

## Book review

Darrell T. Tryon and Jean-Michel Charpentier: *Pacific Pidgins and Creoles: Origins, Growth and Development*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004. xix + 559 pp. Hardcover ISBN 3-11-016998-3, €88.00.

The pidgins and creoles spoken in the Pacific have been very well described and documented so far; I just refer to publications like, for example, Crowley (1987, 1990), Dutton (1980, 1985), Dutton and Thomas (1985), Jourdan and Maebiru (2002), Keesing (1988), Mihalic (1971), Tryon (1987), Verhaar (1995), and Wurm et al. (1996). Darrell Tryon and Jean-Michel Charpentier's new volume on Pacific pidgins and creoles provides the interested reader with a comprehensive overview of the complex and fascinating history of English-based pidgins in the Pacific, especially with respect to Tok Pisin, Solomon Islands Pijin, and Bislama. As indicated in the subtitle, the authors present extremely interesting facts and data on the origins, the growth, and the development of pidgins and creoles that are still spoken in the Pacific.

Following the acknowledgements, the table of contents, a list of maps, a list of figures, a list of tables, and a list of abbreviations, the book starts with the introduction (pp. 1–4). In this first chapter, the authors first introduce themselves to the reader, referring to their long-term interest in the topic of the volume. Then they give a brief overview of the structure of their book and inform the reader about which of them is primarily responsible for which chapter of the volume.

Chapter 2, “Present-day Pacific pidgins” (pp. 5–19), provides first a definition of the term “pidgin” and then gives a brief account of all the English-based pidgin languages spoken in the Pacific today, namely, Bislama (the national language of Vanuatu), Solomon Islands Pijin, Tok Pisin (spoken in Papua New Guinea), Pitcairn-Norfolk, Hawaiian Pidgin English, Ngatik Men's Language, Australian Kriol, Broken (spoken on the Torres Strait Islands), and Nauruan Pidgin English. However, the authors clearly point out that their book concentrates on the three major

Pidgin Englishes of Melanesia, namely, Bislama, Solomons Pijin, and Tok Pisin.

Chapter 3, “Previous theories of pidgin development” (pp. 21–64), discusses the theories “which evolved from the study of the genesis of Pacific contact languages or those which have been used to support the arguments of Oceanic linguists” (p. 21).

The authors:

- briefly present Derek Bickerton’s theories, including his bioprogram hypothesis;
- they summarize Peter Mühlhäusler’s and Roger Keesing’s work on pidgins and creoles and refer to the extremely interesting and at times quite hot and polemical debate between these two scholars in the second half of the 1980s on the origin and development of pidgins, especially on the role of the substrate language;
- they present Ross Clark’s research on the relationships of pidgins suggested by comparative evidence;
- they refer to the work of other scientists like Bill Camdon, Jean-Michel Charpentier, Tom Dutton, and Jakelin Troy;
- and they provide the reader with a quite detailed overview of Terry Crowley’s research on Bislama and the genesis of Pacific contact languages.

This chapter “sets the scene for the remainder of this study, whose focus is the historical development of the pidgins and creoles of this region since the first European settlement in Sydney in 1788” (p. 3).

In Chapter 4, “Early days: History of contacts 1788–1863” (pp. 66–113), the authors consider the history of European–Pacific Islander and Islander to Islander contact from the foundation of modern Australia in 1788 until the year 1863, which marks the beginning of Pacific Island labor recruiting for Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Samoa. The chapter describes the history of the contacts between the first settlers in New South Wales (NSW) and the Aborigines, as well as the contacts between Sydney and the Pacific Islands. The authors point out that New South Wales Pidgin first developed in the Sydney district. From 1830 onwards it was taken into the western and southern districts of NSW and then up to Queensland. It was from this variety that the modern-day varieties of Broken and Kriol developed. The authors then further emphasize and illustrate the central role of the port of Sydney with respect to the linguistic synergies between Australia and the Pacific islands. Ever since 1788 there has been constant European voyaging throughout the Pacific, especially in a mercantile context, which resulted in regular contact between

Europeans — most of which spoke English — and Pacific islanders. During these contacts an English-based lingua franca developed.

Chapter 5, “The beginnings: The language situation 1788–1863” (pp. 115–171), provides samples of the emergent pidgins which the authors found in various scientific, literary, and other written sources. The authors review first usages of these pidgins and try to provide the reader with a preliminary evaluation of the contribution made to Pacific pidgins from Australia.

Chapters 6 and 7 follow exactly the same pattern as Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6, “The plantations: History of contacts 1863–1906” (pp. 173–222), outlines the situation in the Pacific between the beginning of the “recruiting” campaign of Pacific Islander labor for work on cotton (and later sugarcane) plantations in Queensland, Samoa, Fiji, and New Caledonia and the end of it, which was marked by the return of the Pacific Island workers to their home countries. Due to a world cotton shortage because of the American Civil War, cotton plantations in the Pacific started to boom — however, the big problem to overcome was the shortage of available local labor. This resulted in a massive recruiting campaign during which more than 100,000 Pacific Islanders were recruited — most often against their will — for contract periods of three years or so. It goes without saying that this so-called “blackbirding” campaign had a tremendous social impact on the various island communities and states.

In Chapter 7, “Jargon to pidgin: The language situation 1863–1906” (pp. 223–298), the authors present and discuss pidgin language data of this period documented in accounts of traders, missionaries, and travelers, court records, newspapers, letters, Tom Dutton’s (1980) recordings of Queensland Canefields English, and comparative materials recorded in Vanuatu in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A close look at these data “suggests that in the first decades of the twentieth century there was a common Pacific Pidgin pool . . .” (p. 296) and that “English-based Pacific pidgins had achieved a fair degree of stability right throughout Island Melanesia” (p. 349).

Chapters 8 and 9 then describe the historical and linguistic situation in the colonial period between 1906 and 1975. Chapter 8, “Colonial days: History of contacts 1906–1975” (pp. 299–347), again presents the relevant historical, economic, and sociological data for this period, while Chapter 9, “Differentiation: The language situation 1906–1975” (pp. 349–399), describes how the relatively uniform Pacific Pidgin spoken throughout Island Melanesia “gradually differentiated into the three sister dialects Bislama, Solomons Pijin, and Tok Pijin at the end of the recruiting period when labourers . . . returned home . . .” (p. 296). The authors point out and illustrate that there was “a notable lack of

communication between Vanuatu, the Solomons and [what is now (G.S.)] Papua New Guinea between World War I and the 1970s, so providing an environment which resulted in different linguistic choices being made in the areas. This led to a differentiation between the three pidgins to the point that they became individually quite distinctive” (p. 350). The data sources presented document these differentiation processes.

In Chapter 10, “Today’s world: 1975 to the present” (pp. 401–477), the authors describe and analyze the development, the role, and the status of each of the three Melanesian pidgins in the post-colonial era. Especially, they discuss the respective roles of Bislama, Tok Pisin, and Pijin in politics and education and deal with the often conflicting attitudes to pidgins in the modern world. This chapter offers extremely interesting insights (of two highly experienced insider experts) into language politics and the role linguists and politicians play(ed) in various political language planning campaigns! Tryon and Charpentier admirably manage “to set the record straight” (p. 414) especially with respect to Vanuatu language politics.

Chapter 11, the authors’ “Conclusion” (pp. 479–484), provides “a summary and synthesis of what the historical and linguistic data tell us about the complex history of the genesis and development of Melanesian Pidgin Englishes” (p. 4). Tryon and Charpentier emphasize once more:

- the unity of all English-lexifier Pacific pidgins;
- the central role played by Sydney (and its harbor) in and for the development of these pidgins; and
- the direct developmental link between Queensland Kanaka English and Pacific pidgins, in particular Tok Pisin, Pijin, and Bislama.

Moreover, they proudly and rightly point out that the research they present in this volume clearly and impressively documents the “developmental path of English-lexifier Pacific pidgins and creoles since the first European colonist settlement of Sydney in 1788” (p. 481). The book concludes with the authors’ credo that “Pacific pidgins and creoles are of immense significance to specialists, as they make an important contribution to our understanding of language change and development. And the Melanesian Pidgin English varieties . . . are important by any standards, especially to the people of Melanesia, as they are . . . the social cement which links all the people of Island Melanesia” (p. 484). Darrell Tryon and Jean-Michel Charpentier have managed in an admirable way to convince the reader of this book that their conclusion is absolutely true!

The book ends with two appendices that present the “Konstitusin blong Ripablik blong Vanuatu” (pp. 485–488), 30 excellent maps (pp. 489–520), the list of references (pp. 523–550), and a good index (pp. 551–559).

The book is clearly structured and — in general — easy to read (although the authors are sometimes somewhat repetitive in their argumentation). The historical, sociological, economic, and linguistic data presented are excellent and highly illustrative — indeed, the authors provide the reader with a bonanza of interesting facts and data. There are a number of typos, some of which are rather annoying: for example, p. 14, paragraph before last, read: “5.4.3” (for “5.3.3”); p. 68, read: “(see maps 2 and 3 in Appendix II)” (for “[see maps 2 and 3, above]”); p. 224, read: “Foster, Monaghan, and Mühlhäusler (in press)” (for “Foster and Mühlhäusler [in press]”); p. 253, read: “Rotuma also played a significant role ...” (for “Rotuma was also played a significant role ...”); p. 287 Table 23, read: “Dutton (1980)” (for “Dutton[80]”); p. 328 line 7 bottom up, delete: “(Table XVI, p. 75.)”; p. 350, the examples presented in the first four lines are not aligned properly; pp. 457 f., the last paragraph of p. 457 is repeated as the first paragraph on p. 458; p. 458f., something is missing between the last line of p. 458 and the first line of p. 459 (“... often when nothing better was — Identity: ... ???”); p. 463, the reference to Faraclas 1995 is unclear (1995 a or b?); p. 475, read: “... level of vernacularising literacy.” (for “... level of vernacularising literacy.”); p. 531, reference to Faraclas 1995b, read: “Otto Nekitel” (for “Otto Nekital”), and in the index there is no entry for Eduard Hershheim (mentioned on p. 337). I am sure that every decent copyeditor would have noticed most of these typos, especially the extremely irritating printing errors on pages 457–459.

Nevertheless, this book is a milestone in the historical linguistics of Pacific pidgins and creoles. It is a must not only for every linguist interested in pidgins and creoles and their history, but also for sociolinguists interested in language change and development, as well as for all linguists working in the area!

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