BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Roger M. Keesing, *Melanesian Pidgin and the Oceanic Substrate.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988. Pp. vii, 265, appendix, bibliography, index. US$37.50.

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Melanesian Pidgin English (MP) is best known from the many studies of one of its dialects, Tok Pisin, spoken in Papua New Guinea. Only in recent years have more detailed studies begun to appear of the other two dialects of MP: Pijin, spoken in the Solomon Islands, and Bislama, spoken in Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides). Roger Keesing's *Melanesian Pidgin and the Oceanic Substrate* is an important book because not only does it provide detailed information on Solomons Pijin (or Pidgin) but also it looks at the development of MP in general from new perspectives. The book is also assured popularity because it provides more fuel for the "substrata versus universals" debate that has been raging for years in pidgin and creole linguistics (see Muysken and Smith 1986).

For those unfamiliar with this debate, it basically concerns the origin of some grammatical features common to many pidgin and creole languages. The "substratist" position is that these features come from the mother tongues of the speakers who were instrumental in the development of the pidgin--that is, from the "substrate languages." The "universalist" position, on the other hand, is that these common features represent basic, perhaps inborn, properties of human language or common patterns of second-language acquisition.

In the first of fourteen chapters, the author outlines the major themes

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of the book and his position in this debate. His main argument is that Eastern Oceanic languages of the Austronesian family have heavily influenced the structure of all three MP dialects, thus supporting the substratist position. But Keesing does not take a one-sided viewpoint in describing the development of MP; he also considers universals of human language and language acquisition as having played an important role as well as the "superstrate" language or the "lexifier language," that is, the language that provides the bulk of the vocabulary (in this case, English).

Keesing's other major themes are concerned with the chronology for the development of pidgin in the Pacific and with the relationship of the three dialects. In most of the literature (e.g., Clark 1979), it is assumed that there was an unstable (or highly variable) precursor to MP, called South Seas Jargon, which was spoken around the Pacific from the early part of the nineteenth century. This supposedly became a less variable variety, or a stable pidgin, sometimes called "Early Melanesian Pidgin," in the 1860s and 1870s when it was used among Pacific Islanders recruited to work in plantations in Samoa and Queensland. Later, when repatriated laborers from New Guinea, the Solomons, and the New Hebrides took this pidgin back to their own countries, it expanded in both its functions and grammatical structure and diverged into the current three dialects. Keesing, however, claims that a stable pidgin developed not on the plantations but years earlier in trading enclaves in the central Pacific and on trading ships. He argues that the most important stabilization and expansion of the Pacific pidgin that became MP took place prior to the plantation era, and therefore prior to the separation of MP into different dialects. Thus, he believes, the differences between the dialects are not as great as some linguists have claimed.

In chapter 2, Keesing expands on the theme that a stable pidgin developed in the Pacific much earlier than the prevailing wisdom holds. He begins by describing the "crucial phase" in the formation of a Pacific-wide prepidgin or jargon. This was associated with the whaling and trading ships that frequented the central Pacific in the 1840s, at first mainly in Pohnpei and Kosrae and later in the Gilbert Islands and Rotuma. Keesing shows the sociolinguistic conditions on these islands to have been perfect for the development of a pidgin language, with contact between many different ethnic groups using English as lingua franca. But he also claims that similar contact took place on the ships as well, since a great number of Pacific Islanders were aboard working as crew. He says that because these ships crisscrossed the Pacific there was a great deal of contact between various islands and, therefore, the

emerging pidgin was more homogeneous and stabilized than is usually thought.

According to Keesing, this emerging pidgin was later brought by these ships to the southwest Pacific, especially to the New Hebrides and New Caledonia, during the sandalwood trading period, described in chapter 3. During this period, beginning in the 1840s, men from the Loyalty Islands (near New Caledonia) also played an important role in working on trading ships. Several examples of the "Sandalwood English" spoken around the central and southwest Pacific from 1850 to the early 1860s are given in this chapter. The author points out the linguistic features of modern MP present in these examples and concludes that this lingua franca should be called a pidgin rather than an unstable jargon. He speculates that "incipient creolization" may also have been occurring during this period, as children of islanders involved in trading and shipboard work learned this emerging pidgin either as a first language or as a coordinate first language (along with another).

In chapter 4, the author continues to develop his thesis, saying that "sophisticated islanders" (those who had worked on ships or taken part in trading) continued to be involved in the Pacific trade as ships' crew or as recruiters, brokers, or plantation foremen. Since these people already knew the "emerging pidgin," they were responsible for teaching it to the laborers and spreading it to the plantations. Keesing mentions the Gilbert Islands as an important source of plantation laborers as well as crew members, but he gives figures showing that the most important source of laborers was the New Hebrides and the southeast Solomon Islands. Then he moves to the linguistic evidence. Following provisos about the reliability of the data (all from European sources) and a suggestion that Pacific Islanders and Europeans spoke different "registers," he presents several pages of examples of the pidgin spoken in the first decades of the Labor Trade, 1863-1885. Again, he extracts many linguistic features from the examples that are present in modern MP and concludes that the "essential patterns" of all three dialects of MP were established by 1885.

This argument is expanded in chapter 5, which is basically an attack on the view that Tok Pisin developed separately from the other two MP varieties, a view that Keesing attributes to Peter Mühlhäusler (1976, 1978). Keesing reiterates his point that an already stabilized and homogeneous pidgin was introduced into the plantations in Queensland and Samoa during the beginning of the Labor Trade. He also says that these areas were connected until the end of the 1880s by common recruiting grounds and by laborers who reenlisted and moved from one location to

the other. Thus, he claims that, except for a few lexical differences, the varieties of pidgin spoken in Samoa and Queensland were identical. Finally, he suggests that when the pidgin was brought from Samoa to the New Guinea islands by repatriated laborers, it was relexified--that is, a large number of English words were replaced by words from local languages. Because of this large Melanesian-derived content, the author says, Tok Pisin is wrongly considered as the "genuine and canonical dialect."

In chapter 6, the author moves on to discuss the substrate languages that "shaped the structure" of the pidgin that was the forerunner of MP. Because of the preceding arguments, he discounts the influence of the linguistically diverse New Guinea languages. Instead he looks at the relatively homogeneous Eastern Oceanic (EO) subgroup of Austronesian languages, spoken in the areas of the central and southwest Pacific where he says the pidgin originally developed.

After giving some details about historical reconstruction and the subgrouping of EO languages, the author describes what he calls their "core syntactic structures" (p. 69) and "global syntax" (p. 83)--in other words, their common grammatical features. These include subject noun phrase-verb phrase-object noun phrase (SVO) word order, the same as in English. Also like English the subject and object noun phrases include a noun or pronoun, but unlike English these phrases are optional. An EO sentence may consist of only a verb phrase but a very complex verb phrase, differing greatly from English. The verb is preceded by a pronominal particle that refers to the subject, called the "subject-referencing pronoun" (SRP) (p. 70). This is opposed to the pronoun that may act as the subject in the noun phrase, called the "focal pronoun" (FP). If the verb is transitive, it usually has a special suffix added to show this. There may also be another marker added to refer to the object. The chapter includes examples of these structures from a wide variety of languages. It ends with examples of Solomons Pidgin compared to Kwaio, an EO language spoken on the island of Malaita, showing a direct correspondence in words and parts of words between the two languages.

In chapter 7, the author stresses the interplay between substrate and superstrate languages and universal tendencies in the development of MP. He suggests that because of the similarities among the EO languages of the Pacific Islanders in contact and the superficial similarities (especially in word order) between these languages and English, there was no necessity for extreme "bending, simplifying, and rearranging" in order to reach linguistic accommodation and the compromise pidgin language (p. 91). In situations where typologically diverse languages

come in contact (as in the development of Chinook Jargon in North America), the result may be a variety stripped down to the basic universal properties of language. But Keesing argues this was not the case for MP, for which basic EO structures were the common denominator.

Another major point of this chapter concerns the superstrate or target language to which Pacific Islanders were exposed. The author suggests two facets to this exposure. Before the 1850s and to a lesser extent in later years, islanders were exposed to English spoken by white men but heavily influenced by "foreigner talk" or nautical pidgin. From the 1860s onward, however, many islanders were fluent in the stabilized pidgin they used to communicate among themselves. This pidgin, rather than English, provided the target language for other islanders. The result was what Keesing calls "two registers" of pidgin English: one used between some islanders and whites, and one used among islanders themselves. He illustrates that communication between whites and islanders may in fact have been accomplished with whites using grammatical rules of English and islanders using rules of basic EO.

In chapter 8, Keesing lays down the ground rules for determining substrate models for MP: (1) They must have linguistic features found in all dialects, (2) their influence must be possible historically, and (3) their features cannot be merely the same as those of other possible superstrate or substrate influences. Again, the author stresses that general statements about MP should not be made only on the basis of data from Tok Pisin. Then he lists ten grammatical features common to all three dialects in the 1880s. He concludes that the elaboration (or grammatical expansion) of MP is a late-nineteenth-century, rather than a twentieth-century, phenomenon, and that when taken to New Guinea, MP "underwent a considerable withering of its syntactic resources" (p. 115). The chapter continues with more detailed descriptions of the EO sources for features of MP syntax including possession, prepositions, plural marking, and transitive verbal suffixes. It is stressed that simplification toward a more natural or universal pattern has sometimes been involved as well as reinforcement by similar features in the superstrate language, English.

The next two chapters present other elements of EO "core" sentence structure present in MP. Chapter 9 describes the first and most important of these: the pronoun system. It is well known that the semantic categories of the MP pronoun system correspond to those of most Austronesian languages-- with dual, and sometimes trial (or paucal), as well as plural pronouns, and with inclusive and exclusive first-person pronouns. Thus, the MP pronoun system clearly shows the influence of

the substrate languages rather than the superstrate or any linguistic universals. Chapter 10 presents detailed arguments to show that what has been called the "predicate marker" in MP (for example in Tok Pisin, the *i* in *"Em i go"*) is really a subject-referencing pronoun (SRP), as in EO languages.

The next three chapters deal more specifically with Solomons Pidgin and show how Malaitan languages have influenced its development. Chapter 11 describes "the bending of Queensland Pidgin in a Southeast Solomonic direction" (p. 176) and three directions of change that have distinguished Solomons Pidgin from the other varieties. Chapter 12 returns to a discussion of pronouns, this time showing that "the changes in Solomons Pidgin partly entailed a reanalysis or selection among existing patterns so as to approximate more closely to the patterns of substrate languages" (p. 189). Chapter 13 shows how Solomons Pidgin is actually used in discourse, particularly by speakers of the Kwaio language of central Malaita. It also illustrates with many examples how speakers of EO languages "could calque pervasively and systematically onto their native languages" (p. 210)--in other words, speak pidgin as if it was a word-for-word translation of their own languages.

The final part of the book contains a short conclusion (chapter 14) and some end matter, including an appendix with comparable texts in Kwaio and Solomons Pidgin, the list of references, and a short index. The conclusion consists of three questions. The first is concerned with whether or not there was a group of native speakers of the Pacific pidgin in the 1850s and 1860s and, if so, what their role was in the elaboration and spread of the pidgin. The second question is about how speakers of MP who "calque so closely on their diverse native languages" can communicate with one another (p. 228). The author says that these questions remain unanswered and require further research. The answer to the third question, however, has been the major theme of the book: "How could a pidgin have evolved that, despite its almost total lexification from English as superstrate language, has a structure so close to that of Southeast Solomonic Oceanic languages?" (p. 227).

With regard to this theme, I believe that Keesing is quite successful in illustrating that the Oceanic substrate was influential in the development of Melanesian Pidgin. From his evidence, it seems clear that the basic pronominal systems present in all three dialects, and the "subject-referencing pronouns" in at least the Solomons, are all derived from nearly identical features of Eastern Oceanic languages. I agree wholeheartedly with his conclusion, as would any but the most diehard universalist, that substrate languages, the superstrate language, and

universal properties of human languages and second-language learning all usually play a part in the development of pidgins and creoles.

Keesing's study also seems to reinforce the idea that the more homogeneous the substrate, the greater its influence in pidgin/creole development (Singler 1988). One major problem, however, is pointed out in the book (p. 65) but not dealt with satisfactorily. This is the highly debatable question of including the southern New Hebridean languages in the Eastern Oceanic subgroup. These "less conservative" languages do not have many of the EO features described in this account and the author may be stretching things a bit in trying to show that they do. This is an important factor because in the first twenty years of the Labor Trade (the real formative years of MP, as discussed below) a large proportion of the plantation laborers were from the southern New Hebrides (as demonstrated by the figures given by Keesing [p. 40]).

I find it hard to agree, however, with several of the other major arguments in the book, especially concerning the timeframe for the stabilization of a Pacific pidgin, its separation into the three MP dialects, and the key period of substrate influence. As is common in sociolinguistics, though, some of our differences in opinion may be the result of different interpretations of terminology.

First of all, the term "jargon" usually refers to an individual's imperfect productions of the superstrate language, as defined by Mühlhäusler: "Jargons . . . are individual solutions to the problem of cross-linguistic communication and hence subject to individual strategies, the principal ones being lexicalization or holophrastic talking; pragmatic structuring; grammaticalization by transfer; and universals" (1986: 135-136). The first phase of pidgin development, called the "jargon" stage, is thus characterized by a high degree of variation due to concurrent use of numerous individuals' versions of the superstrate language, the various "jargons." At this stage, however, certain conventions do emerge and, although not used consistently, are found in many individual jargons. Some of these are "salient linguistic features" (Siegel 1987: 15), features that differ from any in the superstrate language and give the impression that all the various jargons make up a distinct variety. The term "pidgin" is usually reserved for the next stage of development, when there is less variation--that is, when "autonomy as a norm" has been achieved (Hymes 1971:84) and when a higher degree of "conventionalization" is displayed (Sankoff 1980: 140).

SO it seems to me, as shown in the following passage, that Keesing may misunderstand Mühlhäusler's use of the term "jargon" to characterize the precursor of Pacific pidgin in the 1850s:

> But I see no strong evidence, linguistic or historical, supporting Mühlhäusler's contention that there were a multitude of different jargons. To be sure, speakers of different Pacific languages brought to an emerging lingua franca different phonological repertoires; and they probably bent the constructions of a developing jargon/pidgin to their own grammatical patterns.
>
> And no doubt local media of interlingual communication incorporated indigenous lexical items and usages. (P. 24)

Also, I'm not sure if Keesing is using the terms "stable" and "stability" in the usual sense. When he applies these terms to certain features of the early Pacific lingua franca, he appears to mean "recognizable" rather than "consistently used." From the data he presents, his definition of stabilization is clearly far from that of Hancock: "the establishment of linguistic conventions . . . whose manifestations will be predictable for *at least* 90 per cent of any speaker's performance" (1980:65).

It is true that certain salient linguistic features had emerged by the 1850s that are still present in MP. These were mainly lexical items, illustrated in the examples such as "savvy," "too much," "plenty," "by and by," and "all same" (pp. 31-32). But even these are not used consistently --for example, compare "too much bad" with "very good' (p. 31). Furthermore, many other items that are not features of MP are found in the examples, such as "that," "see," and "speak."

Keesing also claims that this lingua franca was an "already quite grammatically developed pidgin" by this period (p. 25), but the fragmentary evidence does not confirm this statement. The samples show some constructions that on the surface seem to match grammatical features of current MP. For certain of these, though, only one or two examples can be found, and there is no proof that they are not simply features of English rather than grammatical developments. For instance, there is nothing to prove that "by and by" is not being used only as an adverb, just as in English. And it seems to be stretching things to say that "come worship" illustrates verb serialization and "go and kill every man" shows "go" was used as an auxiliary (p. 32). Similarly, one or two examples such as "steal little thing he no want" do not necessarily illustrate embedded relative clauses rather than merely juxtaposed sentences. In addition, it seems presumptuous to include "belong" for possessives (p. 33) as a grammatical feature of this period on the basis of one example, "man belongen noder place" (p. 22), which other writers have questioned (Clark 1979:22) and which could simply be derived from the English *belonging* (see Crowley 1989). In addition, we again have

many other grammatical features illustrated in the data that are not characteristic of any form of Pacific pidgin: the *'s* possessive marker, the *-ing* verbal suffix, *can't* as a negativizer, and attribute plus noun ("Uea man" rather than "man Uea"). Thus, it certainly does not appear that stabilization had occurred.

Of course, these features just mentioned could be a result of Europeans' inaccurate renditions of the way Pacific Islanders spoke the lingua franca. Keesing repeatedly points out (pp. 32, 33, 41, 101, 120, 141) the problems of interpreting our only source of information about earlier forms of MP--representations given by Europeans, mainly in travelogues and court records. These problems have also been discussed by Clark (1979:23-24), who concludes that basically the data are reliable. Keesing's view, however, is that "almost all observers have heavily anglicized their renderings of pidgin" (p. 41) and thus, in some cases, the data are not reliable. But one of my major criticisms of this book is the inconsistency with which the data are accepted. For example, Keesing notes that "my," which occurs three times in texts on pp. 42 and 43, is "highly suspect" as a genuine feature while, as mentioned above, one occurrence in the pre-1860 literature of what may be "belong" is accepted as hard evidence. Also, at times the author seems to reinterpret the data to better fit his arguments--for example, "want to" as in "want to get" as the present Solomons Pidgin auxiliary *wande* (p. 43) and "make a paper" as *mek-em pepa,* showing the transitive suffix *-em* (p. 125). (See also Crowley 1989 concerning this latter example.) It is also interesting to note that the author says "it would be unwise, when our fragments of recorded speech come from Europeans with a highly imperfect command of the pidgin being spoken by the islanders themselves, to make assumptions about its grammatical impoverishment" (p. 33). Yet earlier in the chapter he uses precisely the same data to make assumptions about its grammatical complexity.

Returning to the topic of the timeframe for the development of MP, I feel that just as there is not enough linguistic evidence to support Keesing's claim that a stable and developed pidgin rather than a jargon was spoken in the Pacific before 1860, there is not enough sociohistorical evidence for the existence of a Pacific-wide "linguistic community" in this period (p. 35). The book contains a great deal of evidence that islanders from all over the Pacific were being exposed to English early in the 1800s, but this does not say anything about the development of a homogeneous linguistic community. The author's descriptions of the trading centers at Pohnpei and Kosrae make an important contribution to the study of the history of Pacific pidgin, and perhaps support the idea of a

Micronesian Pidgin English, as suggested by Wurm (1971a). But again, Keesing provides only one piece of evidence to show that the same islanders who worked in the central Pacific later moved on to the southwest Pacific. Therefore, it is certainly possible that "Sandalwood English" developed separately from Micronesian Pidgin.

In fact, during the 1840s and 1850s, whaling was going on in the central Pacific while the sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trades were proceeding in the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, and the Loyalty Islands. Between 1841 and 1855, for example, approximately 195 voyages were made as part of the triangular sandalwood trade between Port Jackson (Sydney) and the South China coast (Shineberg 1967). Therefore, it is also likely that during this period in the southwest Pacific there were two other important influences on the developing pidgin: Chinese Pidgin English (CPE) and New South Wales Pidgin English (NSWPE). Clark notes that the first attestations of several features of MP are from Australia rather than the Pacific, for example, "belong" used in possessives and "fellow" used to mark adjectives (1979:43). In a more recent study Baker writes, "In the Southwest Pacific, I have suggested that NSWPE was the most important influence on the way in which varieties of Pidgin English developed in the islands prior to the start of the labor trade" (1987: 199). He also shows that the transitive suffix *-im,* which Keesing says developed in the Pacific due to EO substrate influence, is actually attested first in New South Wales in 1816 and in German New Guinea in 1834. Other salient linguistic features of the early jargon stage, such as "too much," "all same," and "what for," are also attested first in New South Wales in the 1820s. These are also features of Chinese Pidgin English. So it appears that from the start both CPE and NSWPE have had an influence on Pacific pidgin and that the influence was especially significant in the southwest Pacific.

Thus, with at least three different varieties of pidgin English in contact, Keesing's idea of a homogeneous Pacific pidgin before 1860 appears unfounded. Consequently, his ideas about the early nativization of a Pacific pidgin (p. 14) and "incipient creolization" before the 1860s in such a community in Micronesia (p. 21) and the Loyalty Islands (p. 33) seem highly speculative, especially considering the lack of sociohistorical evidence to support these ideas. Also, I have shown that the linguistic evidence used by the author (the apparently well-developed grammatical features of this period) may not be really acceptable.

As a result, I feel Keesing is unsuccessful in proving that a homogeneous, stable, and well-developed pidgin was used when the Pacific Labor Trade began in early 1860s. It seems rather that it was a still

unstable, "developing" contact language, influenced not only by the first languages of its speakers but also by at least two more-established pidgins. The usually accepted view (e.g., Clark 1979) then stands: Development into a stable Early Melanesian Pidgin occurred at the start of the plantation era--from the early to mid 1860s (and not from the 1870s, the date given by Keesing [p. 13])--when recruited Pacific Islands laborers began working on European-owned plantations in Queensland, Samoa, Fiji, and New Caledonia.

Keesing gives sixteen "essential syntactic and lexical/semantic patterns of Melanesian Pidgin" (pp. 48-50), represented in texts from the 1870s and 1880s (although some come from the late 1860s). Again, several are based on either flimsy evidence or broad interpretations of the data, as shown below (with Keesing's numbering):

2. Relative clauses. Only one other example is given in addition to the dubious one mentioned above. It too may simply be juxtaposed sentences: "That big fellow wind, man Sandwich make him; he broke ship" (p. 42). But note that when it is discussed (p. 48), the punctuation from the original example is omitted, making it look more like one sentence.

4. *Wande* as a modal. Two examples of "want" plus verb and three of "want to" plus verb are all interpreted as *wande* plus verb.

10. Use of *ol* as plural marker. In all the examples given with the word "all," it could be used literally to mean "all" rather than showing the plural, for example, "Me think all the boy want to kill me" (p. 45).

15. The use of "say" *(se)* as a complementizer. There is only one example, "He say, canoe come. . . . He say, long time before he no kaikai man" (p. 42). Here "say" could be used as a main verb.

Keesing, however, does give some solid evidence that certain structures were in use earlier than has previously been suspected, for example, "fellow" as a suffix in regular grammatical slots (p. 49).

So it seems that many, but certainly not all, of the grammatical features of modern MP emerged during the first decades of the plantation era. This brings us to another of Keesing's themes: that the essential linguistic features of MP were in place and used consistently before the divergence into separate dialects. First, I have just shown that not all features were in place. Second, it is clear that, while many features can be identified in the data, they may not have been used consistently by all speakers and there was still a good deal of variation. For example, in Keesing's data, we see "like" being used as well as "want (to)": "he like spik you" (p. 42). We also find several transitive verbs used without the *-im* suffix: "man Sandwich make big wind" (p. 42) and "he bin give me

small fellow boks" (p. 43). There is also the use of pronouns not found in MP, such as "I," "we," and "they," mentioned by the author himself (p. 49).

On the topic of the separation of Tok Pisin from the other two MP dialects, I feel some of Keesing's criticisms of Mühlhäusler's position are largely unjustified. First of all, nowhere do I find Mühlhäusler saying that Samoan Plantation Pidgin (SPP) had "a substantially separate linguistic history from 1870 onward" (p. 51). The main purpose of his work on SPP (1978, 1979) was to show that the forerunner of Tok Pisin was brought back by returned New Guinean laborers not from Queensland plantations, as was previously believed, but from Samoa. From 1879 to 1912 about six thousand laborers went from German New Guinea to work in Samoa, whereas perhaps less than a hundred went to Queensland (Mühlhäusler 1978:69, 79). Laborers from the New Hebrides and the Solomons also worked in Samoa, but only from 1878 to 1885. Thus, as Clark points out, "New Guinea's connection with the Melanesian pidgin network thus lasted no more than seven years" (1979:39-40, quoted by Keesing on p. 52). These two important facts help explain why the New Guinea dialect of MP differs from the other two more closely related ones spoken in the New Hebrides and the Solomons.

By giving the label Samoan Plantation Pidgin, Mühlhäusler is not saying that it was a separate language from Queensland Plantation Pidgin, as Keesing implies (p. 54). In fact, Mühlhäusler agrees with Keesing about there being one early Melanesian Pidgin language in the 1880s and the reasons for this: "Because of a number of factors, including common recruiting grounds for most Pacific plantations and a number of linguistic conventions that had emerged in Pacific Jargon English, this early form of SPP did not differ greatly from the plantations pidgins found in Queensland or New Caledonia" (Mühlhäusler 1978:81).

Where the two scholars differ is that Keesing says that "Samoan Plantation Pidgin was essentially the same dialect as the pidgin of the Queensland/Fiji/New Caledonia Labor Trade" (p. SS), while Mühlhäusler says it was a different "variety." Again, what we may have here is a terminological muddle. According to most linguists, separate varieties or dialects of the same language share most of their grammatical features but are distinguished by a few phonological, lexical, and minor grammatical differences. Thus, one wonders what point Keesing is making when he says: "Scant wonder, then, that the dialect of pidgin Mühlhäusler characterizes as Samoan Plantation Pidgin was essentially

identical (judging by the limited linguistic evidence available) to the pidgin being spoken in Queensland in, say, 1890. No doubt there were Samoan-derived lexical items, just as there was a French lexical component to the pidgin spoken in New Caledonia" (p. 57).

On the other hand, Keesing does make a good point about Mühlhäusler's discussions of structural expansion in Tok Pisin (1980, 1981, 1985b). The dates Mühlhäusler gives for the stages of development of Tok Pisin are pre-1880 for the jargon stage and 1880-1920 for the stabilization stage. As Keesing notes (p. 52), the simplicity of grammar at the jargon stage would rule out the development before 1880 of most of the grammatical constructions described by Mühlhäusler for SPP that later came into Tok Pisin. Clearly, though, many of these constructions were attested for other varieties of early MP before 1880. Thus, Keesing says the only way Mühlhäusler could explain the presence of the same features in all three dialects would be by separate parallel development. However, I think that Mühlhäusler simply has his dates wrong here and, in fact, earlier he says in a discussion of Samoa between 1867 and 1879 that "a relatively stable form of pidgin had emerged during this period" (1978:81). (In a more recent work he gives the dates for stabilization as 1860-1883 [Mühlhäusler 1985a:39]).

This brings us back to the issue of the key period of substrate influence in the development of MP, and the major substrate influences. As already noted, Keesing maintains that the essential grammatical features of MP are derived from EO languages and are found in all three dialects. Thus, in setting forth his "ground rules," Keesing restricts possible candidates for substrate influence to languages that could have influenced all three dialects and restricts the period of influence to before the laborers from New Guinea, the New Hebrides, and the Solomons took early MP back to their home islands. Since Keesing's argument is that the main features of MP are due to EO substrate influence, these ground rules eliminate the non-EO New Guinean languages, which could have influenced only Tok Pisin, and set the key period of substrate influence clearly during the stabilization stage or before.

Keesing also maintains that the grammatical expansion of MP, previously described for Tok Pisin by linguists such as Mühlhäusler and Sankoff and sometimes attributed to substrate influence, actually occurred not in New Guinea but in Queensland and Samoa during the plantation era. According to the author, when the "extensively elaborated pidgin" was transplanted to "alien linguistic soil"--that is, to the non-EO New Guinea islands--some of these features "withered" (p. 115). By implication, when transplanted to the EO areas of the New

Hebrides and the Solomons, they thrived. Therefore, during the period usually thought of as the expansion stage, the substrate languages are seen as providing either negative or positive reinforcement for already existing, well-developed features.

I have two criticisms of this point of view. First, there seems to be no reason to eliminate the possibility of substrate influence of New Guinea languages during the stabilization stage in the plantations. Large numbers of New Guineans began to work in Samoa in the early 1880s and, since MP was still at a formative stage before 1885, their substrate languages could have had an influence on the developing pidgin. Because New Guineans worked alongside New Hebrideans and Solomon Islanders and because of the networks between Samoa and Queensland, described by Keesing, I don't see why these influences could not have affected MP in general.

Second, once again it is not clear that all the basic grammatical features found in modern dialects of MP were firmly in place as early as Keesing maintains. True, some evidence of their existence is found in the data, but there was still a great deal of variation. Keesing's list of syntactic features common to all three dialects in place by the late 1880s (pp. 112-113) contains features that were not used systematically at that time, as already shown, such as the pronouns, the *-im* transitive suffix, and the *se* (from "say") complementizer. Some features listed are also used in different ways in the different modern dialects. For example, Crowley (1989) shows that Bislama differs from other dialects in which transitive verbs take the *-im* suffix. Also, although the three dialects use the suffix *-fela* (from "fellow") in some of the ways described by Keesing, there are major differences. For instance, its use in demonstratives (e.g., *dis-fela* 'this') is not found in Bislama and while the suffix is obligatory on certain adjectives in Tok Pisin (e.g., *gut-pela* 'good') and on quantifiers (e.g., *tu-pela* 'two'), it is optional in Bislama. And Keesing himself shows how the "predicate marker" *i* is used differently in the three dialects.

When Keesing says throughout the book that Tok Pisin is considered the "canonical" dialect of MP, he is being critical of what he sees as people making generalizations about MP based only on data from one dialect. Yet it appears to me that he similarly may be making Solomons Pidgin the "canonical" dialect for his arguments. His descriptions of the important MP features he is focusing on (transitive suffixes on verbs and prepositions, "subject-referencing pronouns," etc.) are based on data from modern Solomons Pidgin, which has most obviously been influenced by EO languages. In fact, he even breaks his own "ground rules"

by discussing "prepositional verbs" (p. 122), present in Solomons Pidgin and Bislama but not in Tok Pisin. This leads to his assumption that such features were present in earlier versions of all three dialects and the ones that are not present must have been lost or later modified by the substrate languages.

What I see is a slightly different scenario in the development of the modern MP dialects, one that would better explain differences between the individual dialects as well as the similarities. During the plantation era, the early MP spoken by the laborers was still highly variable. It did contain many characteristic features of later MP, some clearly resulting from substrate influence (both EO and non-EO), others from superstrate influence (Standard English), and still others from what may be called universals of human language or second-language acquisition. It also contained many features not found in later MP, such as the pronouns "I," "my," and "we," the use of "fellow" as a subject and with "him," and others that Keesing explains away as recording errors or filtering through English. This pool of features was taken back to the laborers' different islands. There, under the influence of substrate languages that were more homogeneous, and out from under the influence of the superstrate language, the use of some of these features died out while the use of others was reinforced. Some were also reanalyzed or "bent" according to substrate patterns, as Keesing himself describes for the Solomons and New Hebrides.

Some strong evidence of such a scenario is given in Crowley (1990) for the development of the prepositions in Bislama. Through the records of testimony in an official inquiry held in Queensland in 1882, he shows that along with the typical MP prepositions "along," "all same," and "belong," others such as "on," "in," "at," "with," "of," "for," "from," "without," "through," "alongside," and "like" were also used as in Standard English a large percentage of the time. Crowley demonstrates that the surface forms of the five basic prepositions of current Bislama are derived from the English "along," "belong," "from," "with," and "all same," but that their semantic roles and grammatical behavior are very different from English, matching patterns in the substrate languages, specifically in Paamese.

Of course, if there are similarities between the groups of substrate languages, certain features may similarly be reinforced. This would account for the nearly identical pronominal systems in all three dialects, which all developed in areas where Austronesian languages with the same system are spoken. Also, similarities in pre-verbal tense and aspect marking in the languages of the three areas led to similarities in the MP

dialects. However, there are some features not found in all the substrate language areas that are found in all three dialects. How can these be explained if we disagree with Keesing's claim that these features were already fully elaborated and systematic in early MP? I think the answer is that although these structures were not well developed in early MP, the "seeds" of these structures were planted at the time. In other words, certain embryonic structures had emerged in early MP that then grew and developed in each of the three environments into structures looking quite similar in their mature states. This would account for the parallel developments that Keesing says would have been unlikely.

Along these lines, Mühlhäusler (1981) has described the developments of the expansion stage (that is, for MP, post-separation into the three dialects) as being mainly a continuation of those started at the preceding stabilization stage (that is, pre-separation). He gives the example of the development of the *ol* plural marker in Tok Pisin (putting *ol* before nouns to show the plural, as in *ol dok* 'dogs'). This is not the way the plural is marked in the New Guinea substrate languages, and Mühlhäusler attributes the development instead to natural internal growth or "universal principles governing expansion" (see Romaine 1988: 134). However, Keesing shows convincingly that the origin of this type of plural marking could have again been EO languages (pp. 128-129) and that there is no need to resort to universals to explain it. But again he is talking about the origin of the "seed' planted in early MP. It appears from the data that this method of plural marking was not well developed or systematized in the 1880s or until much later in any of the three dialects. We can easily see why this feature grew to maturity in the New Hebrides and Solomons, within the supportive environment of the substrate languages with a similar feature. And we may want to call on the universal principles mentioned by Mühlhäusler to explain not the origin of this feature but why it also grew and developed in New Guinea without such a supportive substrate environment.

For me, this book does not only stir up some controversy, provide valuable information on Solomons Pidgin, and make us relook at the history of MP. It also indirectly reconfirms two misgivings I have had about accepted notions of the development of pidgins in general. First, if we go by the usually accepted stages of pidgin/creole development--jargon, stable pidgin, expanded pidgin, creole--it is difficult to say at which stage substrate influence is most likely to occur. Mühlhäusler says that transfer from the speaker's first language is unlikely in the jargon stage and that substrate influence is more likely to occur in the stabilization and especially the expansion stages (1980, 1985b, 1986). It is often

not clear what stage Keesing has in mind in his discussion of substrate influence in MP. In some parts of the book it appears that he is talking mainly about the influence of EO in initial stages (before 1860), but he is also claiming that stabilization had occurred by then. He moves on to discuss the substrate influence of the languages in the southwest Pacific in further stabilization during the Labor Trade. But later, in setting forth his "ground rules," he restricts possible candidates for substrate influence to those that could have historically influenced all three dialects. This implies that substrate influence is not relevant in what is usually considered the expansion stage in MP--when laborers took early MP from the plantations back to their home islands. But the final four chapters of the book are devoted to showing how, in the development of the Solomons dialect, features of MP have been "reanalyzed' and bent to patterns of speakers' native languages, especially those of Malaita.

It seems to me that substrate influence can occur at any stage of development, except perhaps for the jargon stage for the reasons given by Mühlhäusler (1985b: 77). The importance of transfer of features from the first language in second-language acquisition is not so great as originally thought, but still significant. As Keesing has shown, at nearly all stages of development some Pacific Islanders were attempting to learn not English but a form of Pacific pidgin as a second language. Thus, we could expect some substrate influence at these stages. It is also clear that when a pidgin is learned by a new group of people with different substrate languages, it is affected by these languages. Some examples are the loss of the predicate marker *i* in Tok Pisin spoken by New Guinea Highlanders (Wurm 1971b:13-17) and the change in word order to possessor preceding possessed and to SOV in Pidgin Fijian spoken by Fiji Indians (Siegel 1987:242, 246). I see no reason why a fully developed pidgin should behave any differently from other languages with regard to substrate influence. For example, there is a wealth of recent information on how substrate languages (as well as universals of second-language acquisition) have affected English transplanted to India, Singapore, the Philippines, and other former British and American colonies so that "New Englishes" have emerged (Platt, Weber, and Ho 1984).

The second misgiving concerns the stages of pidgin development themselves. As I have pointed out, the data given in this book show a great deal of variation, even after so-called stabilization is supposed to have occurred. Certainly, in the data from the 1880s, after "stabilization" on the plantations, there is nothing near the 90 percent consistency mentioned by Hancock (1980). It seems stabilization is a continuing process, beginning with the emergence of the recognized salient

linguistic features of the jargon stage, increasing dramatically during what is now called the "stable" pidgin stage, and continuing to an even greater degree during the expansion stage. It may be only after expansion, then, that the 90 percent mark is approached. The same is true for expansion; it also seems to be a continuing process that starts earlier than the "expansion" stage and continues on in creolization. Perhaps pidgin/creole studies would be better off talking not about distinct stages of development but rather about different developmental continua, such as stabilization, grammatical expansion, functional expansion, and nativization. And perhaps clarification of these terms would prevent disagreements between linguists on how they are applied to the data.

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