

The teaching of reading is fraught with challenges in the multilingual nation of Papua New Guinea (PNG) which has three official languages: English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu. While English is a national language, it is not widely used and rarely spoken with Tok Pisin used as the main language of interaction while in some cultural activities, such as songs and dances, people use their indigenous languages (Tok Ples) to express themselves. In schools, English is the language of instruction with concerns about using Tok Pisin/Tok Ples (home language) in the teaching of reading.

To support the revitalisation of Tok Ples and Tok Pisin as a resource for the teaching of reading and also learning to read in English, this paper will report on an International development of Oceania Committee (IDOC) funded project undertaken in the north west East Sepik region of PNG to create bi-/multilingual multimodal reading resources: teacher-made books, texts and create indigenous language orthographies. It aimed to build the capacity of local teachers and pre-service teachers, increase participants knowledge of their Tok Ples and revitalise indigenous language/s. It also aimed to make inroads towards bridging divides created through different languages, teaching children with different language and literacy repertoires and the value of their own language/s.