

**Smith, Norval, Tonjes Veenstra, eds, 2001. *Creolization and contact*. (= *Creole Language Library* 23). Amsterdam: Benjamins. ISBN 90 272 5245 9. vi+323 pp. € 110.00.**

**Reviewed by Gerhard Leitner, Freie Universität Berlin**

Australia has been a site of many languages and of intensive language contact during the pre-colonial period and thereafter. Apart from the increase and decrease of language diversity, contact languages have developed through the interaction of settlers with speakers of other tongues, whether indigenous or non-English-speaking migrants. As most of them declined, they left behind ethnic varieties of English such as Aboriginal English, English as a *lingua franca* at the workplace and, importantly, two creoles in the far north, *viz.* Kriol and Torres Strait creole.

*Creolization and contact* deals with pidgins, creoles and other contact languages around the world and specifically the linguistic processes of mixing, etc., that occur in the creation and development of contact languages. Jeff Siegel's "Koine formation and creole genesis" (175-197) turns to Australia and embeds Australia's languages into the wider context of contact. He goes as far as to argue that Australian English is a koine, "a stabilized contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent levelling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects" (p 175). That is a point rarely made and claims that AusE shares a linguistic past with contact languages such as Kriol and Torres Strait creole, but it is a welcome claim in light of recent developments in the study of the story of English in Australia. Though the book is not about Australia, it contains studies that, like Siegel's, bear upon the continent and it is useful for linguistically oriented courses on Australia's language situation.