

Divine Word University

***Abstract***

**HIV/AIDS AWARENESS MESSAGE IN  
*TOK PISIN*: BENEFIT or BARRIER?**

by

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This research was conducted to find out if specific '*Tok Pisin*' words used officially by the National AIDS Council Secretariat (NACS) in awareness messages do play a part to deter people from absorbing the message. The study was focused at the words; *Koap*, *Kokwara*, *kondom* and *kok* which are considered as swear words or vulgar language in the PNG social settings and their use in public gatherings are not encouraged. In most societies in PNG, these words are seen to be associated with sex and immoral behavior, while religiously they are perceived to be associated with sin.

While society may have its perceptions about the words, the NACS sees them as vital tools to convey the message to the people and has constantly used them in campaigns since 1997.

Awareness campaigns can be the effective means to drive the message about the epidemic to the people, but the content must also be appropriate to cater for the varied recipients for whom the message is designed for, to enable communication to be established between the presenter and receiver(s).

Because people have varied notions about the use of the stated words as determined by respective cultural and religious norms and practices, their reaction towards absorbing the message may vary. This may result in the message being picked up or ignored, and that is what this research intends to establish. It is also essential to see how much impact the message has created by straight talk (*Tok aut*, *Tok stret*) with the use of the specified words in the awareness messages and what recipients feel about the use of these words in a concept that is new to the people like the disease itself.