# LANGUAGE POLICY IN OCEANIA: IN THE FRONTIERS OF COLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

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- ABSTRACT: In this article, we present an overview of the language policies adopted in the Oceanian countries and territories after analysis of legislation, plans and government programs. Representing 22.9% of all languages in the world — the vast majority spoken by few people and endangered —, this continent suffered an intense linguistic colonization marked by the instrumentalisation of indigenous languages by missionaries and by the subsequent imposition of European languages as the only ones allowed during European and American imperialism. Such a scenario has broadened the complex linguistic situation in Oceania and has imposed on the countries of the region many challenges about languages to adopt after their independences, in view of the many local problems, which caused the Oceanian peoples to seek diverse political solutions and to become frontier peoples — frontiers of languages, frontiers of meanings, frontiers of memories, frontiers between colonizer languages, indigenous languages and immigrant languages.

- KEYWORDS: Language policy. Oceania. Linguistic colonization. Bilingualism. Languages in contact.

## Introduction

The last continent to be visited by Europeans, Oceania is still a geopolitical space little known in the West. It currently has 14 independent states, and 17 inhabited territories with greater or lesser political and administrative autonomy — from France, the United Kingdom, Chile, Indonesia, the United States and from Australia and New Zealand. The Oceanian continent has 3,509,212 mi² (9,088,818 km²) and it is slightly larger than Brazil. But it is inhabited by only 46.9 million people (UNFPA, 2019), that is, a population slightly higher than Argentina.[1] And although little known, the continent is often remembered by its largest country, Australia, which corresponds to 84.6% of the territory and concentrates 52% of its population. Such numbers often cause the

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[1]   As Kirch (2000) and Cochrane and Hunt (2018) point out, the boundaries of the Oceanian continent are complex and vary according to archaeological, geological, anthropological, linguistic and (geo)political criteria, which may include some Japanese islands and even East Timor or exclude the American state of Hawaii, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) or the western part of the New Guinea.

continent to be presented as a synonym for its larger country, as if there were no other 13 nations that are grouped into three major historical geographic regions: Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia.[2] However, linguistically, Australia currently represents only 13.5% of the continent's languages, out of a total of 1,630 languages (ETHNOLOGUE, 2017).[3] This means that these 13 countries – Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – and 17 territories – American Samoa, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Papua, Pitcairn Islands, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna and West Papua – present approximately 1400 languages. This indicates that 22.9% of all languages in the world are originated in or spoken in the countries and territories of the continent, a region that concentrates only 0.5% of the world population (UNFPA, 2019); thus, becoming, according to Lynch (1998), linguistically the most complex region of the world.

All of these languages can be grouped into six major groups: a) Austronesian languages; b) Trans-New-Guinean languages; c) Indo-European languages; d) Australian Aboriginal languages; e) Sign languages and f) Creole languages, which refer to the majority of the continent's human settlements for thousands of years (LYNCH, 1998; PAWLEY, 2013). According to Ethnologue (2017), the Austronesian language family encompasses approximately 1,256 languages in a vast territory ranging from the island of Madagascar in Africa to Indonesia and the Philippines in Asia to parts of New Guinea, Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia in Oceania, including New Zealand and Hawaii.

The Trans-New-Guinean language family is composed of about 483 languages and extends through Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Indo-European language family comprises approximately 449 languages. These languages came to the continent through linguistic colonization and are now present in all countries of the region, especially English and French. All these families can be divided into several smaller families.

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[2]    Such division of the continent in these regions was made by the French explorer Dumont d'Urville based on nineteenth-century racist and evolutionist criteria in which the Polynesians would be the most advanced in relation to the Micronesians and those in relation to the Melanesians for organizing themselves around indigenous chiefs (COCHRANE; HUNT, 2018). But recently, taking into account archaeological, anthropological and linguistic criteria, Green and Pauley (*apud* COCHRANE; HUNT, 2018) divided Oceania into two regions. The Near Oceania formed by New Guinea, the Bismarck Islands and part of the Solomon Islands and the Remote Oceania formed by the other islands of the continent. While the colonization of Remote Oceania occurred about three thousand years ago, Near Oceania has population remnants dating back 50 thousand years.

[3]    As we know, to delimit linguistic and cultural boundaries, as well as those of a continent, is something very complex and we would say even political-ideological, a topic already discussed by us (BARBOSA DA SILVA, 2018). In this way, to specify how many languages are spoken in the world or in Oceania is not easy and it is often a controversial task. Mühlhäusler (1996) mentions approximately 1470 languages; Lynch (1998), 1400; Kirch (2000), 1200; Lal and Fortune (2000), 1000; Pawley (2013), 1300. We decided to take as reference the data of the Ethnologue because, although in its history is the former Summer Institute of Linguistics, with religious purposes, including in Oceania, its database now compiles several linguistic researches about the world's languages, thus allowing us to have an overview of them. It should be remembered that, regardless of the exact number of languages spoken on the continent, there is no doubt that, as in other colonized regions of the planet, many more were spoken in Oceania before the European colonization.

The fourth group consists of about 379 languages of Australia — half of them are already extinct — of several isolated linguistic families. The fifth group is made up of 142 sign languages and is scattered throughout the world. In Oceania, the Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and the New Zealand Sign Language stand out. The last group is composed of creole and pidgin languages, formed from the contact of languages, generally having a European linguistic based.[4]

Currently, creole and pidgin languages are spread across America, Africa, Asia, and there are 15 of these languages in Oceania. The creoles and pidgins of continent´s English-based are: Australian Kriol, Bislama (one of the official languages of Vanuatu), Hawaiian Pidgin, Ngatikese Creole (Micronesia), Norfuk Creole (Norfolk Island), Pijin (Solomon Islands), Pitkern Creole (Pitcairn Islands), Torres Strait Creole (Australia), and Tok Pisin Creole, which is spoken as a second language by four million Papuan New Guinean. The French-based is the New Caledonian Creole (extinct) and the Tayo Creole (New Caledonia) and German-based, the Unserdeutsch Creole (Papua New Guinea). The Austronesian/Asian-based consists of the Papuan-Malay Creole (Papua and West Papua), the Malay Creole of the Cocos Islands and the Hiri Motu Creole (Papua New Guinea) (HOLM, 2000; ETHNOLOGUE, 2017).

If we consider the large number of languages in relation to the population compared to other continents, Oceania has the lowest proportion of speakers per language in the world. This proportion is even more surprising if we analyze separately some countries of the continent such as Vanuatu, where this proportion reaches a language for 2.5 thousand inhabitants on average.[5] Due to this and to the sea level rise caused by climate change,[6] which threatens many island countries, according to Unesco (2010), 319 languages in Oceania — most of them in the Australian language group — are in danger of extinction in the next years. In addition to these ecological and demographic (or demolinguistic) factors, Hamel (2008) presents others that contribute to the disappearance or displacement of languages: a) the asymmetry of power among linguistic communities in contact; b) the lack of linguistic loyalty in subaltern communities; c) the expansion of the dominant, national and international languages through the State (public education), the media and commerce; d) the lack of recognition and support by State; and e) the repression against minority languages.
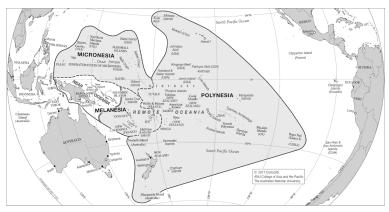
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[4]  For the differentiation between creole and pidgin languages check Couto (1996) and Holm (2000).

[5]  According to Lynch (1998), basically Micronesia and Polynesia have one language per island or group of islands. Melanesia, where Vanuatu is, has many languages per island, thus concentrating one of the greatest linguistic diversities in the world. This would be justified, according to Lynch (2017), due to the time of human occupation of Melanesia in relation to the other areas; by natural geographic separation (rivers, mountains, forests) in regions of Melanesia unlike the ocean that allowed vast contact between islands and atolls of Micronesia and Polynesia and by the different social structure of the regions. While Polynesian societies were organized in indigenous chiefs, in Melanesian societies there was not a defined hierarchy.

[6]  Global warming caused by the emission of polluting gases threatens many islands, atolls and archipelagos of Oceania, mainly in Micronesia and Polynesia, as Tuvalu, Tokelau and Kiribati. Tuvalu, made up of nine atolls, has even maintained a very active stance at the UN Climate Change conferences, condemning the emissions of gases from rich countries (CORLEW, 2012; FRY; TARTE, 2016).

With this background, in this article we aim to provide an overview of the political situation of the languages in Oceanian countries and territories, based on an analysis of their laws and policies so that we can reflect on the challenges that colonialism and globalization impose not only to these countries, but to the whole world. We believe that our view from Brazil, a geographical area that, despite not having much tradition or research about this region, was also colonized and is also on the periphery of the world system, can contribute to the reflection on this theme.

It is worth noting that this is not an easy task due to the diversity of peoples, languages and historical contexts of each country and territory of Oceania. However, our objective, at this moment, is not to deepen these policies according to the specificities of each country, but rather to focus on presenting a scenario of the language policies of the continent after colonization.

**Map 1** – Oceania by regions



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## Linguistic colonization in Oceania

The first European to reach Oceania was Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese in the service of Spain, during the first European circumnavigation trip of the planet, bringing in the Mariana Islands, which he baptized as Lázaro Islands on March 6, 1521 (CAMPBELL, 2003). After this first contact, other Europeans from various countries visited the continent, as the Spanish Alvaro de Mendaña in the Solomon Islands and Polynesia in 1567; the Dutch Abel Tasman in Tasmania, New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji in 1642-1643; the English James Cook on three voyages between 1768 and 1779 when he visited Australia, Alaska, Hawaii, New Zealand and the islands of Polynesia, and the French Louis Antonie de Bougainville between 1766 and 1769 in Polynesia during the first French circumnavigation (CAMPBELL, 2003; QUANCHI; ROBSON, 2009). Even with so many records of European travels to the region, to this day it prevails in

the social imaginary as the dominant discourse that the continent was discovered[7] by James Cook, the first European who arrived in Australia in 1768 and claimed it as an English possession, although this fact is questioned by Portugal.[8]

It is noteworthy that when Europeans arrived in Oceania, they found, just like they did in Brazil, thousands of individuals divided into hundreds of ethnic groups and cultures. These individuals organized themselves into indigenous chieftainships or other non-hierarchical societies. Their ancestors would have migrated to Oceania from the Indonesian islands to New Guinea 50 thousand years ago and from there and from the Philippines to the other islands about three thousand years, developing civilizations such as the Lapita culture (1300-800 BC) in Melanesia; the cities of Nan Madol (0-1700 AD) and Leluh (500-1800 AD) in Micronesia; the Tongan Empire (950-1865 AD), and the best known in the world, Rapa Nui/Easter Island (1000-1400 AD) and its moai, the last two in Polynesia (KIRCH, 2000; CAMPBELL, 2015; COCHRANE; HUNT, 2018).

European colonial history in Oceania can be divided into two quite distinct phases, as in Africa and Asia.[9] The first goes from the arrival of Magellan in the sixteenth century until the second half of the nineteenth century, the phase of exploratory and commercial expeditions, related to commercial capitalism, when America went through intense colonialism. The second phase goes from the nineteenth century until World War II and is embedded in industrial capitalism, marked by European imperialism, annexation of territories on the continent and formation of influence areas.

The colonization of Oceania was not very different from that which Europeans applied in America or Africa. There was also strong violence in the imposition of military superiority on indigenous peoples, forced displacement of the population,[10] great population decrease, introduction of unknown diseases, institution of private property

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[7] To reflect on the different possible meanings about contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples through colonization, we suggest reading Orlandi (2008) and Barbosa da Silva (2018) that demonstrate, through Michel Pêcheux's theoretical and methodological apparatus, the ideological disputes of meaning between the discourse of discovery and the discourse of invasion.

[8] Such controversy, around the discourse of discovery also applies in the debate on the first European to see Australia. The Portuguese people claim that two compatriots were the first to reach Australia: Cristóvão de Mendonça in 1522 and Gomes de Sequeira in 1525. In addition, the name Australia is attributed to another Portuguese, Pedro de Queirós who called the present Vanuatu Islands of *Australia do Espírito Santo* (Southland of the Holy Spirit), in relation to its geographical position in 1605 (QUANCHI; ROBSON, 2009).

[9] Mühlhäusler (1996) divides the colonial history of Oceania into four periods: 1) from 1500 to 1750 — the phase of Spanish exploration and trade; 2) from 1750 to 1830 — phase of scientific and anthropological discoveries; 3) from 1830 to 1880 — phase of modern economic exploitation and 4) from 1880 to 1975 — phase of colonial contact.

[10] According to estimates, between 22 and 27 thousand people were forcibly taken from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to Fiji between 1864 and 1911 in a practice known as "blackbirding". From 1863 to 1904, approximately 62 thousand people were taken mainly from Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to Queensland, in Australia. Between 1862 and 1863 about 3 thousand people — men, women and children — were taken from Niue, Rapa Nui, Tokelau and Tuvalu to Peru and in 1879, 1,210 Kitibatians and Vanuatuans were taken to Samoa. Other displacements were still made towards New Caledonia and Hawaii. All these displacements had the same goal: to provide cheap labor for sugar, cotton and rice plantations and also for mining. However, many died in the crossing or during the work on the plantations (SCARR, 1990; HORNE, 2007; GRAIG, 2011). Some areas of Oceania have also received immigrants from other continents such as Indians in Fiji and Japanese in Micronesia and Hawaii, many of whom were also working on the plantations. Such migration has contributed to the transformation of the language situation of these regions.

unknown by the natives, and the presence of Catholic and Protestant missionaries to Christianize the inhabitants of the islands, an act seen as synonymous of development (DENOON, 1997; CAMPBELL, 2003). This first phase is marked, initially, by the sighting of many islands by the Europeans, the first contacts and the exchange of gifts with native peoples in an attempt to form alliances that would help and allow the exploration of the islands (FISCHER, 2013; CHAPPELL, 2013a). In this first period, the Pacific Islands were used for the extraction of breadfruit, the fishing of sea cucumbers; and at the end of the eighteenth century, for the extraction of sandalwood and for whaling. They also served as a stop for the Pacific Ocean crossings since at first they did not present satisfactory mineral resources as in Latin America. (LAL; FORTUNE, 2000)[11].

Australia and New Zealand, however, present a separate chapter within this colonial history, with some peculiarities that deserve attention. Australia was reached by Europeans late in relation to many islands in Oceania, but, unlike them, it was occupied immediately. Twenty years after the arrival of James Cook, the city of Sydney, in the southeast of the country, was founded, in 1788, by William Bligh. Sydney quickly became an important trading post with the shipping industry as trade grew with Hawaii, the United States, and Tahiti (CAMPBELL, 2003).

Although Australia also had a colonial exploitation with the formation of plantations in Queensland, in the northeast of the country, using forced displacement labor from Melanesia, the settler colonialism prevailed as in Canada and the United States. At first the settlement was made by people who committed crimes in the United Kingdom. The condemned men, after serving time in Australia, received a small portion of land uninhabited for cultivation, but were forbidden to return to the UK. This policy ceased only in 1968, when the number of migrants was already higher than the number of the convicted. (MACINTYRE, 2009).[12]

As for New Zealand, the English colonization began at the end of the eighteenth century, with the first exploratory missions of the territory. There, the English found the Maoris that populated New Zealand around 1200 AD, coming from Eastern Polynesia. Unlike Australia, New Zealand was inhabited by only one people, who lived mainly in the hottest areas north of the North Island. But as in Australia, New Zealand's colonial option was for settlement, first with warehouses for whaling and then for missionaries and sheep ranchers. Such settlement intensified from 1840 on, when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, between the United Kingdom and Maori chiefs, in a sort of formal

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[11] Only in the late nineteenth century, in the second colonial phase, the Europeans discovered considerable mineral reserves of phosphate in Nauru, Kiribati, Palau and French Polynesia; gold and copper in New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea, nickel also in New Caledonia and gold in Fiji (DENOON, 1997). Some mines have brought serious environmental consequences as in Nauru, where the center of the island is now devastated and uninhabited. Other mines are still in full production. Currently New Caledonia is one of the six largest nickel producers in the world (USGS, 2011). Australia and New Zealand also avoid this rule because they had gone through gold cycles already in the middle of the nineteenth century.

[12] According to estimates, from 1788 to 1968, approximately 165 thousand convicts were brought to Australia (AUSTRALIA, 2008).

annexation of the archipelago. The later years were marked by conflicts between settlers and Maoris because of the forced occupation of indigenous lands and the institution of self-government from the Constitution of 1852 (KING, 2003).

Unlike the other countries of the continent, Australia and New Zealand conquered their independence — although maintaining a union with the United Kingdom — relatively early in 1901 and 1907 respectively, while the other countries were passing through the second phase of colonialism. These two countries also took over the role of colonizing powers after World War I in many countries such as Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Nauru, and they remain in Cook Islands, Niue and Norfolk Island.[13]

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution that began in England a century earlier, spread to other European countries such as France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the German states. Capitalism, thus, entered into its imperialist phase. In order to continue capital accumulation, European states, in the ever-increasing search for consumer markets and commodity, built vast colonial empires (HOBSBAWM, 2011). An important and symbolic landmark of this event was the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), in which Europeans shared Africa and occupied almost all the continent's land.

Like Africa, Oceania underwent a period of imperial occupation by European countries, who acted, according to Ferro (1996), "in a preventive manner", taking possession of lands before the rival did so, but unlike the African continent, Oceania was not shared by a specific treaty or action of this kind. Hence, in 1842, fearing to lose more areas in the Pacific Ocean, after the Treaty of Waitangi, which incorporated New Zealand to the United Kingdom, France annexed the Marquesas Islands in Polynesia, the first calculated act of imperialism on the continent (CAMPBELL, 2003). Around 1850, France also annexed the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and New Caledonia, in Melanesia. Fearing attacks from other countries, local chiefs urged the British to take over the protection of their territories at Tokelau in 1877 and at Rotuma in 1881 (GRAIG, 2011).

Between 1884 and 1886, Germany and the United Kingdom divided New Guinea and Solomon Islands and created areas of German influence in the Caroline Islands (Micronesia) and British influence in the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) and the Ellice Islands (Tuvalu). Germany also annexed the Marshall Islands (1885) and Nauru (1888), after forming alliances with local governments and imposed a treaty on Samoa (LAL; FORTUNE, 2000; McINTYRE, 2014). The United Kingdom, in turn, realizing the power vacuum in the region and that German alliances with local governments would favor the country's advance, decided to occupy definitively the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1892 (CAMPBELL, 2003).

The United States also feared the German conquests in the Pacific and questioned the possession of Samoa, making it possible for the islands to be divided in 1899 between the two countries (CAMPBELL, 2003). In 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii and

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[13]   Cook Islands and Niue have a different status among all non-independent territories in Oceania. They are states in free association with New Zealand, with total internal autonomy, but dependent on foreign affairs, although currently this rule is being contradicted.

conquered Guam after the victory in the Spanish-American War over Spain, which in turn sold the Marianas, Carolinas and Palau Islands to Germany. Chile occupied Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in 1888, and the United Kingdom finally took over the Solomon Islands in 1893, imposed a formal protectorate over the Cook Islands in 1888, over Tokelau, in 1889; and over Niue and Tonga, in 1900; and established a condominium with France over the New Hebrides in 1906 (McINTYRE, 2014).[14]

In a relatively short time, the whole continent was annexed by European empires and by the United States.[15] Thus, began the second and main colonialist phase of Oceania. This phase also presents an intense linguistic colonization. For Mariani (2004, p.28, our translation),

> [...] linguistic colonization [...] produces changes in linguistic systems that were becoming separate, or it causes reorganizations in the linguistic functioning of languages and ruptures in stable semantic processes. Linguistic colonization results from a historical process of meeting between at least two linguistic imaginaries constitutive of culturally distinct peoples — languages with memories, histories and policies of unequal meanings, under conditions of production such that one of these languages — called the colonizer language — aims to impose itself on the other(s), colonized[16].

This change in local linguistic systems began with religious missions, which, although begun in the seventeenth century, intensified in the nineteenth century, remaining in many countries to this day. According to Mühlhäusler (1996), the number of missions with the diversity of creeds and methods employed in the Christianization of the region is quite complex to study and describe, especially in a continent with high

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[14]  Japan also maintained an imperialist policy on Oceania, annexing the Ogasawara Islands in 1891 and occupying large areas of the continent, mainly in Micronesia, between the two World Wars (LAL; FORTUNE, 2000).

[15]  The European colonization in Oceania found strong resistance among the autochthonous peoples of the continent as: the resistance of the Australian Aboriginals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the New Zealand Wars against the Maoris between 1845 and 1872; the revolt during the conquest of Fiji in 1878; the rebellion on the Sokehs Island, in Pohnpei, against the German colonial administration; the rebellions in Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in 1914 and 1964 for greater autonomy and civil rights; the kanak guerrilla in 1917 in New Caledonia; the rebellion in Malaita in the Solomon Islands in 1927; the general strike at Rabaul in Papua New Guinea in 1929; the movement for the independence of West Papua from 1965 and resistance movements in Samoa with the founding of the organization "O Le Mau" in 1926, whose motto was "Samoa for the Samoans". On December 28, 1929, eleven Samoans were killed by the European police during a demonstration at what became known as the "Black Saturday". This intense movement of resistance against colonization in Samoa undoubtedly was one of the factors that made the country the first on the continent after Australia and New Zealand to gain independence in 1962 (FIRTH, 1997; CHAPPELL, 2013a; 2013b; GOTT, 2013; FOERSTER; PAKARATI, 2016).

[16]  In the original: "*a colonização linguística (...) produz modificações em sistemas linguísticos que vinham se constituindo em separado, ou ainda, provoca reorganizações no funcionamento linguístico das línguas e rupturas em processos semânticos estabilizados. Colonização linguística resulta de um processo histórico de encontro entre pelo menos dois imaginários linguísticos constitutivos de povos culturalmente distintos — línguas com memórias, histórias e políticas de sentidos desiguais, em condições de produção tais que uma dessas línguas — chamada de língua colonizadora — visa impor-se sobre a(s) outra(s), colonizada(s)".*

linguistic diversity. The Pacific Islands received Catholic and Protestant missionaries from Europe, the United States, and from Oceania too. As the colonial empires, they disputed areas of religious influence and also diverged on how to Christianize better the local population.[17]

However, it is possible to raise a point in common among all the missionaries of the nineteenth century, although the best way to Christianize was to use local languages: for them the Oceanian languages were primitive and, therefore, incapable of being used to convey Christian teachings and concepts. Mariani (2004, p. 25) observed the same among the European missionaries in Brazil, what she called the "deficit ideology", in which at the same time "already existing and before the contact, as it serves to legitimize how domination happens".

To overcome this incapability of the indigenous languages, Mühlhäusler (1996) pointed out three alternatives to linguistic colonization that were adopted by the missionaries and which, in turn, completely affected the language environment of the continent: a) the use of local *lingua franca*; b) the use of pidgins and creoles; or c) the use of European languages.

The first alternative to be employed was to arbitrarily choose languages which would be *lingua franca*, to adapt them, to modernize them to represent the Christian reality and to promote them among the inhabitants of certain region. Such an initiative, according to Mühlhäusler (1996), was based on the adoption of a writing system using the Latin alphabet, on the elaboration of a grammar and a dictionary and on the translation of the Bible, which often ignored

> [...] the metalinguistic intuitions of the speakers that distinguish the number of different (sometimes named) entities; linguistic differences which serve important social functions such as indexing group differences; the fact that questions of mutual intelligibility depend on factors other than having a common name (MÜHLÄUSLER, 1996, p. 145).

Such actions had as a consequence "the promotion of a language (or variant) that had traditionally no dominant role, the creation of hierarchies of languages, the modification of local vernaculars, the gradual silencing of those who spoke up for small languages" (MÜHLÄUSLER, 1996, p. 150) and, for us, the gradual extermination of nearby languages. As an example of this form of Christianization, Mühlhäusler (1996) points out the use of the Tahitian language in the colonization of Rapa Nui and the use of the Samoan in the colonization of Tuvalu, in this last creating a diglossic situation

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[17] In order to have an idea about this diversity, the Catholic missionaries included Jesuits, Marists and the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and among the Protestants were members of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) — formed by Anglican, Presbyterian and Baptist — beside, Wesleyan Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Adventist Lutherans and Mormons. It should be noted that the missionaries succeeded in converting some kingdoms to Christianity as Tahiti (1815); Tonga, Hawaii (1830) and Fiji (1854) (LAL; FORTUNE, 2000; CAMPBELL, 2003; GRAIG, 2011; SNIJDERS, 2012).

between the Tuvaluan and the Samoan during colonization — in which the local colonial government used the second language in its official acts — which affected the lexicon and the grammar of the traditional Tuvaluan language.

The second alternative was the use of a pidgin or a creole. Initially this alternative was widely criticized by the missionaries for their lack of standardization, constant modification, and even the conception that such languages could bring negative influences from the West to the natives[18] (MÜHLÄUSLER, 1996). However, this alternative became more acceptable when the missionaries encountered the linguistic situation of Melanesia, which, as already said, has one of the greatest linguistic diversities in the world. Such criticisms were reduced in the twentieth century, with the increase number of speakers of these languages in the continent.[19]

The third alternative, the use of European languages, according to Mühlhäusler (1996) had positive aspects for the missionaries. He considers the ability of these languages to express the message of the Bible, the possible relation between (linguistic) nationalism and the processes of civilization and Christianization, the ability to attract more missionaries because they do not have to learn the local language and the reduction of production costs of teaching materials in a much smaller number of languages. In addition, this alternative became even more attractive to them with the advance of imperialism — when the missionaries began to receive subsidies from European countries to spread their national languages.

However, regardless of the method used in the colonization, if Mühlhäusler (1996) affirms that all of them privileged communication, intervening, even, in the constitution of these languages in postcolonialism, we say that linguistic colonization "imposes itself by force and by writing, or rather, imposes itself with the institutionalizer force of the (European) grammatical language that already carries with it a memory, the memory of the colonizer over his own history and his own language" (MARIANI, 2004, p. 24). All the alternatives employed, thus, produced modifications in the local languages, either in the simple adoption of a Western script[20] or in the production of alterations in the semantic field, that bring this memory of the colonizer, producing other networks of meanings between the colonized and the colonizer.[21]

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[18]  Here again we observe the functioning of the "deficit ideology", which made inferior the pidgin and creole languages.

[19]  Mühlhäusler (1996) even assigns a certain importance of the missionaries for the development of some pidgins and creoles (as well as the system of plantations employed in various regions that has provided displacements of natives throughout the continent), such as the Australian Kriol, the Unserdeutsch, the Tayo and the stabilization of Tok Pisin.

[20]  According to Mugler and Lynch (1996) no language of Oceania was written until the Europeans arrived.

[21]  An example of these complex networks of language meanings between the colonized and the colonizer is the millenarian movement "cargo cult", whose anthropological and sociolinguistic studies also contributed to the development of research in the area of literacy and acquisition of writing in other parts of the world. According to Meggitt and Burridge (MÜHLÄUSLER, 1996), this movement emerged in Melanesia, especially in Papua New Guinea, from the observation by indigenous groups that missionaries, planters, traders and administration officers were receiving cargoes food and Western products, by ships and airplanes, after sending letters and without the immediate necessity of using currency or even barter. The relevance of this movement to literacy studies is due precisely to the meaning given to writing by the natives and the questioning that the learning of writing would not in itself guarantee the power to send letters to receive products and objects, as occurred with missionaries and European officers.

With the advance of the European and the American imperialism over the Pacific and the establishment of colonies throughout the region, state structures, entities and institutions were created to exert control of the colonial empires, as it was done in Africa. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the colonizers intensified the prohibition of local languages in the Oceanian continent and the imposition of European languages enforcement policies as the only possibility. This happened until the independence of countries in the 1960s and 1970s or till the recognition of cultural and linguistic rights in countries already independent, such as Australia and New Zealand.

This change also took place in other parts of the world, and was possible only through the independence and decolonization movements in the Oceania, which had strengthened after the end of World War II and the creation of the UN in 1945, with the diffusion of the principle of self-determination of peoples. It was in the 1960s that most African countries conquered their independences and that the first countries in Oceania, after Australia and New Zealand, achieved their autonomy: Samoa in 1962 and Nauru in 1968.[22]

As in all other countries that have obtained their independence after a historic process of colonization, the new countries of Oceania have faced many challenges of economic, political, social and linguistic nature. What official language to adopt for the new country, often forged based on colonialism? What is the best way to promote social development and to eradicate illiteracy in countries with a high linguistic diversity in Melanesia and in small countries with low linguistic diversity but with few speakers in Micronesia or Polynesia? How to promote indigenous languages as a way of expressing these groups? How to deal with the legacy of the colonizer's language(s) and its (their) relation to the language(s) of the colonized? How to act in an increasingly globalized world, connected by the internet and with increasing technological transformations? How to overcome such obstacles with the scarcity of financial resources? What are the best language policy(ies) to be adopted for this continent with such a complex linguistic situation?

These are the issues that worried and stimulated us to develop this research.

## Oceanian language policy in the post-independence

As we could observe in the first part of this article, all languages are in constant transformations under human intervention. Calvet (2002) distinguishes these transformations in two management processes: *in vivo* and *in vitro*. *In vivo* management are the transformations naturally occurring in any and every language, such as linguistic variation based in age, gender or geography. *In vitro* management occurs when a

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[22] According to MacLellan (2016), in the last decade, we can observe a new wave of independence on the continent. The Chuuk state (Micronesia), Bougainville archipelago (Papua New Guinea) and New Caledonia (France) could be the next independent countries, following the decision of its inhabitants in plebiscites to be held between 2019 and 2020. And the French Polynesia returned to the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in 2013, after intense diplomacy of the Oceanian countries.

change is imposed on a language, usually by the State. This imposition aims to modify the language environment of a linguistic situation A to a linguistic situation B. And yet, Calvet (2002) claims there are no guarantees of success because the success of a language policy for him depends on the degree of acceptability of the speaker.

Such political actions that aim to modify a linguistic situation, according to Kloss (1969), can be classified as *corpus* planning and *status* planning. While the first is related to a formal planning of language, a change in the interior of the language, that is, when a language is equipped, whether in its lexicon, grammar or spelling to assume another function, the second is related to the functions that a language presents in relation to others and in a particular language environment. Cooper (1997) proposes a third category: the acquisition planning, which, for him, would be the actions taken to increase number of language users. Let us turn to the analysis of the current language situation in Oceania.

In order to carry out this research about the language policies of the continent, we consulted various sources, such as the legislation, statistical offices and education departments of the Oceanian countries and territories, in addition to several authors listed in the bibliography, but especially Leclerc (2018). Then, we elaborated the following table inspired by Ouane (2003) and Barbosa da Silva (2011) that researched the language situation of African countries, in an attempt to present in a simplified way the language conjuncture in the countries and territories of Oceania.

The first two columns present the name of the country or territory, with its independence date or the information of which country it is dependent from and its population by UNFPA (2019) data. The third column shows the number of languages spoken throughout the territory, divided into foreign and autochthonous languages, in addition to the main languages, with data by the Ethnologue (2017). The fourth column presents a list with the names of the main languages, either because it is the most spoken or because it is official.[23] The next two columns show the percentage of the population speaking those languages either as a first language or as a second language. The last five columns refer to the possible or non-use of those languages in the country. The first as *de jure* or *de facto* official language, the second as a *lingua franca*, that is, a contact language between speakers of different local languages. And the last three, as language of instruction[24] in a pre-primary education, the first four or five years of schooling; in the primary, four or five years later and in the secondary, three or four years before higher education.

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[23] For us, every act of naming is an ideological act and the same happens with the languages. A language can have various names, according to the ideological position of those who names it, and can be called by the way in which its speakers designate it, by the same name that is designated by its group of speakers or by the way the Europeans called. For example, the local way of designating the language spoken in Kiribati is a translation of English which in turn came from the way locals called the country from the English-language Gilbert Islands, Kiribati, iKiribati.

[24] It is worth noting that we consider the language of instruction as the language used in the classroom for the most different subjects, including those of the exact sciences. Countries that include it only as subject in their curriculum school were not considered. Likewise, pilot projects were also not considered. In addition, we consider the reality and not the legislation, which is often not fulfilled.

# Table 1 – Language Policy situation in Oceania

| Countries (year of independence or country of which it is dependent) | Population UNFPA (millions) | Number of languages Ethnologue 2017 | | | Main languages | Percentage of speakers | | Language used as | | | | |
| | | Indige-nous | Immi-grants | Main | | First language | Second language | Official language | Liíngua Franca | Average education | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Pre-primary | Primary | Secondary |
| American Samoa (USA) | 0,055 | 2 | 4 | 2 | English Samoan Tongan Japanese Tagalog | 2 91 3,2 3 1,3 | 96 | X X (de facto) | X | X X | X X | X |
| Australia (1901) | 24,4 | 195 | + 150 | 1 | English Chinese Arabic Cantonese Vietnamese Italian Greek Tagalog Hindi Spanish Punjabi Persian Korean German Tamil French Indigenous languages | 72,7 2,6 1,4 1,2 1,2 1,2 1,0 0,8 0,7 0,6 0,6 0,5 0,5 0,3 0,3 0,3 0,3 | 21 | X (de facto) | X | X | X | X |
| Christmas Island (Australia) | 0,0018 (2016) | 0 | 6 | 3 | English Chinese Malay Creole of Cocos Islands Cantonese Min nan | 27,8 17,2 17,2 3,7 1,5 | | X (de facto) | X | X | X | X |
| Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Australia) | 0,0005 (2016) | 0 | 2 | 2 | English Malay Creole of Cocos Islands | 22,2 69,6 | | X (de facto) | | X | X | X |
| Cook Islands (New Zealand) | 0,0173 | 4 | 1 | 2 | English Cook Islands Maori Pukapuka Penrhyn | 3,8 88,6 4,3 3,2 | 90 | X X (de jure) | | X X | X | X |
| Fiji (1970) | 0,9 | 10 | 14 | 3 | English Fijian Fiji Hindi Western Fijian Tamil Telugu Bhojpouri Gujarati Rotuman Kiribati Chinese | 2,7 35,1 21,7 9,5 8,6 3,6 2,9 2,7 1,2 0,7 0,5 | 21 | X X X (de facto) | X X X | X X X | X | X |
| French Polynesia (France) | 0,283 | 7 | 2 | 2 | French Tahitian Tuamotuan Hakka Chinese Austral North-Marquesan South-Marquesan Mangareva | 30 44 8 4,7 2,6 1,4 1,3 0,8 | 35 30 | X (de jure) | X X | X | X | X |

| Countries (year of independence or country of which it is dependent) | Population UNFPA (millions) | Number of languages Ethnologue 2017 | | | Main languages | Percentage of speakers | | Language used as | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Indige-nous | Immi-grants | Main | | First language | Second language | Official language | Líingua Franca | Average education | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Pre-primary | Primary | Secondary |
| Guam (USA) | 0,164 | 1 | 7 | 3 | English<br>Chamorro<br>Tagalog<br>Chuukese<br>Korean<br>Chinese<br>Japanese<br>Palauan | 38,3<br>22,2<br>22,2<br>3,4<br>2,4<br>1,9<br>1,8<br>1,4 | 61 | X<br>X<br>(de jure) | X | X<br>X | X | X |
| Hawaii[25] (USA) | 1,4 (2016) | 2 | + 100 | 3 | English<br>Japanese<br>Tagalog<br>Ilocano<br>Hawaiian<br>Spanish<br>Korean<br>Chinese<br>Samoan<br>Hawaiian pidgin | 74,6<br>5<br>5,4<br>4<br>1,7<br>1,7<br>1,6<br>1,2<br>1 | 50 | X<br><br><br><br>X<br>(de jure) | X<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>X | X<br><br><br><br>X | X<br><br><br><br>X | X<br><br><br><br>X |
| Kiribati (1979) | 0,116 | 1 | 3 | 2 | English<br>Kiribati<br>Tuvaluan<br>Chinese | 2<br>97<br>0,5 | 26 | X<br>X<br>(de facto) | X | X | X | X |
| Marshall Islands (1986) | 0,053 | 1 | 3 | 2 | English<br>Marshallese<br>Japanese<br>Tagalog | 6,8<br>86,9<br>0,6<br>0,6 | 90 | X<br>X<br>(de facto) | | X<br>X | X<br>X | X<br>X |
| Micronesia[26] (1986) | 0,105 | 18 | 2 | 1 | English<br>Chuukese<br>Pohnpeian<br>Kosraean<br>Yapenese | 1,8<br>52,3<br>25,9<br>7<br>5,6 | 45,1<br>4,8<br>6,9<br>0,5<br>0,3 | X<br>(de facto) | X | X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X | X | X |
| Nauru (1968) | 0,011 | 1 | 7 | 2 | English<br>Nauruan<br>Kiribati<br>Chinese<br>Tuvaluan<br>Marshallese<br>Kosraean | 2<br>90<br>2<br>2<br>1 | 64<br>5 | X<br>X<br>(de facto) | X | X<br>X | X | X |
| New Caledonia (France) | 0,276 | 34 | 7 | 1 | French<br>Wallisian<br>Drehu<br>Italian<br>Nengone<br>Paicî<br>Tahitian<br>Xârâcùù<br>Ajië<br>Iaai | 25,7<br>8,8<br>4,9<br>3,9<br>3,2<br>2,8<br>2,6<br>2,1<br>2<br>1,7 | 70 | X<br>(de jure) | X | X | X | X |

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25 An official survey by the Government of the State of Hawaii in 2016 found that 74.6% of Hawaiians speak English at home and 25.4% speak other languages (HAWAII, 2016). In this same research, the Hawaiian Pidgin, which reached less than 0.1%, was given as an alternative response. However, according to other researchers as Drager (2012), the number of Creole speakers is still imprecise, but can reach at least half of the Hawaiian population as a second language. We believe, therefore, that during this linguistic census, most of the Creole speakers did not declare themselves, having answered the question as English speakers.

26 Micronesia is administratively divided into four states. Each state has its official language. The English is official in all along Chuukese in the state of Chuuk, Kosraean in the state of Kosrae, Pohnpeian in the state of Pohnpei, and native languages in the state of Yap.

| Countries (year of independence or country of which it is dependent) | Population UNFPA (millions) | Number of languages Ethnologue 2017 | | | Main languages | Percentage of speakers | | Language used as | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Indige-nous | Immi-grants | Main | | First language | Second language | Official language | Liingua Franca | Average education | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Pre-primary | Primary | Secondary |
| New Zealand (1907) | 4,7 | 2 | + 70 | 2 | English | 81 | 15 | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Maori | 3,7 | | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Samoan | 2,2 | | (de jure) | | X | X | |
| | | | | | Hindi | 1,7 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Chinese | 1,3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | French | 1,2 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yue | 1,1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | German | 0,9 | | | | X | | |
| | | | | | Tongan | 0,8 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Tagalog | 0,7 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Afrikaans | 0,7 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Spanish | 0,6 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Korean | 0,6 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Dutch | 0,6 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | New Zealand Sign language | 0,5 | | X | | | | |
| Niue (New Zealand) | 0,0016 | 1 | 2 | 2 | English | 21,3 | 32,4 | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Niuean | 76,6 | 16 | X | | X | | |
| | | | | | Tongan | | | (de facto) | | | | |
| Norfolk Island (Australia) | 0,0017 (2016) | 1 | 1 | 2 | English | 45,5 | 50 | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Norfuk Creole | 40,9 | | X | | | | |
| | | | | | Fijian | 2 | | (de jure) | | | | |
| | | | | | Tagalog | 1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Chinese | 0,7 | | | | | | |
| Northern Marianas Islands (USA) | 0,055 | 3 | 6 | 1 | English | 10,7 | 85 | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Tagalog | 24,3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Chinese | 23,4 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Chamorro | 22,2 | | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Carolinian | 3,5 | | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Korean | 3,4 | | (de jure) | | | | |
| | | | | | Palauan | 2,3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Japanese | 1,5 | | | | | | |
| Palau[27] (1994) | 0,021 | 3 | 3 | 2 | English | 19 | 79 | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Palauan | 68 | | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Tagalog | 10 | | (de jure) | | | | |
| | | | | | Sonsorolese | 3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Angaur | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Japanese | 0,7 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Tobian | 0,1 | | | | | | |
| Papua[28] (Indonesia) | 3,67 (2016) | 262 | 1 | 2 | Indonesian | 36,5 | | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Papuan-Malay Creole | 12,5 | 14 | (de facto) | X | | | |
| | | | | | Western Dani | 8,1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Western Ekari | 4,5 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Javanese | 2,6 | | | | | | |
| Papua-New Guinea (1975) | 8,2 | 839 | 2 | 3 | English | 1 | 5 | X | | X | X | X |
| | | | | | Tok Pisin | 2 | 64 | X | X | X | | |
| | | | | | Hiri Motu | 3 | | X | | X | | |
| | | | | | Melpa | 2,4 | | (de facto) | | X | | |
| | | | | | Huli | 2 | | | | X | | |
| | | | | | Papuan New Guinean Sign language | | | X | | | | |

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27    Palau is administratively divided into 16 states and each state has its official language. English is official all along with the Tobian in the state of Tobi, the Sonsorolese in the state of Sonsorol, the Japanese and the Angaur in the state of Angaur and the Palauan in the other states.

28    About the percentage of speakers of Indonesian and Papuan-Malay Creole as first language for the territories of Papua and West Papua we collected data from the 2010 Indonesian Census and Kluge (2014) respectively. Even when such data appear to be divergent, we have chosen to keep them in line with those references.

| Countries (year of independence or country of which it is dependent) | Population UNFPA (millions) | Number of languages Ethnologue 2017 | | | Main languages | Percentage of speakers | | Language used as | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Indige-nous | Immi-grants | Main | | First language | Second language | Official language | Língua Franca | Average education | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Pre-primary | Primary | Secondary |
| Pitcairn Islands[29] (United Kingdom) | 0,000055 | 1 | 1 | 2 | English Pitkern Creole | | | X X (de facto) | | | | |
| Rapa Nui /Easter Island (Chile) | 0,0077 | 1 | 1 | 2 | Spanish Rapa Nui | 78 13,8 | 19 33 | X (de jure) | X | X X | X | X |
| Samoa (1962) | 0,196 | 1 | 3 | 2 | English Samoan Maori Chinese | 5 93 0,1 0,1 | 57 6,7 | X X (de facto) | X | X | X X | X |
| Solomon Islands (1978) | 0,611 | 73 | 3 | 1 | English Pijin (Creole) Kawara´ae ’Are’are Kiribatian | 2 6 8 4,5 1 | 37 76 | X (de facto) | X | X X X | X | X |
| Tokelau[30] (New Zealand) | 0,0013 | 1 | 3 | 2 | English Tokelauan Samoan Tuvaluan | 1 93,4 10,5 4,5 | 57,4 2,7 31,5 2,7 | X X (de facto) | X | X | X | |
| Tonga (1970) | 0,108 | 2 | 2 | 2 | English Tongan Chinese Niuafo´ou | 1 96 2 1 | 87 | X X (de facto) | X | X X | X X | X |
| Tuvalu (1978) | 0,011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | English Tuvaluan Kiribati | 0,5 95 2 | 86 3 | X X (de facto) | X | X X | X | X |
| Vanuatu (1980) | 0,276 | 107 | 8 | 3 | English French Bislama Lenakel | 2 3,7 4,1 6 | 60,3 29,4 83 | X X X (de jure) | X X X | X X X X | X X | X X |
| Wallis and Futuna (France) | 0,011 | 2 | 1 | 3 | French Wallisian East Futunan | 10,7 58,9 30 | 72 | X (de jure) | X | X | X | X |
| Western Papua (Indonesia) | 1,36 (2016) | 57 | 1 | 2 | Indonesian Papuan-Malay Creole Javanese Mai Brat Hatam | 69,7 22,5 6,2 3,5 2,6 | 27 | X (de facto) | X | X X | X | X |

**Source:** Prepared by the author based on the laws and websites of governments of the countries and territories of Oceania and Leclerc (2018).[29][30]

At once, observing the number of languages present on each country or territory and considering the colonial history of the continent, we can divide them into four groups or categories:

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[29] The small population of the Pitcairn Islands does not allow statistics to be drawn up. In addition, the islands only provide school education up to twelve years of age. Onwards, the young must study in New Zealand (LECLERC, 2018).

[30] None of Tokelau's three atolls have an institution that provides high school. The Tokelauans complete their studies in Samoa (LECLERC, 2018).

a) group of the country with high linguistic diversity (autochthonous and allochthonous) and the English base settler colonialism: Australia;
b) group of the country and territories with low native linguistic diversity but high or considerable allochthonous linguistic diversity and the settler colonialism of English base: New Zealand and the uninhabited until the first Europeans arrive, Norfolk Island and Pitcairn Islands;
c) group of countries and territories with low autochthonous linguistic diversity that suffered exploitation colonialism: American Samoa, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Rapa Nui, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna;
d) group of countries and territories with high autochthonous linguistic diversity that suffered exploitation colonialism: Fiji, Micronesia, New Caledonia, Papua, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and West Papua.

In the first group, with high autochthonous and also allochthonous linguistic diversity, which was colonized by settlement, is Australia, with approximately 195 indigenous languages and more than 150 immigrant languages. As we said in the previous section, Australian politics underwent a profound transformation in the 1970s, when the Australian government was pressured by Aboriginal movements to abolish both assimilation policy and White Australia Policy, which curtailed immigration from non-European descendants. Such measures allowed the arrival of the first Asians to Australia and culminated later in the adoption of multiculturalism as state policy (MACINTYRE, 2009).

It is from this moment that we can observe a series of initiatives aimed at valuing linguistic diversity, including those aimed at indigenous peoples, such as: the creation of the first pilot programs of bilingual education for Aboriginal peoples, at the 1970s; the development of policies aimed at the teaching of immigrant languages, as the "National Policy on Languages" in 1987, which chose a list of priority languages to be taught; the formulation of the "Aboriginal Education Policy" with the aim of providing Aboriginal access to education, increasing school attendance and ensuring their participation in educational policies, and the creation by the government of the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission" in 1990, to advise the government with regard to the preservation of Aboriginal cultural and linguistic heritage (LECLERC, 2018).

However, in recent years, there has been a consolidation of a language policy of English supremacy in which indigenous schools are inexpressive and immigrant languages are taught only as subjects and restricted to the family context. According to the "Australian Curriculum", for the first ten school years, known as the F-10, that has been developed since 2010, the education system must provide eight learning areas, among them "English and other languages"; seven general capabilities, including "intercultural understanding"; and three trans-curricular priorities, such as sustainability, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander histories and cultures", and "Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia" (AUSTRALIA, 2018).

In the area of languages, Arabic, Australian Sign Language (Auslan), Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese and Indigenous languages are offered as second languages (not as language of instruction) 2 hours per week, but only up to the first 10 years of the school curriculum. For Leclerc (2018), languages are taught with the purpose of integrating immigrants and their children into the country, thus facilitating the acquisition of the English language so that they can participate in public life and, we say, without worrying about the valorization or the preservation of these languages.[31] This can be proven in the F-10 that it points about Arabic and its relation to English:

> Arabic is used as the medium for class interaction and to demonstrate and model new language acquisition. English may be used to explain features of language and aspects of culture. *Both English and Arabic may be used when learners are communicating about similarities and differences between Arabic and other languages and cultures and reflecting on how they talk and behave in Arabic-speaking and English-speaking contexts* (AUSTRALIA, 2018, emphasis added).

The second group, formed by the country and territories with a prevalence of settler colonialism, but with low autochthonous diversity is New Zealand, with only two indigenous languages, Maori and Moriori (in the Chatham Islands, almost extinct) and dozens of immigrant languages. Like Australia, New Zealand has revised its policies of assimilation of indigenous peoples since the 1970s, after extensive mobilization of Maori groups, initiating a policy of appreciation of local culture and language.

Among the measures created were the programs *Te Wiki or Te Reo Māori* (Maori Language Week) in 1975, with a series of events aimed at the recognition of Maori; the *Kōhanga Reo* movement, which from 1981 onwards created pre-primary schools for immersion into Maori culture and language, then nationalized; the creation of *Kura Kaupapa Māori* in 1985, complementary to the previous ones, for primary and secondary education; the adoption of the Maori language as an official in New Zealand in 1987 (NASCIMENTO; MAIA; WHAN, 2017) and in the same year the creation of *Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori* (Maori Language Commission), with the purpose of developing policies promotion of the Maori. All these actions aimed to recognize the importance of the Maori language and to collaborate in the resumption of its transmission to future generations, because like in Australia, a large part of the country's indigenous population had become English-speaking as the first language.

The *Kōhanga Reo* movement achieved a certain success by expanding the number of speakers and eventually served as a model for other countries and regions such as Hawaii (with *Pūnana Leo* since 1984) and also Brazil, in the case of teaching indigenous

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[31] Something similar can be observed in Canada, where we had the opportunity to analyze the functioning of the discourse of multiculturalism (BARBOSA DA SILVA, 2018).

language kaingang (NASCIMENTO; MAIA; WHAN, 2017). The country is currently developing a program that guarantees the use of the Maori and immigrant languages such as Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Maori and Niuean as language of instruction in two-level language: of 51% to 80% and 80% to 100% of the curriculum to secondary education in Maori schools and in primary education for immigrants. In addition, New Zealand presents initiatives such as Language Week, similar to *Te Wiki or Te Reo Māori*, and invests in the production of didactic material for immigrant languages, especially Polynesians, that present shortage of didactic material (NEW ZEALAND, 2018a; 2018b). However, even though governmental documents are produced in the two official languages and the streets of the country are visually bilingual, Leclerc (2018) warns that bilingualism in New Zealand is restricted to the Maori people and to immigrants because few English-speaking people want to learn other languages.

The third group consists of countries and territories that predominantly suffered exploitation colonialism and have low indigenous linguistic diversity, especially in Micronesia and Polynesia, which, according to Lynch (1998), have one language per island or group of islands. Immediately, it is apparent that such countries tend to implement a status planning to institute as official the single or the few indigenous languages alongside the European colonizer language. The fourth group presents countries and territories that predominantly underwent exploitation colonialism, but with a high indigenous linguistic diversity, especially Melanesian countries, where it is possible to observe a tendency to institute as official the European colonizer language with or without creole languages.

It should be noted that the countries and territories of the third group could even adopt only the indigenous language as official because almost all of the population speaks only one native language as in Kiribati or Tuvalu.[32] However, this initiative encounters many problems, such as the lack of resources to develop teaching materials and to train teachers, or the small population and its dispersion across many islands or atolls. In most of these countries, higher education is provided by the University of the South Pacific, based in Suva (Fiji), and is conducted remotely via satellite but with poles only in the capital or main island, and there are cases in which there is not even the provision of secondary education, as in Tokelau and the Pitcairn Islands. This situation influences the migration of young people to countries such as Australia and New Zealand, who end up preferring English language instruction in secondary school to have better professional opportunities (LEE; FRANCIS, 2009; CONNELL; RAPAPORT, 2013).[33]

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[32] In these countries, according to Unesco (2010) and Ethnologue (2017), languages are less endangered than in Melanesia, probably because they have national governments responsible for their language policies as Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.

[33] Data from the national censuses show that around 144 thousand Samoans, 61 thousand Cookians, 60 thousand Tongans, 23 thousand Niueans (fifteen times the population of the territory), 14 thousand Fijians and seven thousand Tokelauans (five times the territory's population) live in New Zealand (2013). In Australia (2016), 61 thousand residents were born in Fiji, 24 thousand in Samoa and 10 thousand in Tonga.

The countries of the fourth group, besides these problems, are in a more complex language situation. Some of them with hundreds of local languages even have to implement a language policy that maintains the national unity, allowing the whole population to communicate in only one language, whether European or Creole, as in Vanuatu or Papua New Guinea, which chose to institute official Creole languages alongside European languages. In others, however, it is noteworthy that there is still a certain discrimination against these Creole languages, as in the Solomon Islands, which did not institute the Pijin as their official language or in Hawaii (territory of the third group), where only recently, in 2016, its linguistic census presented the Creole language as an answer option for the spoken language or even in the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua – that still do not register in the national census this option.

As for the languages used in education, in general in these two groups, we can observe that most countries and territories, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Niue and Samoa, use transitional bilingualism. In these countries and territories, the child has as the language of instruction of the initial grades its first language and later it is introduced into the official European colonizer language. Often the formula is followed, with more or less emphasis on the mother tongue: mother tongue as language of instruction + allochthonous language as subject => mother tongue as language of instruction and allochthonous language as language of instruction => allochthonous language as language of instruction + mother tongue as subject. In general, such a measure would have the advantage of facilitating the acquisition of the colonizer language, thus increasing the country's international insertion in the world, but it has prevented local languages from reaching the upper echelons of the educational system, restricting them to family and religious contexts.

However, it is worth mentioning some variety or specificities of methods in bilingual education of the continent. Those countries and territories that do not adopt the transitional bilingualism system offer courses for local language in the initial grades, for example, in French Polynesia (from 2h to 2:30 per week) or in Fiji (3h to 4h per week). To overcome the difficulties presented, others implement policies and actions in a territorial manner as in Micronesia, which offers the local language according to regions of the country; in a segmented way as in Tonga, where in the capital there is a greater supply of schools with primary education in English in relation to the more distant places of the country due to the parents´ interest; or politics of ethnic character as in Hawaii, that offers instruction in the Hawaiian language for the descendants of Hawaiians; or by subjects such as the Marshall Islands, which offer courses in social studies, health and art in Marshallese, and mathematics and science in English. In Palau, bilingual education varies according to the mother tongue of the teacher, and in the Northern Mariana Islands the lack of resources for bilingual education has meant that the government, since 2004, required proficiency in Chamorro or Carolinian for the conclusion of high school (LECLERC, 2018).

However, even with so many difficulties, some of the advances made mainly in *corpus* planning should be featured — even before the independence of some countries,

but especially after — aimed at equipping languages to take on more important spaces and functions. They could serve as a model for indigenous languages in Brazil with more speakers, such as tikuna, guarani kaiowá, kaingang, xavante and yanomami. Among these initiatives are the foundation of the *Kumision I Fino' Chamorro*/Chamorro Language Commission (1964) in Guam; the institution of the Kiribati Language Board (1970) in Kiribati; the creation of the programs the Pacific Languages Development Project (1970), the Bilingual Education Teacher Training (1974) and their successors by the University of Hawai'i; the formation of the *Académie tahitienne* (1974), in French Polynesia and the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture (1986) in Fiji; the creation of the Chamorro/Carolinian Language Policy Commission (1994), in the Northern Mariana Islands; the constitution of *Faleula o fatuaiupu o le gagana samoa*/International Samoan Language Commission (2000), in Samoa and American Samoa and of the *Te Kopapa Reo Māori*/Maori Language Commission (2003) in the Cook Islands; the institution of the Customary Law and Language Commission (2004), in the Marshall Islands; of the *Académie de langues kanak* (2007), in New Caledonia, and the constitution of the Niue Language Commission in Niue. These initiatives created government-specific offices and university programs responsible in, a greater or lesser degree, for developing and publishing bilingual dictionaries; standardizing spelling; describing the grammar; updating the lexicon; increasing the number of teachers; discussing educational programs and developing teaching materials for local indigenous languages, that is, responsible to implement the *corpus* and acquisition planning for languages of these countries (SPENCER, 1996; LECLERC, 2018).

## Final considerations

In this article, we note that colonialism changed the language environment of this world region, that was even more linguistically complex before Europeans arrived, introducing distinct languages with others spellings and meanings than those already known by the indigenous peoples of Oceania. We verify, throughout the colonization of the continent, the extermination and transformation of local languages through the imposition of European languages. We observe too a process of linguistic decolonization since the 1970s, when another memory is produced about the colonized languages and also about the colonizer languages, marked in the many European-based Creole languages or in New Zealander and Australian Englishes that Holm (2000) even classifies as semi-creole.

Such situation has made the Oceanian peoples become frontier peoples — frontiers of languages, frontiers of meanings, frontiers of memories, frontiers between colonizer languages, indigenous languages and immigrant languages. However, they are not rigid borders but porous, multilingual, with many exchanges and movements, with meanings that come and go, affecting not only local languages but also European languages, even though they are restricted to the Church or the State contexts, respectively.

It should be noted, however, that in spite of the scarcity of the most varied resources, the countries and territories of the region present a relevant language policy of *status*, *corpus* and acquisition, guaranteeing the recognition of local languages by the State; fostering grammatical and lexical linguistic changes so they can occupy other spaces and increase the acquisition of written skills of the population in those languages. Such initiatives are therefore fundamental for is not to be reversed the extinction of languages, at least to reduce it by preserving in a sustainable way this complex and lively language environment.

▪ *RESUMO: Neste artigo, apresentamos um panorama das políticas linguísticas dos países e territórios da Oceania após análise de legislações, planos e programas de governo. Com 22,9% de todas as línguas do mundo, a grande maioria falada por poucas pessoas e ameaçada de desaparecimento, esse continente sofreu uma intensa colonização linguística marcada pela instrumentalização das línguas indígenas por missionários religiosos e pela posterior imposição da língua europeia como única permitida durante o imperialismo europeu e o americano. Tal cenário ampliou a complexa situação linguística da Oceania e impôs aos países da região muitos desafios em torno de qual língua adotar após a independência frente a muitos problemas locais, fazendo com que os oceânicos buscassem diversas soluções políticas e se tornassem povos de fronteiras, fronteiras de línguas, fronteiras de sentidos, fronteiras de memórias entre as línguas colonizadoras, as autóctones e as línguas imigrantes.*

▪ *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Política linguística. Oceania. Colonização linguística. Bilinguismo. Línguas em contato.*

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