

Siegel, Jeff, 2000. *Processes of language contact. Studies from Australia and the South Pacific. Saint-Laurent (Canada): Fides, pp xvi+326. ISBN 2-7621-2098-5.*

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Language contact between English and other languages in Australia are increasingly attracting the interest of the wider international community, while in the past pidgins and creoles were not found in collections of articles or specialist studies (e.g. John Holm 1989. *Pidgins and creoles*. 2 vols. Cambridge: CUP). The collection of papers and maps in Wurm/Mühlhäusler/Tryon (*Atlas of languages of intercultural communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, 1996, 3 vols. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter), which was reviewed in *Newsletter* 12 (1998), paved the way for collections such as Siegel's. The book is not, of course, intended as a survey of Australia and the South Pacific (cf. Wurm/Mühlhäusler/Tryon 1996 in the *Atlas*); it is a collection conference papers and a few specially written ones that deal with (i) theoretical issues in the analysis of contact languages (J. Bresnan "Pidgin genesis and Optimality Theory"; T. Crowley "Simplicity, complexity, emblematicity and grammatical change"; J. Siegel's Introduction); (ii) case studies on the South Pacific (T. Crowley on Bislama, the creole in Vanuatu; J. Siegel *et al.* and C. Corne on Tayo in New Caledonia; C. Jourdan on the creole of the Solomon Islands; G. Smith on Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea); and (iii) on language contact phenomena in Australia (H. Koch on the impact of Aboriginal languages on the grammar of pidgin English (pp 13-46); I. Malcolm on the linguistic (dis-) continuity of Aboriginal English from an early pidgin to today's dialect of English and possible remnants of the South Pacific pidgin (pp 123-144); J. Simpson on the role of Afghan cameleers in spreading pidgins and creoles (195-244); and J. Munro on the expansion of Kriol, the creole in the Northern Territory (pp 245-270)).

While all papers are worth a comment—especially the ones that touch upon theme (i) and areas closely connected with Australia, i.e. the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu—I will single out the Australian ones. The four contributions in question address different themes and I will embed them in the broad socio-historical and research context. In a paper entitled "The role of Australian Aboriginal languages in the formation of Australian pidgin grammar: transitive verbs and adjectives, Harold Koch studies two grammatical phenomena, (i) the marking of transitive verbs with a suffix (mainly *-im*, sometimes *-it*; e.g. *givim* or *givit*) and (ii) the use of *pela* (which is derived from English *fellow* or *fella*) as an adjective marker (*Where big fellow water sitdown?* 'Where is *very big* [i.e. the large body of] water located?'), amongst other uses. These features are typical of Australian pidgins, but have been attested all over the South Pacific. Two questions arise. The first is how their presence can be explained in terms of language contact, the second how their diffusion can be accounted for. Koch claims that Aboriginal languages acted as a substrate—with evidence from the languages close to the first settlement. Koch also holds that these languages led speakers to re-analyse English constructions like "John liked (*th*)em a lot" in terms of grammatical distinctions made in their own languages. And he adds that the new patterns became regular features of the NSW pidgin and spread across the continent, where they were learnt by new pidgin speakers. He fails to show is how they could spread from Australia to the South Pacific. He obviously accepts Wurm/Mühlhäusler/Tryon's (1996) hypothesis that Australia was a major player in the regional contact and that pidgins features were transported as a result of whaling, sealing, trepang fishing or sandalwood trade, but the details of the spread of these features remain untold.

Expanding on research done with Marek Kosciielecki (*Aboriginality and English*, 1997, Edith-Cowan-University, Perth), Ian Malcolm's paper "Aboriginal English: from contact variety to social dialect" defines today's Aboriginal English (AborE) as a social *dialect of English*—he rejects the view that AborE is a 'dialect of Australian English'. He maintains that English was being "forced upon Aboriginal people from the beginning" and that it "was seen to be associated with a power which was progressively depriving Aboriginal people of their land..." (2000:125). The English of Aboriginal people was described at first as a "barbarous mixture of English with the Port Jackson dialect", which proves that it was a contact variety in origin. In his attempt to retrace the rise of today's AborE in the Sydney area, Malcolm contrasts what is known about the early contact variety

with current speech samples from La Perouse. He concludes that AborE retains older features, especially regarding verb inflections; has features that reflect the on-going influence of non-standard AusE—though he tends to agree with the assumption that Aborigines have re-structured old patterns in novel (contemporary) ones and have discarded numerous older simplifications. Thus the transitive suffix *-im*, which was studied by Siegel, no longer turns up in AborE. "Aboriginal English has been drawing heavily on the intralingual resources of English as spoken in Australia", Malcom concludes (2000:140). Yet he believes in a continuity of the semantics of indigenous languages that manifests itself in discourse and text types. While one can agree with most of Malcolm's results, one should add that there has been a tradition of teaching English, a tradition which started with the famous Bennelong, who was kidnapped by Phillip as early as 1789, and was continued in government and mission schools, as well as in many employments. There is, in other words, no bifurcation of the early jargon into a pidgin and creole line (*cf.* Koch) and today's AborE—which would be necessary in his account but which he does not attempt to date.

Jennifer Munro's "Kriol on the move: a case of language spread and shift in Northern Australia", and Jane Simpson's "Camels as pidgin-careers: Afghan cameleers as a vector for the spread of features of Australian Aboriginal pidgins and creoles" deal with one of the two living creoles—the other being Torres Strait creole, spoken in the Torres Strait and the coast from Cape York to around Cairns. There has been a lengthy debate about whether Kriol originated in a single place, possibly Roper River (Ngukurr) on the south-eastern edge of Arnhem Land close to the Gulf of Carpentaria, or whether it arose independently in several places. The most favoured place would be Barunga in the Kimberley. Multiple creolization and convergence or single creolization and language shift is not only an problem of historical evidence; it is also one of theory. Arguing for the view that Kriol originated in Roper and was adopted elsewhere, Munro looks at socio-historical, linguistic and socio-linguistic evidence. She argues that there are seven dialects between the Barkly Tablelands south of the Gulf of Carpentaria to Katherine River, close to Derby in the Kimberly and Daly River southwest of Darwin. She provides a lucid account of the contact situations in the Roper River Mission, Daly River army camps and the Moola Bulla Native Welfare camp near Halls Creek. As only Roper River fulfilled the conditions for the rise of a creole, she believes one must search elsewhere for evidence to explain today's dialect situation. That she finds in the expansion of the pastoralist industry that reached the Northern Territory by 1870 and the Kimberley by the 1880s. The army camps that were set up in several places in the Northern Territory in the first part of the 19th century generated a high level of mobility and policies of assimilationism and government intervention in the 1950s and 1960s added to inter-Aboriginal contact. These developments, then, made it possible for speakers of different languages to shift to the already available Kriol or its precursors, the Northern Territory pidgin. As groups started to identify with their new habitations, they accentuated dialectal peculiarities and incorporated features from AusE. While this account is interesting, her data base—she has one half hour from the Daly River creole—is far too small to permit such general conclusions, it would seem. Her paper is more hypothetical than factual.

It is interesting that Munro did not consider the role of Afghan camel drovers—the theme in Simpson's paper. There has been little work on Afghans and Moslems in the 19th century (e.g. Mary L. Jones, *An Australian pilgrimage*, 1993, Melbourne: Victoria Press), so that Simpson would deserve attention. She re-iterates the period of Afghan immigration between the 1860s and 1900, their involvement in exploring expeditions, transport, construction, and the relations with Europeans and Aborigines. Her survey of Afghan English shows that it contained typical pidgin features, such as the transitive marker *-im* (*cf.* Koch), and adds an extensive appendix of Afghans pidgin English. She draws on an enormous range of historical data, which are worth knowing, but fails to show details of how Afghans adopted and spread Aboriginal pidgin.

Critical remarks aside, the book is an excellent contribution to contact languages in Australia, their relationship to the South Pacific pidgins and creoles and to the intriguing theoretical issues they give rise to. It is a useful, up-to-date book for the language side of Australian Studies.