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By his own admission Keesing writes as "an amateur linguist who is an equally amateur historian" (p. vi). There seem to be at least two different arguments in *Melanesian Pidgin and the Oceanic Substrate*. One concerns the history of the three varieties of Melanesian Pidgin and relationships among them. The other deals with substratum influence in Solomon Islands Pijin, and by implication the role of substratum in pidginogenesis in the Pacific. This is an important book, particularly given the centrality of data from Solomons Pijin to Keesing's arguments. Once Crowley's forthcoming study of Bislama appears (1990), we will have solid studies of the three major varieties of Melanesian Pidgin. I will concentrate my remarks here on the issues of substratum, stabilization, and grammaticalization and I will show how they are interrelated by analyzing one particular grammatical feature that plays a large role in Keesing's argument.

Keesing claims that many of the most important developments in the expansion and stabilization of Melanesian Pidgin took place in the central Pacific prior to separation into regional dialects in Melanesia (p. 3). In particular he argues that Mühlhäusler overestimates the separateness of New Guinea pidgin English and that only after 1880, when Melane-

sian Pidgin had stabilized, did the New Guinea variety develop into the distinctive variety known today as Tok Pisin. According to Keesing, stabilization took place on ships rather than on plantations, Loyalty Islanders played a crucial role in spreading this pidgin, and the distinctive developments that characterized Tok Pisin came about through drastic relexification, which involved the replacement of English forms with forms from indigenous languages, particularly Tolai. I think Keesing is probably right that there was considerable stabilization at an earlier stage than most scholars have thought possible, but I am dubious about the extent to which substratum determined the structure of the Pacific pidgins.

Keesing also says that he avoids giving labels such as Jargon English, Beach-la-Mar, and so forth to the speech used in the Pacific at various historical stages because labeling would convey a spuriously discontinuous development and imply that we know more than we do about the linguistic characteristics of the codes in use at various stages (p. 92). Unfortunately, we will probably never be able to uncover sufficient historical and other data to untangle the threads of the various linguistic traditions.

Much obviously hinges on the interpretation of earlier, fragmentary historical accounts--for example, attestations by travelers, missionaries, and the like--about the English spoken by the "natives" in various Pacific islands. Keesing bases many of his claims on the early appearance in these records of certain constructions that later become "grammaticalized" (grammaticalization is discussed further below) in the Melanesian pidgins (e.g., the transitive suffix *-im*, the predicate marker *i*, and the use of *baebae* to mark futurity). The reasons why these historical records may not be accurate renditions of the languages are well known. Keesing is aware of them, too, but nonetheless relies on the records when it suits him and ignores them when it doesn't. For instance, he dismisses statistical counts of features in texts as useless, given the "overall filters of anglicization" and "internal variations in the corpora" (p. 151). Thus Keesing rejects Mühlhäusler's counts for the use of *he* as the predicate marker but insists that his own from a set of 1908 texts are reliable (p. 195). This is but one example of a number of inconsistencies in method and argumentation.

In chapter 6 Keesing discusses patterns in the Oceanic languages that were calqued into Melanesian Pidgin. He seems, however, to indulge too frequently in the "cafeteria principle"--a random picking out and attribution of features to substratum influence without regard for how they might have been borrowed or incorporated into the pidgin or cre-

ole in question (see Dillard 1970). While Mühlhäusler has attempted to work out implicational patterns for borrowing and the incorporation of particular features at particular stages of pidgin development, Keesing cites patterns that suit him from a range of different languages. He justifies his strategy--that "it is possible to take any Oceanic language of the southwestern Pacific and . . . make a case of substrate influence" (p. 106)--by claiming that these languages share a common core of constructions.

The relative diversity or homogeneity of the substrate is an issue that has finally begun to receive serious attention (e.g., Singler 1988). But in this case we are asked to believe that Oceanic speakers simplified "down to common denominators deriving from a common ancestral language" (p. 91), incorporating core structures of Oceanic grammar (in some cases at a relatively abstract level) (p. 96). Here, however, we run into problems because both Oceanic and English speakers were "analyzing and producing mutually acceptable sentences using different grammars" (p. 91). Thus, while ostensibly making a big bid for substratum influence, Keesing also admits that the syntax of the Oceanic Austronesian languages quite closely resembles the grammar of English when considered at this abstract level (p. 107). Chomsky, of course, would argue that at a certain quite abstract level the global syntax of all human languages should resemble one another.

So how can we separate substratum from superstratum influence? The simple answer is that in many cases we cannot (see Romaine 1988: ch. 3). Although Keesing recognizes this, he nevertheless pursues his substratum line. He suggests that these common denominators in the Oceanic pattern reflect unmarked and maximally natural constructions (p. 110). Then he says that in some cases this abstract Oceanic did not correspond to universal "default grammar" and that there are therefore two sorts of simplification processes that do not coincide (p. 116). In cases where the Oceanic pattern would have been opaque to English speakers, Keesing says they did not rely on it.

However, this in itself raises questions. For instance, the inclusive/exclusive distinction, which is a clear-cut case of Oceanic substratum in Melanesian Pidgin, is relatively opaque to English speakers. Most English speakers of Tok Pisin whom I know consistently fail to make it adequately. It is also probably not that transparent to some younger speakers of Tok Pisin, among whom its use is declining. So why was it incorporated in the first place? Another problem is that some features Keesing would like to attribute to Oceanic substrate are also found in other pidgins and creoles. One such is the use of a comparative con-

struction whose main characteristic is that the noun serving as the standard of comparison is the direct object of a transitive verb meaning “surpass” or “exceed” (e.g., in Cameroon Pidgin English *pas mi fo big* ‘He is bigger than I’). Clearly modeled on serial verb constructions, this type of comparative is found in many pidgins and creoles where it is possible to argue African substrate. Nevertheless it would not be surprising to find this construction type occurring independently of substratum influence because it represents a weakly grammaticalized and transparent means of expressing the notion of comparison (see Romaine 1988: 56-57). The prepositional verbs like *agensim* and *raonem*, which Keesing says are a striking feature of Oceanic grammar that probably evolved from serial verb constructions (p. 181), are also found in Tok Pisin. (A new one I have heard is *afterim*, ‘to be after someone’.) However, they are also found in English: “to up the price,” “down a beer,” and so forth.

This brings me to one of Keesing’s central claims, to which I will devote the rest of my discussion: namely, that certain features either were present earlier than previously thought and are therefore common to Melanesian Pidgin or were “grammaticalized” earlier. The latter is crucial to Keesing’s wish to push back the date for stabilization, but what he means by grammaticalization is unclear. Since Mühlhäusler’s specific arguments against Keesing rest mainly on the analysis of the predicate marker, I will focus my own on Keesing’s interpretation of the data for future marking.

Keesing says that the regularity of *bambae* (from English *by and by*) as a future/irrealis marker in texts of the 1870s and 1880s suggests that it was already becoming grammaticalized during the Labor Trade period and was not merely a “temporal adverb” (p. 48). I know of no way to distinguish clearly when *bambae* (and its related variants) is used as a temporal adverb as distinct from a grammaticalized future marker, which is also used with other adverbs that indicate relations of time or discourse sequencing and in certain contexts with an implication of causality or hypotheticality. Keesing, however, argues that by the late nineteenth century *bambae* seems to have been a grammaticalized form and not simply an adverb temporally framing the clause (p. 187). He notes that what happened to *bambae* is “theoretically important because . . . the transformation of what was until recent decades a temporal adverb in sentence- (or clause-) initial position to a grammaticalized preverbal particle is supposed to reflect a late phase in Melanesian Pidgin development, particularly associated with incipient creolization” (p. 182). This suggests that for him syntactic position of the

marker is the criterion for deciding whether we are dealing with a grammaticalized form.

The data and issues raised by them are actually more complex than Keesing, or for that matter Sankoff and Laberge (1980), are aware. On the basis of research done on Tok Pisin in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Sankoff and Laberge claimed that the temporal adverb *baimbai* was becoming a marker of future tense. Moreover, they linked this change to "the passage of Tok Pisin from a second language lingua franca to the first language of a generation of urban New Guineans" (Sankoff and Laberge 1980). They identified three stages in this process, as in examples 1-3.

- (1) *Baimbai mi go.* 'By and by I'll go.'
- (2) *Bai mi go.* 'I'll go.'
- (3) *Mi bai go.* 'I'll go.'

The first stage is accomplished when *bai* results from the morphophonological reduction of the full adverbial *baimbai*. This is accompanied by a loss in stress. A later stage is reached when *bai* is placed in preverbal position next to the main verb and following the subject rather than at the beginning of the sentence or clause.

This general sequence of grammaticalization of tense markers is taken by many to be a significant hallmark of creolization. Pidgin languages normally use adverbial expressions to express tense, whereas creoles use particles that are usually preverbal (e.g., Markey 1982; Mühlhäusler 1986: 156-157; also Kay and Sankoff 1974:64, who cite the use of sentence external propositional qualifiers as a major typological characteristic of pidgins). From a cross-linguistic perspective, however, it is clear that neither the process nor specific chain of grammaticalization transforming a sentence initial temporal adverb into a preverbal tense particle is unique or necessary to pidgin and creole languages. Marchese, for instance, notes the development of tense auxiliaries from time adverbs in Kru languages (1986:254-257). Some Kru tense markers are clearly reduced forms of time adverbs and now have the distributional properties of auxiliaries rather than adverbs and can even occur in the same clause with the corresponding adverb; for example, a general past tense is derived from the corresponding adverb meaning "yesterday" by semantic extension.

All three stages of this alleged grammaticalization are represented synchronically in data from both children and adults that I collected in

1986-1987 in Papua New Guinea. Even at the time when Sankoff and Laberge obtained their data, however, *baimbai* was a recessive feature. It is clear from my data that the use of *baimbai* is not entirely exclusive to rural or second-language speakers, or to adults.

At least three issues need to be discussed to clarify the sequence of steps identified by Sankoff and Laberge as part of the grammaticalization process and to address Keesing's claims. First, do these stages reflect true diachronic ordering? Second, what is the connection between syntactic positioning and phonological reduction? Third, is this sequence coincident with creolization? I will dismiss the third issue straightaway by saying that it does not appear to be, despite Sankoff and Laberge's statement (1980:195). My claim is based mainly on the finding that younger rural speakers are more frequent users of preverbal *bai* than urban speakers. Since creolization is mainly an urban phenomenon, and creolization is the trigger for grammaticalization, then we would have expected to find urban speakers to lead this development (Romaine 1989).

To illuminate all three questions I will consider further diachronic and comparative evidence. As far as the history of *by and by* in Pacific Pidgin English is concerned, Schuchardt notes its occurrence in Chinese Pidgin English and quotes example 4 below (1883), which interestingly contains a preverbal usage.

(4) *My by'mby catchee he.* 'I will get it.'

Although Baker has attested the earliest occurrence of *by and by* in the Pacific in Chinese Pidgin English (1807) and early examples in other Pacific pidgin Englishes (Hawaii 1820, New South Wales 1826, Queensland 1855, New Hebrides 1865, Solomons 1874, Papua 1885, and German New Guinea 1883) (1987:179), he does not note any preverbal occurrences.¹

None of the earlier historical sources mentions the possibility of preverbal *baimbai*, and Sankoff and Laberge have overlooked it too. Keesing cites an 1883 occurrence (again from Schuchardt) to justify his claim for early grammaticalization. Thus he claims that until the 1880s *bambae* was being used as a temporal adverb, but that Schuchardt's example shows it as a "grammatical tense marker" (p. 184). I have, however, collected some thirty attestations of preverbal *bambae* both diachronically and synchronically in speech and writing. The earliest attestations for this feature in Pacific Pidgin English occur in New South Wales (1844; see Troy 1985) and Queensland (1858) and both predate the Labor Trade.

This means that syntactic positioning of *bai* and phonological reduction must be seen as separate issues. Their conflation by Sankoff and Laberge fails to accommodate a number of competing developments, which have made the grammaticalization process messier than it appears. Phonological reduction is neither a necessary nor a sufficient precondition for preverbal placement of the marker. Example 5, which I recorded from a teenage boy in rural Papua New Guinea, may also provide evidence for the possibility of yet another variant, namely, a clause-initial reduced form of *baimbai*.

(5) *Barn yu go stap ?* 'Will you go and stay there?'

My examples are important because they indicate that the incorporation of the full form *baimbai* within the verb phrase probably existed as a grammatical option long before creolization or indeed the existence of a community of fluent second-language speakers. This option has apparently been available in Tok Pisin for at least a century, and in Australian Pidgin English since 1844, and it still exists today in the speech and writing of fluent Tok Pisin users. It is possible, of course, that the synchronic examples I have recorded are not survivals in any direct sense of the earlier attestations and, therefore, are not genuine reflexes of this construction. They may be simply analogical reformations patterned on preverbal *bai*. In fact Sankoff and Laberge note a personal communication from Anne Chowning, who claims that "in areas of New Britain in the 1950s, *bai* was the exclusively used form, with *baimbai* appearing later as a novel introduction" (1980:201). It is dangerous to assume, although it is commonly done, that older speakers preserve an earlier stage of the language and do not change their speech over the course of their lifetimes.

Some of this evidence could be seen as consistent with Keesing's claims for early stabilization. In my view, however, it is inconclusive. The most we can say is that preverbal position was a potential slot for the positioning of grammatical markers long before creolization or extensive phonological reduction. At the moment no unequivocal criteria exist for determining when a form has become grammaticalized, though a number of scholars have cited category shift, phonological reduction, and semantic bleaching as concomitant processes of grammaticalization. It is difficult to tell at what stage we are dealing with a form that is no longer a temporal adverb.

As far as meaning is concerned, the comments made by a rural Tok Pisin speaker in example 6 are interesting. When questioned about the

variation between clause-initial and preverbal *bai*, he mentions preverbal *baimbai* as a possible variant. He does not attach any important difference in meaning to the variants, though.

(6) *Baimbai, nogat, em nau liklik. Baimbai em i go, baimbai i kam. Em baimbai i kam. Baimbai em. klostu bai. I gat kainkain mining i stap. Bai baimbai ating wankain olsem.*

'You only hear *baimbai* a little bit now, as in *baimbai em i go, baimbai i kam, em baimbai i kam*. That's *baimbai*. It's just about the same as *bai*. They have a similar sort of meaning. *Bai* and *baimbai* are almost the same thing.'

It should not be surprising that the same structural innovations arise at different stages in the development of a language and either spread or fade away. The possibility that convergent etymology is important in determining lexicalization in pidgin and creole languages is now widely acknowledged, and it seems plausible to assume that structures compete for grammaticalization too. The more potential sources for grammaticalization of a construction, the more likely that construction is to be incorporated, though different speakers may pull the language in different directions. Keesing argues for substratum influence in the form of a common Oceanic pattern for incorporation of the future marker within the verb phrase (p. 184). The early attestations in New South Wales Pidgin English and Chinese Pidgin English make superstrate influence more likely, since the Australian and Chinese substratum would have been different from each other and each would have been different from the Oceanic substrate.

There is, however, another structural possibility that could have paved the way for the use of *bai* in preverbal position. Some speakers use the form *em bai*, as in example 7. Here the third-person pronoun *em* is not syntactically integrated as a clause argument. It is easy to see how speakers might have regarded this as a short form of *baimbai* if we look at example 8, where we have a case in which *bai* appears on both sides of the third-person singular pronoun *em*. In rapid speech the sequence of *bai em bai* is almost identical with *baimbai*. The full form *baimbai* might have been first reanalyzed in this position to the sequence *bai em bai*, which would then have set the precedent for the reduced form *bai* to occur both clause initially and preverbally. This also fits in with the finding that it is the third-person pronoun that provides the point of departure for the diffusion of preverbal *bai* throughout the pronominal

paradigm. If this is true, then phonological reduction of *baimbai* is not the only source for the short form *bai*.

(7) *Em bai tupela sindaun.* 'The two of them will sit down.'

(8) *Em bai makim yu, bai yu no laik long en, bai em bai bagarapim yu disla kain olsem.*

'If you didn't like him, he'd mark you and rape you or something like that.'

There are also many examples where *bai* appears both preverbally and clause initially with a repetition of the same verb, as in example 9.

(9) *Nau bai kau bai go.* 'Now the cow will go.'

There are also cases where preverbal and clause-initial uses are juxtaposed within the same utterance, which suggests that for some speakers the two are optional variants, possibly with some stylistic or pragmatic significance. It seems to me likely that we have to acknowledge that there is more than one route to grammaticalization of *bai* in its present meanings and functions.

Keesing's book is a useful and important starting point for further debate about the historical and present-day affinities among varieties of Melanesian Pidgin. Future work should address, in particular, the reasons why the syntax of Solomons Pijin and Bislama is considerably more elaborated than that of Tok Pisin.

NOTE

1. I am grateful to Philip Baker for providing me with some of the examples from German New Guinea and Australia.

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