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Some notes on Papuan Pidgin English

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1. Introduction

Papuan Pidgin English (henceforth PPE) is an extinct variety of Pacific Pidgin English, formerly spoken in several locations in Papua. In comparison to other Pacific varieties, PPE is relatively under researched. As shown by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1377-1379), the very existence of PPE was questioned. Moreover, “in many [...] writings, no clear distinction between PPE and Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin) is drawn” (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1431, n. 2).

Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1378) writes that “there was a period in which PPE was the dominant lingua franca in Papua” and adduces evidence in that respect from e.g. authors writing in the first half of the 20th century who mention the use of Pidgin English in Papua. According to Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1382), “the years between 1900 and 1930 appear to have been the period of PPE’s greatest expansion”. Summing up, “the entire life cycle of PPE from origin to demise was completed in a matter of little more than 50 years” (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1383). A similar conclusion is drawn by Mühlhäusler & Dutton (1979: 211-212), who conclude that “the total ‘active’ life span of PPE appears to have been little more than forty-five years, i.e. from about 1880 to 1925”. In both Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1384) and Mühlhäusler & Dutton (1979: 212) it is mentioned that PPE was still in use in some areas, e.g. Kiwai Islands. PPE is now “functionally dead”, but it was still “alive and well in some areas adjacent to the Torres Straits Islands” (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1379) in the 1970s. As noted by Mühlhäusler & Dutton (1979: 213), however, the use of PPE was restricted to “communication with Torres Strait Islanders rather than among Papuans themselves”. Finally, in 1976, Mühlhäusler was still able to find and record elderly speakers of PPE (Mühlhäusler 1978a).

Historically, PPE emerged in Eastern Papua within the context of trepang trading and blackbirding (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1381). According to Mühlhäusler & Dutton (1979: 211), “PPE was mostly established in Samarai and on the islands east of Samarai”. As for Western Papua it was used by the people of Mowata and Kiwai (Ray 1907: 251), on Kiwai Island, Daru Islands and on the Papuan coast opposite to the Torres Strait Islands. According to Landtman (1927: 453) the diffusion of PPE in Western Papua was a consequence of trade with the Torres Strait Islands and pearling. The Western Papua variety is sometimes referred to as Kiwai Island Pidgin (Mühlhäusler & Dutton 1979: 211, Mühlhäusler 1996: 79). From a linguistic point of view, however, “it is not quite apparent whether a distinction can be made between western PPE [...] and the eastern varieties” (Mühlhäusler & Dutton 1979: 211). PPE was also spoken around Port Moresby (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1384), where “only the less stable domestic varieties appear to have been of importance” (Mühlhäusler & Dutton 1979: 211).

The relationship between PPE and what is today known as Torres Strait Creole¹ is not as yet clarified. As stated by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1387), “the pearling context provided a strong link between PPE and Torres Strait PE, which deserves further investigation”. It is “particularly Kiwai and Daru [that] were oriented towards Torres Straits” (Mühlhäusler 1992: 259). While PPE is regarded by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1379-1380) as being “a variety of Pacific Pidgin English sufficiently different from other Melanesian varieties”, in Mühlhäusler (1996: 79), the Kiwai variety of PPE is said to be essentially identical with Torres Strait Creole². Moreover, Mühlhäusler (1996: 79) states that the predecessor of the latter, i.e. Torres Strait Pidgin English, “was [...] very widely used by Papuans living in Daru and Kiwai Island” and that “the texts collected by Landtman (1927) constitute valuable evidence for the earliest linguistic history of the language”³. Finally, Dutton (1997: 38) considers Papuan Pidgin English to be “actually only an extension of the pidgin English formerly spoken in the Torres Straits and now creolized and referred to as Broken”. To top it all, the status of Torres Strait Creole itself is a matter of debate in the literature: what is at issue is whether it is or not a variety of Melanesian Pidgin English (see Keesing 1988: 8, Shnukal 1988: 3, Mühlhäusler 1992: 260, Lee 1998, Lynch 2010: 227).

¹ Also known as Ailan Tok, Blaikman Tok, Broken or Yumpla Tok.

² As well as with Cape York Creole.

³ In fact, the collection of Kiwai texts appeared in 1917 (Landtman 1917).

In what follows PPE is treated as an independent Pacific variety, part of what is generally referred to as Melanesian Pidgin English (see also Mühlhäusler 1978a, 1992, 1996). In eastern Papua PPE seems to be essentially related to Queensland Plantation Pidgin, with possible additional influence from the Solomon Islands and the former German New Guinea, whereas in western Papua it appears to have been influenced by the pidgin formerly spoken in the Torres Strait Islands, which subsequently underwent creolization (Mühlhäusler 1978: 1429).

The present paper looks into three issues: (i) the relevance of PPE data for the adequate classification of several diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles in Baker & Huber (2001); (ii) PPE evidence for the attestation in Melanesian Pidgin English of a number of world-wide features in Baker & Huber (2001); (iii) some lexical similarities and differences between PPE and Tok Pisin.

Most of the PPE data are from the western variety, with some additions from varieties spoken in other areas of Papua. The main sources are Ray (1907), Grimshaw (1912), Landtman (1913, 1917, 1918⁴ and 1927) and Mühlhäusler (1978a). All examples appear in the orthography or system of transcription used in the sources. It should be noted that in the earliest records samples of PPE are mostly rendered in an etymological spelling, which makes it difficult to reconstruct in detail the phonology of the language⁵. The length of quotations has been kept to a reasonable minimum. All quotations are accompanied by their translation, which is mine, unless otherwise indicated. For ease of reference the diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles are numbered and labeled as in Baker & Huber (2001).

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 focuses on the attestation in PPE of several diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles classified as Atlantic by Baker & Huber (2001). Section 3 is concerned with the occurrence in PPE of some of Baker & Huber's (2001) world-wide features. Section 4 deals with a number of selected lexical items found in PPE and/or Tok Pisin.

2. Alleged Atlantic features

The diagnostic features discussed in this section figure in the Atlantic group in Baker & Huber (2001:197-201). According to their definition, "to qualify for the Atlantic group, an item has to be fully attested in at least two AECs [= Atlantic

⁴ Which also appears as a chapter of Landtman (1927): 453-461).

⁵ For a discussion of the issues involved in the phonological interpretation of early records of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles see Avram (2000).

English Creoles] but not (or only marginally) in the PPEs [= Pacific Pidgin Englishes]” (Baker & Huber 2001: 165). A diagnostic feature is considered marginal “when it is found only once in all the texts of certain varieties” or “when it deviates in form and/or meaning” or “when the feature’s authenticity or the reliability of the text is doubtful” (Baker & Huber 2001: 164). It should also be mentioned that the Pacific varieties considered by Baker & Huber (2001) are those of Hawaii, Eastern Australia, Kiribati, Melanesia and Pitcairn-Norfolk.

40. *dem* (article, demonstrative) (Baker & Huber 2001: 198):

- (1) a. *More better you leave him all them thing* (Landtman 1917: 193)
 ‘You had better leave all those things.’
- b. *I been take all them girl along Wiórubi* (Landtman 1917: 282)
 ‘I took all the girls to Wiórubi.’
- c. *them people been give me that thing* (Landtman 1917: 448)
 ‘those people gave me that thing’

The demonstrative determiner *dem* also occurs in later records of PPE. According to Mühlhäusler (1978: 1410), “Laade (1968) reports the use of *dem* ‘these, those’ for the Pidgin spoken in the vicinity of the Torres Strait Islands”. This usage of *dem* may have been influenced by the fact that *dem* is the form of the definite article in Torres Strait Creole (Shnukal 1988: 24). In addition to these two varieties, the use of *dem* both as the definite article and as a demonstrative determiner is also attested in Australian Kriol (Avram 2015: 91).

62. *fullup* ‘fill, be-full’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 198):

- (2) a. *Full up people* (Landtman 1913: 291)
 ‘It’s full of people.’
- b. *Oh, ground full up ne (excrements)* (Landtman 1917: 145)
 ‘Oh, the ground is full of excrements.’
- c. *Outside along reef he full up pigeon* (Landtman 1927: 427)
 ‘Outside, on the reef, it is full of birds.’

PPE thus provides evidence that the distribution of this diagnostic feature is not limited to the Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles. As shown in Avram (2004a: 84-86), *full up* is also attested in Tok Pisin, Pijin, Bislama as well as in Torres Strait Creole and Australian Kriol.

96. *look* ‘see, find’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 199). Both meanings of *look* are attested in Landtman (1913 and 1917), ‘see’ in (3a) and ‘find’ in (3b):

- (3) a. *I never look place all same Old Mawáta.* (Landtman 1913: 313)
 ‘I have never seen a place like Old Mawáta.’
 b. *I go look Kúru.* (Landtman 1917: 86)
 ‘I will go and find Kúru.’

In addition to PPE this feature is also recorded in several other Pacific varieties: Tok Pisin, Pijin, Bislama (Avram 2004a: 87-88) and Australian Kriol (Avram 2015: 91).

100. *married* ‘marry’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 199).

- (4) a. *Sagáru married along Méuri finish.* (Landtman 1917: 105)
 ‘Sagáru has married Méuri.’
 b. *I no savy you fellow been married.* (Landtman 1917: 273)
 ‘I did not know that you had married.’
 b. *that time me married you boy, me small girl* (Landtman 1917: 305)
 ‘when I married you were a boy, I was a girl’

Landtman (1918: 67) explicitly mentions the occurrence of this feature: “»married» sometimes replaces ‘marry’ as a ground form”. The alternation of these two competing forms, *married* and *marry* (*him*), is illustrated in (5a) and (5b) respectively; note that both sentences were uttered by the same speaker:

- (5) a. *Sagáru married along Méuri finish.* (Landtman 1917: 105)
 ‘Sagáru has married Méuri.’
 b. *Méuri he marry him finish.* (Landtman 1917: 105)
 ‘Méuri has married [him].’

PPE shares this diagnostic feature with a number of Pacific varieties: Bislama (Guy 1974: 100), Tok Pisin and Torres Strait Creole (Avram 2004a: 89) as well as Australian Kriol (Avram 2015: 91).

129. *(make) play* ‘(to have a) party, dance, amusement’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 199). The feature occurs in Landtman (1917). Consider the following examples:

- (6) a. *What name (why) you play along me* (Landtman 1917: 176)
 ‘Why are you partying with me?’
 b. *I got fine play* (Landtman 1917: 436)

‘I have a fine party’

As shown in Avram (2004a: 92), two other Pacific varieties exhibit this feature, Tok Pisin and Torres Strait Creole.

147. *sweet* ‘tasty; please (v.)’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 200):

- (7) a. *this thing he sweet* (Landtman 1917: 327)
 ‘this thing is tasty.’
 b. *Shell fish [...] this one he sweet* (Landtman 1917: 212)
 ‘As for shell fish [...] this is tasty.’
 c. *I say – sweet* (Landtman 1917: 335)
 ‘I say – [this] is tasty’

PPE is therefore another Pacific variety, in addition to Tok Pisin and Torres Strait Creole (Avram 2004a: 92), in which this feature is attested.

167. *WH matter* ‘why’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 201):

- (8) a. *What’s the matter you shoot him?* (Landtman 1917: 81)
 ‘Why are you shooting at him?’
 b. *What’s the matter you come* (Landtman 1917: 84)
 ‘Why did you come?’
 c. *what’s the matter he take long time?* (Landtman 1917: 517)
 ‘Why did he take [such a] long time?’

Although occurring less frequently than the competing form *what name* ‘why’, as explicitly noted by Landtman (1918: 66) “»what’s the matter?» can also serve for ‘why’”. Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1421-1422) has a short list of lexical “items common to PPE and Tok Pisin” which are “not found in other pidgins”. The list includes *wasmara* ‘why’ (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1422). In fact, there is at least one English-lexifier pidgin in which this lexical item is attested. As shown in Avram (2004a: 93) *watsəmætər* ‘why’ is recorded in Aboriginal Pidgin English. Moreover, *wasmara/wasmada* ‘why’ occurs in Torres Strait Creole (Avram 2004a: 93, 2004b: 26) and a form *wajamedā* ‘why’ is found in Australian Kriol (Avram 2015: 91).

To conclude, PPE provides further evidence that the distribution of the diagnostic features 40. *dem* (article, demonstrative), 62. *fullup* ‘fill, be-full’, 96. *look* ‘see, find’, 100. *married* ‘marry’, 129. *(make) play* ‘(to have a) party, dance, amusement’, 147. *sweet* ‘tasty; please (v.)’ and 167. *WH matter* ‘why’ is not restricted

to Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles. The seven features at issue satisfy the criterion proposed by Baker & Huber (2001: 165) to qualify for the status of world-wide features, i.e. to “have at least one full attestation in both the AECs and PPEs”, and therefore need to be reclassified as such⁶.

3. World-wide features in Melanesian Pidgin English

The world-wide features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles discussed in this section are all considered by Baker & Huber (2001) as unattested in Melanesian Pidgin English.

180. *born* ‘give birth’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 201):

- (9) a. *He born pickaninny* (Landtman 1917: 243)
 ‘She gave birth to a child’
 b. *I no savy born pickaninny* (Landtman 1917: 302)
 ‘I don’t know how to bear a child.’
 c. *You been born me* (Landtman 1917: 485)
 ‘You gave birth to me’

The occurrence of *born* ‘give birth’ is explicitly corroborated by a comment by Landtman (1918: 66-67), who states that “occasionally an inflected form of an English verb will be mistaken for the ground-form and used as such”. One of the verbs mentioned by Landtman (1918: 67) is precisely *born*, in the form *born him*, i.e. with the transitive marker *-im*:

- (10) *that woman he close up born him piccaninny* (Landtman 1918: 67)
 ‘that woman is on the verge of giving birth to a child.’

Similar forms with reflexes of English *born* and the transitive suffix are found both in Bislama and respectively Pijin: Guy (1974: 145) lists *ponem* ‘to give birth to’ and Jourdan & Maebiru 2002: 26) gives *bonem* ‘deliver a child’. This suggests that the PPE forms recorded by Landtman (1917, 1918) and those found in Bislama and Pijin all go back to the lexicon of early Melanesian Pidgin English.

⁶ See also Avram (2004: 101).

213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1's N2) (Baker & Huber 2001: 202). Like other Pacific varieties, PPE uses *belong* in attributive possession constructions, in which the order of the constituents is possessum–possessor. However, as noted by Landtman (1918: 65), in PPE “sometimes a possessive meaning is implied in the association of two nouns without »belong»”. Note that the order of the constituents is reversed: possessor–possessum. Consider the following examples:

- (11) a. *this (one) man garden* (Landtman 1918: 65)
 ‘the garden of this man’
 b. *one Mawata man canoe* (Landtman 1918: 65)
 ‘the canoe of a Mawata man’
 c. *that send you along devil-place* (Landtman 1927: 181)
 ‘that sent you to the dwelling of the spirit’

PPE therefore appears to be the only variety of Melanesian Pidgin English in which this diagnostic feature is recorded. Mention should be made of the fact that the feature is also attested in Torres Straight Creole *yam time* ‘the yam season’ (Haddon 1901: 165), *a:ti Zawai house* ‘Grandfather Zaway’s house’ (Dutton 1970: 156).

232. *that time* ‘when’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 202). This feature occurs several times in Landtman (1913, 1917 and 1927). Consider the three examples given below:

- (12) a. *All blood come on top me that time I fight* (Landtman 1913: 302)
 ‘Blood covers me all over when I fight.’
 b. *That time them fellow wake up, they look island.* (Landtman 1917: 89)
 ‘When they woke up, they saw the island.’
 d. *That time you plant him umámu (yam)* (Landtman 1927: 81)
 ‘When you plant yam’

This is a world-wide feature which seems to be found only in earlier PPE as documented by Landtman (1917). As for other varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English, it seems to be marginally attested in Pijin. In Tryon & Charpentier (2004: 240), for instance, there are two such attestations of *that time* ‘when’, one in 1902 and the other in 1980.

The next set of world-wide features consists of bimorphemic question words in which the first morpheme is a reflex of English *what*.

242. WH *fashion* ‘why, how’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 202). Both meanings can be illustrated with PPE examples from Landtman’s (1917) texts, ‘why’ in (13a) and ‘how’ in (13b-c):

- (13) a. *what fashion you shoot him pig* (Landtman 1917: 213)
 ‘why did you shoot the pig [?]’
 b. *What fashion he make him that garden* (Landtman 1917: 229)
 ‘How did make that garden [?]’
 c. *What fashion you been find him that white skin* (Landtman 1917: 439)
 ‘How did you find that white skin [?]’

Once again PPE is the only variety of Melanesian Pidgin English which exhibits this world-wide feature.

243. WH *place* ‘where’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 202):

- (14) a. *what place (where) friend belong you* (Landtman 1917: 97)
 ‘where is your friend [?]’
 b. *what place he go?* (Landtman 1917: 359)
 ‘where did he go?’

Landtman (1917) himself occasionally indicates that *what place* means ‘where’, either in the text between brackets, as in (14a), or in the occasional translations he provides, as in (15):

- (15) a. *what place I sit down* (Landtman 1917: 156)
 ‘where shall I find room to sit?’

Beside PPE, to my knowledge, there is only one other variety of Melanesian Pidgin English in which this diagnostic feature is attested: Mühlhäusler (1978b: 97) lists *wat peles* ‘where’ among the question words of Samoan Plantation Pidgin.

245. WH *thing* ‘what’ (Baker & Huber 2001: 203):

- (16) a. *What thing you been dream?* (Landtman 1917: 190)
 ‘What did you dream?’

- b. *What thing you been do that time you been catch this island?*
(Landtman 1917: 226)
'What did you do when you reached this island?'
- c. *What thing you like you speak me* (Landtman 1917: 330)
'what would you like to tell me [?]'

PPE is the only variety which provides evidence for the occurrence of this diagnostic feature in Melanesian Pidgin English.

Finally, evidence from PPE shows that three world-wide diagnostic features are recorded in Melanesian Pidgin English earlier than indicated by Baker & Huber (2001).

189. *falldown* 'fall' (reanalysis). The date of the first attestation in Melanesian Pidgin English given by Baker & Huber (2001: 201) is 1930. As shown below, however, the samples of PPE in Grimshaw (1912) and the texts in Landtman (1917) testify to the earlier occurrence in Melanesian Pidgin English of this diagnostic feature:

- (17) a. *He pall down along river* (Grimshaw 1912: 320)
'He fell into the river.'
- b. *Side belong you fellow one man fall down, side belong me fellow two man fall down.* (Landtman 1917: 401)
'One man fell on your side, two men fell on my side'
- c. *what name (why) you fellow fall down?* (Landtman 1917: 450)
'why did you fall?'

229. *standup* 'stand' (reanalysis). According to Baker & Huber (2001: 202), the first attestation in MPE is by 1985. This feature is already recorded, more than 70 years earlier, in the texts in Landtman (1917). Three examples are given below:

- (18) a. *who you there stand up along sand-beach?* (Landtman 1917: 126)
'who are you there, standing on the sand-beach?'
- b. *Wabéa stand up along boat, shoot him* (Landtman 1917: 180)
'Wabéa is standing in the boat, shoot him [!]'
- c. *one big tree stand up close up to house* (Landtman 1917: 424)
'a big tree stands near the house.'

246. WH *time* ‘when’. According to (Baker & Huber 2001: 203), its first attestation in Melanesian Pidgin English is by 1985. However, as the examples below show, it is found in PPE over 70 years earlier:

- (19) a. *What time boy belong me come back?* (Landtman 1917: 112)
 ‘When did my boy come back?’
 b. *what time you me catch shore?* (Landtman 1917: 359)
 ‘when did we reach the shore?’
 c. *What time boy belong me he come?* (Landtman 1927: 271)
 ‘When did my son come?’

Note, incidentally, that a form *wat taim* ‘when’ is also attested in Samoan Plantation Pidgin (Mühlhäusler 1978b: 97) and that other attestations preceding the date indicated by Baker & Huber (2001: 203) are found in Tok Pisin as well: *wɔtajm* ‘when’ Hall (1943: 125), *wottaim* ‘when’ (Schebesta & Meiser 1945: 175).

Summing up, it has been shown that six world-wide features believed not to be attested in Melanesian Pidgin English are recorded in PPE: 180. *born* ‘give birth’, 213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1’s N2), 232. *that time* ‘when’, 242. WH *fashion* ‘why, how’, 243. WH *place* ‘where’, and 245. WH *thing* ‘what’. Importantly, in the case of four of these features, i.e. 213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1’s N2), 232. *that time* ‘when’, 242. WH *fashion* ‘why, how’, and 245. WH *thing* ‘what’, PPE is the only variety of Melanesian Pidgin English in which they are attested. Also, PPE provides earlier attestations than those indicated in Baker & Huber (2001) of three world-wide features: 189. *falldown* ‘fall’ (reanalysis), 229. *standup* ‘stand’ (reanalysis) and 246. WH *time* ‘when’.

4. Lexical similarities and differences between PPE and Tok Pisin

In his discussion of PPE and Tok Pisin *wasmara* ‘why’ Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1416) writes that “it is interesting that the form *wasmara* (*what’s the matter*)” has never “been listed in a dictionary” of Tok Pisin “only recently appearing for the first time in print (in Dutton 1973)”. Actually, there are two earlier attestations in Tok Pisin of this diagnostic feature. The first one is in Murphy (1943 [1966]: 101), who lists *wasamara* ‘why?, for what reason?’. Moreover, the word appears to have

survived for quite a long time in regional varieties of Tok Pisin. The same form *wasamara* ‘why’ was still in use in the early 1970s in Tok Pisin as spoken in the Highlands. Wurm (1971: 60) includes among the interrogatives used in this variety *wasamara* ‘why? (rude question)’. Finally, a form *wasmara* ‘why?’ is also attested in Tok Pisin as spoken in Port Moresby (Barhorst & O’Dell-Barhorst n.d.).

Landtman’s (1917) PPE texts also illustrate an additional use of *what’s the matter*, corresponding to that of the English etymon. Consider the following examples:

- (20) a. *Oh, givári-man, what’s the matter?* (Landtman 1917: 261)
 ‘Oh, sorcerer, what’s the matter?’
- b. *Brother, what’s the matter, Sonáre?* (Landtman 1917: 313)
 ‘Brother, what’s the matter, Sonáre?’
- c. *Uó! what’s the matter that boy?* (Landtman 1917: 452)
 ‘Wow! What’s the matter with that boy?’

This use of *what’s the matter* is also shared with Tok Pisin, a fact not mentioned by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1416). In Schebesta & Meiser’s (1945: 172) dictionary, *wasamara* is glossed ‘what’s the matter’. The evidence provided by Schebesta & Meiser (1945) also disconfirms a claim made in the literature on Tok Pisin. Mihalic (1990: 264) writes that “the colonial Australian [era] produced a whole series of English loan words, seemingly used in the vicinity of the English-speaking Europeans on plantations in particular” which “just never caught on and were never brought home by the “finishtime” labourers”. His list of such lexical items includes *wasamara* glossed ‘what’s the matter’ (Mihalic 1990: 266). In fact, the word survived until relatively recently in regional varieties of Tok Pisin. In his discussion of *wasamara* ‘what’s the matter’, Verhaar (1995: 66) writes that “the use of it seems to be only regional and to be declining”.

Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1422) notes that PPE and Tok Pisin exhibit a number of lexical differences which he attributes to several factors. One such factor is “the strong influence of English and the lack of German and Tolai influence” (Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1422) on PPE. His examples include the following four words:

- (21) a. PPE *calico* vs. Tok Pisin *laplap* ‘loincloth, cloth’
- b. PPE *kokers* vs. Tok Pisin *kakalak* ‘cockroach’

- c. PPE *maskito* vs. TokPisin *natnat* ‘mosquito’
- d. PPE *tri* vs. Tok Pisin *diwai* ‘tree’

With the exception of ‘cockroach’, the PPE words in (21) are also found in early records of the language. For instance, *calico* ‘loincloth, cloth’ is first attested in 1898:

(22) *Hair just like white calico* ‘Hair just like white cloth’ (Ray 1907: 254)

The word also occurs in Landtman’s (1917) texts:

(23) *all same red calico* (Landtman 1917: 410)

‘like a red cloth’

PPE appears to have used for ‘mosquito’ the term <mosquito>, presumably [moskito]. This consistently occurs in Landtman (1917 and 1927):

(24) a. *too much mosquito* (Landtman 1917: 81)

‘many mosquitoes’

b. *house belong mosquito* (Landtman 1917: 84)

‘the mosquito nest’

d. *all same mosquito he come* (Landtman 1927: 323)

‘He comes like a mosquito.’

As for ‘tree’, the only form recorded throughout the history of PPE is [tri]. Consider the following examples from Landtman (1913 and 1917):

(25) a. *Good fine tree stop along Dibiri* (Landtman 1913: 295)

‘There are fine trees in Dibiri.’

b. *What for you put him along tree* (Landtman 1917: 220)

‘Why did you put [it] in the tree?’

c. *me sleep along tree* (Landtman 1917: 258)

‘I slept in the tree.’

It should be noted that all the four PPE lexical items in (21) also occur in identical or similar forms in Torres Strait Creole:

(26) a. *kaleko/kaliko* ‘cloth, material, lavalava’ (Shnukal 1988: 141)

b. *kakros/kokros* ‘cockroach’ (Shnukal 1988: 149)

c. *maskita/miskita* ‘mosquito’ (Shnukal 1988: 162)

d. *tri* ‘tree’ (Shnukal 1988: 217)

It would be tempting to attribute to the influence of Torres Strait Creole on (western) PPE the occurrence of these four words in the two varieties. Note, however, all the four lexical items at issue are also recorded in Tok Pisin, either in its earlier stages or throughout its history, as shown in what follows.

A form *kæIko* ‘calico’ is listed by Hall (1943: 102) in his glossary. The word also appears in another contemporary source, Schebesta & Meiser’s (1945) dictionary: *kaliko* ‘calico’.

Forms similar to the PPE term for ‘cockroach’ are found in Tok Pisin, as documented by at least four reliable sources. The only form provided by Murphy (1943 [1966]: 76) is *kokoros* ‘cockroach’. In their entry for *kakalak* ‘cockroach’, Schebesta & Meiser (1945: 81) add “(Colloq.) kokoros”. Similarly, Mihalic (1957: 52 and respectively 63) lists both *kakalak* and *kokoros* ‘cockroach’. The same holds for the relevant entries in Steinbauer (1969 [1998]: 42 and 49) and Baing et al. (2008: 31 and 37) for *kakalak* and *kokoros*. To conclude, the difference between PPE and Tok Pisin resides in the fact that the German-derived *kakalak* is not recorded in the former.

While many of the early records of Tok Pisin have *natnat* for ‘mosquito’, there is evidence, from reliable sources, that the English-derived word was already in use in the 1940s. In Hall (1943: 110) the form given is *mɔskɪto* ‘mosquito’. Murphy (1943 [1966]: 50) has *maskita* ‘mosquito’, presumably pronounced [maskita]. Schebesta & Meiser (1945: 118) include the form *moskito* ‘mosquito’, but add “(new word)” and that “the common word is natnat”. The word *moskito* also appears in later dictionaries⁷ of Tok Pisin, e.g. Mihalic (1957: 88), Steinbauer (1969 [1998]: 66), Barhorst & O’Dell-Barhorst n.d.) and Baing et al. (2008: 52).

Consider, finally, the word for ‘tree’ in earlier stages of Tok Pisin. It figures among “some items which are found in older varieties of NGP [= New Guinea Pidgin] [which] have since been replaced by other items” (Mühlhäusler 1978b: 90). While *diwai*, as noted by Clark (2007: 360), “was clearly current in Tok Pisin by the turn of the century”⁸, it had not as yet ousted the chronologically older *tri*. The evidence from later records sheds light on the gradual replacement of *tri* by the current TP form *diwai*. The only form for ‘tree’ recorded by Hall (1943: 122) is *tri*. However, in three

⁷ See also Dutton (1973: xiii), who illustrates with *natnat* and *mosquito* the occurrence in Tok Pisin of “competing vocabulary forms for the same thing”.

⁸ A form spelled <diway> is recorded in 1904 (Mühlhäusler et al. 2003: 46).

other records dating from the same period, the only forms listed are *diwai* (Murphy 1943 [1966]: 65) or *dewai* (Anon. a 1937: 22, Helton 1945: 50). Finally, the relevant entry in Schebesta & Meiser's (1945: 166) dictionary is quite revealing: “tri ‘tree’, more common: diwai”.

Another factor mentioned by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1422) which accounts for the lexical differences between PPE and Tok Pisin is “the borrowing of different English items” by the two varieties. The list of such lexical items includes the following:

- (27) a. PPE *danis* vs. Tok Pisin *singsing* ‘dance’
 b. PPE *smokhaus* vs. Tok Pisin *haus paia* ‘smoke house’
 c. PPE *waild* vs. Tok Pisin *kros* ‘cross’
 d. PPE *wantim* vs. Tok Pisin *laikim* ‘to want’
 e. PPE *wok* vs. Tok Pisin *wokabaut* ‘to walk’

The PPE words for ‘dance’, ‘cross’ and ‘to want’ are also found in the earliest records of this variety. In Landtman's (1917 and 1927) *dance* is the only term for ‘dance’:

- (28) *we make dance for that man* (Landtman 1927: 260)
 ‘we dance for that man.’

In both Ray (1907) and Landtman (1917 and 1927) the word for ‘cross’ is *wild*, as shown in (29) and respectively (30):

- (29) *He wild* 1898 (Ray 1907: 253)
 ‘He is cross’
- (30) a. *Óea, what for you wild?* (Landtman 1917: 271)
 ‘Óea, why are you angry?’
 b. *No good you wild along me fellow* (Landtman 1917: 541)
 ‘Don’t be angry with us.’
 c. *you no wild along that man* (Landtman 1927: 65)
 ‘You are not angry with that man.’

Finally, the only verb meaning ‘to want’ which occurs in Landtman's (1917) texts is *want him*, presumably standing for [wantim]. Here are some examples:

- (31) a. *Me fellow want him yam* (Landtman 1917: 122)
 ‘We want the yam.’

- b. *I no want him pickaninny* (Landmann 1917: 218)
‘I don’t want the child.’
- c. *he want him wife* (Landtman 1917: 280)
‘He wants a wife.’

Here again it should be mentioned that the PPE forms for ‘dance’, ‘cross’ and ‘to ant’ are identical or similar to those found in Torres Strait Creole:

- (32) a. *dans/danis* ‘dance’ (Shnukal 1988: 122)
b. *wail* ‘annoyed, irate, angry, furious’ (Shnukal 1888: 220)
c. *wande* ‘to want’ (Shnukal 1988: 221)

Note that the PPE form for ‘dance’ may have been phonetically realized as [danis], i.e. with the epenthetic vowel [i], as in Torres Strait Creole⁹. Similarly, PPE *wild* may actually stand for [wail], again as in Torres Strait Creole¹⁰.

As far as Tok Pisin is concerned, let me first note that, to the best of my knowledge, the terms for ‘dance’ and respectively ‘cross’ have always been *singsing* and respectively *kros*. In other words, Tok Pisin appears to have never used a reflex of English *dance*, while the meaning of *wail* has always been ‘wild’. However, the remaining three pairs of lexical items in (27) are worth discussing.

Hall (1943: 118) records in Tok Pisin *haus smok* ‘smoking house’, containing the same English-derived items as its PPE counterpart *smoke house* in (28) but with the reverse order of the constituents.

As in PPE, a form *wantim* ‘to want’ existed in earlier Tok Pisin. Hall (1943: 123) lists *wantIm* ‘to want’. Given that it does not occur in his texts, in which only *lajkIm* ‘to want’ is found, this suggests that the verb *wantim* did not really catch on in Tok Pisin.

As for ‘to walk’, whereas the form *wok* listed by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1422) does not occur in the records of early PPE at my disposal, a form identical to Tok Pisin *wokabaut* is quite robustly attested. There are no less than 63 occurrences of

⁹ The epenthesis of [i] into stop + fricative clusters is a characteristic of PPE, e.g. *akis* ‘axe’ *takkis* ‘tax’ (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1404). It also occurs in early Tok Pisin, e.g. *akis* ‘axe’, *banis* ‘fence’ (Avram 2005: 196-197)

¹⁰ In PPE word-final clusters ending in a coronal stop are reduced via its deletion, e.g. *paun* ‘paund’ (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1404). This is a characteristic of early Tok Pisin as well, e.g. *gol* ‘gold’ *ailan* ‘island’ (Avram 2005: 196).

walk about in Landtman's (1917) texts, 2 in Landtman (1918), and 21 more in Landtman (1927). Consider the examples below:

- (33) a. *Suppose you walk about night-time* (Landtman 1917: 195)
 'If you walk at night'
 b. *walk about along road* (Landtman 1918: 65)
 'walk on the road'
 c. *Something there walk about alongside* (Landtman 1927: 115)
 'Something there walks along.'

Moreover, *wokabaut* also occurs in two PPE texts recorded by Mühlhäusler himself in (1976):

- (34) a. *em i go haus, kam bek, o wokabaut* (Mühlhäusler 1978: 1437)
 'He goes into the house, he comes back, or takes a walk.'
 b. *o i go wokabaut* (Mühlhäusler 1978: 1437)
 'or he will take a walk'

Note, finally, that the PPE form is also similar to Torres Strait Creole *wagbaut/wogbaut* 'to walk' (Shnukal 1988: 220).

According to Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1423), yet another factor accounting for differences between the lexicon of PPE and Tok Pisin is the existence of "marked differences in pronunciation and differences in the use of reduplication". His list of such lexical items includes:

- (35) a. PPE *devil devil* vs. Tok Pisin *devel* 'devil'
 b. PPE *fraiten* vs. Tok Pisin *pret* 'frightened'
 c. PPE *wota* vs. Tok Pisin *wara* 'water'

The case of PPE and Tok Pisin forms for 'devil' is a complex one. One the one hand, in earlier records of PPE only the non-reduplicated form occurs:

- (36) a. *devil* 'spirit' 1898 (Ray 1907: 254)
 b. *make him devil* 1898 (Ray 1907: 253)
 'perform funeral ceremonies' [= 'turn into a spirit/ghost']

In the texts collected by Landtman (1917) there are 100 occurrences of *devil* 'spirit, ghost'; moreover, this non-reduplicated form is also found in Landtman (1927):

- (37) a. *You devil (spirit)?* (Landtman 1917: 106)

- ‘Are you a spirit?’
- b. *suppose devil (ghost) belong you come here* (Landtman 1917: 175)
‘if your ghost comes here’
- c. *you devil (spirit) now* (Landtman 1927: 283)
‘You are a spirit now.’

The reduplicated form *devil-devil* is also found in Landtman (1917). However, beside the fact that there are only 3 occurrences, the meaning seems to be ‘sorcery’:

- (38) a. *me been make devil-devil* (Landtman 1917: 355)
‘I performed sorcery.’
- b. *you fellow been make devil-devil quick* (Landtman 1917: 355)
‘You quickly performed sorcery.’
- c. *Man he been make devil-devil* (Landtman 1917: 355)
‘The man performed sorcery.’

According to Baker & Mühlhäusler (1996: 589), the reduplicated form *devil devil* ‘evil spirit’ is first attested in Papua by 1923. At the very least, then, PPE also used, in its earlier stages the simplex form *devil* for ‘spirit’.

The potential Torres Strait Creole connection is not conclusive. The reduplicated form *devil-devil* is first recorded in this variety in 1888 (Baker & Mühlhäusler 1996: 589). However, it should be mentioned that the evidence provided by Haddon (1901), the source on early Torres Strait Creole cited by the authors, is mixed since there are only two attestations of the word for ‘evil spirit’ in sample sentences, one in the reduplicated form and one in the simplex form:

- (39) a. *They all devil-devil* (Haddon 1901: 57)
‘They are all spirits.’
- b. *I think him half-devil* (Haddon 1901: 156)
‘I think that he is a half-spirit.’

As for modern Torres Strait Creole only the simplex form occurs:

- (40) *debol* ‘devil, evil spirit’ (Shnukal 1988: 124)

The situation is further complicated by the fact the reduplicated form is recorded in Tok Pisin as well. Actually, according to Baker & Mühlhäusler (1996: 589), the second earliest attestation in a variety of Pacific Pidgin English of the diagnostic feature *devil devil* ‘evil spirit’ dates from 1884, in German New-Guinea. In later

sources, however, only the non-reduplicated form is listed, e.g. *dɛvɪl* ‘spirit’ (Hall 1943: 94), *devel* ‘a ghost-like being’ Schebesta & Meiser (1945: 43). To sum up, then, the simplex form *devil* and the reduplicated form *devil-devil* ‘(evil) spirit’ are both recorded in PPE and Tok Pisin.

Consider next the PPE term for ‘frightened’. The only form which consistently occurs in Landtman’s (1917) texts is *fright*, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (41) a. *me fellow been fright (afraid of) that thing* (Landtman 1917: 68)
 ‘I was afraid of that thing.’
 b. *I fright for you* (Landtman 1917: 277)
 ‘I am afraid of you.’
 c. *you no fright along me* (Landtman 1917: 456)
 ‘You do not frighten me.’

Note also that <f> in *fright* stands for [p], since PPE substitutes it for English /f/ (Mühlhäusler 1978: 1404)¹¹. Therefore, it is phonetically identical with the Torres Strait Creole form *prait* ‘to be frightened, be afraid, be scared’ (Shnukal 1988: 185). The PPE and Tok Pisin forms for ‘frighten’ do not reflect “marked differences in pronunciation”, but are rather derived from different etyma. PPE *fright*, presumably [prait], is etymologically derived from English *fright*, whereas Tok Pisin *pret* is a reflex of English *afraid*, as is also shown by its earlier/competing forms *fred* (Hall 1943: 97), *fred* (Schebesta & Meiser 1945: 58). Hence this pair of forms should be included in the list illustrating “the borrowing of different English items” by PPE and Tok Pisin (Mühlhäusler 1978a: 1422).

In PPE as recorded by Landtman (1917) the word for ‘water’ is *water*.

- (42) a. *You fellow give me water* (Landtman 1917: 168)
 ‘You give me water.’
 b. *all same hot water* (Landtman 1917: 202)
 ‘like hot water’
 c. *You give me water* (Landtman 1917: 521)
 ‘Give me water [!]’

¹¹ Cf. also PPE *pyre* ‘fire’ (Grimshaw 1912: 183), *pinish* ‘to finish’ (Grimshaw 1912: 320). See also example (17).

The etymological spelling used by Landtman (1917) makes it impossible to determine the quality of the vowels spelled <a> and <e> and whether the word-final <r> stands for [r].

As for Tok Pisin, several sources list the form *water* ‘water’. Two of these, Anon. a (1937: 37) and Helton (1945: 63), only list *water* ‘water’. Hall (1943: 123) lists both *wara* and *water*: “*watər* (also *wara*) water”. Schebesta & Meiser (1945) also list both *wara* and *water*. The former is defined as “Colloq. for water” (Schebesta & Meiser 1945: 172). The entry for the latter (Schebesta & Meiser 1945: 172) includes the specification “(colloq. and much more common: wara; the word water is regarded by the natives as bad and incorrect language [...])”. It appears that Tok Pisin *water* is yet another earlier form which later fell out of usage.

The above findings are hardly surprising given that there are other PPE forms which are also recorded in earlier Tok Pisin. Of these, two which are mentioned by (Mühlhäusler 1978b: 90), i.e. *poldaun* ‘to fall’ and *lilebit* ‘a little bit’, are discussed in what follows.

As shown in section 3, the early PPE form for ‘to fall’ is transcribed *fall down*, or *pall down*. The former is the only form in earlier Tok Pisin given by Hall (1943: 97): *fɔl dawn* ‘fall down’. However, Murphy (1943 [1966]: 89) only provides the form *pundaon* ‘fall’. Like Hall (1943), Helton (1945: 32) has *fall down* ‘fall’. In the same year the current Tok Pisin form is listed in Schebesta & Meiser (1945: 56), where the following variants for ‘to fall’ are given: *foldaun*, *fuldaun*, *pundaun* ‘to fall’. To conclude, it would seem that in the 1940s the Tok Pisin variants phonetically closer to the etymon *fall down* were already giving way to the form *pundaun* which would ultimately catch on. This appears to have been a rather “winding road”, i.e. a less straightforward evolution, given that the form listed by Mihalic (1957: 112) is *podaun* ‘fall’. In sum, PPE and Tok Pisin initially shared this lexical item, with the latter phonetically diverging at a later stage.

The first attestation of *little bit* ‘a little bit’ in PPE dates from 1898:

(43) *little bit heavy* ‘slightly heavy’ (Ray 1907: 254)

In Landtman (1917 and 1927) there are several instances of *little bit*, three of which are reproduced below:

- (44) a. *he been kaikai little bit* (Landtman 1917: 197)
 ‘He ate a little bit.’
- b. *First time he shake little bit* (Landtman 1917: 311)
 ‘He shook a little bit before.’
- d. *little bit old, green one* (Landtman 1927: 95)
 ‘[It’s] slightly old, the green one.’

The occurrence of reflexes of English *little bit*, both in PPE and in earlier stages of Tok Pisin, is to be expected. On the one hand, in Torres Strait Creole *little bit* ‘slightly’ is recorded in 1888 (Baker & Mühlhäusler 1996b: 588). On the other hand, *little bit* was part of the lexicon of early Melanesian Pidgin English. According to Baker & Mühlhäusler (1996b: 588) *little bit* is attested in the Solomon Islands after 1884, in Vanuatu by 1914, and in German New Guinea in 1915. In Tok Pisin, *little bit* seems to have survived until at least the 1940s. Schebesta & Meiser (1945: 104) provide two variants, *lilibet* and *lelevel* ‘a little bit’, but add that these are “seldom used”. This remark suggests that the word was already falling out of use.

Summing up, while there are undeniable differences in their lexicon, as shown by Mühlhäusler (1978a: 1421-1423), PPE and Tok Pisin share more words than hitherto assumed, if one also examines the earlier vocabulary of the latter.

5. Conclusions

The PPE data discussed in this paper are a further confirmation of Mühlhäusler’s (1978a: 1429) conclusion that the study of PPE “is a necessary part of that of Pacific and, in particular, Melanesian Pidgin”.

Evidence from PPE is relevant to the reclassification of several diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles which were previously believed to be attested only in Atlantic varieties.

A number of world-wide features of English-lexifier contact languages have been shown, on the basis of PPE data, to be found in Melanesian Pidgin English. Notably, the only variety of Melanesian Pidgin English in which four of these features are recorded is PPE.

Finally, examination of early sources of PPE and Tok Pisin has also shed new light on some lexical similarities and differences between these two varieties.

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