Anna Shnukal, Broken: an Introduction to the Creole Language of Torres Strait
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Reviewed by John Holm,
City University of New York

This ground-breaking study includes not only a 3,500-word dictionary but also a 94-page introduction, most of which focuses on the phonological and morphosyntactic structure of **Broken** (B), catapulting its status from one of the least known to one of the best documented English-based creoles.

Shnukal notes in her introduction to the dictionary that it was "written primarily for students and teachers in the schools of Torres Strait...The main aim of the dictionary is to aid islander secondary school students in their study of English" (p. 97). But the author is also aware that the book will be of interest to fellow linguists, and neither readership can be entirely accommodated. Thus there is an attempt to avoid the technical jargon of linguists (phonemes are called "important sounds" on page 17) but yet to address the concerns of linguists as well (e.g. discussions of iterative, cessative, habitual completive, inceptive, continuative and even semelfactive aspect, pages 48 to 51).

Yet the book is sure to prove useful to both these groups and others as well. It contains sufficient data to establish the structural differences between **Broken** and the two varieties of restructured English to which it appears to be most closely related: the Kriol spoken elsewhere in northern Australia, and the various dialects of Melanesian Pidgin English. Although some comparative work has been done (e.g. Sandefur 1986: 23 ff.), much more research is needed to make clear the historical interrelationship of these varieties.

Shnukal discusses the history and current sociolinguistic status of **Broken** (p. 4-10), noting how the islands between Queensland's Cape York and the southwestern coast of Papua New Guinea have undergone profound cultural and linguistic changes over the past 150 years. The inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands originally spoke two distinct languages: Meriam Mir (a Papuan language) on the eastern islands, and

Kala Lagaw Ya (an Australian language) on the western islands. In the 1840s white Australians began coming to gather pearls and the beach-la-mar sea slug prized in China, using laborers recruited from all parts of the Pacific. Beach-la-mar (pre-)pidgin English became the contact language of this industry, and later the first language of the children of the Pacific islanders who settled in the Torres Strait with local women, often as missionaries who became community leaders in a culture under siege. Today the Creole is the lingua franca for some 12,000 to 15,000 islanders (many of whom now live in the coastal towns of Queensland), and the first language of perhaps 3,000 of them. Long stigmatized, it is now valued by many younger islanders "as a cultural marker of identity, ethnicity and separateness from mainstream white Australian society" (p. 10).

The dictionary lists 3,500 commonly used Creole words. Their etymologies indicate that some 85% come from English, which remains the source of most modern additions to the lexicon (e.g. **bidyo** 'video tape or recorder'). However, the etymologies do not indicate that the sources of many items are word forms which today are archaic or regional in Britain, e.g. **akse**, which comes not from standard English ask but rather dialectal **ax**, which dates back to Old English **acsian**. Again, TSC **nosol** 'nostril' comes from dialectal **nose hole**. Both of these forms are found in creolized varieties of English from West Africa to the Caribbean (Holm with Shilling 1982) as well as in many white dialects of English outside Britain, raising the question of what varieties of nonstandard English took to the seas, to be discussed below.

Broken preserves not only word forms but also phonological features of British dialects, e.g. /ai/ before a velar corresponding to standard /Ë/, as in **draig** 'drag' or **slaik** 'slack', also found in Atlantic varieties of Creole English (Holm 1988:134). Other regional British features include the palatalization of initial velars (e.g. **gyaman** 'to lie' from **gammon** 'to dupe' in thieves' slang). Nautical words have given the creole such terms as **kapsaiz** 'to spill' (cf. capsize), **liwud** 'front' (cf. *leeward*), and **rastikil** 'unwashed person' (cf. *rusty keel*). Other terms originated in nineteenth-century slang words (some of which are still current in Australia) such as **plas** 'showy' from **flash** (*idem*).

Some 14% of the Creole's lexicon is derived from the two local substrate languages with which it has continued to coexist, Kala Lagaw Ya (e.g. **kothei** 'nape

of the neck' from **kothey** idem) and Meriam Mir (e.g. **kenani** 'armpit' from **kenani** idem). In addition to contributing lexical items, these substrate languages have also influenced the semantic range of Creole words borrowed from English. For example, in the eastern dialect of the Creole (influenced by Meriam Mir), **leg** refers to the lower leg and foot (the meaning of **tag** in Meriam Mir), but in the western dialect (influenced by Kala Lagaw Ya) **leg** refers to the lower leg only (the meaning of **ngar** in Kala Lagaw Ya). Reduplication is a feature of the eastern dialect only, e.g. **spotspot** 'spotty' or **straipstraip** 'striped'; Miriam Mir uses the reduplication of nouns to form adjectives meaning 'having [noun]', e.g. **tulik** 'knife' and **tuliktulik** 'having a knife' (p. 22).

The remaining 1% of the **Broken** lexicon comes from the various languages spoken by those involved in the nineteenth-century trade for pearls and beach-la-mar, i.e. Pacific languages (e.g. **pakalolo** 'island porridge' from Fijian **vakalolo** 'pudding'; **tawi** 'brother-in-law' from Vanuatu **tawean** idem; **susu** 'breast' from Samoan **susu** idem). Other such languages include Malay (e.g. **blasan** 'blachan, a hot shrimp or fish paste' from Malay **blacan** 'hot, spicy paste'" [Robert Allen gives the source as Malay **belacan** 'shrimp paste' in a personal communication]). Another such language is Japanese, an example of which is **namas** 'raw fish' from "Japanese **namasu** 'marinated raw seafood or vegetables'" (p. 169). Satoshi Koike (personal communication) notes that the final vowel of **namasu** is devoiced (and thus likely to be lost in a language contact situation); its meaning is 'pickled Japanese radish which may contain raw fish'. Although not noted by Shnukal, Japanese could also be the source of the semantic range of **trai**, which not only means 'try' but is also used before a verb to form a polite request, e.g. **Trai spik gen!** 'Could you repeat that please!' (p. 216). Koike notes that Japanese **miru** 'try' can be used with verbs to form an indirect (i.e. more polite) imperative, e.g. the inflected form **mite** in **Itte mite** 'Please go.' Stewart (1989) notes that this use of Hawaiian Creole English try first became predominant among speakers of that creole who were bilingual in Japanese.

Finally, other **Broken** words resulted from processes familiar to students of creole lexicography. One is the reanalysis of morpheme boundaries, such as the agglutination of the plural morpheme in the English etymon into a single creole morpheme, as in **anis** 'ant' or **asis** 'ash'. Another is new morpheme combinations

(possibly influenced by substrate languages) as in **atso** 'heartache, worry' from **heart sore,** or **prenlo** from **friend-in-law,** a trusted friend who has taken on the social status of an in-law. An example of semantic shift is **skon** 'fritter' from scone (Shnukal kindly provides the recipe on p. 200, the only way to define a dish with any accuracy). Finally, many words have undergone a change of syntactic function, such as **strong** 'strength' or **smud** 'smoothness'.

Unfortunately Shnukal's etymologies show little awareness that anything except the current standard dialect could have provided English sources. For example, the relative pronoun **we** 'that, which' (e.g. **bon we i brok** 'the bone that got broken') is traced to English **where** (p. 224), although Wright (1898-1905) provides a much more plausible British dialect source: Northcountry **whe** 'who, which', also found throughout the English-based creoles of the Atlantic. The problem is also that Creole English lexicography is still in its infancy, despite the exemplary scholarship of Cassidy and Le Page (1967, 1980), and researchers tend to be unaware of each other's work, particularly across that gap of oceanic dimensions that divides creolists working on Atlantic and Pacific varieties.

A minor problem for the non-Australian user of this dictionary is the occasional use of local English in definitions; some of us will be none the wiser for glosses such as **titaim** 'smoko' (p. 90), **geinga** 'ganger' (18), or **meto** 'metho' (105). Perhaps it is high time we all bought Australian dictionaries.

Creolists working on Caribbean varieties will be astonished at the number of cognates of familiar words they find in this dictionary, many of which have been attributed to the influence of African languages, e.g. **big ai** as in **Em gad big ai po kaikai** 'He is very greedy' (p. 104). Others include **beliran** 'diarrhoea', **big pipe/** 'adults', **bipotaim** 'past', **long** 'tall', **swit** 'tasty', **wantaim** 'at once', **wanwan** 'one at a time', **Zameikaman** 'Jamaican'. Pan-creole grammatical terms are even more intriguing, e.g. **uda** 'who?' or the associative use of **dempla** 'they' (as in **Charlotte dempla** 'Charlotte and her crowd' [p. 31]) or the use of **bin** as a preverbal marker of past tense (as in **Weya yu bin go?** 'Where did you go?' [p.116]). In another case B **de,** a deictic particle, is almost compatible in meaning with Atlantic Creole English **de,** a preverbal marker of progressive aspect, e.g. **Uda de tok?** 'Who's that talking?' (p. 123) or **Ud de plot ene wata** 'A piece of wood was floating in the water' (58)--suggesting a reanalysis of Atlantic Creole **de** rather than English **there.** The

Atlantic complementizer **fo** (cf. English **for**) has its mirror image in B **po**, e.g. **Mitu go stap po tok lo dempla** 'We'll stay (in order) to talk to them' (78), or **Yu lawe da gel po kam** 'You allowed the girl to come' (79). Finally, there is the quotative particle **sei**, again parallel to Atlantic creole usage: **Em i spik sei 'Libim pas!'** 'He said: "Leave it alone!"' (195).

Some of these forms may have had a common origin in the regional speech of England, such as West Country or Liverpool "I came for see" (Orton et al. 1978:S3). Others may reflect grammar universals, features found in so many of the world languages that there is no need to try to explain them by diffusion from any one particular source, such as quotative *sei* (Holm 1988:185 ff.). Yet there remains a real case for Atlantic creole forms having been brought to the southwest Pacific and Australia; the likelihood of diffusion is clearest in the case of lexical items (e.g. B **piknini** 'child'), but it also seem likely to account for the similarity of a number of grammatical items like **bin** or **de.** In short, this dictionary contributes to the mounting evidence that the input languages of Pacific Pidgin English included not only English, but also the English-based creoles of the Atlantic, if only as a model of speech that nineteenth- century seamen and others thought appropriate for contact with non-whites.

This dictionary is made even more useful by an English-Creole finderlist of some 4,500 items, and appendices grouping words by semantic field (e.g. animals, food, etc.). Finally, there are seven pages of texts in **Broken** with English translations. The author has served her readers very well indeed: the Torres Strait Islanders, creolists, and others will all find themselves enriched by her efforts.

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