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MELANESIAN PIDGIN AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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The development of Melanesian Pidgin English has interesting implications for second language acquisition. First, it has been hypothesized that the development of a pidgin in an interlingual situation parallels the pidgin stage in acquiring a second language. The Pacific case shows the dangers of assuming that superstrate (here, English) is the target language in such situations.

Second, the process whereby a developing pidgin is shaped by the grammar of the substrate but lexified mainly from the superstrate is illuminating. Where substrate languages are syntactically similar, grammaticalization can be short-cut: superstrate lexical elements are borrowed to fill substrate grammatical slots. The result of this short-cutting, where new labels are fitted into slots common to substrate languages, is a pidgin highly "effable" (Bickerton) to substrate speakers. Able to calque on their native languages using formulas of morpheme equivalence, they can acquire fluency and grammatical competence extremely easily and quickly.

INTRODUCTION

A lively debate has been going on with regard to the history of Pidgin English dialects in the southwestern Pacific, a controversy that bears on more general issues of linguistic and sociolinguistic theory and language learning and change. An examination of these questions may be illuminating to researchers working on other problems of language acquisition.

The case of pidgin in the Pacific indicates that hypotheses (advanced by such scholars as Anderson 1983) connecting the development of pidgin languages to the process of second language acquisition need to be placed very carefully in historical contexts. Assumptions that a superstrate (in this case English) constituted a "target language" in the process of pidgin development must be tempered in cases where the pidgin itself became sufficiently rich and stable to serve as target language for those acquiring it. The relationships between superstrate and substrate languages and universal linguistic faculties in the process of pidgin development also, I suggest, have interesting implications for students of second language acquisition. Finally, where — as in the Melanesian case— a stable and elaborated pidgin incorporates grammatical patterns and semantic categories from substrate languages, speakers of these indigenous languages learning the pidgin as adults face a qualitatively different task than speakers of superstrate languages.

MELANESIAN PIDGIN: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

Melanesian Pidgin has stood out from other pidgins and creoles as something of a

special case. As Bickerton (1977, 1984) and Mufwene (1986) have observed, Melanesian Pidgin (of which Tok Pisin, the Papua New Guinea dialect, is the best known form) is unusual in:

1) having remained a second language, a lingua franca of plantation and police work, over several generations. These dialects continue to be acquired as second languages of plantation work and urban migration by many villagers in the region, even though the pidgins are now creolizing in urban settings; and

2) having acquired a greater grammatical richness and complexity and a greater stability than has been presumed for the pidgins antecedent to Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles, which are assumed to have creolized quickly at a stage when they are grammatically rudimentary and unstable. Melanesian Pidgin dialects incorporate grammatical devices (such as transitive-marking) that are usually absent even in creoles.

In a 1988 book, *Melanesian Pidgin and the Oceanic Substrate* (Keesing 1988), I advanced a number of hypotheses regarding the historical development of Pidgin English in the Pacific that would shed light on these apparent anomalies. First of all, I hypothesize that the grammatical expansion and progressive stabilization of Melanesian Pidgin occurred some twenty years earlier than has usually been assumed (with a major expansion phase taking place in the period 1860 to 1890, rather than 1880 to 1910).

Second, whereas some specialists (notably Peter Mühlhäusler) had argued for the separate and parallel development of English-based pidgins in various parts of the Pacific (and particularly, for a separate origin of New Guinea Pidgin), I argue that a single developing form of pidgin was used on trading ships, and later labor recruiting ships, through the entire Pacific until the late 1880s. The region of pidgin use progressively narrowed toward the southwestern Pacific after 1870, as plantation economies developed in Queensland, Fiji, Samoa, New Caledonia and, eventually, in the Solomons, New Hebrides, and New Guinea. I advance evidence to show that the New Guinea dialect of Melanesian Pidgin diverged from the regional antecedent form only after the late 1880s.

Third, I hypothesize that speakers of genetically-related and grammatically similar Oceanic Austronesian languages played a much more central part in the historical creation of a pidgin mainly lexified from English than has usually been assumed; and that Melanesian Pidgin therefore acquired a strongly Oceanic grammatical cast. I show that it is precisely where Melanesian Pidgin has incorporated grammatical patterns common to the substratum languages, as in the pronominal system and the marking of transitivity, that it has acquired syntactic complexity unusual in pidgins and creoles.

These hypotheses have predictably been criticized by several specialists with scholarly interests directly at stake, but the reviews in major linguistics journals have been overwhelmingly positive. I have not resolved all the issues —the evidence from the nineteenth century is much too thin for that— but I have set an agenda for further research.

Melanesian Pidgin and second language acquisition

In this history, there are several processes of considerable interest for students of second language acquisition. First, Roger Anderson (1983), John Schumann (1978),

and some other specialists on second language acquisition have suggested that the process whereby a pidgin develops in a situation of interlingual communication parallels the process adult learners of a second language go through in articulating the code of their first language with that of the target language and simplifying the latter. The implication of Anderson's hypothesis would be that in the Pacific, Islanders interacting with English speakers were producing pidginized forms in attempting to speak English as target language. I will suggest that this was probably true to some extent in the early jargon phases where a nautical tradition of "native talk" was drawn on in interlingual communication and where Pacific Islanders on ships' crews struggled to communicate with English speakers and one another. However, I will suggest that a developing pidgin in the Pacific quickly acquired a life of its own, and that its most fluent speakers were Pacific Islanders who were acting as the linguistic brokers in trade, labor recruiting, and shipboard communication. From the end of the 1860s onward, it was these speakers, I hypothesize, who provided the target language emulated both by fellow Pacific Islanders and by English-speakers —although curiously, on both sides of the linguistic encounter, the pidgin was thought to be (a form of) English.

Second, the relationship between substrate languages (those spoken by indigenous participants in an interlingual situation) and superstrate language (that spoken by the politically dominant participants, who as in the Pacific were usually Europeans) in the process of pidgin formation has considerable potential interest for students of second language acquisition. The development of Melanesian Pidgin strikingly exemplifies what seems likely to turn out to be a much more general sociolinguistic and linguistic pattern. In this pattern, the numerically predominant but politically subordinate speakers of substrate languages play the major part in the development of syntactic patterns and semantic categories (through a dialectical process drawing both on patterns in these languages and on universal faculties of language learning and simplification), while the superstrate language provides most of the lexical labels.

Third, the development of Melanesian Pidgin has interesting implications for the study of *grammaticalization*, the process whereby lexical forms progressively develop into grammatical elements (Heine and Traugott n.d.). These, in turn, are of interest to students of second language acquisition. I will illustrate that a pidgin can develop grammatical elements whose labels are lexical forms in the superstrate language, through a process of calquing. That is, a bridge that has progressively developed through grammaticalization in substrate languages, connecting a lexical form with a grammatical element, can be crossed directly in the process of pidgin formation: a form can be adopted from the superstrate language and fitted into both lexical and grammatical slots.

Fourth, because a developing pidgin progressively incorporated the core patterns of Oceanic Austronesian grammar, learning it was quite a different process for Pacific Islanders speaking these languages natively than it was for English speakers. Code interference, syntactic and semantic, operated massively in the case of English speakers, who found grammatical patterns and distinctions opaque and were continually misled by English lexical forms, which in the developing Pidgin had come to label Oceanic semantic categories and grammatical elements. Oceanic language speakers have, for decades, found Melanesian Pidgin "effable" (to borrow the curious but useful term

used by Bickerton (1977:561), and have learned it quickly, bending the phonology of English-derived labels to their native patterns but finding familiar ground in syntax and semantics.

Indeed, my own intuitions that eventually inspired and guided the research that led to my book came from this kind of encounter with Solomons Pidgin. I had already acquired a quite fluent command of Kwaio, a language of Malaita, in the course of my anthropological fieldwork in the Solomons, when in 1964 I had occasion to learn and use Pidgin. I found that although the lexical labels came mainly from English, in learning and speaking Melanesian Pidgin I was drawing on the grammatical patterns and semantic categories of Kwaio, not English.

Let me develop these arguments in more detail.

Second language acquisition and the "target language"

In the 1983 book *Pidginization and Creolization as Language Acquisition*, edited by Roger Anderson, a number of scholars explored the possible relevance of language acquisition studies to the burgeoning field of pidgin and creole linguistic research. Could the process whereby pidgins develop in situations of radical interlingual communication be illuminated by the process whereby an adult learns a second language? The learner passes through a "pidginization" stage in which a provisional grammar of the target language, influenced by the learner's first language and by universal faculties of simplification, develops. Is a pidgin English or Portuguese or French, then, the outcome of the same process, through which indigenous participants acquire a simplified grammar stripped of marking and perhaps bent towards their native grammars? In his paper in the volume "A Language Acquisition Interpretation of Pidginization and Creolization" (1983), Anderson answered with a qualified "yes." He qualified the picture by hypothesizing a further element in such a situation of radical interlingual communication: the superstrate speech (English, Portuguese, French) to which the indigenous participants were exposed would itself often have been produced by nonnative speakers:

> Because the pidgin or creole language arises from the need for a common means of intergroups communication, it is in fact the speech of his fellow nonnative speakers in this intergroup linguistic system more than the speech of the few native speakers (if indeed there are any) that he must understand. Thus the usual input that a learner in an incipient pidgin or creole community receives and processes is nonnative input (1983:15).

Anderson's formulation implies that the speakers who provide the input in this situation of interlingual communication are themselves trying to produce English (or Portuguese or French, etc.), but are doing so imperfectly. The superstrate code is the target language; but the indigenous language learner is doubly removed from it, by facing the usual difficulties of second language acquisition and by being exposed to an imperfect, nonnative rendering of the target language.

The historical development of a pidgin English in the Pacific reinforces Anderson's general observations, but it adds an important element. Here, I must summarize the historical evidence, as I read it.[1] From the beginning of the nineteenth century, a jar-

[1] The reader needs to be warned that others read the evidence somewhat differently. For discussion of these questions, see Belikov et al. (1991) and Crowley (1989, 1990).

gon developed on whaling and trading ships with mixed European and Pacific Islander crews, and in and around shore enclaves and ports. From the 1820s onward, substantial numbers of Pacific Islanders joined the crews of whalers and trading ships[2], many of them replacing Europeans who had jumped ship. The Islanders were speakers of Oceanic Austronesian languages, mutually unintelligible but mainly sharing a common core grammatical pattern, realized in diverse local forms (see Keesing 1988, Chap. 6).[3] The speech to which these Islanders were exposed on the ships included working class, nautical registers of standard English and a mode of nautical "native talk" with old and complex historical roots. Specific local versions of this "native talk" had developed on the China coast and in New South Wales, and each (and probably others) contributed elements to the development of a shipboard and trading jargon in the Pacific.

It is important to note that from the early years of the nineteenth century, Pacific Islanders working with Europeans on ships' crews and in shore bases were exposed to two different target languages: first, the nautical English spoken by Europeans *to one another*; and second, the nautical jargon spoken by Europeans to them, and to other "natives." My reading of the evidence is that the former provided Pacific Islanders with the main source of lexical labels, particularly for "things" on and around the ships and for the work tasks involved in sailing and trading; and that the latter provided a major source of grammatical elements (such as "fella" following numbers, adjectives, and demonstratives, and "um" following verbs, both of which were used in China coast pidgin and elsewhere). This division of sources makes eminent sociolinguistic sense, given the assumption that Pacific Islanders themselves were primary agents in building a lingua franca out of the elements available to them. I have argued that it *was* Pacific Islanders, who as speakers of lexically diverse but grammatically quite similar languages had to work and survive together, who were the primary agents in the creation of a distinctive Pacific pidgin.

The Labor Trade of the southwestern Pacific, which brought indentured laborers from the (then) New Hebrides, Solomons, and New Guinea to plantations in Queensland, Fiji, and Samoa, began in the mid-1860s. By that time, I argue, a developing pidgin had already acquired a number of the quite complex constructional patterns — including the marking of transitivity with *-im*[4], embedding of relative clauses using agreement-marking pronouns, use of a resumptive pronoun[5] after noun subjects, and the use of *bulong* for possessives— and a good many of the lexical forms that were to be characteristic of Melanesian Pidgin dialects a century later. By this time, I argue, a substantial population of Pacific Islanders[6] had spent long periods on and around European ships and ports; and from around 1850 onward, a good many Islanders had

[2] Through the 1850s, especially those trading *beche-de-mer* or *trepang*, and sandalwood to the China coast.

[3] Some of the sailors they encountered on the ships were speakers of Western Austronesian languages (Bugis, Filipinos, Malays, etc.).

[4] Although this marking was apparently not fully regularized until considerably later. See Crowley 1990.

[5] Derived from English "he".

[6] From such islands as Lifu and Mare in the Loyalties, Kosrae and Pohnpei in the Carolines, Rotuma, the Gilberts, Fiji, and Tahiti.

grown up as childhood speakers of the developing pidgin. It is these fluent speakers who served as linguistic brokers, communicating with fellow Islanders and with Europeans, and mediating interlingual encounters. When the Labor Trade began, they played an expanding role in recruiting Islanders from communities still engaged in blood feuding and warfare, and in organizing work on plantations.

These most fluent speakers of the prevailing pidgin interacted with English-speakers much more than did the laborers they recruited and supervised; many of them seem to have commanded a register closer to standard English as well as a pidgin that had come by the 1870s to incorporate many syntactic and semantic patterns pervasive in Oceanic Austronesian languages. Hence, they provided a conduit for lexical forms to flow from one code to another; and they probably were crucial agents in the progressive expansion and stabilization of the grammatical resources of the developing pidgin. Two points are crucial here. The first is that these indigenous linguistic brokers were communicating in two different codes: first, the pidgin, highly Oceanic in its structure and semantics (as will be seen), used with fellow Islanders; and second, the register of English they used in speaking to Europeans. The latter was, for most of these linguistic middlemen, probably in most cases something of a mix between their pidgin and standard English (the nature of the mix depending on the degree of their engagement with the latter); we get samples of and references to such partial command of standard English in documents of the period.[7]

The second point is that it was these Islanders who were the most fluent speakers of a developing Pacific Pidgin that by the 1870s had a very strongly Oceanic cast and was very, very different from standard English in its grammar. It is *they*, I argue, whose pidgin constituted the target language for learners of the lingua franca, both Pacific Islanders and Europeans. Ironically, Europeans learning this pidgin imagined it to be a bastardized form of English (and most of them learned it badly, thinking that they could sprinkle their talk with sporadic "fella" and "um" and be speaking pidgin, and not mastering what had become quite regularized and systematic grammatical patterns); and many Islanders learning it (most of whom had little direct contact with English-speakers) seem to have assumed that it *was* English.

All of this suggests that the sociolinguistic situations in which pidgins develop are likely to be even more complex than Anderson (1983) surmises, and that it cannot be assumed in any particular case that the superstrate code will constitute the target language throughout the period when a pidgin develops and stabilizes. The task adult learners of a developing pidgin face depends on the relationship between the grammar and semantics of their first languages and those of the pidgin. To see the significance of this for Pacific Islanders, we need to look briefly at Oceanic patterns in Melanesian Pidgin —the source of what Bickerton (1977) calls the "effability" of the code to indigenous language learners.

[7] Witnesses in the 1869 Select Committee hearing on the initial phases of the Labor Trade included "Lifou Dick, Bebbo, ...and Kouma, three of the boat's crew, — and Fangai or Johnny Mare the cook; all these natives speaking English, and two of them men of considerable intelligence, being able to read and write."

Oceanic patterns in Melanesian Pidgin

The key or core syntactic patterns in Oceanic Austronesian languages is a verb phrase containing an obligatory subject-referencing pronoun, the verb (with surrounding markers of tense, aspect, mood, etc.), and —if the verb is transitive— a suffix marking the verb as such and/or a pronominal element referencing the object.[8] A subject or object NP is an "optional expansion"[9] on this verb-phrase nucleus. Where a pronominal subject reference is stressed, a free subject pronoun may fit into the subject NP slot (so that there is then a double subject pronoun, as in French "moi, je..." constructions).

Melanesian Pidgin developed exactly this pattern. The "-im" verb ending that had been a sporadically used element in a nautical tradition of "native talk" was equated with the Oceanic transitive suffix and progressively regularized. The resumptive pronoun of colloquial English ("Joe he went") provided the basis for an equivalent to the Oceanic pronominal pattern (*sip i kam* "the ship came"); and by the 1890s[10], an Oceanic pattern of double pronouns (*em i kam* "he came", *olketa i lukim* "they saw it"[11]) had been incorporated into the code.

The pronominal system acquired a strongly Oceanic cast semantically as well as syntactically. A distinction pervasive in Oceanic languages between inclusive and exclusive "we" pronouns (*iumi* "you (pl.) and I" vs. *mifela* "they and I"[12]) was incorporated into Pidgin — even though it has been inadequately grasped by most English-speakers through the decades. Moreover, as in Oceanic pronominal systems, Melanesian Pidgin dialects incorporate dual (and sporadically used trial) pronominal forms: *mitufela* "he and I", etc..[13]

The separation of the nineteenth century pidgin speech community that extended across the southwestern Pacific plantation areas (including Queensland) and their island recruiting grounds in the New Hebrides, Solomons, Bismarck Archipelago[14], led to a further incorporation of substrate language patterns. When German annexation of the Bismarcks led to a separation from the regional speech community at the end of the 1880s, what became New Guinea Pidgin acquired a substantial input from substrate languages of the east New Britain/New Hanover/New Ireland area (which included a substantial relexification in which vernacular forms replaced English-derived forms).

The New Hebrides and Solomons remained connected, by way of the Queensland and Fiji plantations, until the beginning of the twentieth century: hence, these two

[8] The system reconstructed for Proto-Oceanic included both transitive suffix and clitic pronoun referencing a following or implied direct object. This creates an element of redundancy, and in some daughter languages the transitive suffix has disappeared and the clitic pronoun alone marks the transitivity of the verb; where in others, the transitive suffix alone implies a third-person object reference (i.e., the implied pronominal element is zero-marked).

[9] To borrow an expression from Wolff (1980).

[10] And almost certainly earlier, we may surmise on distributional grounds, although the first reference I have found dates from 1893.

[11] The *-im* here is the transitive suffix.

[12] The New Guinea rendering is *mipela*; the Solomons Pidgin is *mifala*.

[13] Again, the phonological shapes standardized in the orthographies of the three daughter dialects vary.

[14] And in the early years, the Gilberts.

dialects of Melanesian Pidgin share a number of patterns not found in New Guinea Pidgin, most of which appear to be motivated by patterns common to the fairly closely related Eastern Oceanic languages of the north-central New Hebrides and Southeast Solomons.[15] Thus, for example, we find in both Vanuatu (ex-New Hebrides) and Solomons dialects of Pidgin small sets of prepositions that have the morphological structure of transitive verbs: in Solomons Pidgin, *wit-im* ("with" [s.o.]), *agens-em* ("against"), *raon-em* ("around"). These correspond closely to forms in the vernaculars that historically evolved from serial verb constructions (Kwaio *fe'e-ni-* "with", *fono-si-* "against", where *-ni* and *-si* are allomorphs of the Oceanic transitive suffix).

Since the separation of New Hebrides and Solomons Pidgin speech communities at the beginning of the twentieth century, a further close modelling on substrate languages of the two areas has continued to shape their Melanesian Pidgin dialects. I show, for example (Keesing 1988, Chapters 11 and 12), that the tense/aspect/mood systems of the two pidgins have diverged in ways that map closely onto distinctions drawn in the substrate languages whose speakers were dominant in plantation labor. I will illustrate below how speakers of Southeast Solomonic languages such as Kwaio can use formulas of morpheme by morpheme correspondence in learning and speaking Solomons Pidgin. We find other evidence of close mapping. Consider, for example, the parallel between Southeast Solomonic constructions and Solomons Pidgin in:

ma'u-ni-a	fear him (Kwaio, Malaita)
fa'a-ma'u-a	frighten him (where *fa'a-* is a causative, "cause-be afraid-him")
and	
fraet-em	fear him
mek-em i fraet	frighten him.

We find further pervasive evidence on substrate influence in the semantics of Melanesian Pidgin dialects. Thus English-derived lexical forms such as *dae* and *kil-im* label Oceanic semantic categories: not "die", but "die, be dead, be comatose, be extinguished"; not "kill" but "strike."

Pidgin languages and the grammaticalization process

Two developments in linguistic theory have made possible a diachronic perspective on syntax —a systematic comparative study of how grammars change through time. First, the development of a universalist functional and semantically based syntactic theory by such scholars as Keenan, Comrie and Givon has created a metalanguage and theoretical framework within which languages can be characterized and compared. Second, the development of cognitive linguistics has opened the way to the study of the metaphoric nature of grammars and the way cognitive processes of prototype-based categorization and metaphor and metonymy operate in syntax and grammatical change. The study of grammaticalization —the way lexical forms progressively develop into grammatical elements, through a metaphor-based process of "blea-

[15] See Keesing 1988, Chap. 6. For some counterinterpretations to my arguments for substrate sources of these patterns, see Crowley 1990.

ching" and what Langacker (1990) calls "subjectification"—has become a burgeoning concern (Heine and Traugott n.d.).

I have pointed out, in my contribution to the forthcoming papers from a major 1989 conference on grammaticalization organized by Talmy Givon (Keesing n.d., in Heine and Traugott n.d.), that the development of Melanesian Pidgin illustrates a significant shortcut in the grammaticalization process. I will suggest that it is of potential interest to students of second language acquisition.

Where the substratum languages have undergone a grammaticalization process whereby a lexical form (or set of forms) has acquired a new grammatical function (in the process, either retaining or losing the original lexical sense), a developing pidgin may adopt a lexical form from the superstrate language and assign to it the same grammatical force as a corresponding form in the substrate languages. In some cases, this process of borrowing and calquing recapitulates the original metaphor-based "phylogeny" of the grammaticalization. Some examples will illustrate the process.

Early in the history of Oceanic Austronesian languages, lexical verbs for "come" and "go" acquired a grammatical force as deictic directionals following verbs: thus, in Kwaio *mai* "hither" and *kau* "thither", as in *ngaria mai* "bring it here" and *feea kau* "transport it over there". In most daughter languages reflexes of Proto-Oceanic **mai* "come" and **pwatu* "go" have lost their senses as lexical verbs. In Solomons Pidgin, exactly the same semantic patterns are established using *kam* "hither" and *go* "thither" as postverbal directionals: *tekem kam* "bring it here", *karem go* "transport it there".[16]

Another example shows how a form may cross a bridge already established through grammaticalization processes in the substrate languages. In the Southeast Solomonic languages of Malaita (the main source of plantation workers for a century), a form used as a postverbal perfect aspect marker (with the form *n*V[C]V) has come to serve as well as a marker of topical emphasis following a noun or pronoun subject. Thus, in Kwaio (where the form has the canonical shape *no'o*) we find:

gila	*la*	*age-a*	*no'o*
them	they	do-it	PRF

They did it. (or: They're in the process of doing it.)

gila	*no'o*	*la*	*age-a*
them	TOP	they	do-it

They're the ones who did it.

In Solomons Pidgin we find exactly the same grammatical elements, both labelled with English *nao* (a label-borrowing facilitated by the parallel phonological shape as well as the semantic appropriateness of "now" as perfect-marker, and its accessibility to English speakers; see Simons 1986):

olgeta i duim nao
They did it./They're in the process of doing it.
olgeta nao i duim
They're the ones who did it.

[16] In the New Guinea and Vanuatu dialects, the same semantic pattern is established by using *kam* and *go* as serial verbs: *tekem i kam*.

That is, once English "now" had been adopted as equivalent to the perfect marker in the substratum languages whose speakers predominated in the labor force, it could be carried across a metaphoric bridge already established in these vernaculars by the grammaticalization process.

What was for English speakers a clause-initial adverb, "by and by", was transformed in the development of Melanesian Pidgin into a particle within the verb phrase *(babae* or *bae)*, which characteristically carries irrealis as well as temporal meanings, as in the substrate languages. This represented not a slow grammaticalization process but a calquing of the English-derived form into a grammatical slot that already existed in the substratum languages (see Keesing 1986, and Romaine and Keesing in Belikov et al. 1991).

This short-cutting of the grammaticalization process through calquing even produces seeming exceptions to quite powerful cross-linguistic generalizations. Thus, it has been argued (e.g., by Claudi and Heine 1986) that temporal markers develop out of spatial terms, and never the reverse. However, once a form has acquired both spatial and temporal senses in substratum languages, a temporal expresion in the superstrate lexifying language may be assigned both temporal and spatial senses in the pidgin. Again Solomons Pidgin provides an illustration. In the Malaita languages, *na'o*, originally a noun with a spatial reference ("front"), has developed temporal as well as spatial senses:

i na'o	in front, first, before
na'o-na 'ifi	in front of the house
na'o-na mae	before the war

In Solomons Pidgin, *fastaem* (from the English temporal expression "first time") has the canonical sense of "first", or, with a following locative, "before": *fastaem long*. But *fastaem* is also used with a spatial reference, as with *iu go fastaem* "you go in front". Older Malaita speakers use expressions like *fastaem long haos* "in front of the house", a direct calque on *na'o-na 'ifi* , which reverses the cross-linguistic generalization even more strikingly. But, I argue, it is not really an exception; a bridge in the substrate languages can, through the calquing process, be crossed in either direction.

This short-cutting of grammaticalization through calquing has, I think, some interesting implications for the study of second language acquisition. It strikingly illustrates the active agency of the politically subordinate and marginalized participants in an interlingual situation, and strikingly confirms the inadequacy of assuming that the superstrate is the target language. If anything (other than the most fluently spoken version of the existing pidgin) is a target language here, it is a kind of common-denominator abstract version of the substrate vernaculars, whose speakers are rummaging through the lexical resources of the superstrate language seeking what can be turned directly into the grammatical elements for which cognitive templates already exist.[17]

[17] For further discusion of the inadequacy of assumptions that the superstrate language in a multilingual situation is the target language in pidgin creation, see Jourdan 1985 and Baker 1990.

Calquing and pidgin acquisition

Through the kinds of historical processes I have sketched, the Vanuatu (New Hebrides) and Solomon Islands dialects of Melanesian Pidgin manifest strikingly Oceanic grammatical patterns. Not surprisingly, since the speech communities separated early in this century, the Pidgin spoken in the two archipelagoes by old men who learned it on plantations prior to World War II is strikingly similar. However, in the first half of this century the two dialects diverged somewhat; and in doing so, each developed a closer fit with substrate languages.

In the Solomons, Malaita, the most populous island, provided most of the plantation labor force; and Solomons Pidgin developed a close fit with the Malaita languages, which are relatively closely related and have quite similar grammatical patterns. Pidgin forms derived from lexical elements in English (through the processes I have illustrated) have been mapped onto the grammatical templates of substrate languages. My data from speakers of Kwaio, a central Malaita language whose speakers have been an important component of the labor force, show how close the fit is. For tense-aspect markers, for example, the Pidgin system corresponds so closely to the Kwaio system that a Kwaio speaker need only use formulas of morpheme-by-morpheme correspondence. The Kwaio future/irrealis marker is *ta-*, prefixed to the subject-referencing pronoun. Kwaio speakers calque Pidgin *bae* on this form:

nau ta-ku	*leka gani*	*mi*	*bae*	*mi*	*go*	*tumora*
me FUT-I	go tomorrow	me	FUT	I	go	tomorrow

I'll go tomorrow.

In Kwaio, the aspect-marker *bi'i* following the subject-referencing pronoun indicates that the action of the verb has just occurred. Kwaio speakers calque the Pidgin forms *des*[18] (derived from English "just") on this particle:

gila	*bi'i*	*age-a*	*olgeta*	*des*	*du-im*
they	JUST	do-it	they	JUST	do-it

They just did it.

But are they really calquing? Compelling evidence that they are comes from another construction where these two aspect marking particles are combined to convey an idiosyncratic meaning; in Kwaio, the future/irrealis marker *ta-* prefixed to the subject-referencing pronoun, combined with *bi'i* following the pronoun, indicates that the action of the verb will take place a short time in the future. Kwaio speakers use a corresponding Pidgin construction:

ta-gala	*bi'i*	*suga-a*	*mai*	*bae*	*tufala*	*des*	*bae-em*	*kam*
FUT-they2	JUST	buy-it	DIR	FUT	they2	JUST	buy-it	DIR

The two of them will buy (and bring) it in a while.

The same pattern of calquing occurs throughout the tense-aspect-mood system and throughout a very large corpus. Even with quite long and complex sentences, the parallels in global syntax and morpheme-by-morpheme correspondences are striking in the extreme. A single example will suffice here.

[18] The phonological shape varies somewhat.

mele siri-a ' a-lai naana'i mama-ni-' ame'e Kwaio
we2 want-it INF-them stay wait- TrS- us2
We two wanted them to wait for us.

mitufala laek-em for olgeta-i stap weit-em mitufala Pidgin
we2 want-it INF them stay wait-TrS us2
We two wanted them to stay and wait for us.[19]

What are the consequences for the speaker of a Malaita language learning Pidgin as a young adult? It is evident that Bickerton's (1977) comment about "effability" was more true, at least for this corner of the Pacific, than he could have realized. A Malaita speaker encounters in Pidgin a code that is in some respects grammatically simpler than his native language (e.g., no distinction is drawn, as in the substrate languages, between alienable and inalienable possession), and has a greatly reduced vocabulary. For him[20], learning Pidgin entails learning a new (and radically attenuated) set of lexical equivalents for key semantic categories, nouns and verbs, and it entails learning a set of new labels for the grammatical elements of his native language. Indeed, a considerable array of Pidgin lexical forms has permeated into local languages, even in remote rural areas like that of the Kwaio with whom I have worked, defiantly pagan and traditionalist[21]: so part of the Pidgin vocabulary is already familiar. The phonology of Pidgin is closely fitted to the phonologies of vernaculars.[22] Hence, the challenge of learning Pidgin as a young adult is very different for a Malaita speaker than for an English speaker learning Japanese, or even French or German. (It is also qualitatively quite different from the challenge to an English speaker learning Pidgin: the learner is continually misled by familiar labels for unfamiliar categories.)

Although my data from the Solomons (and those of my co-researcher Christine Jourdan, who has been studying the creolization of Solomon Islands Pidgin in the urban setting of Honiara) are mainly anecdotal, they indicate that Malaitans can acquire fluency in Pidgin with a rapidity astonishing in the comparative spectrum of second language acquisition. Jourdan and I have (independently) observed young men who are unilingual speakers of Kwaio arriving in town or on plantations gain impressive fluency in Solomons Pidgin within two or three weeks. In the 1960s, when I began my anthropological fieldwork in the Solomons, the Pidgin being spoken on the plantations had changed little from what I had recorded from older men who had learned it thirty or forty years earlier; learning this Pidgin, heavily Oceanic in phonology and grammar, was uncomplicated. In the intervening years, with the development of urban Honiara as capital of an independent country, a creolizing urban dialect has emerged (Jourdan

[19] I have slightly condensed two exemplifying sentences; see Keesing 1988, p. 219, for the full versions.

[20] I used the gendered pronoun advisedly, since it has been young men who have historically been the participants in the plantation labor system.

[21] Among the Kwaio pagans, for whom word tabooing is still an ongoing practice (see Keesing and Fifi'i 1969), some Pidgin forms have been borrowed as replacements for tabooed Kwaio forms (including, e.g., *leni* 'rain' and *solowata* 'sea').

[22] Hence Kwaio use a different phonology, in speaking Pidgin, than do speakers of the neighboring languages, 'Are'are to the southeast or Kwara'ae to the northwest.

1985, 1988), making insertion into the Pidgin speech community more complicated for adult language learners entering the town milieu. The urban dialect is spoken much more rapidly, phonologically streamlined, stripped of interconsonantal vowels and other vernacular phonological patterns, grammatically transformed away from Oceanic substrate patterns, and lexically enriched. The Pidgin register, heavily calqued on substrate patterns, which is easily learnable by speakers from rural areas is still being spoken, but it has become disvalued and stigmatized in the urban context.

The historical scenario I have outlined and the data I have sketchily illustrated, suggest that this remarkable facility of language acquisition is possible for Malaitans because Solomons Pidgin so closely follows syntactic and semantic patterns of their native languages that they can massively calque, using patterns of morpheme by morpheme equivalence and learning new labels for familiar semantic categories.

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