

# **German in the Pacific: Language policy and language planning. Governmental and mission activities in the German-colonial era (1884 – 1914)**

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During the second half of the 19th century, extended parts of the Pacific region came under German colonial administration. Part of this colonial administration consisted of repeated and diverse efforts to implement German as the official language in several contexts (administration, government and mission schools) in the colonized areas.

This paper traces the course of the implementation process from early circulars and regulations to school curricula and practical application. It presents the legal steps that were taken with regard to the status, corpus, and acquisition planning of German in the Pacific and puts a particular emphasis on the role the missions played in this process.

Due to unfamiliar sociological and linguistic conditions, to competition with English as an(other) important/prestigious colonizer language, and to the short time-span of the German colonial rule, these efforts rendered only little language-related effect. Nevertheless, some linguistic traces have been left, and these seem to reflect in what areas language implementation was organized most thoroughly.

Our investigation works from two directions: First, taking an historical approach, legal and otherwise official documents as well as documents from mission archives relating to discussions and regulations with respect to language planning are analysed in order to understand how the implementation process was planned and (intended to be) carried out. Second, from a linguistic perspective, established lexical borrowings and other traces of linguistic contact are identified that can corroborate the historical findings by reflecting a greater effect of contact in such areas where the implementation of German was carried out most strictly.

The major goal of this paper is to trace the political and missionary activities in language planning with regard to German in the colonized Pacific, to demonstrate how this planning process, though not always conscious and consistent, followed the same steps that are still taken when in a more modern language policy context a new code of prestige or national unity is to be implemented. The paper compares the steps of modern language planning with those taken in the Pacific and forms hypotheses on what outcomes could have been expected in the historical situation in the Pacific. These hypotheses are then compared to and evaluated in the face of the outcome that can be observed, in the historical practice as well as in long-term effects of language contact up until today.