This volume presents a historical-sociolinguistic description and analysis of Maritime Polynesian Pidgin. It offers linguistic and sociohistorical substantiation for a regional Eastern Polynesian-based pidgin, and challenges conventional Eurocentric assumptions about early colonial contact in the eastern Pacific by arguing that Maritime Polynesian Pidgin preceded the introduction of Pidgin English by as much as a century. Emanuel J. Drechsel not only opens up new methodological avenues for historical-sociolinguistic research in Oceania by a combination of philology and ethnohistory, but also gives greater recognition to Pacific Islanders in early contact between cultures. Students and researchers working on language contact, language typology, historical linguistics, and sociolinguistics will want to read this book. It redefines our understanding of how Europeans and Americans interacted with Pacific Islanders in eastern Polynesia during early encounters and offers an alternative model of language contact.

Long interested in non-European pidgins, EMANUEL J. DRECHSEL is the author of a well-received case study entitled Mobilian Jargon (1997) of greater Louisiana; his recent research has focused on the eastern Pacific. He is a senior faculty member of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and has regularly taught courses in linguistic anthropology, ethnohistory, and related topics.
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Language Contact in the Early Colonial Pacific

Maritime Polynesian Pidgin before Pidgin English

Emanuel J. Drechsel

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
In memory of my beloved mother, Rita Hubbard-Bänziger (1913–2002), and in gratitude to my dear stepfather Dr. Stanley L. Hubbard, both of whom have always inspired me to pursue voyaging in both body and spirit.
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Series editor’s foreword

The series *Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact* (CALC) was set up to publish outstanding monographs on language contact, especially by authors who approach their specific subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on language diversification (including the development of creoles, pidgins, and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), bilingual language development, code-switching, and language endangerment. We hope to provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favor approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors’ own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavor to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

We are happy to add to our list Emanuel J. Drechsel’s *Language Contact in the Early Colonial Pacific: Maritime Polynesian Pidgin before Pidgin English*. The reader is provided with historical documentation of the languages of communication between, on the one hand, Polynesians and, on the other, Western explorers, merchants, beachcombers, and other “adventurers” in the Pacific. He or she will learn about the important ethnographic function of Maritime Pidgin English (MPP) as a lingua franca in these interactions during the second half of the eighteenth century until it was replaced by Pidgin English in the second half of the nineteenth century.

This is an analysis consistent with the hypothesis that Hawaiian Pidgin English also emerged no sooner than the late nineteenth century, owing largely to usage of Pidgin Hawaiian between the local populations and the contract laborers, before the former would replace the latter, concurrently with the spread of English on the islands and the emergence of Hawaiian Creole English. The reader will also learn about the role of interpreters on board the ships that sailed the Pacific, a special set of individuals that facilitated communication between the Islanders and the Westerners, why it was so easy for them to learn (to speak) MPP, and how they developed variable competence in English and other European languages. I would be remiss not to mention the meticulous analyses...
cum reconstitutions that Drechsel provides of the structures of attestations of MPP that he has painstakingly documented from various historical sources. The book is thus a precious source of information about the extent of communication between Westerners and Natives during their encounters in the Pacific since the second half of the eighteenth century and the kind of simplification that Tahitian, among other languages, appears to have undergone during the pidginization process. An important question arises as to why Tahiti emerges as so prominent in these encounters. Furthermore, who were the agents of the restructuring processes, on which the reader is equally invited to speculate? What was the specific role of the European explorers, merchants, and seamen in the emergence and spread of MPP and similar varieties elsewhere in the world? What was the role of the native actors and what stratum of the indigenous populations did they represent? How were they selected and/or recruited? What specific kinds of interactions did the Europeans and Natives have in these encounters that may be considered the hallmark of pidginization? These and several related questions arise from the wealth of historical documentation that this book makes available for the first time regarding the exploration of the Pacific and its trade colonization by Westerners.

**Salikoko S. Mufwene, University of Chicago**
Preface and acknowledgments

Language Contact in the Early Colonial Pacific reflects the direct influence of three prominent creolists: John E. Reinecke (1904–1982) with his early historical-sociolinguistic study of the Hawaiian Islands; Frederic G. Cassidy (1907–2000) with his lexical-philological research of Jamaican Creole and American English; and Derek Bickerton with not only his systematic analysis of linguistic variation in pidgins and creoles, but also an interest in Hawai‘i Creole English (“Pidgin”) and the preceding Hawaiian Pidgin. For a broader historical perspective, my book even carries the marks of my former long-time mentor William W. Elmendorf (1912–1997), an Americanist linguist and anthropologist in the tradition of Alfred Kroeber and Edward Sapir with an interest in another, unrelated, indigenous pidgin of the Pacific, Chinook Jargon of northwestern North America.

This book has been in the making for some time, like a large puzzle. Aside from drawing on earlier studies of mine, I began writing this book before completing my basic research, and later added new parts to the “puzzle.” Whereas this course of action would not be advisable in a project requiring a large block of initial commitment such as fieldwork, it worked surprisingly well in this case. I had already gathered enough data for an overall framework. Filling in blanks with subsequent findings, then, proved structurally more consistent than I had originally expected.

I first toyed with the notion of a Hawaiian-based contact medium when, together with my wife T. Haunani Makuakāne-Drechsel, I explored Hawaiian loanwords in two Native American pidgins, Chinook Jargon and Eskimo Jargon, in the early 1980s (Drechsel and Makuakāne 1982). Questions by Bickerton about the history of Hawai‘i Pidgin and Creole English raised the issue of Pidgin Hawaiian in no uncertain terms (Bickerton and Wilson 1987), and eventually led to a project entitled “Language Contact in Hawai‘i and the Pacific, 1778–1930, with Particular Reference to Hawaiian,” funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF Grant No. SBR-94–06763) in February 1994 and completed under my direction in January 1995. That project also supported the first in-depth analysis of Pidgin Hawaiian by Sarah J. Roberts (1995a, 1995b), at the time an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I
was already interested in the applicability of theoretical concepts of pidgin and creole studies, developed primarily on the basis of European-based cases, to non-European instances. However, my research still focused on North America, to culminate in a book on the Muskogean-based Mobilian Jargon of the greater Mississippi River valley and an accompanying vocabulary (Drechsel 1996b, 1997). Only in time did the National Science Foundation project lead to publications on Maritime Polynesian Pidgin (Drechsel 1999, 2007a, 2007b, forthcoming). This early research constitutes the foundation upon which Part II of this book draws, although at a substantially wider geographic range, time span, and thematic scope.

In pursuing this project, I recognize with gratitude the grant by the National Science Foundation (NSF Grant No. SBR-94–06763, February 1994 to January 1995). I also acknowledge with much appreciation and love the input of my wife T. Haunani Makaukāne-Drechsel, who has patiently answered numerous questions about Hawaiian grammar. In addition, I am obliged to Sarah J. Roberts, Simon Kaliko Trapp, and William (“Pila”) H. Wilson for essential contributions to my research on Pidgin Hawaiian over the years. Acknowledgment likewise is due to Vaipuarii Tapiero for helping identify and interpret reduced forms of Tahitian in historical records, and to Jack Ward for answering some remaining questions. I am moreover indebted to Yuko Otsuka and Gabriele H. Cablitz for identifying and helping to interpret early samples of non-standard Marquesan, to Mary Boyce for assisting me in sorting out historical instances of irregular from standard Māori, and to Ameli’a M. Pasi for evaluating incidental references to contact with Eastern Polynesian languages in Tongan and the question of whether Maritime Polynesian Pidgin extended to the Tonga Islands. I also appreciate the critical comments by Anthony P. Grant, Suzanne Romaine, and anonymous readers to drafts of my earlier publications, which have improved my current project. I further owe recognition to Robert A. Blust, Michael Forman, Paul Lyons, Peter Mühlhäusler, and Albert J. Schütz in my interpretation of Polynesian languages, on questions regarding Pacific pidgins and creoles, in my assessment of Herman Melville’s linguistic data, and for valuable suggestions in the discussion of methodological-theoretical problems. I am especially grateful to Al Schütz and Pila Wilson for taking the time to read a first draft, making indispensable corrections, and offering alternative interpretations.

I take this opportunity to recognize the late Renée Heyum, Curator of the Pacific Collection, Eleanor Au, former director of the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections, the late Karen M. Peacock, Head of Special Collections, as well as her staff, especially Stuart Dawrs, Joan Hori, Dore Minatodani, Andrea Nakamura, and Wesley Poka, all at Hamilton Library of the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, for their generous support over the past several years. Credit is also due to Ross A. Christensen and Jodie H. Mattos, Humanities Librarians,
and the Office of Interlibrary Services at Hamilton Library of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, especially Malia McGoldrick, for addressing my quirkiest requests for historical materials. I am further grateful to Barbara E. Dunn, Administrative Director of the Hawaiian Historical Society, and Irene Axelrod, Head Research Librarian at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, for their assistance in locating relevant historical documentation. Many thanks also to those who offered suggestions in the identification of mysterious original sources for two sections in Jules S. C. Dumont d’Urville’s *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (1834–1835), especially to Bronwen Douglas, John Dunmore, Martin Terry, and Nicholas Thomas.

Acknowledgments are due to: the Honolulu Museum of Art for granting permission to reproduce “Alii on the Shore Greeting Tall-Masted Ship” by Arman T. Manookian, born Armenia, 1904–1931, mixed media, 11 ¾ in. × 12 ¼ in., Honolulu Museum of Art, Gift of the Estate of Aneliese Lermann, 1998 (26469) on this book’s cover as well as Patrick and Vergine Manoukian as inheritors of the Manookian estate for giving their consent; Peter Mühlhäuser for allowing me to quote extensively from his book *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*, copyright 1997 by Peter Mühlhäuser, in Chapter 2; the University of Hawai‘i Press for permitting the inclusion of excerpts from the recent edition of George Forster’s *Voyage Round the World* of 1777, re-edited by Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof with the assistance of Jennifer Newell, copyright 2000 by University of Hawai‘i Press; Northwestern University Press for consenting to my use of extended quotes from Herman Melville’s novel *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* of 1846, reissued by Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, with a historical note by Leon Howard, copyright 1968 by Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library; the John Benjamins Publishing Company for allowing me to use portions of my own article “Sociolinguistic-Ethnohistorical Observations on Maritime Polynesian Pidgin in Herman Melville’s Two Major Semi-Autobiographical Novels of the Pacific,” originally published in the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 22: 231–261 in 2007, copyright by John Benjamins Publishing Company; and Simon J. Greenhill, Ross Clark, and Bruce Biggs of the Polynesian Lexicon Project Online (Pollex) at the University of Auckland, copyright POLLEX-Online 2010 by Simon J. Greenhill, Ross Clark, and Bruce Biggs, whose comparative lexical database I have sporadically used in philological reconstructions with a questionable foundation.

I would moreover like to express my appreciation to Salikoko S. Mufwene, Editor of *Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact*, for his editorial guidance as well as to Helen Barton, Commissioning Editor at Cambridge University Press, and her staff, especially Helena Dowson and Jacqueline French, for their support. Acknowledgment is further due to Peter Manicas and Jaishree Odin, former and current director of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University
Preface and acknowledgments

of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, for their continuous encouragement of my research over the years. My sabbatical during the spring of 2008 provided me with not only a long-missed break for pursuing uninterrupted in-depth research of the topic under investigation, but also an extended cruise with my wife to the South Pacific. Voyaging through eastern Polynesia allowed me to retrace many observations by early European explorers in contact with Pacific Islanders in spite of a time gap of as long as two and a half centuries and – with it – entirely different sociohistorical and linguistic circumstances since early colonial times. Just as the cruise gave me the opportunity for writing the first chapters of this book without disruption, my family, foremost my stepfather Stanley Hubbard and my sister Cornelia Drechsel, have opened their homes to me to develop subsequent portions of this book. I gratefully acknowledge their willingness to put me up and to put up with me during my visits.

Mahalo nui loa to all! As a matter of course, my indebtedness serves as no pretext for any mistaken interpretations or other shortcomings, which shall remain entirely my own responsibility.