

Languis blong Solomon Aelan

Languages of the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is made up of very diverse cultures, languages and customs.

There are more than 70 indigenous languages and dialects. Although English is the official language, Solomon Islands Pidgin is the lingua franca.

It evolved during the 19th century in the sugarcane and copra plantations of Fiji, Samoa and Australia, where Melanesian indentured labourers were brought over by various colonial powers. This was known as the blackbirding period. In order to communicate with each other, Melanesians from various nations started to adopt and adapt English, German, French and Portuguese, thereby giving rise to a pidgin creole language.

Various versions of this pidgin creole were then taken back to the native Islands of Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, where they developed and evolved independently to become what we know today as Solomon Islands Pidgin, Bislama (Vanuatu) and Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea). Because of this origin, all three pidgin languages have many similarities and can be understood to various levels by all speakers of those same languages.

Although most people still speak their own indigenous languages, Solomon Islands Pidgin is the language most spoken by Solomon Islanders. Given the diversity of cultures and languages, Solomon Islands Pidgin serves as an important unifying language among the entire population.

It is recognised as an official language alongside English and is used in various domains of public life, including the media, government, and education. Despite its creole origins, Solomon Islands Pidgin has a rich and complex grammar and vocabulary, reflecting its dynamic history and the cultural diversity of its speakers.

CONSONANTS

Some consonants are usually nasalised. This is the case for **b, d, g**, which are often pronounced as **mb, nd, ng** when not at the beginning of the word.

For example, **Abu** is pronounced **Ambu** and **Seda** is pronounced **Senda**. In many cases, the written form includes nasalisation.

All other consonants are very similar to the ones found in English, except for **'r'**, which is pronounced like a Scottish or an Italian rolled **'r'**.

Other English consonants that do not occur in Pidgin are **c, ch, q, sh, th, x** and **z**. These are adapted as **x → 'ks' | th → 'd' | c and q → 'k' | ch, sh and z → 's'**.

English words ending **-tion** are written with **-sin** ending.

E.g. **Education → Ediukesin**

Alfabet blong Solomon Aelan Pijin *Solomon Island Pidgin alphabet*

There are 21 letters in the Solomon Islands Pidgin alphabet.

Aa

Apol
Apple

Bb

Bataflae
Butterfly

Dd

Dogi
Dog

Ee

Eroplen
Aeroplane

Ff

Faea
Fire

Gg

Grashopa
Grasshopper

Hh

Haos
House

Ii

Ilfis
Eel fish

Jj

Jinja
Ginger

Kk

Kokorako
Chicken

Ll

Lif
Leaf

Mm

Manggo
Mango

Nn

Niuspepa
Newspaper

Oo

Orenj
Orange

Pp

Puskat
Cat

Rr

Redio
Radio

Ss

Sela
Shell

Tt

Tebol
Table

Uu

Ukalele
Ukulele

Vv

Vilij
Village

Ww

Watafol
Waterfall

Solomon Aelan Pijin *Solomon Islands Pidgin*

Common Phrases

Halo

Hello

Mone

Good morning

Aftanun

Good afternoon

Gud naet

Good night

Hao nao yu?

How are you?

Mi oraet

I'm fine

Wat na nem blo yu?

What's your name?

Nem blo mi _____

My name is _____

Lukim yu bihaen

See you later

Lukim yu tumoro

See you tomorrow

Lukim yu neks wik

See you next week

Tagio

Thank you

Tagio (tenkyu) tumas

Thank you very much

Solomon Aelan Pijin Solomon Islands Pidgin

Pronouns

Yu / iu	<i>You (singular), the person being spoken to</i>
Yufala / iufala	<i>You (plural), the group of people being spoken to</i>
Mi	<i>Me, I (singular), the person speaking</i>
Mitufala / mifala	<i>Myself and one other (plural), we, us, but inclusive of speaker / his / her group</i>
Yumi / iumi	<i>You and I, that is the speaker and the listener</i>
Yumi tufala / iumi tufala	<i>You and I</i>
Yumitrifala / iumitrifala Olketa / oketa	<i>They, them, everyone, you all ('olketa' is the three of us the Pidgin word indicating plurality)</i>
Hem	<i>He / him, she / her, it</i>
Samfala	<i>Some (Impersonal pronoun)</i>

People

Pikinini	<i>Children</i>
Man	<i>Man</i>
Mere	<i>Woman</i>
Boe	<i>Boy</i>
Gele	<i>Girl</i>
Sista	<i>Sister</i>
Barata	<i>Brother</i>
Dadi	<i>Father</i>
Mami	<i>Mother</i>

Other words

Haus	<i>House/home</i>
Kaleko	<i>Clothes</i>
Lotu	<i>Worship</i>
Herem	<i>Hear</i>
Lukim	<i>See</i>
Tekem	<i>Take</i>
Talem	<i>Tell</i>
Laek/laekem	<i>Like</i>
Lav/lavem	<i>Love</i>

