in the *2005 Fifth Draft of the Vanuatu National Language Policy*, which recommended that:

Bislama should be given an adequate place in the national curriculum:

- a) as a vernacular language and as a potential medium of instruction in mixed community pre-schools and in early primary school.
- b) Bislama should be taught as a subject at secondary and tertiary levels (article 5.1.3, p. 3).

Nevertheless, the principal languages of education remain English and French, which “should be taught as bridging subjects in vernacular education” (5.3.1, p. 4).

In November 2005, the bill for the creation of the National Language Council was first examined by parliament, and the committee was then established as a legal entity. At the same time, the second conference Vanuatu Languages took place at USP, funded by UNESCO (the first one took place in 2002). This fifth version of the National Linguistic Policy for Vanuatu clearly defines the principles of the promotion and protection of the linguistic diversity of the country formerly stated in the constitution written in 1980 when Vanuatu became independent. The clear goal is to protect vernacular languages and encourage research on these languages as well as their promotion in education ‘at the appropriate levels’ (articles 4.10 and 4.8). It also recommends that Bislama be promoted as national language, and ‘normalised to meet the needs of the evolution of society’ (articles 4.11 and 4.12). The language is described as the most spoken language in the country, and as first language for some. Therefore, as stated in articles 5.1.4 to 5.1.7, Bislama must be taught as a means of communication at work and in the media. Furthermore, it is recommended that Bislama be used in public services such as justice and health, and that literary publication in Bislama be promoted. In article 5.2, the three official languages, Bislama, French and English, are given the same status, both in the public and private sectors, and all three official languages must be used in the educational system, from primary school to university. Article 5.1.3 gives Bislama an important place in education, and “could be a potential education medium for pre-school and early primary years”. It also “must be taught and studied in secondary and tertiary education”. However, the two main languages of instruction are still French and English, put on the same footing in education.

As far as the vernacular languages are concerned, the policy states that the immense linguistic diversity of the country must be protected, through different ways: first, they should be adopted as languages of education from kindergarten to primary school, and second, the use of local languages should be encouraged for any activity in the communities and in their cultural life. These languages must be studied, and an orthographic system created so that the most spoken ones can be used as media of education as well as taught. Literary production in vernacular languages must be promoted, and all the organisations involved in the study or development of local languages supported by the government (articles 5.4.1 to 5.4.10). ‘Immigrant’ languages are not forgotten insofar as the policy protects other languages for their speakers and encourages speakers of different languages to learn them too.

The role of the National Council of Languages is clearly defined: safeguard the linguistic diversity, support awareness and increased use of Bislama, provide guidance and help the Ministry of Education define and implement its policy regarding the use of vernacular languages in education, make annual reports, promote the use of standardised Bislama, give the media recommendations about the use of Bislama, state national priorities for research on local languages, and coordinate the international funding thereof.

It seems obvious today that only part of these recommendations have been taken into account, as for the time being anyway, no ‘official’ place has been given to Bislama in formal primary education, let alone secondary or tertiary. Although Bislama is acknowledged as being ‘a symbol of identity’ as well as having a ‘unifying role in society’, its place in the formal educational system is yet to be defined.

6.4.2 The new policy

In its 2006 Policy Priority, the Vanuatu government declared that “The vision of the government is that in ten years time all pupils at primary and secondary schools should be able to speak and write English and French fluently as well as to ensure that Education for All (EFA) policy is fully implemented” (*Education Language Policy Report (ELPR)* introduced in Parliament for presentation in December 2010, p. 15). The Government then mandated the MOE to establish the new policy and the team working on the ELP was officially appointed by the MOE in April 2009 (*ELPR*: 2). The avowed objective was to have all schools bilingual by 2015, with the rate of bilingual teachers and students increasing every year, so as “to improve language and literacy competencies” (*ELPR*: 9). The only mention of Bislama in this document is in the statistics of the 1999 census and the diagrams showing the

growing importance of Bislama in both what is referred to as ‘the crest languages’ (of the elite, along with English and French), and the ‘basic languages’ (with the vernaculars). The words ‘multilingualism’ and ‘plurilingualism’ are both used to describe the linguistic developments in Vanuatu without being clearly defined, and even though this is immediately followed by “How can we reflect this situation in the education system?” (ELPR: 14). Nothing in the plurilingual education system presented later in the report indicates that the growing number of speakers of Bislama is actually taken into account in the new ELP, apart from the one hour a week devoted to the teaching/learning of Bislama in Y5 and Y6 to be found in the propositions.

In 2008, the MOE was already working on a new, much-needed language policy. In order to evaluate the situation and establish the policy, the MOE recruited an expert in charge of heading a team working on the future Education Language Policy (ELP), as previously mentioned. On June 16, 2009, Charlot Salwai, the Minister of Education, presented the ‘Education Policy Statement 2009-2012’ to Parliament. As is the custom in parliament, the text was presented in Bislama (with a lot of English words). The statement announces the changes that will be made to the educational system in Vanuatu at the kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It also evokes the problem of the qualification and salaries of teachers, the need to work on the national curriculum, and to upgrade the infrastructure (schools and resources). It mentions free education for the primary level for 2010. This is more a general policy statement, so it does not particularly focus on languages. Nevertheless, in terms of language use, what is to be noted is that French and English remain the two languages of instruction: at the primary level, “*Language blong instruction hemi i English or French*”. For secondary education, again, “*language of instruction hemi Englis and or French mo bae I gat nid blong strengenem use blong tufala lanwis long olgeta level ya nao*” ‘The language(s) of instruction are English and/or French, and there is a need to reinforce the use of the two languages at all levels in the future’.

The situation is slightly different for technical colleges where no clear comment is made: “*Long olgeta Technical college ya olgeta Academic subjects, olsem, math and language oli must be relevant long need blong olgeta technical fields we ol schools ya bae oli offerem*”. ‘In technical colleges, the academic subjects such as math and language must be relevant to the technical fields that will be offered by the schools’ (all references: *The Independent*, June 20, 2009: 9, 14).

[illegible]

So what are the changes? First and foremost, the introduction of VL as medium of instruction for the first years of education has to be noted as the major difference with the existing system, but only for several years. If we have a closer look at the three proposals, the main difference lies in the number of years that education in the VL will be carried out. Second, the introduction of French as the major medium of instruction, with the use of English also as a medium of instruction varying in proportion according to the scenarios. This would not be without posing problems, as we are about to see in the next part. In fact, proposals 1 and 3 are very similar, with only the two years of kindergarten in VL, and then French becoming the major medium of instruction in the first year of primary school. The only difference in proposals 1 and 3 is the proportion of English used, with slightly more in scenario 1 than in scenario 3. Proposal 2 differs from the other two in so far as much more place is given to VL: indeed, the period of time when VL is used as the main medium of education would be twice as long as in scenarios 1 and 3, with education in VL continuing for four years before French and English are introduced. It seems to me that proposal 2 is probably the most reasonable scenario – among the three proposed for discussion, that is – since it would give the children enough time to be completely literate in their vernacular, which would be impossible with proposals 1 and 3.

6.4.3 The limitations of the policy

As might have been expected for such a vexing question, voices were then heard expressing concern about the new language policy. Among the various reactions were those of Robert Early, a linguist at USP who, along with other colleagues, has always strongly supported the introduction of VL/Bislama into the education system. In August 2009, Early sent a formal document to the Cabinet, in which he analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the new policy. The document, written in English, provides summaries of each of the eleven points in Bislama as well. Early sees the introduction of VL in the three propositions as ‘a great advance’ and a very positive point that should not be overlooked. This seems to be just about the only redeeming feature of the policy, as in the rest of the response, Early is very critical of its remaining points.

He stresses the fact that some of the outcomes of the new policy are mere assumptions, that it may well be unconstitutional, and questions the importance given to French as the most important medium of education, based on ‘a shaky supposition as a foundational principle’ (namely that at the end of school education, Francophones are better at English than Anglophones are at French). The main points of criticism, though, lie in the fact that the

population will be consulted over what is presented as three scenarios, whereas in fact there is only ONE with three variants.

The other bone of contention is the nature itself of the consultation: “There is no opportunity for completely different or opposing views to be expressed” and the results of the consultation would therefore be “invalid”.

Also mentioned are the inconsistencies in the report, the fact that it is limited to the primary system without long-term vision on secondary and tertiary education. It also has “outdated and negative attitudes” to Bislama, the incorporation of which “should be given some acknowledgement immediately” and mentions that the implementation problems have been overlooked (Early 2009).

I completely agree with this response to the policy statement in so far as many of the points raised by Early had already come to my mind when I was told about the policy in 2008 when I started working on this research. In the oral presentation I made in Auckland in March 2009, that is to say before the policy was even presented to the minister, I had underlined the different issues I thought were controversial, as shown below:

Aim:

- to have bilingual F/E speakers (plus VL and Bislama), as opposed to one medium of education in the past
- One **unified** system for all, end of ‘war’ between Anglophones and Francophones

Problems :

- Choice between VL
- Not taking into account Bislama L1 speakers
- Majority of ‘Anglophones’ : choice for French as L1 at school accepted ?
- Qualification of teachers
- Non-governmental education mostly in Bislama
- Ambitious programme: financial means and implementation ?

Slide 13, formal end-of-first year presentation, UOA, March 2009

At the time too, as I was meeting with people involved in education, I was struck by what I call ‘pensée unique’ (‘one train of thought’), a concept which I have difficulty expressing in English, but which could be the equivalent of something like Thatcher’s famous quote “There is no alternative” in politics or perhaps “*wan tingting*” in Bislama. Let me elaborate on this a little more to say that wherever I went to official institutions, I heard the same arguments being

developed to promote more French in primary school while at the same time dismissing Bislama altogether, even in institutions where I knew Bislama was actually used as the medium of instruction. The introduction of VL was also mentioned then, but not much was said when I stressed out the fact that there would probably be an increasing number of ‘Bislamophones’ in the years to come. The same arguments, used repeatedly, did not leave much room for any alternative hence my suggestion for the translation of the French expression.

The policy has not changed much in the meantime, and I am also concerned about the way the consultation was carried out. At first sight, it may appear as if the population was consulted, but it does not take long to see the shortcomings of the way it was done. In fact, it is my feeling that the **people of Vanuatu** are not given the chance of expressing their point of view in a democratic way, as they are represented by chiefs, local representatives, religious authorities, and some teachers or persons involved in the field of education. Given the complexity of the problems linked to the new policy, and the prejudiced attitude of some of these representatives towards one language or another, the feedback from the ‘population’ is likely to be extremely limited and probably biased in some cases. If you add to this the point made by Early that there is little or no room for discussion outside of the frame proposed by the MOE, then one might indeed question the value of such a consultation.

Following Early’s report, the issue was brought on the public place by the *Vanuatu Daily Post*, whose headline on the front page of the N° 2727 issue on September 12, 2009 reads “English learning under threat: Proposed new education curriculum undermines English”. The article runs on two pages, and includes the MOE’s three propositions, as well as quotes of Early’s response. It mainly raises the question of the involvement of the French government behind the policy, remarking that “For the last year since Charles Salwai (UMP) became Minister of Education, Francophones have reportedly been behind the development of the new education strategy for Vanuatu”. He also stresses the fact that Early and his colleagues were not “invited to participate in the planning of the new curriculum and the related language changes” (front page), and quotes at length many of the points raised by Early, but somehow does not mention the positive point of the introduction of VL at the early stage which is also one of the major changes for the new policy.

According to this article, the policy lies behind a smokescreen of positive initiatives, and is nothing but “a blatant political motive rather than an educational concern according to political analysis” (p. 4). In spite of the fact that some of the points raised here are worthy of further investigation - even though the subtitle confuses policy and curriculum, which are not

the same thing in spite of being closely linked to each other - , the whole tone of this article adds further fuel to the Anglophone/Francophone debate which has been at the centre of many quarrels in the past. The quotes from Early and Von Trease are carefully selected, and the importance of the political role played by France remains to be proved, as no precise figures of how much money the French government is prepared to “pump into”¹⁸⁴ the Vanuatu education system are given at any point. Nor is the problem of the place of Bislama evoked anywhere, although this is also one of the points about which important decisions have to be made. The good side of the role of the press as a whistleblower cannot be denied, but only when a fair picture is given to inform the public.

Unsurprisingly, the Minister of Education reacted to this article to “reassure the public on English concerns” (*Daily Post*, September 17, 2009), stating that no decision had been made and that “everything is still on the table for discussion”. Salwai stresses the fact that change is needed from the dual system inherited from the colonial past and which makes children suffer. He leaves room for concertation and more proposals to be added “if the population wants”. Ironically enough though, he emphasises the point that “for so many years foreigners have dictated how we do things and it is time for us to take a stand and do it ourselves” when the MOE recruited a foreign expert to work out the new language policy. However, he adds, France is not giving money, the donors being the European Union, New Zealand and Australia.

Following this controversy, a public forum was organised at USP on September 24th, whose topic was: ‘Bilingualism in Vanuatu: why compulsory bilingualism (English and French) is proposed in the Vanuatu Education System’ (Minutes of the forum kindly given to me by Helen Tamtam, USP). The presenters were members of USP staff, senior education officers and representatives of the Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The importance of the National Language Council was mentioned, as well as its role in debating the issue of the National Language Policy. One of the interesting points mentioned by its representative, Hannah Bogiri, was the need for a standardised spelling of Bislama so that it can be used in the Educational Curriculum. The other important point is the protection of indigenous languages as one of the duties of the government. Carol Aru, as a member of the Education Policy Committee, stressed that a lot of feedback was needed from the communities to develop a policy that is relevant to the children. Helen Tamtam, who represented the Vanuatu

¹⁸⁴ Quoted from the article in the *Daily Post*, September 17, 2009

Literacy Committee, insisted on the many advantages of education in the vernacular languages and wondered whether the policy would help the (very low) literacy rates of Vanuatu. Both church representatives said they support bilingualism, as well as taking the local languages into account. Voices in the public expressed concern over the fact that the policy will perpetuate the élite system, and that there must be more proposals to have a more sustainable system (as by MP R. Regenvanu, who was involved in setting up the National Language Council). Others characterised the policy as biased, not taking Bislama into account, or again insisted on the insufficient number of options offered for discussion, hence the ‘pensée unique’ already mentioned. Some argued that changes in the constitution or a referendum might be needed. One member of the public stressed the irony of the fact that the meeting and discussions were all taking place in Bislama to talk about bilingualism in French and English. Representatives of MOE tried to defend the policy with the same argument that the dual system was dividing the country and costly, and justifying their choices by arguing that Vanuatu is a bilingual country and that this was in fact what the people wanted, but we know that only a tiny percentage of the population is actually bilingual in French and English.

It might have been expected that this forum, recorded by the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation for television and radio broadcast, would have led to some kind of rethinking of the way the population would be consulted. However, notwithstanding the enormous task carried out by the team to go to all of the six provinces (with about 450 people consulted, 11 public meetings and about 60 workgroups), nothing was changed in the approach in so far as the people consulted were presented with the three propositions to discuss and give feedback on, with little or no room for more scenarios, even though the MOE says this is an opportunity for the public to come up with more proposals which can then be looked at by the team.

6.4.4 The place of Bislama

As is obvious when looking at the policy, there is still no room for Bislama in the formal education system, apart from the fact that it will be considered as a VL for Bislamophones (and possibly the one hour a week of Bislama mentioned in the propositions for Y5 and Y6). Indeed, there is in fact no other choice for the MOE than to have to deal with the situation, but the main problem with doing so, in my opinion, is that Bislama is much more than a VL, it is **the** language of the population of Vanuatu. By the end of the few years when the VL have been used as the medium of instruction, it is unreasonable to think that children will

communicate in French – should it become the medium of instruction – with their families and friends. Today, Bislama is already the language spoken when children leave their communities before the end of primary school and mix with children of different origins. Why would they use a metropolitan language, if they have been used to talking in their indigenous language, or in Bislama, with their parents and communities? There seems to be absolutely no justification for their doing so. They do not do so today, with about 5% of young people using either French or English at home in towns, and less than 1% in rural areas, as shown in the 2009 Census results (see Table 1.1) so there is no reason why this might be expected to change. Sitting outside the Ecole Française in Port Vila on a few occasions, I was struck by the fact that the minute children are out waiting for their parents or for the bus, the great majority of them communicate in Bislama, not in French! So what will happen? Children educated in their VL will use Bislama all the same, but will still be given no formal knowledge of this second language they will all use orally, so that today's ignorance of the written language, its origin, grammar and rules will persist. It can therefore be anticipated that the problems mentioned earlier, such as standardisation and interference with English will also persist and that Bislama will keep its 'lower' status as a language in Vanuatu.

In fact, provision is made in the constitution that one of the VL could become a national language, but as the number of speakers of the largest group of VL is less than 6% of the population, this scenario seems highly unlikely. However, Article 86 also allows for the status of any of the three official languages to be changed: "A bill for an amendment of a provision of the Constitution regarding the status of Bislama, English and French [...] shall not come into effect unless it has been supported by a referendum" (Article 86, The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu, July 1980).¹⁸⁵

It is understandable, though, that Bislama can be perceived as a potential threat to VL: as explained by Miles (1998), the diffusion of Bislama has come at the expense of indigenous languages and many of these languages are threatened with extinction, and there is an undeniable progressive degradation of indigenous modes of communication. The introduction of VL in education has been supported by the *Malvatumauri* (Council of Chiefs) and the Christian Council of Vanuatu, which encourages pride in local languages. It seems wise of

¹⁸⁵ *Wan bil blong mekem amendemen long Konstitusen long saed blong fasin blong yusum trifala langwis ia Bislama, Inglis mo Franis long kaontri ia,[...] bambae I save gat paoa nomo sipos ol sitisen oli sapotem tru long wan referendum.*

the MOE to start education in VL, for the reasons mentioned above. Nevertheless, starting with VL does not necessarily entail the rejection of Bislama: another scenario could also integrate Bislama in the educational picture, either as a taught language, or the medium of instruction for a few years. If Bislama is going to be used as the medium of instruction equivalent to a VL in the first few years of education for its speakers as L1, then it follows that efforts for its standardisation will have to be made anyway, so why not use it for VL speakers at a later stage, and then make a transition to learning the metropolitan languages as foreign languages? The irony is that in its previsions and recommendations for the new ELP, the MOE report takes into account the cost of the training of teachers in Bislama in 2012, as well as recommends to “make the Bisalma [sic] spelling and referential tools (dictionary, grammar,...) official” (p. 45), also mentioning the creation of a Language Institute.

After the work of consultation in the different provinces between February and March 2010, the report was finally presented to Parliament at the end of the year 2010, but simply as ‘a sensibilisation’ document for MPs (M. Lesines, p.c. April 2011).

It has not been easy to know exactly what is happening or will happen to this ELP, because of the political instability in Vanuatu. There was a change of government at the end of 2010, and the Minister of Education also changed. In April 2011, when I was in Port Vila, M. Pipite, the new Minister of Education, had made no decision whatsoever concerning the policy itself, but it is more or less assumed that a consensus has been reached. Not soon after my trip to Vanuatu, there was another ministerial reshuffle, followed by yet another one, with M. Pipite the Minister of Education in the new coalition government latest update August 2012). It might entail that the ELP will eventually go ahead and be presented to the Cabinet and introduced in Parliament for study, but it is impossible to know whether it will be in its present form. The changes will go along with the elaboration of the new curriculum and the training of teachers.

Conclusion

As I mentioned at the beginning, it is a rare privilege for a researcher to find oneself in the thick of things. My study on written Bislama from the linguistic point of view inevitably took me to its place in education, because the two are intrinsically linked. During the time of this research, I met a lot of people involved in one way or another in the world of education, and it was always interesting to listen to what they had to say and their vision of the future of

education in Vanuatu. What has been difficult for me at times was (and still is) try and not fall into the pit of the paradox of the linguist, and the 'know-all' position of the foreign observer. I have refrained from making personal comments when discussing the place of Bislama in 'official' meetings and tried to keep a neutral stand. However, almost everyone I talked to was interested in knowing my position on the matter, regardless of their own convictions. This shows that people are far from being indifferent to the issue and are concerned by the future of their youth, and rightly so. The policy is an ambitious one, and it will not be easy to implement, for the multiple reasons already mentioned. It remains to be seen what benefit the Ni-Vanuatu youth will get from the new ELP and this, of course, will have to be the object of further study, as it is obviously beyond the scope of this research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Being languages of contact, pidgins and creoles have a challenging side insofar as they are mixed languages, with characteristics of two, and sometimes more, superstrate and substrate languages and Bislama, the creole of Vanuatu, is no exception to the rule.

The present study looks at Bislama in terms of its potential decreolisation, that is to say its anglicisation, as English is the lexifier of Bislama.

In order to do that, I devoted the first chapters of this thesis to the description of the framework in which this research was conducted. My study is first and foremost diachronic because it looks at the evolution of written Bislama over a period of about 40 years, with a view to finding whether the language is decreolising. However, this study has a synchronic dimension because I am also dealing with the place of Bislama in today's society, more particularly in the education system of Vanuatu.

What is important to bear in mind is that Vanuatu has a complex colonial history which cannot be ignored, as there were two colonial powers for more than 70 years. The country became independent in 1980 and there can be no question that in the past 40 years or so, many things have changed in the country, including the fact that Bislama has become the only national language as well as one of the three official languages, thus provoking a change of attitude towards the once pidgin. From an oral language spoken by labourers, it has become the language of the Ni-Vanuatu population and a sign of Melanesian identity.

The bulk of the research, its results and analyses can be found in Chapters 4 and 5. We look at the two sorts of documents in the corpus, those I used for the first part of the research and those that constitute my data base. In order to try and find out the changes that possibly occurred in time, I decided to adopt a chronological approach for each of the genres under scrutiny. So what do the results show?

If I was to sum up my findings in one word, I would choose **variability**, because it is definitely what characterises the corpus I have studied. What the results clearly show is that it

is impossible to make any generalisation on the potential decreolisation of written Bislama. What we can do, however, is draw conclusions on the presence of the criteria in the various genres. Let us examine them and see what conclusions they lead to.

Plural -s is probably one of the most salient criteria of anglicisation, and what is most striking is that its presence varies greatly according to genre and even to sub-categories within each genre. It is much more common in 'Press', 'Official documents' and 'Politics', but almost non-existent in 'Religion' or 'Translations'. It also has to be noticed that we find it mostly in the documents of the last twenty years (period 2 of the corpus) as opposed to between 1970 and 1990 (period 1). This is evidence that even though it was already happening occasionally at an early stage, in some domains particularly, it is increasingly common in more recent documents. However, what is also obvious is that all the signs of decreolisation do not happen systematically in a particular newspaper or text, or even in the sub-categories. In the genre 'Press', for instance, we have highlighted the fact that the level of anglicisation in articles, letters to the editor or sports can vary immensely even in the same newspaper. So what is happening in this genre is that the presence – or absence – of the features I have selected as indicators of decreolisation seems to depend mostly on the writers' and journalists' choices as regards the importance of anglicising – or not – their Bislama. This characteristic can also be observed, to a lesser extent, in the two other genres 'Official documents' and 'Other'. Indeed, the consideration of the salient features for decreolisation shows that these are two other domains where loan words and structures from English can be very obvious. This should not come as a surprise for two reasons: first, the texts deal with modern issues that require new semantic fields. Second, there are very recent publications, for most of them. As this research has also shown, written documents in all fields are more and more numerous, and more and more written in Bislama. However, we have noticed that some of the documents are not anglicised at all apart from what could be seen as 'normal' borrowing from English as the lexifier of Bislama. So here again, we find great variability in the language used in the documents. It seems therefore reasonable to take the plural -s ending as a sign of the decreolisation of Bislama, even if the genres in which it is most frequently found are mostly parts of the Bislama repertoire of the educated elite as well as that of the urban population. As my corpus is a written one, it is impossible for me to compare the use of the plural ending in the written and spoken language, but during my presence in Port Vila, I mainly heard the -s ending used by educated Anglophones and mostly in 'official' contexts. In my opinion, it is doubtful that this grammatical feature will be used in all the repertoires in the future, as the words that have been part of the lexicon for quite a long time are, I believe,

highly unlikely to ever take this plural ending, as for instance in **pikininis*. Of course, there is no way of knowing how fast the feature will spread enough to integrate everyday language, or if it ever will. The *-s* appearing in the data is indicative of the tendency towards anglicisation, however, and so is the fact that it is appearing mostly in the very recent documents, even if we did find a few in the earlier period.

As far as compound nouns are concerned, we are faced with the same phenomenon as for the mark of the English plural ending, and it is obvious that there is a correlation between the level of anglicisation of the texts and the number of compounds we find in them, so that they are found in higher proportion in the same genres as the plural *-s* feature, for instance. What is immediately observable in the results is that most compound nouns are calqued on English and that the rules for compounds mostly follow those of English, with a few constructions that differ in the word order. A very limited number of these words have acquired a meaning of their own, so we can say that this is a criterion where the influence of English is definitely present.

All the other criteria, ‘Verbs’, ‘Spelling’ and ‘*evri*’ also prove to be highly variable in proportion depending on the nature of the documents. We have seen that a lot of verbs borrowed from English have been integrated into Bislama in the past ten years or so. These verbs are used more and more frequently, particularly in the media and in official documents to which people have more and more access. It was Crowley’s choice not to include most of them in his 2003 dictionary, but within a period of almost 10 years since the publication of his work, we can say that a lot of them are now used quite commonly, at least in some of the genres. It can therefore be reasonably anticipated that the same process of the integration of new lexicon by borrowing will continue for verbs and that this entails great expansion over time. It also has to be noted that virtually all the ‘new’ verbs are borrowed from English and that they are used in all of the genres, with some undoubtedly more frequent in the media and the domain of education, where the jargon of teaching is all from English.

As for what I have called ‘Spelling’, the conclusion I can draw from my results is that variation does not – in my opinion – come from lack of rules as such, but rather from lack of knowledge of or compliance to them, as well as other reasons that have already been identified, such as the phonological perception of the speakers. My findings seem to confirm that apart from typos, nonce occurrences or idiosyncrasies, the patterns of variation that we observe are not as haphazard as they appear to be at first sight. Indeed, the writers are very consistent in their way of writing, even if that means not paying much attention to the

orthography or the level of anglicisation they choose, so that what appears to be ‘anything goes’ is, in fact, a choice. Therefore, this for me implies that spelling is a ‘problem’ that can probably be easily dealt with once the will is there to do so.

We have also seen that the distinction between *olgeta* and *evri* is a knotty problem and there is a great deal of uncertainty about the way people use them. It is commonly conceded that in English, ‘all’ refers to plural and ‘every’ to singular, but this is not necessarily what is happening in Bislama. What is interesting in the data base results, I think, is the correlation between the use of *evri* and the plural ending -s, which is an association more and more common in recent texts, and where *evri* means ‘all’. However, it is also used with the singular predicate marker *i* and has then the same value as its English counterpart ‘every’. The findings have also indicated that *olgeta* is used to refer to a specific group already determined, and is found much more frequently in the genre ‘Religion’. So there might be a recent shift from *olgeta* to *evri* to express the meaning of ‘all’, but once more, there is great variability in people’s use and perception of the words when they are used as quantifiers. To conclude on this point, we could simply point out that linguists do not necessarily agree on the value and use of the English quantifiers ‘all’ and ‘every’, so that this point is also the object of various interpretations in the lexifier. It is therefore proposed that this particular feature should be the object of further study.

After looking at the results in terms of criteria, it is also interesting to examine them from a different perspective, namely that of genres. We have already stated that there is great variability in the presence of such or such feature in the corpus. Let us now try to give conclusions in terms of the corpus genres. If we look at the results in terms of decreolisation, what immediately comes to mind is that the results show great similarities for some of the genres, in spite of the variability already pointed out. What I mean by this is that decreolisation seems to be taking place in some genres – or some of their sub-categories – and not at all in others.

The first striking element is that the signs of the anglicisation of written Bislama are particularly obvious in three genres: ‘Press’, ‘Official documents’ and ‘Other’ where there is clear correlational evidence that the criteria are all present in great number in the same documents. What is also noticeable is that they appear in the last two decades, with the better part of them in the past 10 years. As I have already pointed out, there seems to be coherence in the results because of the nature of the genres. Some of these documents, for instance, require specific semantic fields and are written – and probably read – by educated people. It

is reasonable to predict that, as they are more accessible to the general public, people will, little by little, get accustomed to reading loan words they are not too familiar with but which will integrate and widen the vocabulary of Bislama. The media, of course, play a very important part in the process, and even though my corpus is limited to written documents and spoken Bislama is beyond the scope of this study, I was told on many occasions – and check by myself – that the Bislama used on some radio stations, for example, had nothing to do with ‘oldfala’ Bislama “*from we i gatplante Inglis long hem naoia*” ‘because today it’s full of English words’ (anonymous quote). There is to me absolutely no doubt that decreolisation is taking place in these genres. However, I also have to point out that some journalists consciously ‘resist’ doing this by deliberately choosing **not to** anglicise their written Bislama and by trying to be creative by coining new expressions more in keeping with Melanesian identity.

The results are somehow very different for ‘Religion’, ‘Translations’ and ‘Storian’, where the data strongly suggest that hardly any decreolisation is occurring at all. But it must be borne in mind that this cannot be generalised to the whole genre, as we have noted that there was also variability depending on what sub-category the text belongs to. For example, if we deal with religious writings and texts or translations, there is no sign of anglicisation at all. Things are different if we consider recent documents produced by churches but which deal with advice on issues of people’s everyday lives. In some of these booklets, we find the same phenomenon of anglicisation as in other publications about the same issues and at the same period, that is to say very recent publications. The language used in the brochures does not belong to the field of religion *per se* and can therefore seem to be able to ‘bear with’ anglicisation whereas the phenomenon is definitely absent from the documents referring to religion and purely religious texts.

Evidence of the same kind of non-anglicisation is found in ‘Translations’, which is the other genre where decreolisation is not happening. Indeed, very few of my criteria are to be found in them, as is indicated by the results. The only explanation I can venture for this comes from my personal experience as a ‘translator’ in the course of both my teaching and studying. Not only do translators have the responsibility of conveying meaning from one language to another, but they do so with the most accurate phrasing possible, i.e. applying the ‘rules’ of the language they are translating into. When you do this for Bislama, it follows that the rules of the written language are respected by translators – often linguists themselves – therefore you find no -s, no English and no variation in spelling. We have shown that, contrarily to

what is often believed, the tools are amply sufficient for Bislama to be written in a standardised way by anyone willing to do so, for both grammar and lexicon.

One further finding worth mentioning here is that in the same data, I have found no evidence that the phenomenon of decreolisation is occurring for ‘Storian’. It should hardly come as a surprise, because the genre is in essence almost the epitome of Melanesian identity as what it is composed of is also called *kastom stori* ‘traditional stories, tales’. It is therefore completely logical that no anglicisation is taking place here, and even in the more recent corpus of stories written for children, for example, the language is carefully selected and contains no English. Obviously, the language in traditional stories does not belong to the world of technology or the modern world, but this nevertheless shows that people are aware of the choices they make when they create and write stories.

‘Politics’ may well be the genre where variability is probably highest because the corpus shows two different kinds of documents, with some written in very traditional Bislama whereas other can be extremely anglicised. It is hard at this stage to offer explanations for this state of things other than the speaker’s/writer’s idiosyncrasies. One might venture that there could be a difference in the level of anglicisation which depends on whether the speaker is francophone or anglophone, but as I have not considered this dimension in my corpus – apart as an observer while studying the documents – it would be foolhardy of me to make any further comment on this particular point. The only remark I will make is that some documents look resolutely ‘grassroots’ to me, with everyday Bislama while others look much more ‘sophisticated’ in that they are very anglicised. We may infer from this that politicians also make choices concerning the kind of language they use which may vary according to the public / audience who is targeted, but this is only an impression and would require further evidence to be considered as valid.

Finally, I would like to say a few words on the very recent parts of the corpus because they involve new ways of communication, such as emails, text messages, as well as ads. Unfortunately, these genres are very limited in size in my corpus, for reasons already evoked. I have however tried to point out what I think are the trends, such as the use of abbreviations, shortenings and even creations. The research findings outlined here are by necessity very limited and further research is necessary to document and examine the consequences these new ways of communication will have on the written language. There will be a need to consider the impact of new technologies and their constraints on language in general, as well

as the rampant anglicisation we can observe in a lot of languages which is due to globalisation.

The chapter before last is not *stricto sensu* on the written language itself as it focuses on the place of Bislama in education. Indeed, there is for me no language without the people who speak and write it, the environment they live in, the period of their history and the institutional frame of education. My very strong conviction at the end of this study is that Bislama is what it is today – not used for literary creation and still variable to a certain extent, as this study has shown – precisely because of the paradox I have already mentioned. There is to me no doubt that, even though Bislama is the only national language of Vanuatu, its official status remains unclear in spite of its recognition as a sign of identity not only in the country itself, but also in the South Pacific region because of its links to *Tok Pisin* and *Pijin*. Bislama is the language of public domains and is spoken as a first language by a growing number of children. The lingua franca of the Ni-Vanuatu is thriving, expanding every day and yet, it is not recognised in the formal system of education.

There seem to be barriers to the acceptance of Bislama, may be because the most commonly held opinion used to be – may still be for some – that pidgins/creoles are not good enough to express everything and that their repertoire is limited by nature. Even if mentalities are changing, given the tone and the complexity of the debate, one may wonder how it will be resolved – if ever. What is needed is a clear position on the standardisation of Bislama, because it seems to me that standardised spelling would probably entail that Bislama would then be effectively used as a written medium of grassroots communication, just like it is done orally. There is definitely a need to take that step forward, irrespective of whether the language is introduced in schools or not. The standardisation would, of course, be greatly facilitated should the language find recognition in schools. I hope that this work makes it clear that I believe it is more a question of attitude than real problems which can be solved quickly once the will to make progress is there. Admittedly, there are still a few points that need clarifying but on the whole, most of the work has been done and the final choices could be made quickly.

Vanuatu is not the only country in the Pacific region to question the efficiency of its education system and to examine the reasons of its failure. As we have seen, one of the central issues is language. Learning in an alien language is a hindrance and Vanuatu has to make sure that children learn their mother tongues which will later be used as foundation for acquiring one (or two) foreign languages. The challenge is to accommodate the best of what

can be found in two very different worlds so that the children can become active citizens not only in their own country but also globally. The country wants bilingualism, and this position seems to hold considerable promise for bridging the divide between Anglophones and Francophones. However, one may express doubts on the feasibility of such an ambitious linguistic policy for Vanuatu, for reasons I have tried to expose clearly in this study. It is a field where disagreement is still rife and at this stage, it is right to emphasise that not only can the creole bridge that gap too, but it also gives the people a sense of Melanesian identity which neither French nor English can.

A lot of things remain to be done on the study of Bislama with the question of its potential decreolisation in mind. First of all, a study of the spoken language would bring, I am certain, considerably more insight into language change. It was at times frustrating for me to limit myself to the written corpus, however varied and rich it may have been. Such a comparative study between spoken and written would probably be extremely time-consuming and painstaking, but it could bring more insight into the oral/written dichotomy as well as possibly more information about the decreolisation of Bislama.

It would certainly be quite worthwhile to constitute a bigger data base and continue the observation of a larger corpus, as well as perhaps add other criteria for further study, too. My conclusions on the potential decreolisation of written Bislama would be reinforced, or shattered, by further evidence which would shed more light on the question. The newer forms of writing such as text messages and emails – of which I only have a very small corpus – require more studying too because new forms of writing could appear in the years to come. I am aware that the data presented here are sketchy, and further study of such new ways of communication is needed.

Of course, keeping informed on what the Vanuatu government will do as far as the country's language policy is concerned is also a must. This can only be conducted progressively as it is still, one could say, 'in the making' or at least in the process of being adopted in the years to come. Not all the questions have been answered, nor will the decisions be easy to make. In this study, I have tried to show that language and its place in education cannot be dissociated, and that the interaction between the two is fundamental.

It is impossible to predict what will happen to Bislama in terms of status in the educational system in the foreseeable future, although for the time being it seems unlikely that it will be given a place. However, what is a certainty is that the language has considerably extended its

presence in all fields of people's everyday lives and it is becoming **the** language of Vanuatu. It is gaining more and more importance in its written form and will be widely used by the younger generations who are more accustomed to seeing it written everywhere around them. The greatest challenge for Vanuatu is to focus on the priorities while sustaining the standard and quality of the education system whose ultimate beneficiaries are the students. I do hope that my work can provide food for thought and possibly further reflection on the place of Bislama.

Finally, what will also deserve further consideration is the expansion of the written language to new repertoires, with Bislama finding its place as a medium of expression for literature and poetry, just like it has become the artistic language of many *stringband* songs, one of the fields I have not explored at all and which is certainly worth studying from both linguistic and social perspectives. I have no doubt that, considering the greater use of written Bislama I have been able to observe since the beginning of my research, the time will come when it finds its place as a medium of literary creation too, in spite of the fact that it is still not accepted in the formal education system. New technologies are facilitating the spreading of communication and access to information and entertainment, and the younger generations certainly know how to go on *YouTube* where they can find quite a few songs in Bislama, as well as recordings of religious material, for example. Even though few people in Vanuatu have access to the Internet and to these very popular websites for the time being, the growing presence of new technologies will entail easier access to more artistic material in the years to come. To my mind, this will inevitably give the language a higher status and more creative production will follow. There is to me absolutely no doubt that, should Bislama be introduced in schools either as a taught language or as a medium of instruction, it would acquire its *lettres de noblesse* just as it did when it became the language of religion and politics 40 years ago. There would be another shift of attitudes and changes in mentalities which would most probably lead to more artistic creativity.

Bae fiuja nomo i toktok hemwan 'Time will tell'.

Appendices

Appendix A: Vanuatu periodicals

Name	Type	Language	dates
<i>Bulletin de la Résidence de France</i> ↓	monthly	F/ B	1961-1974
<i>Bulletin</i> ↓		F/B	1974-1975
<i>Nabanga-Bimensuel d'Information</i>	fortnightly	F/B	1975-1979
<i>Nabanga-Hebdomadaire d'information</i>	weekly	F/B	1979- 1980
<i>British Newsletter</i>	monthly	E only	July 1964-Dec 1965
<i>British Newsletter</i>	fortnightly	E/ B in 1972	1966-1973
<i>New Hebrides News</i> (British Residency)	fortnightly	E/ a little B	1973-1979
<i>News in the New Hebrides</i> (British Residency)	fortnightly?	E	Nov 1979-Jan 1980
<i>nakamal/le néo-hébridais</i> ↓*	monthly	Mostly F/E and B	July 1971-Dec 1972
<i>new hebrides nakamal/le néo-hébridais</i>	fortnightly	E/F	Jan-Aug 1973
<i>Tam Tam</i> (first paper after independence, government run) ↓	weekly fortnightly?	E/F/B	1980-1984
<i>Vanuatu Weekly/Hebdomadaire</i>	weekly		1984-2001
<i>Tam Tam - What to do in Vanuatu this week</i>	free weekly	E only	1993-
<i>Trading Post Vanuatu</i> ↓	twice/week; 3 times/week	E only	1992-2000
<i>Vanuatu Daily Post</i>	daily		2000-
<i>Bush Nius</i> (staff newsletter, Vanuatu Forestry)	quarterly	E	Oct 1995-June 2004
<i>Port Vila Presse</i> ↓	weekly	E/F	2000-2003
<i>The Independent/L'Indépendant</i>	weekly	E/F/B	Oct 2003-
<i>Tam Tam-nius pepa blong yumi</i>	Supplement to Port Vila Presse	Bislama only	2001-2002
<i>The Ni-Vanuatu</i>	weekly	Mostly E/ F	2004- ?
<i>L'Hebo du Vanuatu</i> (supplement of <i>Daily Post</i>)	weekly	French only	2008-2009
<i>Storian-Vanuatu's lifestyle magazine</i>	monthly	E	2009-2010
<i>Vanuatu Times</i>	weekly	E/F/B	2009-
<i>Wikli Post</i> (<i>Daily Post</i> free island supplement)	weekly	Bislama only	2008-2009; Dec 2010-Feb 2011

Appendix B: Size of corpus by genre and period

Genre	Size in corpus	n.d	70	80	90	2000
Letters	4.6%			19.9%		81.1%
Articles	16.8%		27.3%	14%		58.7%
Sports	2.6%					100%
Religion (publications)	6.1%	22.8%				77.2%
Religion (translations)	3.3%					100%
Religion (educational material)	6.6%				21%	79%
Other (agriculture, science)	2.2%			33.4%	66.6%	
Politics (news)	4.2%		58%	16.7%	25.3%	
Official documents (reports)	7%					100%
Brochures/leaflets	10%				8.5%	91.5%
Translations	2.9%	51%	12.4%		36.6%	
Periodicals (agriculture, science)	3.5%			100%		
Other (educational material)	8.2%		11.7%			88.3%

Appendix C: Total -s by genre and period (data base)

Genre	Sub-categories	Total s	?	70	80	90	2000
Press	Letters to the editor	41			5		36
Press	News articles	86		7	4		75
Press	Sports articles	29					29
Press	Official notices	6				6	
Press	translations	0		0			
Press	politics	11			11		
Press	speech / interview	0					0
Press	agriculture/science	4			0	4	
Press	health, general awareness	0			0		0
Press	writing prose	1					1
Press	kastom stori	0			0		0
Press	culture	0					0
Religion	about religion	2	0				2
Religion	Brochures / Leaflets	0			0		0
Religion	translations	1					1
Religion	educational material	19				0	19
Ads	about religion	0					0
Ads	Official notices	39					39
Ads	Commercial	12					12
Storian	translations	0					0
Storian	poetry	0		0			0
Politics	Letters to the editor	4			4		
Politics	News articles	51		6	8	37	
Politics	translations	1		0	1		
Politics	poetry	52				52	
Politics	speech / interview	2			2		
Politics	culture	0			0		
Official Docs	News articles	13					13
Official Docs	about religion	19					19
Official Docs	Reports	11					11
Official Docs	Brochures / Leaflets	93				8	85
Official Docs	translations	0					0
Official Docs	educational material	2					2
Translations	translations	1	0	1		0	
Translations	agriculture/science	0			0		
Translations	health, general awareness	0					
Periodicals	agriculture/science	2			2		
Other	poetry	25				22	3
Other	educational material	17		1			16
Other	agriculture/science	39			15	24	
	TOTAL	583	0	15	52	153	363

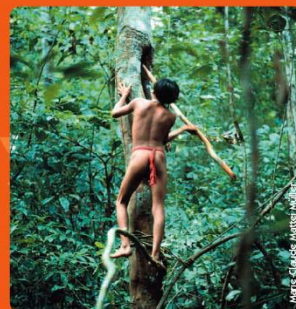
Strong stamba blong

wan gudfala developmen

'Kastom save mo save blong ples' hemi kam long ol bubu blong yumi. Ol bubu blong yumi oli kasem ol save blong olgeta mo fasin blong mekem samting tru long plante handred yia we oli laef wetem envaeronmen. Long ol man ples we oli stap long ol rural eria, kastom save blong ples hemi givhan bigwan long ol desisen we olgeta i stap mekem evri dei.

Ol save ia oli wan pat blong kalja blong yumi, we i kavremap tu ol lanwis, fasin blong talemaot ol difren nem blong ol difren samting insaed long envaeronmen, fasin blong yusum ol risos blong yumi, fasin blong laef long wan komuniti, ol fasin blong mekem kastom mo ol seremoni.

Ol save ia oli wan impoten pat blong ol difren kaen kalja long wol mo oli mekem se kastom save i givim wan strong stamba tingting blong ol gudfala kaen developmen i save kamaot long hem.



Wan boe blong Yanomami we hemi stap long Upper Orinoco, Venezuela, i stap lukaotem hani insaed long wan stamba blong wud we i gat hol long hem. Olgeta man Yanomami oli gat nem blong fifti (50) difren kaen bee, we i stap givim long olgeta fulap gudfala hani we i gud blong bodi mo oli yusum olsem meresin. Oli save long ol difren kaen haos we gat hani (we oli stap faenem antap o daon insaed long hol blong wan tri, o long wud we i foldaon) mo oli stap yusum ol difren kaen fasin blong karemaot hani insaed long tri folem ples we hani i stap long hem.



Long ol Surin aelans long Thailand ol man mo woman blong Mokin (olgeta oli wan grup we oli stap muf olbaot long ol ples klosap long solwora) oli stap traem yusum ol fasin we bae i no save spolem envaeronmen. Ol woman nao oli stap lukaotem kakae long solwora taem solwora i drae mo oli stap yusum save blong olgeta long envaeronmen blong faenem ol difren kaen selfis, krab mo fis.

Wan kenu we i gat sel long ol aelan blong Maskelynes, saot Malekula, Vanuatu, i stap kambak long garen long menlan. Kastom save blong yusum kenu long solwora, we i stap long save blong man long ol sta, swel, win mo ol animol, i stap halpem yumi yet long Pasifik taem yumi stap krosem solwora.



LINKS

Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems
www.unesco.org/links



Appendix E: Plural -s match by genre and period (data base)

Genre	Sub-categories	Total -s	70	80	90	2000
Press	Letters to the editor	34		4		30
Press	News articles	40	4	1		35
Press	Sports articles	14				14
Press	Official notices	6			6	
Press	politics	7		7		
Press	agriculture/science	1			1	
Religion	Religious publications (about religion)	1				1
Religion	translations	1				1
Religion	educational material	13				13
Ads	Official notices	26				26
Ads	Commercial	7				7
Politics	Letters to the editor	3		3		
Politics	News articles	41	2	8	31	
Politics	poetry	49			49	
Politics	speech / interview	2		2		
Official Docs	News articles	12				12
Official Docs	Religious publications (about religion)	9				9
Official Docs	Reports	4				4
Official Docs	Brochures / Leaflets	43			2	41
Official Docs	educational material	1				1
Periodicals	agriculture/science	1		1		
Other	poetry	13			10	3
Other	educational material	6				6
Other	agriculture/science	17		10	7	
	TOTAL	351	6	36	106	203

Appendix F: Research permit



VANUATU NASONAL KALJORAL KAONSEL
Vanuatu National Cultural Council
Conseil National Culturel du Vanuatu

VANUATU KALJORAL SENTA
Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Centre Culturel du Vanuatu

P.O. Box 184, Port Vila, Vanuatu, South Pacific Phone / Fax: (678) 26590 Email: vks@vanuatu.com.vu

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

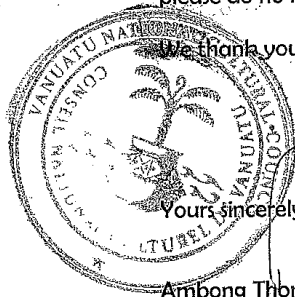
Application to do Research in Vanuatu.

This is to certify that permission is granted for Cendrine JARRAUD – LEBANC to do her research in Vanuatu on the Evaluation of written Bislama.

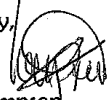
Her research project is for 4 years period beginning 2008 up till March 2012.

Should there be any queries in regards to the above research and Officer concern please do not hesitate to contact the Vanuatu National Cultural Council in Port Vila.

We thank you in your cooperation in this research.



Yours sincerely,


Ambong Thompson,
Vice Chairman, Vanuatu National Cultural Council.

41/04/011

T

NASONAL MUSEUM
National Museum
Musée National

REJISTA BLONG OLGETA OLFALA PLES BLONG VANUATU
The Vanuatu Cultural and Historic Sites Survey
Inventaire Sites Historiques et Culturels du Vanuatu

NASONAL FILM MO SAON UNIT
National Film and Sound Unit
Service national du Film et du Son

NASONAL LAEBRI
National Library
Bibliothèque Nationale

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