BISLAMA PHONOLOGY AND GRAMMAR: A REVIEW ARTICLE[1]

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0. INTRODUCTION

J.B.M Guy's <u>Handbook of Bichelamar – Manuel de Bichelamar</u> (Pacific Linguistics C34, 1974) is intended to

> serve as a valuable guide to those seeking a mastery of this often
> under-rated language, as well as to pidgin and creole specialists.
> (flyleaf).

It does contain a reasonably useful dictionary section (115-255): almost 1400 Bislama[2] entries with explanations in English and French followed by separate English and French finder lists; its usefulness, however, is marred by several orthographic problems and extremely poor sections on phonology and grammar (English version 3-54, French version 57-111), all of which are discussed further below.

0.1. The grammar is very poorly organised: Guy's sadly inadequate index at the end of the grammar in no way makes up for the lack of a table of contents as an indispensable route-map through a terrain marked by a most confusing style of paragraphing and poor headings for these paragraphs. In part at least, this appears to be due to his failure to separate what might properly be dealt with under the heading 'Morphology' from what should be discussed under 'Syntax'. While a certain amount of overlap between the two is unavoidable in the presentation of the facts of any grammar, it is evident that Guy has made very little effort to organise his work in such a way that it might be read <u>and</u> understood by a linguist <u>and</u> a layman.

<u>0.2.</u> More importantly, Guy employs a highly idiosyncratic approach to linguistic analysis which unnecessarily complicates the grammatical picture of Bislama. He has completely disregarded the generally accepted view that a large number of morphemes in pidgin languages are multifunctional, and that in analysing these languages we are not dealing with sets of homophonous morphemes belonging to different classes or subclasses but with a single morpheme possessing a number of syntactic functions.[3]

Thus we find, for example, pedantic statements like the following:

> The adverbs <u>olsem</u>, <u>olketa</u>, <u>evriwan</u>, and <u>wan-wan</u> [translated as 'thus', 'entirely, quite', 'without exception', and 'one by one'] ARE NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH the preposition <u>olsem</u> and the numerals <u>olketa</u>, <u>evriwan</u>, and <u>wan-wan</u> [translated as 'like', 'all', 'everyone, everybody', and 'one by one']. (44: my emphasis).

We find also (24-25) that there are three classes of adjectives: adjectives proper, emphatic adjectives, and comparative adjectives. A closer reading, however, shows that 'emphatic adjectives' are merely 'adjectives proper' with the suffix –<u>vala</u> ~ –<u>fala</u>, while 'comparative adjectives' are in fact 'adjectives proper' preceded by the particle <u>mo</u>; e.g.,

(1) <u>bik</u>   big ['adjective proper']

     <u>bikfala</u>   big, outstanding for its size ['emphatic adjective']

     <u>mo bik</u>   bigger ['comparative adjective']

A 'normal' analysis would recognise one class of adjectives, which take the suffix –<u>vala</u> ~ –<u>fala</u> in cases of emphasis and which are preceded by <u>mo</u> in comparative constructions.

This passion for subclassification is, perhaps, best illustrated by his treatment of Bislama verbs (14-19). Four categories of verbs are recognised:

(a) The 'predicative verb' <u>i</u>, which I shall discuss in section 2.

(b) 'Autonomous verbs'. This term is never defined; however,

> a word is said to be <u>autonomous</u> if it expresses by itself a complete meaning; if it does not, it is said to be auxiliary. (9).

To the extent that this is a definition, then, autonomous verbs are presumably verbs which by themselves express a complete meaning. In any case, the category of autonomous verb includes all but ten of the verbs in the language (ten, that is, if i is counted a verb).

(c)   'Verbs of aspect', which "denote how the process of the following verb is considered in its development" (18).

(d)   'Verbs of mode', which

> express the ideas of would like to (desiderative mode), to be able to (potential mode) or to want to (volitive mode). (18).

The distinction between the last two of these classes seems somewhat spurious, at least on the basis of Guy's definitions; but the whole system of verbal subcategorisation seems all the more unwarranted when we find that all six 'verbs of aspect' (finis, kam, go, stap, stat, and traem) and all three 'verbs of mode' (laikem, save, and wantem) are also autonomous verbs.[4]

0.3. To complicate even further an unnecessarily complex grammatical presentation, Guy employs linguistic terminology in a cavalierly individualistic fashion. In his first major section (11-12), he lists twelve major 'parts of speech': nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, numerals, demonstratives, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, particles, and hinge-words.[5] At least five parts of speech, however, do not rate separate sections: adverbs are found in a subsection on adverbial complements within the section on subordination (41-46); demonstratives are tucked away at the end of the section on numerals (28); prepositions are found in the discussion of certain complements (33ff.); conjunctions are discussed under coordination (48-49); and particles appear above the surface only in the index, where we are referred to section 35, which begins:

> The predicative verb i has for function to link the subject and the predicate together. It is therefore a tool-word. (16).

Apparently, then, the only member of the class 'particle' is also a member of the class 'verb'!

Certain other terms depart from standard linguistic terminology, and these departures cannot generally be viewed as an attempt to make things easier for the layman: 'hinge-words' for 'sentence-introducers' (50), 'infinitives' for 'verb phrases' (29), and so on. Perhaps his most unusual term, however, is 'tool-word':

> Very often, coordination and subordination are shown ... by
> using certain auxiliary words, also called tool-words. (11).

Of the twelve 'parts of speech', prepositions, conjunctions, and hinge-words are all said to be tool-words with various functions; in addition, "particles are constituted by miscellaneous kinds of auxiliary words" (12), and so presumably are also tool-words. Should a blanket term have been necessary to describe these four classes -- if indeed they are separate classes -- then I fail to see why one of the more common terms grammatical morpheme, minor morpheme, or function-word could not have been used.

0.4. Finally, Guy has apparently disregarded completely any previous study on any of the English-based pidgins or creoles spoken in the Pacific: the Handbook contains no bibliography, no reference to the work of other scholars, and no acknowledgements to informants or to others who may have provided assistance.[6]

The question of whether Bislama, Solomon Islands Pidgin, and Tok Pisin of Papua New Guinea are dialects of the one language or separate languages is one which has not yet been answered in any detail. My own feeling is that, while there may be compelling socio-political reasons for treating these as if they were separate languages (due to the emergent nationalism in Melanesia and the building of a national identity in each of the three countries), the linguistic facts suggest that these three pidgin/creoles are dialects of a single language.[7] However the question is resolved, Guy in a number of instances departs radically from the generally accepted analysis of very similar data in Tok Pisin. At the very least, I feel he should have taken these analyses into account and justified his departure from them.

0.5. It is unlikely that another grammar of Bislama will be published in the immediate future; this makes it all the more disappointing that Guy's Handbook, at least

in its present form, should have been published at all, and all the more likely that "this often under-rated language" may well remain so until a more adequate and usable grammar is produced.

While I do not intend to comment further on individual aspects of Guy's analysis, there are two areas which I feel require substantial restatement. Accordingly, the remainder of this article will discuss first the phonology and orthography of Bislama, and then the particle i.

1. PHONOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY

According to Guy, Bislama has the following twenty-six phonemes: /b p t k v f s m n ŋ l r̃ w y h i e a o u ae ao ea ia oe ua/.[8] Orthographic symbols are the same as phonemic symbols except that ng and r represent /ŋ/ and /r̃/. It is apparent from even a cursory glance at his analysis that the treatment of the obstruents, stress placement, and the diphthongs require substantial restatement.

1.1   Obstruents. Guy's analysis shows four stops /b p t k/ and three fricatives /v f s/, the phonetic norms apparently being [b], [p], [t], [k], [v ~ b], [f ~ p], and [s] respectively (5). Two factors apparently complicate this simple picture. One is that "the pronunciation of Bichelamar ... may ... vary from island to island", and that the pronunciation of /p/, /t/, and /k/ as [b], [d], and [g] respectively is "very common" (8). This is especially true in non-final position; and the prenasalisation of voiced stops in initial and medial position is also common in areas where these sounds occur in indigenous languages. The other factor is that

> in many words, confusion arises between p and f, b and f,
> or v and f. ... To spare the reader the need to look for such
> words under several different spellings, b and f are spelt P
> in the Bichelamar-English-French part of the dictionary. The
> exact pronunciations are then given in square brackets. (7).

Guy's phonological and orthographic decisions are thus (a) to write only /t/ and /k/ to represent voiceless, voiced, and prenasalised dental/alveolar and velar stops;

(b) to write p = /p/, v = /v/, and P = /b/, /f/, /p ~ f/, /b ~ f/ and /v ~ f/ in the Bislama-English-French section of the dictionary only; and (c) to represent the voiced/voiceless distinction in the labials only (i.e., to write /p/, /b/, /f/, and /v/) in other sections of the dictionary and in the grammar.

Apart from perplexing the reader, the analysis is at variance with the phonological facts. Far from "confusing" voiced and voiceless stops, many Bislama speakers actually keep these stops phonemically distinct. This appears to occur especially (a) in regions where indigenous languages have this voiced/voiceless distinction, or even a voiced/voiceless allophonic variation;[9] and (b) among New Hebrideans with some degree of fluency in one of the metropolitan languages (English or French). Thus in Tanna (Southern District), for example, the phonemic oppositions exemplified in (2) have been observed to occur quite commonly; and although my experience with other parts of the New Hebrides is not as great, I would venture to suggest that these phonemic oppositions are by no means restricted to the Southern District.[10]

(2) | Guy's analysis | | Tanna | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PIS [pis, fis] | /fis/ | [fis] | 'fish' |
| PIS [pis, fis] | /pis/ | [pis] | 'peace' |
| PISNIS [bisnis] | /bisnis/ | [bisnis] | 'business' |
| VILITS | /vilij/ | [vilij̃] | 'village' |
| TETE | /tede/ | [tede] | 'today' |
| TET | /det/ | [det] | 'die, dead' |
| KAREM | /karem/ | [kaɾem] | 'carry' |
| KAREN | /garen/ | [gaɾen] | 'garden' |

Guy's orthography, then, departs from the phonological facts. It would appear reasonable that if some dialects have /p b t d k g/ while others have only /p t k/

the orthography, like that of Tok Pisin, should represent the voicing contrast, allowing those who do make the distinction to represent it and those who do not to have pairs of homophonous symbols. These latter would thus pronounce identically each of the orthographic pairs tok 'speak' and dok 'dog', and kat 'playing card' and gat 'have'. This seems a better orthographic proposal than forcing those with the voicing contrast in their dialects to accept a large number of words spelled identically but pronounced differently; Guy's orthography requires these people to write /tok/ 'speak' and /dok/ 'dog' identically as tok, and also /kat/ 'playing card' and /gat/ 'have' identically as kat.

Various dialects of Bislama also possess a number of alveolar affricates. Guy notes that ts and tsy are acceptable consonant clusters, but neither is treated as a phoneme (8).[11] Consider, however, the following range of pronunciation of /jam/ 'jump' and /vilij/ 'village'; every dialect has at least one of these options, some allowing more than one.

(3)   /jam/   [syam ~ tsyam ~ čam ~ ỹam]
       /vilij/   [vilis ~ vilits ~ vilič ~ viliỹ]

Certain dialects, in fact, do make a three-way contrast between [s], [ts ~ č], and [ỹ], at least in initial position:

(4)   [ỹun]   'June'   [ỹelas]   'jealous'
       [tsus ~ čus]   'choose'   [tsenis ~ čenis]   'change'
       [sus]   'shoes'   [selfis]   'shellfish'

This suggests that the phonology -- and orthography -- should recognise /j/ and /ts/ in addition to /s/. Bislama thus has the following obstruent phonemes: /p b t d k g ts j f v s/.

1.2. Stress. Guy's analysis of Bislama stress (6) is drastically oversimplified, and may lead the learner into some confusion. His stress rules are:

[A]   Monosyllabic "tool-words" are unstressed, while other monosyllabic words
are stressed; thus [we] 'relative clause introducer', but [yét] 'still'.

[B]   Disyllabic verbs ending in –em, –im, or –um are stressed on the initial
syllable: [tékem] 'take'.

[C]   "Words of more than two syllables have most often only their first and last
syllables stressed" (6): [ólketá] 'all', [túvalá] 'two', [námaldó] 'megapod'.

[D]   "Otherwise, stress falls evenly on every syllable of the word" (6):
[kálá] 'colour', [nákátdmból] 'a kind of tree (Dracontomelum sylvestre)'.

Guy's first two rules are accurate; his last two, as stated, however, show total
internal contradiction -- i.e., what can 'otherwise' in rule [D] refer to? -- as well as
being phonologically inaccurate. I will leave the discussion of stress-placement in
words containing diphthongs until the next section. In words without diphthongs, the facts
are as follows.

Monosyllablic words, except for grammatical morphemes, are stressed:

(5)   [dók]   'dog'

       [mán]   'man'

       [bík]   'big'

Almost all disyllables and words of four or more syllables take stress on the penulti-
mate syllable and on each alternate syllable to the left of the penult. Exceptions will
be discussed below; the following, however, give evidence of the fairly general appli-
cation of this rule:

(6)   [kála]   'colour'

       [lóto]   'motor vehicle'

       [máket]   'market'

       [nákatámbol]   'kind of tree'

       [nátakúřa]   'sago'

       [nákavíka]   'Malay-apple'

Words ending in –ap (from English up), however, always take stress on the final syllable:

(7) [antáp]   'up, above'

     [bágaráp]   'broken, malfunctioning'

     [klosáp]   'close, near'

The trisyllables present a more complex picture. Some -- probably the majority -- show regular penultimate stress:

(8) [olkéta]   'all'

     [natṍa]   'Island teak'

     [natóŋtoŋ]   'mangrove'

Trisyllables ending in the suffix –fala ~ –vala, however, show initial stress:

(9) [mívala]   'we (exclusive)'

     [túvala]   'the two of them'

     [bíkfala]   'big (emphatic)'

Some other initially-stressed trisyllables seem to have retained the English stress-pattern, while the last two examples in (10) show words of local origin with initial stress:

(10) [kámbani]   'group'

     [péntekos]   'Pentecost Island'

     [kálabus]   'jail'

     [nákamal]   'dance-ground, kava-drinking place, men's-house'

     [náŋgalat]   'tree with stinging leaves'

Still other trisyllables, many of which are complex morphemes in the source language if not in Bislama, show stress on the initial and final syllables:

(11) [évriwán]   'everyone'

     [stórián]   'talk, chat'

     [bákegén]   'again'

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Stress in Bislama is thus basically of an alternating pattern, with stress falling on the penultimate syllable and each alternate syllable to the left of it. Exceptional words, like those in (7) and (9) through (11) should be so marked in the dictionary.[12]

1.3. Diphthongs. According to Guy, Bislama has six diphthong phonemes: /ae/, /ao/, /ea/, /ia/, /oe/, and /ua/. I should like to raise a number of issues in connection with these.

First, the diphthongs /ea/, /ia/, and /ua/ are always heard as two quite distinct vowels, and thus constitute a vowel cluster. It seems unnecessary for them to be considered separate unit phonemes.[13]

Second, there is the issue of whether the 'true' diphthongs should be also interpreted as vowel clusters or as complex vowel unit phonemes. Researchers into Pacific languages generally tend to regard diphthongs like these as vowel clusters, thus reducing the phoneme inventory considerably at the expense of usually very minor additions to the stress rules. Although Mihalic (1971:4-5) suggests that Tok Pisin in fact has the diphthong phonemes /ai/, /au/, and /oi/, the implications of Laycock's (1970), Wurm's (1971), and Dutton's (1973) pronunciation guides is that these diphthongs are clusters of vowels and not unit phonemes in themselves.

The evidence from stress-placement in words containing diphthongs is not conclusive, but it does tend to suggest that the diphthongs should in fact be treated as vowel clusters. Words ending in diphthongs take stress on the first vowel of the diphthong:

(12) [kakái]   'eat, food'
      [námarái]   'eel'
      [kátemdáun]   'cut down'

If these are interpreted as vowel clusters, then the rule of penultimate stress-placement assigns stress correctly. On the other hand, words with diphthongs in non-final position do not show the expected alternating pattern:

(13) [kapsáitem]   'turn over'   (not [kápsaítem])

[siŋɑ́utem]   'call out to'   (not [síŋaútem])

The simple expedient of adding a stress-shifting rule like (14) to the grammar, however, obviates the necessity for recognising three extra phonemes.

(14) VV́ ----→ V́V

The third issue is one of orthographic representation of the diphthongs. Three of Guy's diphthongs, written <u>ae</u>, <u>ao</u>, and <u>oe</u>, are pronounced [aj̯], [au̯], and [oi̯] at least as often as they are pronounced [ae̯], [ao̯], and [oe̯]. In fact, Guy's pronunciation guide suggests that the former set is the norm: they should be sounded like English <u>mine</u>, <u>cow</u>, and <u>toil</u> (5), or as in French <u>bétail</u>, <u>maoïste</u>, and <u>Bolchoï</u> (59). Tok Pisin uses <u>ai</u>, <u>au</u>, and <u>oi</u>, although Solomon Islands Pidgin uses <u>ae</u>, <u>ao</u>, and <u>oe</u>. Although the issue is not overly weighty, some attempt at standardisation is desirable. I will follow the Tok Pisin usage in this paper.

2.   THE PARTICLE /i/

By far the strangest part of Guy's grammar is his treatment of Bislama <u>i</u> in sentences like the following:

(15) a. <u>Mivala i no kam.</u>   'We (exclusive) didn't come'

b. <u>Mi tekem pikinini i</u>   'I took the child to the house'.
<u>go long haus.</u>

In sentences like (15a), <u>i</u> is described as a 'predicative verb' (16-17), while in sentences like (15b) <u>i</u> is a 'preposition' (37-39). I will examine each of these claims in turn.

2.1. The 'Predicative Verb'. The 'predicative verb' function of <u>i</u> is defined as follows:

The predicative verb i has for function to link the subject and the predicate together.
It is therefore a tool-word.

This verb is the only Bichelamar word which is not invariable. It is conjugated
as follows (for all tenses and all modes):

Singular	1st pers	mi
	2nd pers.	yu
	3rd pers.	i
dual	1st pers. (inclusive)	i
	1st pers. (exclusive)	i
	2nd pers.	i
	3rd pers.	i
	3rd pers. (collective)	i
plural	1st pers. (inclusive)	(null)
	1st pers. (exclusive)	i
	2nd pers.	i
	3rd pers.	ol i (16).

The blame for this fatuous piece of analysis can clearly be laid at the door of Guy's
lack of reference to other works on Melanesian Pidgin. It is worth quoting at some length
from some of these:

All verbs, and any [sic] certain other types of sentence discussed below,
require the predicate marker i when the subject is in the third person.
After first and second person pronoun forms ending in -pela, the use of
i is optional. (Laycock 1970: xix; my underlining).

The functions of the particle i - usually referred to as the predicate marker -
are fundamental for many parts of Pidgin grammar. ... i appears before a
verb or non-verbal predicate if the subject is the third person. ... Before
a verb, i appears optionally if the subject is a non-singular first or second
person pronoun. (Wurm 1971:13, 17; my underlining).

Mihalic (1971:23-24) calls attention to

> the constant recurrence of the form "i" between the subject and predicate in
> Melanesian Pidgin ... . It is called a <u>predicate marker</u> because its presence
> in the sentence tells us that whatever follows is the predicate. ... It is
> always used between a subject and predicate when the subject is a noun or
> the third person singular or plural personal pronoun. ... It is usually
> used between subject and predicate when the subject is either the first
> person plural(exclusive) or the second person plural personal pronoun. ...
> The predicate marker /i/ is part of the entire predicate and not of the
> verb alone. (My underlining).

> In most Pidgin sentences all the subject pronouns except <u>mi</u> and <u>yu</u> are
> followed by <u>i</u> which occurs between the pronoun and the verb ... .
> This particle ... is usually referred to as the <u>Predicative Particle</u> or
> <u>Predicate Marker</u>. (Dutton 1973:7; my underlining).

It is apparent, then, that in Tok Pisin <u>i</u> is regarded as a particle linking subject
and predicate, and that it occurs after all pronoun subjects except <u>mi</u>, <u>yu</u>, and <u>yumi</u>
with varying degrees of optionality. This appears to be exactly the case in Bislama.
I will show below that Guy's 'conjugation' in the third person plural is inaccurate.
In other persons and numbers, the occurrence of Bislama <u>i</u> exactly parallels that of
Tok Pisin <u>i</u> as described by Laycock, Wurm, Mihalic, and Dutton; the only difference
appears to be that, in the non-singular, <u>i</u> occurs obligatorily with the first and second
person pronouns in Bislama but only optionally with these pronouns in Tok Pisin.[14]

What, then, of the first and second persons singular? Guy notes that

> the <u>subject</u> may be omitted if it consists of a singular personal pronoun
> (<u>mi</u>, <u>yu</u>, or <u>em</u>) or of the third person plural pronoun ol. (31; my underlining).

He does not state under what conditions these subject pronouns are omitted; but he
does state that in a sentence like

(16)   <u>Mi kam halpen yu</u>. 'I'm coming to help you' (18)
       "the subject [mi] is omitted" (16); and that in a sentence like

(17)   Yu wantem hu? 'Whom do you want?' (13)
       "<u>yu</u> is <u>not the personal pronoun</u> of the 2nd. pers. sg. <u>but an auxiliary verb
       in the 2nd. pers. sg.</u>" (13); my underlining).

Consider now sentences (18) and (19), which are identical to (16) and (17) except that the so-called subject has been retained:

    (18) <u>Mi mi kam halpem yu</u>.   'I'm coming to help you'

    (19) <u>Yu yu wantem hu</u>?   'And who do <u>you</u> want?'

In these two sentences we find that the subject is emphasised; and, in all dialects I have observed, what is in fact reduplication of the pronouns <u>mi</u> and <u>yu</u> indicates emphasis of the subject. (This has also been independently pointed out by Dutton (1973:278)). Sentences like (16) and (17), then, show unreduplicated pronoun subjects and not 'predicative verbs with the subject omitted', and are thus gramatically identical to similar sentences in Tok Pisin. We thus find another paralled between Bislama and Tok Pisin: the particle <u>i</u> does not occur after the pronouns <u>mi</u> and <u>yu</u>.

Returning to Guy's statement on subject-omission, we find that the third person pronouns <u>em</u> and <u>ol</u> are also said to be omitted. The former is omitted in sentences like the following:

    (20) <u>I tait</u>.   'He (or she) is tired' (31)

    (21) <u>I gutfala</u>.   'It's (very) good!'

This idiomatic usage is common also in Tok Pisin, especially when the subject can be inferred from the linguistic or extra-linguistic context.

Regarding the omission of <u>ol</u>, however, Guy's example is quite confusing. Sentence (22) is supposed to be an example of a sentence in which the pronoun <u>ol</u> is omitted, all that remains before the verb being the third person plural form of the predicative verb <u>i</u> -- which is <u>ol i</u>.

    (22) <u>Ol i slip</u>.   'They are sleeping'

Now if the pronoun ol has been omitted optionally, under conditions Guy never specifies, then presumably sentences like ol ol i slip, with the pronoun subject retained, should also occur. But nowhere in Guy's grammar do such sentences occur, for the simple reason that they are ungrammatical in Bislama. Guy may have had in mind sentences like

(23) Olketa ol i slip.   'They are all sleeping'

but this is not a case of pronoun (olketa) + predicative verb (ol i), but a case of nominal (olketa) + pronoun (ol) + predicative marker (i), with the pronoun being used after the noun subject for recapitulative purposes as it is in sentences like (24):

(24) Pikinini em i no bin kam. 'The child, he didn't come'

ol i thus represents a pronoun followed by a predicative marker, and not just a predicative marker; and hence the usage of Bislama i is almost exactly identical to that of Tok Pisin i, and should be analysed as such.

2.2. The 'Preposition'. In the sentences below, the double-underlined occurrence of i is said to be a preposition introducing the following complement:

(25) Mi karem ol basket i go long haus.   'I carried the baskets(away) to the house' (37)

(26) Mivala i ron i kasem vilij.   'We ran up to the village' (38)

(27) Mi save rit i bitim yu.   'I can read better than you' (38)

(28) Yu livim i stap.   'Leave it!' (39)

Now we have already seen that i is a particle which introduces the verb of the predicate. In each of these sentences the complement is introduced by a verb; and in these cases it seems far more logical to treat the i as being the predicate marker which links the deleted subject to the verb. Thus (28), for example, may be thought of as combining the two sentences (29):

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(29) a. <u>Yu livim</u>.   'You leave it'

     b. <u>Em i stap</u>.   'It stays'

With the deletion of the subject of the complement sentence (<u>em</u>) by regular rules of complementation, what follows the verb of the matrix sentence (<u>livim</u>) is the verb of the complement with its associated predicate marker. This seems a far more natural analysis than terming <u>i</u> a preposition.

3.   CONCLUSION

In this short paper I have endeavoured to point out certain defects in Guy's <u>Handbook</u> and to put forward restatements of certain aspects of Bislama phonology and grammar. It is to be hoped that the question of Bislama's relationship to the other Pacific pidgin/creoles will soon be investigated, and that a more accurate and more useful grammar of Bislama will soon be produced.

NOTES

1.   Tom Dutton, Ranier Lang, Peter C. Lincoln, and Bob McDonald have commented on parts of a draft of this paper, and Otto Nekitel has commented on some of the differences between Bislama and Tok Pisin. Theirs is not the responsibility, however, for the opinions expressed.

2.   Guy uses the name <u>Bichelamar</u>, and cites as variants <u>Bichlamar</u>, <u>Beach-la-mer</u>, <u>Beach-la-mar</u>, and <u>Pislama</u>. The term Bichelamar is most commonly used among

2. contd.

    French-speakers, English-speakers preferring the term <u>Pidgin</u>. However, <u>Bislama</u>--stress sometimes penultimate, sometimes final--is by far the commonest name among New Hebrideans, and this name will be used throughout this paper except when quoting directly from Guy.

3.   Mühlhäusler (1975a) examines this issue in Tok Pisin in great detail.

4.   The fact that Guy notes that "verbs of mode and aspect may be used as autonomous verbs, in which case they denote not merely the aspect or mode of the following verb, but a process in itself" (18) suggests that he could well have rethought the basis of his classification.

5.   Prepositions, conjunctions, particles, and hinge-words are also members of the class tool-word; see below.

6.   A previous article on Bislama phonology and orthography (Guy 1974b), however, was based on two weeks' fieldwork with a single informant, a tape-recording made by another linguist, printed materials in Bislama produced by the French Service in the New Hebrides, and "observations drawn from conversations with New Hebrideans in Espiritu Santo" (Guy 1974b:23, 25).

7.   I hope soon to be in a position to publish the evidence substantiating this claim. In the meantime, preliminary remarks on the similarities and differences between Bislama and Tok Pisin can be found in Dutton (1973: 227-79).

8.   Guy does not explicitly state that this is a phonemic statement, but I infer that it is from the statements "each Bichelamar sound is always represented by the same letter or group of two letters" and "Bichelamar has twenty-six different sounds" (4).

    It should be pointed out here that in Guy (1974b) the phonemes /d/, /g/, and /ts/ were also recognised.

9. Thus in Tanna, most speakers make the voiced/voiceless distinction in Bislama, although in the indigenous languages there is only one series of stops with voiced and voiceless allophones.

10. In certain other parts of the New Hebrides, the voiced stops are usually heard prenasalised.

11. In Guy (1974b), however, he does accord phonemic status to the affricate /ts/, further noting that "to /ts/ may correspond [s], and to /s/ [ts]" (Guy 1974b:34).

12. Attention should be drawn to the fact that there is a certain amount of idiolectal variation in stress patterns, due largely to (a) the stress patterns of the individual's native language, and (b) the stress patterns of English or French, in idiolects of speakers with a certain degree of fluency in one of these languages.

13. If Guy were to be consistent he should include a seventh diphthong, /ɔa/: e.g., /stɔa/ 'store', /dɔa/ 'door', which more accurately reflect common pronunciation than his /sto/ and /to/.

14. I have even heard Bislama sentences like yumi i kam, 'we came'. Presumably, in normal speech, the particle i̱ is assimilated to the /i/ of yumi.

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