

REVIEW

C.P. Livingston, A Course in Hiri Motu. Department of Education, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. 1972. pp 16 + 4 x 45 minute tapes.

This course of 28 lessons is recorded on four 45 minute tapes, and is accompanied by a sixteen page booklet, comprising a transcript of the lessons, with introduction.

Hiri Motu is a pidgin form of the Motu language of Papua, and is widely used as the lingua franca throughout most of Papua. It arose as a means of communication between the Motu and their trading partners to the east, the Kerema, and considerably pre-dates the pidgin English of the Trust Territory of New Guinea, which arose as a means of communication between the first white traders and settlers, and the various local tribes of New Guinea. Hiri Motu was used by the Royal Papuan Constabulary in the early days of the Australian Administration, hence its other name, Police Motu.

The author is an educationist with an impressive linguistic competence in the three lingue franche of Papua New Guinea, Classical Motu, Hiri Motu, and Neomelanesian. A foremost authority on Classical Motu, Livingston is an authority on both Hiri Motu and Neomelanesian. The first simultaneous interpreter in Papua New Guinea in all three languages and English, he originated and was for many years in charge of all broadcasting in the vernacular languages of the country.

This course is the outcome of a long period of experimentation by the author with various teaching methods. His earlier teaching courses in Hiri Motu, as well as his courses in Classical Motu and Pidgin English, were carefully graded both in structure and vocabulary. However these did not satisfy Livingston, who had increasing misgivings about the lack of living realism of the courses, and their inability to sufficiently stimulate and extend the student. He began to move away from the rigidly controlled and graded vocabularies and sentence corpaes in the series of school broadcast lessons prepared for the late Director of Education, W.C. Groves, at the ABC in Sydney. His contention was that we do not hear sentences in graded steps in the living language, and it is this control and grading that produces much of the dullness of current language courses.

In this course therefore, Livingston has superimposed upon the graded series of lessons

of his earlier courses a second graded series of more challenging difficulty, deliberately inserting at calculated points a series of sentences more difficult than the graded stream in which they occur. Livingston suggests that for the intelligent person determined to master the languages these sentences are a challenge which produces the mental activity he insists is vital for language apprehension.

The course has been specially designed to meet the needs of the person wishing to study alone, and is entirely self-contained. Although assuming a high initial motivation it yet very markedly increases the motivation in the best way of all, by throwing in a challenge at every potential point where interest could flag.

While self-contained, the course nevertheless is a most useful supplement to any other course in Hiri Motu.

Port Moresby

T.A. Dietz